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Defining Oppression: An Exercise Manual for the Multicultural Educator

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This starred paper submitted by Lee La Due in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.

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**DEFINING OPPRESSION: AN EXERCISE MANUAL
FOR THE MULTICULTURAL EDUCATOR**

BY

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B.S., St. Cloud State University, 1984

Starred Paper

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

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INTRODUCTION

The melting pot theory has been a core concept of the ideological foundation which has been used within the educational system to create and maintain the myth of the United States as a just and equitable country. The melting pot theory touted a new land that united all racial and ethnic groups and would integrate the many different cultures into a new utopian culture. This monocultural approach to education has many critics. Critics feel that this new evolved culture never existed, but is still being used as an oppressive force to assimilate minorities into the dominate culture. Newman (1977) asserts that immigrants were not accepted as part of this new society but rather were portrayed as different and inferior in the schools. Ramsey, Vold and Williams (1989) conclude that the racial and ethnic minority's values and customs were never integrated or taught in the schools and minorities were not given access to power. Newman contends that the role of the schools went far beyond teaching Anglo-Saxon values by serving the purpose of training the ethnic minorities for factory labor. Mildred Dickman (1973) writes that

what developed was a mass system of public indoctrination. That system had two functions: first to create a lower laboring class . . . which adhered sufficiently to the values and myths of the American ruling class so that it was not likely to question its place in society . . . second, selection, the selection of those few, as needed who possessed adequate loyalty and sufficient conformity in attitudes, values, behavior, and appearance, to be adapted into the expanding middle class.
(p. 6)

Many critics conclude that the melting pot theory served to establish, maintain, and justify a divisive and racist society which protected the interests of the wealthy owning class.

This belief led progressive educational leaders to promote a multicultural, gender-fair approach. Multicultural and gender-fair education was borne out of a need to prepare students for a diverse culture. Patricia Ramsey (1987) outlines the following goals of multicultural education:

- To develop positive gender, racial, cultural, class and individual identity.
- To identify, empathize and relate with individuals from other groups.
- To foster respect and appreciation for the diversity of cultures.
- To promote a realistic awareness of today's society, a sense of social responsibility and an active concern beyond one's own family or group.
- To empower individuals to be autonomous and critical analysts and activists.
- To support educational and social skills of all participants in larger society that are appropriate to individual's styles, culture and linguistic background.

The goals of multicultural education have created a debate in the educational and political arena. It is feared by the conservatives that multicultural education is a way to bring a political agenda into the classroom, ignoring that there has been a political agenda serving their purposes all along. Certainly if education has served as a form of indoctrination to create a complacent labor force, as Mildred Dickman contends, then the owning class does have reason to fear an educational system that empowers and supports critical analysis. The current debate about political correctness seems to be a reaction from the ruling class to maintain a system that serves their purposes and maintains their power and control.

Banks (1986) writes that

since multicultural education . . . deals with highly controversial and politicized issues such as racism and inequity it is especially likely to be harshly criticized during its formative stages because it deals with serious problems in society and appears to many individuals and groups to challenge established institutions, norms and values. (p. 222)

As multicultural education gains more influence in our schools, it continues to be attacked, subverted and depoliticized by the conservatives.

The left has also criticized multicultural education saying that its focus on individual human relations is not enough to effectively combat racism. Some critics feel that this narrow focus is designed to make oppressed groups content with the status quo and keep them from fighting the system that oppresses them (Banks, 1986). Banks responds to this criticism by agreeing that schools cannot eradicate racism, but that multicultural education can teach awareness of the inconsistencies between democratic values and the practices of our country. Through this process students can learn true citizenship skills: skills to understand cultural diversity, to critically analyze their environment, and enact social change.

This manual was created with this philosophy in mind; namely that multicultural education needs to examine the roots of oppression thereby establishing the connections between oppressed groups, and providing skills to enact social change. The manual covers the following areas: oppression, distribution of wealth, racism, sexism, homophobia and ableism. The exercises in this manual certainly do not represent an exhaustive study of all oppression, but do provide

a basic understanding that will assist students' analysis of other forms of oppression.

Another important aspect of multicultural education is a recognition that people have different learning styles. Not all students excel using the teacher-centered, classic learning approach. This manual provides a tool for an experiential teaching approach.

One possible approach is to provide an opportunity for the students to begin to identify aspects of their own personal oppression and to empower themselves. Once students have understood their own oppression, they can then begin to look outside of their own experiences and understand systemic oppression. This approach encourages a greater depth of empathy. However, learning about oppression should not stop here. It is common when students are just beginning to learn about these issues, to go through a stage of feeling overwhelmed, hopeless and helpless. It is important to help them move beyond this by providing them with the tools and skills to effect change in their environments. A crucial part of this learning process is to challenge students to confront their own oppressive attitudes and actions that will prepare them to live in a multicultural world.

The material contained in this manual often deals with deep-rooted values and attitudes. The facilitator must create an atmosphere that is conducive to open expression of students' true feelings on the subject matter. If the students feel that their attitudes will be harshly judged, the facilitator will be unable to effectively deal with the underlying issues. This atmosphere can be created by developing a few simple classroom guidelines for the students and the instructor.

1. Expression of disagreement must be done in a respectful manner by challenging specific ideas or behaviors, rather than attacking the person.
2. Everyone's process of growth is different. Allow people to evolve at their own pace.
3. Encourage everyone in your group to participate and give everyone a chance to talk.

It can also be helpful to explain that prejudiced attitudes and beliefs come out of an environment that continually reinforces those attitudes and beliefs. Encouraging students to examine the roots of their preconceptions will make this clearer and prevent feelings of failure that would deter risk-taking.

The exercises are not to be used exclusively, but with supporting background material on the respective topics. The facilitator must be familiar with the topics in order for the-exercises to be appropriately effective. I have listed suggested resources for individual exercises as well as provided a selected bibliography with each chapter.

Many of the exercises were designed by faculty at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education at St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Minnesota. The mission statement announces that the center "provides training in self-awareness and the acquisition of skills essential for living and working in a pluralistic multicultural society." The courses provide information on the social, political, and economic aspects of individual's lives as experienced in a culturally diverse society. The courses also teach skills in effecting change in the power structure, distribution of resources, cultural standards and institutions (Mission Statement, 1985).

Exercises from other sources are footnoted at the end of each exercise as well as in the bibliography. Exercises without a source citation are ones that I have developed.

The exercises are in a progressive order, but are also designed to be used alone. The manual can be used for a variety of post-secondary classes that deal with issues of oppression and are integrating multicultural and gender-fair teaching methods. Use in a workshop setting would also be appropriate.

We no longer can pretend that that the melting pot society exists. We also can no longer allow this theory to be used to perpetuate a system of oppression. The disenfranchised can no longer afford to allow the privileged few to divide us and divert our pursuit of justice. We must continue to break through our own barriers of sexism, racism and classism so that we can truly live in a multicultural world.

Chapter 1

OPPRESSION

Chapter one serves as an introduction to understanding oppression. Understanding the fundamental dynamics of oppression will lead to an understanding of the power imbalances that allow discrimination. The exercises in chapter one provide a framework and foundation for the following chapters on the distribution of wealth, racism, sexism, heterosexism and homophobia, and ableism. This framework will help the students understand how all forms of oppression are integrally related and connected. Audre Lorde (1983) asserts that all oppression arises from the same source: one's perception of superiority based on race, sex, or sexual preference, which leads to the belief that this gives one the right to dominate over others.

The exercises are reflective of the interest theory of discrimination (Feagin and Feagin, 1978) which also provides an explanation of the connections of all oppression. The interest theory asserts that discrimination stems from the dominant group protecting their power position and the privileges that accompany it. Feagin and Feagin describe five components the interest theory focuses on: (1) maintaining power and privilege of the dominant group, (2) structural elements of society rather than attitudinal characteristics of individuals, (3) rationalization of domination, (4) belief by

the dominant group that the benefits and resources are rightfully theirs, and (5) the divisiveness of scarce resources. Understanding the roots of oppression will help students recognize ineffective efforts of combating racism that are really designed to placate the concerned group and to maintain the status quo.

These exercises will help students begin to identify the oppression that exists all around them. Change cannot occur until the problem is defined and identified. Andrzejewski states in the exercise "Identifying Oppression" (p. 19), that "because we may be ignorant of what constitutes an oppressive act or attitude, we may not only unknowingly participate in oppressive actions, but also may become victims of oppression ourselves."

The exercises are fairly non-threatening, designed to build trust within a new group and begin the process of self-analysis. "Getting Acquainted", "Who's Who", and "Selective Perception" can also be used by the instructor to assess the group's knowledge base of the issues so the curriculum can be adapted for each particular class.

Selected Bibliography

- Andrzejewski, J. (1990). Human relations: The study of oppression and human rights. (Vol. 1, 2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Ginn Press.
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Zinn, H. (1986). The twentieth century. New York: Colophon Books.

Z Magazine. (Available from 116 St. Botolph, MA 02115)

GETTING ACQUAINTED

Objectives

To help students get acquainted with one another and develop trust within the group.

To create an atmosphere that will encourage student participation in discussing personal observations, attitudes, and values regarding oppression.

To disprove the belief that oppression does not occur in one's own environment.

To help students begin to identify their own oppression.

To assess student's current understanding of oppression.

To develop a shared definition of oppression.

Note. Exercise one can be used as a quick icebreaker to introduce the students to one another. Exercise two is more in-depth requiring at least an hour.

Exercise One

Process

Ask students to write down specific examples of oppression that they have recently observed or experienced themselves. Allow two to three minutes.

Ask the students to introduce themselves and read one of the examples they have written down.

Introduce yourself in this same manner to provide an example.

This exercise can be followed with a discussion of the definition of oppression and an introduction of the content of the course.

Oppression: Oppression exists when any entity (society, organization, group, or individual) intentionally or unintentionally inequitably distributes resources, refuses to share power, imposes ethnocentric culture, and/or maintains unresponsive and inflexible institutions toward another entity for its supposed benefit and rationalizes its action by blaming or ignoring the victim (Andrzejewski, 1990, p.1).*

Exercise Two**

Explain to the students that the manner in which problems are solved is determined by how the problem is defined. Also note that in order to discuss oppression, a shared definition we all agree upon will be needed.

Divide the class into groups of three to four students.

Ask them to think of an experience in their own life when they were discriminated against. (It is important to allow individuals to define their own discrimination. Do not question the validity of their experiences.)

Instruct them to describe this experience to the other group members. Instruct the group members to listen and only ask clarification questions without judging the speaker's experience. Ask them to allow time for all group members to speak.

Still in their small groups, ask them to list all the common aspects of their experiences. Write the lists on the board.

If students are having difficulty starting, you may have to lead them through the remainder of the exercise. The following description serves as an example:

"Were your experiences negative or positive?"

"Negative experience" can be their first item on the list. This may lead them into listing feelings. Allow that to happen but list those feelings under "negative experience" on the board.

"Did you feel powerful or did someone have power over you?"

List their examples under "power" on the board.

"How many of you were discriminated against because of something you did as an individual or because you were perceived to be a member of a group?"

Because of gender socialization, the women will tend to see their discrimination due to something they personally did wrong, whereas men usually perceive their discrimination as the result of someone "screwing them over". Help them understand that often their discrimination is due to their perceived or actual membership in a group ie. student, women, ethnic or racial group, young, old, overweight etc. Ask them if it would have happened if they had been a teacher, male, white, a different age, or thin. This process will lead them to understand that oppression can happen to an individual or a group.

"If you went back to your oppressor, would they see themselves as oppressive?"

Most will say no, but some may have had situations of intentional discrimination. This will lead them to the conclusion that discrimination can be intentional or unintentional.

"How do you think your oppressor would rationalize his or her behavior?"

Common responses are: "I did it for your own good", "that's the way its done here", "what I did is natural human behavior", "you don't have any sense of humor", "you took me too seriously", "you misunderstood me", "don't take it personally, I do it to everybody", "I'm not responsible, I was just carrying out the rules, I didn't make them", "it's your fault, I wouldn't have done it if you hadn't...". This will help them see that it is cultural and also that blaming the victim is involved.

Ask them to combine all of the elements of their definition and develop a working definition that will differentiate between what is oppression and what is not oppression. Have them write this out on newsprint so all of the definitions can be displayed.

Help them fill in the missing components of their definitions. You can do this orally or by showing the film Rose by Any Other Name.***

Show the 15 minute film.

Ask if Rose was a victim of oppression according to their definition.

Have them write down all of the ways in which Rose was oppressed. This will help them see what's missing from their definition.

Finally, combine all of the definitions into one. This will be the framework for future discussions of oppression.

*Minnesota State Department of Education. (1977). Foundations of oppression curriculum. In J. Andrzejewski (Ed.). (1990). Human relations: The study of oppression and human rights. (Vol. 1, 2nd ed., p. 1). Needham Heights, MA: Ginn Press.

**Developed from an interview with Douglas Risberg based on an exercise he designed for the classroom. Dr. Risberg is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

***Keller, J. H. (Screenplay), & Allesandro, R.V. (Director). (1979). Rose By Any Other Name [Film]. Garden City, NY: Adelphi University Center on Aging.

**SELECTIVE PERCEPTION
EXERCISE ONE***

Objective

To illustrate that we select what we see and do not understand or shift easily to a different point of view.

Process

Divide the class into discussion groups.

Show the perception picture (see p. 15) to the group for a brief period (about 10 seconds) and ask everyone to write down what they saw. (It is helpful to put the picture on an overhead projector.)

Ask group members to describe to each other what they saw. Usually people see one or the other woman (young or old) although occasionally someone will see both. Often times this is because they have seen the picture before. It is useful to ask if anyone has seen this picture and suggest they wait until others have discussed the picture before sharing their earlier experience.

Have people who saw the old woman describe her to the others as they look at the picture again. Make sure that everyone has the opportunity to see the old woman. Use the same procedure for the young woman.

Ask how they felt when they could not picture the other woman. If feelings of being "dumb" or "stupid" are expressed, point out the similarity between this response in a rather simple exercise and the discomfort that is experienced when a person enters an unfamiliar cultural environment where others perceive things he or she doesn't. Also point out that studies have shown that young people tend to see the young woman and older people, the old woman.

The discussion during and following the exercise should center around how we select out of our perceptual field the things we want to see or are able to see, and that it is sometimes difficult to "see" things that are obviously there. Discuss why and how we select our perceptions, what the influence of cultural background is, what results in terms of stereotyping and other dysfunctional responses, and what can be done about it. By using this or a similar exercise, differences in perception and the feelings that are present when those differences are not understood can be immediately experienced, explored and generalized to other situations. It also provides a common experience within the group that sets the stage for discussing individual experiences. These experiences should relate to an inability to recognize or to comprehend how different people or groups of people select data, evaluate it and respond to a given situation or set of conditions.

SELECTIVE PERCEPTION EXERCISE TWO

Objectives

To examine historical and cultural examples of oppressive selective perception and how that influences current attitudes and views.

To provide examples of how our own selective perceptions contribute to the dynamics of oppression.

Note. Exercise two must be done in conjunction with "Selective Perception: Exercise One". Exercise one builds the framework for exercise two.

Process

Ask the students for examples of how cultural selective perception has contributed to the dynamics of oppression.

Examples:

- History books relating history only through battles and wars.
- History books omitting the accomplishments of women and people of color.
- The myth of objectivity in the media
- Europeans being unable to recognize that women held positions of power in some Native American tribes during the invasion of the Americas.
- Viewing capitalism as the only viable economic system.
- Believing that an individualistic approach to living is superior to a communal approach.

Now ask students to think of personal examples of how their own selective perceptions have led to oppressive thoughts or actions towards others.

Ask them to discuss these examples in their small groups.

*Exercise one is from Multicultural Education: A Cross Cultural Training Approach (p. 110-111) by M. P. Pusch, 1979, La Grange Park, IL: Intercultural Network. Copyright 1979 by Intercultural Network. Adapted by permission.

SELECTIVE PERCEPTION PICTURE



OPPRESSION: WHO'S WHO

Objectives

To identify the groups of people who are oppressed and who oppresses them.

To identify how those in power oppress and what resources are used to control the oppressed groups.

To define the different types of discrimination and label examples accordingly.

Exercise One*

Process

Divide the class into small discussion groups.

Instruct them to make a list of groups of people who are oppressed and who oppresses them.

For example:

<u>Oppressors</u>	<u>Oppressed</u>
Men	Women
Rich	Poor
White	People of Color
Christian	Jews, Moslems, Atheists, all other
Heterosexual	Homosexual, bisexual
Temporarily able-bodied	Differently abled
Young	Long-lived
Traditionally educated	Self-educated
Owners, managers	Workers
Adults	Children

Record the lists on the board. Discuss what resources those in power use to maintain control of the oppressed:

- economic resources
- criminal justice system
- educational system
- media
- violence

Also explain the following two concepts:

Philosophy of scarcity. When there are not enough resources and money to go around, those who have obtained some must prevent the poor from taking away from their pool of resources. This happens while huge profits are being made by the very wealthy.

Setting the Norms. The powerful set the norms and control the oppressed through institutions. The oppressed are told that if they follow the rules they will be allowed into the circle of power and privilege. A few are allowed in, but only by acting white or adapting themselves to the prescribed norms.

Exercise Two
Process

Hand out the definition sheet (see page 18). Explain the definition of discrimination.

Instruct the groups to write down examples of discrimination for each of the groups identified in exercise one. Encourage examples from each of the areas the class identified as resources the oppressors use to maintain control.

Have the groups label their examples as isolate, small group, direct institutional or indirect institutional discrimination.

Exercise Three
Process

List the derogatory names that the oppressed groups of people are called.

Discuss what purpose name calling has in power relationships:

Name calling dehumanizes and invalidates the oppressed and provides justification for the oppression.

*Excerpted with the permission of the Seal Press from Naming the Violence. Copyright 1986 by Kerry Lobel. Available from the Seal Press, 3131 Western Avenue #410, Seattle, WA 98121. Phone: 206-283-7844.

**OPPRESSION: WHO'S WHO
DEFINITION SHEET**

Discrimination:

Actions or practices carried out by members of dominant groups or their representatives, which have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate groups. (Feagin & Feagin, 1978, p. 20)*

Types of Discrimination:

1. Isolate Discrimination: Intentionally injurious action taken by an individual against members of subordinate groups--minorities and women--without being imbedded in a large scale organizational context. (This type of discrimination is commonplace in the United States.)
2. Small Group Discrimination: Intentionally injurious actions taken by a small group of individuals acting against members of subordinate groups without the support of the norms prevailing in a larger, organizational or community context. (Example: Ku Klux Klan lynchings, a few people in power agreeing to discriminate although it is against the norms and rules of an organization.)
3. Direct Institutionalized Discrimination: Organizationally-prescribed or community-prescribed actions which have an intentionally differential or negative impact on members of subordinate groups. Includes informal, unwritten rules and norms as well as more formal laws. (Examples: Segregation laws, Miscegenation laws, "Protective" Labor Laws for women, etc.)
4. Indirect Institutional Discrimination: Practices having a negative and differential impact on minorities and women even though the organizationally-prescribed or community-prescribed norms or regulations guiding those actions were established, and are carried out, with no prejudice or no intent to harm lying [sic] immediately behind them. On their face and in their intent, the norms and practices appear fair or at least neutral. Two forms of indirect institutional discrimination are: side-effect discrimination and past-in-present discrimination. (Feagin & Feagin, 1978, pp. 29-31)**

*Feagin, J.R., & Feagin, C.B. (1978). Discrimination American style. New York: Prentice-Hall.

**Ibid.

IDENTIFYING OPPRESSION

Objectives

To identify oppression that occurs in blatant and subtle forms by individuals, small groups, and institutions.

To begin the process of confronting the various forms of oppression such as sexism, racism, and heterosexism.

Process*

Introduce the exercise:

Oppression occurs in blatant and subtle forms by individuals, small groups and institutions. It is occurring all around us and we, often unknowingly, participate in oppressive actions ourselves. Because we may be ignorant of what constitutes an oppressive act or attitude, we may become victims of oppression ourselves without really being aware. Oppression is readily observed in each of our lives every day.

Give the students the following directions:

Your assignment is to identify and document examples of oppression outside of class in your own environment. The following sources are all likely places to find examples.

- Comments made by friends, relatives roommates, spouses or partners, acquaintances, co-workers, classmates.
- Jokes.
- Policies or rules at school, work, church, or home.
- Institutional practices which may not be written into the rules.
- Written materials: books, magazines, or newspapers.
- Visual media: television, videotapes, movies, posters, artwork.
- The use of mental or emotional manipulation or even physical force.

Note examples of oppression--especially racism, sexism and heterosexism--and make a list.

Notice how you feel in the face of these experiences.

- Do you want to speak up to challenge them?
- Do you want to remain silent and let them pass?
- If you were to speak out against the oppression, what feelings, fears, or inhibitions, might get in the way?

Try to challenge one instance each of racism, sexism, and heterosexism.

- How did you feel doing this?
- If you were not able to speak up, what prevented you?

Keep a journal of these experiences, write responses to the above questions, and be prepared to discuss them in class.

Depending on the length of the course, allow one to five weeks for completion.

Discuss in class:

- What did you learn?
- How did you feel about challenging oppression?
- What could you do that might make it easier for you to confront racism, sexism, and heterosexism consistently in your life?
- What would prevent you from challenging oppression?

*Adapted by Polly Kellogg from an exercise designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Ms. Kellogg is an instructor, and Dr. Andrzejewski is a Professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

OPPRESSION IN OUR CULTURE
MULTIMEDIA PROJECT

Objective

To increase student's understanding of oppression and ability to identify it in our culture.

Process*

Divide the class into small planning groups.

Each group will focus on one type of oppression (as explained below) and look for cultural manifestations of how that oppression is reinforced. Groups will meet several times to discuss examples of their "ism" and create a multimedia presentation for the rest of the class.

Instruct the groups that they will prepare a 5 to 15 minute presentation relating their examples. The presentation could include:

- Clips from songs or television shows or commercials.
- Pictures and captions from magazines and newspapers.
- Collages.
- Photos of your own.
- A video you produce.
- A bulletin board.
- Graffiti, etc.

Instruct them to analyze the patterns of stereotyping and blaming the victim and how the culture supports the power structure. Specifically, they need to analyze how the culture helps to subordinate the oppressed and reinforce the oppressor's powerful position.

Each group will focus on one of the following types of oppression. The examples are only a sample of possibilities. Many of the illustrations will overlap with other "isms". Explain that this is reflective of how oppression operates, so student's should not limit themselves.

Classism:

- Portrayals of those with money as better, harder working, more "real" or "with it", than people with less money.
- Stereotypes of poor people.
- Disproportionate numbers of upper middle class images versus the limited images of the working class.

Racism:

- White culture being more visible and valued than the culture of African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans or American Indians.
- Stereotypes and examples of the invisibility of people of color in the media.
- Portrayals of people of color as poorer or more violent than whites.
- The disproportionate number of whites in power positions.
- The roles of people of color limited to entertainers.

Sexism:

- Stereotypes.
- Women's roles as limited to sex objects (weak, beautiful, temptress, passive, vulnerable) wives, mothers, caretakers.
- Men as dominant, in-control and in-charge, but never vulnerable, in-doubt, or expressing feelings other than anger.
- Men in more power positions than women.
- Women as poorer.
- Violence against women portrayed as entertainment.

Heterosexism or Homophobia:

- Presentation of heterosexuality as the only option for relationships.
- Invisibility of average gays, lesbians and bisexuals.
- Gay and lesbian's roles limited to diseased (AIDS), weird, or sick.
- Antigay/lesbian graffiti or jokes.

Imperialism:

- Glorification of multinational corporations' overseas operations.
- Stereotypes of third World people in the media as always poor, revolting, or in crisis.
- Media coverage limited to crowd shots or individual leaders.
- Poor unable to manage their own affairs without help from white Americans or Europeans.

*Designed by Polly Kellogg. Ms. Kellogg is an instructor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

EMPOWERMENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Objectives

To personalize the importance of social change.

To build trust within a new group.

To generate ideas for social action that will decrease feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.

To empower students to actively be involved in changing oppressive systems.

Process*

Ask each person to describe one aspect of our society they would like to change and why?

Discuss what prevents us from acting on that desire for change.

Have the group respond to and provide support and validation for the insights, feelings, and perceptions that each person has expressed.

Write the components of the philosophy of empowerment on the board.

- Recognition of a capacity to bring about change.
- Accepting a personal responsibility to act.
- Become free to transform yourself.
- Discover untapped strength within yourself.
- Rippling effect of individual action and protest that empowers others.
- Key point: To help someone see something that they haven't seen before and act upon that insight.

Have each person think about what they could do to initiate change on both a personal level and an institutional level. Ask them to share their list with the group.

Have the group add their suggestions to the list.

Personal actions:

- Wear a button.
- Write letters.
- Read alternative press.
- Talk to others about the issue.
- Give money to support an organization that works for change.

Group Actions:

- Hand out literature.
- Attempt to get a policy examined, changed, or implemented.
- Join a group committed to social change.
- Get together with other people to strategize solutions.
- Organize community forums.

Editor's Note. Learning about oppression can begin to feel overwhelming at times. Students often begin to feel hopeless and verbalize that they cannot fight a system in which they have so little power. This exercise can help get them thinking about how to effectively use the power they do have. Encourage attendance at marches, vigils, and demonstrations for those who have never attended one. It is a powerful feeling to be with a large group of people all working towards the same goal.

*Adapted by Julie Andrzejewski from Empowerment of People for Peace by Mary White & Dorothy Vann Soest, 1984, Unpublished booklet. Copyright 1984 by Women Against Military Madness, Minneapolis chapter. Adapted by permission. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

Chapter 2

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND POWER

Studying the economic roots of oppression will lead to a clearer analysis of why and how oppression is maintained. Feagin and Feagin (1978) outline the interest theory as a powerful force which perpetuates discrimination. As noted in chapter one, the interest theory contends that discrimination serves the purpose of maintaining the power, control, and resources of the privileged group in society. Other theories and definitions parallel and enhance the conceptualization of the interest theory. In particular, the internal colonialism explanation (Feagin and Feagin) and Merlin Stone's (1981) outline of racism develop an economic explanation of discrimination further by examining historical patterns of racism. The internal colonialism theory argues that historically resources (land from Native Americans and labor from African Americans) were taken by force, then institutionalized into our economic system. Merlin Stone interprets this pattern similarly, but adds that economic racism occurs cooperatively with cultural racism, consisting of ideologies which define the victims as innately inferior morally and mentally.

Some feminist analysts interpret sexism as a systemic maintenance of the economic privileges for men in a patriarchal society.

Leghorn and Parker (1981) declare that

in virtually all existing cultures, women's work, though usually invisible to the male eye, sustains the economy and subsidizes the profits, leisure time and higher standard of living enjoyed by individual men, private corporations, and male-dominated governments. (p. 3)

It is clear from the development of these theories that one cannot gain an understanding of oppression without examining the economic structures of society.

This chapter helps students identify economic exploitation and explores the forces that maintain the status quo. Statistical information on the United States is provided to encourage a critical analysis of the existence of freedom and democracy in our political and economic system. (Background information on the United State's role in global distribution of wealth would enhance these exercises. See below Michael Parenti's books Democracy for the Few and Sword and the Dollar.) Common misconceptions about economically disadvantaged people will be dispelled and the ideology of blaming the victim explained. Throughout the exercises, student's perceptions and values will be challenged. Encourage them to allow themselves to be challenged and support their process.

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WHAT AMERICA STANDS FOR

Objectives

To identify what students have been taught regarding the values of America.

To recognize the contradictions between what students were taught and what is reality.

To expose the underlying motive of perpetuating these false ideals.

To examine students' values and possible contradictions between stated beliefs and actions.

Exercise One*

Process

Ask students to discuss what they have been taught "America stands for". Write their list on the board.

After making the list, ask for evidence to substantiate these values and ideals. For example a common assumption is that capitalism is the best economic system. Ask how they know this. Ask if anyone was ever taught about other economic systems in other countries, or read any statistics that support the superiority of capitalism.

Now ask students to make a list of policies or practices by the United States which seem to contradict the ideals we have been taught.

After allowing ample time for discussion, ask the students if these contradictions are merely small aberrations or "mistakes", or whether they are systemic and institutional.

Editor's addendum. Hand out the article, My Country 'Tis of Thee by Holly Sklar.** (See p. 30-32). Allow time for them to read it.

Ask them to discuss their reactions and why this information is not widely known or taught in our schools.

Editor's Variation

(This would be appropriate for a group that is less informed regarding U.S. politics.)

Tell the students that you will read them specific information about life in a particular country, and they are to write down what country you are describing.

They can change their answer as you give them more information.

Read Holly Sklar's article aloud, leaving out the first sentence and stopping each time before it reads: "It's not...", to allow students to write down their answers. (Many students will not guess you are describing the United States.)

Give them time to discuss their various reactions.

Discuss why so few thought this was the U.S. Ask them to discuss why they haven't heard the U.S. described like this before?

Exercise Two***

Process

Ask students to list and then discuss their own personal values to answer the question: "What do you stand for?"

Have them compare what they say they stand for with their own actions, ie. where they spend their time and money.

Raise the following questions:

- What if I value what people think of me more than standing up for someone's rights?
- Can I say that I really value something if I never act on it?

*Designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

**Sklar, H. (1989). My country tis of thee. ZETA Magazine, 2(2), 44.

***Designed by Dr. Andrzejewski.

MY COUNTRY TIS OF THEE*
HOLLY SKLAR

Think about life in the United States as if you're just learning about it. This is a country where a lot of people stand tall on the backs of others. The top 10 percent of the population own 84 percent of the nation's assets. The poorest 40 percent of families live on about 15 percent of the national income. The richest 5 percent take 17 percent.

This is a country where one in seven are poor. The poverty rate is about 14 percent. That's over 32 million people. About 60 percent of families living below the official poverty line have at least one employed member. They're working poor.

This is a country where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Inflation-adjusted benefits under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) have fallen by about one-third since 1970. Meanwhile, the richest 1 percent of families have increased their slice of the nation's wealth from 27 percent in the early 1970s to about 36 percent today.

It's not Chile.

This is a country where farms are foreclosed while banks are bailed out and some 20 million go hungry. It's a country in need of land reform.

It's not Brazil.

This is a country where people are living in the streets, in cars, on sidewalks, in condemned buildings, in cardboard boxes, in scrap wood and plastic shanty-towns. Many are families with children.

It's not India.

This is a country that ranks number one in wealth and weapons, and 20th in infant mortality (10 per 1000 infants die before age one). A country with no national health insurance.

This is a country where one in five children are poor. Some kids go to schools which provide personal computers. Other kids go to schools which can't afford individual textbooks.

This is a country where you increasingly need a college education to get a good job, but many kids can't go to college because they can't pay tuition. The government encourages them to be all they can be in the Army.

This is a country where most mothers work at low-wage jobs. There is no national day care. This is a country where women make two-thirds of men's wages. Women don't put in a third less hours. Landlords don't advertise, "Rent \$600. Women welcome for \$400." Women don't pay two-thirds the prices at the store, two-thirds the bus fare, two-thirds the heat bill, or two-thirds the bill at the hospital when they are sick, raped, or beaten. More than one out of three college men say they would commit rape if they could get away with it. Nearly two million married women are beaten by their husbands every year. This is a country with no Equal Rights Amendment.

It's not Saudi Arabia.

This is a country where a year-round, full-time minimum wage job pays less than the poverty line. Overall, real wages (adjusted for inflation) have fallen 15 percent since their peak in 1973. The average work week rose from under 41 hours in 1973 to over 47 hours in 1985. The average worker has less than 9 paid vacation days.

This is a country where less than 20 percent of the work force is unionized--down from 31 percent in 1970.

It's not South Korea.

This is a country that spends almost ten times more on Star Wars research than it does on research for AIDS. The military consumes enough fuel in a year to run the entire country's existing public transit system for 22 years. More tax dollars go to military bands than the National Endowment for the Arts.

This is a country where inner-city kids can make more in a few hours as lookouts for crack dealers than their parents make in a week--if their parents have jobs. This is a racist country. One third of all Blacks are poor. Nearly half of all Black children are poor.

This is a country where poverty and racism kills. In Boston the Black infant mortality rate is over 20 in 1,000 infants dying before age one, about three times the white rate. This is a country where per capita income in 1987 was under \$7,500 for Blacks and over \$13,000 for whites.

It's not South Africa.

This is a country whose 100th Congress (1987-1988) looked little different from its first. The Senate was 100 percent white and 98 percent male. The House of so-called Representatives was 92 percent white and 95 percent male.

This is a country where members of Congress make more in base salary than over 95 percent of their constituents, and they wanted us to believe they need a 51 percent raise (to \$135,000) to maintain a decent standard of living.

They think we can't get good public servants at \$89,500 plus benefits, perks, and honoraria. They're right. We should have public funding of campaigns at all levels and elect people who are really interested in public service.

This is a country where half the eligible voters don't vote.

This is a country that needs democratization. This is a country that needs popular self-determination.

This is a country that rounds up refugees in detention camps and separates them into legal and illegal "aliens." A recent newspaper headline reads "79 Aliens Seized on Jet." those "aliens" weren't from Mars. They were from this country's so-called "backyard."

This is a country that needs solidarity in domestic and international affairs.

This is a country that needs to make real the "United" in its name.

It's the United States.

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CITIZENSHIP SKILLS FOR A DEMOCRACY

Objectives

To define democracy.

To distinguish between representative and participatory democracy.

To explore why participatory democratic citizenship skills are not taught in most of our schools.

Process*

Ask students to write down a definition of democracy.

Have them list the democratic citizenship skills they have been taught in school. (Every school will contend that they are teaching students citizenship skills. Usually the only skills students can think of are voting, obeying the laws, and saluting the flag.)

Ask them if these skills are sufficient for a democratic country. What other skills do they think may be necessary.

Hand out the democracy definition sheet. (See page 34.)

Discuss the differences between representative and participatory democracy.

Discussion questions:

- According to the definitions, what kind of democracy do we have in the United States?
- What citizenship skills might be necessary for participatory democracy?
- Why aren't the schools teaching them?

At this point, you can lead the class into further discussions on the relationship between political democracy and economic systems.

*Designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

CITIZENSHIP SKILLS FOR DEMOCRACY
DEFINITIONS OF DEMOCRACY

Greenberg (1986) provides the following definitions and comments on democracy.*

Participatory Democracy:

Direct, face-to-face participation by ordinary people in their own governance is assured. In its original meaning, democracy simply meant government by and for the common people. It was . . . a system of governance and a way of life in which the great mass of ordinary people acted publicly to affect the directions of collective life. . . . Direct face-to-face participation is central in community decision-making.
(p. 22)

Liberal-representative Democracy:

The people rule indirectly, through representatives authorized to make policy decisions in the name of those who elected them. While citizen participation remains an important constituent element, it is limited to the periodic election of persons who act as representatives, and to the occasional transmission of instructions to them. (p. 24)

Pluralist Democracy:

"Modern political science has formulated yet another conception of democracy: pluralism or pluralist democracy" (p.26). It is based on two basic assumptions: (1) That ordinary citizens of the U.S. are neither rational, informed or interested in politics. (2) That the system works (ie. provides for a peaceful transition of power between ruling groups). This is seen as a system of elite policy making with two methods for transmitting mass wants, aspirations and demands to government officials: elite competition and interest groups. It is not government by the people but government occasionally approved by the people.

Greenberg takes the position, however, that the United States does not fulfill the expectations of any of the democratic models.

With respect to democracy, the performance of the United States is no more impressive than it is with respect to social justice. The classical-participatory concept of democracy is far from fulfillment not only because normal politics are abstract and distant to most people, but more important, because people's participation is neither appreciated, invited, nor felt in most of the arenas of decision making that shape social life.

Rather than being active participants in directing their own lives, most Americans are buffeted in one direction and then another by external forces. . . .

Perhaps more surprising is the absence of convincing evidence of conditions that meet either pluralist or liberal representative formulations of democracy in the United States. There is no evidence, for instance, of widespread inter-elite group competition to protect against oligopolistic or monopolistic political decision making or of an open, accessible, responsive, and competitive leadership. More characteristic of American arrangements, as has been seen, is concentrated economic power allied with concentrated political power primarily serving the interests of giant corporations. Furthermore, conditions in the United States, which seem at first glance to conform to liberal notions of democracy, are less than perfect on closer inspection. Earlier chapters demonstrated that the free exercise of civil liberties has but a spotty history in the United States; that judicial and legal protections are biased in their distribution and are not freely available to all; and that the power of representation is almost completely negated by the role of wealth and corporate power in American electoral politics. While the outward forms of liberal democracy are generally observed, the quality of their observance is much lower than is generally assumed. (pp. 339-341)

Michael Parenti's (1983) position is that

democracy refers to a system of governance that represents in both form and content the needs and desires of the ruled. Decisionmakers are not to govern for the benefit of the privileged few but for the interest of the many. In other words, their decisions and policies should be of substantive benefit to the populace. . . . A democratic people should be able to live without fear of want, enjoying freedom from economic, as well as political, oppression. (p. 57-58)**

Parenti goes on to say that freedom of speech is not the sum total of democracy, only one of its necessary conditions. Too often we are free to say what we want, while those of wealth and power are free to do what they want regardless of what we say.

*From American Political System: A Radical Approach (p. 22-29, & pp. 339-341) by E.S. Greenberg, 1986, Boston: Little, Brown and Company. Copyright 1986 by E.S. Greenberg. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

**Parenti, M. (1983). Democracy for the few. New York: St. Martin's Press.

SIMULATION EXERCISE ON POWER
THE RICHEST 0.5 PERCENT VS. 90 PERCENT OF THE U.S. POPULATION

Objectives

To learn how the distribution of wealth in the U.S. contributes to oppression.

To increase understanding of the oppressor's role in relation to the oppressed.

To examine the oppressive forces that prevent 90 percent of the population from working in solidarity.

Process*

Discuss the distribution of wealth in the U.S:

The richest 0.5 percent of the population own 45 percent of the wealth and the richest 10 percent of the population own 86 percent. The bottom 90 percent own the remaining wealth. (Parenti, 1988)**

Discuss who the super rich are:

Mostly WASP males who inherited corporate holdings (Parenti, 1988), not the movie stars and athletes upon whom the media focuses our attention.

Discuss interlocking boards of directors, oligopolies, and corporate influence on our representatives in government.

Role play. Ask for volunteers who want to be super rich for the day and designate 10 percent of the class as the interlocking boards of directors of the major corporations of the Upper Midwest.

Designate the rest of the class as the bottom 90 percent of the population which includes farmers, teachers, rank and file of the military, factory workers, and workers (not owners) of the media.

Explain the premise of the role play:

The bottom 90 percent of the population has decided to work together to gain power from the super rich. People have overcome their racism, sexism, and classism and are cooperating in a unified action against the boards of directors. The 90 percent can come up with their own demands, or to save time, their main demand can be that all corporate boards be composed of one-half community members and workers.

The wealthy 10 percent will plan how they will convince the 90 percent that it is in their best interest to maintain the status quo. They control the meeting where the 90 percent present their demands and strategies. They can arrange the room any way they want, and also chair the meeting.

Send the wealthy 10 percent out of the room to strategize.

Tell the 90 percent to plan their strategy on how to pressure the super rich. (After some discussion, they usually come up with general strikes and boycotts, a third party and a barter system to support themselves.)

Allow approximately 15 to 20 minutes for each group to plan their strategies.

Call the wealthy 10 percent back into the room and allow 20 to 30 minutes for the meeting of the two groups.

At a breaking point stop the role play and ask each group how they felt during it. Discuss power and powerlessness.

The students representing the 10 percent usually can imitate the ideals and communication styles of the rich smoothly and automatically. Discuss why they know this behavior so well and why the role of the protestors is so unfamiliar and difficult.

Discuss what in reality prevents the 90 percent from working together to change the system.

Note. This role play reveals that students know a great deal about how those in power act, from mannerisms to threats of moving their businesses to the Third World. The exercise arouses strong feelings in many class members. Start the next class by asking if anyone discussed the role play with friends or family or had any more thoughts or feelings about it.

*Designed by Polly Kellogg. Ms. Kellogg is an instructor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

**Parenti, M. (1988). Democracy for the few. New York: Saint Martin's Press.

FOOD FOR THE WORLD

Objectives

To increase understanding of the unequal distribution of food and resources in the world.

To explore possible resolutions to this inequality and discover what prevents these resolutions from occurring.

Process*

Divide the class into the following three groups:

Group one, consisting of 20 percent of the class, will portray U.S., Canada, Japan, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Group two, consisting of 10 percent of the class, will portray Russia and Eastern Europe.

Group three, consisting of 70 percent of the class, will portray Africa, Asia, Central and South America.

Divide a snack (pizza, pie, popcorn etc.) into the following proportions: 70 percent of the snack to group one, 20 percent to group three, and the remaining 10 percent to group two.

Ask each group to distribute the food among its members. Ask group three to decide how its going to feed all of its people. (You may get varied responses ranging from the group remaining passive and accepting their plight, to the group revolting and stealing food from group one.)

Instruct the groups to organize a U.N. meeting in which the Third world negotiates for power and a more equitable resource distribution.

Hold the meeting for 15 to 20 minutes then facilitate a discussion regarding their reactions to the role play. Then discuss why this inequitable distribution system continues to exist. Point out that the world produces enough food to feed the total world's population.

*Adapted by Polly Kellogg from Peacemaking for Little Friends: Tips Lessons and Resources for Parents and Teachers. (pp. 23-24) by Mary Joan Park, 1985, 4405 29th St., Mt. Rainier MD 20712: Little Friends for Peace. Copyright 1985 by Little Friends for Peace. Adapted by permission. Ms. Kellogg is an instructor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

TALK SHOW
LOW INCOME WOMEN'S INTERVIEWS

Objectives

To increase empathy and understanding towards victims of economic oppression.

To increase awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of blaming the victim.

Process

Assign three to five students a story from the book Dignity: Lower Income Women Tell of Their Lives and Struggles.* Let them know that they will be portraying the woman in their story on a simulated talk show on poverty.

Select three to five members to be on the host committee. Their task is to come up with interview questions for the host to ask the women. They will need to review the stories also. Ask them to select one group member to be the talk show host.

The rest of the class will be the audience. Ask them to prepare comments or questions that they think a typical American audience might ask.

Allow 20 minutes for each group to complete their tasks.

Set the stage for the show and do the role play. Give each student portraying a low income woman five to ten minutes to tell their story. Allow the host to ask questions and mediate the show. The host should then ask the audience for comments and questions.

After the show, ask the students who portrayed the low income women what it felt like to describe their lives and respond to the audience's questions.

List the common stereotypes of low income people on the board. Discuss if these are based on reality or myth.

Ask if any of the questions from the host or audience implied that the women were to blame for their poverty? Discuss which questions indicated this and if any were related to the list of stereotypes.

Discuss what purpose blaming the victim serves.**

Blaming the victim focuses the attention onto the victims rather than the system that is responsible. Thus it provides a comfortable justification for those who benefit from an inequitable economic system for never challenging or attempting to change the status quo.

*Buss, F. L. (1985). Dignity: Lower income women tell of their lives and struggles. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

**Suggested Resource: Ryan, W. (1971). Blaming the victim. New York: Pantheon Books, a division of Random House.

Chapter 3

RACISM

Chapter three was designed to assist students in understanding the social, economic and political forces that shape, influence and perpetuate racism. The exercises in this chapter are based on the on defining racism as systematic and institutionalized. Racism requires the possession of power. As outlined in chapter two, the internal colonialism theory and the interest theory (Feagin and Feagin, 1978) confirm that racism became institutionalized only after the initial theft of land and labor resources and now serves to maintain and protect the status quo of the power structure. Stone (1981) explains this process in two specific steps of economic racism. First, the aggressors steal the land, labor, and resources through violence or whatever means necessary. Step two is the aggressors long term control attained by claiming what they stole as legally belonging to them. Then the conquerors control the number of laborers through food and other resources, enforced pregnancy or enforced sterilization. These economic steps are accompanied by the steps of cultural racism that define the victims as mentally and morally inferior. Stone asserts that cultural racism is used to support economic racism.

By studying how these steps have unfolded in historical events, students can learn to predict and anticipate their use in current

examples of racism. Students will be provided with the definitions of the different forms of discrimination and given an opportunity to apply those definitions to simulated situations. The "Japanese Internment" exercise is used to illustrate the selectivity of our history lessons and the importance of viewing racism in a historical context. Students will learn to recognize and identify racism in both its blatant and subtle forms. Through role plays and discussion, students can practice skills in social action and challenging attitudes.

These exercises can be complimented with background information on particular racial and ethnic groups, and their history of oppression. This will give students the opportunity to understand these concepts in the context of real situations, reinforcing the information in the exercises.

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RECOGNIZING RACISM

Objectives

To increase students' ability to understand and recognize racism.

To practice identifying different types of discrimination.

Process

Hand out the definition sheet and review (see pp. 44-45).

Emphasize that racism "requires the possession of genuine power in a society " and discuss the difference between racism and prejudice.

Hand out the worksheet (see p. 46-47) and instruct the students to complete it. This can be done individually or in groups.

After the worksheet has been completed, have the groups identify the examples of racism as isolate discrimination, small group discrimination, direct institutionalized discrimination or indirect institutional discrimination.

Have the students write two of their own examples of racism for each type of discrimination. (There will not be examples on the worksheet representing every type of discrimination.)

Discuss the results with the entire class.

RACISM DEFINITIONS

Racism:

Racism is the systematic oppression and exploitation of human beings on the basis of their belonging to a particular racial group or people. "Systematic" indicates that we must look at the status of the group as a whole, and not at those few individuals who may have climbed a "ladder of success" in the white society. The word "systematic" also connotes practices and policies which are pervasive, regardless of whether they are intentional or unintentional. Racism is different from individual prejudice because it requires the possession of genuine power in a society. So racism is not merely prejudice, but prejudice with power. (Andrzejewski, 1990, p. 1).*

Types of Discrimination

1. Isolate Discrimination: Intentionally injurious action taken by an individual against members of subordinate groups--minorities and women--without being embedded in a large scale organizational context. (This type of discrimination is commonplace in the United States.)
2. Small Group Discrimination: Intentionally injurious actions taken by a small group of individuals acting against members of subordinate groups without the support of the norms prevailing in a larger, organizational or community context. (Example: Ku Klux Klan lynchings, a few in power agreeing to discriminate although it is against the norms and rules of an organization.)
3. Direct Institutionalized Discrimination: .
Organizationally-prescribed or community-prescribed actions which have an intentionally differential or negative impact on members of subordinate groups. Includes informal, unwritten rules and norms as well as more formal laws. (Examples: segregation laws, Miscegenation laws, "Protective" Labor Laws for women, etc.)
4. Indirect Institutional Discrimination: Practices having a negative and differential impact on minorities and women even though the organizationally-prescribed or community-prescribed norms or regulations guiding those actions were established, and are carried out, with no prejudice or no intent to harm lying immediately behind them. On their face and in their intent, the norms and practices appear fair or at least neutral. Two forms of indirect institutional discrimination are: side-effect discrimination and past-in-present discrimination. (Feagin & Feagin, 1978, pp. 29-31)

*Council on Interracial Books for Children. (1976). Human and anti-human values in children's books. In J. Andrzejewski (Ed.). (1990). Human relations: The study of oppression and human rights (2nd ed., Vol. 1, p. 1). Needham Heights, MA: Ginn Press.

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RECOGNIZING RACISM
WORKSHEETS*

Indicate with a check mark which of the following quotations or descriptive statements are examples of racism according to the definition found on page 44.

- "A Black family moved into our neighborhood this week."
- The Dean of Education interviewed two equally outstanding candidates, one Black and the other Latino. She selected the Black teacher because her school had several Latino teachers but no Black teachers.
- In 1882 immigration laws excluded the Chinese, and the Japanese were excluded in 1908.
- During the 1960's civil rights movement, Mrs. Viola Liuzzo, a White civil rights worker from Michigan, was shot by White southern segregationists.
- Between 1892 and 1921 nearly 2,400 Black Americans were lynched by vigilante mobs who were never brought to justice.
- "The best basketball players on our team this year are Black."
- The band director discouraged Black students from playing the flute or piccolo because he believed it was too difficult for them to excel on these instruments.
- When Mrs. Wallace, a Black woman from Detroit, visited a predominantly White university in northern Michigan to see her son play basketball, she was seriously injured in a car accident. She refused a blood transfusion because she was afraid of being contaminated by white blood.
- When Stacey Russell, a Black undergraduate, went through rush, the girls of an all-White sorority decided not to pledge her because several members threatened to move out if they did.
- The geography textbook described the peoples of Nigeria as primitive and underdeveloped.
- The children who attended an elementary school in south-west Texas spoke only Spanish at home. When they came to school all the books and intelligence tests were in English. Nearly all of the children were placed in remedial classes or in classes for the mentally retarded.

— Mr. Jones said, "It is true that Indians who still live on reservations live in extreme poverty. But this is because they refuse to give up their traditions and a culture which is obsolete in the modern world."

— The U.S. Constitution defined slaves as three-fifths of a man.

— The reporter wrote that "Toni Morrison is a brilliant writer who accurately portrays much of the Black experience in America."

— When John brought home a new friend, his father was shocked and angry. Peter, the new friend, was of Japanese origin and John's father had been seriously wounded by the Japanese in World War II. John's father refused to allow Peter to visit again.

— In 1896 the Supreme Court ruled that separate facilities for the races were legal as long as they were equal. This resulted in separate schools, churches, restaurants, restrooms, swimming pools, theaters, doctors' offices, neighborhoods, Bibles used in court, etc.

— When Mary Adams wanted to find a place in the school cafeteria the only vacant chair was at a table seating five Black girls. Mary, who is White was afraid to join them.

— In California today, approximately 10 percent of the population is black, while 41 percent of those in prison are Black. Blacks generally have more financial difficulty than Whites in hiring a lawyer and plea bargaining.

*From Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice (p. 224) by C. I. Bennett, 1986, Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Copyright 1986 by Allyn and Bacon. Reprinted by permission.

STEPS OF RACISM

Objectives

To understand and empathize with the oppression of Native Americans.

To understand the steps of racism and practice applying them to historical and current situations.

Process

Introduce the exercise as a children's story that will be read to them as a guided visualization.

Tell the students to relax and close their eyes as you read the story. (See pp. 50-51.)

After the story is read, ask them how they would feel in that situation and what actions they might have taken.

Ask what group of people this story is describing.

Introduce the steps of racism.*

There are two stages: economic and cultural.

Economic Racism

1. Initial theft of land, resources and labor.

- Obtained through violence or whatever means is necessary.

2. Long term control.

- The aggressors claim what they took, as legally theirs.

- The conquerors control the number of laborers through food resources, enforced pregnancy or enforced sterilization.

Cultural Racism

1. Conquerors claim that the victims are innately immoral, evil, and sadistic.

- The moral superiority of the aggressors is assumed.

- Because of this innate evilness, the group must be destroyed.

2. The victims of the theft are innately mentally inferior.

- This step affirms the belief that these people need our assistance to survive, and that they are capable only of menial jobs.

These two stages work together and support the other. Cultural racism's step one (claiming the victims are innately immoral, evil, and sadistic) is necessary to obtain approval from the aggressor's group of the first economic step (theft of land, resources and labor). The final and ultimate step of racism is the victim's internalization of the assigned labels. If the victims believe they are inferior, rebellion is less likely. Thus the level of violence by the aggressors is in relation to the degree of internalization by the victims. At any sign of rebellion the previous steps can be revived. For example, if the group rebels, they will be labeled evil and immoral and violence will be used to control them. Conversely, when the victims are cooperating, they will still be labeled mentally inferior to justify continued dominance.

Divide the class into discussion groups.

Ask the groups to apply the steps of racism to the European's treatment of the Native Americans. Have them write it out step by step.

Allow 10 to 15 minutes. Then transfer these steps to the board.

Ask how these steps continue today?

Have the groups think of other historical and current examples of the steps of racism.

- Enforced sterilizations of Native American women and Hispanic women.
- Multinational companies saying that Asian women like doing intricate work with their hands.
- United States "helping" Third World countries, etc.

*Stone, M. (1981). Three thousand years of racism: Recurring patterns in racism. In J. Andrzejewski (Ed.), (1990) Human relations: The study of oppression and human rights. (pp. 245-248). Needham Heights, MA: Ginn Press.

**STEPS OF RACISM
GUIDED VISUALIZATION***

You and your family live in a nice house with a huge yard, lots of trees, a big garden and a pretty little stream. You have lots of friends, lots of pets and plenty of good food to eat. You are safe and snug and very happy.

One day, when you are home alone, a strange object comes slowly into view in the sky. You've never seen anything like it before. It is a strange shape and very large. It lands in your own back yard! Soon very strange-looking people get out; they are dressed in clothes very different from yours and talk to each other in a way that you cannot understand.

You are hiding so that they cannot see you. You don't want them to see you because you are trying to figure out who they are and what they want. You have heard about people who look like this from your mother and father. They walk about, pick up your toys and pets and examine them closely. One gets into your car, turns the key and drives all around on the grass and through the garden. Others are helping themselves to the tomatoes in the garden and the apples and plums on the trees. Then they fill a lot of big baskets with the fruit and vegetables from your garden and put them in the big machine they arrived in.

Then they come straight toward your house! Without even ringing the bell, they come through the door and go through every room, picking up things and looking closely at them, talking and laughing among themselves. They really don't seem to be afraid or even embarrassed about being in your house.

The strange people leave your house. You think they have seen you but you're not sure. It doesn't matter, though, because you're so glad to see them go. Maybe they'll just get into their big air ship and fly back to wherever they came from. Even if they have taken things that belong to you, you'll be happy to see them leave.

But as you watch, they don't seem to be leaving. In fact, they appear to like it in your big back yard. They begin to bring things out of the machine. They set up a saw and cut down one of the biggest trees! They are going to build a house with it, probably in that favorite spot of your backyard there by the stream because that's where they are clearing away the bushes and digging out the grass. They cut down another tree and another and another! They are building two, three, a half dozen houses. They have furniture and pans and dishes and rugs, and curtains,--everything that you have in your house and some other things that you don't even recognize. They also have big weapons that flash with a big bang. You think that they could probably kill you with one big bang just as they have killed some of the pets in your yard.

You stare at all the activity going on out there in your back yard. Suddenly you start to cry. These strange people who have come from somewhere far off and who are so very rude are not going away--ever. They are going to stay. They are going to live in your own back yard and use your garden and your toys and fish in your stream and cut down your trees and act as if it all belonged to them!

Then a very strange thing happens. A group of the strangers has been talking together and pointing toward the very place where you are hiding. Do you think they could have spotted you? Yes! They are coming right toward you, talking and smiling. You don't know what to do. Should you run? Call for help? Stay perfectly still? One, who is closer to you than the rest, takes your hand and pulls you out to stand in front of them. They are smiling and pointing at your favorite place by the stream where they are building their houses. They want you to come with them!

As you do, the one holding your hand says: "We like you. We like this place. We are going to live here from now on." Without asking if you are surprised or if you want them here, that person points to a table set with a great feast, smiles and says: "Come, Celebrate with us because we have reached the end of our long journey and have found a wonderful place to live."

*Developed for the Department of Human Relations of the Madison Wisconsin Metropolitan School District by Dorothy W. Davids and Ruth A. Gudinas. In Interracial Books for Children Bulletin (pp.8-9) New York: Council on Interracial Books for Children.

LANGUAGE AND COLOR ASSOCIATIONS

Objectives

To establish the connection between stereotypes and color associations.

To demonstrate how language can be a powerful tool of oppression.

Process

Divide the class into two groups.

Provide instructions for group one:

Define what the word white means in the predominant culture (virginal, pure, innocent). Then make a list that exemplifies your definitions, in words or actions (brides wearing white, White House, etc.).

Provide instructions for group two:

Define what the word black means in the predominant culture (evil, bad, etc.). Then make a list that exemplifies your definitions, in words or actions (blackball, black magic, blackmail, black sheep etc.).

Have the groups read their lists and write them on the board side by side.

Discuss how language can be a tool of oppression.

- How do you think these definitions originated?
- Does language form images and impressions?
- Even though the user of these words may not intentionally use them in a racist manner, does that mean it does not have a negative impact?

DESIGNING A RACIST SCHOOL

Objectives

To examine institutional racism in schools.

To assess students' ability to recognize and identify institutional racism.

To understand how institutional racism in schools influences individual and cultural attitudes.

To brainstorm possible solutions for eliminating institutional racism.

Process

Discuss the definitions of racism and institutional racism (see pp. 44-45).

Divide the class into four groups. Each group will work on one section of the worksheet (see pp.54-55).

Explain that each group is to design a racist school system that would appear to be an equal opportunity school. Each group will have one specific area to develop. Each group will report on their school system.

Hand out the worksheet and allow approximately 20 minutes for the groups to design the school.

Have each group explain their school system. Allow time for discussion and questions.

Ask if any of them had similar examples of institutional racism in their schools. Discuss what kind of impact it had on them.

Now ask each group to design a non-racist school. Allow approximately 20 minutes.

Have each group report on their non-racist school. Ask why there is resistance to implementing changes that would lead to a non-racist, non-sexist school.

Note. This exercise can also be used to examine sexism in schools.

**DESIGNING A RACIST SCHOOL
WORKSHEETS***

Your task is to design a racist school system in a way that can be justified or appear as socially acceptable to the community at large. As a start, the following are lists of items for you to consider in such a design. Be as specific as possible in describing how you would build racism into the way the system would operate. Include assumptions on why it is racist.

Culture

Expectations or norms about social clubs, informal contacts outside the organization?

What are norms for appropriate dress, language?

Method of problem solving or discipline used in the classroom?

Way emotions are handled or allowed?

Model for perfect or ideal employee?

Model for the perfect or ideal student?

Teachers' lounge?

Counseling process for students?

Power

Who has budget responsibility?

Who has control of curriculum design?

Who gets to make what decisions at what level?

Who gets to see confidential memos or "closely held" numbers?

Who can hire and fire?

Personnel?

Board of education?

Who decides on suspension and disciplinary policy?

Who decides who gets to use athletic equipment?

Who has student leadership positions?

Who controls student leaders?

Resources

Who gets the "good" jobs?

Who gets to travel?

Who gets to get the good offices, classrooms, supplies, and athletic equipment?

"Fast-Track" for moving up in the system and race distribution?

Budget for athletics?

Procedures and Institutional Practices

Job specifications and requirements?

Recruiting practices?

Application forms?

Testing?

Orientations?

Reward system?

*From Handbook of Training Activities to Combat Sexism in Education by M. Campbell and R. Terry, 1977, Ann Arbor, MI: Programs for Educational Opportunity. Copyright 1977 by Programs for Educational Opportunity. Reprinted by permission.

OPPRESSION ROLE PLAY*
LIBERTYVILLE

Objectives

To provide the class members with the opportunity to describe a hypothetical community that, in reality, is the one in which they currently live.

To increase understanding of institutional oppression.

To reveal to students that victims understand institutional oppression but cannot readily make change within the institution because they do not have access to power and resources.

Process

Explain the definition of racism and institutional racism (see pp. 44-45).

Divide the class into four groups. Send one group out of the class room. The three remaining groups are given the following instructions:

You are an all white group of citizens living in Libertyville. Over the years, some Latinos have lived in your town, but they have been thwarted in all their attempts to gain any political or economic power. You comprise the power structure of this hypothetical community. You are the governing bodies of institutional structures which dictate policy and practice. A significant number of Latinos are about to move into your community and you want to assure yourselves ultimate power over them. In order to guarantee this, you develop policies for your institution that will most likely keep whites in power. Your assignment is to articulate these policies for the new Latino citizen group about to meet with you and you want to present yourselves as being reasonable people. You are not subject to federal or state laws and regulations.

Designate the three remaining groups as: education (kindergarten through higher education), media (newspapers, TV), and financial institutions (banks, savings and loan credit unions).

Give the following instructions to the group outside of class:

You are a group of Latinos who are about to move into Libertyville. You've been told that this community is like most communities in this country, i.e. Latinos are kept at the lower end of the economic scale. You have requested a meeting with the governing bodies of this township and are going to attempt to clarify the policies and practices of this

community. The three groups you will face will be education, media, and banking. You need to anticipate that their policies will be racist and that they will justify their views based on their past experience with Latinos, e.g. Latinos who did not pay loans back promptly or who didn't have the educational background and experience to move into middle class positions. Be familiar with the effects of past discrimination as well as current discrimination.

Allow approximately 15 minutes for groups to marshal their arguments.

Bring the Latino group back into the classroom and provide approximately 30 minutes for the Latinos to question the whites regarding the institutional policies of Libertyville. You may want to allow the whites to set the rules and procedures for this meeting.

Note. This exercise can be modified in a number of ways. For example, the class can be divided not only on race as an issue, but class, gender, religion, etc. This is an exercise that evolves in different ways depending on the instructor, class members, and time allotted. Be creative with your own rules.

*Designed by Suellyn Hoffmann. Dr. Hoffmann is an assistant professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT CAMPS

Objectives

To increase awareness of the Japanese American internment camps during World War II and the racism that prompted the action.

To demonstrate the bias of our history books and our schools.

Process

Distribute the questionnaire on Japanese American internment (see p.) without discussing the event previously. Ask the students to fill these out and hand them in.

Introduce and show the film Unfinished Business.* (This is the story of three men; Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui, who resisted military orders to intern.)

Tabulate the results of the questionnaire while the film is being shown. Often a large number of students will not have known about the internment.

After the movie show the results and discuss why this wasn't taught in their high schools or found in their history books. Ask them if this is a type of institutional racism.

After the movie, divide the students into groups to re-examine the questions and discuss what information they used to select their previous responses.

If you'd like a comparison, distribute the questionnaire again, tabulate, and note the difference.

*Okazaki, S. (Producer & Director). (1984). Unfinished business [Film]. San Francisco: Mouchette Films.

**JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT
QUESTIONNAIRE***

Key: Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

- 1 2 3 4 5 1. Japanese and Japanese Americans were interned mainly for national security.
- 1 2 3 4 5 2. Japanese and Japanese Americans were interned mainly for their own safety because Caucasians might think they were the enemy.
- 1 2 3 4 5 3. Japanese and Japanese Americans were interned because of racism.
- 1 2 3 4 5 4. Japanese and Japanese Americans were interned because of scapegoating.
- 1 2 3 4 5 5. Japanese and Japanese Americans were interned because of the economic competition experienced with Caucasians.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6. Americans of Japanese descent were more dangerous than citizens of Italian or German descent.
- 1 2 3 4 5 7. The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II was justified.
- Yes No 8. I have not had the opportunity to study the history of the internment camps for Japanese or Japanese Americans.
- Yes No 9. This is the first time I've heard about the internment camps for Japanese or Japanese Americans.

*Questions one through seven from Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice (p. 225) by C.I. Bennett, 1986, Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Copyright 1986 by Allyn and Bacon. Reprinted by permission.

YOU ARE AMERICAN INDIAN

Objectives

To expose students to aspects of oppression as experienced by many American Indians.

To foster an environment of empathy toward oppressed peoples.

To develop an understanding of the historical and current context in which American Indians call for justice.

Exercise One Process*

Explain to the student's that they are American Indian and have been discriminated against in the following ways.

- Historically, your people have been systematically killed.
- Your land has been taken and is still being taken from you.
- Your children have been taken away from you and put into boarding schools.
- Your culture and language have been attacked and stifled wherever possible.
- You are to have access to public education yet the schooling presents a justification of everything done to you and your people and is culturally alienating.
- There is documentation that Indian women have been sterilized against their wishes.
- Unemployment is as much as 90 percent on many reservations and those who leave the reservation are often living in poverty.
- People say you are lazy, dumb, drunk, etc. and complain that you live off of them and don't pay taxes. After all, they say, what happened to you is in the past so what are you complaining about now?

Divide the class into small work groups. Ask the groups to make a list of what they want as American Indians.

Write the lists on the board.

Ask the student's to respond to this statement. "Oppressed groups are always complaining about what's happened in the past and are given handouts and opportunities no one else receives. I don't think they should get special treatment."

Facilitate the discussion and point out discrepancies between the above statement and what the student's felt they should get if they were oppressed.

Exercise Two

Process

Ask the groups to list what American Indians have actually asked for in negotiating for their rights. (Depending on the background of your class, you can be general or examine a specific situation such as the Wisconsin treaty rights or the White Earth land conflict.) Students may list some of the following:

- land
- education
- housing
- access to quality health care
- hunting and fishing rights

Note to the students that all of these demands fall under four categories: land, education, social services, and health care. All four of these are what were promised to Native Americans through the treaties, which were legally binding documents. The U.S. government has not upheld these treaties.

Now have them list what American Indians have actually been given.

- Offered money when asking for land.
- Desolate land of no value rather than returning sacred land.
- Housing instead of land etc.

Compare the two lists and ask what conclusions can be drawn.

The U.S. government has "given" American Indians what they decided was best for them. This often was and is reflective of an ethnocentric and paternalistic attitude. It also was part of a self-serving plan for assimilation.

Most of what was given to them was not what Native Americans wanted and was not what was legally granted to them in the treaties. Often, what is offered is something that will benefit the decisionmakers. For instance, in the Southwest, the Hopi are being "given" houses. Often, what is not reported is what is being taken away. The Hopi are being relocated and forced off of their land because the mining companies want the minerals that were found on their land.

Another important aspect to recognize is that the second list is representative of short term solutions to long term problems. The Native American tribes are never allowed to develop an infrastructure that would actually eliminated the problems.

*Exercise one was designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education at St. Cloud State University.

Chapter 4

SEXISM

We live in a male-defined world. Women are exploited and oppressed based on their gender. Gender socialization starts before we are even out of the womb and continues to permeate all aspects of our every day lives thereafter. Sexism is taught and maintained through the institutions of family, church, school, the media and our economic system. Violence against women serves to isolate, control, limit mobility, and to keep all women in their place. Institutionalized sexism tends to become cloaked in invisibility. The exercises in this chapter are intended to raise awareness of sexism and demonstrate the detrimental effects it has on all of our lives. The exercises are based on the following definition of sexism:

Sexism is the systematic oppression and exploitation of human beings on the basis of their belonging to the female sex. Secondly, we see sexism as the repression of people based on cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity, which prevents both sexes from realizing their full human potential. Briefly, sexism is an attitude, action, or institutional structure which subordinates or limits a person on the basis of sex. As with racism, the possession of power is the key. Most real power in the United States lies in the hands of men (although certainly not all men). Men use that power to oppress and exploit women. But women as a group have no power base--no institutional control--from which to oppress and exploit men, either as a group or separately (although individual women may exploit men, like the rich woman and her chauffeur). (Interracial Books for Children Bulletin, p. 11)

The exercises in chapter four approach sexism on both the personal level and the systemic level. Several exercises are designed to raise student's awareness of gender issues so they can begin to identify it. Students will examine their personal values regarding gender and where those values originated.

Other topics that are included are sexist language, exploitation of women in advertising and pornography, gender communication styles and violence towards women.

Because of the personal nature of this section, students may more readily react defensively. The instructor will need to sensitively facilitate the discussions between men and women so that individuals feel safe to express their honest thoughts and feelings in a respectful manner.

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GENDER RULES

Objective

To help students understand where their gender roles originated.

To explore the effects of gender roles on students' lives as adults.

Process*

Ask students to individually list ten rules their mother gave them on how to be a woman/man.

Then have them list ten rules their father gave them on how to be a woman/man.

Divide the class into small discussion groups and ask them to discuss their rules with one another and answer the following questions.

- Are there similarities with other's lists?
- Do you still follow any of these rules?
- Which rules did you reject and why?
- Which rules do you still follow and why?
- Are they beneficial or detrimental to you now as adults?

*Adapted by permission from page 33 of Beyond Sex Roles by Alice Sargent; Copyright 1977 by West Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

SEX ROLE PROJECT

Objectives

To experience a behavior or activity that is atypical for a student's gender.

To explore students' feelings and other's reactions and attitudes towards sex roles.

To increase understanding of the pressures society uses to keep men and women in their roles.

Process*

Tell the students that they will get to select an activity that is outside or opposite of the role expectations for their gender. They can select one from the handout's list of examples (see p.66) or they can make up their own. The selected behavior must be one that is not common for that individual.

Give them the following instructions:

You must take the project seriously and not make it obvious to others that you are only doing this as a project.

You must do it over a matter of time (weeks) not just a one-time behavior change.

Keep track of your reactions and feelings and of other's reactions and write them in a notebook.

Ask them to turn in a paragraph describing what they have chosen to do and why.

At the end of the project time, have them share their reactions and feelings with the rest of the class.

*Designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

SEX ROLE PROJECT EXAMPLES*

Females

- Stop wearing make-up.
- Fix your car, plumbing, etc. (if its not common for you).
- Be aggressive or assertive.
- Lift weights or pursue athletic development.
- Drive the car instead of the male driving.
- Stop cleaning partners apartment, doing his laundry, etc.
- Do a role reversal with spouse or male friend.
- Stop letting your father fix mechanical things during visits home.
- Ask males out on dates and plan all the activities.
- Stop nurturing others and begin to nurture yourself.
- Call yourself a feminist and stand up for women's rights.
- Progressive project. (1) Keep track of sexist comments, jokes, etc. by yourself and others around you; (2) evaluate their impact on other women and yourself; (3) stop participating in sexist behaviors, comments, jokes, etc; (4) begin using non-sexist language.

Males

- Knit, crochet, sew, cook (if it's not common for you).
- Be emotional (show emotions other than anger).
- Try nurturing others, pleasing others.
- Establish non-sexual friendships with women.
- Do a role reversal with spouse or woman friend.
- Stop letting your mother cook and do laundry during visits home.
- Use coupons at the supermarket.
- Pierce an ear.
- Challenge other men's sexism (jokes, comments, pornography, etc.).
- Call yourself a feminist and act like one.
- Take responsibility for child care.
- Progressive project. (1) Keep track of sexist comments, jokes, etc. by yourself and others around you; (2) evaluate their impact on women and yourself; (3) stop participating in sexist behaviors, comments, jokes, etc; (4) begin using non-sexist language; (5) evaluate how women are portrayed in pornography; (6) stop using pornography; (7) challenge other men to stop using pornography.

Remember that you might want to think of this project in terms of what you will no longer do. Many people take on extra responsibilities for this project and never consider refusing to perform current responsibilities which extend from sexist attitudes.

*Designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

GENDER INTERVIEWS

Objectives

To identify personal and cultural gender role expectations.

To understand how gender messages influence personal behavior as an adult.

To increase understanding of men and women's personal experiences and feelings in regards to gender expectations.

Process

Hand out the interview questionnaire (see p. 68-69).

Divide the students into dyads or groups of four. If possible divide an even number of men and women. (If you have a disproportionate number of men and women or have limited time, have students do this outside of class time with someone of the opposite gender.)

Explain that the questions are to be used as a guide. Feel free to ask your own questions. When asking the questions, respect the interviewee's right to not answer a particular question.

After the interviews, discuss what they discovered about gender roles. Encourage discussion regarding the benefits and/or detriments of gender roles. Who generally benefits? Who is oppressed?

GENDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What do the words feminine and masculine mean to you?

What kinds of games or toys did you play while growing up?

Would you categorize these games as active or inactive?

Were you ever punished for playing games that were not gender appropriate?

What kind of clothes did you wear? Did this affect your choice of play activities?

Who was your childhood hero? Did they have an influence on your gender behavior?

Describe an experience in your childhood when you were praised for doing something that was gender appropriate?

Describe an experience in your childhood when you were punished or reacted negatively to for doing something that was inappropriate for your gender? How did this effect your future behavior?

Were you ever discouraged or encouraged to cry or show emotions?

When you were a child did you ever wish you were the opposite gender? Why or why not?

Were you treated differently from your brothers (sisters)? In what ways?

What chores were you required to do? Were there any you weren't allowed to do or were not encouraged to do because of your gender?

Did your teachers treat boys and girls differently? In what ways?

Did you ever feel like you had to "play dumb" to be liked by your peers?

What messages did you get about dating and sexuality when you were an adolescent?

As boys, what did it feel like to be expected to initiate the phone call or date with someone to whom you were attracted?

As girls, what did it feel like to be expected to wait for someone you were attracted to call or ask you to dance?

What do you think about a girl/woman asking a boy/man out on a date?

What personality traits do you like in a male (female)?

What characteristics do you look for in a partner?

Who do you feel most comfortable talking to, a man or a woman? Explain your choice.

What do you talk about or do with your same gender friends?

Do you ever think about what you wear or your appearance?

Are there any traits that are stereotypical for the opposite gender that you wish you had? Describe which ones and why?

What is the most difficult aspect of being female, (male)?

What do you most like and dislike about being female, (male)?

As an adult female, (male) what is your biggest fear?

How are chores divided in your household?

If you plan to have children, or have children now, who will be/is responsible for childcare in your home?

SEXISM EXERCISE

Objectives

- To assess students' ability to identify sexism.
- To realize the prevalence of sexism.
- To examine how sexism is maintained.
- To understand the consequences of sexism.

Process*

Discuss the definition of sexism.**

- Systematic oppression and exploitation of females.
- Secondly, repression of females and males based on definitions of masculinity and femininity.
- Any attitude or action of institutional practice which limits a person based on gender.
- Requires the possession of power.
- May be intentional or unintentional. (Andrzejewski, 1990, p. 1)

Divide the class into small work groups.

Pass out the worksheet and instruct the groups to cite examples of sexism for each entry and the consequences of each example. Finally, indicate the type of control (Physical, economic or ideological) used to maintain that form of sexism.

Discuss selected topics with the entire group.

*Designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

**Council on Interracial Books for Children. (1976). Human and anti-human values in children's books. In J. Andrzejewski (Ed.). (1990). Human Relations: The study of oppression and human rights (2nd ed., Vol. 1, p. 1). Needham Heights, MA: Ginn Press.

SEXISM EXERCISE WORKSHEET

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Consequences</u>	<u>Type of Control</u>
Education (all levels)			
Religion			
Family			
Language			
Sexuality			
Health			
Mental Health			
History			
Science			
Politics			
Business			
Sports			
Employment			
Communication			

*Designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

IDENTIFYING SEXISM IN ADVERTISING

Objectives

To understand the exploitation of women in advertising.

To help students identify sexism in a medium that surrounds them and may be unconsciously influencing them.

To understand the media influence on gender identity.

To transfer the influence of advertising from the subconscious to the conscious level.

Process

Have groups of three to four students put together a collage of magazine advertisements and identify the sexism and exploitation.

In addition to or as an alternative, have students watch an evening of television and document sexism in the advertisements, TV shows, and movies.

Discuss how these images affect our gender identities. Encourage personal reactions ie. women who feel unattractive without make-up.

Explain that sometimes sexism can seem subtle, especially when you are first learning to identify it. When you are questioning if something is sexist try switching the genders of the characters. If this seems awkward or ridiculous, it most likely is sexist.

Ask each group to select one of the above examples to act out. Reverse the advertisement's gender roles.

Encourage the students to use their imaginations and to have fun with the role plays.

Note. This exercise can be an avenue for raising students' awareness of sexism in a non-threatening manner. If you have the equipment available, the students may enjoy videotaping the skits.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Objectives

- To identify stereotypical traits assigned to men and women.
- To explore the effects of stereotypical gender roles.
- To understand the effects of sexism in the mental health profession.
- To encourage students to move beyond the limitations of gender roles.

Exercise One

Process

Ask the students to list healthy traits of an adult female and then another list of traits for an adult male. This can be done in small groups or with the class as a whole.

Then instruct the groups to compile a third list of traits of a healthy adult.

Ask the students if they see any correlations between the lists.

After some discussion, cite the Boverman study* on which this exercise is based. Seventy clinical psychologists were given 122 personality traits and asked to label them as adult female, adult male or as healthy adult characteristics. The study demonstrated that the list for the healthy adult male and the healthy adult were very similar. However, the traits for a healthy adult female were not compatible with the healthy adult characteristics.

Discuss the following questions:

- What are the implications of this study and how does it relate to sexism?
- How do you think this affects the mental health care men and women receive?
- In what other ways does this phenomenon affect women's lives?

Exercise Two
Process

Divide the class into small discussion groups.

Instruct the groups to list stereotypical traits, both positive and negative, of males and then of females.

Ask everyone to choose a positive trait from their opposite gender list and describe a time they could have used that trait or skill.

Ask each group to give a brief overview of the discussion and examples.

Encourage discussion on the following questions:

- Why do gender roles continue to be taught to children?
- Are there any benefits to these gender roles?
- Who benefits the most from these roles?
- Are there harmful effects?
- To whom are the roles the most harmful? In what ways?

*Broverman, I. K., Broverman, D. M., Clarkson, F. E., Rosenkrantz, P. S. & Vogel, S. R. (1970). Sex-role stereotypes and clinical judgments of mental health. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 34, 1-7.

LANGUAGE AS A MEANS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Objectives

To increase awareness of sexism and homophobia in language.

To demonstrate how language is used as a means of social control.

Process*

Explain to the group that they are going to list slang put downs for men and women to demonstrate how language is used to control us and keep us in our roles. Explain that put downs and stereotypes can hurt but it is necessary to name them if we are to move beyond them.

Ask them to call out all of the negative slang terms they can think of, used to describe women. Explain that words like jerk are gender neutral so they cannot be used.

As students call out names write them in three columns, without labeling them yet.

Slut

whore
easy lay
nympho
piece of ass
piece of meat
cunt
broad
chick
babe
loose

Prude

cock tease
ice box
frigid
snow queen
virgin
up tight
old cow
old hag
lezzie
priss

Bitch

ball buster
emasculating
castrating
nag
hysterical female
on the rag
dyke
battle axe
penis envy
domineering

Now label the three categories and explain the significance.

A slut is a woman who is too sexual, and a prude is a woman who is not sexual enough. A woman must walk a thin line between these categories all her life. When a man wants to sleep with a woman he can call her one of the "prude" words to get her to go along. When he's going with a woman and wants to keep her attached to him alone, he can use the "slut" category of words to keep her in line. The most interesting category, the third one, which is for women who get angry and demand their rights or protest oppression by speaking out.

Do the same for names used to describe men negatively.

<u>Put Down Mothers</u>	<u>Put Men Down as Men</u>	<u>Men Who Take Direction From Women</u>
mother fucker		
SOB	prick	momma's boy
bastard	male chauvinist	hen pecked
		pussy whipped

Men Who Are Like Women

fag	woman
queen	effeminite
sissy	swish
fairy	limp wrist
girl	cock sucker
wimp	

Label the categories for the students.

Discuss the following points.

Even in the put downs for men (which are far fewer in number) women get put down. Also any male who steps out of his role and "act like a woman" is accused of being gay. (Note that this is the largest category.) Homophobia and misogyny pressure men to stay in their dominant role. Homophobia functions as a social control mechanism to maintain men's macho image and oppress women.

Ask the students the following questions to help point out the inequality of the put downs.

- What's a word for a man who sleeps around?
- Lots of men get too angry and domineering. What do we call them?
- Why aren't there names to put down wife-batterers?
- How about men who get a woman pregnant and don't take responsibility for the pregnancy?
- Why are there no put downs for child molesters?

Provide other examples of how these words are used as social control mechanisms.

- How many women have gone for birth control with the word "slut" in the back of their minds?
- How many women have felt unfeminine whenever you get angry or raise your voice?
- How many women do you suppose feel that getting raped was somehow their fault.

- How many men dare to stand up for women by challenging sexist remarks?
- How do other men react?
- How many men feel unmasculine when they show feelings like sadness, fear or worry?
- How many men feel inadequate when they want to ask for advice?

These are all examples which are used to keep men and women in their roles. In many instances both homophobia and sexism are used. For example, when a guy says to his buddies "Hey look at that stacked chick," is this really a friendly remark about women or is it a comment proclaiming to his buddies "I'm not queer"?

If you have time, the following questions could be used in discussion groups:

- How have these words affected You?
- Which ones make you the most uncomfortable or that you hate the most?
- Has the fear of being considered one of these names ever made you not do something you wanted to do?

Men could discuss the homophobic names that were frequently used during their adolescence. These terms are used most frequently by adolescents who are expected to be rapidly making the switch from same sex bonding to opposite sex attraction.

*Designed by Polly Kellogg. Ms. Kellogg is an instructor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

GENDER COMMUNICATION STYLES

Objectives

To observe and identify gender role behaviors in groups.

To role play behaviors students have identified as opposite of their own gender.

Exercise One Process

Before class begins, select one person for each group to be the observer. Tell them to document (by gender not by name) who speaks, who interrupts, who takes notes and who is selected as a leader. This should be done without telling the other group members.

Divide the class into small discussion groups making sure each group has both men and women in it.

Select a topic for them or ask them to select a topic to discuss that is relevant to the materials you have been covering. (The topic of discussion is irrelevant. The goal is to set up a normal discussion group so that the individuals will react in the way they normally would without being conscious of gender roles.)

Ask each group to have someone take notes and someone that will report to the class as a whole what they discussed. Allow 15 to 20 minutes of discussion.

After the discussion, explain to the class that you had observers in every group tracking gender communication patterns.

Ask the observers to report what they noted.

Initiate discussion on gender-influenced group dynamics.

Ask the students for examples they have observed in settings outside of this class.

Exercise Two
Process*

Select a topic for discussion. During the discussion, the men will follow the women's rules for communication and vice versa.

The men are to follow traditional guidelines for female communication patterns as listed below in addition to the list the class developed in exercise one.

- Be deferential, don't interrupt.
- After making a point in the conversation, laugh or let your voices trail off in a discounting manner.
- Smile a lot.
- Look at the other group members a lot, particularly (in this case) the women, for approval.

The women are to follow traditional guidelines for male communication patterns as listed below in addition to the list the class developed in exercise one.

- Be assertive.
- Interrupt others if they don't complete their thought quickly enough for you.
- Talk in paragraphs.
- Ignore nonverbal cues.
- Don't look at anyone in particular when you talk.

Explain that while these directions are a bit exaggerated, they may help you experience some contrasting ways of responding and being responded to.

Editor's Addendum. Ask the groups to discuss the following questions:

- How did you feel taking on the opposite gender role?
- What did you like and dislike about the opposite role?
- Did it feel comfortable or uncomfortable to you?

*Adapted by permission from page 106 of Beyond Sex Roles by Alice Sargent; Copyright C 1977 by West Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

BLAMING THE VICTIM ROLE PLAY
THE RAPE OF MR. SMITH

Objectives

To define the ideology of blaming the victim.

To increase understanding of the role it serves to maintain the status quo.

To increase understanding of how this ideology is manifested in the justice system.

To discover how this ideology is only used to describe or explain the behavior of the oppressed, never of those in power.

To challenge the myth that women ask to be raped by their behavior and that rape is their fault.

Process

Choose one person to role play a lawyer and one person to be Mr. Smith, a wealthy business man. The rest of the class will serve as the jury.

Explain to the class that Mr. Smith was a victim of robbery and has chosen to press charges. The defense attorney is cross examining him.

Give Mr. Smith and the attorney their role instructions (see pp. 81-83). They are to see only their own instructions.

Have them act out the role play.

Have the jury decide if Mr. Smith was really robbed.

Discuss the ideology of blaming the victim and the purpose it serves. Who benefits from it?

Discuss violence towards women and why it is so under reported and why the cases that are reported rarely result in convictions.

**BLAMING THE VICTIM ROLE PLAY
MR. SMITH'S ROLE INSTRUCTIONS**

Adapted with permission from the April 1975 issue of the ABA Journal,
The Lawyer's Magazine, published by the American Bar Association.

Answer the lawyer's questions according to the following information:

You are a successful business man who has a reputation for contributing generously to worthy charities. You have recently been robbed at gunpoint on the corner of First and Main at 11:00 P.M. as you were walking home. You were working late at the office so you still had your expensive business suit on. Because there was a weapon you did not struggle or scream. Many people do not believe you were robbed.

**BLAMING THE VICTIM ROLE PLAY
LAWYER'S ROLE INSTRUCTIONS**

Adapted with permission from the April 1975 issue of the ABA Journal,
The Lawyer's Magazine, published by the American Bar Association.

You will cross examine Mr. Smith in an aggressive manner only allowing him to respond to your direct questions. Feel free to ad-lib.

Mr. Smith, You were held at gun point on the corner of First and Main?

Did you struggle with the robber?
(He did not struggle.)

Why not?
(The robber was armed.)

Then you made a conscious decision to comply with his demands rather than resist?

Did you scream or cry out?
(He did not.)

Yes, I see. Have you ever been held up before?
(No, he hasn't.)

Have you given money away before in any manner?
(Mr. Smith has given to charities.)

Did you do this willingly?

Let's see now. You've given money away in the past. In fact you have quite a reputation for philanthropy. How can we be sure you weren't conniving to have your money taken by force?

(Interrupt his response.) Never mind. What time did the holdup take place?

You were out on the street at 11 P.M.? Doing what?

Do you know that it's dangerous being out on the street that late at night? Weren't you aware that you could have been held up?

What were you wearing?
(He was wearing a suit.)

Was this an expensive suit?

So in other words, Mr. Smith, you were walking around the streets late at night in a suit that practically advertised the fact that you might be a good target for some easy money, isn't that so? I mean, if we didn't know better, Mr. Smith, we might even think that you were asking for this to happen, mighn't we?

WHAT IS A RAPE CULTURE?

Objectives

To define sexual assault.

To understand what behaviors contribute to and encourage sexual assault.

Process

Divide the class into male and female discussion groups.

Give each group the set of scenarios and ask them to read them as a group and discuss the questions with each other. Ask the groups to take notes so they can summarize their discussion.

After the groups summarize their discussions, you may find that there are some significant differences between the men and women. Encourage the groups to discuss these differences and challenge one another.

Discussion questions:

- Why are there differences in interpretations between the men and women's groups?
- What messages did men and women learn about sexuality that may contribute to these differences?
- Do any of these gender messages contribute to a culture of violence toward women?
- What is meant by the words "rape culture"?
- Are there other aspects of our culture that can be correlated to the high rate of sexual assault?

**WHAT IS A RAPE CULTURE?
SCENARIOS**

1. You and several female friends attend a college party. You notice that one of your female friends has consumed a lot of beer. She has been drinking with a guy that she indicated an attraction to earlier. She is laughing and seems to be enjoying herself as two other men join the two of them and walk upstairs and disappear into a bedroom. It is getting late; you and your other friends decide to go home. Several hours later, your friends knocks on your door and tells you that she was raped by ~~the~~ three men?

- Do you believe she was really raped?
- Do you confront her and ask why she was drinking so much?
- Is she partially to blame for what happened?
- Should you call anyone, or suggest that she just forget about it?

2. A group of fraternity brothers are discussing a "little sister" who they have identified as unattractive. She has been trying very hard to be liked and to fit in with her new sorority and fraternity friends. They make bets on "rude hogging" her. ("Rude hogging" is a fraternity term that refers to being the first to bed the ugliest woman at a party.) That night at the fraternity party, she finds herself the center of attention of several fraternity brothers. She's delighted with their amorous attention. One of them asks her to go upstairs so they could be alone. She does not resist when he starts to undress her. After they have sex, she feels as if she's been accepted and looks forward to seeing him again.

- Is this a form of sexual violence? Is it sexual assault?
- What advice would you give her if she came to you and asked why this man has ignored her since this night?
- If she discovered that she was set up, would you encourage her to report the incident to the university judicial board, or tell her to be happy she had a night of great sex?
- What steps could sororities and fraternities take to deter this sort of behavior?

3. As the weather warms up, the men living in the college dorms and housing around campus move out onto the balconies and rooftops. They have been rating the women walking by on the sidewalks. They are whistling, jeering and yelling comments about the women's appearance.

- Do you think women find this flattering or insulting?
- Would you confront them?
- Does this sort of behavior limit women's mobility?
- Is this sexual harassment or just kidding around?
- Is it a form of sexual violence?

Chapter 5

HOMOPHOBIA AND HETEROSEXISM

As an oppressed group gay men, lesbians and bisexuals still do not have equal rights under the law. The exercises in this chapter confront the underlying reasons for this. It will be important to facilitate an understanding of the correlation between homophobia, heterosexism and other forms of oppression, especially sexism. Some students tend to want to isolate it and see it as a separate issue.

The exercises focus on dispelling myths about gay men, lesbians and bisexuals, as well as challenging individual attitudes. Including basic information on sexuality is necessary to establish a foundation for such a discussion because many misconceptions stem from inaccurate information regarding human sexuality and the accompanying expectations of gender roles. Be aware that this topic can be sensitive because it confronts people's fears about their own sexuality. Allow these feelings to be expressed in a respectful manner.

It will be important to point out that homophobic actions are a way to keep men and women from stepping outside of their gender roles. The ultimate control, violence, is perpetrated upon anyone who is perceived to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Anyone, regardless of their sexual preference could be targeted, especially for violating

gender expectations. All people are oppressed and limited in their freedom of self-expression by homophobia.

Selected Bibliography

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WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT GAY MEN, LESBIANS, AND BISEXUALS

Objectives

To define heterosexism and homophobia.

To disprove myths about gay men, lesbians and bisexuals.

To provide a safe atmosphere in which students feel free to ask questions about gay men, lesbians and bisexuals.

Process

Define homophobia and heterosexism.

Heterosexism is the systematic oppression and exploitation of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people. Secondly, it is the oppression of any person (lesbian, gay or heterosexual) who does not conform to the stereotypical roles of femininity and masculinity. Heterosexism refers to pervasive policies and practices (intentional or unintentional) which reinforce heterosexuality as the only option for intimate loving relationships, domestic partners, or families.*

Homophobia is the fear, dread or hatred of lesbians and gay men. Homophobia is the result of a carefully designed system of stereotypes, myths and half-truths that serve to enforce traditional sex-role stereotyping which in turn serves male dominance. When women and men break from that system of male dominance (by loving the same-sex, by exhibiting behavior that is out of line with traditional sex-roles), then homophobia is used as a method of social control to draw them into line, and it works against those who are gay and lesbian and those who are not. The threat of being called a faggot or lesbian keeps many heterosexual men and women exhibiting traditional stereotyped sex-role behavior even when they want to be free of it. The weapons of homophobia are violence, ostracism, the loss of job, children, family, church, and community. (Lobel, p. 206)*

Introduce the exercise:

For many people, much of what they think they know about gay men and lesbians is based on the myths they've heard about it, not the reality. Sorting out the myths and realities can lead to greater self-awareness which motivates us to learn more and become more accepting of those whose sexual orientation may be different from our own. (Belvin & Kellogg, appendix 3-1)

Hand out the questionnaire (see pp. 90-91) and allow five to ten minutes for completion.

Tell the class to fill out the questionnaire individually. The questionnaire is for their own use and will not be turned in. This should dissipate anyone's fear of having someone else see their answers and help the students answer the questions more honestly.

Reassure your class that the purpose of the exercise is to discuss myths about gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals, not to make them feel stupid for not knowing the answers. →

Review the correct answers (see pp. 92-95) for each question with the entire class. Allow time for questions and discussion from the class.

*Written by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

*Lobel, K. (Ed.). (1986). Naming the violence: Speaking out about lesbian battering. Seattle: Seal Press.

**WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT GAY MEN, LESBIANS, AND BISEXUALS
QUESTIONNAIRE***

Read each statement below quickly and circle the number which most closely indicates your actual level of agreement or disagreement (not according to how you think the facilitator would like you to respond).

Key: 1=Strongly Agree 2=Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly Disagree

- 1 2 3 4 5 1. Lesbians and gay men are only a very small percentage of the population.
- 1 2 3 4 5 2. Lesbians and gay men can ordinarily be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.
- 1 2 3 4 5 3. In a gay or lesbian relationship one partner usually plays the "husband"/"butch" role and the other plays the "wife" role.
- 1 2 3 4 5 4. We do not know what causes homosexuality.
- 1 2 3 4 5 5. Most lesbian and gay people could be cured by having really good sex with a member of the opposite sex.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6. The majority of child molesters are gay and lesbian.
- 1 2 3 4 5 7. Most lesbian and gay people regard themselves as members of the opposite sex. (Most lesbians as men and most gay men think of themselves as women.)
- 1 2 3 4 5 8. Homosexuality is not "natural" - that is, it does not exist in nature, therefore that proves that it is wrong.
- 1 2 3 4 5 9. Gay men and lesbians should not be teachers because they will try to convert their students.
- 1 2 3 4 5 10. Lesbians and gay men have made a conscious decision to be homosexual.
- 1 2 3 4 5 11. There are very few "bisexuals;" most people are either completely homosexual or heterosexually oriented.
- 1 2 3 4 5 12. Homosexuality is a type of mental illness and can be cured by appropriate psychotherapy.

- 1 2 3 4 5 13. One homosexual experience as an adolescent will play a large part in determining whether a person will be homosexually oriented as an adult.
- 1 2 3 4 5 14. Lesbians and gay men do not contribute to society.

*From Sharing Silent Journeys of Faith: Embracing Our Gay Brothers and Lesbian Sisters (appendix 3-1) by P. Kellogg and F. Belvin, 1989, Minneapolis: Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT GAY MEN, LESBIANS, AND BISEXUALS
ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE*

1. **Lesbians and gay men are only a very small percentage of the population.**

The Kinsey study showed that approximately ten percent of the population is predominantly lesbian or gay. And Judd Marmor has calculated that one in every four families has a member (parent or child) who is predominantly lesbian or gay. They are our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children, uncles, aunts, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. They may be members of any race or religion. They may be blind or deaf. They may be poor or wealthy. And they hold all sorts of jobs.

2. **Lesbians and gay men can ordinarily be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.**

The vast majority of lesbians and gay men cannot be identified by looks. The small fraction who dress or act so that people will assume they are gay usually do so because they want to be known as gay or lesbian or because they dislike the traditional sex roles. Many straight people appear lesbian or gay for this last reason too. But if most people are aware only of those lesbians and gay men who fit the stereotypes, and if the media plays up the stereotypes, it's logical that people will believe the stereotypes.

3. **In a lesbian or gay relationship one partner usually plays the "husband"/"butch" role and the other plays the "wife"/"femme" role.**

This is an old pattern that was evident in some lesbian and gay relationships when lesbians and gay men had only the traditional heterosexual relationship as a model. Today, most lesbians and gay men work to develop relationships based on the principles of equality and mutuality where they are loved and appreciated for "who they are," not for the roles they are supposed to play. There is no right or wrong way that prescribes how to divide roles or household tasks between partners.

4. **We do not know what causes homosexuality.**

This is a very controversial issue. It is not yet known what specifically causes either homosexuality or heterosexuality. Some believe it is predetermined genetically or hormonally. Others maintain that all humans are predisposed to all variations of sexual behavior and "learn" a preference or orientation.

5. **Most lesbian or gay people could be cured by having really good sex with a member of the opposite sex.**

There are no "cures". Many lesbians and gay men have had satisfying heterosexual experiences in their lifetime. However, gay men and lesbians who out of desperation or fear, choose to enter a heterosexual relationship to get "cured" may cause undue misery and pain to themselves and their partners.

Most gay men and lesbians would not choose to be sexually active with members of the other sex and would resent and challenge the assumption that heterosexuals have a corner on the market of "good sex".

6. **The majority of child molesters are gay and lesbian.**

Recent statistics show that sexual molestation of children is much more common than we have believed. In over 90% of the cases it is committed by heterosexual men, against young girls or infants. The myths that child molesters are usually gay men or strangers are untrue, and serve to cover up how common incest is. Studies show 65 to 90 percent of molesters are men that the child knew, often fathers, step-fathers, and uncles. Lesbians have actually been leaders in bringing the facts about child molestations to public attention by writing books, speaking out, and forming treatment programs for victims.

7. **Most gay and lesbian people regard themselves as members of the opposite sex.**

Most, if not all, gay men and lesbians are comfortable with their femaleness or maleness. Being lesbian or gay must not be confused with being transexual, where one feels trapped in the body of the wrong sex, and therefore, may seek surgery to change gender.

8. **Homosexuality is not "natural"—that is, it does not exist in nature, therefore, that proves that it is "wrong".**

From a scientific point of view, it is "natural". Any animal, including humans, is capable of responding to homosexual stimuli. Research suggests that homosexuality is almost universal among all animals and is especially frequent among highly developed species. There has been evidence of homosexuality in all human cultures throughout history. In fact, one anthropological study of non-western cultures found that 65 percent of their sample considered homosexuality "normal and socially acceptable" for certain members of the society.

9. **Gay men and lesbians should not be teachers because they will try to convert their students.**

Homosexual "conversion" or "seduction" is no more common than is heterosexual seduction. Most lesbian and gay teachers live with the fear that they will be fired immediately if they are found to be lesbian or gay. Most, if not all, lesbians and gay men have no desire to "convert" students. Unfortunately, their efforts to provide support for younger lesbians and gays may be misconstrued and misrepresented. If, in fact, the data is correct that suggests that sexual orientation is established by age three to six, contact with teachers would have no effect on students.

10. **Lesbians and gay men have made a conscious decision to be homosexual.**

While researchers continue to disagree on the specific "causes" of homosexuality, they mostly agree that there is some sort of predisposition or genetic relationship involved. The "decision" may not be whether one is going to be lesbian or gay, but rather whether one is going to acknowledge the existence of gay or lesbian feelings and behaviors.

Because of the high price of societal rejection and oppression, "coming out" can be a complex and difficult process. It may take years for some lesbians and gay men to work through the anxiety, pain and anger they feel and come to an acceptance of the lesbian or gay identity.

11. **There are very few "bisexuals;" most people are either completely homosexually or heterosexually oriented.**

The pioneering studies of Dr. Alfred Kinsey and his associates are most frequently cited on this question. This data suggested that few people are either predominantly heterosexual or homosexual. Most people fall somewhere on the continuum between these two ends of the scale, and thus, have the capacity to experience both affectional and sexual feelings for members of both sexes.

12. **Homosexuality is a type of mental illness and can be cured by appropriate psychotherapy.**

In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. In 1975 the American Psychological Association went further to state that, "Homosexuality, per se, implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capacities." Psychiatrists have had little real success in

their attempts to change people's sexual/affectional preferences through psychotherapy. Research done by the National Institute for Mental Health found no greater incidence of mental illness among lesbians and gay men than among heterosexuals.

13. **One homosexual experience as an adolescent will play a large part in determining whether a person will be homosexually oriented as an adult.**

If this statement were true, then the percentage of lesbians and gay men in the population would be far greater than ten percent. Many young boys and girls (far more than ten percent) have same-gender sexual experiences in their childhood as part of the natural exploration of one's sexuality.

14. **Lesbians and gay men do not contribute to society.**

Lesbians and gay men have made major contributions in all fields: social services, education, politics, arts, and humanities. A few famous lesbians and gay men include Sappho, Leonardo da Vinci, Alexander the Great, Tchaikovsky, Dag Hammerskjold and Jane Addams. We know the most about writers and artists, since they were most likely to leave records of their personal feelings: Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Willa Cather, Bessie Smith, Susan B. Anthony, Emily Dickinson, Tennessee Williams, and Lorraine Hansberry are a few.

*From Sharing Silent Journeys of Faith: Embracing Our Exiled Gay Brothers and Lesbian Sisters (appendix 4-1 to 4-3) by P. Kellogg and F. Belvin, 1989, Minneapolis: Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities.

RACISM, SEXISM, AND HOMOPHOBIA

Objectives

To show the parallels between homophobia, racism and sexism.

To show that all forms of oppression stems from the same roots.

To demystify students' ideas about homophobia.

Process

Ask students to list things which are used to promote and perpetuate sexism.

Examples:

- economics
- traditions
- laws
- education
- religion
- Bible
- violence
- gender stereotypes

Do the same for racism.

Facilitate a discussion on how each of these examples is used to promote sexism and racism. Discuss the similarities of these two types of oppression. Ask why they are so similar.

Now ask the students to list what is used to promote and perpetuate homophobia. It will be similar to the sexism and racism list.

Discuss how each example is used to perpetuate homophobia.

Read the following quote:

"From my membership in all of these groups I have learned that oppression and the intolerance of difference come in all shapes and sizes and colors and sexualities; . . . there can be no hierarchies of oppression. I have learned that sexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all others and thereby its right to dominance) and heterosexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby its right to dominance) both arise from the same source as racism--a belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby its right to dominance." (Lorde p. 9).*

Facilitate a discussion on the similarities of homophobia/heterosexism, compared to sexism and racism.

Was there a time in history that the Bible was used to justify slavery?

What groups continues to use the bible to justify racism? (KKK, Neo Nazis)

Do you think the debate over slavery was similar to the debate regarding homosexuality and the Bible today?

Are their similarities between the fight for gay rights ordinances and the struggle to eliminate segregation laws.

What are the connections between strict gender roles and homophobia?

*Lorde, A. (1983). There is no hierarchy of oppressions. Interracial Books for Children Bulletin, 14(3 & 4), 9.

NAMES***Objectives**

To give students a chance to get out some of their homophobia in an acceptable way.

To demonstrate how derogatory homophobic language is used as a means of control.

Process

Ask the class to give all the names they have heard gays, lesbians, or bisexuals called, and list them for the group to see.

Here are some of the names people may give:

Butch
Dyke
Faggot
Queer
Man-hater
Femme
Sissy
Fairy
Witch
Pervert

Facilitate a short discussion. Take a couple of the terms and discuss their significance. For example, show how so many terms describe not being the norm (queer, pervert) or not fitting into a role (butch, sissy, fairy).

Point out how some of the words (faggot, witch) keep alive our memories of one of the ultimate means of control: The burning of people who are different--faggots and witches at the stake, Jews in concentration camp ovens, Blacks in their homes with crosses burning in their yards. Emphasize that these words are used to remind those that are different that this is what can happen if their being too vocal in demanding their rights.

*Adapted with the permission of the Seal Press from Naming the Violence. Copyright 1986 by Kerry Lobel. Available from the Seal Press, 3131 Western Avenue #410, Seattle, WA 98121. Phone: 206-283-7844.

WHAT IS HOMOPHOBIA

Objectives

- To define homophobia and heterosexism.
- To provide examples of homophobia and heterosexism in our culture.
- To identify personal homophobic and heterosexist feelings and actions.

Process

Provide the students with the following definitions.

Heterosexism is the systematic oppression and exploitation of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people. Secondly, it is the oppression of any person (lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual) who does not conform to the stereotypical roles of femininity and masculinity. Heterosexism refers to pervasive policies and practices (intentional or unintentional) which reinforce heterosexuality as the only option for intimate loving relationships, domestic partners, or families.*

Homophobia is the fear, dread or hatred of lesbians and gay men. Homophobia is the result of a carefully designed system of stereotypes, myths and half-truths that serve to enforce traditional sex-role stereotyping which in turn serves male dominance. When women and men break from that system of male dominance (by loving the same-sex by exhibiting behavior that is out of line with traditional sex-roles), then homophobia is used as a method of social control to draw them into line, and it works against those who are gay and lesbian and those who are not. The threat of being called a faggot or lesbian keeps many heterosexual men and women exhibiting traditional stereotyped sex-role behavior even when they want to be free of it. The weapons of homophobia are violence, ostracism, the loss of job, children, family, church, and community. (Lobel, p. 206)**

Divide students into small discussion groups and ask them to list examples of homophobia and heterosexism.

After adequate discussion time, hand out the following list. This may provide additional examples (see pp. 101-102).

Encourage students to discuss their personal feelings of homophobia and identify their own examples of homophobia.

Note. This exercise is best done after the participants have been provided with accurate information regarding homosexuality. This will help them understand that their homophobia may be based on mythical premises.

*Written by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

**Lobel, K. (Ed.). (1986). Naming the Violence. Seattle: Seal Press.

WHAT IS HOMOPHOBIA
EXAMPLES*

Expecting a gay man or lesbian to change their public identity or affectional habits or mode of dress.

Looking at a lesbian woman or gay man and automatically thinking of their sexuality rather than seeing them as a whole and complex people.

Failing to be supportive when a gay man or lesbian friend is sad about a quarrel or breakup of a relationship.

Changing your seat in a meeting because a lesbian woman or gay man sits down in the chair next to yours.

Thinking you can "spot one".

Using the term "gay" and "lesbian" as accusatory.

Not asking about a woman's female lover or a man's male lover although you regularly ask "how is your husband or boyfriend" or "wife or girlfriend" when you run into a heterosexual friend.

Kissing an old friend but being afraid to shake hands with a lesbian woman or gay man.

Thinking that if a gay man or lesbian woman touches you, that they are making a sexual advance.

Stereotyping lesbians as man-haters, separatists or radicals and gay men as sissies, wimps or woman-haters, using those terms accusingly.

Feeling repulsed by public displays of affection between lesbian women and gay men, but accepting the same affectional displays between heterosexuals as "nice".

Wondering which one is the "man" or "woman"; i.e. role reversals in gay or lesbian relationships.

Feeling that gay people are too outspoken about gay rights.

Assuming that everyone you meet is probably heterosexual.

Being outspoken about gay rights, but making sure everyone knows that you are straight.

Feeling that a lesbian is just a woman who couldn't find a man.

Avoiding mentioning to your friends that you are involved with a women's organization, or a men's organization that emphasizes domestic skills, because you are afraid that they will think you are lesbian or gay.

Not confronting a heterosexist remark for fear of being identified as gay or lesbian.

*From Sharing Silent Journeys of Faith: Embracing Our Exiled Gay Brothers and Lesbian Sisters. (appendix 6-1) by P. Kellogg and F. Belvin, 1989, Minneapolis: Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities.

LIVING IN A GAY AND LESBIAN WORLD

Objectives

To understand the alienation created by living in a heterosexist culture.

To create an atmosphere which promotes empathy towards gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals.

Process

Ask everyone to close their eyes, take three deep breaths, and relax.

Read the visualization (see pp. 104-106).

After the visualization divide the class into groups of three to four people. Ask them to talk about how they were feeling during the visualization.

Tell them that they are going to role play the visualization. Choose one person in the group to be the heterosexual in this homosexual world. This person is going to come out to his/her family. Select this person with care, as discussion of sexuality may be threatening to some individuals.

Give the family the heterosexual questionnaire (see pp. 107-108) and instruct them to use these questions in response to their son or daughter's news.

Allow time for the role play.

Ask the "heterosexuals" to talk about what it felt like to come out to their family. Ask if they were able to answer the questions from the handout.

Facilitate a discussion about the oppression of gays and lesbians from a personal level to a societal level.

LIVING IN A GAY AND LESBIAN WORLD
GUIDED VISUALIZATION*

Imagine now that you are living in a gay and lesbian world. All around you, everywhere you look, there are lesbians and gay men. All TV shows and advertisements are about same-gender couples and their lives. Every movie you go to is based on the assumption that everyone is gay or lesbian. All of the love stories are same-gender, and all of the families shown are same-gender. All soap operas have wedding ceremonies showing two men or two women getting married. You walk down the streets and see women holding hands or two men kissing each other good-bye.

In this gay and lesbian world you are a minority--you are a heterosexual. You have known since you were 12 years old that you were different from everybody else. When your friends were getting crushes and giggling about other children of the same gender, you secretly knew that you liked your friends of the opposite gender in a special way. The other children sensed that you were different and called you names such as "hetero", "breeder", "straight", and "pervert". You felt the emotional impact of these hurtful words.

As a teenager you fell in love with a friend of the opposite gender. You knew you had to be secretive about it. Your friends and your two lesbian mothers would not have understood at all. In fact, they would have been horrified and ashamed of you for loving someone of the opposite sex. You feared being disowned by them, and in turn lose all of their support financially and emotionally. So you grew withdrawn and secretive, fearing to tell anyone your shameful secret.

You wanted to go to the prom with your opposite sex friend, but that would have meant exposing yourself to everybody at school. You would have been rejected by your homosexual friends, thought of as having a disease, and harassed by students, teachers, and friends. Your friends always asked you if you liked a certain person of the same sex. You always answered, "I don't have time for a relationship. Anyway, I'm just not interested." You wondered if they suspected you as a heterosexual.

As you grew to adulthood, you finally came to accept your heterosexuality. And now you have a life partner; someone whom you love and care for deeply, someone with whom you share an apartment, go to movies and go out to eat. You are partners, and you have been together for many years. Outside of the privacy of your own home, you must act only as friends. Once you are outside of your apartment, you cannot hold hands. In your own back yard, you must be careful to be out of sight of neighbors before quickly kissing. At the movies, you carefully hold hands under a jacket.

At work, other people talk freely about their same-sex spouses and their home lives. When they ask you about your weekend, you try to think of something to say that will not reveal how you really spent your weekend with your partner and other heterosexual friends. You end up lying to your friends and family. If there happens to be a disagreement between you and your opposite sex partner, you have no one to turn to and talk. People sense you are different from them, but can't put a finger on it. You become paranoid about people being able to look at you and guess you are a heterosexual. Everything you say about your friends needs to be self-monitored to make sure there are no indications of your heterosexuality. You feel alienated from society. You feel as if something is wrong with you. Questions of "Was I born this way?" and "Why do I feel this way?", cross your mind.

Your family--your two lesbian mothers, a brother and two sisters--do not know that you are heterosexual. You fear they will reject you so you continue to conceal the truth from them. At holidays you must choose between spending time with your partner or with your mothers. You began to dread holidays because you can't spend them with both your partner and family. Your mothers are always asking you when you are going to start dating. You want to tell them that you already have fallen in love but you fear disappointing them.

You and your partner do attend church together but everyone in your church seems to be in gay and lesbian families so you feel left out. The language assumes all members in the church are gay or lesbian. All the social activities are centered around being homosexual. The doctrine of the church tells you that as a heterosexual you are sick and sinful. However, even though it is not socially acceptable to be heterosexual, you trust your feelings and you know in your heart that you are a good person. To you, your heterosexuality is a very important and beautiful part of who you are. The church is yet another place where you cannot be honest about who you are.

And now, you have just learned that your partner is ill with some form of terminal cancer. For the next year you are deeply involved in caring for your beloved and preoccupied with the grief and loss you are both experiencing, as he or she grows weaker and continues to lose physical abilities.

The year is extremely stressful for you, but at this time when you most need support and understanding, you find there are few places where it is available to you. You cannot turn to your mothers or siblings, or to the Church, or even share what is going on with most of the people in your life.

And as the death of your partner approaches, his or her parents come and take over, assuming the right to make vital decisions, and you are excluded from the circle as it grows closer around your beloved at the time of death. You, who are going through the loss of your life partner are treated as "just a friend" or a "roommate". You can share the depth of your grief only with your other heterosexual friends, and others who knew the truth about your relationship.

*From Sharing Silent Journeys of Faith (p. 17-20) by P. Kellogg and F. Belvin, 1989, Minneapolis: Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities. Copyright 1989 by the Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities. Adapted by permission.

**LIVING IN A GAY AND LESBIAN WORLD
HETEROSEXUAL QUESTIONNAIRE***

The following questions are reversed questions frequently asked of gay men and lesbians based on homophobic premises.

What do you think caused your heterosexuality?

When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?

Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?

Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?

Isn't it possible that all you need is a good gay lover?

Heterosexuals have histories of failure in gay relationships. Do you think you may have turned to heterosexuality out of fear of rejection?

If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know that you wouldn't prefer that?

If heterosexuality is normal, why are a disproportionate number of mental patients heterosexual?

To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?

Your heterosexuality doesn't offend me as long as you don't try to force it on me. Why do you people feel compelled to seduce others into your sexual orientation?

If you should choose to nurture children, would you want them to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face?

The great majority of child molesters are heterosexuals. Do you really consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?

Why do you insist on being so obvious and making a public spectacle of your heterosexuality? Can't you just be who you are and keep it quiet?

How can you ever hope to become a whole person if you limit yourself to a compulsive, exclusive heterosexual object choice, and remain unwilling to explore and develop your normal, healthy, God-given homosexual potential?

Heterosexuals are noted for assigning themselves and each other to narrowly restricted, stereotyped sex-roles. Why do you cling to such unhealthy role playing?

How can you enjoy a fully satisfying sexual experience or deep emotional rapport with a person of the opposite sex, when the obvious physical, biological, and temperamental differences between you are so vast? How can a man understand what pleases a woman sexually, or vice-versa?

Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?

With all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?

Shouldn't you ask the far-out straight types, like swingers, Hell's Angels and Jesus freaks, to conform more? Wouldn't that improve your image?

How could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual like you, considering the menace of overpopulation?

Techniques have been developed with which you might be able to change if you really want to. Have you considered trying aversion therapy?

A disproportionate number of criminals, hippies, welfare recipients, and other irresponsible or anti-social types are heterosexual. Why would anyone hire a heterosexual for a responsible position?

Do heterosexuals hate and/or distrust others of their own sex? Is that what makes them heterosexual?

Does heterosexual acting-out necessarily make one a heterosexual. Can't a person have loving friends of the opposite sex without being labeled a heterosexual?

Why are heterosexuals so promiscuous?

Why do you make a point of attributing heterosexuality to famous people? Is it to justify your own heterosexuality?

Could you really trust a heterosexual therapist/counselor to be objective and unbiased? Don't you fear he/she might be inclined to influence you in the direction of his/her own leanings?

*From Sharing Silent Journey's of Faith: Embracing Our Exiled Gay Brothers and Lesbian Sisters. (appendix 12-2) by P. Kellogg and F. Belvin, 1989, Minneapolis: Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities.

HETEROSEXUAL PRIVILEGE

Objective

To learn how a heterosexual world is oppressive to gay men, lesbians and bisexuals..

Process

Divide the class into small discussion groups.

Ask each group to make a list of privileges that heterosexuals have which gay men and lesbians do not have. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for discussion.

Ask each group to report their list.

Add the following privileges if they were not already mentioned.*

The right to:

- Marry.
- Kiss or show affection in public.
- Talk about your relationship.
- Not question your normalcy.
- Show pain openly when a relationship ends.
- Have children without questions.
- Be open about apartment hunting with a significant other.
- Be validated by your religion.
- Be socially accepted by neighborhoods and/or neighbors.
- Feel comfortable in children's school with children's teachers and school activities.
- Dress without worrying about what it represents.
- Have in-laws.
- Not hide friends and social activities geared to the same sex.
- Not to resent media for heterosexual reference base (or feel excluded).
- Share holidays with a lover and families.
- Openly discuss politics without fear of someone reading between the lines.
- Have your children be comfortable with their friends, by not being teased at school and by being able to have friends visit.
- Family support.

*From Sharing Silent Journeys of Faith: Embracing Our Exiled Gay Brothers and Lesbian Sisters. (appendix 7-1) by P. Kellogg & F. Belvin, 1989, Minneapolis: Catholic Pastoral Committee.

ATTITUDES EXERCISE***Objectives**

To encourage students to examine their own oppressive attitudes towards gay men, lesbians, or bisexuals.

To clarify inconsistencies in students' beliefs about human rights.

Process

Show the film Pink Triangle.** Introduce the film by explaining that it explores prejudiced attitudes against gays and lesbians and provides a historical perspective. Show the film. (It runs for 35 minutes.)

Pass out the questionnaire (see p. 111) and ask the student's to fill in their honest responses. This questionnaire will not be handed in.

Divide the class into small discussion groups, and ask them to discuss their responses with one another.

Go around and join each group to help facilitate discussion. Point out discrepancies that you observe. For example a student may indicate that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals should not be denied civil rights, but also marks that they don't want them to be teachers or have children. When students mark that gays, lesbians and bisexuals should not be allowed the same rights as heterosexuals, ask them how they would enforce this. Continue to challenge these inconsistencies.

Often students want to distance themselves from any acts of oppression. It is comfortable to be a passive non-oppressor. Point out that this is not feasible. Assist each group in confronting one another's oppressive feelings and actions.

*Developed from an interview with Julie Andrzejewski based on an exercise she has designed for the classroom. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

**Blumenfeld, W. (Producer). (1982). Pink Triangle. [Film]. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Documentary Films.

ATTITUDES EXERCISE
QUESTIONNAIRE*

Check as many of the following statements that you are in agreement with.

I want lesbians and gay men:

1. to be executed.
2. to be jailed.
3. to be forced into therapy. If therapy fails, then _____.
4. to be denied basic civil rights under the law (jobs, health care, education, etc.)
5. to be celibate.
6. to stay closeted.
7. to be given full civil rights under the law.
8. to be allowed equal access to all the resources of our society (jobs, health care, education, etc.).
9. to be allowed equal access to lesbian/gay history and the contributions of gays and lesbians to society.
10. to have the right to be teachers.
11. to have the right to be parents, the right of custody of their children.
12. to be allowed the same freedoms as heterosexuals in showing affection.

*Designed by Julie Andrzejewski. Dr. Andrzejewski is a professor at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education, St. Cloud State University.

Chapter 6

ABLEISM

People with disabilities are beginning to unite and organize for their rights. Discrimination is encountered in employment practices, housing, accessibility of public buildings, schooling and public transportation. Images of people with disabilities are portrayed in unrealistic stereotypes in print and on the screen. These stereotypes tend to perpetuate and justify the oppression.

In spite of the widespread discrimination, organizing disabled people has proven difficult because of individuals' reluctance to identify with having a disability at all due to the social stigma. Also because there are many different types of disabilities, there is not a singular discriminatory experience shared by all disabled people, nor is there a singular remedy for the variety of discrimination. Other barriers to organizing are lack of transportation and financial resources.

This chapter's exercises will introduce students to stereotypes towards people with disabilities and how attitudes are formed and influenced by the media. Personal attitudes and images will also be explored. Students will examine the barriers to accessibility and practice strategizing and organizing for disability rights. Students will also learn how our current economic system and power

structure creates barriers for the disabled. Through these exercises students will begin to recognize that supporting disability rights is beneficial to all as the term "temporarily able-bodied" suggests.

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS*

Objectives

To explore students' first memories of disabilities and how those first impressions may still influence their attitudes today.

To discover how many first impressions of disabilities are based on stereotypes.

Process

Divide the class into small discussion groups.

Ask everyone to think about the first time they became aware of disabilities. When did they realize that people with disabilities existed or were different from able-bodied people.

Have them write down what thoughts first entered their consciousness about it. Were they afraid or curious or without feeling?

Allow five to ten minutes for this then ask them to discuss what they wrote with one another.

Ask them to discuss where these thoughts came from. Ask them if they saw something on television, met someone with a disability, or heard their parents comment.

Now ask them to close their eyes and picture a person with a disability.

What images form in your mind and what words come to mind?

Where did these images and words come from?

How many of these are based on stereotypes and fears?

Where did these images and words come from?

*Designed from an interview with Marj Schneider. Ms. Schneider is the founder of the Women's Braille Press in Minneapolis, MN. She also is an adjunct faculty at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education at St. Cloud State University.

MEDIA IMAGES OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Objectives

To explore images of disabled people as portrayed in the media.

To examine how these portrayals affect attitudes and form stereotypes of the disabled.

Process

Ask the students to bring in any articles from newspapers or magazines about people with disabilities. Also ask them to document stories from television news. Give them one week to gather this information.

Divide the class into small discussion groups to review their articles and documented stories.

Ask each group to give a brief overview of the articles they have gathered. After everyone has reported, ask them to write down any similarities or themes that were prevalent in the stories.

Common themes:

- Disabled people overcoming their disability against great odds ie. trekking across America in their wheelchair.
- Disabilities being presented as a terrible tragedy.
- People with disabilities deserve our pity because they cannot lead "normal" lives.
- Generous, kind people who raise money for the handicapped.

Discuss the portrayal of the disabled in movies and cartoons.*

Give some examples of characters that were disabled.
(The Joker, Elmer Fudd, the Hunchback, Captain Ahab, Captain Hook Etc.)

How are these disabled characters portrayed?
(evil, punished with a disability because they were evil, bitter, angry, stupid, mostly with undesirable traits)

Encourage discussion on how these themes create stereotypes of people with disabilities and often serve to help able-bodied people feel good about themselves. They are either glad they don't have a disability, or feel good because money is being raised for these "poor, unfortunate" people.

Next ask the students what is missing from the media. Discuss the lack of stories pertaining to the rights of the disabled or the obstacles that society creates for the disabled.

Ask them to list some of those obstacles.

Discuss how these themes and stereotypes affect their images and feelings towards disabled people and how it affects disabled people.

3

*Suggested Resource: Gartner, A. & Joe, T. (Eds.). (1986). Images of the disabled, disabling images. New York: Praeger.

PUBLIC BUILDING SURVEYS***Objectives**

To increase understanding of the difficulty of mobility for disabled people created by the design of public buildings.

To increase awareness of how society disables people with disabilities.

Process

Obtain the current guidelines for accessibility for public buildings from your State Council on Disability. The phone number for Minnesota's council is 612-296-6785.

Divide your class into groups of three to five people. Give each group a copy of the guidelines.

Give them the following instructions:

Each group will choose a public building to survey. It may be useful for some groups to survey newer buildings, while other groups survey older buildings for comparison.

Decide when to meet and survey your building. In addition to the guidelines, you will need a tape measure, pen and paper.

Check the areas of the building listed in the guidelines and write down your measurements for comparison to the codes. Keep in mind that the codes themselves often are not adequate and do not insure easy mobility for disabled people. It can be helpful to imagine getting around in the building as if you are visually impaired, in a wheelchair, or on crutches.

Write down obstacles to mobility that you observe.

If possible, talk to the building supervisor regarding their thoughts about accessibility of their building and how many disabled people use their facility.

In class ask each group to report their findings.

Discuss their reactions and the following questions:

- Are the code guidelines adequate to ensure accessibility?
- Are any of the barriers to mobility unnecessary?
- Do you think people are disabled only by their physical or mental impairments or by society?

*Designed from an interview with Marj Schnieder. Ms. Schnieder is the founder of the Women's Braille Press in Minneapolis, MN. She also is an adjunct faculty at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education at St. Cloud State University.

AN ACCESSIBLE WORLD

Objectives

To look at how society impedes disability rights.

To explore how discrimination against the disabled could be eliminated.

Process*

Divide students into small discussion groups.

Assign each group with a disability ie. visually impaired, hearing impaired, in a wheelchair etc.

Read the following instructions:

The majority of the U.S. citizens have the same disability as you do. You are to envision what an accessible world would look like to you. For example, if the majority of people were hearing impaired, what form of communication would we have to replace the telephone? Think about communication and transportation systems, architectural designs, clothing designs, product mix, and recreational activities.

Give each group 15 to 20 minutes to discuss and prepare a report to present to the class on their design for an accessible world.

Discussion questions:

How would that world look to able-bodied people?

In your accessible world, would people with disabilities be as disabled as they are now in a world designed for able bodied people?

Do we now have the technological capability for some of your ideas?

If yes, what keeps companies from researching and designing these products?

*Designed from an interview with Marj Schneider. Ms. Schneider is the founder of the Women's Braille Press in Mpls, MN. She also is an adjunct faculty at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education at St. Cloud State University.

DISABLED STUDENTS PROTEST

Objectives

To increase understanding of the discrimination people with disabilities experience.

To better understand the media coverage of disabled people's issues.

To examine the barriers people with disabilities have to obtaining an equal education.

Process*

Divide the class into three groups. Two groups of five to seven members, and the remainder of the class in the third group.

Group one will be school administrators.

Group two will be newspaper and television reporters.

Group three will be students with disabilities.

Explain the role play:

Disabled students at Ableton University have been asking for improved accessibility to university buildings which is necessary for an equal education. School administrators have responded by confirming the importance of this issue and agreeing to make it a top priority. Since this time the students have seen little real improvement or change. They feel that action will not be taken unless the administrators are pressured. The students have staged a "sit in" in the administration building stating that they will not leave until an acceptable agreement is reached. The administrators have ignored them as best a possible most of the day but it is nearing 3:00 P.M. and the building will close in a couple of hours. The administrators have agreed to meet with the students if they will leave the building at 5:00 P.M. They also have notified the police and have threatened to have the students arrested if they do not leave at that time.

The students have agreed to meet with the administrators but have not agreed to anything else. The students will have to decide if they will risk arrest. The media have begun to arrive with microphones and cameras to cover the story. They want to be there if the students are arrested. Keep in mind the public's response to disabled people being arrested, and the obstacles that the police officers may encounter while attempting to jail them.

Give each group about 20 minutes to meet separately and plan their strategy for this public meeting.

Allow 15 to 20 minutes for the role play.

Follow up with a discussion:

How did you feel about your roles and about what happened?

What barriers to getting an education do you see at your own campus?

How can this be changed?

Because of the societal stigma, many disabled people do not identify themselves as disabled. This makes organizing for disability rights difficult. Lack of public transportation and financial resources also makes organizing very difficult. How would you begin to change this?

*Designed from an interview with Marj Schnieder. Ms. Schnieder is the founder of the Women's Braille Press in Minneapolis, MN. She also is an adjunct faculty at the Center for Human Relations and Multicultural Education at St. Cloud State University.

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