



A Lesson Plan for STEREOTYPES

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This is an activity combining both critical thinking and physical exercise.

First, small pieces of paper are handed out to each student (one or two per student). Then students are asked to write down on that piece of paper a phrase that they think represents themselves either as a person or as a group. Phrases can range from very common characteristics to less common ones. Examples can be: “I am wearing jeans today”, “I have brown/blue eyes”, “I have more than three siblings”, “I live in a small village”, etc.

All of the pieces of paper are collected and put into a opaque container (a jar, a hat, a cardboard box).

One student is selected as co-ordinator and is given the container. The other students form a line along one side of the classroom.

The co-ordinating student retrieves one piece of paper from the container and reads aloud the phrase written. Everyone who agrees with the phrase has to run to the other side of the room while those who don't agree stay in their place.

Students then reflect on the group they are found in and how large or small it is. They can thus see who else has something in common with them, even though they might not expect it.

Students then reform the line and the process is repeated. The activity can be set to music.

This can be done as an icebreaking exercise.

In addition, there can be some pre-arranged phrases as a safeguard (“I am a boy/girl”, “I go to school”). If in the course of the activity, some phrases isolate someone, the co-ordinating student can use one of the safeguard phrases and bring the group back together.