

DIVERSITY CIRCLE ACTIVITY



OBJECTIVE: To expose stereotypes to a critical examination.

INSTRUCTIONS: For this activity, have your students form a circle. Explain to them that you will be calling out various archetypes that they might have been identified with in high school. When you call out a particular archetype, instruct students who identify with it to enter the circle. Then, ask students in the circle to come up with some stereotypes associated with that group. Finally, use this as a starting point for a discussion about how stereotypes work. Be sure to allow the people in the circle to respond to the stereotypes.

Some archetypes you can use are:

- Jocks
- Preps
- Rappers
- Punks
- Goths
- Skaters
- Hippies
- Cheerleaders
- Nerds

You can also use archetypes associated with activities:

- A-students/Honors students
- Particular sports (football, softball, volleyball, etc.,--especially if you know you have students who have participated in those activities)
- Chess club
- Video gamers
- Theatre

Finally, you can draw it into their current experience by talking about majors or potential majors such as Business, Education, Psychology, Math, Computers, Engineering, and so on. The list is limitless. You can also have them suggest some archetypes that you have missed.

Because this is a potentially sensitive discussion, the role of the instructor as moderator is a particularly important one. Make sure you both lead into and follow-up with a discussion about stereotypes. This is an activity you may want to do after several class meetings (rather than the first day) after students have had a chance to get to know one another. One way to break the ice at the beginning is to start the circle by saying “Professor” and entering the circle yourself, allowing students to discuss the stereotypes they may have of you and other professors. Then, you can ease into the discussion about the students themselves.