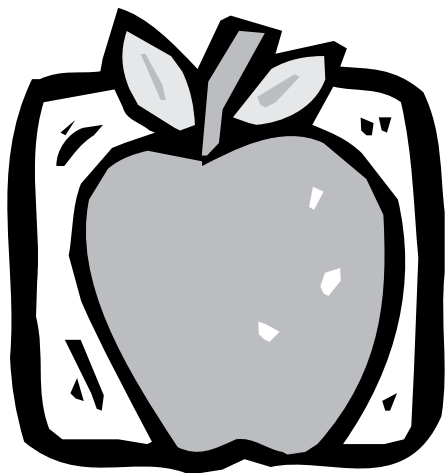


More

Diversity Activities

for

Youth and Adults



PENNSSTATE



College of Agricultural Sciences
Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension

Introduction

Why is appreciating diversity important for youth and adults?

The face of the United States and its workplace is changing. A growing number of neighborhoods and communities contain a complex mix of races, cultures, languages, and religious affiliations. At the same time, the widening gap between the rich and the poor is creating greater social class diversity. In addition, the U.S. population includes more than 43 million people with physical and mental challenges.

For these reasons, today's youth and adults are more likely to face the challenges of interacting and working with people different from themselves. The ability to relate well to all types of people in the workplace is a leadership skill that is becoming increasingly important. Understanding, accepting, and valuing diverse backgrounds can help young people and adults thrive in this ever-changing society.

How can these activities boost understanding of diversity?

Learning about diversity can be fun. The activities in this publication can help participants:

- Recognize how we place self-imposed limits on the way we think.
- Discover that, in many ways, people from different cultures and backgrounds hold similar values and beliefs.
- Become more aware of our own cultural viewpoints and the stereotypes we may have inadvertently picked up.
- Accept and respect the differences and similarities in people.

When and where should these activities be used?

The activities in this publication are appropriate for use by teachers, youth leaders, and child care professionals. While most of the activities are appropriate for older youth (middle school and above) and adults, some of the activities may be adapted for younger children. Decisions should be based on the facilitator's knowledge of the group's cognitive level and needs.

Some of the activities—including “Complimentary Round Table” and “Chocolate Milk and Shades of Skin Color”—can be used as discussion starters or icebreakers. Others such as “Is That a Fact?” may be the basis for an entire lesson. In either case, the facilitator should allow enough time for discussion at the end of each activity. Debriefing is important for dealing with unresolved feelings or misunderstandings. Conducting activities in an atmosphere of warmth, trust, and acceptance is equally as important.

Is That a Fact?

Goals

To articulate the difference between fact and opinion and to identify ways to clarify or qualify statements of opinion.

Time

30 minutes

Materials

Sets of Fact/Opinion Statement Cards (see directions below)

Fact/Opinion Statement Cards

Create sets of Fact/Opinion Statement Cards by writing the following statements on blank index cards, one statement per card. Add or substitute statements of your choice.

- Girls are smarter than boys.
- Americans are friendly.
- Some boys are good at sports.
- Utah is a state in the United States.
- The world is a better place now than it was 100 years ago.
- Wheelchair users feel sorry for themselves.
- The Nile is the longest river in the world.
- Women make better teachers than men.
- People with accents are not smart.

- Most people in Africa live in urban areas.
- The United States is the richest country in the world.
- Americans love French fries.
- Some rich people are stuck up.
- There is more farmland in the United States than in any other country.
- Homeless people are lazy.
- In the United States, the sun comes up every day.
- Men are usually taller than women.
- This is the best school in the whole town.
- Judaism is a religion.
- China is the most populous country in the world.
- Most people in Honduras are unhappy.

Introduction

Understanding the difference between fact and opinion is critical to our ability to examine our reactions to events and people. Stereotypes and prejudices are often based on opinions that are perceived as facts.

Procedure

Write three examples of facts on one side of the board and three examples of opinions on the other side of the board

Examples of facts:

- George has blue eyes.
- This room has four windows.
- There are 50 states in the United States.

Examples of opinions:

- This room is too warm.
- Math class is boring.
- The best cars are made in the United States.

Ask participants to identify the statements of fact and the statements of opinion. Label each group.

Have participants work with partners to come up with definitions for the words “fact” and “opinion.” Choose a group definition (use a dictionary if necessary).

Divide participants into small groups of four to five people each. Provide each group with a set of Fact/Opinion Statement cards. Ask one person in each group to “deal” the cards out to the group members until all cards have been distributed.

Fact/Opinion Statement Cards

China is the most populous country in the world.

Americans are friendly.

Utah is a state in the United States.

Today is a beautiful day.

Women make better teachers than men.

Judaism is a religion.

Girls are smarter than boys.

Some boys are good at sports.

The United States is the richest country in the world.

Most people in Africa live in urban areas.

Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world.

Some redheads have bad tempers.

Wheelchair users feel sorry for themselves.

Some rich people are stuck up.

Men are usually taller than women.

The world is a better place now than it was 100 years ago.

Most people in Honduras are unhappy.

There is more farmland in the United States than in any other country.

Americans love French fries.

Homeless people are lazy.

This is the best school in the whole town.

The Nile is the longest river in the world.

People with accents are not smart.

The sun comes up every day.

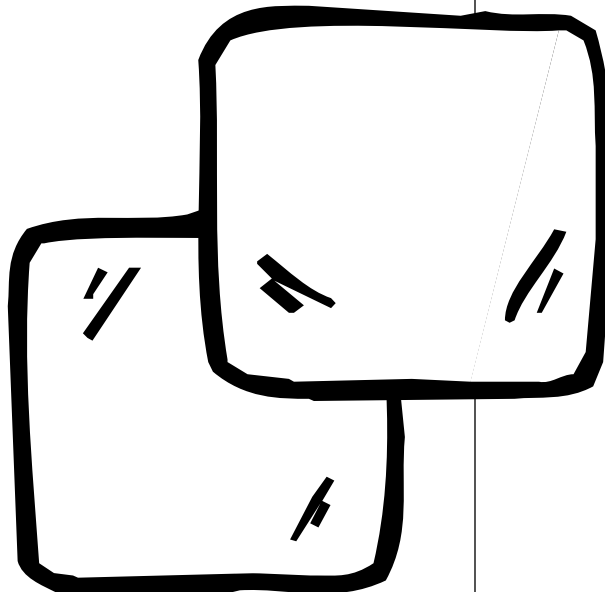
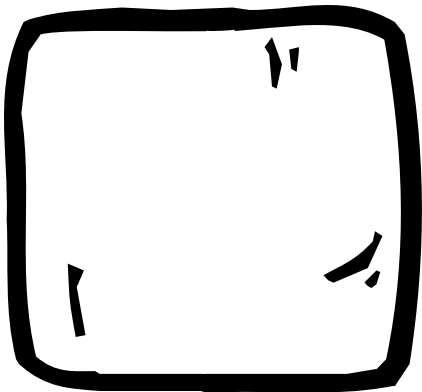
Have each small group divide its work space into three areas, one labeled “Facts,” another “Opinions,” and the third “Need More Information.” Have participants work together to place the statements in the appropriate areas according to the definitions they agreed on earlier.

Ask participants to examine the statements in the “Need More Information” category. Have them work together to identify sources of information that would prove or disprove the statements.

Discussion

When the small groups have completed their work, bring the whole group back together to discuss the process. Use the following questions to check the students’ understanding of the difference between fact and opinion.

- How can you tell whether something is a fact or an opinion?
- What makes deciding if something is a fact or an opinion difficult?
- When you were working in small groups, did everyone agree on which statements were fact and which were opinion? Could any of the opinion statements be considered facts if we had more information or if the statements were more specific?
- If you’re not sure whether something is a fact, what can you do?
- Why is knowing whether something is a fact or an opinion important?



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