



General Psychology 20 (Theme Six)
Personal Psychology 20 (Theme Three and Six)

Respecting
Diversity

Living
Respectfully

Preventing
Prejudice

Examining Stereotypes

Contributor

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Objectives

This lesson is designed to encourage students to examine stereotypes. Students will consider how stereotypes can cause harm or conflict. They will engage in a project to examine stereotypes and in some cases, find solutions to problems caused by stereotyping.

🕒 **Time:** two to three 80-minute periods

✂ Materials

- Flip chart, blackboard, whiteboard, or online writing tool (for synchronous distance educators).

Getting Started

Ask students to brainstorm what they know about the word *stereotype*. This may be done in a large group setting (teacher directed) or in small groups that report to the large group. Create a common definition.

Teacher Information: Originally, referring to an old-fashioned printing technique, a stereotype was an impression taken from lead type (letters, numbers and symbols), such that subsequent copies of documents could be made with no changes. It was essentially a fixed pattern. This technique was generalized into a metaphor for repeating a set of ideas with no changes. Today's definition of a stereotype retains the essence of the original definition and refuse to which the preconceived, standardized and oversimplified impression of the characteristics that typify a person or a group of people.

Engaging Interest

Have the students read the poem "The Blind Men and the Elephant," The poem can be found at http://www.noogenesis.com/pineapple/blind_men_elephant.html. (Information from McGraw-Hill states that the text for this edition of the story is in the public domain.)

Learning Activities

Ask students to consider a shop owner who allows a maximum of two teenagers in his store at a time. What are the shopkeeper's assumptions about teenagers? How has he stereotyped all young people?

In groups, have students brainstorm and record a list of commonly held stereotypes. Emphasize that they are not listing their personal beliefs. As a class, discuss the list generated and discuss how stereotypes can cause someone to act unfairly toward another person. Remind students that stereotypes may also portray people in a positive light (e.g., Canadians are polite, Americans are friendly).

- Make the students aware that many stereotypes are founded on characteristics that are genetically or hormonally based, such as skin colour or gender. Students may want to read the articles provided (*see file) or do research on hormonal and genetic influences with respect to gender preference or other characteristics.
- Discuss cultural differences that may lead to erroneous stereotypes. An example of a cultural difference is the dictate in some countries, such as Indonesia, against eating with the left hand, which is seen as unclean. In other countries, such as Nepal, showing (or exposing) bare legs is considered culturally unacceptable. As another example, different cultures have various practices regarding such things as how close one should stand when talking to someone.
- When stereotypes negatively affect a person's self-concept and self-esteem, emotional problems may develop. The way people interact in relationships is often based on the reactions they get from others.

Project

Students choose one of the following:

- Create a poster/collage depicting how a group is stereotyped in their community, along with a message to treat all people with respect.
- Write a poem or song that illustrates the feelings of a person who has been unfairly stereotyped.
- Draw a cartoon strip depicting a stereotypical situation and how it might be resolved in a positive manner.
- Write a fable that teaches a lesson about why we shouldn't stereotype.
- Present a one-act play portraying stereotyping that depicts a positive resolution.
- Write a story describing the effects stereotyping on a person and his or her future development (good or bad).

* Students may work on their own or in a group to complete these projects.

Assessment/Analysis

Evaluation questions (group or individual, marked or not-for-marks)

1. What is the problem with stereotyping people based on physical or biological characteristics?
2. People need to categorize things and experiences in their lives in order to make sense of their world. What are some positive and negative aspects of categorization?
3. We often hear people speak ill of others based on stereotypes. Suggest some things that can be done to educate such people.

Application

Individual Assignment:

1. How did it make you feel? Have you ever felt that you were unfairly stereotyped?
2. What stereotypes have you held in the past? What made you change your perception?
3. Do you still hold any stereotypes? What are they?

Extension Activity

Begin a discussion of gender roles and relationships. Refer to stereotypes of men and women in the past and present. Make a chart similar to the following, or use Handout 1:

| Role or Topic | Expectations of Men in the Past | Expectations of Men Today | Expectation of Women in the Past | Expectations of Women Today |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Role in a family | | | | |
| Role in the workplace | | | | |
| Types of acceptable hobbies and sporting activities | | | | |
| Role in parenting | | | | |
| Other | | | | |

Group students appropriately for your classroom situation. Have each group respond to the following three questions. After 10 or so minutes, go over the group responses together. Explore any differences. Address any major issues that may arise.

What are the main differences between the roles and expectations from the past and in the present?

Learner Outcomes for Personal and General Psychology 20

The objectives of both Personal and General Psychology 20 are to help “students develop skills and understanding that make it possible for more effective living in our complex environment and to help them understand and appreciate the reasons that underlie one’s own actions and those of others.”

The specific learner outcomes for Person Psychology link to Theme 3 (sections e and f) and Theme 6 (section f). The learner outcomes for General Psychology link to Theme 6 (sections a, e, and f). It is hoped that the students, through listening, speaking, reading and writing, will become actively involved in exploring their own belief systems.

Safe and Caring Topics and Concepts

- Understanding Conflict, Peace, Justice, and Violence
 - Identifying how injustice affects people
- Working Cooperatively in Groups
 - Respecting an appreciating others’ ideas, insights, solutions and contributions
- Stereotyping Leads to Prejudice, Discrimination and Conflict-
 - Identifying ways to avoid stereotyping people and situations

Teaching Strategies

| | Cooperative Learning | Inquiry Learning | Direct Instruction |
|---|---|------------------|--------------------|
| Go to www.sacsc.ca/strategies for strategy descriptions | Think-pair/group-share Brainstorming | | Chalk and talk |

| Generalization and Transfer | Peer Teaching | Empathy/Affective Education | General Teaching Activities/Ideas |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Modelling, Literature | | | Creation of poems, drama, productions, and so on |

Supplementary Resources

- http://www.noogenesis.com/pineapple/blind_men_elephant.html
- *Edmonton Journal* articles (see attached) PDF files

Student Handouts: When possible, and if time permits, have students copy and create their own notes. This makes them take a more active and stimulating role in their own learning.

Student Handout 1

Gender Roles and Relationships

| Role or Topic | Expectations of Men in the Past | Expectations of Men Today | Expectation of Women in the Past | Expectations of Women Today |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Role in a family | | | | |
| Role in the workplace | | | | |
| Types of acceptable hobbies and sporting activities | | | | |
| Role in parenting | | | | |
| Other | | | | |

What are the main differences between the roles and expectations from the past and in the present?