



Volunteer Information Sheets

Outcome Area: How our perceptions contribute to cultural misunderstanding and prejudice.

Curriculum Area: Valuing and Respecting Diversity

Description of Activity: This diversity exercise uses cultural artifacts to help students clarify their cultural identities and build pride.

Age Level: middle school-adult

Time Involved: 45 minutes

Supplies: One sheet of lined paper for each students and pencils.

Prior to the lesson students are asked to bring five items in a small paper bag that represent important aspects about you as a person. One item should be a certificate or award and another should illustrate your cultural roots or ethnic identity. Describe on a piece of paper no larger than 3"x 5" any of the five items to large to put in the bag.

Instructions:

1. Divide students into teams of two members.
2. Distribute one page of lined writing paper to each student.
3. Have each student print his/her full name on the paper and exchange it with his/her partner.
4. Tell the students to exchange their bags and they have five minutes to examine the contents.
5. Ask each student to write on the lined paper a five-paragraph description of the other student's identity based on the bag's contents. (10-12 minutes)
6. The students exchange and read each other's descriptions. (5 minutes)
7. The students take alternating turns to explain how/why each object represents his/her identity. (10-12 minutes)

Discussion Questions:

Conduct a discussion about the exercise, focusing on how initial perceptions contribute to cultural misunderstanding and prejudice. (10-15 minutes)

Source: Caruso, J. (1999). My Life In A Bag. *Electronic Magazine of Multicultural Education* [online], 1(4), 2 paragraphs.<Available: <http://www.eastern.edu/publication/emme/1999fall/caruso.html>>[2007, August 22]

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