



Writing for Change

RAISING AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE, POWER, AND DISCRIMINATION

1.16 Re-conceiving Notions

Objectives

Create an awareness of the kinds of assumptions or preconceived notions your students hold about people in ethnic groups different from their own.

Explore the diversity of attitudes and behaviors within ethnic groups as well as between them.

Materials needed

Copies of the handout

Time needed

Ten to twenty minutes

Instructor directions

Discuss the idea of assumptions or preconceived notions and their relation to bias and the “-isms.”

Have students identify some of their assumptions and then examine whether they apply uniformly to the listed ethnic groups.



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1.16 Re-conceiving Notions Handout

Directions

Identify one specific assumption or preconceived notion you have had about people from the following groups.

Ethnic or cultural group

I think people in this group. . .

Koreans

African-Americans

Jews

Orthodox Russians

Buddhists

Mexicans

Albanians

Muslims

Native Alaskans

Japanese

Ethiopians

Thais

Native American Indians or First Nations

Nicaraguans

Greeks

Vietnamese

Saudi Arabians

Germans

Pacific Islanders

Chinese

Iraqis

Explain how you became aware of this assumption or preconceived notion within yourself.
Answer the following questions:

Where did your preconceived notion come from? Why do you hold it?

In what ways has your experience with people from this group confirmed your assumption or preconceived notion? In what ways has your experience challenged your assumption?

How might stereotypes obscure differences between people of a specified ethnic group?
How might stereotypes obscure similarities between people of different ethnic groups?

How do these kinds of assumptions harm individuals? What opportunities might you have to benefit from associations with people of other ethnic groups if you did not hold preconceived notions about them?