



EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Dealing with Stereotyping, Prejudice, Discrimination, and Scapegoating¹

By William J. Kreidler

Lesson in Brief:

Students identify strategies for dealing with conflicts that are rooted in stereotyping and prejudice. Once students have acquired the vocabulary, they are ready to discuss how to handle prejudice-related conflicts. In this lesson, students examine effective and ineffective ways to handle prejudice-related conflicts, using skills they acquired earlier in this course of study. A theme to emphasize during this lesson is that positive and constructive action can be taken to deal with these conflicts.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to

- Define stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.
- Describe how each is potentially dangerous and can contribute to conflict.
- Identify strategies for dealing with prejudice-related conflicts.

Vocabulary:

- *Stereotype* -- A mental image of a group based on opinion without regard to individual differences.

¹ This lesson is adapted from the version in *Conflict Resolution in the Middle School* by William J. Kreidler, (Cambridge: Educators for Social Responsibility, 1994, 1997.) pp 265-274. Exercise from Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson, *Open Minds to Equality*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1983). Adapted with permission.

- *Prejudice* -- A negative judgment or opinion formed about a group without knowledge of the facts.
- *Assumptions* -- Conclusions based on limited knowledge of the facts.
- *Discrimination* -- Treating people in a less favorable way because they are members of a particular group. Discrimination is prejudice in action.
- *Scapegoating* -- Holding one person or group responsible for all the community's problems. Isolating or rejecting a person or group.

Lesson Overview:

- Agenda and Vocabulary Review
- Discuss How Stereotyping and Prejudice Are Harmful
- Identify Strategies for Prejudice-related Conflicts
- Evaluation/Review of Key Points
- Closing (Optional)

Time Needed: One class period (minimum 40 minutes), depending on the additional activities you use.

Handouts:

- Prejudice Situation Cards
- We All Lose
- Interrupting Prejudice Case Studies
- Strategies for Interrupting Prejudice

Lesson Sequence:

Agenda and Vocabulary Review

Write the agenda on the board and review it with the class. Introduce any vocabulary in the lesson that you think will be unfamiliar to your students.

Discuss How Stereotyping, Prejudice, Discrimination, and Scapegoating Are Harmful

Handouts: *We All Lose!* (one copy for each group), one set of *Prejudice Situation Cards* for each group of three to four students

1. Divide students into groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the *We All Lose!* handout and a set of *Prejudice Situation Cards*.
2. Have a student in the group draw one of the cards and read it to the group. The group then fills in the first box on the handout, identifying the act involved and how it harms the people in the situation.
3. When the group is satisfied with its responses to the first situation, a second student draws another card and the process is repeated. The group keeps drawing cards until the handout is filled in completely.
4. Begin the discussion by having each group share with the class its responses to one of the situations.

Discussion

- What are some of the ways people in these situations “lost” as a result of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, or scapegoating?
- What are some ways the people who did the stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, or scapegoating “lost”?
- What kinds of conflicts do these situations represent? How would you classify them?
- What is the role of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, or scapegoating in the conflicts—is it the cause of the conflict? An escalator?
- Can you think of other examples where people have lost out because of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, or scapegoating—either as victims or perpetrators?

- How do you think the people in these situations learned stereotypes or prejudices?
- Have you ever been the victim of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, or scapegoating?

Identify Strategies for Prejudice-related Conflicts

Handouts: *Interrupting Prejudice Case Studies* (two case studies for each group of three or four), *Strategies for Interrupting Prejudice* (one for each group of three or four)

1. Review the six styles for handling conflicts that were introduced previously and are summarized here in *Strategies for Interrupting Prejudice* (check to see if students understand this vocabulary). Explain that all of these ways can be used to deal with prejudice- and stereotype-related conflicts.
2. Divide students into groups of three or four and give each group a copy of the *Strategies for Interrupting Prejudice* handout. Explain that each group will receive two different case studies that tell of how someone dealt with or “interrupted” prejudice in a conflict. Some of the people were effective, some were not. The group will have about five minutes to read the case, then discuss the questions on the handout and decide what they think. (You may allow more time for this activity if you choose.)
3. Distribute two case studies to each group. Some groups will have the same case studies as others. You will want to consider the standards of your community in choosing which case studies to use. Allow about five minutes for each case study. As the groups work, give them time warnings. After five minutes, they should move on to the second case study, unless you are able to give them more time.
4. When the groups have finished, have each group share with the class one of the case studies they discussed.

Discussion

- What were the most ineffective ways of dealing with these conflicts?
- What values were at work in these conflicts?
- What role did values play in the conflicts?
- Did any of the people in these cases use conflict productively? How?
- Have you ever been in similar situations? What did you do?

Evaluation/Review of Key Points

1. Have volunteers respond to the following question. If you were going to describe this class to a friend who was not here, what is one thing you would say about it?
2. Summarize key points from the lesson:
 - Stereotyping can lead to prejudice, which can lead to discrimination, which can lead to scapegoating.
 - Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and scapegoating harm all the people involved.
 - Conflict resolution skills can help in handling prejudice-related conflicts.

Closing (Optional)

Prejudice Situation Cards

1. Steven was hit in the eye with a softball, and to everyone's surprise, he started to cry. The other guys then started to snicker. Jorge felt bad for him, but laughed along with the other guys.

2. Some Latino students asked Shirley to join their group to do a math project. She thought that because their English wasn't good they couldn't be very smart. She joined another group. Their group got an A. Shirley's didn't.

3. Gabe was a great dancer. One day the phys. ed. teacher suggested that Gabe might want to take up ballet. Gabe liked the idea, but the more he thought about it, the more he was afraid that the other guys would make fun of him. He dropped the idea, along with lots of good exercise and a possible career.

4. Denise fell on the sidewalk. Her ankle really hurt. A black woman stopped to help her up. "I'm a doctor," she said. "Sit on this bench and let me look at that." Denise didn't trust the woman and said, "No thanks. I'm fine." She limped away.

5. Joan's family doesn't have much money and lives in a different neighborhood from Lu Ellen's. When Joan invited Lu Ellen to a birthday party, Lu assumed the house would be messy and dirty. She didn't go, and everyone told her later how nice the house was, and how good the food was.

6. Tyrell missed the bus and needed a ride to school. Ms. Gomez, who is 82, offered him a ride. Tyrell refused, thinking she'd drive off the road. He killed his feet walking the four miles to school, was late, and it started to rain.

7. Arnie's younger sister keeps calling her friend a "wild Indian." She shoots him again and again with a toy gun. Arnie is bothered by this name-calling, but he doesn't say anything.

8. Karen is having trouble in math class. She keeps going for extra help, but her grades are not improving. The teacher tells her it's okay because girls don't do well at math.

We All Lose!

Card Number -----

Stereotype or Prejudice -----

Harm caused by stereotype or prejudice to each person in the situation:

Card Number -----

Stereotype or Prejudice -----

Harm caused by stereotype or prejudice to each person in the situation:

Card Number -----

Stereotype or Prejudice -----

Harm caused by stereotype or prejudice to each person in the situation:

Interrupting Prejudice Case Studies

Case 1

A group of five middle school boys and girls were concerned about racial conflicts in the school. One of them had heard about a group of athletes that comes to middle schools and talks with students about prejudice and racism. They wanted to bring this group to their school. They met with the assistant principal and a guidance counselor and got their help in arranging an assembly. They raised money for the speakers by having a bake sale and by asking some business people to help them. The speakers came and spoke to the students, and everyone was inspired by them.

Case 2

Martin, who is an eighth grader, saw a group of three elementary students picking on a disabled man in his neighborhood. The man was getting upset, and this made the children tease him all the more. It made Martin angry to see this. "Hey you kids, knock it off, or I'm going to come after you myself." The children saw who was yelling and ran off.

Case 3

Eileen hangs out with some girls who are very popular. They often tease and laugh at Charlene, a girl in their class who doesn't have much money. Eileen hates the way they pick on Charlene, but goes along with it because she really wants this group of girls to like her.

Case 4

Liu is new to the country and doesn't speak much English. She has been teased by a group of boys in school. Now, whenever she sees these boys coming, she walks away quickly. She tries never to be where they are.

Case 5

Jon is at his relative's house on Sunday afternoon. He's sitting with all the men in his family, watching the football game. One of his uncles starts to say racist things about some of the players on the team. Jon is uncomfortable, but doesn't know what to do. His father isn't saying anything either. Jon thinks, "If I don't say anything he'll stop. I'll just let it go. It's his house."

Case 6

In homeroom some of the students are talking about gay men and making jokes. Mark's face gets very red, and suddenly he blurts out, "My uncle's gay, and he's a great guy. You guys don't know what you're talking about so just shut up!" Someone says, "Okay, Mark, relax!" The teacher comes in and the kids take their seats. Later, another student comes up to Mark and says, "I have a gay uncle, too. And I really like him. I was glad you told those kids to shut up."

Case 7

Ruth, who is African-American, is constantly in conflict with Isabel, a Latina girl in her grade. Ruth feels that Isabel is always putting her down and making racist comments about her. Isabel makes the comments in Spanish, so Ruth isn't sure. Ruth likes to go to the Youth Center, but doesn't feel comfortable when Isabel is there. She is tired of these conflicts, so she approaches Isabel one day. "Look," she says. "We really get on each other's nerves. So I'll make a deal with you. I'll stay out of your way for the whole school day if you stay out of the Youth Center." Isabel agrees to the deal.

Case 8

One day Mario's friend Dan started making jokes about Italians, saying they were stupid and dirty. Mario, who is Italian, didn't say anything. But as he walked home from Dan's house he thought to himself, "I'm going to say something. I just need to calm down and figure out how I want to say it. Then I'm going to call him tonight."

Case 9

Because of surgery she had on her leg, Casel walks with a brace and a cane. Before the surgery she couldn't walk at all. Now she goes to a new school where a group of boys taunt her every day on her way to her sixth period class. She's tried ignoring them, but they keep doing it. One day she sees one of the boys in the library, sitting by himself. She goes up to him and says, "Why do you and your friends pick on me? I never did anything to you." The boy mumbles an apology. "Will you stop?" Casel asks. The boy agrees, then leaves.

Case 10

The students in one middle school stick pretty much with their own racial and ethnic group. They don't mix much, and when they do, it's often because they're in conflict. But one of the teachers has organized a project to paint a mural on the side of the school. Eight students have been chosen to design and paint the mural. They are students from all different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and they have to make decisions together and work together. As a result of working on the project, they get to be friends and start hanging out together.

Strategies for Interrupting Prejudice

Case Study Number _____

What conflict styles did you see in this situation?

_____ Aggressive _____ Give In
_____ Collaborate _____ Avoid or Delay
_____ Compromise _____ Get Help

If you were the person in this situation, would you feel satisfied with the way it turned out?

In what ways was this response effective?

In what ways was it ineffective?

Identify three other possible responses:

Case Study Number _____

What conflict styles did you see in this situation?

_____ Aggressive _____ Give In
_____ Collaborate _____ Avoid or Delay
_____ Compromise _____ Get Help

If you were the person in this situation, would you feel satisfied with the way it turned out?

In what ways was this response effective?

In what ways was it ineffective?

Identify three other possible responses: