



Social Awareness

The Golden Rule

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

It is just as important as ever to not only respect but work to understand our differences and honor the *Golden Rule* of “treat others how you would like to be treated”. For us to embody the Golden Rule and work towards equity for all, we must actively seek to understand the different types of cultures and identities. We must additionally learn how our perceived or implicit biases contribute to discrimination. Most importantly, we must be open to learning from those who are different from ourselves.

Here are some active ways we can work towards this goal:

1. Try to avoid using physical or personal identity traits to describe people. For example, you wouldn't say “Kelly Clarkson is a great heterosexual TV host” so why would you say, “Ellen DeGeneres is a really great lesbian TV host.”
2. Avoid using language that reinforces stereotypes. Even things you might think are “good stereotypes” can often in turn reinforce the negatives ones.
3. Avoid cultural tokenism. For example, do you only share content relevant to BIPOC during Black History Month? Make sure if you're going to talk the talk you also walk the walk!

Key Takeaways:

- Students will increase tolerance of others who think differently.
- Students will gain empathy for those with less privilege.
- Students will increase accountability for their actions.
- Students will understand the difference between representation and tokenism.
- Students will understand and work to change their biases.

Duration + Materials:

- 50 minutes
- Internet and audio/visual equipment

Key Vocabulary:

- **Tokenism-** The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce.
- **Implicit Bias-** When we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge.
- **Equity-** The quality of being fair and impartial.



Activity:

1. Teachers will introduce the lesson using the pre-teaching language.
2. Teachers will show students the video *Representation vs. Tokenism*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3rUzOTeEQ4>
3. Ask students to define the difference between representation and tokenism.
4. Ask students to provide examples of how they believe representation can contribute to negative stereotypes of minority groups.
 - a. If students are having trouble coming up with examples, you can pull from this list: <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/stereotypes-in-movies/>
5. Ask students to provide examples from shows they watch where they believe tokenism is taking place and ask them to explain why.
6. Write or discuss the examples of unnecessary identity traits (found in the Supplemental Materials section) and ask students to correct them.
7. Wrap up the lesson by asking students to share positive examples of representation in the media. Explain the importance of representation and how appropriate representation in film and media ensures that “the whole story” is being told.
 - a. Be sure to include how representation is important both on the screen as well as behind the scenes.
 - b. Remind students that the lack of representation leads to children growing up with implicit biases and feelings of inferiority.

Supplemental Materials:

Unnecessary identity trait examples:

1. I had a doctor appointment today and my male nurse told me that my blood sugar was high.
2. That lesbian comedian we saw last night was really funny!
3. Our photographer was great, she even stopped to help this Asian couple find their way back to Times Square.

Remind students that even though these examples sound very ridiculous, these types of unnecessary identifiers happen every day. Urge them to be aware and to correct their friends or family when they hear them.

Reinforcement Activities:

1. Be sure to intentionally include works by diverse authors and content creators in your class.
 - a. This includes learning about the creator, immersing yourself in the work you are sharing and doing this more than just once a year.
2. Challenge student opinions by giving them opportunities to “think outside the box”.
3. Curate student work groups to ensure that students can work with peers who may have differing views and opinions.