



DIVERSITY
A PATHWAY TO SUCCESS
EDISON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



EDISON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE | DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Diversity Activities



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CHOCOLATE MILK AND SHADES OF SKIN COLORS

Discipline	Biology Psychology
Objective	To understand why people have different skin colors.
Time	5–10 minutes
Materials Needed	One glass of white milk, a spoon, a package of powdered chocolate drink mix
Delivery Method	Classroom and online, individual student and/or groups
Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. State that one way people differ is in their skin colors. Ask if anyone knows why people have different skin colors.2. Pour a glass of milk and hold it up for the class to see. Ask if anyone in the room has skin as white as the milk in the glass. (The answer should be “No” unless there is an albino in the class.)3. Inform students that this is because all of us have something in our skin color “melanin” which is a black substance.4. Hold up the package of chocolate powder. Ask students to pretend the chocolate is melanin. Make the following statements as you add chocolate to the glass:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• White people have a small amount of melanin in their skin. (Put a little chocolate in the glass and stir.)• Brown people, such as those from India, have more melanin in their skin. (Put more chocolate in the glass and stir.)• Darker people, such as many African Americans, have even more melanin in their skin. (Put more chocolate in and stir.)5. Ask students why we have different amounts of melanin in our skin. Inform them that melanin is like a curtain in our skin—it protects our skin from the sun’s ray. We need some sun to help our bodies make and use vitamins, but too much sun will burn our skin. What color we are depends on our ancestry. White people originated in western European parts of the world, where it was colder. That area did not have much bright sunlight, so people in that area developed skin with less melanin to take advantage of the smaller amount of available sunlight.<p>People who lived in India, for example, where it is hot and had a lot of sunlight, developed skin pigmentation with more melanin to protect them from the over exposure of the sun. Even people living in Africa where it is very hot all the time developed more pigmentation to protect them from the sun’s hot rays.</p>
Question:	Ask students which skin color burns faster in the summer sun?
Answer:	People with lighter skin burn worse and more quickly than people with darker skin.
Discussion	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does the color of people’s skin make them good or bad, more intelligent or less intelligent, pretty or ugly?2. What does the color of a person’s skin tell you about the person?

Discipline:	Music
Objective:	To understand other cultures forms of entertainment during specific American holidays
Time:	Faculty to set their own time.
Delivery Method:	Classroom and online, individual student and/or groups
Procedure:	Have students read a book or see a movie containing multicultural perspectives like "What's Cooking" (2000), a film that addresses Jewish, Latin, Asian and Black families in the same neighborhood dealing with similar issues around the common American holiday of Thanksgiving.
Discussion:	Prepare an oral or written presentation exploring the commonalities in issues faced and the different effects that culture has on the addressing of issues.

- Discipline:** Music
- Objective:** To explore and appreciate different types of cultural music.
- Time:** Faculty to set their own time.
- Delivery Method:** Classroom and online, individual student and/or groups
- Procedure:** Play different types of cultural music in reception or common areas. Appropriate cultural CDs could be played as your organization's telephone "hold" music on a rotating basis.
- Discussion:** Ask students to bring in examples of music from their culture and heritage or hire local cultural musical groups to provide live music for a special event to be held in the classroom.

Discipline: Business | Communication

Objective: To identify companies in Miami County area that have business dealings with companies/people from countries beyond the United States of America.

Time: Faculty to set their own time.

Delivery Method: Classroom and online, individual student and/or groups

Procedure: Use resources and books like *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: How to Do Business in 60 Countries* to find out more about the cultural norms of how business is conducted in countries where your organization has operation in, does business with or that you will be personally visiting. Remember that those norms may be similar or greatly different from the United States.

Discussion: **Guest Panel** To learn more, respectfully ask your international colleagues some questions regarding their customs around punctuality, gift-giving, business cards, negotiating, greeting protocol, forms of address, etc. When in doubt, encourage students to always ask for more information.

Have students prepare a one page report of their findings.

- Discipline:** Art
- Objective:** To feature the work of artists from various cultures and backgrounds
- Time:** Faculty to set their own time.
- Delivery Method:** Classroom or group assignment
- Procedure:** Feature the work of artists from various cultures and backgrounds during MLK, Black History and Women's History Month. Include captions that tell the story of the art and the artist. If there is enough local artist participation, invite the artists to join one or more of the showings to share their perspective.
- Activity:** View the art with at least one other person so at the conclusion you can discuss your individual viewing experiences and explore how they are the same and/or different.

Discipline: Psychology | Sociology | Anthropology | Religion | Philosophy | History | Literature

Objective: To create a personal timeline.

Time: Faculty to set their own time.

Delivery Method: Classroom and online, individual student and/or groups

Procedure: Have students create a personal timeline on a piece of paper by drawing a long straight line and labeling the left end of the line "birthday" and the right end of the line "today." Ask them to think about events in their lives that taught them about diversity and to mark those events on the timeline they have drawn. Use questions to generate ideas such as:

1. When was the first time that you met someone of a different race?
2. When was the first time that you learned another language?
3. When was the first time that you traveled far from home?
4. When was the first time that you worked with someone of a different culture?
5. When was the first time that you noticed that a person may be avoiding you?
6. When was the first time that you observed an incident that you believe could have been related to bias or prejudice?

Discussion: Ask participants to pair off with someone of a different generation or background to answer the following questions:

1. What have you learned about each other after learning about these events?
2. How do these your experiences impact you and how you view diversity (positively or negatively)? Explain?

- Discipline:** Psychology | Sociology | Anthropology | Religion | Philosophy | History | Literature
- Objective:** To discuss personal beliefs about age.
- Time:** Faculty to set their own time.
- Delivery Method:** Classroom and online, individual student and/or groups
- Procedure:** Have a group conversation regarding personal beliefs about age. Divide the group into two sections: "older" and "younger" (the composition of your larger group will determine those definitions). Give each group a question such as the following: (brainstorm additional questions) to answer:
1. What was your first car and how have your vehicles changed over time?
 2. How many jobs have you held?
 3. What songs do you remember from your childhood?
 4. How do you define "dressing for success?"
- Activity:** **Oral Presentation** Compare group responses. Ask if there were any surprises as a result of the conversation. Consider how the group's differing perspectives might impact how they work together.

WHERE WERE YOU WHEN...?

Discipline: Psychology | Sociology | Anthropology | Religion | Philosophy | History | Literature

Objective: Icebreaker or class meeting opener

Time: 5–10 minutes

Delivery Method: Classroom and online, individual student

Procedure: As an icebreaker or meeting opener, ask participants the following questions. Where were you when:

- John F. Kennedy was assassinated?
- Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated?
- Bobby Kennedy was assassinated?
- The space shuttle blew up?

Discussion: Ask participants to consider how their age may have impacted their reaction to these specific historical events. If students were of an age to remember the events, ask them how each event made them feel.

Discipline: All

Objective: To help participants think about the concept of “lookism” and to identify how appearance affects bias.

Time: Approximately 45 minutes

Materials Needed: Markers and one flipchart for each group.

DESCRIPTION

According to various Internet websites, “Lookism is prejudice or discrimination based on physical appearance, especially towards unattractive people; mainly in the workplace, but also in public settings.”

Delivery Method: Classroom and online, individual student and/or groups

Procedure: Divide the class into small groups (four to a group) and give each group a flipchart and markers.

Each group will make two flipcharts—one will be titled “How prejudice and bias focus on the physical characteristics of people” and the other will be titled “How prejudices and bias focus on the dress and makeup of people.”

Under each title, they will list how people are hindered for not meeting a group or organization’s standards (or norms). Coach the groups as they work their way through the exercise. Some items that could be listed include:

Physical Characteristics

- Overweight
- Too light or too dark
- Too young or too old
- Disfigured
- Not graced with “good looks”
- Features that are less desirable than social or cultural norms

Dress and Makeup

- Dresses out of fashion
- Body piercing
- Hair length
- Informal dress
- Impression of informality
- Expression of cultural, ethnic, religion, generational, or personal standards

Activity: After the small groups have worked on the activity for about 25 minutes, bring the groups together and have them present their findings.

Discussion: Discuss what is fair and legitimate to ask of people about physical characteristics and appearance when it comes to workplace norms.

- Ability to do the job
- Loss of customers and money due to how an organization’s employees look
- Safety requirements
- Loss of personnel because of bias about appearance

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Sources:
englishdictionary.com
Merrian-Webster.com

- Discipline:** All
- Objective:** To experience the frustrations of being left out of a group or being ignored by its members and to explore the factors associated with the behaviors of insiders and outsiders.
- Time:** 15–20 minutes
- Delivery Method:** Classroom or group assignment
- Procedure:**
1. Based upon the number of students, determine how many groups you can form containing six or seven students per group.
 2. Tell the students that you will need some volunteers. Select the same number of volunteers as you have groups. (Example: If you have thirty students, you can form five groups of six students, and then choose five volunteers.) Take the volunteers into the hall and tell them that you will return with instructions.
 3. Instruct the remaining students in the classroom to get into groups of five or six and form a circle. Tell them that the goal of each circle is to prohibit the volunteers from becoming a part of their group.
 4. The group should pick a topic of conversation, talk to each other about it and appear to be having a good time. The groups can use any means possible, except violence, to keep the volunteer from becoming a part of the group. The group members may stand close together so that the volunteer cannot get into the circle or they may simply ignore the volunteer and not talk to them. Give each group a sheet of paper containing their assigned group number
 5. Leave the classroom and return to the volunteers in the hall. Assign a corresponding group number to each volunteer. Instruct the volunteers that their goal is to become a part of the group that you have assigned them to.
 6. Bring the volunteers into the room and ask the circles to hold up their numbers. Allow the interaction to proceed for about three minutes. Then ask everyone to return to their seats.

Discussion: First, ask everyone to give the volunteers a round of applause for being brave enough to be volunteers for this activity. Thank them. Then lead them in a discussion of this activity.

Ask volunteers:

- How did you feel about being excluded by the group?
- How hard did you try to become part of the group?
- What did you do to try to get into the group?
- What did the group say or do to you to keep you out?

Ask group members:

- How did you feel about excluding the volunteer?
- How far were you willing to go to keep the volunteer out?

Discussion (con't): Tell them that in this situation they were asked to keep the volunteers out of the group. But in real life people do get excluded from groups and often it is because they are thought to be different from people in the group.

- Can you think of a time when you felt different from everyone else? Maybe you were the only girl in a group of boys. Or maybe you were the only person in the room who spoke English. Who can share a time when they felt different?
- What is one word that best describes how you felt when you were the one who was different? (Write these on a blank overhead or wall sheet.)
- Have you ever been excluded from a group that you wanted to join? Why did you want to join the group and how did they exclude you?
- Think about people at your school that you consider different from yourself or those you associate with. Everyone can think of at least one person that you think of as being different. Do you have that person in mind? Raise your hand if you have that person in mind. Now, comes the hard part. Think of at least two ways in which this person is the same as you.

(Ask the students to share.)

- What is the most important thing you learned from this activity?
- Based on your experience with this activity, would you change any of your behaviors at school?
- How could we make it easier for outsiders to join our group?

- Discipline:** Child Development | Education | Literature | English | Communications
- Objective:** To experience various cultures through storytelling.
- Time:** 10–15 minutes
- Delivery Method:** Classroom or group assignment
- Process:** Storytelling is a big part of many cultures and is a way to share the culture's history and heritage with the next generation. Invite representatives from various senior communities or trained storytellers to share stories of their background and cultures.
- Discussion:** Share your story and encourage students to share their stories even if they have been passed down and embellished along the way.

MULTICULTURAL SHOW AND TELL

Discipline: Literature | History | Psychology | Sociology

Objective: To research individual's culture group identity.

Time: Faculty to set their own time.

Delivery Method: Classroom or individual/group assignment

Process: Have students do some research into the cultural group that they identify with and then ask each student to bring in one item or fact related to his or her family's background. It might relate to a country of origin, home state/region in the United States or a special custom and/or tradition that they observe.

Activity: Ask each student to provide one additional piece of information related to the item that they chose, such as the game used in a native language or how the item is made. Follow with a discussion into cultural identity and how culture identity in North America compares to that in other parts of the world.

- Discipline:** Literature
- Objective:** To explore the definition of “family”
- Time:** Faculty to set their own time.
- Delivery Method:** Classroom or individual/group assignment
- Process:** The definition of “family,” is multi-faceted and in contemporary society may include traditional male-female couples, GLBT partners, single, couples with pets, ESL, siblings or grandparents as caregivers, adoption, mixed race, divorces, families of “choice,” multi-generational families, etc. Create a display wall for employees and/or students to show a photo and a brief description of their “family.”
- Discussion:** Invite participants to share a fact or story about their families that make them unique. Ask them to share some of the strengths they have and some of the challenges they face as a family.

CONNECT THE DOTS—ACTIVITY SHEET

Directions:

Connect all of the dots with four straight lines. Do NOT lift your pencil off the paper. Do NOT retrace any line. Lines may cross if necessary.

