

Lesson Plan/Script

What are stereotypes?

- A stereotype is a “widely held but oversimplified belief about a particular person or thing”
- Can you think of any stereotypes for cats and dogs?
 - Students answer: cats are mean, dogs are smart, etc
- Good! But we know not all cats are mean, and not all dogs are smart.
- What about stereotypes about people who ride motorcycles?
 - Students answer: mean, have beards, always wear black, big and tough
- Exactly! Those are things we all think of when we think about bikers. But not all bikers like black and wear leather and have a beard! Nothing about liking riding motorcycles means you have to like those other things.

What are gender roles?

- In anthropology, we define gender roles as what a certain culture defines as “normal” for a boy or a girl based on their culture
- Can anyone name some gender roles or stereotypes we have here in America?
 - Students answer: boys like sports, girls like cooking, boys aren’t emotional, girls have long hair

Gender Roles (continued)

- Stereotypical roles for men and women
 - These are the tasks and activities that each gender is normally expected to do or be interested in.
- Seen with early hunter-gatherers
 - Anthropologists think the idea of men and women having different jobs started before people even were growing their own food (over 10 thousand years ago!). There’s evidence that women did most of the gathering and men did most of the hunting for meat. If this is true, that means that women provide the majority of the food!
- Vary by culture, meaning they can change
 - Gender roles vary by culture, but in general men work outside the home to provide for the family and women work inside the home to take care of the children and clean the home

Gender Roles Across Cultures - Chambri of New Guinea

- Males and females had clearly defined roles
- Women provide for the family and lead the community
- Men were more emotional compared to the women and took care of the children
 - This proved that the idea of men as dominant and women as submissive wasn’t always true, but was an aspect of culture

Gender roles across cultures - Kibbutzim of Israel

- No division of labor based on gender
- Men and women both help cook and clean
- Men and women both do manual labor and fieldwork
- Children are all raised together

Third Genders

- So if gender is what is expected of us based on our sex and our culture, what happens

when what is expected of them doesn't match how they feel on the inside? Since how we define gender is so dependent on our culture, there are a lot of ways people talk about people who don't feel like they fit into the traditional gender roles in their culture. Some examples of these are:

- Fa'afaine in Samoa
- Hijras in South America
- Two-Spirits in Native American cultures

Review After Gender Activity

- What are gender roles?
- What do archaeologists do?
- How do we define culture?
- What are some recently evolved human traits?

Gender Activity

Supplies:

- 3x5 notecards cut in half (or any other small slip of paper)
- Hat or other container to gather slips into

Instructions:

Pass out two slips of paper to each student. Instruct students to write a stereotype about boys on one slip of paper and a stereotype about girls on the other. These can be what they boys and girls enjoy doing, how they dress, what shows they like, etc. The students do not need to write their names on the slips. Collect all the slips of paper and gather them in a container to draw at random.

Next, have all the students stand in a group together in the middle of the room. Draw a random stereotype and divide the students on whether or not they enjoy that thing or not. For example, if the slip says boys like to play outdoors, instruct the class to stand to your right if they enjoy playing outdoors and to your left if they enjoy playing indoors, without telling them if this is supposedly an activity for boys or for girls. Once they have divided themselves, ask them to guess whether it is a "boy" activity or a "girl" activity. Point out to the students that although people might think an activity is for girls, in reality your gender doesn't have an affect on what you can or can't enjoy. Repeat as many times as you want, pulling different random stereotypes out of the examples given by the kids.

Discussion:

- What did you think about the way the class divided up on different likes and dislikes?
- Were there any that you had trouble choosing from? What does this tell us about putting people in categories?
- Can you think of any ways that gender roles can be harmful to people?