STAND UP

FOR JUSTICE

Application deadline: March 1, 2023

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Requirements due by March 1, 2023:

Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons or activities

The events leading up to the 2008 election demonstrated the importance of educating students on how to read the many slanted messages and the misinformation that were circulating not just in TV political commercials, but in the new use of social media platforms. During this time, while teaching argument and rhetoric it was clear to me that trying to teach students how to think about the arguments and information presented to them would need to be approached in a way that didn't begin with the heated arguments abounding in politics and around their own kitchen tables, but within understanding how each person's view of the world is shaped by their own experiences. It was also clear that in getting ready to teach students how to recognize fallacies, that it was important for them to understand how many of those using fallacies play off of emphasizing the premise of Us vs. Them and manipulate a person's own sense of belonging to groups and powerful stereotypes to push unreasonable and dangerous arguments.

I have been teaching and developing the beginning of this lesson now for about 14 years and have felt its importance again during the election of 2016, but even between presidential elections to give students a way to think about arguments that arise not just on the national level, but on the local level within our community and school. Over the past few years as our own school district has been embroiled in some very divisive disagreements, these lessons continue to grow and help me instruct students about how to navigate the many arguments and fallacies they encounter.

I believe that having each student understand how they have been impacted personally by bias and prejudice and then applying that understanding by reading other examples and exploring one on their own, I can help teach the kind of thinking needed when they encounter more emotional arguments involving gender, race, religion, etc. In fact this is a lesson that provides a foundation of how to think and understand the powerful use of bias and stereotypes that they hopefully never forget.

Over the past two years, I have had added the end of unit assessment featured here-the students take the lesson all the way into a final product where they get to choose a stereotype, research views and implication and present that information in an op-ed, a video/podcast or an infographic.

The Unit: In researching ideas for a unit on Argument and Fallacies, I discovered a few valuable resources:

- Factcheck.org was extremely helpful and at the time they had a created units through a Fact Check Ed initiative.
  - o Part of the lesson built off of is now housed here:
    https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/resource/everything-know-wrong-us-them/
  - o And this handout is one I used to teach students the layers of bias:
    https://cdn.annenbergclassroom.org/wp-content/uploads/EYKIW1_worksheet.pdf

- The book *Un-Spun: finding facts in a world of disinformation* was also helpful in building background.

The Unit begins with having students complete the following assignment:

We discuss the following first:

Our View of Groups

Let's think about groups in two overarching ways:

Identity Groups: These are groups we are part of because we cannot choose them- they are a part of our identity.

Joined Groups: These are groups we choose to be a part of probably because: "joining groups" satisfies our need to belong, gain information and understanding through social comparison, define our sense of self and social identity, and achieve goals that might elude us if we worked alone." (nobaproject.com)

Complete this assignment: Groups to Which You Belong

Groups to Which You Belong

✅ Published   ✎ Edit   ⋮

Complete the following question and submit your assignment. We will be sharing these in class.

1. Make a list of groups to which you belong- try to get to ten. These can be formal groups, groups you joined willingly or groups that are just part of who you are that you have no control over like identity groups. For example: daughter, republican, only child, runner, teenager, etc.
2. Choose one or two of your groups and explain how people NOT in that group often view people in that group and what is said about your group by people not in the group that you have heard others say about the group that isn't true for you personally (even if it is true of others in the group). Feel free to quote people in the news, history, etc. For example: I am part of the group teachers and I have heard people say "Teachers are lazy," "Teachers only want their summers off," "Teachers became teachers because they couldn't do anything else."
3. Explain how the comments you discuss in number 2 make you feel.
4. Make a list of groups to which you do NOT belong- try to get to ten.
5. Choose one or two of your groups that you do NOT belong to and explain what you have heard people say about the group. Feel free to quote people in the news, history, etc.

After each student completes this assignment, we discuss in pairs and groups and then with the larger class. Students share some interesting experiences including negative comments and views they have heard made that aren't true for them, how they felt and why it bothered them.

This is always a lively discussion where we often laugh or are in total shock at what has been stated, but no matter what the goal is always reached: Students understand that they have been misjudged solely based on their association with a group to which they belong. Students share stories about all sorts of stereotypes about groups such as: cheerleaders, vegans, immigrants, only children, blondes, Nascar fans, Philly fans, marching band members, autistic people, etc.
I also ask, if it hasn't already come up, for them to explain how they have experienced being judged and misjudged for being in the group "teenagers." They LOVE this conversation and venting! As they assert different judgments I ask, "Is that true of any teenager? How many teenagers might that be true for? Would it be fair for you to be judged as those things even if it isn't true for you just because you are in the group teenager? Why not?" It is an example we continue to use as a good baseline throughout the unit.

We then watch the following segment from *60 Minutes* and I ask them to explain how this example demonstrates how Jeremy Lin was judged based on one group to which he belongs: Asian-American.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMUhcSi6gUk

The students then learn the following definitions and examples to help solidify some vocabulary that helps them understand bias:

US VS. THEM | How belonging to one group and not another affects our view
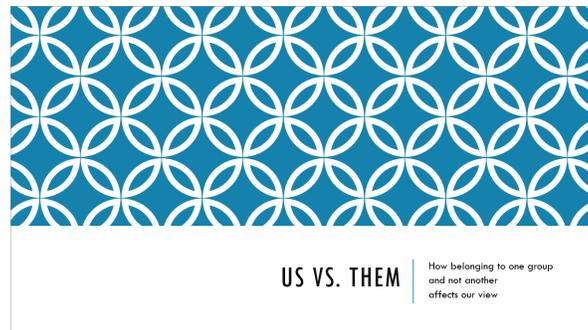
PREJUDICE

- A PRECONCIEVED belief about ALL people belonging to one group or category
- Even if a stereotype is based in some reality—and many are not– it will not be true of EVERY member of a group
- Assuming you know what someone is like because of the groups they belong to is PREJUDICE and it can keep you from RATIONALLY evaluating their motives and choices.

PARTISANSHIP

- The tendency to favor those with whom you already AGREE
- We tend to make POSITIVE assumptions about groups to which we BELONG.
- We assume that people who think like us are more RATIONAL and more informed than people with whom we DISAGREE.
- This hinders reasoning because we accept arguments based on WHO makes them and not on their CONTENT or SUPPORT.

PROVINCIALISM

- The tendency to believe that the issues you feel most strongly about are the most IMPORTANT
- We tend to think the issues affecting our IDENTITY GROUPS are MORE important or MORE urgent than issues affecting other groups.
- This prevents us from ACCURATELY evaluating these issues.

HERD INSTINCT

- The tendency to adhere to CULTURAL NORMS of belief and behavior
- We make assumptions about what's ACCEPTABLE and POPULAR in the groups to which we belong, and it's often hard to go against these norms
- When an opinion is unpopular, the herd instinct can make us inclined to IGNORE evidence so we can maintain beliefs that are in line with mainstream beliefs

Then we look together at and discuss a variety of sources to help us understand examples, implications of stereotypes and consequences of bias:

- Video from "What Would you Do?" that sets up a scenario of an individual stealing a bike: a white teenage boy, a black teen age boy and an attractive blond woman. This clip includes the scenario and then some commentary by an expert on bias. This is an example of Prejudice: http://abcnews.go.com/WhatWouldYouDo/video/stop-bike-thief-10589721
- Video from *The Daily Show* which shows an example of provincialism: Finger-Pointing Blame Game - The Daily Show with Jon Stewart (Video Clip) | Comedy Central US (cc.com)
- Video from *Candid Camera* showing herd instinct in an elevator: Elevator psychology – Social Influence - YouTube
- Cartoon that highlights provincialism:

Students then read from a variety of perspectives to see more examples, implications and consequences of bias:

- "The Men We Carry in Our Minds" by Scott Russell Sanders: an example where the author came from a working-class background and felt judged by women when we went to college based solely on being a man. This leads to sharing examples in an assignment: What are some media or real-life images of men (in other words men you know personally or men in the public eye) that influence your view of the image of men you "carry" in your mind.
- "Disability" by Nancy Mairs: an example where she discusses media bias of disabled individuals. This leads to sharing of examples in an assignment: Choose another group that is portrayed in the media in a way that isn't true for all people in that group. The media portrayal could be in movies, TV shows, cartoons, music videos, etc.
- "Black Men in Public Space" by Brent Staples: in which Staples recalls his first experience of a woman crossing the street to avoid him and realizing how she was perceiving him. Students then complete the following:
  - Find a video or article from a news site that gives another example of race playing a role in a person being misjudged. This needs to be a SPECIFIC example and not one provided by me. Provide the link and then give a summary of the example.

  - In "Black Men and Public Space," he describes how he realized that by being a black man he "altered public space" for other people. Think about how this is true for teenagers in public spaces. Tell a story about how you were perceived in public or give an example from the news for how teens have been perceived.

Students then work to complete these assignments:

Argument Examples about Stereotypes

Read the following two opinion arguments.

1. Being biracial in a Black and white world.docx ↓
2. Memo to Media gun violence.pdf ↓

Both would be classified as Op-Eds or Opinion-Editorials. As you read them, take note of how each writer does the following:

- Gives real examples of stereotype beliefs about a group
- Argues the impact of those beliefs
- Unique features of the structure and style of the way the writer writes

Then for this assignment, complete the following:

1. What is the author of "Being Biracial in a Black and White World" arguing and what is one piece of evidence that you found supported her argument well? Explain why.
2. What is the author of "Memo to the Media on Gun Violence" arguing and what is one piece of evidence that you found supported His argument well? Explain why.
3. What is something interesting about the style of either writer's piece?
4. List a stereotype that you know about either because you are part of that group or you have experience and knowledge about that you could write an opinion piece on like these two authors. Next to the topic/subject write what you would want to argue about the impact of the stereotype. This may be the group you have been thinking about since we did the exercise, "Groups to which you belong"

The two op-eds are linked here:

- Reality: Being biracial in a Black and white world (phillyburbs.com)
- Memo to Media: Manhood, Not Guns or Mental Illness, Should Be Central in Newtown Shooting | HuffPost Latest News

Beware of Bias

For this assignment, watch the two Ted talks found here Overcoming Bias and take not of stories they each tell that involve bias- their personal bias and others- and then note what they both want the audience to remember, do or think about bias going forward.

Then in a well-written response first explain what the speakers share and their advice for us. Then think about a group to which you belong or a group to which you do not belong (these could be the ones you discussed in the opening activity Groups to Which You Belong). How could you apply the speakers' messages to that group?

In the second part of this response, give one specific example where you do what the speakers ask to combat our tendency to think a certain way and write including the example. (Hint: it could be a positive example of a real person that goes against the stereotype or it could be a story that shows why we should beware of our own intentions and benefits.)

The Two Ted Talks are linked here:
- Dan Ariely: Beware conflicts of interest | TED Talk
- Vernā Myers: How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them | TED Talk

This culminates in the following assignment:

Core: Researched Argument-Stereotypes

Step 1: Choose the Stereotyped Group for this Assignment and Explain your Interest

Some over-arching example areas for topics are:

1. Gender
2. Race
3. Age
4. Economic Level
5. Professions
6. Activity Group
7. Religion

For the group you choose for this assignment, get even more specific within a larger or two like the following topics. You may be part of the group, but you don't have to be part of the group:

1. Female Body Image
2. Mexican immigrants to the United States
3. Black Teenage Boys
4. People who use food stamps
5. Male Hairdresser
6. Cheerleaders
7. Muslim Men

In a well-written response (think about some of the mentor texts we have read in this unit), explain why you are interested discussing this stereotype; in other words, what prompted your interest. Maybe you are part of the group and have a personal story, maybe you saw a documentary on Netflix that moved you, maybe you have a friend and have seen that fried have to deal with unfair judgments. I don't want you choosing a group "just because"- there needs to be more to it.

Step 2: Research the stereotype and find evidence of the stereotype

- You need to gather a minimum of three sources to demonstrate that the stereotype is held and at least one source must be an article from a vetted source and one source has to be a media portrayal of the stereotype in film, TV shows, cartoons, advertising, etc. However, the more the better.
- Use the library databases! You can find them in the Canvas Course from the library or on the library webpage.

- Find examples of people stating stereotyped comments about the group. ***You may quote from social media for this, just make sure it is school appropriate and you still must cite this.***
- Find media portrayals of the stereotype- look at movies, tv shows, commercials, etc.
- For example for the teacher stereotype I could use: pictures from movies of teacher portrayals, quotes from a letter to the editor about teachers that is negative, tweets about teachers that are negative.
- For each source, you need to explain it by summarizing it and where it is from and HOW it helps perpetuate a stereotype. Work on your clarity for each piece of evidence or groups of evidence.
- You will submit, the sources and your explanation for each.
- Y*ou must also hand in a Works Cited (bibliography) for the sources used in this step. This will have a minimum of three sources: remember that pictures or examples from media count as a source, as long as you reference them in some way in your final product.*

Step 3: Argue why the stereotype is just that by presenting evidence that proves it to be untrue for everyone in the group and harmful

- You need a **central claim** that you will argue- this is the assertion that you will make about why the stereotype is wrong and harmful. For example: Teachers are incorrectly stereotyped as either all angel or all devil and this stereotype causes teachers to feel like they can't live up to society's expectations causing teachers to leave the profession and to a decrease in the number of young people pursuing teaching as a profession. In reality, most teachers fall somewhere inbetween.
- You need to come up with reasons why the stereotype is wrong and harmful and then support them with the evidence you find in the argument.
- Evidence for your argument can be: examples of real people who defy the stereotype, statistics that support the negative impact of the stereotype, comments by experts or researchers, news articles, etc.
- Use the library databases! You can find them in the Canvas Course from the library or on the library webpage.
- You need to gather a minimum of three sources to support your argument against the stereotype and at least one source has to be an article from a vetted source and one source has to be an example of a real person who does not fit the model (this person cannot be you, although you may be in the group- it has to be a real person you can interview as a source or you must find an article about a real person.
- For example for the teacher stereotype being untrue: I could feature some of the teachers I work with, I could interview students about those teachers and include quotes from what they say, I could highlight teacher of the year candidates, I could show the harm by including the decrease in the number of college students enrolling in

teacher programs, the statistic of how many teachers leave the profession in the first five years and the quotes from teachers who have left teaching in the past year.

- You will hand in a well-written argument that begins with your claim and then you will write to support that claim using the evidence you gather. Make sure that when you write about your evidence you explain what it is, how it relates and why it helps support your claim.
- Y*ou must also hand in a Works Cited (bibliography) for the sources used in this step. This will have a minimum of three sources: remember that pictures or examples from media count as a source, as long as you reference them in some way in your final product.*

Step 4: Use all that you found to create a final product:

- You may choose to create:
    - o Infographic (canva.com)
    - o Video/Podcast (you will hand in your script)
    - o Opinion-Editorial Article

Y*ou must also hand in a final document with a Works Cited (bibliography). This will have a minimum of six sources: remember that pictures or examples from media count as a source, as long as you reference them in some way in your final product.*

No matter the format you choose for a final product, your product should follow this format:

1. Establish and provide evidence that the stereotype and the comments and beliefs that some have about the group.
2. State your central claim
3. Provide reasons and evidence to prove the stereotyped arguments you presented in number two as incorrect for all people in that group. Show real examples and evidence of people who do not fit the stereotype.
4. Provide statistics and/or examples of the harm of the stereotype
5. Provide evidence of the truth, reality and what you want to change or advice on how to challenge the stereotype

Expectation and Evaluation: The final product should be…

- Creative, interesting, and sophisticated in its format and presentation- this will set apart A work from B/C work
- Organized and include what is given in the above format
- Researched and supported with convincing evidence and analysis of that evidence and have a correct Works Cited with a minimum of six sources that are cited within the product
- Well-written and clear for the audience

Review the grading rubric HERE

The Lesson:

The progression of the unit from thinking about their own life and examples of where they have experienced bias to hearing their peers discuss similar instances to understanding that those personal examples happen because of stereotypes and prejudice sets the framework for understanding how individual beliefs about themselves and others are shaped. And the students really understand the impact of bias on them and others because they have experienced it.

We then watch and read various examples that helps them see implications of stereotypes and continues to ask them to offer up additional details or examples of how groups to which they belong or know about have been targeted by harmful stereotypes, including using images in movies, tv and social media. We continue to disucss that even if others can point to one, two or a hundred examples of someone in the group fulfilling that stereotype, it will *never* be true of *all* of those who belong to the group and that is an important reminder in fighting bias.

Finally, having students use choice to examine a stereotype has proven to be powerful. Sometimes students choose a stereotype they are impacted by and other times they explore and research one that they have heard in the news, on social media or even at their own kitchen table. Having them research reliable sources and databases for evidence to counter the stereotype and find real examples that counter the stereotypes solidifies that understanding of how important it is to question stereotypes around them in everyday life. Also, documenting the implications of those stereotypes in real ways shows the danger and power of stereotypes. Students then share their final assignment with others in the class and this further helps them realize that for every stereotype there is a counter of truth.

This is a lesson that I hope gives them the skills to evaluate arguments being made based on harmful stereotypes, to seek out reliable evidence and resources and to refrain from jumping to those kinds of conclusions themselves.

The Student Produced Evidence: Student examples attached:

- Female body Stereotype
- Black Father Stereotype
- Bad Asian Driver Stereotype
- High heels as Feminine Beauty Stereotype
- Middle Child Bias