

Flash Judgments Lesson Plan

Objective:

Students will look at pictures and use a prompt to recognize and minimize the human tendency to make quick judgments of people. This will help create empathy among students.

Time & Materials:

Anywhere from 10-40 minutes, depending on if you do the freewrite or the photo activity.

Prior to activity: Generate “Group Norms” to make the following discussion to take place in a safe environment. Here are some ideas:

- Allow people to say mistakes
- Allow people to say the wrong words
- Do not judge
- What is said here stays here
- Ask class for others...

Activity One: Flash Judgment Photo Groups

Step One: Preface the activity with the following introduction:

“Flash Judgments are judgments that we make about people based upon their appearances and our first impressions of them. In this activity, you will be creating a biographical sketch of someone based on a photo you have been given. Be creative!”

Step Two: Put students in groups of 3-4. Pass out a preselected photo to each group and have them answer the following questions about their photo.

- 1) Who is this person? Give the person a name, ethnic heritage, age, occupation, educational background, etc.
- 2) Where does this person live? Where did the person grow up? Describe his/her home situation.
- 3) What kind of car does this person drive? What kind of hobbies does this person have? What is the most notable thing this person has done in his/her life?
- 4) What is his/her biggest problem?
- 5) What are his/her favorite movies, TV show and music?
- 6) Would this person be a friend of yours? Explain why or why not. Will this person succeed? Explain why or why not.

Step Three: Have students share their biographies with another group or with the whole class.

Step Four: Pass out the “real” biographies of the photos and have each group compare their ideas to the person’s stories. What did they miss by using their “flash” judgment on someone? Have them re-answer question #6 now that they know the person’s true situation.

Step Five (if time): Have students write a quick reflection on how easy or difficult it was to create the biography, and what they have learned from this activity.

Activity Two: Flash Judgment Free Write Prompt

Step One: Preface the activity with the following introduction:

“Flash judgments are judgments that we make about people based upon their appearances and our first impressions of them. Take a minute to think silently about a time that you feel you have been flash judged.”

Step Two: Have students respond in writing to the following prompt :

Think of a time when someone (or a group of people) made a “flash judgment” about you, relying on stereotypes about what you look or act like. Describe what happened and how it made you feel.

Step Three: Have students share their reflections in small groups or as a discussion. Have them discuss the commonalities among their experiences, and the emotions that come up when someone is flash judged.

Step Four: Have them brainstorm a few strategies to make sure they continue to be aware of people’s tendencies to flash judge, and how they can work on not being so quick to flash judge. You can create a list of strategies on the board or have them do this in small groups.