

Tearing Off Your Labels

13. Stereotypes

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup: Little or no space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 6-12

Group Size: 4 or more

Time: 5 minutes

Introduction: This simple warm-up activity will demonstrate to students the ways in which we use labels.

Materials:

- 1 pen or pencil per team
- 1 piece of paper per team
- Whiteboard or blackboard
- Markers or chalk
- 1 clock or timer
- Prize or treat for the winning team (optional)

Activity:

Divide the group into teams of four to eight people. Tell the teams that the object of the activity is to write down as many of the school's stereotypes (or labels) as the teams can think of in three minutes. Have each team pick a scribe to write the team's list. To start the group off, you may give them hints like, "What do we usually call groups of people who dress in black?" or "What do we usually call groups of people who play sports?"

After three minutes is up, find out which team has the longest list and write this list on the board. See if the other teams thought of stereotypes that the winning team didn't, and add these to the list as well.

You may give a prize to the team that had the longest list.

Processing the Experience:

- Would you define any of these labels as negative? Why?
- Do you feel any of these labels are unfair or inaccurate? Why or why not?
- Why do we label people?
- In what ways are labels important?
- Have you ever given somebody a label based on a first impression and later changed it?
- How can labeling be hurtful to others?