

6.7 Minorities

Goal

The students become aware that the feeling of marginalization is not just related to how "outsiders" are perceived by members of a society, but just as much related to the acceptance within one's own group.

7th–9th grade

45 minutes



Materials:

sets of cards with positive and negative statements (see next page) for each group; previously cut up into small units); two large sheets of paper (A3 or A2) per group; one with the title "feelings", the other with the word "reactions".

Hints:

The content of the sequence is sort of a role play, whereby the students do not know initially whom or which group they are going to portray, as otherwise stereotypes might already come into play. The framework conditions in terms of play time and instructions must be explained clearly and understandably. Within this setting, the students have considerable freedom.

Procedure:

- The class is divided into groups of four students.
- Each group receives a set with positive cards (see below), a pencil and a large sheet of paper with the title "feelings". Each group selects someone who records its reactions on the paper. (Alternatively, each student records his/her own statements.)
- The instructor then communicates to the students that in this exercise they are not going to represent themselves, but members of a minority group. In a first step, they should consider the strengths and qualities of their group, based on the positive cards, and how they will feel as members of this group. The corresponding answers will be discussed within the group and recorded on the paper labelled "feelings".
- Each group then receives the six negative cards and a paper with the title "reactions". The key question, this time, is as follows: how would you behave as members of your group in light of the negative experiences documented on the negative cards? The answers will be recorded on the sheet under the title "reactions".
- In the class as a whole:
 - Each group reports about the feelings which they documented on the paper, marked "feelings". Relevant questions are clarified and commentaries briefly discussed.
 - The same is true for the paper, marked "reactions". The class should identify constructive actions, violent actions and differences between and within the groups.
 - Questions about working in groups: where did problems occur and why; what have you learned about yourselves and the others?
 - Questions and prompts: would you be able to make a connection between the minority groups which you represented and other groups, that you might possibly know?
- Final round: which ethnic group could have been alluded to in the people characterized on the cards? (Solution: the people in question are travelling folk or Roma people, respectively.)

Set of cards with positive statements (left side) and negative statements (right side).

<p>Our houses are unlike the houses of other people. They are special to us and we love them. We like to preserve traditions.</p>	<p>TV and print media don't tell the truth about us. They say we are a problem. They won't give us any opportunity to present our own view of things.</p>
<p>We are skillful and have many talents. We perform the most diverse manual and craftsmanlike work. With our work, we make a valuable contribution to the country in which we live.</p>	<p>Certain people treat us badly and revile us. Sometimes we are attacked for no reason. Thousands of our people have been murdered not so long ago.</p>
<p>Our people have accomplished many brave acts in the past. We like to remember our history.</p>	<p>We rarely have running water; our garbage does not get collected.</p>
<p>We are very independent. We like to take care of ourselves on our own. We owe nothing to anyone.</p>	<p>Many doctors won't treat us when we're sick. It is difficult for us to receive social benefits.</p>
<p>We like to get together to share stories and to sing. We think it is important to promote and cultivate community. The (extended) family is for us the most reliable institution.</p>	<p>People don't want to have us near them. Many people will not give us work because we belong to this ethnic group.</p>
<p>We try to live near family and friends. We take good care of the elderly in our community. We love our children above everything else.</p>	<p>Sometimes we have problems with the police and the local authorities because we stay in a certain location.</p>

