

Unequal Resources

For: Diversity Training

Duration: 30-35 minutes

Purpose: To examine people's attitudes toward and expectations of people with different economic backgrounds.

Supplies: Five large zip-lock bags with the following art supplies for each of the five groups:

Group 1: Regular pencils and one colored pencil

Group 2: Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper

Groups 3 and 4: Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper, scissors, colored markers, glue.

Group 5: Regular pencils, colored pencils, crayons, assorted colored construction paper, scissors, rulers, colored markers, glue, tape, glitter, ribbons, stencils, and anything you can add to help this group

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to form groups with three to five people in each. You want to have five groups. Tell participants that each group will make a poster to celebrate a holiday, season of the year, or other occasion (for example, Mother's Day, spring, fall, or Thanksgiving Day). All groups should make a poster about the same holiday or occasion. Tell them that each group will receive a bag of supplies to use in making their posters. They can use only the supplies given to their group; they may not borrow supplies from other groups. Tell them that their finished posters will be put on display and that they will have 15 or 20 minutes to complete their posters.
2. Give each group a large sheet of poster paper. Have the bags of supplies in view for all to see. Then give each group one of the bags. Hold up the bag (in an inconspicuous manner) so that all groups see the bag that is being given to each group. You need not comment on the contents of the bag. If participants ask why the contents are different, just say that these are the supplies available for your group. That's the way it is.
3. Give participants a five-minute warning. When the allotted time is up, ask participants to put their unused supplies back into their bags. One at a time, call each group to come up to the front of the room to display and explain their poster. After each presentation, applaud the group. When all groups have completed their presentations, engage the group in a discussion about this activity.

4. Debrief:

- How did you feel when you noticed that some people had more materials than you did?
- How did you feel when you noticed that some people had fewer materials than you did?
- In what ways did resources affect your project?
- How would you have felt if I had judged your final products for a prize or for a grade? Would that be fair? Why or why not?
- If other people saw your posters and were asked to pick the most talented students in the room, whom would they say? Would these posters necessarily be a fair assessment of what all of you can do?
- Why do you think I set up this activity this way?
- In what other situations do people have advantages over others? (Provide some examples to prompt the class.)
- Is it important to consider individual circumstances and opportunities before judging a person's capabilities? Why or why not?