



Ball State Philosophy Outreach Project Lesson Plan

Topic: Identity & Oppression

Time: 50-60 minutes

Inspired by: Teaching Works from University of Michigan

Materials: Ten pieces of paper and adhesive to stick the paper to the wall. Each paper should have one term written on it. The terms are as follows: “Religion or Spiritual Affiliation,” “Race,” “Ethnicity,” “Socioeconomic Status,” “Gender,” “Sexual Orientation,” “Age,” “National Origin,” “First Language,” and “Physical, Emotional, Developmental Ability”.

Activity (25-30 minutes): Facilitator will hang each piece of paper in different spots of the room. Facilitator will explain all terms to the class. Then the facilitator will read a prompt and ask students to stand by the identity type they feel best matches the prompt. There should be an emphasis on honesty and standing by the identity you feel truly answers the prompt to you. It should also be emphasized this is a safe environment and this activity will require all participants to be vulnerable. Then the facilitator will read another prompt and students will move to stand by the identity they feel best answers it for them. The facilitator should also stand by the identity that best matches that prompt for them. Then the facilitator should share their reasoning for choosing that identity. Then the floor will be open for all students to share why they chose that identity. As many students as possible should be encouraged to share their reasoning. After going through all the prompts then students can circle up desks for a conversation.

Activity Prompts:

- Stand by the identity you think of most often in general.
- Stand by the identity you think of most often when first meeting someone else.
- Stand by the identity you think of most often in terms of others.
- Stand by the identity you think of most often in terms of yourself.
- Stand by the identity you think of least often in general.
- Stand by the identity you think of least often when first meeting someone.
- Stand by the identity you think of least often in terms of others
- Stand by the identity you think of least often in terms of yourself.
- Stand by the identity you want to learn more about in general.
- Stand by the identity you want to learn more about with regard to others.

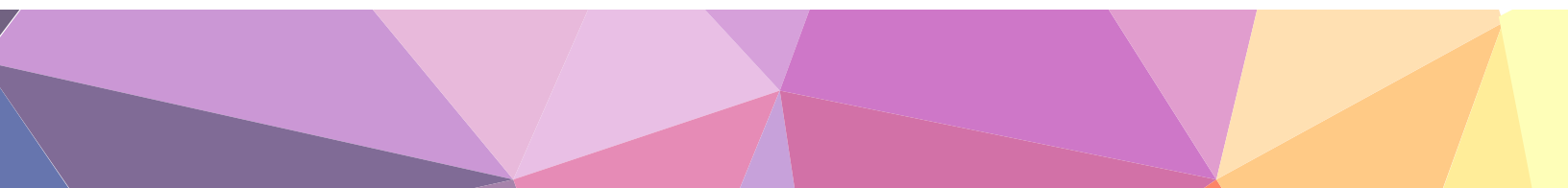
- Stand by the identity you want to learn more about with regard to yourself
- Stand by the identity you think has the largest impact on individuals in a general sense.
- Stand by the identity you think has the largest impact on others.
- Stand by the identity you think has the largest impact on yourself.
- Stand by the identity you think others notice most about you.
- Stand by the identity you think others notice first about you.
- Stand by the identity you think has the least impact on how others perceive you.

Discussion Questions (25-30 minutes): The facilitator does not need to ask all of these questions; however they should try to get through at least six. This list of questions is simply meant to accommodate students wherever the conversation goes.

- Is it helpful to talk about identity? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about your own identity through this activity?
- How did you feel standing in front of each sign with your peers watching?
- How did you feel talking about your identity with your peers?
- How did you feel listening to your peers talk about their identity?
- Why might someone be shy or embarrassed by an aspect of their identity?
- Are there prejudices against particular identities? What are they?
- How do you see prejudice in your life?
- What about oppression? Or discrimination? (oppression is social and structural; discrimination is interpersonal)
- Define racism
- Define privilege
- How do you see privilege in your life?
- How do you see privilege in the media?
- Should people be educated on societal inequities? If so, how?
- How are inequities discussed in your life?

Key Terms: These terms may come up in discussion. Therefore, they are listed with their definitions below.

- oppression: unjust treatment on a societal level involving one privileged group of people over another group
- discrimination: interpersonal exchange of unjust or cruel treatment based on an aspect of an individual's perceived identity
- sexism: oppression or discrimination based on sex, typically against women
- racism: oppression or discrimination based on race, typically against people of color
- classism: oppression or discrimination based on socio-economic status or class
- ableism: oppression or discrimination based on physical, emotional, developmental ability
- LGBTQ+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer
- religion or spirituality: relationship with a higher being or belief in regards to an existential perspective.



- race: a division of humankind based on appearance and ethnicity
- national origin: the country a person was born in
- first language: the initial language a person learned to communicate with
- socioeconomic status: social standing based on education, class, and career
- ethnicity: belonging to a group with common culture or national origin
- gender: characteristics based on masculinity and femininity
- sexual orientation: sexual identity in relation to the gender which someone is attracted to
- physical, emotional, developmental ability: capacity to perform certain activities in different areas
- age: the amount of time an individual has been alive

External Reading: This is for facilitator use. The facilitator may choose to read this brief article beforehand. It could be a beneficial resource to the discussion at hand.

Stephanie M. Wildman with Adrienne E D. Davis. (1996). "Making Systems of Privilege Visible." In S. M. Wildman (Ed.), *Privilege revealed: How invisible preference undermines America* (pp. 7-24). New York: New York University Press.

