

HANDOUT 6.3 DIVERSITY TOSS

Time

15–20 minutes

Materials

Blank index cards (5 cards per participant)

Pens or Pencils

Procedure

1. Give each participant five blank index cards. Ask participants to write the following information on their cards, one item per card and not to share the information with others
Their first name or the name used most often
Race of ethnic group
Gender
Religion (what is practiced now or the tradition they were raised in)
Another dimension that is very important to the participant's self-image or identity, such as marital status, parental status, occupation, native language, military experience, etc.
2. Have participants form small groups of four to five people.
3. Tell participants to look at their cards and decide which item is least important to them (easiest to give up) and to throw that card into the middle of the group (like playing poker).
4. Repeat the process two more times. Stop when each person has two cards remaining.
5. Once all but two cards are discarded have the student sitting to the left of the cardholder take one of the cards and discard it.
6. Each person briefly tells the group what they gave up and why. And how they felt to have one of their remaining identities taken from them.
7. Now ask the participants to briefly tell their group what they kept and why.
8. Reconvene in a large group and ask for reactions. Be sure to ask several volunteers what item they held onto and why. Names, ethnicity, and religion are popular items to hold. Ask other questions such as:

How did you feel during this activity?

What did you learn about yourself? About your group members?

How might this activity relate to the real-life experience of students in our classrooms? Or what do some students have to "give up" in order to fit in at school?

How do institutional structures take identity away?

(Adapted from Inquire Within: A Teaching Tolerance In-Service)