

diversity bead activity

Objective: To help students understand how they define diversity and to assist in group development.

Materials

- resealable plastic zipper bags
- beads of several different colors or types
- string
- key rings (optional)
- index cards

Teacher prep

- Start with an even number of resealable plastic bags (8, 10, or 12).
- Fill each bag with several beads of the same color or type. Each bag should contain only one color or type of bead (e.g. one bag of yellow beads, one of green beads, one of red, one of striped, etc.).
- Randomly pair up the bags of different-colored beads. For each pair of bags, fill out an index card on which you've written a particular question with two different answers. For example:

Which would you like to be able to speak?	French	Chinese
Which flavor ice cream do you prefer?	vanilla	chocolate
What kind of pet do you prefer?	dog	cat
Where were you born?	Vermont	another state
Where were your parents born?	in the U.S.	another country
Which subject do you prefer?	math	art
What do you prefer to do?	write a story	read a story
Which would you rather have?	a skateboard	video games
Where would you prefer to live?	city	country

- At different stations around the room, place one index card with a pair of bags. Label one bag with one of the answers on the index card, and label the other bag with the second answer.
- Provide each student with a piece of string on which he or she can string beads collected during the activity. Another option is to give each student a key ring with a piece of string already attached.

Framing the activity

Introduce the students to the idea of diversity, and then ask them:

- Is this group diverse?
- In what ways are we diverse; in what ways are we not diverse?

After some discussion, have students offer their own definitions of diversity and what it means to them.

Procedure

- Have students circulate around the room to every station. After reading the question at each station, students should take a bead from the bag labeled with their answer to that question (instruct students not to select beads based on *color*). Students should not discuss their answers with classmates.
- Once students have selected all their beads, they can string the beads in any order they choose.
- Moving around the room, students should find one person who has the same color bead(s) as they. Once they find a classmate who shares a bead color, the two students can identify the attribute they have in common. They should then try to identify something else they have in common.
- Students should switch classmates until they've paired up with two or three others.

Questions to use for processing

- Did your opinion of this group's diversity change?
- Did you find someone new with whom you have some things in common?
- Were there any surprises; if so, what?
- Did you find anyone with all the same beads as you?

NCDA guidelines for personal social development

- develop an understanding of yourself to build and maintain a positive self-image

Vermont's Framework of Standards vital results

Section 3 Personal Development Standards — Making Decisions

- 3.3 Students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
 - 3.11 Students interact respectfully with others, including those with whom they have differences

VTSCA career standards

Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others

- PS A1.1 Students develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person
- PS A2.3 Students will recognize, accept, respect, and appreciate individual differences



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