

Level

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Names can hurt you too

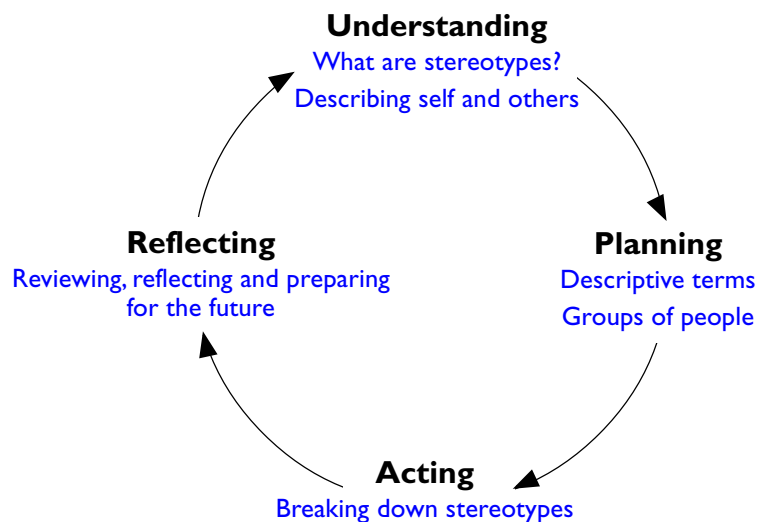
Strand
Enhancing Personal Development

Purpose

Students develop an understanding of how the use of stereotypes groups and labels people, and explore the use of stereotypes by the media and others. They examine how the assumptions, values and judgments underpinning stereotypes affect the way they value and treat themselves and others and how the use of stereotypes can lead to discrimination.

Overview of activities

Activities in this module are based on a learner-centred approach with an emphasis on decision making and problem solving. As the following diagram shows, activities are sequenced in **understanding**, **planning**, **acting** and **reflecting** phases.



Core learning outcome

This module focuses on the following core learning outcome from the Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Syllabus:

Enhancing Personal Development

3.1 Students explain how different ways of describing people, including stereotyping of males and females, influence the way people value and treat themselves and others.

Core content

This module incorporates the following core content from the syllabus:

Enhancing Personal Development

- aspects of identity, including gender identity and cultural identity;
- factors influencing identity and relationships, such as stereotyping, media, cultural inheritance, values, attitudes and beliefs.

Assessment strategy

The following are examples of assessment tasks that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the core learning outcome identified in this module.

Enhancing Personal Development 3.1

- **Students identify descriptions of people based on stereotypes of either gender or race in media reports. They suggest reasons why the stereotype is being used in the report.**

- Can the student correctly identify a stereotypical description from a media report?
- Can the student provide valid reasons why such a stereotypical description has been used in the context of the report?

Enhancing Personal Development 3.1

- **Using the stereotypical description identified in the previous task, students contrast the positive and negative impacts such a description would have on their feelings if they and/or their friends were being described in this way. They give reasons for their answers.**

- Can the student describe both positive and negative impacts on feelings about himself or herself?
- Can the student present reasons for these feelings that are appropriate to his or her own identity and/or friends' identities?

Enhancing Personal Development 3.1

- **Students develop and perform a presentation that demonstrates how people make stereotypical comments about others and the effect this can have on the identity (self-esteem and self-concept) of those people being stereotyped. The audience should be able to recognise such comments and their effects.**

- Can the student identify stereotypical comments?
- Can the student explain how such comments can influence a person's identity?

Background information

Stereotyping

People often describe themselves and are described by others according to physical characteristics such as gender, eye shape or colour, height and hair colour, as well as other characteristics such as ethnicity, cultural background, occupation and social roles. At times, the characteristics that individuals ascribe to people based on their gender, race or socioeconomic status are the result of stereotypes promoted through the media.

The media also promote images of young people that may not be achievable. These images can be influential in constructing the identities of young people.

Stereotyping is a socially harmful behaviour because it ignores individual differences. Students need to be aware of their own individuality and that of others and work towards breaking down stereotypes that exist in our society.

Terminology

Activities in this module involve use of the following language in the context of Health and Physical Education:

assumptions	characteristics	judgments	stereotypes
attitudes	gender	physical features	values

School authority policies

Teachers need to be aware of and observe school authority policies that may be relevant to this module, particularly policies relating to sensitive issues.

Social justice principles

This module provides opportunities for students to increase their understanding and appreciation of diversity and supportive environments. It includes activities that encourage students to:

- accept and value diversity by challenging stereotypes and their use;
- develop environments which are supportive of individual differences.

Students with disabilities or learning difficulties may require some activities to be modified to optimise their participation and their ability to demonstrate the outcome. Teachers should consult with parents/carers and specialist support staff to determine whether modification is necessary.

Support materials and references

McGrath, H. & Francey, S. 1991, *Friendly Kids, Friendly Classrooms: Teaching Social Skills and Confidence in the Classroom*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

New South Wales Board of Studies 1993, *Personal Awareness: Content Strand 7: Years 7–10 Teaching Kit*, North Sydney.

Activities

Understanding

WHAT ARE STEREOTYPES?

Exploring the meaning and use of the term 'stereotype'

- ▶ Students find dictionary meanings of the term 'stereotype'. They form small groups to discuss these meanings and record their discussion points and ideas on charts and display these for a class discussion.
- ▶ Students discuss the following statements that reflect commonly used stereotypes. They consider why these statements are inaccurate, why people sometimes use these statements and what effect such statements may have on the people to whom they are directed.
 - Don't cry like a girl.
 - Boys don't cry.
 - Be tough; you're a boy.
 - Women are always gossiping.
 - Rugby players are all beef and no brain.
 - Blondes are dumb.
 - Redheads are temperamental.
 - Real men don't eat quiche.

Students suggest other statements involving stereotypes that they have heard or read. These can be placed on a chart for later reference.

DESCRIBING SELF AND OTHERS

Using different characteristics to describe self and others

- ▶ Students draw a picture of themselves that includes physical characteristics such as their body shape, eye colour, hair colour, skin colour, height, special features and clothes they are wearing. They then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of describing themselves using only physical characteristics.

Focus questions could include:

- In what circumstances might it be important to describe a person's physical appearance?
- In what occupations might it be important to have specific physical characteristics?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of describing someone in terms of their physical characteristics?
- What other ways are there of describing ourselves and others?

Teaching considerations

Be sensitive to issues of ability and disability when asking students to describe themselves and others using physical characteristics.

Descriptions based on a person's physical characteristics are commonly used — for example, to describe a crime suspect, on a passport, to assist in finding a missing person.

Different physical characteristics are valued differently in our society. Descriptions of physical characteristics can be subjective (for example, dark eyes could be described as 'haunted' eyes) and relative (for example, a person who is two-metres tall may be described as a 'short' basketball player).

Some occupations may require people to have particular physical characteristics — for example, professional basketball player, jockey. When discussing this topic, however, take care not to reinforce stereotypes.

► Students list their emotional, intellectual, social and/or spiritual characteristics and those of a well-known public figure such as a sportsperson, politician or entertainer. They then compare the similarities and differences between themselves and the public figure.

Focus questions could include:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of describing someone in terms of these types of characteristics?
 - When is it better to describe ourselves or others according to emotional, intellectual, social and/or spiritual characteristics?
 - Are there occupations in which it is important for people to have particular emotional, intellectual, social and/or spiritual characteristics — for example, office worker, prime minister, priest, doctor?
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Teaching considerations

Stress the positive ways in which people could be described using emotional, intellectual, social and/or spiritual characteristics.

Obtain information about the public figure from biographical data rather than from media reports.

Make students aware that descriptions based on personality characteristics are subjective and relative. Using words such as 'kind', 'shy' or 'smart' when describing a person reflects the values and judgments of the person giving the description.

Some occupations may require specific characteristics such as patience or reliability.

► Students collect and compare positive descriptions of themselves written by others such as their friends, family members, team members, coach or neighbours. They consider how these descriptions influence how they see themselves and why they might be described differently by different people.

Focus questions could include:

- What words do your family, friends and other acquaintances use to describe you?
- How do their descriptions make you feel?
- Why might different aspects of your identity be highlighted in different contexts — for example, at home, at school?
- How does this make you feel?
- How do we know whether we are tall or short, lovable or boisterous?
- Do these descriptions influence the way you feel about yourself or other people such as those who wrote the descriptions?

Teaching considerations

Highlight how the relationships and roles people have influence how they are described by others — for example, a person may be described differently in the role of son/daughter, student, hockey player, dancer and volunteer worker.

A person can be described in quite different ways according to whom is giving the description and the context in which the person is being described.

Planning

DESCRIPTIVE TERMS	Exploring how the use of words and phrases can affect the way we respond to others and the expectations we have of others
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► Students read or view a variety of media reports and then list the words and phrases used to describe people in the reports. They group these words or phrases into categories which they determine.

Focus questions could include:

- What words do the media use to describe or give identity to individuals?
- What emotions do words such as ‘sadness’, ‘pity’, ‘shock’ and ‘anger’ evoke?
- How do words such as ‘lazy’, ‘strange’ and ‘aged’ highlight negative personal characteristics or emotions?
- How do words such as ‘talented’, ‘creative’, ‘ambitious’ and ‘proud’ highlight positive personal characteristics or emotions?
- How does a report change when no words describing personal characteristics are used?

Teaching considerations

The teacher or students could select media reports containing stereotypes for this activity.

Some categories for grouping words and phrases may include:

- physical characteristics — for example, tall, female, brown hair, old, white;
 - roles — for example, father, unemployed, single parent, coach, teacher, author;
 - emotional, intellectual, social and/or spiritual characteristics — for example, clever, happy, humorous, talented, lazy;
 - other — for example, Queensland representative, Asian, manager.
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► Students listen to or read descriptions of fictitious individuals or descriptions of people from media reports. They outline their expectations of the individual described and then share their expectations and the reasons for these with a partner or in a small group. Students then discuss their differing opinions and the reasons for these.

Teaching consideration

Caution students against making assumptions about individuals based on information provided by others. Encourage them to critically assess comments made by others and to make their own judgments.

► Students discuss the effect of describing a person in different ways. They write a description of a character from a novel, television program, film or video of their choice. The character should be easily identifiable by all students. They then write a description of the character using different words and phrases. The students note how the interpretation of the character's identity can change depending on the description.

Teaching consideration

Encourage students to avoid descriptions based on stereotypes.



Resource
Sheet 1

► Students consider the descriptions of people in the sentences on Resource Sheet 1. They rewrite these descriptions so that they do not include stereotypes — for example, 'A defenceless grandmother was robbed' could become 'A person was robbed'. After making changes they discuss what effect describing an individual in a non-stereotypical way may have on the individual's self-image and the image of the group to which that individual belongs.

Focus questions could include:

- How might changing the description of a person alter others' perceptions of that person?
- Are there advantages and disadvantages in using either of the descriptions?
- Why would the media mention a person's race or status?
- How do descriptions of people based on race make you feel?
- How might your changes to the descriptions make the person who is being described feel?
- Are the original descriptions used to present only one view of the group being described? Why would this be an advantage or disadvantage?
- If it were you being described, how would it make you feel?

Teaching considerations

Explain how the media use social roles and stereotyping to elicit emotive responses from their readers/audience — for example, 'young mother of six', 'unemployed youths'.

There are reasons why the media choose to portray people in a particular manner — for example, to elicit sympathy or empathy. Encourage students to challenge such portrayals.

GROUPS OF PEOPLE

Identifying and discussing how groups of people can be described in stereotypical ways

► Using the sentence beginnings below, students write sentences that summarise what they believe to be commonly held perceptions of the characteristics of members of particular groups of people. They then consider how these perceptions can become stereotypical descriptions of all members of these groups.

- Australians are ...
- Unemployed young people are ...
- Motorcyclists are ...
- Migrants are ...
- Gun owners are ...
- Chinese swimmers are ...
- Disabled athletes are ...
- Physically active girls are ...
- Physically active boys are ...

Focus questions could include:

- Do you have a positive or negative view of these groups or group members?
- Why do you have this view? Where do your views come from? What alternative views are there?
- How do your values, assumptions and judgments about members of these groups affect your relationships with them?
- Where do stereotypes originate?

Teaching considerations

Our values, assumptions and judgments are developed from our experiences and are influenced by our family, our friends, the media and institutions such as schools and churches.

Stereotypical descriptions are commonly used in a negative manner and can be very damaging to relationships.

► Students survey their class to determine whether the group attaches a particular sex and/or ethnic group to the following occupations:

- secretary
- fruit-shop owner
- nurse
- heart surgeon
- mechanic
- computer programmer
- librarian
- florist
- builder's labourer
- gymnast
- professional footballer
- professional basketball player

They discuss why they have assigned stereotypes of sex and race to these occupations.

Focus questions could include:

- What is the class response to each occupation?
- What are the various reasons for these responses?
- Were there any differences between the responses given by males and females? Why do you think this was?
- Is it appropriate to use only one description to represent all the people who work in these occupations? Why?
- What values, assumptions and judgments underpin your responses?
- Do the responses reflect any stereotypical views?

Teaching considerations

Stereotyping occurs when a value or judgment is ascribed to all members of a group. When people use stereotypes, they assume that all members of the group will hold the same values or will think or act in a particular way.

It can be difficult to challenge stereotypes that other people hold unknowingly.

Acting

BREAKING DOWN STEREOTYPES

Dramatising the influence of stereotypes on the way people value and treat themselves and others

- ▶ Students form small groups to develop and perform a presentation, such as a short play, verse, rap song or story, that reflects an understanding of stereotyping and its influence. Each group considers the context, setting and message of their presentation.

Teaching considerations

Discuss proposals for presentations with students before they start rehearsing to ensure appropriateness.

Help students develop their presentations by reminding them of earlier activities and discussions.

- ▶ Students identify descriptions of people based on stereotypes of either gender or race in a newspaper report, magazine article or other form of media report. They suggest reasons why the stereotype is being used in the report. They suggest how the use of these stereotypes may influence the identity (self-concept and self-esteem) of those people being described and contribute to the prejudice or disadvantage that members of the group may experience.

Reflecting

REVIEWING, REFLECTING AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Considering what has been learned and preparing for the future



- ▶ Students complete the ten-minute mirror activity on Resource Sheet 2. They use this activity to consider what they have learnt and how they can modify their behaviour and respond to the behaviour of others in the future.

Descriptions



1. A defenceless grandmother was robbed.
2. The delicate girl was picking flowers.
3. A rugged labourer lifted the heavy post.
4. Her sympathetic aunty bought her a new dress.
5. The energetic netball player moved quickly toward the goal.
6. The Italian waiter served us our meal.
7. The Asian gang startled shoppers at the mall.
8. Four Australian tourists created havoc at the resort.
9. Several female parents refused to stop talking during the presentation.
10. An angry man bullied his way to the front of the line.
11. The drunken men misbehaved at the party.
12. Two pretty models walked elegantly along the catwalk.

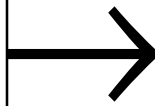
Ten-minute mirror



Resource Sheet 2

NAMES CAN HURT YOU TOO • MIDDLE PRIMARY

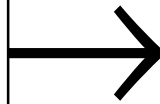
Past behaviours
Unfortunately, I have made stereotypical comments about



Goal: My future behaviours
My goal is to avoid making stereotypical comments about

because

The behaviours of others
Unfortunately, others have made stereotypical comments about me such as



Goal: Influencing the behaviours of others
When people make stereotypical comments about me or others I will

because

This sourcebook module should be read in conjunction with the following Queensland School Curriculum Council materials:

Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Syllabus

Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Sourcebook: Guidelines

Health and Physical Education Initial In-service Materials

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Any inquiries should be addressed to:
Queensland School Curriculum Council
PO Box 317
Brisbane Albert Street, Q 4002
Australia

Telephone: (07) 3237 0794
Facsimile: (07) 3237 1285
Website: <http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au>
Email: inquiries@qscc.qld.edu.au

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