

# Individual Abilities

Integration: Health (Mental/Emotional Health, Personal Health, Growth & Development); Language Arts

Grade Levels: 4-6

Time: 1-2 class periods

Materials:

- *I Would Never Do That* worksheet
- *Who Is Ann Bancroft?* handout
- *Who Is Liv Arnesen?* handout

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Recognize stereotyped thinking.
2. Consider how stereotyped thinking can prevent them and others from “achieving their dreams”.

Lesson:

Full Group

1. Write the word *stereotype* on the chalkboard or on an overhead. Ask students if they know what the word means. (belief that that all people who belong to a certain group think, act, or look the same.)
2. Write the two following statements on the chalkboard or on an overhead. Ask students to determine which one is stereotyped thinking.
  - All tall kids can play basketball well.
  - Basketball players are good athletes.
3. Tell students that stereotypes are everywhere, including on television, in magazines, in books, and in the classroom. Explain to students that one of the best ways to stop stereotyped thinking is to point it out when they hear it or see it.

### Think-Pair-Share

4. Explain to students that they must be able to recognize stereotyped thinking and determine why it is unfair, or biased thinking. Pair students with a partner to complete the following sentences.
  - a. Girls like to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Boys like to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Old people like to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. People with disabilities are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. Rich people like to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. Poor people like to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - g. Fat people are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - h. Foreigners are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - i. Kids who get straight A's are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - j. People who speak other languages are \_\_\_\_\_.

### Full Group

5. After the pairs have had the opportunity to complete the sentences, ask the students to share some of their completions. Are the ideas always true? Why or why not? Using the sentences as a guide, discuss how stereotypes are harmful.
6. Explain that an example of a stereotype in advertising might be a picture of a boy playing a computer game while his sister plays with a doll. This might suggest that only boys are good at computer games, or that girls would rather play with dolls.
  - a. Ask for other examples of stereotypes in advertising.
7. Read or have students read about Ann Bancroft and Liv Arnesen (biographies). Ask, "Do you think Ann and Liv were ever told that they could not achieve their goals because of stereotypes?" (yes)
  - a. Tell students that when Liv was 12 years old she dreamed about going to Antarctica. When she told her friends, they told her that it was a boy's dream. It would be impossible for her to do. Girls were not supposed to want to go on expeditions.
  - b. Tell students that Ann had been told that she couldn't achieve her dreams because she was a woman. This motivated her even more.
8. Ask students, "Do you think Ann and Liv would attempt to become the first women to cross Antarctica if they believed in stereotypes?" Present the following stereotypical thoughts and discuss why they are not necessarily true.

- Women shouldn't attempt polar explorations without men.
  - Only large, muscular people are strong enough to pull 250-pound sleds.
  - Only scientists have the ability to collect useful information about Antarctica.
9. Tell students that you will make some statements and will ask those who agree to stand up. Those who disagree will remain seated. Tell students to debate their opinions. The challenge will be to convince others to change their opinion. (add or have students contribute additional statements as necessary)
- Men are better drivers than women are.
  - It is easier to be a boy than a girl.
  - Women make better housekeepers.
  - All men are good at sports.

ALTERNATIVE: Divide students into 2 groups and give each a position on the topics. Have the students debate the topic from the position they were given whether they believe it or not.

10. Through discussion of stereotyping, students will observe how it affects everyday behavior. Ask, "How are some people treated because of stereotypes (positive and negative)?"
11. Ask students if they have ever made the statement, "I Would Never Do That!"  
 Explain that sometimes people feel that they can't change or learn something new. Some people even believe stereotyped thinking about themselves.
- a. Discuss how people grow and change as they learn new things.
12. Distribute the *I Would Never Do That!* worksheet. Tell students to put a check in the box that most applies to their feelings about each role now. Ask them how their answers might change if they think about these things in five years.
- a. Discuss whether stereotyped thinking affects how the students answer.

### Learning Log

13. Ask students to select one of the following topics and write a short essay. Explain that as they write their essay, they should consider how stereotyped thinking could prevent them and others from "achieving their dreams". Have students share their essays (optional).
- a. Describe someone you admire and why.

- b. Talk about your favorite actor or actress and why you like him or her.
- c. In your opinion, what was the greatest moment in sports?
- d. Describe your greatest accomplishment.
- e. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
- f. If you could change anything in the world, what would you change and why?

EXTENSION: Have a guest speaker speak to the class about stereotyping.

Assessment:

Teachers will assess:

1. Student's explanation of stereotyped thinking and its effect on people's behavior and ability to achieve.
2. Student's ability to recognize stereotyped thinking.
3. Student's critical thinking during the debate.