

Eyebright

Unit One - Classification

This is the first unit in a series of eight, created for HMD 2010, in partnership with the art and poetry group arthur+martha. You should download and read the project guidelines (http://education.hmd.org.uk/assets/downloads/guidance_notes.pdf) before working through the unit. The work is based on the stages of genocide (<http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides>) as defined by Gregory Stanton. The first stage is Classification and you need to **ensure** your students understand what happens in this stage. **Discuss** the summary below as an introduction to the unit. You should not attempt to work through the exercises before you have done this.

Summary and discussion

Many cultures use categories to distinguish people into “us” and “them” by ethnicity, race religion or nationality. Examples from the Nazi era and more recent genocides are Aryan and Jew, city person and peasant in Cambodia, Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda. In the Mosaic of Victims case study (<http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/a-mosaic-of-victims/read>) there are many examples of how the Nazis classified people.

Ask whether students can think of divisions in our own communities. **Discuss** with students how name calling and labelling diminishes us. To prevent classification leading to something more serious, we need to search for common ground. **ASK** what do we all share as human being? How can we celebrate difference? How can we create a **Legacy of Hope**?

Writing exercise

This poem creation exercise is designed to be the opposite of classification – instead of stereotyping and putting people into groups, it celebrates individuals. The poem to be created is linked by a refrain adapted from Walt Whitman’s line ‘I celebrate myself and sing’ from his poem *Leaves of Grass*. This line will be rewritten by everyone who creates a poem. The common lines, written by everyone, mean that each poem can be read by itself and be an individual message or each contribution can become a verse in a larger piece co-written by many people. Alliteration and assonance make it ideal for reading aloud.

Give these instructions to students but **work slowly** through each step.

1. **Re-order** the words in Whitman's line 'I celebrate myself and sing', writing them on your card. Do this five times, leaving a gap under each line. **Rearrange** not only the words but also the letters ('Celebrate' could, for example, become 'bratecele') and substitute words with similar meanings. **Encourage** students to use other languages and alphabets. By the fifth rewriting the line should be almost unrecognisable.
2. In the gap under the first line write four words to **describe yourself** in positive, celebratory ways. Each word must begin with the letter S or be sibilant. Any word that is negative must be qualified by a positive, for instance 'stupid' would become 'splendidly stupid'.
3. In the gap under the second line, **write** a further four words celebrating yourself. This time the words don't have to start with S, but must contain an S, or sibilant sounds.
4. Under the third line, write a full sentence that contains another four S words **celebrating** yourself and your individuality.
5. Under the fourth line, write a sentence describing four things (containing S, naturally) that you like to see.
6. The complete poem can be read through, **encourage** students to think of it as a performance so **ask** them to experiment with **reading out loud**. **Try** conducting the group as though they were an orchestra, asking them to read softly/loudly, read in and out of sequence, read in sub-groups, emphasise certain sounds (especially the S) and so on.
7. The poems are now ready to be **cut into triangle badges**. Use a template and **ask** students to draw a 12cm triangle over the part of the page that seems most interesting, cut it out and tape a safety-pin to the back. Here is a poem created by the students of Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School.

I myself sing and celebrate

Silly, smiling, sporty, sweet, super.

Celebrate sing myself and I.

Precious, gorgeous, sympathetic, surprising, noisy.

Sing and celebrate I myself.

I see flowers

I see snow

I see strawberries

I see ice cream

I see sea.

I celebrate myself

Snow falls, flowing softly.

Sing and myself celebrate I.

I my singer.

Finally - remind students that by creating poems and badges to celebrate individuality they have challenge the divisive nature of classifying people as group members rather than recognising them as individuals.