Part II :
Developing Global Perspectives

We got to the town where we would do our training for the next three months, and I wondered where all the houses were because all I could see were garages, or what I thought were garages. The houses were very different from what my concept of a house was. There were no yards on the outside like I had grown up with in Minnesota.

-Monica Fitzgerald[21]

People expected Americans to behave in a certain way. They expected all Americans to be blonde. They have a lot of U.S. movies and videos. . .people always expected Americans to be rich.

-Jean Deal[22]

Although late 20th century advances in transportation and communications promise a smaller, more accessible world, we each perceive that world through the filters of our individual experiences and cultural development. Still, cross-cultural contact is a fact of our local, national, and global lives. It is more important than ever that each of us develop an inclusive global perspective that celebrates diversity and promotes tolerance.

The experiences of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers like Monica Fitzgerald and Jean Deal illustrate the dual mission of the Peace Corps: to teach and to learn. A Volunteer learns quickly that her view of the world will be challenged daily by the unfamiliar. By living and working alongside host country residents, Volunteers also have the opportunity to demonstrate the diversity of American culture. The stories of Returned Volunteers are stories of adaptation and acceptance, of how to be at home anywhere in the world (see "Sunday Morning Stares" on following page).

Global education experts Jan Drum, Steve Hughes, and George Otero have articulated the need to bring concepts such as diversity, adaptation, and acceptance to the attention of our students:

> *"Educated people today need to be aware that their view of the world is only one of many. . . . Teachers need to help young people become conscious of their own world views. Once students have clarified their beliefs, they can begin to imagine how others might see things differently; they can try to understand and empathize with people who see things from a different angle."*[23]

The activities included in this section address these goals by helping students identify the factors that shape their individual views, promoting active appreciation for diversity in their classroom and world communities, and providing tools for analyzing information sources. Teachers are encouraged to review all the activities and to select or adapt the materials that are most appropriate for their students.

Sunday Morning Stares[24]

The Sunday morning walk to St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church of Sogeri is two kilometers from my little red house on the Iarowari High School grounds. Today is Palm Sunday. I'm walking the Sogeri road. The weight of the sun is like an invisible heat blanket bleaching my hair, trying to set it ablaze.

Tall kunai grass towers on both sides. Wild bushes sprouting magnificent colored flowers climb the hills on the right side. Strange, crooked, randomly spiraling palm trees eerily look down on the tar like the background of a Salvador Dali painting. An unseen stream rolls over its rocky bed then reminds me of its presence down below the grassy hill on the left.

As I turn the corner coming up near the school rugby oval, I get a feeling. Unavoidable. It will stay with me until I'm back in my little red house. Some people are sitting on a fallen tree on the hill overlooking the rugby field and some more are walking my way. A woman and three children. I'm on stage. I'm a showpiece, a curiosity, a foreigner. Painfully aware, I'm a white man in Papua New Guinea. I don't mean to say that the Papua New Guineans never see whites. But one who lives amongst them? A man who walks the same road as they do, eats the same food, teaches their children? A white man who doesn't live in some expensive palace in Moresby going about his day beyond the barbed wire, acting as if he were back in his own country?

The stares come. They come from all directions. I pass the people on the fallen tree, but I still feel their looks on my back. The women and children pass me. A greeting of "*Moning nau*" is exchanged, but the children gawk. I give a smile and happily receive one back.

Where I came from (a small Midwestern town) did not prepare me to be at center stage, every moment of each day. I am the middle of nine children. At college I was a study in average. Comfortably packed in with the rest, a perfectly capable student, but one who never racked his brains with school. I sailed on the wave of the fat section of the bell curve. Last year, I remember thinking, "I don't want to get a job, in a few years a wife. I want to see the world! I want to be different!" Good Lord, I'm different now.

The stares keep coming, and for some unknown reason a lonely feeling creeps in. The "I wish I could talk to my family" feeling. The "far away in the middle of nowhere feeling." I fight it back down my throat. I want to sit. I want to close my eyes and imagine. Imagine that I can lose myself in a crowd, that I can look like everyone else. I want my hair to curl up into tight little dark balls and my skin to turn brown. I want to sit somewhere and have people walk by without staring, without even noticing. This spotlight is as bright and constant as the sun that has now reached every part of my body. Sweat drips down off my nose and makes a dark wet spot on my shirt.

I'm passing the community school now and two of my students have caught up with me. They give me a happy look and prepare to absorb some of the stares. Mostly they get stares of their own which say, "You two are with him, huh?" To which they smile and nod, "That's right, he's a *Taubada*, but he's OK, he's with us." I nod as if to affirm the silent conversation. I feel as accepted as I'll ever be. An appreciated stranger.

We pass an old man who has found a nice piece of shade. I recognize him. Local guy. A Papuan with a small belly and a baseball cap on. His hair has big Afro curls and his Melanesian eyes are spread apart. His teeth are stained a blackish red from a life's worth of betel nut chewing. Even though my Motu is limited to a few words, I mix some in with a Pidgin greeting, *"Ah Tura, namo. Yo Orait, eh? Gutpela, lukim."*

My effort shows a lack of ignorance more than any great knowledge. He smiles and gives a quick wave of his hand. The lonely feeling makes a quick exit; I breathe in the beautiful morning and exotic surroundings. My students turn off to the Lutheran Church after the wooden bridge that looks as if it was built during World War II. The stares appear more like curious looks that make me smile as I walk on. I can see St. Gregory the Great Church. It is a little bigger than my father's garage back in Michigan, but today it has the feel of a cathedral. All kinds of palms decorate inside and out. The colorful flowers have made their way into the church. They cover the altar and crucifix. I'm early. I sit down and place my elbows on my tanned knees to brace my head. More stares come my way, accompanied by the muffled giggles of some young girls in the back of the church. A thought enters my mind. All these stares, every look shot my way by the dark eyes of the PNG, they are 100 percent curiosity, zero percent animosity. They just want to know something about me. They want to feel my hair, pull my beard, touch my arm. They want to hear stories from the land of Rambo and Arnold Schwarzenegger. They want to see pictures of New York and find out if people actually kiss in public in my hometown. They want to hear about a football stadium filled with 100,000 screaming fans or ask how many times I've seen Mohammed Ali. Pure curiosity. Racial hatred hasn't come alive here yet. They just want to know something about me and my place.

Mass is starting and we all move outside to form a procession into the church, traditional Palm Sunday style. I've made a decision just now. Occasionally a loneliness that lessens over time and being on stage most of the day are small prices to pay for knowing this country and its people. I suddenly feel good about today, St. Gregory's Church, the Sogeri Plateau, Papua New Guinea, and, yes, even the look the man sitting beside me gives me right before he shakes my hand and says, "Peace be with you."

Daniel Laboe served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Papua New Guinea from 1992 to 1994.

Activity Suggestions: Grades 3-5

First Impressions

Class time needed: 40 minutes

Materials
"First Impressions" worksheet for each student

Objectives
- Students will recognize that a single observation can be misleading.
- Students will get to know one another.

Introduction
Young children often make assumptions and judgments about people based on quick impressions. For example, a little girl noticing a house with peeling paint and an unkempt yard told her aunt, "I bet the people who live in that house are ugly." The girl had somehow learned to make assumptions about people she had never met based on her perception of their possessions.

Given our tendency to link appearances to personality or cultural traits, the little girl's comment is not surprising. Each of us, regardless of age, has probably experienced the embarrassment of making a faulty assumption based on scant evidence. This exercise can be used to point out the importance of making careful observations and of avoiding judgment. It also serves as a community-building activity.

Procedure

1. To begin the activity, have students make lists of their favorite things. Tell them to keep these lists as they will be referring to them later.

2. Divide the students into groups of two. If possible, pair students who do not know each other well. Give each student a copy of the "First Impressions" worksheet.

3. Assign the following tasks.
   - Without speaking to your partner, think of at least five things you believe he or she likes (e.g., favorite color, activities, music, food). Base your ideas only on what you can learn about your partner from what you can see. List your ideas in the first column on your paper.
   - In the second column, write down the evidence that supports each of your ideas.

4. Once students have completed their lists, ask them to interview each other to find out if their observations are accurate. You may want to model the following dialogue.

   Student A: I see you have a Pittsburgh Steelers sticker on your notebook. You must like football.
   Student B: No, you're wrong. My brother is the football fan. He put these stickers on everything in the house after his favorite team won the Super Bowl.
   Student A: But you must like to read. You have two library books with you.
   Student B: You're right about that. I read a lot in my spare time. Since you're a girl, I'll bet you like to shop.
   Student A: Shopping is fun, but I didn't list it as one of my favorite activities. I'd rather play computer games.

As students conduct their interviews, they should use the third column to note corrections and to add more information about their initial observations.

Debriefing

After students have completed their interviews, bring the full class together to discuss the activity. The following questions can be used to focus the discussion.

1. How did it feel to know that someone was making guesses about the things you like without talking to you?

2. What happened when you talked with your partners about your observations? Were your original conclusions mostly right or mostly wrong? Did you find that you like similar things or different things?

3. What would you say are the important things to remember about first impressions?

4. What are some problems that can occur when people make assumptions without very much evidence?

5. What if you did this activity with someone much older than yourself or with someone from another country? How would you make accurate guesses about their favorite things?

6. What are some things you can do to make sure that your ideas about people and places are fair?

Extending the Ideas

- Ask students to use the information gathered during their interviews to introduce their partners to other members of the class.

- Have students design posters that illustrate their partners' lists of favorite things. Displayed in the classroom, these would serve as a visual reminder of individual traits and shared interests. These displays could be updated throughout the school year as students get to know each other better.

- Invite international exchange students or Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to the class to talk about their first impressions of people in their host countries. Did their perspective change over time?

- If your class is writing to a Peace Corps Volunteer, try to find out how experience in the host country changed his or her initial impressions.

- Ask the newest students in the class to share their first impressions of your school and the class. Have your class then brainstorm ideas to help new students have a positive beginning in your school. If there is a need to assist new students in their adjustment, this could be developed into a service-learning project. See the Introduction to *Looking at Ourselves and Others* for a Service-Learning Rubric.

First Impressions

What I Think My Partner Likes	Evidence to Support What I Think	What My Partner Said About My Observation

The Blind Men and the Elephant[25]

Class time needed: 20 minutes

Materials
One copy of "The Blind Men and the Elephant"

Objectives
- Students will develop sensitivity to others' points of view.
- Students will understand the importance of having as much information as possible before coming to conclusions.

This retelling of a traditional story from India illustrates how different people can have distinctly different perceptions of the same thing. Students will readily see the faulty thinking behind the blind men's arguments, but they may need some help understanding that even when presented with a real elephant, each man could "see" only what he already believed to be true. Use this story to encourage your students to develop perspective awareness—awareness that each of us creates a unique view of the world based on personal experience, language, and culture.

Procedure
Since "The Blind Men and the Elephant" is a folktale from oral tradition, you may want to rehearse the story several times and tell it rather than read it to your class. Before you present the story, ask students to give their interpretations of the word "see." Reinforce the idea that to see can mean to perceive something visually or to understand an idea. Ask students to listen to the story for examples of both definitions.

Debriefing
After students have heard the story, use the following questions to guide discussion of how differences in perspective can make it difficult for people to communicate. Students should be encouraged to apply the moral of the folktale to real-life situations.

1. How does it feel when another person doesn't "see" something the same way you do?

2. What happens in the story when each blind man "sees" the elephant? Why were there six different ideas about the elephant? Were any of the men right about the elephant? Were any of them completely wrong?

3. What did the blind men learn from the Rajah? What does the storyteller want us to learn from this tale?

4. Do problems like this happen in real life? Think of times when arguments or misunderstandings have occurred because people see situations from different points of view. Describe what happened.

5. What if the men in this story were not blind? Would they still have different ideas about elephants?

6. Does the story give you any ideas about how these problems can be solved? What are some steps you can take to understand why another person doesn't see things the way you do?

Extending the Ideas

- Ask students to write an extension of the story that includes the conversation the six men might have had as they journeyed home.

- Have students write original stories that illustrate the importance of perspective-awareness.

- Ask students to write and perform a skit based on the story. The skit could be performed for other classes, and the performers could guide a debriefing with their audience.

- Have students work in groups of six to create group illustrations of the story. Alternatively, have them use recycled materials to create a sculpture of the elephant combining the perspectives of the six blind men.

- Encourage students to talk about misunderstandings they experience or observe that seem to be the result of clashes between points of view. Work with students to role-play behavior that resolves the misunderstanding.

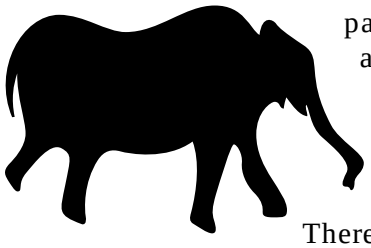
- If your class is corresponding with a Peace Corps Volunteer, ask him or her to provide some examples of differences in how people in the host country view the world and the way Americans "see" things. What has the Volunteer learned from these differences?

The Blind Men and the Elephant

Long ago six old men lived in a village in India. Each was born blind. The other villagers loved the old men and kept them away from harm. Since the blind men could not see the world for themselves, they had to imagine many of its wonders. They listened carefully to the stories told by travelers to learn what they could about life outside the village.

The men were curious about many of the stories they heard, but they were most curious about elephants. They were told that elephants could trample forests, carry huge burdens, and frighten young and old with their loud trumpet calls. But they also knew that the Rajah's daughter rode an elephant when she traveled in her father's kingdom. Would the Rajah let his daughter get near such a dangerous creature?

The old men argued day and night about elephants. "An elephant must be a powerful giant," claimed the first blind man. He had heard stories about elephants being used to clear forests and build roads.



"No, you must be wrong," argued the second blind man. "An elephant must be graceful and gentle if a princess is to ride on its back."

"You're wrong! I have heard that an elephant can pierce a man's heart with its terrible horn," said the third blind man.

"Please," said the fourth blind man. "You are all mistaken. An elephant is nothing more than a large sort of cow. You know how people exaggerate."

"I am sure that an elephant is something magical," said the fifth blind man. "That would explain why the Rajah's daughter can travel safely throughout the kingdom."

"I don't believe elephants exist at all," declared the sixth blind man. "I think we are the victims of a cruel joke."

Finally, the villagers grew tired of all the arguments, and they arranged for the curious men to visit the palace of the Rajah to learn the truth about elephants. A young boy from their village was selected to guide the blind men on their journey. The smallest man put his hand on the boy's shoulder. The second blind man put his hand on his friend's shoulder, and so on until all six men were ready to walk safely behind the boy who would lead them to the Rajah's magnificent palace.

When the blind men reached the palace, they were greeted by an old friend from their village who worked as a gardener on the palace grounds. Their friend led them to the courtyard. There stood an elephant. The blind men stepped forward to touch the creature that was the subject of so many arguments.

The first blind man reached out and touched the side of the huge animal. "An elephant is smooth and solid like a wall!" he declared. "It must be very powerful."

The second blind man put his hand on the elephant's limber trunk. "An elephant is like a giant snake," he announced.

The third blind man felt the elephant's pointed tusk. "I was right," he decided. "This creature is as sharp and deadly as a spear."

The fourth blind man touched one of the elephant's four legs. "What we have here," he said, "is an extremely large cow."

The fifth blind man felt the elephant's giant ear. "I believe an elephant is like a huge fan or maybe a magic carpet that can fly over mountains and treetops," he said.

The sixth blind man gave a tug on the elephant's fuzzy tail. "Why, this is nothing more than a piece of old rope. Dangerous, indeed," he scoffed.

The gardener led his friends to the shade of a tree. "Sit here and rest for the long journey home," he said. "I will bring you some water to drink."

While they waited, the six blind men talked about the elephant.

"An elephant is like a wall," said the first blind man. "Surely we can finally agree on that."

"A wall? An elephant is a giant snake!" answered the second blind man.

"It's a spear, I tell you," insisted the third blind man.

"I'm certain it's a giant cow," said the fourth blind man.

"Magic carpet. There's no doubt," said the fifth blind man.

"Don't you see?" pleaded the sixth blind man. "Someone used a rope to trick us."

Their argument continued and their shouts grew louder and louder.

"Wall!" "Snake!" "Spear!" "Cow!" "Carpet!" "Rope!"

"STOP SHOUTING!" called a very angry voice.

It was the Rajah, awakened from his nap by the noisy argument.

"How can each of you be so certain you are right?" asked the ruler.

The six blind men considered the question. And then, knowing the Rajah to be a very wise man, they decided to say nothing at all.

"The elephant is a very large animal," said the Rajah kindly. "Each man touched only one part. Perhaps if you put the parts together, you will see the truth. Now, let me finish my nap in peace."

When their friend returned to the garden with the cool water, the six men rested quietly in the shade, thinking about the Rajah's advice.

"He is right," said the first blind man. "To learn the truth, we must put all the parts together. Let's discuss this on the journey home."

The first blind man put his hand on the shoulder of the young boy who would guide them home. The second blind man put a hand on his friend's shoulder, and so on until all six men were ready to travel together.

Retold by Donelle Blubaugh

Opposites

Class time needed: 30 minutes

Materials
Pencils and paper

Objectives
- Students will recognize that their classmates hold a variety of opinions.
- Students will identify factors that influence perspective and opinion.

Introduction
This activity is designed to illustrate the variety of perspectives and opinions represented in the class. It will help students understand that perceptions are influenced by personal experience and taste as well as cultural background. This is a good opportunity to help students get to know each other better by recognizing the variety of cultures and talents represented in their community.

Procedure
Tell your students that you would like them to explore their opinions about a topic of current interest.

1. Ask the students to choose a category such as school, music, food, television, or a theme currently being discussed in a curricular area.

2. Present the students with a list of opposites describing a variety of opinions and perspectives such as rich / poor, beautiful / ugly, easy / difficult, delicious / disgusting, boring / interesting.

3. Ask each student to write down the name of an activity, a thing, or an idea (not a person!) that represents each concept. Encourage students to respond according to their honest feelings, not according to what is cool or funny.

4. Once students have completed their individual lists, have students share some of their responses. As a group, look at the variety of perceptions represented by the students' lists.

Debriefing
Use the following questions to help students reflect on the ways we form opinions.

1. How do you feel when someone disagrees with your opinion about something?

2. How many different examples of things that are delicious did we collect? Is there any one thing that we could all agree is delicious?

3. Why do you think there are so many differences of opinion about these ideas? What did you learn about our class when we compared our opinions?

4. What might happen if we asked every student in our school to do this activity? What would our community be like if everyone had the same preferences and opinions?

5. What are some ways differences can be used to make a community work better?

Extending the Ideas

- Use this activity as a starting point for building a class service directory similar to those found in community newspapers and telephone books. Students can work together to develop a questionnaire that probes individual student interests and talents. Then have students design advertising pages for each other based on responses to the questionnaire. (For example: "Need help with math? Contact Tonya Johnson, our class expert." "Ron Nguyen is a terrific artist! Let him know if you're a writer with a story to illustrate." "Maria Rodriguez has an amazing collection of baseball cards. Call her when you're ready to trade.") Be sure to help those students who may have trouble identifying special skills or interests and encourage students with complementary talents to develop group advertisements.

- Invite a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer or someone from your community who has spent time in other countries to talk to your class about how perceptions of rich / poor, beautiful / ugly, delicious / disgusting, etc. vary from culture to culture. Contact World Wise Schools for a list of Returned Volunteers in your area (e-mail: <dpinfo@peacecorps.gov>; phone: 800-424-8580).

- If you are corresponding with a current Peace Corps Volunteer, ask for comments on how his or her perspective on concepts such as good / bad, rich / poor, or easy / difficult has changed in the host country.

Activity Suggestions: Grades 6-9

Is That a Fact?

Class time needed: 30 minutes

Materials

"Is That a Fact?" worksheets for each group of four to five students

Objectives

- Students will articulate the difference between fact and opinion.
- Students will identify ways to clarify or qualify statements of opinion.

Introduction

Understanding the difference between fact and opinion is critical to our ability to examine our reactions to events and people. Stereotypes and prejudices are often based on opinions that are perceived as facts. Skills practiced during this activity can be reinforced using content from textbooks, magazines, and newspapers, as well as from correspondence with your Peace Corps Volunteer if your class is participating in a World Wise Schools match program.

Procedure

1. Write three examples of facts on one side of the board and three examples of opinions on the other side of the board.

Examples of facts:

George has blue eyes.
This room has four windows.
There are 50 states in the United States.

Examples of opinions:

This room is too warm.
Math class is boring.
The best cars are made in the United States.

2. Ask students to identify the statements of fact and the statements of opinion. Label each group.

3. Have students work with partners to come up with definitions for the words "fact" and "opinion." Choose a class definition, using a dictionary or a language arts textbook if necessary.

4. Divide the class into small groups of four to five students each. Provide each group with a copy of the worksheet "Is That A Fact?" Ask one student in each group to cut the sheet into strips as indicated. That student should "deal" the strips out to the group's members until all of the strips have been distributed.

5. Have each small group divide its work space into three areas, one labeled "Facts," another "Opinions," and the third "Need More Information." Have students work together to place the statements in the appropriate areas according to the definitions they agreed upon earlier.

6. As you monitor the group activity, ask representatives from each group to explain how the group is deciding to place the statements. Make sure their decisions followed the agreed upon definitions for fact and opinion.

7. Ask students to examine the statements in the "Need More Information" category. Have them work together to identify sources of information that would prove or disprove the statements.

Debriefing

When the small groups have completed their work, bring the whole class back together to discuss the process. Use the following questions to check student understanding of the difference between fact and opinion.

1. How can you tell whether something is a fact or an opinion?

2. What makes it difficult to decide if something is a fact or an opinion?

3. When you were working in small groups, did everyone agree on which statements were fact and which were opinion? Could any of the opinion statements be considered facts if we had more information or if the statement were more specific? (Example: When it comes to math scores, this is the best school in the whole town.)

4. If you're not sure whether something is a fact, what can you do?

5. Why is it important to know whether something is a fact or an opinion?

Extending the Ideas

- Have students rewrite the statements identified as opinions using qualifying phrases (e.g., I think, according to the book I read, etc.) or more specific language.

- Have students watch one or more of the World Wise Schools *Destination* video tapes. Ask students to listen for and record facts and opinions as they watch. Compare responses in small groups.

- Have your students read essays by Peace Corps Volunteers or other pieces of writing to find examples of facts and opinions. Check the World Wise Schools online resources for letters from Peace Corps Volunteers or use the excerpt, "Living in a Traditional African Way" from an interview with Volunteer Craig Benson. The entire interview can be found on the Peace Corps web site at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/dp/interview/wwsin2.html>.

Is That a Fact?

Girls are smarter than boys.

Americans love French fries.

Americans are friendly.

Men are usually taller than women.

The world is a better place now than it was 100 years ago.

There is more farm land in the United States than in any other country.

Today is a beautiful day.

Most people in Africa live in urban areas.

This is the best school in the whole town.

Women make better teachers than men.

Most people in Honduras are unhappy.

The U.S.A. is the richest country in the world.

Living in a Traditional African Way

The following reading is adapted from an interview conducted with Craig Benson during his Peace Corps service in Cameroon in Central Africa between 1990 and 1993.

The thing that's really important no matter where you go are the friends that you meet, the people that you love, and the people with whom you share life. I have some really great neighbors here. In particular, I have a family—five children, two parents—with whom I'm close. The wife is a leader of a farming group that I work with. She introduced me to her farming group, which has turned out to be one of the best. That family welcomed me in a very traditional African way.

When I first came to the house they brought me food for three months. I didn't cook. They brought me two meals a day. I got to try out all the different kinds of African foods. They would always invite me out for any occasion, invite me to come to the church, invite me to the farm, invite me to this baptism, invite me to go to this "crydie," which is what they say for a funeral, or to this "born-house," which is a birth celebration when a woman has a baby.

They showed me the village and have watched out for me since I've been here. It's those kind of people that really, no matter how much the chips go down, make an experience like this worthwhile.

Let me tell you about one friend I have. He's a young man here in the village who hadn't been in school for some time. When I came, I asked for someone to help me around the house—not really so much for cleaning, but to show me where to get water and how to do things in the village. That young man, Dan, has become a good friend. We have a poultry project going on.

You couldn't buy eggs anywhere in Ande, so Dan and I put our heads together and said, "Well, we both like to eat eggs, so let's get some day-old chicks." And, sure enough, now we have poultry and they're grown. They're giving us eggs. So I've just put Dan in complete control of that. I've taught him the ropes about what diseases poultry can get, what kind of feed to give them, how to get a lot of eggs, what kind of green feed, bone meal, sand, and ants they need. We're feeding them well and it's a nice demonstration. People come to see it and ask why our fowls are so big and theirs are so small. They ask why ours are alive and theirs are dead (because they've died in the dry season).

We're getting some revenue from it, which Dan is controlling. He collects eggs. My deal with him is, "You just give me the eggs I need to eat, and the rest is yours." He manages it—saves the money from it to buy more feed and then whatever is left over he uses. He's actually put himself back in school. He's been able to sponsor himself through school by taking care of some chickens.

Let me say one more thing about Dan. He's teaching me how to play football, which is very important! I'm a terrible soccer player—football is what they say for soccer. And it's the only game in town—it doesn't matter if I know how to play basketball, baseball, volleyball, and all the rest—you can't play them here. Football is it. So I said, "Dan, I'll help you with the fowls. I'll help you with anything, but you've got to teach me how to play football." So I'm getting better. It's been a year, but I'm only up to the level of high school-age players. I play with little kids, and that's about as good as I am. I'm not as good as people my same age, but I'm on my way!

How Accurate Is It? [26]

Class time needed: 40 minutes

Materials

- "How Accurate Is It" worksheets for every two students
- Pencils and paper

Objective

- Students will learn to identify and modify generalizations.

Introduction

This activity introduces students to the difficult concept of generalization so that they will challenge generalizations made about people, insist on knowing the evidence that supports these, and be willing to modify their own generalizations when confronted by evidence showing them to be false. It is important for students to understand that almost all generalizations, particularly those about people, need to be qualified. The activity also asks students to practice using qualifying language.

Procedure

1. Explain the meaning of "general" and "specific" using objects in the room or pictures to illustrate your point (e.g., "This horse is black" versus "All horses are black").

2. Write the following statement on the board: "Snakes are harmful." Ask students to write whether they agree or disagree with the statement at the top of a sheet of paper. Then read each the following questions aloud. Have students write "yes" or "no" in response to each question.
   - Are all snakes harmful?
   - Are most snakes harmful?
   - Are many snakes harmful?
   - Are some snakes harmful?
   - Are a few snakes harmful?
   - Do you know about all snakes?
   - Is the statement "Snakes are harmful" true?

3. As a class, explore the following questions.
   - How many students agreed with the statement on the board? How many students answered no to the seventh question? What made you change your mind?
   - What words can you add to the statement "Snakes are harmful" to make it more accurate (e.g., some snakes, many snakes, a few snakes in Asia)?
   - What can you add to the statement to show that you don't have a lot of factual information about snakes (e.g., as far as I know, I'm not sure, in my experience)?

4. Have students work in small groups to evaluate the accuracy of the generalizations listed on the "How Accurate Is It?" worksheet. Encourage them to discuss their reasoning and come to consensus on each statement. Then have students work in pairs to rewrite each statement using the qualifying phrases discussed above so that it is as accurate as possible.

5. As a class, discuss the conclusions of each group, paying close attention to how the statements were qualified.

Debriefing

Use the following questions to guide a brainstorming session to help students recognize generalizations and begin using qualifying language.

1. Have you ever heard anyone use a generalization to describe you or another person? How does it feel when someone does that?

2. What happened when we used a generalization to describe snakes? Was the statement accurate? What happened when we used qualifiers to describe snakes? When you filled out the worksheet, which statements were more difficult to evaluate—the statements about things, or the statements about people?

3. What are some ways we could complete the following sentences?
   We should try not to use generalizations because _____ .
   It is important to use qualified statements because _____.

4. What can you do if you hear someone using generalizations to describe a person or a group of people? (Help students articulate some nonconfrontational ways to respond to generalized descriptions.)

Extending the Ideas

- Watch one or more World Wise Schools *Destination* video tapes. Ask students to listen for and record the qualified statements made in the tape. (Example: Most people in Honduras live in the mountains.)

- Ask students to collect examples of generalizations from advertising. Discuss why advertisers use generalizations and have students revise generalized statements to make them more accurate.

- Use returned Peace Corps Volunteer Julie Kaminsky's description of education in Gaoual, Guinea, in West Africa to help students recognize generalizations and qualified statements. Have them work in pairs to read the article and identify the statements that indicate that Julie Kaminsky was trying not to generalize. Then have them locate any generalizations. (For a complete list of "Volunteer Views," visit World Wise Schools on the Peace Corps web site at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/dp/wws1.html>.

How Accurate Is It?

Directions: Read each statement carefully. Then ask yourself the following questions.

- Are all (or almost all) baseballs (or elephants, etc.) white (strong, etc.)?
- Are most baseballs (or elephants, etc.) white (strong, etc.)?
- Are some. . .?
- Are a few. . .?
- Do you know about. . .?

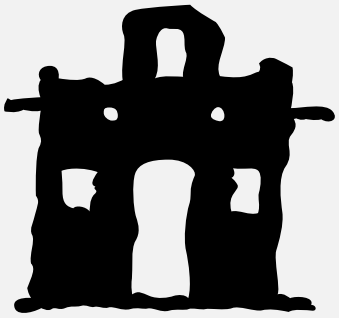
Put a check in the box that shows how accurate each statement is.

Statement	How Accurate It Is					
	all or almost all	**most**	**many**	**some**	**few**	**don't know**
1. Baseballs are white.						
2. Elephants are strong.						
3. Fish have gills.						
4. Spiders are poisonous.						
5. Candy is bad for your teeth.						
6. Babies cry.						
7. Politicians are dishonest.						
8. Teachers are smarter than children.						
9. Americans are rich.						
10. Poor people are lazy.						

School in Guinea, West Africa

I served in Guinea in West Africa. My town, Gaoual, was predominantly Moslem, and most children attended several years of Koranic school before they started regular classes in elementary school. While children could begin school as young as six years old, most started when they were eight or nine years old. Official statistics are difficult to obtain, but I was told that around 50 percent of all children attend elementary school (grades one to six).

In sixth grade, students take a national exam to get into middle school, and about half will continue. After that, each year school children must take exams to go on to the next grade level. Many don't pass on the first try and most will repeat a grade at least once or twice somewhere along the way. At the end of tenth grade, students take an exam to attend either high school or technical school (to become a carpenter, nurse, plumber, etc.). Only about 10 percent of all children actually attend through high school. My eleventh grade class had about 40 students; the twelfth grade class had 17; the "terminal" (final year of high school) had only four students.



By the time students complete "terminal" they are usually 20 to 24 years old. Generally, children come to school Monday through Saturday. Middle school and high school students attend three classes daily, each two hours long: in the morning from 8 to 10 and 10:15 to 12:15 p.m., and in the afternoon from 12:15 to 2:15. Some subjects take only one hour, so the second half of the two-hour block the students have free time.

Students attend classes October through May, with national and local exams held in June. July, August, and September are summer vacation (the rainy season). During the month of Ramadan (a Moslem religious month when all adults fast during daylight hours) older students and teachers fast but continue to come to class. All state holidays are days off and there are one-week vacations twice a year: December 25 to January 1 and April 4 to 11, standard throughout the country.

Julie Kaminsky served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Gaoual, a town in the northwest corner of Guinea, from 1993 to 1994.

Good News/Bad News/Who Cares?

Class time needed: Approximately 40 minutes

Materials

- One "Good News/Bad News/Who Cares?" activity sheet for each student
- Pencils and paper
- Almanacs and other reference materials

Objective

- Students will recognize that there are many ways of interpreting a single piece of information.

Introduction

To develop global perspectives, students need to form the habit of reflecting on the sources of their own opinions and reactions. This activity asks students to respond to a series of facts, analyze their reactions, and compare their responses. Students will also practice viewing factual information from multiple perspectives and work to develop awareness of the hidden biases in "factual" statements.

Procedure

1. Distribute copies of the "Good News/Bad News/Who Cares?" activity sheet to students. Explain that the statements are based on accurate research and can be believed to be true.

2. Instruct students to read each statement in the "Fact" column, then quickly note their response to each statement in one of the response columns. Is the statement good news, bad news, or just an uninteresting fact (Who Cares?)? For those statements interpreted as good news or bad news, students should jot a few words in the "Why?" column to explain their feelings.

3. Once students have completed their charts, tally their responses to each statement. Are a variety of opinions represented? Or did students have similar responses to the same facts? What factors might account for this? Ask individual students to share the thinking behind their opinions. Discuss why some statements did not elicit strong opinions (e.g., some statements may not contain enough information to warrant an opinion, others may simply not provoke the interest of individual students).

4. Divide the class into small groups of two to three students. Ask students to review their individual charts. Each student will choose one statement about which he or she felt strongly and discuss the reasons for that opinion with other group members. Then the group should brainstorm a short list of people who may have reasons for forming the opposite opinion. For example, students are likely to feel strongly that a $2.61 hourly wage for Mexican workers is bad news because that amount is very low compared to what most U.S. workers earn. However, the information could be good news for a U.S. manufacturer who is looking for a less expensive way to make products. Check in with the small groups frequently as they work; students may need help to place isolated facts into a more complete picture.

Debriefing

1. Ask a student spokesperson from each group to give some examples of the perspectives they considered and to summarize any difficulty the group had in imagining different points of view.

2. Ask students to discuss how they felt when their opinions were challenged by other students. Did any students change their opinions during the activity?

3. Revisit statement #7. Ask students if their reactions to this statement would change if it were phrased in a different, but equally true, way? For example, the statement would be equally true as "Almost 80 percent of the cars purchased in this country are made in the United States." Point out that even "facts" can be stated in ways that emphasize a particular perspective.

4. Help students identify ways statements of fact can be checked for accuracy and bias. For example, the fact should be supported by multiple sources. We can develop the habit of looking "behind the curtain." In other words, who is issuing the statement? Does that person or organization have a biased perspective?

Extending the Ideas

- Ask students to gather a list of facts from almanacs or other brief information sources about a Peace Corps host country and indicate whether those facts represent good news or bad news. This is a good opportunity to instruct students about the uses and limitations of various sources of information. For example, in most almanacs, infant mortality rates for a given country are reported for one year only. What at first glance appears to be a dire fact may actually be good news when statistics are compared over time.

- If the class is participating in the World Wise Schools match program, students can locate facts about their Peace Corps Volunteer's host country and ask the Volunteer to respond in good news/bad news fashion.

Good News/Bad News/Who Cares

Fact	Good News	Bad News	Who Cares?	Why?
1. Americans spend more than $20 million a day on snacks.*				
2. In 1993, Middle Eastern nations produced 18,446 barrels of crude oil a day. Those countries used 3,489 barrels a day.				
3. Chinese is the native language of more than one billion people. English is the native language of 300-450 million people.				
4. Each person in the United States eats more than four pounds of cucumbers a year.*				
5. The number of Internet users reached 25 million in 1995.				
6. The average hourly wage for workers in Mexico was $2.61 in 1994.				
7. In 1993, 15.6 percent of the automobiles sold in the United States were made in Japan.				
8. The New York Yankees won the World Series in 1996.				
9. About six billion people inhabit the Earth. By 2050 the world population will increase to about 10 billion.				
10. School attendance is not required in Guatemala.				

*Source: *The Great Food Almanac: A Feast of Fact From A-Z* by Irena Chalmers (San Francisco: Collins, 1994). Other information is from *The Universal Almanac 1996*, John W. Wright, editor (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1995).

Activity Suggestions: Grades 10-12

Beauty

Class time needed: Two to three class periods

Materials

- Objects provided by students
- Art supplies

Objectives

- Students will develop appreciation for the individual experiences that shape our views of what is important or valuable.
- Students will practice tolerance and acceptance.

Note: **This activity asks students to share potentially sensitive aspects of their personal lives. Help shy or reluctant students find "safe" ways to participate and set clear expectations for mutual respect in the class.**

Introduction

Objects tell stories. Each of us owns treasured mementos that hold little meaning or appeal for other people. These objects help us remember significant events and serve as symbols of personal or family milestones. This activity will help students understand how individual experience influences the way we view the world. It also provides a forum for discussion of the value of diversity and of our capacity to change.

Procedure

1. Ask each student to consider the emotional connotations of the word beautiful. An object that has personal or sentimental value may be "beautiful" to its owner, even though someone else might consider it odd, unusual, or ugly.

2. Ask each student to bring an object to class that he or she considers "beautiful" because of its connection to an idea, event, or person important to its owner.

3. Have students display their objects in the classroom as if it were a museum.

4. Have students tour the exhibit and take notes describing their gut reactions or first impressions of each object. Try to maintain a formal museum or gallery atmosphere in the class. Owners should not explain their objects, and observers should not comment aloud.

5. For the second class period, ask each student to find a way to explain the significance of his or her object. Students could use visual art, poetry, storytelling, dance, etc. to illustrate the events and feelings associated with their objects. They should invite their classmates to ask questions about each object and the story behind it. Students should then visit the "museum" a second time, again noting their responses.

Debriefing

Use the following questions (or questions you create) to guide discussion of how perceptions can change when we have the opportunity to hear each other's stories.

1. How did it feel to know that people were looking closely at, and perhaps making judgments about, something you treasure?

2. What happened the first time you looked at the objects exhibited by your classmates? Share some of the observations you made about the objects. What happened when you viewed the objects for a second time? Share some of your new observations. Did your feelings about the object change?

3. What are some things you learned about each other during this exercise? What did you learn about yourselves?

4. Working in groups of two to three, brainstorm a list of things that people judge according to appearance. Is it ever OK to do this? When?

5. What if we did this activity with people who were not familiar with American culture? How would you help them to understand the value of your objects? What questions could you ask to learn about the things they consider "beautiful"?

6. What are some things we can do to stay open-minded about things we don't immediately like or understand? As a group, devise a checklist or guide that students can use to help them remember to re-examine first impressions.

Extending the Ideas

- Ask students to keep a journal of their reactions to new situations, people, food, music, etc. for a specific time. Invite students to share their journal entries with the class and to discuss their progress as they develop perspective awareness.

- If your class is corresponding with a Peace Corps Volunteer, ask him or her to compare initial impressions of the host country with later feelings. Ask your Volunteer to discuss perspective awareness. What strategies does the Volunteer use to understand issues and events from the perspective of the hosts?

- Invite a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer or someone from your community who has spent time in other countries to talk to your class about perceptions of unfamiliar things from another culture. Ask the speaker to describe how these impressions influenced his or her behavior. Ask if the unfamiliar became routine over time and how that happened. Have the speaker describe situations that illustrate the concepts brought out in this lesson. Contact World Wise Schools for a list of Returned Volunteers in your area (e-mail: <dpinfo@peacecorps.gov>; phone: 800-424-8580, extension 2283).

Perspectives on Paraguay

Class time needed: 40 minutes

Materials

A copy of "Perspectives on Paraguay," an interview with returned Peace Corps Volunteer Nichola Minott, for each student

Objective

•Students will develop awareness of diverse cultural norms and values.

Introduction

Nichola Minott was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay from 1991 to 1994. She worked as a teacher trainer and then as a health coordinator. She was interviewed during the filming of a World Wise Schools video, *Destination: Paraguay*. In the interview excerpts printed on the student activity sheet, Nichola tells about her experiences as a Volunteer in a South American country. She provides a glimpse of the lives and culture of the people of Paraguay. Be aware that students may find aspects of Paraguayan life unfamiliar and strange in comparison to their own. Emphasize the need to be respectful of other peoples' ways of life, ideas, and traditions while reading and discussing the interview. The full interview can be found on the Peace Corps web site at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/dp/interview/wwsin1.html>.

Procedure

1. Help students locate Paraguay on a world map. Ask students to share their ideas about how a Paraguayan teenager's life might compare to a teenager's life in the United States. At this point it doesn't matter whether students have much background information about Paraguay; it will be interesting to see what the students' expectations are.

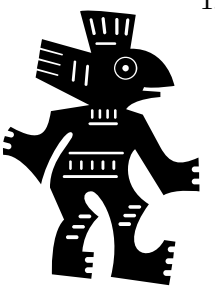
2. Provide each student with a copy of "Interview with Nichola Minott." Ask students to read the interview to learn about aspects of Paraguayan life and to compare it to their own.

3. After the students have read the interview independently, ask them to work in small groups to find specific similarities and differences between Paraguayan and American views. Be sure all of the cultural backgrounds represented in your class are heard during these discussions and during the debriefing period.

4. Ask a student spokesperson to summarize the similarities and differences identified by each small group.

Debriefing

Use the following questions to help students think about what they have learned.



1. What Paraguayan customs or views seemed most unusual to you? Are there aspects of Paraguayan life described in the interview that would be difficult for you to adapt to? Did Nichola Minott describe family and social expectations that also are important in your community?

2. What are some characteristics of life in our community that might make a teenager from Paraguay feel uncomfortable?

3. What are some values and characteristics that Nichola Minott labels as "American"? Would all Americans in all regions and communities agree with her?

4. Nichola Minott said that the Paraguayan perception of Americans is "blond hair, blue eyes." If you were a Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay, what could you do to give people a more diverse perspective?

Extending the Ideas

- View the World Wise Schools video *Destination: Paraguay*. Ask students if their impressions of life in Paraguay formed after reading Nichola Minott's interview were confirmed or challenged.

- Have students create a video tape that demonstrates daily life in your community. Encourage students to present the community's diversity.

- Use this same reading as the basis for a discussion on generalizations and how to recognize them. See "How Accurate Is It?" in the Grades 6-9 section of this guide for suggestions and debriefing questions.

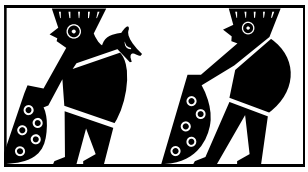
Perspectives on Paraguay

Question (Q): Describe the people in Paraguay.

Answer (A): OK. They're very open, they're very friendly. No matter how poor they are, they'll invite you to the house and give you the best portion of what they have. They're also very honest. For example, in the United States people are so conscious about their weight. In Paraguay, if someone is overweight, they'll say, "Oh, you know you're fat," but it's not something that's considered negative. It's just how you are. They're very honest about that, and I think that it takes a little bit of adjusting, especially coming from a culture where physical appearance is so important. It takes a little adjusting to realize that they're just being honest, but at the same time, it's not necessarily seen in a negative way.

The people of Paraguay are very friendly. They're shy at first. They feel you out to see who you are, especially if you're a foreigner. But once they get to know you, they are very protective of you. They make sure that nothing happens to you. They're just really open, really loving.

I think they value the family; the family's very close. Daughters, even though they get married, they still come back and they visit their mothers, their fathers. They live fairly close to each other. On weekends and Sundays, they always come back if they don't live very close to visit and have lunch. They're just a very open and loving people.



Q: How is life in Paraguay different from life in the U.S.?

A: Well, there's a term that they use here a lot in Paraguay—it's called *tranquillo*. I think life is a lot calmer, more low key, down to earth in Paraguay than in the U.S. In the U.S. everybody's rushing to get somewhere, rushing to do something. There's never enough time to do the things they want to do, and I think in Paraguay there is. There isn't so much emphasis on job as there is on family, and I think that's something that really differentiates the people in Paraguay.

Q: Describe the differences between men and women in the rural areas and then, if it's different, in the urban areas.

A: Well, there's a great division of the sexes. The men are considered the heads of the families and the women are to stay home and have babies and take care of the kids. That is the way it is. It's to a greater degree in the more rural areas, of course, and there's more freedom for women in the more urban areas. Like, for example, in this town, Carapegua, the women have jobs, they're teachers. They have their own businesses. In the rural areas that's not the case at all. So there are very distinct lines between males and females. And, for example, for a woman to

reach a certain age and not be married is not considered socially acceptable. There are women who have remained single most of their lives, but it is not socially acceptable. Also, it is unheard of for a woman to live alone. They're always living with their families. For me to come into this community, which is a fairly large town, and live by myself was something that they just could not understand. The women have been trained . . . to find a husband and get married and have a family. And that's the way it is right now. Just recently they have started to change that mentality, but it's a very long process, and it's not going to change overnight.

Q: Describe some of the dating customs.

A: Women are not allowed to [go to] dances until they're 15. When they turn 15, there's a huge party and then they're considered eligible. They can get married at 15, and they can go out to parties with a chaperone, either their mother or their older sisters. They cannot go to parties, especially in the more rural areas, without a chaperone or a date. They have certain visiting days when the men go over to the women's houses. They sit with the family and they talk to the dad, and they have very little time alone, and they get to know the family. On the non-visiting days they can do what they want. But when a man comes on those certain days, then that means he's interested and they're dating.

Q: Talk a little bit about some of the friendships you've made here in this area.

A: Well, let's see, I've made really good friends here. I think that's a feat in itself in that [I had] to learn the language. I wouldn't consider the friends I've made here superficial friends. I think it took a lot of work and a lot of trying on both our parts, but I think I've made friends that I hope to maintain when I return to the States. And the thing that is so important to me is that I've made them in a different language. We did not speak the same language when I first came here, and now we've passed that and it's a deeper friendship, and I value it. I value it more because of the work to form the friendships here.

Q: Do you feel that you've become part of the community?

A: Yeah! I felt I became part of the community . . . but you're always a foreigner, you're always the North American. I felt that people accepted me, and they were comfortable around me, but I don't think that I could, at least in two years, ever be completely integrated into the community. I'm still considered a novelty in a lot of ways. Their perception of Americans is blond hair, blue eyes—because that's the majority of what they see on TV and of Volunteers coming down here. I think I was a novelty because they'd never seen a black woman. So it was an awakening for them, and I think a good thing that they got to see an American who was not representative of the white Americans that they see on television.

Q: Do you have any special experiences or moments that you can share with us that come to mind, stand out?

A: I think one of the most rewarding experiences for me, workwise, was visiting a school and seeing them using something that we'd talked about in a workshop. That was really rewarding. For example, seeing a little kid wearing shoes and talking to his little brother or sister and saying, "You've got to put on your shoes," after I talked about not running around without shoes so you don't get parasites—I think that was rewarding. On another level, working with the kids, even though I didn't work with them a lot, was something I had a good feeling about.

On a personal level, I'd say the moment I got past the superficial barrier with my friends was very special to me, the moment we got to the point in our friendship where they started to come to me and ask my advice about things and talk to me. Then I knew we had reached a new level where I could talk to them and get advice from them—just like in the States when you're hanging out with your girlfriends and you're gossiping and going over your problems and getting different opinions. I thought that was one of the more rewarding experiences—when they started to come to me and when I started to do that with them.

Q: So what do you think people in the U.S. can learn from the Paraguayans?

A: I think one of the things we're losing in the U.S. is the importance of family. I've learned that personally being here. Just to value the family, also the importance of the community as a whole and working together for the community. It is not always the case in all communities, but in comparison to the United States, there's still a strong sense of community here in Paraguay. I think in the United States people tend to focus on consuming and having things, and I don't know whether it's to replace something they're lacking emotionally, but I think here people are more concerned with living. They buy things they need, but there is not so much emphasis on work and earning money. There's more emphasis on family. Work is to get the things you need in the house and the things you need to survive. But family is important.

Q: What makes Paraguay special for you?

A: There are a lot of things that make Paraguay special for me. I can't pinpoint one thing. I will say my experience has been enriched by the people I've met. . . . I really enjoy the culture, the language, listening to Guarinese even though I don't understand it. Spanish, learning Spanish, and just learning about a different culture, and communicating when three years ago I couldn't. I think that's part of the reason I really enjoy it, that I now have an understanding of people that I didn't have before.

Nichola Minott served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay from 1991 to 1994.

Endnotes

[21] Monica Fitzgerald served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala from 1987 to 1989. This comment is taken from an interview in March 1997.

[22] Jean Deal served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Marshall Islands from 1993 to 1995. This comment is taken from an interview in March 1997.

[23] Drum, Jan, Steve Hughes and George Otero, *Global Winners: 74 Learning Activities for Inside and Outside the Classroom* (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1994), p. xiv.

[24] Adapted from *Peace Corps Times*, Number 1, 1994, pp. 34-35.

[25] Previously unpublished adaptation of a traditional folktale. Printed with permission.

[26] Adapted with permission from *The Prejudice Book* by David Shiman (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1979).