1.16 Re-conceiving Notions

Objectives
Create an awareness of the kinds of assumptions or preconceived notions your students hold about people in ethnic groups different from their own.

Explore the diversity of attitudes and behaviors within ethnic groups as well as between them.

Materials needed
Copies of the handout

Time needed
Ten to twenty minutes

Instructor directions
Discuss the idea of assumptions or preconceived notions and their relation to bias and the “-isms.”

Have students identify some of their assumptions and then examine whether they apply uniformly to the listed ethnic groups.
1.16 Re-conceiving Notions Handout

Directions
Identify one specific assumption or preconceived notion you have had about people from the following groups.

Ethnic or cultural group I think people in this group...
Koreans
African-Americans
Jews
Orthodox Russians
Buddhists
Mexicans
Albanians
Muslims
Native Alaskans
Japanese
Ethiopians
Thais
Native American Indians or First Nations
Nicaraguans
Greeks
Vietnamese
Saudi Arabians
Germans
Pacific Islanders
Chinese
Iraqis
Explain how you became aware of this assumption or preconceived notion within yourself. Answer the following questions:
Where did your preconceived notion come from? Why do you hold it?

In what ways has your experience with people from this group confirmed your assumption or preconceived notion? In what ways has your experience challenged your assumption?

How might stereotypes obscure differences between people of a specified ethnic group? How might stereotypes obscure similarities between people of different ethnic groups?

How do these kinds of assumptions harm individuals? What opportunities might you have to benefit from associations with people of other ethnic groups if you did not hold preconceived notions about them?