

Charrette Challenge

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Interactive Segregation Simulation

Instructions and background:

Our goal is to make students more aware of the segregation that is occurring around them today and to make it easier for them to relate to the segregation of the past (which is a major part of the novel). We suggest the students go into the activity blind with no previous study of segregation or knowledge of the purpose of the activity.

Create badges of different colors with each color group containing somewhere between 5 and 10 members. As students walk in to class hand them a badge (any color but red) and have them sit in an assigned color area. Note...it is important to break up normal social groups in this process. Once everyone is separated have them place the badge in a visible position on their person and explain to them the RULES:

- You ARE your assigned color NO MORE NO LESS!
- All members of a color group MUST associate with each other
- No member of a color may associate with anyone not in their color
- Unless informed otherwise no member of one color may get within 2 feet of a member of another color
- All colors are not equal.....those higher on the scale will receive additional benefits and those lower on the scale must be conscious of their position. The ranking is as follows: Purple, Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red
- Anyone caught associating with any other color becomes red
- You may not speak to or with a red person. Otherwise you are to be isolated

After ground rules have been laid we suggest doing many group bonding activities. We suggest that you incorporate the following. Competitions such as an architecture activity, a relay race, a group quiz, or a production activity (see appendix for full explanations). At the end of the day/period come together as a class for a group discussion and discuss the following ideas.

Discussion:

View the video which discusses many concepts such as what is segregation, does it exist today, and is there a way to stop it. Discussion questions that you may want to address other than those posed in the video are:

- How was this different from an everyday school experience?
- How was this similar?
- In the activity you were told to ignore people of other “colors” in real life who/what groups are of a different “color” than you?
- Why is that?
- Do you think these are notions you developed or notions forced upon you by society?
- Do you see any way that this self-segregation could be stopped?
- How is today’s segregation similar to the racism that existed throughout the 20th Century? (this would be a good point to introduce the book and the general plot behind it)

We hope that this activity has helped the class to better relate to and understand segregation (like presented in *The Best of Enemies*). It was our intention to get the class thinking about large scale issues that affect them as well as the main characters in the upcoming literature and we hope that this is just a starting point for that complex discussion.

Appendix:

Group Quiz:

The purpose of this particular activity is for students to get to know other members of their group. Give each team time to talk about their personal likes or dislikes with their teammates. You can allocate as much time as you want for this (we recommend five to ten minutes, more if you are not affected by time restraints), but make sure lower level teams to not receive as much discussion time as the other groups are allowed. You want to create differences and advantages for certain colors. For example, you could give the orange team two minutes to discuss their favorite food, movies, etc. while allowing the purple team closer to fifteen minutes to talk to their group members. After the discussion time is completed, pass out the same quiz to all teams, asking questions about their new friends. Questions could include, but are not limited to: What is _____’s favorite color? Movie? Travel Destination? Song? How many siblings does your team have, combined? Who is the oldest member of your team? Who is the youngest? Whose birthday is the closest to today’s date?

Because these questions are difficult to grade, you may consider other variations of the group quiz. You may hand out a quiz related to the school subject or past material discussed in the classroom. Make sure to give advantages to higher ranked teams, either according to time, or by forcing some colors to work as individuals and others to work together. Feel free to consider other variations in quizzes or handicaps to groups.

No matter the method picked, prizes or some sort of praise should be given to the team with the highest average score. Remember to take into consideration the color of the group that wins. Do not over praise lower groups, and give more encouragement to teams that are higher on the scale.

Production Activity:

This will be a teamwork activity. Each group must make the most number of cars in an allotted time slot. All cars must be cut from the computer paper, be relatively the same size as the template, have two wheels, and be colored. The students may choose to produce the cars individually, or allocate certain parts of the process to different members, in an assembly line fashion.

When counting the number of completed cars, you may be more lenient for groups of a higher color order and make sure the students notice this leniency. Prizes (such as small pieces of candy) may be awarded between each round of play.

Between rounds you may vary the play by choosing another product for the students to create, basing your judgments on quality, establishing a quota rather than a time limit, establishing both a quota and a time limit, or assigning more rules to particular groups. Please use any variations you think may be more appropriate for your class.

Once again make sure the students notice the differential treatment between groups. This activity should both create resentment between colors and enhance teamwork.

Included is a copy of the car template.

