

DRAW A HAND



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This is a three minute activity that can be used to challenge assumptions or encourage critical thinking.

Preparation:

Place an index card and a pencil on each seat to avoid wasting time distributing these items.

Instructions:

1. Ask everyone to draw a hand on the index card within 45 seconds. Pause while participants complete this task.
2. After 45 seconds (it doesn't matter if some of the artists are still working on their masterpieces), begin debriefing.
3. Instead of conducting a discussion, present the major learning point this way:

How many of you looked at your hand or your neighbor's hand to draw the picture? Most of you did not. That is because we prefer to work with a mental picture even while the real world is staring in our face. We think with these mental pictures and we frequently base our performance on these mental pictures. Psychologists call the act of creating mental pictures generalization, abstraction, or concept acquisition. I call it stereotyping.

It does not matter if you draw a picture of a hand based on your mental picture. However, it does matter if you come up with a company policy based on your mental picture of a female employee. This is because your mental picture could be stereotypical and distorted and, therefore, your policy may not produce the intended effect on the wide range of people it is supposed to affect. When was the last time you ignored reality and worked with a mental picture? Was your mental picture distorted?