

# Knowledge Construction Activity

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In the classroom, or at recess, stage an event without announcing it to the class. For example, have two or three people burst into a classroom with different genders, races, cultures, or ages. Let them act out for about 60 seconds before they leave. When things quiet down, have the students write down the event to the best of their knowledge. Then only select a particular group of students as being the correct view based on gender, race, or culture. Make a big deal out of their correctness. Have them make assumptions and draw conclusions about what they saw. Then have them share their versions as experts. Be ready for some fireworks. Since we all tend to focus on things that are similar to us, the chosen students will probably have a different slant than other students. Ask them how they came to their conclusions? What did they base their truth and accuracy? Even if they are wrong in their conclusions, their opinions stand as truth because they are the dominant, chosen group with the power to make their beliefs stick, even if they are mistaken.

Then tie this into the view that many white Americans have about other cultures coming to the U.S. today. Or how the black Americans view the Koreans or Vietnamese in Los Angeles or New York. Or to the Civil Rights movement. Or to the fact that no woman or Black or Hispanic or Asian or Jew has been President. Who makes these decisions? What do we base our choice and electoral votes? What do we assume about these people? What do students assume about each other or their teachers? What information do we accept as truth, and what do we ignore?

<http://www.siue.edu/~ptheodo/foundations/studentconstruction.html>