



Writing for Change

RAISING AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE, POWER, AND DISCRIMINATION

4.4 Learning About Leaders

Objectives

Encourage students to develop an awareness of the composition of the leadership in their major or professional field.

Help them examine pros and cons of that particular composition for the membership.

Materials needed

Copies of the handout

Reference materials

Time needed

Thirty to sixty minutes

Instructor directions

Assign students to write a structured essay or report with information about the leadership in their major or field.

Variation

Have your students attend a conference of their professional or technical society and do the following:

Observe the organizers and presenters; compare their age, gender, ethnicity, credentials, and level of education to those of the people attending the conference. Notice who provides support services such as registration, who serves the food, who sets up the facility (moves tables, prepares AV equipment), who cleans up after the conference, etc.

Make inferences about whether and why some members might not be attending the conference.



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Directions

Examine the masthead of your professional or technical society's journal. Look at the names, credentials, and biographical data of contributing authors.

Ask yourself the following questions and write brief responses:

What can I infer about the age, gender, ethnicity, credentials, and level of education of the people who publish my profession's journal?

What inferences can I make about the contributors?

Who is the presumed audience for the publication? Do the characteristics of the actual audience vary from those of the presumed audience?

Do the leaders in my field comprise a cross-section of the people in the profession (or students in this class)?

What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of a leadership composed in this manner?

What are the implications for individuals in the field who may not possess similar characteristics as the leadership?

Variation

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