Chapter Activities

# Chapter 4: Socialization: Becoming Human and Humane

## Mass Media Socialization

**Objective:** To help students learn to expose the socialization messages in television or film.

**Directions:** Select one (television or film). Show brief video clips (approximately 3–5 minutes each) to students from sources aimed toward different age groups. One clip should be of a film/TV show aimed at very young children, one should be produced for preschoolers, one for elementary-aged children (e.g., a Saturday-morning cartoon), one for teens, one for adults, and one for older adults. Show the clips one at a time. After each one, ask:

1. What messages is this video sending to [age group]?
2. How do you know which age group it’s targeted toward?
3. What type of [person in age group] is this video aimed toward? [consider issues of race, sex, social class, etc.]
4. What is the purpose of these particular socialization messages? Why might others think that it is important for [age group] to learn these things?

Finally, discuss the entire collection, comparing and contrasting the differences in socialization messages.

## How Do Our Socialization Experiences Vary?

**Objective:** To help students understand that, while there may be some variation, most of their socialization experiences are more similar than different

**Directions:** Break students into small groups and have them discuss the following issues, recording their similarities and differences. Be sure that each group member is heard from on all issues:

1. How did you learn table manners? Do you recall any specific learning instances? If so, feel free to mention the experience.
2. How did you learn to read? Do you recall any specific learning instances? If so, feel free to mention the experience.
3. How did you learn how to behave on a date? Do you recall any specific learning instances? If so, feel free to mention the experience.
4. What’s keeping you in your seat right now answering this questionnaire rather than being outside enjoying the weather/napping/reading or watching television? How did you learn that this is appropriate behavior?

Bring the students back together to discuss their findings. Are students surprised by the similarities? How do they explain the differences?

If possible, share information from your particular college on diversity at the school (i.e., statistics on racial, sexual, national origin, and social class diversity). Despite the diversity in your school, ask students if they expect that other students at your university have socialization experiences that are like their own. Why or why not?

## Being Socialized to Become a College Student

**Objective:** To allow students to understand how we are socialized

**Directions:** Ask students to list ways in which they were socialized to become a successful college student. Have them think about what socialization occurred in high school, at home, with their peers, via the internet, and so on. Examples of ways include taking “college-prep” classes in high school or taking tours of college campuses. Have students share ways in which they were socialized. Then ask students if they believe they were properly socialized. How or how not? How has the socialization continued as college students?

## How Have You Been Socialized?

**Objective:** Students will realize that their socialization processes differ based on their race/ethnicity, social class, gender, and religious background.

**Directions:** Students should be given the following assignment, asked to complete it (either in class or out of class), and be ready to discuss their findings with the class. Alternative: The assignment could be used to prompt an in-class discussion only.

Read the box in Chapter 4 of your text titled “Black Men and Public Space” and then answer the following questions.

1. How did the author’s sex and race impact his socialization process?
2. How has your sex impacted your socialization?
3. How has your race/ethnicity impacted your socialization?
4. How has your social class impacted your socialization?
5. How has your religious background (or lack of religion) impacted your socialization?
6. Have any of these factors combined to influence your socialization process (e.g., the socialization experience of a white, working-class male is likely quite different from the socialization experience of a white upper-middle-class male)?

Break your students up into five groups. Assign each group one of the different types of society and have them come up with and present reasons why their society is the best. Some things they should consider are: If you were born into that particular society, what would you be doing with most of your time? Materially, would you be better off or worse off than you are today? Emotionally? Spiritually? Would growing up in that society make you a different person than you currently are? Would you think the same way? Would you think about the same things? Are there any parts of your current identity that would not be any different? After they answer the questions, hold a class discussion asking your students if they would prefer to grow up in a hunting-and-gathering society, a horticultural society, a pastoral society, or an early industrial society if forced to choose. Why? Make sure you exclude the current computer age from the choice. You can also have students try to predict the future, or what the next society will look like based on what they know of the evolution of these other societies, including our current society.

## Roles

**Objective:** To understand the number of roles that each person possesses in their lives and how we were socialized to assume those roles.

**Directions:** Have students list all the roles they currently occupy. Then have them share their answers. Ask the class to discuss how people are socialized to take on these roles within society.

## Life Without the Internet and Cell Phones

**Objective**: Students will realize what life would be like without the Internet and how dependent we have become on the Internet and cell phones for many purposes.

**Directions:** Break the students into small groups. Tell them to imagine a world without the Internet and cell phones. Ask each group to answer the following questions (have each student in the groups answer questions 1 through 3 and as a group come up with the answers to questions 4 and 5):

1. How would you conduct research for a research paper?
2. What would be your primary mode of communication?
3. How would your life be altered?
4. List the benefits of a world without cell phones and the Internet.
5. List the disadvantages of a world without cell phones and the Internet.