Lesson overview

Biases and career choices

7 Recommended:
7th grade

Length:
95 minutes

About this lesson

To build awareness of workplace biases that may be influencing their own decisions, students will explore common career biases, learn how bias can influence career choices, and reflect on the bias(es) that may have influenced their initial opinion of a career.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- identify biases of gender, ethnicity, ability, and class in the workplace
- explore how biases can influence career choices
- reflect on the bias(es) that may have influenced their initial opinion of a career

Driving question

How do biases influence my career decisions?

Future-ready skills

Collaboration   Critical thinking   Research

Lesson breakdown

30 minutes

Activity 1: Career trailblazers

In this activity, students will work in small groups to explore one common career bias and share the story of one trailblazing hero who overcame the odds.

45 minutes

Activity 2: Xello lesson: Biases and career choices

Students will complete the **Biases and career choices** Xello lesson to learn how bias can influence career choices and explore assumptions and biases related to careers.

20 minutes

Activity 3: Non-traditional career matches

In this activity, students will revisit their career matches to reflect on the bias(es) that may have influenced their initial opinion of a career and identify at least one strategy that could help them pursue the career if they choose.

🔲 Xello entry point

Students can dive right into the Xello lesson, but it's recommended that they have completed the first phase of **Matchmaker** prior to Activity 3.

Vocabulary

- Bias
- Race
- Class
- Ability
- Gender

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Activity 1: Career trailblazers

7 Recommended:
7th grade

⏱ Length:
30 minutes

Inquiry prompts
- What career-related biases exist today?
- How do career-related biases impact career choices?
- How have others overcome a career-related bias?

Before you begin
- Determine how your students will share their career trailblazer's story (ie. a Google doc that can be virtually shared, on chart paper for an in-class gallery walk, or on a presentation deck that can be displayed in class or online).

Teaching strategies

In this activity, students will work in small groups to explore 1 common career bias and share the story of a trailblazing hero who overcame the odds.

1 Create a minimum of 4 groups, 1 for each common career-related bias. You may want to create more groups to ensure everyone participates in the activity.

2 Provide each group with 1 career-related bias and definition and check their understanding of the bias they've been assigned.

- **Class Bias**: harmful ideas based on a person's wealth or social status.
- **Race Bias**: harmful ideas based on a person's physical traits, culture, nationality, or ethnicity.
- **Gender Bias**: harmful ideas based on a person's gender.
- **Ability Bias**: harmful ideas based on a person's perceived mental or physical abilities.

3 Provide the instructions (also available in Spanish) on the next page to your students.

Materials required

- Student instructions (available in Spanish)
- Computer or tablet with internet access
- Collaborative space for small group work

Artifacts

Students will work in small groups to share a story about 1 career trailblazer who overcame a common career bias to succeed in their profession.

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Career trailblazers

Student instructions

It's natural to make assumptions about careers. But it's also important to know that the ideas and biases we have about fields of work can impact our career decisions. There are laws to protect people against discrimination at work. But this doesn't mean that biases do not exist. In this activity you will work as a team to share the story of someone who overcame bias in their field of work.

1 Review the career-related bias assigned to your group. Can you think of a recent news story on this topic?

2 As a group, come up with a list of careers you think are or were in the past affected by this career-related bias. Set a timer for 4 minutes for this activity.

3 Review the list as a group, and discuss the career-related bias assigned to your group:

- **Class bias**: Who is famous for overcoming bias based on their social background to succeed in their career?
- **Race bias**: Who is famous for overcoming bias based on their skin color, nationality, or ethnicity to succeed in this career? Who was the first of their race to be represented in their profession?
- **Gender bias**: Who is famous for being the first of their gender in their career field?
- **Ability bias**: Who is famous for overcoming bias based on their perceived abilities to succeed in their profession?

4 Select 1 career trailblazer from your discussion. Research the following information to share with the rest of the class:

- **Who** is your career trailblazer and what bias did they overcome?
- **Why** was it thought to be unlikely for them to succeed in this career?
- **How** did they achieve their professional success? What strategies did they use to challenge bias?

Pioneros de las profesiones

Instrucciones para estudiantes

Es natural hacer suposiciones sobre las profesiones. También es importante saber que las ideas y los sesgos que tenemos acerca de las profesiones pueden influir sobre nuestras elecciones. Hay leyes que protegen contra la discriminación en el trabajo. Pero esto no significa que no existan los sesgos. En esta actividad, trabajarás en equipo para compartir la historia de alguien que se sobrepuso a un sesgo en su área de trabajo.

1 Revisa el sesgo relacionado con profesiones asignado a tu grupo. ¿Puedes pensar en una noticia reciente relacionada con este tema?

2 En grupo, crea una lista de profesiones que consideres que se hayan visto afectadas por este sesgo relacionado con profesiones. Fija un plazo de 4 minutos en un temporizador para esta actividad.

3 Revisa la lista en grupo y analiza el sesgo relacionado con profesiones asignado a tu grupo:

- **Sesgo de clase:** ¿Quién es conocido por sobreponerse a sesgos basados en su origen social para tener éxito en su profesión?
- **Sesgo de raza:** ¿Quién es conocido por sobreponerse a sesgos basados en su color de piel, nacionalidad o etnia para tener éxito en esta profesión? ¿Quién fue la primera persona de su raza con representación en su profesión?
- **Sesgo de género:** ¿Quién es conocido por ser el primero de su género en su profesión?
- **Sesgo de capacidad:** ¿Quién es conocido por sobreponerse a sesgos basados en sus habilidades para tener éxito en esta profesión?

4 Selecciona a 1 pionero de una profesión del debate. Investiga la siguiente información para compartirla con el resto de la clase:

- **¿Quién** tu pionero elegido y a qué sesgo se sobrepuso?
- **¿Por qué** se creyó que eran bajas sus posibilidades de tener éxito en la profesión que eligió?
- **¿Cómo** alcanzó el éxito en la profesión? ¿A qué estrategias recurrió para desafiar los sesgos?

Activity 2 - Xello Lesson: Biases & career choices

7 Recommended:
7th grade

Length:
45 minutes

About this activity

In Activity 1, students worked in small groups to explore one common career bias and shared the story of one trailblazing hero who overcame the odds.

Now that your students have started to explore how the ideas and biases we have about fields of work can impact our career decisions, it's time to dig into the **Biases & career choices** lesson in Xello! In this activity, students will learn how bias can influence career choices and explore assumptions and biases related to careers.

Inquiry prompts

- How do people form their opinions about careers? Where do you learn or hear about different careers?
- Can you think of any jobs people might have biases about?
- What is a blue collar job? Do you think some people think of blue collar jobs in a negative way?
- What jobs do people often consider to be "men's" jobs? What about "women's" jobs? Why do you think people think of these jobs this way?
- Do you know anybody who has a job that's not considered traditional for their gender?

Before you begin

Before diving in with your students:

1. Create a copy or download the Biases & career choices slide presentation (also available in Spanish) to use as a helpful teaching aid before and after the Xello lesson.
2. Review the slides (including the speaker notes section for discussion strategies and prompts.
3. Update slide 5 of the presentation with your students' Xello sign in format. If you don't know your students' Xello login format check out Sign in to Xello for support.

Teaching strategies

Use the following strategies to set your students up for success:

1. Before students start the Xello lesson, engage them in a classroom discussion using a few of the inquiry prompts from the **Warm up** activity slide of the Biases & career choices slide presentation (also available in Spanish), or choose your own.

2. Help your students log into their Xello account. Project your screen as you model how to navigate to the lesson using your demo student account. From the student dashboard, click on a lesson to get started. If the lesson you want isn't visible, access it by selecting **View all lessons** below the lesson shown or **View lessons** on the left of your screen.

3. Students finished early? Encourage your students to revisit their career

Materials required

- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Whiteboard/projector
- Biases & career choices slide presentation (also available in Spanish)

Prerequisites

- None

Artifacts

Students will complete the Xello lesson: **Biases & career choices**.

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Activity 2 - Xello Lesson: Biases & career choices

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7th grade

Length:
45 minutes

matches and dismiss any careers they no longer wish to consider. From the **Explore Careers** page, students can select **Hide** for any career they want to dismiss.

4. Students can also explore their dashboard feed, where they'll find new content about their updated saved careers.

5. Once all students have completed the Xello lesson, return to the Biases & career choices slide presentation (also available in Spanish) to have them revisit their answers to the inquiry prompts you posed at the beginning of class.

6. **Classroom discussion strategy: I used to think/Now I think:** Encourage students to share how important they think noticing biases in career choices is. Students can use a scale from 1-3 to rate importance. A rating of 1 equals not important, a rating of 2 equals important, and a rating of 3 equals very important.

7. Ask students if their thoughts about the importance of noticing biases in career choices have changed or stayed the same since completing the Xello lesson. Example: I used to think recognizing biases in career choices was not important (a rating of 1) but now I think it's important (a rating of 2).

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Activity 3: Non-traditional career matches

7 Recommended:
7th grade

Length:
20 minutes

Inquiry prompts

- Are there unfair biases surrounding careers I'm interested in?
- Has an assumption I've made affected my opinion on a career?
- Do I think I would be swayed by someone else's opinions?
- Can I think of a career-related bias I have?

Before you begin

- It is important for students to have completed at least the first phase of **Matchmaker** prior to this activity.

Teaching strategies

In this activity, students will revisit their career matches to reflect on the bias(es) that may have influenced their initial opinion of a career and identify at least 1 strategy that could help them pursue the career if they choose.

1 Provide the instructions (also available in Spanish) on the next page to your students.

Materials required

- Student instructions (also available in Spanish)
- Computer or tablet with internet access

Artifacts

Students will save 1 career they'd discounted as an option for themselves and reflect on the career-related bias(es) that may have influenced their initial opinion in the **My notes** card of the career profile.

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Non-traditional career matches

Student instructions

After you completed the first phase of Xello's **Matchmaker** career assessment, were you surprised by any matches? What first came to mind when you saw some of the matches? **Matchmaker** is not meant to predict or identify your future path. It is intended to introduce you to professions you may not have considered before and expand your career choices rather than limit them.

1. In Xello, navigate to **Explore Careers** to review your career matches. You can sort the careers by your assessment results. As you look over the list of careers, are there any you decided against for yourself? Did you think, "even if I wanted to consider it an option I couldn't"?

2. Select a career you decided against. Not one that clashes with your values, but one that you think you just don't have a chance succeeding at. Think about what stopped you from saving this career.

3. Review the career profile. And even though you may have doubts about it as a possible career choice for yourself, save it anyway. You can always change how you feel about it:
   - It's a possibility
   - Not sure it's a good fit
   - Definitely not for me

4. After identifying how you feel about it, access the **My notes** card at the top of the career profile to respond to the following questions:
   - What assumption did you have about this career prior to reading the career profile? How does TV tend to portray this career? What unfair biases surround this career?
   - Did any of the information in the career profile surprise you? Explain.
   - If a friend had an interest in this career, but a career-related bias was putting them off, what strategy would you suggest helping challenge the bias? (Example: apply for a scholarship/bursary, enroll in a related high school course, seek out a mentor in the field, or complete a job shadow placement). Explain why this would be a good strategy for them.

Profesiones coincidentes no tradicionales

Instrucciones para estudiantes

Después de completar la primera etapa de la evaluación de profesiones de **Matchmaker**, en Xello, ¿te sorprendió alguna de las coincidencias? ¿Qué fue lo primero que pensaste cuando viste algunas de las coincidencias? **Matchmaker** no está pensado para predecir o identificar tu rumbo futuro. Su propósito es presentarte profesiones que posiblemente no hayas considerado y ampliar tus opciones profesionales en lugar de limitarlas.

1. En Xello, dirígete a **Explorar profesiones** para revisar tus profesiones coincidentes. Puedes ordenar las profesiones según los resultados de tu evaluación. Al ver la lista de profesiones, ¿hay alguna a la que te hayas opuesto? ¿Pensaste "Aunque quisiera considerarla como opción no podría"?

2. Selecciona una profesión a la que te hayas opuesto. No debe ser una que esté en conflicto con tus valores, sino una en la que no haya para ti posibilidades de tener éxito. Piensa en lo que impidió que guardaras esta profesión.

3. Revisa el perfil de la profesión. Incluso aunque dudes respecto de que pueda ser una opción profesional en tu caso, guárdala. Siempre tienes la posibilidad de cambiar de parecer respecto de ella:

   - Es una posibilidad.
   - No estoy seguro de que sea una opción adecuada.
   - Definitivamente, no es para mí.

4. Después de identificar la sensación que te genera, accede a la tarjeta de **Mis notas** en la parte superior del perfil de profesiones para responder a las siguientes preguntas:

   - ¿Qué suposición tenías sobre esta profesión antes de leer el perfil? ¿De qué manera suele retratarse su profesión en la televisión? ¿Qué sesgos injustos se asocian con esta profesión?
   - ¿Parte de la información del perfil de la profesión te sorprendió? Proporciona una explicación.
   - Si un amigo estuviera interesado en esta profesión, pero un sesgo relacionado con ella le produjera rechazo, ¿qué estrategia sugerirías para hacer frente al sesgo? (Ejemplo: postularse para una beca o un subsidio, inscribirse en un curso de secundaria relacionado, buscar un tutor en el campo o completar una preparación profesional por observación). Explica la razón por la que esta sería una buena estrategia en su caso.