

LEAVING SPACE: Equality in the Classroom

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The 9 grounds for **discrimination** protected under the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015

- GENDER
- MARITAL STATUS
- FAMILY STATUS
- AGE
- (DIS)ABILITY
- ORIENTATION
- RACE
- RELIGION
- MEMBERSHIP OF THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

Why talk about equality in class?

- Teaching more inclusively helps students better understand the culture
- Students feel safe and welcome within the class
- Though we cannot change the situation acknowledging their experience helps validate their adverse experiences
- So, how you can make your class more inclusive?



DISCUSSION:

1. What has your school done to make spaces more inclusive?
2. Does your workplace leave space to discuss these grounds for discrimination in class and/or in the staffroom?
3. How comfortable are you speaking about these in class?
4. When is it okay to talk about these in class?
5. What are some situations related to these grounds you have encountered in class? How have you dealt with them?

Some situations to discuss



Xena

Want to use they/them pronouns in English but use other pronouns in their first language



Joãzinho

Has to fill out the Irish census and is unsure of how to identify his race and ethnicity



Tinderella

Would like to know what pansexual means because her current romantic interest identifies this way



P

Has very rigid views on the role of women in societies and has expressed cynicism with dating in Ireland

How it went in my classes

Xena

- Students felt uncomfortable with the grammar and third person conjugation
- Teacher explained the different uses of all subject pronouns in English (general 'you', inclusive 'we', etc.)
- Provided good practice for subject and verb agreement

Joãzinho

- Explained the historical uses and origin of 'race' and the ramifications of this
- Talked about cultural identity and ethnicity, explaining that this is more tied to personal experience than physical attributes
- Shared my personal experience of ethnicity and cultural identity and asked how they would identify-
- Excellent discussion topic and engagement

How it went in my classes

Tinderella

- Asked students if they would be interested in a class on sexuality
- Provided a brief drawn tree of umbrella terms, and meanings of some of the language, fielding student questions
- Asked students to share if they knew anyone who identified these ways and, if they felt comfortable, to share their orientations

P

- Provided cultural background on women's rights in Ireland (which I had learned from Union courses)
- Provided functional language for giving opinions politely on controversial topics
- Described the variety of hierarchical structures in society and asked students to discuss their value
- Planned a debate (but quickly decided against it)

Make some assumptions about me



Privilege Walk

An Advanced class had made several assumptions about me based on the way I presented, acted, appeared, and was.

<https://www.eiu.edu/eiu1111/Privilege%20Walk%20Exercise-%20Transfer%20Leadership%20Institute-%20Week%204.pdf>



I decided to do a Privilege Walk with them to compare our personal experiences and circumstances, and the results were surprising even to me.

Do you feel discriminated at work?



There's a Union for that!

