

LESSON 9: EQUALITY AND ELIMINATING INEQUALITY

Lesson aim:

- ↘ To provide students with an understanding of the concept of equality and inequality.
- ↘ To outline the different types of inequalities which exist and how they affect peoples' lives.
- ↘ To examine how inequalities might be eliminated.

Learning objectives:

At the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- ↘ define equality and inequality, explain its concept;
- ↘ explore how equality issues affect individuals specifically and society in general; and
- ↘ identify how equality might affect students in their own lives.

Lesson outline:

In-class discussion: Equality and Inequality

Ask students to consider the following:

- ↘ What do equality and inequality mean?
- ↘ Why does equality matter?

Read through the types of inequality listed in the resource section and ask students:

- ↘ What other types of inequality exist? Does it exist in Ireland? Explain.
- ↘ Who might experience inequality in Irish society?
- ↘ Provide examples of what inequality might look like in reality?
- ↘ Have they ever been the victim of or witnessed discrimination? How did it make them feel? What did they do? Would they do anything differently if it happened again?

- ↘ Why do they think this sort of behaviour happens? What should be done to eliminate it?
- ↘ Do they think they will ever experience inequality or discrimination? Explain.

There should be time provided for the class to discuss their answers to these questions. The information piece at the start of the module can be used to aid discussions on this topic.

Additional discussion: Marginalised groups

Time permitting the following can be used to continue discussions with students.

The term 'marginalised' should be explained to ensure students understand its meaning. Then ask them who do they think might be marginalised in Ireland and why do they think that might be so.

Student activity: The effects of inequality

Refer back to the section on inequality and read out to students the nine grounds for potential discrimination, which are protected by the equality legislation.

Each student should be given one ground on which to write their essay.

(NOTE: Please ensure that the class covers as many of the grounds as possible. In the case of the disability ground, a number of students could cover different aspects of disability such as mental, physical and learning.)

The essay should be written from the point of view of having a characteristic that allows the individual to identify with that group. The essay should focus on daily life, career prospects and general outlook. Students should be encouraged to contact the relevant organisation in order to effectively research some of the difficulties individuals may encounter.

LESSON 9: EQUALITY AND ELIMINATING INEQUALITY (CONTINUED)

A list of organisations which might be helpful for this exercise include:

- The Irish Congress of Trade Unions – www.ictu.ie
- The Equality Authority – www.equality.ie
- The National Disability Authority – www.nda.ie
- Age Action Ireland – www.ageaction.ie
- Gay and Lesbian Network – www.glen.ie
- National Women’s Council of Ireland – www.nwci.ie
- Work life balance website – www.worklifebalance.ie
- Pavee point – www.paveepoint.ie
- One Family – www.onefamily.ie
- Irish Council for Civil Liberties – www.iccl.ie
- Equality and Rights Alliance – www.eracampaign.org

Individual or class exercise (optional): Economic Inequality

Students can either write an essay on one of the following topics, discuss the issues in class or organise a class debate on the topic.

“Economic independence is the foundation of the only sort of freedom worth a damn.”

Henry Louis Mencken

“True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.”

Franklin D Roosevelt

“We have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we now know that it is bad economics.”

FDR

Discussion: Approaches to inequality

Read through the section on addressing inequality and ask students:

What do you think of these approaches to inequality? Do you think they might work? How might you approach the inequalities you see in everyday life? Explain.

Student essay: Education

Ask students to write an essay on the importance of education. The title of the essay could be either of the following or a title of the teacher’s choosing:

- ✚ Do you think education is important to your future career? Explain.
- ✚ Education is the most important factor in securing a decent wage. Explain.