

Privilege walk - Humility

EXPLANATION:

This activity is designed to explore what privilege is and how it can influence our experiences of life. With an understanding of privilege students are asked to consider traits of kindness and how humility, empathy and compassion can potentially counteract privilege.

YEAR LEVELS: Years 11 -12

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole class activity

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 60mins approx.

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

Representation of General capabilities (English curriculum)

Personal and social capability

Students develop personal and social capability in English by enhancing their communication skills, teamwork and capacity to empathise with and appreciate the perspectives of others. Close study of texts assists students to understand different personal and social experiences, perspectives and challenges. Students identify and express their own opinions, beliefs and responses by interacting with a range of texts. English actively assists students in the development of communication skills needed for analysis, research and the expression of viewpoints and arguments. Students work collaboratively in teams and also independently as part of their learning and research endeavours.

SCOPE OF TASK:

Please note: The purpose of a privilege walk is to recognise and highlight the fact that everyone has some privilege that influences their lives – and we are not always aware of its occurrence. This exercise is not meant to make anyone feel guilty or ashamed of their privilege or lack of privilege rather, it seeks to demonstrate the hidden power of privilege. To make this relevant and meaningful to the students this activity asks them to determine the questions that can be used on the privilege walk. This enables the activity to be targeted at a specific group and context and monitored by the teacher.

This activity may trigger strong feelings by participants and approval and/or communication with School Leadership and parents/caregivers might need to be sought prior to commencement.

1. Gather the students together in a group. Share with them the introductory video from Isha Guha. Isha played cricket for England and is now a television and radio cricket broadcaster. She provides an overview of humility and introduces the activity:



2. Ask students if they have heard of a 'privilege walk' to determine students' prior knowledge and experience.
3. Ask students to spend a few minutes researching on the internet to investigate privilege walks. An example of an Australian version of a privilege walk activity is:
<https://www.facebook.com/BuzzFeedOz/videos/1936578223240531/>
4. After watching some video examples ask students about the aim of the task. Probing questions could include:
 - What was the purpose of this activity?
 - What were the questions attempting to do?
 - How do you think the different students felt – being in front – being behind?
5. Ask the students if they would like to try to re-enact their own privilege walk?



6. If so, what questions would match their circumstances and context and challenge thinking. Work with the students to create a list of questions that could be used in their re-enactment. Some questions might require participants to take a step forward or backward depending on whether the statement suggested privilege or not. Some questions that have been previously used and which could guide their choices include:

- If you had more than 50 books in your home when you were growing up
- If your parents ever had to work more than one job to support your family
- If you have been impacted by divorce
- If one of your parents went to University
- If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- If you are right-handed
- If English is your first language
- If you were ever made fun of or bullied for something you could not change or was beyond your control
- If your family has ever left your homeland or entered another country not of your own free will. If you have a physically visible disability
- If you have an invisible illness or disability
- If you have ever been spoken over because you could not articulate your thoughts fast enough
- If someone has ever spoken for you when you did not want them to do so
- If you have assumed that you'll go to university
- If your parents have told you that you can be anything you want to be

7. Once the students are happy with a list of 30 or more questions set the rules for the activity:

- Participants should line-up shoulder-to-shoulder – they can hold hands if they choose.
- As each statement is read aloud, participants should take a step forward or backward depending on their response.
- Provide students with choice: If they do not feel comfortable acknowledging a statement that is read, they simply do not move. Remind them that no one will know whether it applies to them or not!

At the end of the activity ask students to look around and note where they are standing and also where their classmates are standing. Take a moment to just stand and reflect on what they can see.

8. Gather into a circle for discussion. Questions to encourage conversation could include:

- What did it feel like to be at the front, back, and middle of the group?
- Were there factors of privilege that you had not considered before?
- Was there a question that made you think the most?

9. At the completion of the activity ask students what 'being humble is'? Make connections with understanding what privilege is and being humble and empathetic to others who do not have the same privileges in life. Ask students:

- How can we show humility?
- How can we show care and compassion?

- How can awareness of others particular circumstances influence our behaviour?

RESOURCES:

- List of questions created by the group and relevant to context
- Large space
- Computers and internet
- Tape on ground to show the starting point

Online video: The Kindness Curriculum- Isa Guha Introduces the Privilege Walk sourced from <https://youtu.be/fc1SXs6AyCo>