

Exercise 8.7. – Minorities

Educational objective	The students understand that the sense of exclusion can be the result not only of the way other members of society see you, but also of the way members of your own group see you.
Resources	A set of positive cards and a set of negative cards for each group. Two flipchart sheets for each group, one bearing the word “FEELINGS” and the other the word “ACTIONS”. Marker pens.

Procedure

At the beginning of the game, it is essential that the students have no idea of what they represent, otherwise they might immediately resort to preconceived ideas which would distort the course of the game.

The game is an example of careful and complex framing by the teacher. Within the strict framework, the students have great liberty to develop and express their ideas and experiences.

1. The students form groups of four to six (preferably not more).
2. Each group receives a set of positive cards, a marker pen and the two sheets of flipchart paper. The teacher asks them to appoint a writer to record the group’s comments and reactions on the flipcharts. Alternatively, all group members record their own reactions.
3. The teacher tells the students that they will not represent themselves during the exercise, but will act as members of a minority group. For the moment, they should enquire who they are, but also consider the messages on the cards as describing them and their situation.
4. In turn, the students read one of the cards out to the other members of the group. When they have read all six cards, they write their answers to the question, “How do you feel as a member of this group?” on the “FEELINGS” sheet.
5. The teacher distributes the six negative cards to each group, and they repeat step 4.
6. The teacher asks the students to answer the following question, “What would you do if you were in a similar situation?” The answers are to be written on the “ACTIONS” sheet. The students should bear in mind that they are still the same group who expressed their feelings on the first sheet. Perhaps something they have felt or written on that sheet might help them decide how to act.
7. Plenary session:
 - Each group present their feelings as set out on the sheet headed “FEELINGS” to the rest of the class.
 - When all the groups have completed Part I, the teacher asks them to present their suggestions on their “ACTIONS” sheet. The class should identify constructive actions and acts of violence and differences between and within groups.
8. The teacher asks the students how they worked in the group and whether they encountered any problems while doing the exercise (co-operation, leadership, etc.), and what they think they have learned from the exercise: about themselves, their reactions and the group. Can they establish a relationship between the minority group which they represented and other groups they might know?
9. Lastly, the teacher tells the students that the group they represented is the group of Tinkers, otherwise known as Roma or Gypsies.

Extension

The students compare their ideas with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.⁸ The students can also explore whether the situation described seems to correspond to that in their own country, what measures are taken by the authorities to deal with the problem and which of the measures they have suggested follow the convention.

Materials

Set of positive and negative cards

<p>Our houses are unlike those of other people. They are special and we are very fond of them. We like to keep our traditions.</p> <p>We have many skills. We do all kinds of manual and craft work. Our work is a major contribution to the country we live in.</p> <p>In the past, our people performed many brave acts. We like to remember our history.</p> <p>We are very independent. We prefer to look after ourselves. We do not owe anything to anybody.</p> <p>We like getting together and telling stories and singing songs. We think this is very important to enjoy life.</p> <p>We try to live near our family and friends. We look after the old people in our community very well. We adore our children.</p>	<p>Television programmes and the press do not tell the truth about us. They say that we are a problem. They do not let us tell our part of the story.</p> <p>Some people treat us badly and give us bad names. Sometimes we are attacked without reason. Thousands of our people were murdered abroad, not very long ago.</p> <p>We never have running water, our refuse is rarely collected.</p> <p>Some doctors do not want to treat us when we are sick. It is difficult for us to receive social security benefits.</p> <p>People do not want us in their neighbourhood. Some people do not want to give us a job because of what we are.</p> <p>Sometimes we have problems with the police and the municipal authorities because of the place we happen to be at.</p>
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8. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1963. The text is accessible via the Internet.