Guidelines for inclusive training

Ensuring all participants feel welcome & respected

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education
CSIE
supporting inclusion
challenging exclusion

ELICIT
ELICIT-PLUS
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Guidelines for inclusive training

These guidelines are relevant to any training event, within or outside the field of education. They were originally prepared in July 2017 for the ELICIT-PLUS project (European Literacy and Citizenship Education, www.elicitplus.eu), funded with support from the European Commission (2014-1-FR01-KA200-002362), in which CSIE was invited to support project partners in designing and delivering inclusive training events. The project developed a range of study programmes and pedagogical tools aiming to develop active European citizenship: knowledge of the multiple perspectives of our shared history in all its richness, an understanding of the current context, and an invitation to think about the shared future which we must build together.

In all dissemination activities lead organisations have a key role in creating and maintaining an inclusive learning environment, where all participants feel welcome and respected. It is essential that facilitators are openly supportive and welcoming of diversity, and that this is evident in both the content and delivery of each course.

The following recommendations are offered as overall guidance on good practice.

Planning the event:

- Course organisers should familiarise themselves with equality legislation in the country where the course is to be delivered and ensure that every aspect of the training is consistent with relevant legal requirements.

- Course organisers should familiarise themselves with every aspect of equality included in the Appendix to these guidelines and ensure that the language they habitually use is consistent with demonstrating respect for all, regardless of social, cultural or ethnic background, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, impairment, perceived ability, religion or belief.

- Ensure the venue is accessible and visit if possible, to determine the level of accessibility, before confirming the booking. A fully accessible venue will have step-free access or a lift that is wide enough for an electric wheelchair, accessible fire exits and wheelchair refuges, accessible toilets, gender-neutral toilets, good transport links and/or accessible parking, a hearing loop in all rooms to be used including break-out rooms, and sufficient space for a wheelchair to move in all parts of the building to be used, including outdoor spaces if relevant. It you are planning small group work, it is recommended to have a separate break-out room for every group; using different corners of a large room can generate a level of background noise that makes it very difficult for people with hearing impairments to understand what is being said in their group.

- Ensure that the timing of the event will not inadvertently make it harder for some people to attend. Consult a multi-faith calendar to ensure the event does not coincide with a major religious festival.

- If refreshments are to be offered, ensure that the selection available is suitable for all dietary requirements as shaped by moral choice, health, culture or religion.

Advertising the event:

- Ensure that the course description uses inclusive language (see Appendix) and explicitly states the organisers' commitment to equality and welcoming of diversity.

- Provide a clear description of the venue, to help those with mobility or health issues to plan their journey in advance.

- Ask prospective participants what the organisers can do to enable their participation, for example an assurance of physical access including parking, hearing loop, alternative material formats or dietary requirements. Remain flexible and open to suggestions, for example a need for clarity around timetable and break times may enable someone who has diabetes to plan their food intake with confidence.

- Avoid presenting gender as binary in the event description and any booking forms used. If your booking form requests information on gender, ensure it uses an alternative to the binary choice of male/female.

During the event:

- Ensure that all areas to be used, including disabled routes, fire exits and accessible toilets, are clearly signposted.

- Welcome everyone with a smile and check that everyone's access requirements have been met. Ensure there is someone available to deal with last-minute amendments as necessary.

- Ensure that there is enough time for introductions, and that participants feel free to introduce themselves in the way which feels most comfortable to them.

- Address everyone by their chosen name and preferred gender pronoun.

- Avoid making assumptions about people's level of understanding on the basis of how they look. Some people with significant physical impairments have no learning difficulties whatsoever, and vice versa.

- Establish ground rules from the very beginning. When addressing sensitive issues, it is important that everyone feels able to express their views and feelings freely; consider

asking everyone to make their point to the facilitator and to respond to a point, not to a person.

- Encourage participants to take responsibility for their own learning, for example if someone needs to see the speaker at all times they will need to feel comfortable to say if the speaker has turned their back to write on a flipchart or if the room has not been fully lit again after showing a DVD.

- Outline equality issues (see Appendix) and point out that all facilitators will be using inclusive language throughout the event. Explain to participants why this is done and why it is important. Establish an expectation that everyone present will try to use inclusive language throughout the event and encourage participants to gently challenge any behaviour or language that is not inclusive. Support people to understand the impact on others of behaviour or language which is not inclusive. If there is no time to address language in the moment, facilitators can rephrase in a more inclusive form of words before responding to the comment or the question.

- Ensure that the course content is delivered in as accessible way as possible. Facilitators should make sure that they are facing the audience and speak clearly (to enable lip-reading) and in short and clear sentences (to facilitate understanding for everyone), allowing time for reflection at key moments. Delivering one piece of information or instruction at a time will support all participants, especially those who are not using their first language, or who have learning or processing difficulties. Participants who are on the autistic spectrum may find it easier to follow instructions which are short and clearly describe what they are required to do.

- Ensure that all slides and handouts are accessible: use a font size of 12 or above for handouts, 28 or above for slides, ensuring a good contrast between font and background colour. Consider cream, yellow or light blue paper for handouts, to improve the learning experience for participants who have dyslexia.

- If there are facilitators or participants with visual or physical impairments, make doubly sure that there are no obstacles in the way in any of the spaces used for sessions and breaks. Be prepared to describe the environment to someone who has a visual impairment, for example where chairs, tables, doors, exits and other facilities are, and remember to read out your slides and describe any images in them. It is also helpful if facilitators and other speakers identify themselves by name, as they begin speaking. If there is buffet catering, people with visual or physical impairments may welcome some assistance, but do not assume that they will.

- If there are facilitators or participants with a working dog to support a sensory impairment, avoid interacting with or distracting the dog, and remind the rest of the group to avoid this too.

- Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments to any activity, in response to someone's physical, sensory or mental impairment. Negotiate with them as relevant.

- If you are using translation of any kind, for example sign-language or another spoken language, remember to plan for enough time for all facilitators' and participants' contributions to be translated. This can significantly affect the time needed for every session. Remember that deaf participants will not be able to read visual materials and lip-read or look at a sign-language interpreter at the same time.

- At the end of the event use an evaluation form to gather feedback from participants, including about accessibility issues. Read everyone's feedback carefully and use what you learn from this in the planning of similar events in the future.

In addition to CSIE's experience, these guidelines have drawn from the following sources:

- *Embedding equality and diversity in training programmes - notes of guidance (University of St Andrews, 2017)*
- *Equality: Making It Happen – A guide to help schools ensure everyone is safe, included and learning (CSIE, 2016)*
- *Guidelines for Inclusive Learning (Oxford Brookes University, 2011)*
- *Training: How to create inclusive learning environments (The Scout Association, 2017)*
- *World of Inclusion (www.worldofinclusion.com, 2017)*

Appendix
Key considerations for equality and inclusive language

Disability:
More than 1 billion people in our world are disabled. They have a variety of impairments, but are often prevented from exercising their Human Rights by barriers of attitude, organisation and environment. People who have physical, sensory or mental impairments become disabled if no adjustment is made in response to their impairments. Inclusive language reflects the understanding that some people have unusual bodies or minds, and that this is an ordinary aspect of our shared humanity. It is consistent with acknowledging that disabled people have equal rights to a fulfilling life and full participation in society. Phrases that include assumptions, for example that someone "suffers from" a condition, have no place in inclusive language.

Sex and gender identity:
Gender stereotypes remain deeply rooted in many societies; expectations for people to act in gender-appropriate ways are widespread and often reinforced unintentionally. Inclusive language reflects an acknowledgement and expectation for sex equality.

Until very recently, every baby born in a European country was assigned a gender at birth, even if their gender appeared ambiguous. Transgender people (often referred to as trans) are people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the gender they were assigned at birth. Some people (often referred to as 'intersex') are born with ambiguous genitalia or have sex chromosomal variations that become apparent later in life but they, too, would have been assigned a gender at birth. Some trans people transition to the gender with which they identify later in life, with or without medical intervention. Inclusive language represents gender as a continuum and avoids representing gender as binary such as male/female. It is good practice to use 'they' or 'them' instead of 'he/she' or 'him/her' in spoken and written language because, when gender is presented as a binary, trans people are likely to feel invisible.

Sexual orientation:
Lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people make up a significant part of any society. They are sometimes less visible than heterosexual people, possibly because it feels unsafe for them to be open about who they are. The fact that LGB people exist is not up for negotiation. We all have a moral and, in most countries, a legal obligation to make sure LGB people, and those who have LGB friends or family members, hear positive messages about LGB identities in the way that heterosexual people take for granted. Inclusive language reflects this understanding at every opportunity; for example, using the word 'partner', rather than 'husband', 'wife', 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' signals to LGB individuals that they can feel comfortable to be themselves. It is good practice to refer to 'parents', rather than children's 'mothers and fathers', as the latter conveys an assumption that other people are heterosexual, which has no place in inclusive language. It is imperative to challenge homophobic language whenever this is encountered, even if there seems to be no intention to offend LGB people (for example in the widespread use of the word 'gay' to mean that something is nonsense, broken or otherwise substandard), because even if the person who uses the word negatively may mean no harm,

those who hear it can feel hurt by it. Young people can be helped to realise the potential harm by being encouraged to imagine that the phrase was 'that's so Welsh (or German, or Christian, or any other significant aspect of their own identity).

Culture/ethnicity:
In multicultural societies of the 21st century, there is no place for racism. Racism is the belief that people who have a particular skin colour, nationality, religion or culture are inferior. It can take the form of an individual's actions (for example verbal or physical abuse or exclusion) or an institution's procedures which disadvantage a particular group of people (institutional racism). Racism can also be very subtle; sometimes there may be a sense of unease, without any particular comment or action that can be identified as racist. Racist beliefs, systems and laws have led to oppression, harassment, hate crime and, in extreme cases, genocide. In a project such as ELICIT-PLUS which has a specific focus on celebrating diversity and finding unity within it, it is doubly important that course participants are helped to understand the detrimental effect of prejudice on people. Allport's Scale of Prejudice & Discrimination is a useful tool for explaining that language which some dismiss as 'harmless banter' may be the first step towards serious harm. American psychologist Gordon Allport, in his 5-point scale for the manifestation of prejudice in society, lists as the first step Antilocution (which means 'speaking against' and implies a majority group freely making jokes about a minority group), followed by Avoidance, Discrimination, Physical attack, and finally Extermination. He suggests that individuals or groups may gradually progress through these steps, meaning that each step may inadvertently pave the way to the next, if it is not challenged effectively.

Religion or belief:
Most religions share similar core values of love and respect for other people, and yet religion has been at the root of much conflict and violence in the world, in present times and throughout history. It is, therefore, imperative that children and young people understand similarities and differences between religions and between sects of the same religion. Inclusive language will reflect the realisation that a small number of people of any religion may engage in extreme violence but that does not make all people of that religion extremists. There are approximately 1.7 billion Muslims in the world and only a very tiny percentage has ever been involved in any terrorist activity. Throughout Europe, however, many people are being attacked and blamed for the actions of this small number of extreme people, because they may share a faith or skin colour. Religion is only one aspect of a person's identity and may not be the most important part. Course participants can be encouraged to understand, and convey to others in their community, that within a large group of people who share the religion Islam, there is a massive amount of diversity. It is imperative that we question information seen in mainstream media about people from any particular religion, and look for alternative evidence to back up personal opinions.

Sources (for Appendix):

- *Equality: Making It Happen – A guide to help schools ensure everyone is safe, included and learning (CSIE, 2016)*
- *World of Inclusion (www.worldofinclusion.com, 2017)*