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Do we belong in our classrooms?

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Equality and Diversity Conference
Friday 11th November 2011

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Do we belong in our classrooms?

Who belongs?

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- Inclusivity / exclusion often seen in terms of disability;
- Of course, this is important – but we wanted to broaden the frame of reference and encourage people to think of other ways in which particular social groups are excluded from education.
- We felt it was important to add a sociological / political / economic dimension to our discussion.

‘Inclusion’

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- “For many observers the word ‘inclusion’ is synonymous with the education of children with impairments, disabilities and special educational needs. But, inclusion is a broad category ... social and educational exclusion has many compounding forms of differing exclusions; is not a natural but a socially constructed process; has no single factor that can remove it and is in constant need of conceptual analysis. For our purposes, then, while disability and SEN analysis are important it is crucial that we keep a broad view of the kinds of learners involved in debates about inclusion.” (Goodley, no date, p3)

Where are the barriers?

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Individual

- Disability: a student's own lack of physical ability;
- Class: not enough value placed on education / lack of aspiration;

Structural

- 'Disability' is socially constructed - Watch clip from Disability Rights Commission
- Aspiration is there ... but the opportunity to fulfil that aspiration is shrinking.

Reasons for exclusion

- Ethnicity / religion
- Watch the clip:

Criticality?

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- Reflection
- Management
- Psychology
- Reflection
- Critical education
- Praxis

A critical approach

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- Examination of theoretical and ideological underpinnings – functionalist / New Right / Neoliberal / Marxist / postmodern etc;
- An awareness of how this relates to policy – e.g. raising aspirations / cutting EMA / raising fees / cuts to public sector / marketisation / globalisation / privatisation;
- Historical perspective – *les trentes glorieuses* , the rise of neoliberalism.
- Global perspective – past and present .

A critical approach

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- Revealing power relations: who excludes?
- Challenging power relations.
- Praxis and collaboration.

Critical pedagogies and inclusivity

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Education has often been seen as an engine of social mobility, a transformative experience, an opportunity to enhance social justice and provide equal opportunities for all, regardless of background.

"Critical pedagogy ... broadly seeks to expose how relations of power and inequality ... are manifest and are challenged in the formal and informal education of children and adults." (Apple *et al*, 2009:3)

How?

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- Research;
- Pedagogies;
- Collaboration;
- Curricula.

Labelling : identity construction

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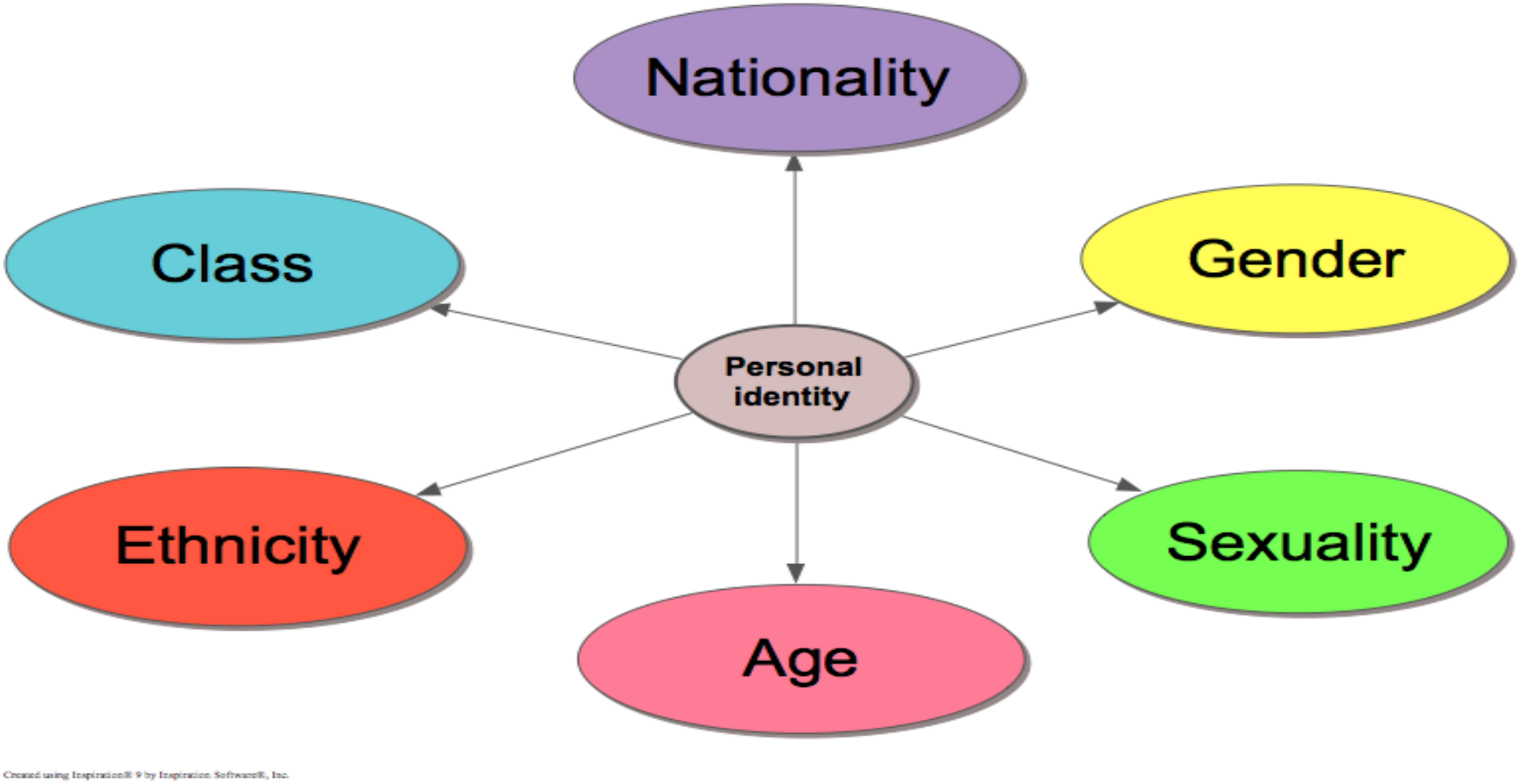
Place these aspects of identity in the order in which you perceive yourself.



Ask:

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- Why is the order you have selected the same or different to a colleague?
- What factors make one of these aspects more significant than another?

Now….

List 6 other identifiers or attributes that you think are important to your identity.

‘ **I am…..**’

Are these identities self constructed?
Who does the labeling?

Benign or toxic labeling (Hudak).

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- Sorting, differentiate, separate.
- Useful identifiers (food labels).
- Labeling as social control.
- ‘Problem’ of person diverts attention from inadequacies in teaching and learning or institutional structures.
- Systems of representation bringing power relations.

Labels

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LABELLING = POLITICS, POWER, REPRESENTATION

Hudak and Kihn (2001, p.22)

> Constructs can create stereotypes through language interpretation, often resulting representations of being 'other' and inferior.

Arguably used in politics as a deterrent.

e.g. The stigma of the label 'P' = pauper. Badging of the poor (1697 Act).

Hudak, G. & Kihn, P. (Eds) (2001) *Labeling: pedagogy and politics.* London: Routledge Falmer

Athens 2011

International
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