

POL361 Gender and Politics – Topic 3: Intersectionality

Part 1. Brainstorming

Share one of the main barriers faced during their time at university.

Part 2. Activity to demonstrate how intersectionality is used to enact change in movements and organisations

A) Individual Exercise – Power Flower

This exercise represents an introduction to a broader analysis of power. It is the first element of the intersectionality toolkit that many organisations currently use (e.g. UN Women and Young Friends of the Earth). As with intersectionality context analysis, it is meant to be used ideally at the start of any new policy or programme design process.

Instructions: Take the flower and write your name at the centre. Each petal represents one category of identity. In the inner ring, write your most meaningful identities. In the outer ring write the dominant identities (i.e. the identities of those in power). For the purpose of this exercise, please consider the dominant identities that shape higher education/university.

When finished, think about the following questions and jot down some of your ideas:

- How many of your personal characteristics are different from the dominant identity?
- Which characteristics cannot be changed?
- What does this say about your own power or potential for exercising power?
- How might this influence your studies?

B) Plenary Exercise – Power Flower

Hold a “garden or flower show” in which the flowers are affixed to the wall or simply left on the desks. Ask everyone to take a stroll around the “show”, paying attention to individual’s answers.

C) Group Exercise – Power Flower

Reconvene in small groups and go deeper by answering the following questions:

- What does the exercise reveal about us as a group? In particular: What are the differences and similarities in relation to the dominant power? How can that influence your studies?
- What does this exercise tell us about identity and power more broadly? How can such information address some of the challenges outlined at the beginning of the class?

Be prepared to report back.

Part 3. Class discussion

In this exercise we reflect on your experiences of "doing" intersectionality.

- What did you think of this tool?

When answering the question consider Crenshaw's formulation of intersectionality, Audre Lorde's piece on the uses of anger, and the arguments put forward by scholars who are critical of the way it is being increasingly used (Lewis, Salem and Nash). Justify your answer through the literature and/or using concrete examples.

Part 4. Thinking about AS1

Work in pairs.

In turn, briefly present your chosen object/artwork.

Explain why you chose this particular object/artwork and how you intend to relate it to the topics/material covered in the module.

Listen carefully.

Once you have both finished, you are encouraged to:

- Ask questions, where anything is unclear
- Provide feedback
- Make note of anything they want to ask in class

Use the time in the plenary to seek clarifications or even share great work!

The material used for this activity is sourced from JASS Just Power.

JASS Just Power is a "community of practice" – a network of dedicated activists, scholars, and popular educators who shared political histories and a mission – and secondarily an organization committed to change the beliefs and structures that drive economic inequality, environmental destruction, and gender-based as well as political violence.

For more information, you can visit their website: <https://justassociates.org/big-ideas/intersectionality/>