SOGI-Inclusive Classroom Checklist

All schools should be inclusive places where students feel safe, accepted, respected, and welcome. This checklist is designed to help educators ensure all students see themselves reflected in their classrooms and empower them to be the best versions of themselves. Make your classroom lessons and discussions more inclusive of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (SOGI) by using this checklist!

Here are five ways to make lessons more SOGI-inclusive:

Examine Your Resources

Are your teaching resources inclusive of diverse lived experiences? Scan your resources to see if there are ways that you can share multiple perspectives, identities, and viewpoints.

Here's how...

- Ensure SOGI-inclusive books and novels are available in your school or classroom library. Use textbooks, magazines, novels, films, and images that include examples of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- When giving examples of role models or people who have been successful in a given field, include members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- Make sure the posters and visual representations on classroom walls reflect diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Use Gender-Inclusive Language

Do your lessons and classroom conversations use gender-inclusive language? Break the binary by finding ways to include all students in your language.

Here's how...

- When addressing students, avoid using gendered terms. Instead, consider using "Hey, everyone," "Hello, friends," "Listen up, all", or "Hi, people." Be creative!
- Ask for and use students' chosen names and their pronouns (e.g. she/her; he/him; they/them).
- Question whether gender is important to include in an example or test. If not, use a gender-neutral pronoun such as "they" or use gender-neutral names.
- Group your students based on non-gendered categories (e.g. by birthday, number of letters in their name, or colour of their shoes).
- When you do have to reference gender, avoid reinforcing idea that everyone fits into two strict gender identities and make students aware that you mean to include people of all genders.

This checklist was developed by the Alberta SOGI Educator Network with support from ARC Foundation. Learn more at **SOGIeducation.org**

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Challenge Stereotypes

Are your lessons reinforcing or challenging common stereotypes? Find ways to challenge misinformation and the status quo so all students feel valued and included in their classrooms.

Here's how...

- Display examples of people doing things that are not traditionally seen for their gender (e.g., male nurses, female soldiers, female scientists).
- Avoid categorizing activities, colours, clothes, or toys by gender. There are no "girls' sports" or "boys' sports," just sports that anyone can play.
- Post pictures depicting gender diverse individuals or cultures in which gender is expressed differently than traditional perspectives (e.g., Two-Spirit people, men holding hands in other cultures).

Challenge Heteronormativity

When teaching, ask how is heteronormativity normalized? Do we unintentionally categorize students into groups that they may not identify with? Focus more on addressing the behaviour of students and focus less on bodies and binaries.

Here's how...

- Make room for students to be themselves. Use phrases like, "that may be true for some people, but not for all people." Avoid generalizing or using the term "normal" to describe any behaviour.
- Hold students to a high standard of behaviour regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Avoid using language which excuses behaviour and reinforces gender stereotypes (e.g. "boys will be boys.")
- Ensure your classroom communications to parents and caregivers are inclusive of all kinds of different family structures.

Celebrate Diversity

How is diversity reflected in your lessons, classroom, and school? Think of creative ways to celebrate the beauty in diversity.

Here's how...

- Find ways to bring in 2SLGBTQ+ classroom speakers and guests who come from diverse backgrounds. 2SLGBTQ+ people come in different shapes, ethnicities, classes, ability groups, and religions.
- Consider how you can recognize and authentically celebrate different cultural holidays, beliefs, and practices in your classroom.

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