**Title**: **Equalising Power – Exploring Unwritten Rules in relation to Power and Gender**

**Introduction to the Lesson**

This is the fifth in a series of 6 one-hour lessons written by consultant, Lucy Holbrook, which explore the concept of “power” – power over, power to, power with and power within. The aim is to give learners a comprehensive Power Toolkit that includes an understanding of how to use their internal body resources to support that external process of nonviolent social change. Please see the supporting document written by Lucy explaining the rationale for the lessons (Resource Sheet 72).

**Curriculum links:** RSHE, Citizenship, English

**Learning Outcomes:**

* To understand that Gender Equality is a human struggle – not a female struggle.
* To understand the concepts of stereotypes and prejudice and what it feels like to experience them.
* To start to understand what if feels like when we experience prejudice or being stereotyped including gender inequality.
* To recognise that gender inequality comes at a cost - for all of us.

**Concepts:**

**Gender** (WHO 2018 definition) - “Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men”

**Feminism** - the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.

**Unwritten Rules –** mostly unconscious expectations about how people Should/Must/Ought/Got to (SMOG) behave, think and feel

**Gender Equality** (thesaurus at [www.eige.europa.eu](http://www.eige.europa.eu)) - Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.

* The state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender.
* Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, and when the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured.

**Gender Inequality** (thesaurus at [www.eige.europa.eu](http://www.eige.europa.eu)) - Legal, social and cultural situation in which sex and/or gender determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to or enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles.

**Key Vocabulary**:

**Social Construct** - an idea that has been created and accepted as “the norm” by the people in a society

**Stereotype** (collinsdictionary.com) - a fixed [general](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/general) [image](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/image) or set of characteristics that a [lot](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/lot) of people [believe](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/believe) [represent](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/represent) a particular type of person or thing.

**Prejudice** (dictionary.com) - an unfavourable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason. Any preconceived opinion or feeling, either favourable or unfavourable. Unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature, regarding an ethnic, racial, social, or religious group.

**Activity Resources:**

2 x buckets/container of different sizes

2 x balls

Large sheets of paper (flip chart size)

Resource Sheet 94 Gender Questions – cut up

Resource Sheet 95 Summary Unwritten Rules

The Voice by Shel Silverstein: <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-voice-34/>

Listen to the Mustn’ts by Shel Silverstein <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/listen-to-the-mustnts-by-shel-silverstein>

There are boys, there are girls by Elle Richard <https://hellopoetry.com/just_floating_around/>

1. **Starter activity**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Time**  |
| 1. **Introduce theme for the lesson – gender equality**

Have learners stand in a single file line behind a marker, facing the larger bucket.Explain the two rules below clearly (and only these rules as the rest is for the learners to decide upon). * Your task is to get the ball into the bucket to score a point
* You must stand behind the marker when you throw

Learners take one turn each trying to shoot the ball into the bucket. Whilst they are taking turns you either Move the bucket further/closer away from the markerChange the bucket to smaller/bigger oneGive the thrower smaller/bigger ball.Do this according to gender of the thrower e.g. for either all boys or all girls give them bigger bucket/ball and closer to the marker.Refrain from answering any questions with regards to “the rules” or the “fairness” of what is happening. Ask learners to hold onto their thoughts and to remember how they are feeling. This will become the catalyst for the discussion. Once each child has had their turn open up the discussion with the following starter questions:“What didn’t you like about the game?”“What did you expect I would do?”“What would make it a more equal game?”“What did they feel?” link this to the fact you make it easier for either the boys or girls.The discussion should focus on their different experiences, especially how they felt; work to highlight their expectation of being treated equally. Don’t get too bogged down with this discussion, as the main activity will build on it.NB This activity is adapted from the “In-class Activity: Equality – What’s a Fair Game” from the Constable Care Programme (www.constablecare.org.au) | 15 mins. |

1. **Main activity**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Time**  |
| 1. Introduce the ideas of Gender, Gender Equality and Gender Inequality

(you may like to use the definitions included here) and explain the next activity is exploring other aspects of gender inequality. | 3 mins. |
| 1. Pick a selection of questions from RS93 and either pin them to the wall

at the top of large sheets of paper or share them around table groups and ask learners to discuss and write down their responses to the questions. Give each group a limited time for each question then get them to rotate round all sheets so they get to think about all the questions. | 12 mins. |
| 1. As a class share what has been put on each sheet in relation to each

question. Through this discussion draw out the concepts of stereotyping and prejudice. It may be helpful to have the definitions printed out so they can be put up in the classroom somewhere visible. **NB** If you are familiar with the concept of Unwritten Rules you can link this to stereotyping and prejudice.Ask the learners what they feel when they experience the effects of gender stereotyping and prejudice; ensure they understand that gender inequality affects both boys and girls, men and women. While this happens in different ways the negative impacts are the same such as * Limits and wastes our potential.
* Undermines our confidence and self-esteem.
* Can be divisive and cause conflict.
* We can feel unsafe.
* Isolating and alienating – we don’t belong.

You may like to share some of the facts and statistics in the supporting information. | 20 mins. |

1. **Reflection**

Share Silverstein’s two poems “The Voice” and “Listen to the Mustn’ts” and ask learners to reflect individually and then in pairs how they (or how might someone) feel when they are treated equally and not according to gender stereotypes. (10 mins.)

1. **Suggested follow-up activities**
2. **Equalities Child**

Facilitate learners to imagine an additional “virtual” classmate called “Equalities Child”or “EC”. This classmate is the one that holds the perspective of gender equality and can be called upon at any time by the teacher or learners e.g. “what might EC do, think or feel about X, Y or Z?” This is a way of depersonalising the issue.

Allow the learners to discuss, in small groups, the different characteristics they would like EC to have ranging from physical attributes (hair, eye, skin colour; height; size; shape) to clothes, gender and personality and things they like. They can draw EC, or use a toy/puppet if available in the classroom. (NB needs to be permanently available) (45-60 mins.)

**2. “Opposite & Not Equal” Activity from Feeling Safe and Standing Strong Facilitator’s Manual produced by ASTOP INC, Wisconsin USA – with permission**

* Write two or three of the male words from the following list and ask learners to provide the female opposite:

Master Mistress

Old Man Old Woman

Bull Cow

Patron Matron

Wizard Witch

Cock Hen

Bachelor Old Maid, Spinster

* Ask learners for other examples of male and female words
* Ask learners if there are any female versions which are complimentary or neutral and male versions which are derogatory?

Encourage the group to look critically at the differences in meaning between the male and female versions of words.

* Ask learners the following questions:

How could these differences affect men and women?

Would these differences have any influence on male/female relationships? Why or why not?

How might these differences have an influence on violence in our society, if at all?

Ask if there are any other words in which the opposites have different values. Some examples are:

Black White

Big Little

Good Bad

Able Disabled

Discuss how these differences may affect the way we relate to other people?

Discuss how the English language is filled with gender-biased words, references and images. But language is more than words. It is communication between people that may or may not show the values of equality and support of each and every person. Non-aggressive language reflects new ways of interacting with one another and can contribute to creating nonviolent individuals, families and communities. (20-30 mins.)

**3. P4C enquiry using poem “There are Boys, There are Girls”** (60 mins.)

<https://hellopoetry.com/just_floating_around/>

**4. Repeat “Main Activity 2” from this lesson using different questions RS93 (35 mins).**