

The project 'How Privileged am I' is a project that takes place in the 2nd year of the Heerbeek International College.

During the HIC week (comparative to a Heerbeekweek) students will investigate the meaning of privilege in theory and practice. Learning about their place in society and the chances they and others get are the main objectives. Students analyze their current situation and predict future opportunities and challenges. Which prejudices, stereotypes and labels stick to different social groups in society? Students are asked if they themselves belong to any or several stereotypical groups? And they are asked to think about inequality in the 21st century? To achieve this, students need to be creative, think outside the box, debate, observe and predict as well using their HIC-skills and competences.

“Privilege: a special advantage or benefit not enjoyed by all, but by only one person or a certain group of people, usually because of their position, background (ethnicity) or simple because they are rich.”

During the second HIC week students will be investigating how privileged they are or aren't by investigating the 3 main areas where they could be confronted with stereotypes and prejudices. This results in 3 sub-questions:

“How does your appearance influence how privileged you are?”

- 1) Your appearance (each person is unique. Physical features influence the way you experience any privilege in your (daily) life. Students need to investigate which prejudices are connected to their own and other peoples appearances.)

“In what way does background influence how privileged you are?”

- 2) Students will continue investigating privileges by looking at family history. Interviewing their grandparents is part of this investigation.

and finally “In which way do surroundings influence how privileged someone is?”.

- 3) Surroundings (where someone grows up influences the chances they get in life.)

On the last day of the second week, students will fill and donate a goody bag to the local food bank. This bag will contain items that people can use during the Christmas period.

The central and common goal of the week is to create awareness about inequality and diversity and the impact of privilege on their daily lives. Students need to think about how they are socially and economically influenced by their appearance, background and/or surroundings?

Some of the assignments and activities that take place during this week are as follows:

Monday:

- A social experiment - bike in the park : students will watch a video where the subconscious prejudices relative to skin color are examined. Students will then answer questions and write them in their book. Students will be asked about their reactions and feelings about this video.
- Activity - 'test yourself' (students see these in a powerpoint presentation, they need to mark the people they think these theses apply to. After the test, they will see the answers for 5 seconds and they need to check if their answers were correct.
- Activity - after the test, there will be a discussion with the entire class. The discussion will be about prejudices. Everyone has them, are they handy or do they hamper you when forming an honest opinion? In the discussion, the following points will be discussed: Where do prejudices come from? What is the difference between prejudices and stereotypes? And, prejudices can have a negative connotation, but they can also be handy to have, think about this.
- Activity - look at yourself, where do prejudices come from? In small groups students will discuss the following 6 questions:

- 1) Do you have immigrant friends?
 - 2) Is anyone in your inner circle gay?
 - 3) Do you know anyone who is overweight?
 - 4) Do you pray sometimes?
 - 5) Have you or one of your friends ever stolen anything?
 - 6) Does anyone in your inner circle have a tattoo or piercing?
- Activity - prejudices exist, but how do you deal with them? With this activity students will need to think and make a sketch with set prejudices. They need to show how they would react to these prejudices. They will then do the sketch a 2nd time, but now with an open mind, how would they handle the situation without prejudices?
 - Activity - What are you going to do? Up to this point students have researched what prejudices are, where they come from and how they instinctively react. At this point they will discuss with a classmate what they will do to initiate awareness for new reactions.

Tuesday:

- Civic integration exam: Students will first watch a film and then themselves take an exam to live in England. Then the students will take a short Dutch exam. After the exams, the students will discuss the results and talk about whether the questions are good and if they eventually demonstrate if you will be a good citizen.
- Debate: The debate leaders introduce themselves and remind the students about the HIC-competences which are mentioned in the project book. The leaders have prepared two statements. The first one is about the children's pardon and the 2nd one is about poor families paying for swimming lessons.
The group is divided into 2 groups. Group 1 will debate about the first statement and group 2 will observe and afterwards make comments about the debate. Then the roles will be switched for the second statement. After this, the groups will be divided into pro and con. Students assume a viewpoint that is not per se their personal viewpoint and start the debate. Students may need additional coaching during this part.
Story of a refugee (including a discussion): this is a guest lesson from a refugee and the follow-up talk. The guest lesson will be given by the guest speaker and a mentor from the organization PAX. The follow-up talk is done by the class mentor. The goal of this activity is to talk about new insights, share viewpoints and make the link with the theme of the week 'How privileged am I?'.
The Privilege run: The teacher will explain that students need to sprint to the finish after taking big steps and that the first person to the other side will win a prize. Before 'start' is said, students will listen to a number of statements. If the answer to these statements is 'yes', the students can take two steps forward, otherwise they must stay where they are. Example statements: take two steps forward if you are a man; take two steps forward if your parents are still together, etc.
The students that take steps forward should turn around and look at each other. They should be told that every statement that is made has nothing to do with a decision that they made themselves and it has nothing to do with something that they did. The people in the front have more chances to win. Does this mean that the people in the back cannot sprint? No, but the people in front do have an advantage. That's how it is in real-life. Then the students should all sprint to the finish from where they are standing at that moment. 3,2,1... start.

Wednesday:

- This day students will participate in 3 different activities together with students from the Worldclass from Pius X college. Some of the activities they will do are as follows: improvisation exercises; cross the line; intercultural talks; dance/tabletop games and a culture quiz.

- Along with these activities they will watch a documentary 'Rot op naar je eigen land.' Based on the documentary students will answer questions: after the introduction, during and after the documentary.

Thursday:

- Social ladder game
- Decorating and filling your donation bag for the food bank
- Reflecting on the HIC competences
- Picture time.

We hope at the end of the week that the students have enjoyed themselves and more importantly that they have taken steps and have grown in their personal and global awareness and citizenship.

What do the students learn?

The main goal of the project is to create awareness about inequality and diversity and the impact of privilege on our daily lives.

In the second year of HIC, students work on the following skills and competences: collaboration; planning; organization and perseverance. During this project and HIC weeks, extra attention will be paid to the following components: listening actively; being able to handle criticism and working in a concentrated and diligent manner. Students will look at these skills and competences at the beginning of the week and again at the end of the week.

Experiences/ Expectations:

Niels van den Bogert (one of the organizers of this project week):

I think this week was very valuable for students, since it addressed the 'privilege-question' on different levels and from various perspectives. In this way you can reach every student about this social issue, since there are always some activities in the week that 'click' with them.

What also helped was the participation with external parties such as Stichting PAX and Wereldklas from Pius-X College. They bring expertise and experience that our teachers and students simply do not have. As an organizer of project-weeks you should be aware of this, and should also try to take into account the different backgrounds and interests of the involved teachers. If you don't it will increase the risk that your activities will not be very effective in practice, since teachers might not be motivated about the activity or don't know what is expected from them.

More Information:

Voor gebruik van de opzet van dit project kan contact opgenomen worden met Niels van den Bogert (docent Maatschappijleer en Global Perspectives, N.vandenbogert@heerbeek.nl) of Kai Bloemers (docent Geschiedenis, K.Bloemers@heerbeek.nl).

Mede dank aan: (bronnen)

Voedselbank Best, Stichting PAX, Debatbureau, Wereldklas Pius-X College and HIC2-students.

Foto:

