



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

Senior Cycle Business Studies Resource



Teacher Notes: Pedagogical Approach for Lessons

- Create safety together: We suggest that a way to begin Stand Up Awareness Week lessons is by co-constructing classroom agreements with your students that emphasise safety and respect. This helps everyone feel secure and valued. Display the agreements in the classroom or keep a copy in student journals or copies. What values are important to your students and what do they need to feel respected and safe?
- Keep an open mind: Use language that welcomes all identities and experiences, avoiding assumptions about sexuality, gender or family structure. (all voices included)
- Pause and reflect: Take time to notice your own comfort levels, possible biases, or areas where you might want to grow your knowledge. This modelling of reflection shows students that learning is ongoing for everyone.
- Support deeper learning: Give students opportunities to think quietly, speak when ready, reflect individually and ask questions. A layered approach helps everyone engage at their own pace.
- Protect student choice: Encourage participation but never expect or ask students to share personal stories in order to make the learning 'real'. Their voices matter, but their privacy matters too.
- Shape respectful dialogue: Debate and discussion can be powerful, but not every topic should be up for debate. Work with your students to agree on safe and respectful boundaries for discussions, so the classroom remains supportive for all.
- Belong To's e-learning module is a fantastic resource to learn how to best create a safe inclusive environment at school. (Accessible at: <https://www.belongto.org/training/>)
- Free speech is not hate speech! Hateful comments are never acceptable.
- The resources listed here promote inclusion and belonging and are intended as an aid for schools to help implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

Lesson 1: Workplace Inclusion – Why It Matters

Relevant Strands: Business in Action, Enterprise, Responsible Business

Strand: Responsible Business

Unit: Diversity, Ethics, and Inclusion in Business

Learning Intentions

- Understand the concept of diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- Examine how inclusive practices benefit employees and businesses
- Explore the role of equality legislation in promoting fair workplaces

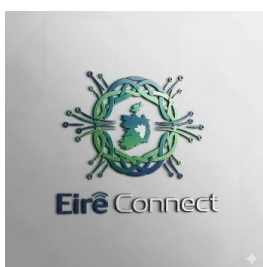
Materials Needed

- Inclusion audit checklist (student-produced)
- Sample workplace policy documents (real or fictional)

Suggested Classroom Activities

Activity 1. Inclusion Audit Simulation

- **Task:**
 1. In small groups, have students brainstorm a list of everything they think would successfully show that a company is effectively being inclusive. Aim for at least ten aspects.
 2. Compile this list and make this an 'inclusion checklist'.
 3. Use this checklist to conduct an audit assessing the invented case study Eire Connect's practices in terms of inclusion. See below.
- **Outcome:** Each group assigns a grade (e.g., A–F or 1–5 scale) and gives one actionable recommendation to improve inclusion



Eire Connect: Inclusion Audit Case Study

Company Overview: Eire Connect is a mid-sized Irish tech company based in Cork, specialising in digital infrastructure and broadband solutions for rural communities. With 120 employees across Ireland, the company prides itself on innovation and community engagement

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- Policies in Place:
 1. Anti-discrimination and harassment policy
 2. Flexible working arrangements
 3. Gender-neutral parental leave
 4. Annual unconscious bias training
- Challenges Identified:
 1. Leadership team lacks diversity (all male, all older age bracket)
 2. Limited representation of people with disabilities
 3. No formal employee resource groups (ERGs)
 4. Some staff report feeling excluded from decision-making processes
- Recent Initiatives:
 1. Partnered with a local NGO to offer internships to young people from underrepresented communities.
 2. Updated recruitment language to be more inclusive.
 3. Hosted a Pride event in collaboration with LGBTQ+ staff.

Activity 2. Case Study Snapshots

- **Task:** Provide students with short real-world examples of Irish or international companies with inclusive policies (e.g. Accenture Ireland, An Post, Google).
 - Discussion Prompts:
 - What works well in these companies?
 - What challenges remain?
 - How do these compare to Eire Connect?

Activity 3. Irish Employment Equality Act - Match the Scenario

Objective: Students will apply their knowledge of the Irish Employment Equality Act to identify the protected grounds in various real world scenarios.

Instructions:

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Provide each group with the 'Scenarios' sheet and the 'Protected Grounds' list.
- Students must read each scenario and match it to the correct protected ground or grounds that may be at play.
- Once matched, groups should briefly explain why they chose that protected ground, citing the specific elements of the scenario.
- The activity concludes with a class discussion to review the answers and clarify any misunderstandings.

Protected Grounds (The Irish Employment Equality Act 1998-2015)	
Gender: This ground refers to protecting people from discrimination on the basis of being a man, woman, pregnant person or on maternity leave or a transgender person.	
Civil Status: Refers to being single, married, separated, divorced or widowed.	
Family Status: Refers to a person who is the parent or legal guardian of a child under 18, or the main carer of a person with a disability.	
Sexual Orientation: Refers to a person's sexual orientation (e.g. gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual).	
Religion: Refers to a person's religious beliefs or lack thereof.	
Age: Refers to being a person over 18 (in most cases, discrimination against those under 18 is not covered, but this can be a discussion point).	
Disability: Refers to a person with a physical, intellectual, mental or sensory disability.	
Race: Refers to a person's race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin.	
Member of the Traveller Community: A specific ground protecting members of the Traveller community from discrimination.	
Sample Scenarios	
1. An employee is denied a promotion after their manager finds out they are living with a long-term illness that requires regular medical appointments.	
2. A 22-year-old is the most qualified candidate for a senior management position but is told the company is looking for someone with "more life experience".	
3. A pregnant woman is demoted from her role and has her hours cut, shortly after informing her employer of her pregnancy.	
4. An older man is refused a job as a bartender because the bar's owner wants to cultivate a "young, energetic" image for the business.	
5. A candidate is rejected for a sales position because their "foreign sounding" name is deemed to be a "poor fit" for the client base.	
6. A newly hired employee is singled out and ridiculed by a colleague for wearing a headscarf as part of their religious practice.	
7. A job applicant is asked in an interview if they are planning to get married or have children in the near future.	

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| 8. An employee who is a member of the Traveller community is consistently assigned fewer desirable shifts and is excluded from team social events. |
| 9. A manager makes a derogatory comment about a team member's partner, after learning that they are in a same-sex relationship. |

Reflection Activity

- What is one change you would make in your future workplace to ensure inclusion?

Lesson 2: Ethical Marketing and Representation

Strand: Enterprise

Learning Intentions:

- Evaluate how companies represent diverse identities in advertising
- Understand the ethics of inclusive branding and the risks of tokenism
- Design marketing that reflects real values and inclusion

Materials Needed

- Examples of inclusive marketing campaigns:
 - **Example One: Dublin Bus 'The Long Road to Pride'**
This campaign celebrated the history of LGBTQ+ activism in Ireland. It featured real stories from Irish LGBTQ+ individuals and allies, highlighting the journey toward equality. The campaign was praised for its authenticity and emotional impact, and it aligned with Dublin Bus' ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion.
 - **Example Two: An Post 'Addressing the Nation'**
An Post's campaign featured spoken word poetry and diverse voices from across Ireland, including immigrants, LGBTQ+ individuals and people with disabilities. It celebrated the richness of Irish identity and the importance of belonging, using the postal service as a metaphor for connection.
 - **Example Three: Lidl Ireland 'TrolleyCam' and Inclusive Hiring**
Lidl has run several campaigns showcasing real Irish families and individuals from different backgrounds. Their inclusive hiring practices and representation of neurodiverse employees have also been featured in internal and external communications, promoting workplace inclusion.
- Poster paper or digital slide tools

Suggested Classroom Activities

1. **Ad Analysis Carousel:** Display a series of marketing campaigns that feature LGBTQ+ representation. Students rotate around the room answering: Is this authentic? Who is represented? What's the message?
2. **Rainbow-Washing or Real?** Students explore how some companies use LGBTQ+ symbolism in marketing without supporting the community in practice.
3. **Class Debate:** "Is visibility always good, even if it's tokenistic?"
4. **Design Challenge - Inclusive Campaign:** In pairs, students choose a product and design a mock campaign that authentically reflects inclusive values, including internal policies (e.g. donation to LGBTQ+ causes, inclusive recruitment practices).

Reflection Activity

- How can a brand build real trust with the LGBTQ+ community?

Lesson 3: Social Entrepreneurship & Advocacy

Strand: Business in Action

Learning Intentions

- Understand the concept of social entrepreneurship
- Explore how businesses can advocate for marginalised communities
- Identify the impact of socially responsible leadership

Materials Needed

- Profiles of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs or advocates (e.g. Dr Norah Patten, LGBT Ireland founders, small businesses during Pride)
- 'Build a Social Business' worksheet (include here)
- Business Values Mapping template (include here)

Suggested Classroom Activities

Activity 1. Entrepreneur Spotlight

1. Students read or watch short biographies of LGBTQ+ business founders or allies.
1. Discuss: What drove their mission? How do they blend profit with purpose?

Rory O'Neill (Panti Bliss) – Irish Business Owner Case Study



Rory O'Neill, born in Ballinrobe, County Mayo in 1968, is not only Ireland's most celebrated drag performer but also a successful entrepreneur in Dublin's hospitality scene.

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He is the owner of **Pantibar**, a vibrant LGBTQ+ bar located in central Dublin, which he opened in **November 2007**. Pantibar quickly became a cornerstone of Dublin's LGBTQ+ nightlife and a cultural hub for community events, performances and activism.

In **2020**, O'Neill expanded his business portfolio by taking over **Pennylane**, a stylish cocktail bar just around the corner from Pantibar. Both venues reflect his flair for design, inclusivity, and entertainment, blending his artistic sensibilities with savvy business acumen. His establishments are known for their welcoming atmosphere, strong community ties, and support for LGBTQ+ visibility and rights.

O'Neill's role as a publican is deeply intertwined with his activism. His bars are not just commercial ventures, they are safe spaces that foster dialogue, celebration and solidarity. His success as a business owner has earned him recognition, including the '**Business Person of the Year**' award at the Gay and Lesbian Awards.

Activity 2. Build A Values Driven Enterprise

1. Values Mapping: Using Worksheet 1 below, students map out the values of a socially responsible business using examples: What do they stand for? How do they show it to employees, customers and the public?

2. Build a Social Enterprise: Using Worksheet 2 below, in teams, students brainstorm a start-up idea with a social goal (e.g. creating safe workspaces, providing inclusive products, mentoring LGBTQ+ youth). Share ideas in a mini-pitch session.

Reflection Activity:

- What does ethical leadership mean to you?

Optional Assessment Ideas:

- Reflective journal entry: What role can I play in shaping inclusive workplaces?
- Group presentation: An ethical brand campaign or inclusive workplace proposal.
- Quiz on business laws related to equality and ethics.

Worksheet 1: Business Values Mapping Template

Title: Mapping the Values of an Inclusive Business

Objective:

Identify and analyse the values that guide inclusive and ethical businesses.

Part A: Core Values

List 3–5 values your business stands for (e.g. respect, equality, transparency):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Part B: How Values Are Shown

In companies, values are shown in different ways depending on the audience e.g.

Value	How It's Shown to Employees	How It's Shown to Customers	How It's Shown to the Public
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Part C: Case Study Comparison

Choose one real business from the lesson (e.g. Aer Lingus, An Post, Dublin Bus).

Business Name: _____

What values does this business promote?

How do they show these values in practice?

Reflection

What value do you think is most important in an inclusive business and why?

Worksheet 2: Build a Social Enterprise or Business

Title: Build a Social Business – Inclusion and Advocacy

Objective:

Design a business idea that promotes inclusion and supports a social cause, with a focus on advocacy or broader diversity goals.

Part A: Business Concept

1. Business name:

2. What product or service will your business offer?

3. Who is your target audience or customer base?

4. What social issue will your business address?
(e.g. LGBTQ+ inclusion, disability access, migrant support)

Part B: Inclusion Strategy

5. How will your business promote inclusion in the workplace?

- ☐ Inclusive hiring practices
- ☐ Gender-neutral policies
- ☐ Staff training on bias and diversity
- ☐ Employee resource groups
- ☐ Other: _____

6. How will your business support the community?

- ☐ Donations to advocacy groups
- ☐ Hosting inclusive events
- ☐ Offering mentorship or internships

☐ Public awareness campaigns

☐ Other: _____

Part C: Pitch Your Idea

7. Write a short pitch (3 to 5 sentences) explaining why your business matters and how it blends profit with purpose.

Reflection

8. What's one challenge your business might face in promoting inclusion?

9. What's one thing you learned about ethical leadership today?
