



ASSEMBLY DAY 2025

Challenging racial bias in the classroom: creating a safe space for all

Session 3 Parallel Workshops

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SESSION 3 PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

Meet the facilitator:

Susanna Trifiletti is a secondary Geography, CSPE, and Politics and Society teacher. She worked for World Wise Global Schools and Fishamble Theatre Company, developing workshops for students and teachers alike. She is a trained facilitator in intercultural education, anti-bias education, and "Difficult conversations" practice. Susanna brings a practical approach to the workshop. In the last four years, she has provided training for family centres and primary and secondary schools nationwide, supporting educators in fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments.



Overview: This workshop aims to equip educators with practical strategies and tools to address and respond to microaggressions and racial prejudice in the classroom.

This interactive session will focus on the following key objectives:

1. Understanding what microaggressions are and how they manifest in classroom environments.
2. Learning how to tackle microaggressions in real-time effectively.
3. Developing the ability to choose appropriate facilitation stances in different classroom situations.
4. Engaging in case studies and real-life role-play scenarios to practice and refine responses.



Key points discussed:

- Susanna's background: From Sicily, a historically multicultural society, where she engaged in conversations about what is considered racist.
- Drawing from classroom experiences, Susanna began retraining and upskilling in response to the issues she encountered.
- Susanna will share insights from other educators based on her practice.
- Reporting structures for racist incidents, such as INAR (Irish Network Against Racism).
- Discrimination statistics: 17% of cases involved school or public sector staff, 20% were reported to the Gardaí, and 33% of perpetrators were under 18 years old.
- Each country has a unique history of racism and different understandings of race, often shaped by hierarchical definitions.
- In Ireland, it is interesting to examine narratives about Irish emigrants and how they were historically portrayed (e.g., with animalistic features).
- Each country historically developed its own systems of racism.
- Microaggressions can be subtle or overt, intentional or unintentional. Different types include micro-validations, micro-assaults, and micro-insults—sometimes stemming from 'unintentional harm packaged as curiosity.'
- The distinction between racial prejudice and racism.
- Examples of microaggressions:
 - Touching someone without consent.
 - Inventing nicknames.
 - Speaking slowly in English.
 - Asking black/brown people to explain racism.
- The role of the facilitator in these discussions—options include being neutral, an ally, biased, or presenting official positions.
- What kind of facilitator do we want to be when leading conversations on controversial issues?
- Can one truly be neutral on certain issues (e.g., the Holocaust)?

Testimonials



My key takeaway from today is the importance of preparing better to challenge racist microaggressions in a constructive way. This is something I intend to expand on and actively incorporate into my practice as a result of the discussions.

One thing I intend to take forward is to consider a team strategy for addressing microaggressions and revisit our approach to resources.

