

Political Correctness Learner Autonomy Worksheet

1 Look at these words/phrases. Tick the ones you don't know. Then stand up, walk around the room, and find out the meanings of the ones you don't know from other students. Don't use a dictionary!

1 minority groups

6 politically correct expression

2 to give offence

7 a label

3 sexist

8 diversity

4 ageist

9 multicultural society

5 to discriminate against

10 sensitivity



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2 Now read the words in context. If there are still some words you don't know, stand up, walk around the room again, and find out from other students.

Political Correctness

Before the era of political correctness, a lot of the language used in everyday society used to *give offence*. Some of it was *sexist*, some of it was *racist*, and people from various backgrounds felt humiliated. In particular, *minority groups* suffered (they felt *discriminated against*).

But today people are much more aware of the effects of language. They know that a *label* (such as 'blind') can create negative feelings. People use language with greater *sensitivity* today. They use Politically Correct (PC) expressions like '*socially disadvantaged*' instead of poor.

A key word in PC thinking is '*diversity*'. We are encouraged to be aware that we live in a society containing many different sorts of people – and that this is a good thing. Of course, in societies like this (which may be called *multicultural*), there is often marriage between people from different backgrounds, which makes society even more complex.

3 Now look at these questions about the new words. Answer them in class.

- 1 If you give offence do you hurt someone through language or by hitting them?
- 2 If you are sexist do you talk about the other sex in a positive or negative way?
- 3 If you are racist do you talk about another race in a positive or negative way?
- 4 Give an example of a minority group in your country.
- 5 If you discriminate against a group of people, do you treat them the same as others – or in a different way?
- 6 Give other examples (apart from 'blind') of labels that may cause negative feelings.
- 7 If you have sensitivity towards other people's feelings, do you care about the language you use – or don't you care?
- 8 What is the PC expression for a) a black person in the USA and b) a short person?
- 9 If there is diversity in society, is everyone more or less the same, or are there a lot of differences in, for example, race, sexual orientation, and lifestyle?
- 10 What happens in a multicultural society?