



# Team Teacher Reflection (TTR) Manual

**#iBelong: Towards a Sense of Belonging in  
an Inclusive Learning Environment.**

January 2022



## Introduction

In this Manual we provide the concept and the procedure of the Team Teacher Reflection program. The program was developed within the Erasmus+-project: #Ibelong: Towards a Sense of Belonging in an Inclusive Learning Environment.

## Authors

Pravini Baboeram (ECHO, Expert Center Diversity Policy)  
Dr. Marieke Meeuwisse (Erasmus University Rotterdam)  
Dr. Rick Wolff (Risbo/Erasmus University Rotterdam)

## Designer

Tara Drev, Knowledge Innovation Centre

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# TEAM TEACHER REFLECTION

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## Introduction



The #iBelong program focuses primarily on non-traditional students such as first-generation college students and students from migrant background. Research shows that these student populations are often disadvantaged and feel less belonging. #iBelong aims at improving the sense of belonging and outcomes of these students through creating more inclusive learning environments in higher education. Because teaching staff has an important impact on the institutional culture and practices (e.g. in class dynamics, the teacher-student power relation) it is crucial that teachers, especially teachers in Year 1 of a course program, are aware of the diversity of students and can effectively engage with students from diverse backgrounds to create and shape an inclusive learning environment. For this purpose, the Team Teacher Reflection (TTR) is designed as part of the #iBelong-program.

TTR is a teacher team effort: participants are active in Year 1 of the same course program. This is important to stress, because the sustainability of sense of belonging initiatives depends on the active support, involvement, and collaboration within a teacher team (including management and support staff). Therefore, we recommend performing TTR with all Year 1 staff or -if not possible- a minimum of 8 participants.

In addition, TTR is best embedded in the other activities that are also provided by the #iBelong project: the Dialogue Days and the Community Mentoring Program. Teachers can be directly involved in the organization and facilitation of the Dialogue Days and draw from experiences in the Community Mentoring Program.

## TRR Goals

TTR is a guided set of immersive collaborative sessions designed for teacher teams (teachers of the same course program), aimed at making teaching more inclusive and supportive of/for a diverse student body and offering teaching staff tools and support necessary to constructively deal with challenges and questions in a diverse classroom. The main goal of TTR is:

**Empowering teacher teams to develop their capacity and confidence to enable a diverse student population to engage, belong and learn successfully.**

Short term goal: creating awareness about a diverse student body and an inclusive learning environment.

Midterm goal: expanding teaching skills related to diversity and inclusive education by reflecting on cases of exclusion at the course program.

Long term goal: establishing a Sense of Belonging mindset and practice in a teacher team that fosters an inclusive learning environment.

## TRR Design

TTR is designed in such a way that:

- activities can be integrated into regular staff meetings to make sessions as accessible as possible for teaching staff of Year 1.
- activities are distributed over the year to keep focus on Sense of Belonging throughout the academic year.
- it can be performed both offline as well as online.
- it is context independent. Teacher teams formulate their own Sense of Belonging priorities and take action based on their specific institutional context and students' experiences.

TTR consists out of 3 to 4 sessions, depending on the local circumstances:

- Introductory session: Towards a Frame of Reference for Sense of Belonging (90-120 min). The implementation of this session is mandatory.

- The goal is to a) introduce the concept of Sense of Belonging to your Teacher Team in an interactive way and b) collect input for a Frame of Reference on Sense of Belonging (SB-Frame of Reference), which include a definition/statement on Sense of Belonging and 4 conditions to foster Sense of Belonging, formulated/written by members of the teacher team (so-called Team Leads).
- 2 to 3 follow up meetings: Reflection on Sense of Belonging Cases (30–45 minutes). The goal of these meetings is to expand the repertoire of staff to strengthen sense of belonging of a diverse group of students by reflecting on sense of belonging cases and discussing constructive strategies for the

In these cases, situations are described in which (first year) students felt a lack of sense of belonging and/or in which teachers were confronted with challenges or dilemmas regarding sense of belonging. Case reflections will be guided by the Framework of Reference on Sense of Belonging. Members of the teacher team write a short report of each follow up meeting.

Activity	Period	Involved
Promoting and preparing Introductory SB-session	First two weeks of academic year	Management/SB-lead
Introductory SB-session*	Third/fourth week of academic year	Teaching staff/ Management
Formulating Teacher Team SB-Frame of Reference	Start Fall	SB-lead
Gathering SB-cases among first year students	Until a week and a half before Follow up session 1	Mentors/teachers
Preparing Follow-up session 1	A week and a half before Follow up session 1	SB-lead
Follow-up session 1*	End of Fall	Teaching staff/ Management/ SB-lead
Report of Follow-up session 1	End of Fall	SB-lead
Gathering SB-cases among first year students	Until a week and a half before Follow up session 2	Mentors/teachers
Preparing Follow-up session 2	A week and a half before Follow up session 2	SB-lead

Activity	Period	Involved
Follow-up session 2*	Winter	Teaching staff/ Management/ SB-lead
Report of Follow-up session 2	End of Winter	SB-lead
Gathering SB-cases among first year students	Until a week and a half before Follow up session 2	Mentors/teachers
Preparing Follow-up session 3	A week and a half before Follow up session 2	SB-lead
Follow-up session 3*	Spring	Teaching staff/ Management/ SB-lead
Annual Report (Including SB-Frame of Reference and Reports Follow up session)	End of Spring	SB-lead

It is key that one or two members of the teacher team take the lead during this trajectory, the so-called Team Leads. The Team Lead(s) formulate the SB-Frame of Reference based on the Introductory Session, moderate the follow up meetings and produce the short reports based on these meetings. This set up will enhance the ownership of the teacher team. When someone from outside the team performs these tasks, TTR will be considered as an external initiative and consequently will be placed outside daily practice of teachers.

A preparatory activity: Framing TTR via a Teacher Team Scan

We recommend conducting a Teacher Team Scan before starting the Introductory Session. The Teacher Team Scan provides information both on content, the level of knowledge and skills on diversity, inclusion/inclusive education and enthusiasm within the teacher team to participate in the TTR. This information serves as input for the TTR framing. For example, if the scan shows that a teacher team has a high level of expertise on diversity and inclusion, the TTR can be framed as a unique opportunity for

teachers to share their expertise to jointly enhance the sense of belonging of students. If the scan shows a low level of enthusiasm, then the TTR can be framed as an opportunity to develop professional teaching skills to make education more inclusive.

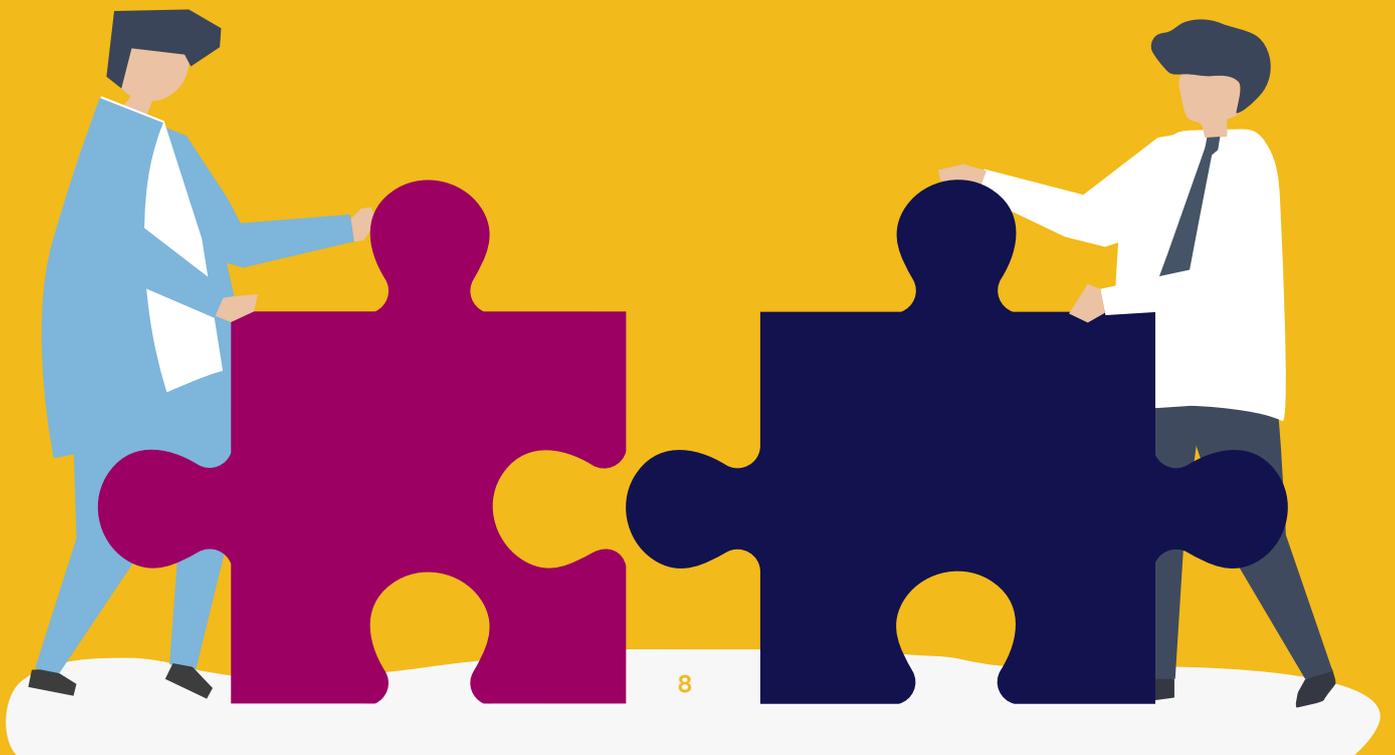
The scan can be performed in different ways. As an example, we suggest the following elements:

- a web-based analysis of staff, gathering information on fields of expertise, research projects, publications and courses delivered.
- a preparatory meeting with key-staff members to determine staff-engagement on diversity, inclusive education and sense of belonging.

In addition: although the main goal of the TTR institutional is context-independent, the specific application of this goal does depend on this institutional context. For example, at one course program emphasis on activities may be on sense of belonging of first-generation students, while at another course program activities may be gender oriented or focused on students from migrant background.

# TEAM TEACHER REFLECTION

Sessions



## TTR Sessions

### Introductory session: Towards a Frame of Reference on Sense of Belonging

(90–120 min)

The goals of this introductory session are:

1. Experiencing inclusion and exclusion by performing the Power Walk exercise. This exercise will raise (further) awareness on issues concerning diversity and inclusion.
2. Formulating a Framework of Reference on Sense of Belonging by the teacher team, which will serve as a guideline for further sense of belonging actions during the remainder of the academic year.

#### Part 1: The Power Walk exercise<sup>1</sup>

In the Power Walk exercise participants are invited to step into someone else's shoes (a student persona). They are challenged to explore lived experiences unfamiliar to their own daily reality and to reflect on what this means for navigating a higher education environment. The exercise highlights the fact that sense of belonging often has to do with systemic issues and is shaped by institutional structures within an institution. In addition, by stepping into someone else's shoes, participants can reflect on their own images, stereotypes and prejudices of others<sup>2</sup>.

The Power Walk exercise contains the following steps:

1. Participants imagine they are a student persona with –on some dimensions– a different background than their own (see preparation instruction in Appendix A).
2. When the Introductory Session is done offline, participants are asked to line up.

3. The moderator presents around 10 statements related to inclusion/exclusion, for example: 'I recognize myself in the teaching staff.' (see appendix B for more statement examples).
4. Participants take a step forward if they think a statement is applicable to their student persona, otherwise they remain in position.

When Introductory Session is executed online, participants grant themselves 10 points if the statement is applicable to their student persona, 5 points if they are in doubt/partially agree or 0 points if not. At the end participants are asked to calculate their total score and share this score in the chat of the online platform. An overview of all scores can be visualized in an Excel-chart and presented in share screen mode.

After the response to the last statement, it becomes clear that some participants took more steps (in the offline version) or have more points (in the online version) than other participants.

5. Participants reveal their student persona and reflect on the outcome of the Power Walk. Suggestions for questions to discuss are:
  - Can you share what you feel right now, captured in one word (participants who do not want to respond may say 'pass')?
  - To what extent did you find it easy or difficult to answer the statement from your student persona?
  - What was your approach in taking on the perspective of your persona? Did you have someone in your personal circles as a reference point or was it based on assumptions?
  - Were there any blind spots you discovered in doing this exercise? If so, which blind spots?
  - How does it feel to be one of the students at the back of the group?

<sup>1</sup>This exercise is designed by ECHO, Expert Center Diversity Policy, in collaboration with Risbo/EUR. The exercise is based on the Privilege Walk exercise performed by Lake Land College ([https://slidelegend.com/the-privilege-walk-exercise-lake-land-college\\_59d6e71a1723ddb0c7a0df01.html](https://slidelegend.com/the-privilege-walk-exercise-lake-land-college_59d6e71a1723ddb0c7a0df01.html)) and the Power Walk developed by the British Council ([active\\_citizens\\_global\\_toolkit\\_2017-18.pdf](https://www.britishecouncil.org/active-citizens-global-toolkit-2017-18.pdf) ([britishcouncil.org](https://www.britishecouncil.org))).

<sup>2</sup>Alternatively, participants can be asked to take part in the exercise as themselves. However, we recommend doing this only in case of a high level of trust and safety for participants. The Power Walk is a 'high risk' activity and to expose oneself means that one exposes her/his own (under)privileged position. This may lead to challenging situations that may obstruct further sharing and openness.

- How does it feel to be one of the students at the front of the group?
- How does it feel to be one of the students in the middle of the group?
- Did you experience certain statements as more impactful than others? Which ones? And why?
- In your opinion, what impact does it have for students feeling at the back, or at the front of the group in terms of a) the power relation between teacher and student b) inclusion at the course program and c) study outcomes/success?,
- What do your responses to these statements tell us about the norm in your institution?
- In your view, what impact does this have on sense of belonging for students who deviate from the norm?
- What are actions or interventions that come to mind if you want to contribute to sense of belonging?

The findings of the Power Walk exercise reflection can be used as input for formulating the Frame of Reference on Sense of Belonging.

### Preparation 'Power Walk' for participants

A week before the session introductory session, participants are asked to select four sub-identities (e.g. gender, ethnicity, sexuality, academic background) – of which at least two dimensions deviate from their own identity – from which they will participate. These four sub-identities together form the 'student persona' (or Power Walk identity) of the participant. In Appendix B you find the preparatory instruction document for the Power Walk.

### Part 2: Formulating a Framework of Reference on Sense of Belonging

You can find an example of a Framework of Reference, formulated by the iBelong-partner Os-nabrück University, in Appendix C.

This part of the Introductory Session has three elements (Participants are asked to prepare for this part of the session. See instruction below):

#### 1. Defining key concepts for sense of belonging

Invite participants to share their interpretations of sense of belonging in their professional context and to elaborate on these interpretations. A question you can pose to help them get started is:

Referring to the preparatory assignment: what is your definition/statement/key concepts of student's Sense of Belonging? For participants who didn't prepare: Thinking about student's Sense of Belonging, what key concepts pop up in your mind?

*Summarize:* Team Leads write down the key concepts mentioned and summarize the outcomes. If possible, address similarities and differences between their interpretations. Stress the importance of formulating an own definition or statement of sense of belonging as a teacher team, because the team will be the owner of this definition or statement.

#### 2. Formulating 4 Conditions to ensure students' sense of belonging at the course program

After summarizing the definition/statements/key concepts for sense of belonging, the next step is to discuss how the participants can ensure and nurture these elements they themselves have described.

Invite participants to reflect on this by sharing 4 conditions they feel are important to create and foster sense of belonging for their students (prepared teachers already formulated 4 conditions).

Explain that reflections will be done in 2 rounds: Individual reflection and Small group reflection

##### Individual reflection:

Give participants 3–4 minutes to individually reflect on the key concepts mentioned by relating them to the 4 conditions they already formulated for the preparatory assignment.

Possibly, they want to reformulate these 4 conditions because of their experiences with the Power Walk exercise.

(Participants who did not do the preparatory assignment can use the 3–4 minutes to write down the 4 conditions they feel are important to ensure and nurture sense of belonging based on the key concepts mentioned.)

Small group reflection:

Divide the group into small groups (2–4 participants) and ask them to jointly come up with a priority list of 4 conditions, based on their individual reflections. If they are aligned in their views, it can be easy to identify the similarities and come up with conditions they all agree with. If they have different ideas about the conditions, the challenge is to come to a formulation of conditions that reflects all their perspectives.

3. Finalizing 4 conditions for sense of belonging: plenary reflection

Bring the group back together and invite them to plenary share their 4 conditions. Based on the input of the participants, see if you can find a common thread in their input that you can summarize in 4 conditions. Write this down and check with the participants if they agree with these final 4 conditions.

Preparation 'Formulating a Frame of Reference on Sense of Belonging' for participants

A week before the Introductory Session participants are asked to prepare for this part of the session by thinking over the following questions:

- How would you define Sense of Belonging? What are key concepts to you, thinking about Sense of Belonging?
- What are, in your opinion, four conditions needed for ensuring student's Sense of Belonging at your faculty/course (program)?

(For moderator/facilitator: because we think that it is not too difficult for participants to come up with two or three conditions, we ask for four conditions to push their creative thinking.)

(Participants who did not do the preparatory assignment can use the 3–4 minutes to write down the 4 conditions they feel are important to ensure and nurture sense of belonging based on the key concepts mentioned.)

Small group reflection:

Divide the group into small groups (2–4 participants) and ask them to jointly come up with a priority list of 4 conditions, based on their individual reflections. If they are aligned in their views, it can be easy to identify the similarities and come up with conditions they all agree with. If they have different ideas about the conditions, the challenge is to come to a formulation of conditions that reflects all their perspectives.

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## Introductory session: Towards a Frame of Reference for Sense of Belonging

<p><b>Time Table</b></p>	<p>10 minutes: Introduction          35 minutes: Power Walk          10 minutes: Break          10 minutes: Defining sense of belonging          30 minutes: Formulating 4 conditions for sense of belonging          10 minutes: Finalizing 4 conditions for sense of belonging          5 minutes: Wrap-up</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme outline</b></p>	
<p><b>Introduction</b>                      <b>10min</b></p>	<p>The need for the Team Teacher Reflection at the course program.</p> <p>The initiators of the Team Teacher Reflection will explain the importance of the TTR-initiative for the course program, stressing the team effort required by TTR.</p> <p>To put TTR in a wider context, the initiators can elaborate on the origins of the Team Teacher Reflection (more information an ibelong-website: <a href="http://ibelong.eu">ibelong.eu</a>).</p> <p>#Ibelong aims at improving the experiences and outcomes of students from diverse backgrounds through creating more inclusive learning environments in higher education.</p> <p>Three pillars of interventions towards a sense of belonging on the level of course programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue Days</li> <li>• Team Teacher Reflection</li> <li>• Student Community Mentoring</li> </ul> <p>Proceed by explaining the goals of this session:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Power Walk exercise: experiencing inclusion and exclusion. This exercise will raise (further) awareness on issues concerning diversity and inclusion.</li> <li>2. Formulating a Framework of Reference on Sense of Belonging for the teacher team. The SB-Frame of Reference will serve as a guideline for future actions by the teacher team.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Power Walk exercise</b>            <b>35min</b></p>	<p>See instruction above</p>
<p><b>Break</b>                                      <b>10min</b></p>	

## Introductory session: Towards a Frame of Reference for Sense of Belonging

Defining sense of belonging	10min	See instruction above
Formulating 4 conditions for sense of belonging	30min	See instruction above
Finalizing 4 conditions for sense of belonging	10min	See instruction above
Wrap-up	5min	<p>The moderator will announce the follow-up steps of TTR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Team Leads will produce a short Frame of Reference document (half or one page) that contains a) the team's definition of Sense of Belonging and b) 4 conditions to create and foster sense of belonging for their students. This document is based on the input from the Introductory Session and will be shared with members of the teacher team.</li> <li>The Team Leads will organize 2-3 Follow Up Meetings (30-45 minutes) in which participants reflect on Sense of Belonging cases at the course program. The meetings are scheduled during regular meetings and member of the teacher team is moderator.</li> </ul>

### 2 to 3 follow-up meetings: Reflections on Sense of Belonging Cases at the course program

(30-45 minutes)

In the follow-up meetings the teacher team reflect on cases (situations) in which first year students of their course program felt a lack of sense of belonging and/or in which teachers were confronted with challenges or dilemmas regarding sense of belonging. The goal of the meetings is to expand the repertoire of staff to strengthen sense of belonging of a diverse group of students by reflecting on sense of belonging cases and discussing constructive strategies for the future. The follow-up meetings will be organized by the Team Leads, scheduled during regular meetings and moderated by a team member.

The cases are collected and described by the Community Mentors, but teachers of the teacher team can also bring in cases.

To provide a clear picture, we recommend describing cases along the following line of questions:

- What was the issue in the case?
- Who were involved in the case?
- How did the teacher behave and react to the issue?
- How did the student behave and react to the issue?
- How did others (peers, other teaching staff) behave and react to the issue?
- What did the issue mean for the sense of belonging of the student?

*Remember to make cases as anonymous as possible because of the sensitive information it may contain. The follow-up sessions are meant to constructively reflect on cases as a team, without putting individual peers in a difficult situation. An alternative is to discuss fictitious cases. However, reflections on cases from the own learning environment/course program is strongly recommended because these are the cases teachers have to deal with in their daily practice.*

In every meeting one case will be discussed. The teaching team can decide if a case is distributed before the meeting as preparatory reading, or to hand out the case during the meeting.

We recommend distributing the case as preparatory reading to maximize the reflection time during the meeting. The program, time table and instructions for the follow-up meetings are as follows:

<b>Follow-up meetings: Reflections on Sense of Belonging Cases</b>	
<b>Time Table</b>	10 minutes: Inventory 20 minutes: reflection 10 minutes: formulating action points
	<b>Programme outline</b>
<b>Inventory</b>	Share what teacher team members have done to improve sense of belonging since the last meeting based on a) the Frame of Reference of Sense of Belonging and/or b) the case discussed in the last meeting?
<b>Reflection</b>	Introduce the case and reflect on the case by answering the following question: how can we deal with this case using the Frame of Reference of Sense of Belonging as discussed in the Introductory TTR session?
<b>Action points</b>	Formulate action points by answering the following question: which concrete follow-up steps will we take to solve this case and to improve students' sense of belonging?
<b>Concrete output</b>	After every follow-up meeting Team Leads will write a short report of the meeting to share with members of the teacher team.

## TTR output

The TTR output is delivered on different moments through the year.

### *Introductory Session Output*

A Sense of Belonging Frame of Reference document (half or one page) that contains a) the team's definition of Sense of Belonging and b) 4 conditions to create and foster sense of belonging for their students

### *Follow-up Session Output*

A short report containing a) the case description and b) action points formulated to deal with this case and to improve students' sense of belonging

### *Annual TTR-report*

This report contains a) the Sense of Belonging Frame of Reference, b) the reports of the Follow up sessions and c) a 'lessons learned' section. The Annual TTR-report can serve as a starting point for TTR-activities in the coming academic year.

## TTR after the first year of implementation

TTR is designed for teaching staff in Year 1. Possibly, the composition of the Year 1 teaching staff largely remains the same over the years. In this case it may not be necessary to repeat the Introductory Session every year. However, the follow up sessions have to continue as part of the ongoing process of creating an inclusive learning environment at the course program. After all, sense of belonging challenges may change from year to year, as the Corona Pandemic clearly has shown. In addition, after the first year of implementation the teacher team can regularly check if the Frame of Reference on Sense of Belonging needs updating.

# TEAM TEACHER REFLECTION



Appendix



## Appendix A: Preparatory Instruction Power Walk for participants



In this activity we invite you to step into someone else's shoes and challenge you to explore the other person's experience. In preparation for this activity, we want to ask you to formulate an identity from which you will participate.

Identities are layered and consist of different dimensions, all of which influence views and experiences. For this activity we limit ourselves to the dimensions that are frequently reflected in policy.

### EXERCISE

1. View the four dimensions of identity as shown below.
2. Select three dimensions to formulate an identity, of which at least two dimensions deviate from your own identity.
3. Write down the chosen "power walk identity".

#### 1 Gender

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Other, .....

#### 2 Ethnicity

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Other, .....

#### 3 Sexuality

- Heterosexual
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Other, .....

#### 4 Academic background

- No family experience of HE
- No recent education experience
- Alternative entry qualification
- Other, .....

**YOUR POWERWALK IDENTITY:**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

## Appendix B: Examples Power Walk Statements

Below you find some examples of statements you can use for the Power Walk. Of course, you can formulate your own statements that are more appropriate to your specific context:

- I can ask my parents for help in navigating the university.
- In pre-university education (primary education, secondary education) I studied the culture of history of my ancestors.
- My voice and experiences are represented in the student bodies of the university.
- I recognize myself in the teaching staff.
- I can participate in my classes without encountering any challenges.
- I see myself reflected in communication materials published by the university.
- In general, I am seldom confronted with stereotypes about my community.
- If I address something I consider inappropriate, I'm not worried people will think I'm oversensitive.
- I grew up in a house with more than 50 books
- I never took out loans for my education.

## Appendix C: Example Framework of Reference on Sense of Belonging

(source: Osnabrück University, Department of Research in Vocational Education and Training)

### OUR CONCEPT OF SENSE OF BELONGING



Our concept of SoB at our institution is that our students share a common sense of community and feel socially integrated. This helps them build their identity and feel proud of where they study. The SoB leads to more participation, more agency and helps students master their academic and social skills.

### Conditions for SoB @TeachingUOS



Activation and promotion of student participation

Use interactive methods

Activate students

Reflect expectations

Creating a friendly learning environment

Empathy and Flexibility

Responding to the needs of students

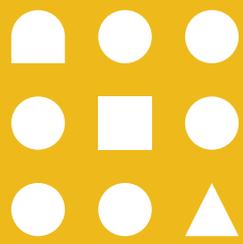
Awareness of diversity and reflection on one's own teaching

Show your own SoB, be a role model

Use Up-to-date Research and methods

Meeting students at their own eye level and seeking to engage them in dialogue

See students as individuals and not anonymous communicate



I Belong