Female Pioneers

About this activity

'Female Pioneers' is an activity that focuses on developing knowledge of female pioneers in a topic that is often dominated by males. Students research women who have been pioneers in a range of fields and present their findings.

Stage 1: warm up	Ask learners what they understand by the term 'pioneer'. Offer the definition of: a person who is among the first to explore or settle a new country or area. OR develop or be the first to use or apply (a new method, area of knowledge, or activity).
Stage 2	Ask learners to share names of pioneers they may know of. These could be from any field – science and medicine, technology, exploration, social change. As they name the people, write up in a divided list of males and females. It is likely that the list will contain more male names. Draw attention to this and discuss why this could be. Reasons include lack of access to education for females; ideas from females claimed by males they worked with; females seen as unable to complete certain activities.
Stage 3	Take note of the limited number of female pioneers and explain that the task is going to be to research further examples of pioneering females. Ask learners why there might be a need for this? Examples could include: the need to tell their stories; justice over ideas that were stolen; inspiration for future generations of people identifying as female.
Stage 4	Allow learners time to access books, internet or any resources available to them to access images, videos and content and ask them to create a presentation on a specific female pioneer. Learners can work in groups of mixed gender and ability. Allow around 1 hour for this.
Stage 5	Allow learners time to synthesise their findings and prepare a presentation. 1 hour or however much time is available.

Stage 6	Ask learners to present their research and findings. Following each presentation, encourage learners to give positive feedback as well as a next step for improvement. Allow around 1 hour to see all presentations depending on how many groups you have.

Gender Responsive Notes
Ensure gender neutral language throughout; mixed gender groups to carry out research and present; ensure answers and feedback is taken from a variety of learners. Discuss the issues of gendered norms and representation if there are any challenges finding information about female pioneers.

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