



The Learning Institute

Using reflection to promote racial equality and justice in the classroom

Overview

The current Covid-19 pandemic has prompted society to reflect on its attitudes to race and especially the disadvantages faced by many of the BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities as deaths from the virus are higher in these groups. As educators, we are urged to reflect not only on our own attitudes but also our roles in raising awareness in schools.

Target audience

Anyone working with children and young people in schools

Duration

Approximately 1 hour

The Learning Institute provides opportunities for individuals and communities through high quality education, training and research programmes that challenge personal barriers and promote social inclusion. To find out more, please get in touch.

Introduction

As educators, we have a responsibility to promote equality and justice for all children and young people, as well as supporting a tolerant and diverse workforce.

Reflection helps us to look more deeply at our own attitudes and beliefs that often may be there without our even realising it (unconscious bias). This may lead to a shift in our thinking which helps to promote a more tolerant and diverse society.

This CPD will help you to be reflexive i.e. reflect on your own attitudes and values, as well as guiding you to find resources that can support you in raising awareness in the classroom.

Please note: This set of activities use knowledge and skills that have been explored in a previous CPD titled *Reflective Practice*, which was designed to support practitioners by helping them to understand some key principles of effective reflection and how a model of reflection can be applied. It is advisable that you complete the [Reflective Practice](#) CPD activities prior to starting this CPD.

Objectives

- To understand how the practice of reflection can help us to challenge our views and change our perspectives.
- To know some of the resources available to promote awareness of different beliefs and cultures.
- To support any assemblies or lesson plans on promoting equality.

Resources

Pen and paper for note taking

Internet access to following:

- *A view from the classroom: Britishness* [video], available at <https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/view-classroom-britishness>
- *Black to Yellow* [video], available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/black-yellow
- *Eid ul-Fitr* [video], available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/eid-ul-fitr
- *Hijab & me* [video], available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/hijab-me
- *Mo – My future. My Career. My RE* [video], available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/mo-my-future-my-career-my-re
- TrueTube [website], available at www.truetube.co.uk

Task 1: Understanding the main principles of reflexivity

This task will help you to reflect on your own attitudes and assumptions about race and equality.

What is reflexivity?

'Being reflexive is focusing close attention upon one's own actions, thoughts, feelings and their effects' (Bolton, 2010, p.7)

Many writers now believe that we all live with a set of core beliefs and values that, together, define our understanding of the world so strongly that we simply do not realise, at a fully conscious level, that we have even got them.

Reflection and Black Lives Matter

The recent pandemic has highlighted the urgency of reflecting on our own attitudes to the BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) community (Public Health England, 2020).

This includes attitudes to all of those in our workplace who may be BAME, as well as our role in raising awareness about the need for racial equality.

As the next quote shows, the urgency of this has been prompted by the increased risk of dying from Covid-19 in this community.



The link between Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter

*'Stakeholders pointed to racism and discrimination experienced by communities and more specifically by **BAME key workers** as a root cause affecting health, and exposure risk and disease progression risk. Racial discrimination affects people's life chances and the stress associated with being discriminated against based on race/ethnicity affects mental and physical health'*

(Public Health England 2020, p.7). (Bold text added)

Watch the following clip and make notes on your response to it: *A view from the classroom: Britishness*, available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/view-classroom-britishness

- Reflect on whether any of your attitudes have changed over the last few months.
- Think about why this may be? Have the statistics about the number of the BAME community suffering from Covid 19 challenged previously held views?

Task 2: How can I promote racial equality in the classroom?

This task will give you an example of some of the resources that you can access to support you in this.

How can we raise awareness in our classrooms?

Consider the following two quotes and the Childline statistics.

'Racial prejudice can be obvious or hidden, and sometimes the people who hold this prejudice lack the knowledge they need to recognise it in themselves. Someone doesn't have to feel particularly hostile towards people from a minority ethnic group in order to have racist attitudes or to act in a racist way'

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, 2018, p.6

'Any child or young person who is viewed by others as being part of a minority ethnic group is at risk of experiencing racist bullying. This can happen regardless of how they view their own ethnic identity. Racism is not a result of the ethnicity of the person being bullied, but a result of the attitudes of the person displaying the bullying behaviour'

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, 2018, p.7

The charity Childline show children as young as 9 are contacting them about race or faith-based bullying. There have been more than 2,500 counselling sessions in the last three years about racial and faith based bullying. Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Black and Sikh children were among those who have contacted Childline about the issue (NSPCC, 2019).

Now watch clips below and make notes on what aspects would be useful for you in your setting:

- *Black to Yellow*, available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/black-yellow
- *Eid ul-Fitr*, available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/eid-ul-fitr
- *Hijab & me*, available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/hijab-me
- *Mo – My future. My Career. My RE*, available at www.truetube.co.uk/film/mo-my-future-my-career-my-re

Have any of these clips challenged your own views? Why?

Task 3: Reviewing other resources including lesson plans, assembly scripts and short film clips

Search the TrueTube website, available at www.truetube.co.uk, for resources that might be helpful for your own setting:

Task 4: Reflection on learning

Note down your responses to the following questions:

- What knowledge did I already have that has been refreshed by this CPD?
- How has this CPD developed my knowledge and understanding?
- How can I apply what I now know to my practice?

Sources

Bolton, G. (2010) *Reflective practice: writing and professional development*. 3rd edn. London: Sage.

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (2018) *Addressing Inclusion: effectively challenging racism in schools*. Available at: <https://www.crer.scot/crer-publications> (Accessed: 8 July 2020).

NSPCC (2020) *News and opinion*. Available at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/> (Accessed: 8 July 2020)

Public Health England (2020) *Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of Covid 19 on BAME groups*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-understanding-the-impact-on-bame-communities> (Accessed: 8 July 2020)

Further reading

Amnesty International UK, available at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/black-lives-matter-write-your-mp>

BBC video: Black Lives Matter: Parents and children talk about racism, available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-53113271/black-lives-matter-parents-and-children-talk-about-racism>

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