

Learning and Teaching  
Resources and Practices:  
means of deconstructing –  
*and challenging* - stereotypes  
of Gender, Sexuality, 'Race'  
and Ethnicity

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# Introduction

- ▶ Key issues relating to resources and practices aimed at addressing and challenging stereotyping – gender, sexuality, ethnicity/'race' ... (and dis/ability)
- ▶ The UK context – some reflections
- ▶ What constitutes 'good practice'??
- ▶ Looking at pedagogy and learning and teaching materials

# Key issues in 'practices' aimed at addressing stereotyping – gender, sexuality, ethnicity/'race' – as education professionals we need to:

- ▶ Acknowledge that these aspects of individual and collective identity are social constructions, and therefore are subject to influence and change;
- ▶ Understand that in addressing and challenging stereotyping, educators need to consider commonalities as well as differences between, for example, members of particular ethnic groups;

NB sexuality, ethnicity/'race' are not unproblematic, homogenous unitary categories;

- ▶ Know that gender, sexuality, ethnicity/'race' impact on all children's engagement with and achievement in all aspects of education;
- ▶ Acknowledge that teacher and school attitudes and values, as well as those of parents and pupils, are highly significant in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity/'race' and educational attainment;
- ▶ Understand that 'bias', in content, pedagogy and assessment, needs to be addressed in relation to gender, sexuality, ethnicity/'race';
- ▶ Acknowledge that these are complex issues .... quick fix responses and simplistic solutions are unlikely to have lasting success;
- ▶ Acknowledge that an 'unreflective technician' approach to teaching and learning is likely to exacerbate rather than ameliorate gender/sexuality/ethnicity related attainment problems;
- ▶ Accept that individual teachers, and schools, cannot correct all societies' problems .... but they can play a part ....

# The UK context – some reflections

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DfCSF) and equal opportunities

- ▶ <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/>

There is no single definition of the term 'equal opportunities' however, in the context of schools and pupils, it can be taken to mean:

- ▶ Providing for all pupils, **regardless of** gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability etc.;
- ▶ Being mindful of the difficulties that some groups can face and ensuring that any obstacles to them are removed ;
- ▶ Being aware of personal prejudices and stereotypical views and avoiding labels related to these;
- ▶ Valuing each pupil's worth.

# RECENT AND RELEVANT UK GOVERNMENT POLICY AND LEGISLATION

- ▶ 'Every Child Matters (2003)
  - Inter - agency working
  - Diversity and individuality of pupils
  - Schools' and teachers' roles
- ▶ School Workforce Remodelling (2003 -2005)
  - Extended schools
  - The national agreement
- ▶ Children's Act ( 2004)

# Schools' Roles in Equality and Diversity Education

- ▶ Expectations and attitudes
- ▶ Staff Development
- ▶ Home/school relationships
- ▶ Pastoral Care
- ▶ Behaviour management
- ▶ **Interpretation of the curriculum**
- ▶ **Pedagogy**
- ▶ Assessment

# What constitutes 'good practice'??

- ▶ Policy into practice
- ▶ A whole school (and community) approach
- ▶ 'Special lessons' ?? or an integrated approach ? ... or both?
- ▶ Involving children and young people – and their families
- ▶ Reflect, review and revise

# Addressing stereotyping through the formal curriculum – a UK example

- ▶ The framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship aims to teach pupils to understand and respect diversity and differences. Pupils learn to recognise the effects of bullying, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination of any kind, and to develop the skills to challenge discrimination assertively.
- ▶ The PSHE framework for teaching outlines which subjects should be taught at which Key Stage:
  - ▶ Key Stage 1: there are different types of teasing and bullying; bullying is wrong; how to get help with bullying
  - ▶ Key Stage 2: realise the nature and consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviours, such as bullying and racism; recognise and challenge stereotypes
  - ▶ Key Stage 3: the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying and racism; how to challenge them assertively
  - ▶ Key Stage 4: how to challenge offending behaviour, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination assertively and take the initiative in giving and receiving support
- ▶ TeacherNet's PSHE section gives information about a range of other sources of advice and guidance.

# Teachers' 'sphere of influence'

- ▶ Interpretation of the curriculum
- ▶ Subject matter selection
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Pedagogy
- ▶ Assessment
- ▶ Expectations and attitudes
- ▶ Class, resource and behaviour management
- ▶ Pastoral Care
- ▶ Home/school relationships
- ▶ Modelling

# Looking at learning and teaching resources and pedagogy

- ▶ Planning and preparing effective lessons

## Learning and teaching resources ....

- **Text and image**
- Film/video
- **Creative Writing**
- Discussion groups
- **Visiting speakers**
- Role play
- **Practical activities** – designing and making
- Drama
- **Visits/collaborations**
- Problem solving
- **Out of school activities** – team building
- Scenario response

# Text and image

Books, worksheets, displays, pictures:

- The written word, supported by images can be a powerful tool e.g. poems, literature, newspaper magazine articles etc. – it elicit responses and can act as powerful starting points;
- every area of the curriculum has points at which the teacher, by judicious choice of written and visual materials, can engage with issues around stereotyping

# Creative Writing

- ▶ Creative writing provides a rich context through which teachers can provide children with opportunities to explore their attitudes and values in relation to 'difficult' and 'controversial' areas – such as sexuality, gender, 'race'/ethnicity. Often used in conjunction with an initial stimulus – reading, video, picture, talk etc. and some focussed discussion, children can then be asked to produce a creative writing response (e.g. a poem) about (for example);
  - The Bully;
  - Coming out – John's story;
  - Ignorance and Prejudice in the UK (or wherever);
  - 'I don't want to be a mother' – one girl's story

# Visiting speakers

- ▶ The judicious choice of 'visitors' can be a valuable tool for teachers in addressing stereotypes. This can be a stimulus for a range of other learning activities including discussion, creative writing, role play, drama, reading, artefact production. Topics might include for example:
  - Living with racism;
  - The glass ceiling;
  - Gay and lesbian adoption;
  - Sexual harassment;
  - Bullying in school etc.

# Practical activities – designing and making

- ▶ The creation of physical items – individually or as a group activity - can be used as a medium for challenging stereotypes. e.g. sculpture, painting, ceramics, drawing, clothing, posters ... a whole range of artefacts ... food !!. For example design and make :
  - invitations for gay wedding;
  - food for the Jewish Sabbath;
  - Posters for an Anti-homophobic bullying campaign

# Visits/collaborations

- ▶ Visits to and collaborations with a wide variety of local organisations and institutions can be valuable 'hands on experiences' for children of all ages. For example to:
  - Mosque, synagogue, church, temple
  - Old people's homes, schools with 'different' catchments – school 'pairings';
  - Art galleries, music and cultural events.

# Out of school activities

- ▶ Day or residential 'off curriculum' sessions which provide an environment in which children can experience extended, non-subject based activities to:
  - Build self esteem;
  - Engender cooperation;
  - Build leadership skills;
  - Challenge their attitudes towards, (for example) the practical capabilities of others as well as themselves.

# Examples

## ► Art and Design

- Response activities which involve children in analysis of image, stereotypes (of 'beauty' for example) , historical and cultural constructions of 'primitive' art etc.;
- Design and Make activities which utilise the work of (for example) black artists as a starting point;
- Compare, contrast and analysis activities which utilise non/stereotype images as a basis for discussion of the 'artists' message/intent' – e.g. photographs of people

# Examples

## ► Mathematics:

- Displays - 'great mathematicians' (for example) – using examples which challenge stereotypes;
- Practical activities which use statistics on (for example) bullying, racist attacks, women in senior positions etc.;
- Group work in which girls take leadership role.

# Examples

## ► Foreign Languages:

- Selection of subject matter and images which challenge stereotypes – of (for example) 'foreigners';
- Visiting speakers (of target language) to talk about an aspect of (for example) racism;
- Role play/drama/stimulus response – children produce short presentation/play in the target language around a given (racist/sexist/homophobic) scenario.

# Looking at learning and teaching resources and pedagogy

- ▶ Planning and preparing effective lessons

## **Pedagogy .....**

- Developing knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes;
  - Selecting subject and group 'appropriate' learning and teaching strategies;
  - Role Models .....
- adults in the learning environment ...

# Developing knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes

- ▶ In devising and 'delivering' learning experiences aimed at deconstructing and *challenging* stereotypes of Gender, Sexuality, 'Race' and Ethnicity (and dis/ability) teachers are involved in a complex set of processes in which children and young people need to be seen as 'active agents' in their own learning .....
- ▶ These learning experiences are likely to be most effective when:
  - children are actively involved in the learning experience – not just talked to or preached at;
  - teachers and other adults value their viewpoints and contributions and are seen to use these productively;
  - their prior knowledge/understanding/experiences etc. are used as a 'starting point' i.e. the children have a meaningful reference point from which to build;
  - they can see a purpose to the experience i.e. the objectives of the experience are clearly defined in terms which they can understand.

# Selecting subject and group 'appropriate' learning and teaching strategies

- ▶ In the selection of 'appropriate' learning and teaching strategies (through which children and young people will be able to engage with the skills, knowledge and understanding, and attitudes and values concerned with these issues) teachers need to consider carefully:
  - Age;
  - Previous experiences;
  - Learning style predispositions (VAK);
  - Group composition;
  - Human and physical resources;
  - Time;
  - Aims and objectives of the lesson.

# Role Models- adults in the learning environment .... the biggest resource

- ▶ a final .... and essential note .....

Adults in learning environments – particularly teachers – have an enormous role to play in deconstructing and *challenging* stereotypes of Gender, Sexuality, 'Race' and Ethnicity ..... they display, through every word and deed, their attitudes and values as well as their knowledge, skills and understanding. It is, therefore, important that we, as education professionals, address our own ideas and assumptions and the ways in which these impact on the children and young people in our care .....

We can – and do - 'make a difference' .....