



Yellow Flag Self Awareness Training

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

This course is for teachers, parents and others to help them reflect on their role as intercultural educators.

CULTURAL POSITIONING

Many authors talk about the necessity for educators to understand the self as a fore-runner to understanding their students (Milner 2015, NCCA 2006).

In order to know how to relate with other cultures it is crucial to know where we start. We need to be aware of our own cultural positioning (where we are in relation to other cultural groups): this includes our non-verbal communication styles, our values, how our history influences us, how we react to conflicts, what we consider right or wrong and what we consider important or not.

KNOWING OURSELVES

Knowing ourselves also means understanding our prejudices and preconceptions, being able to detect them and avoid being biased towards the other, who is culturally different.

Thinking about ourselves as people within a 'racialised' social system, allows us to explore the messages that we have received over our life time about people within our own, and other ethnic groups.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

This online programme will help you to consider some of the issues raised in the previous slides.

It is set out over 6 units. Each unit takes around 25 minutes. The goal of each unit is to build knowledge and greater awareness of our own values, attitudes and feelings about race and ethnicity.

Each learning unit includes videos, podcasts and exercises to help you learn more about each topic. The final unit 'the Intercultural educator' explores the ways we can practice intercultural education in the classroom.



You will need a paper and pen to write down your responses and thoughts - this will enable a deeper reflection on the topics.

HOW TO DO THIS COURSE

While it is intended that you can do these units on your own, we also encourage ‘learning groups’ to come together and learn.

This could be a group of parents or teachers. This will enable greater discussion on the questions and the chance to learn from each other’s experiences.

Learning together with people from diverse cultural groups will enhance the learning experience for all.

See the ‘Glossary of Terms’ in your Yellow Flag Folder to help you understand the terms that are used throughout the course.

UNDERTAKING THE COURSE AS A GROUP

The following guidelines can help groups to work well together:

- Agree on a time and place for the group to meet
- Agree on ground rules for the group - create a safe and confidential space to talk
- At each session select a group leader - their job is to keep the group 'on topic' and to ensure that discussions are not re-enforcing negative stereotypes. If discussions stray say 'I think we are going off course' and get back to the topic. Encourage group members to challenge each other, 'does anyone disagree with this view?'
- Ensure everyone has a pen and paper to hand
- Make sure there is plenty of quiet time during each session to think and reflect
- Enjoy this time to reflect and learn!

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UNIT 1

What is Race?

'Race' is a muddled and even dangerous concept. The idea of race came about in the later part of the eighteenth century, it is a modern idea.

RACE

Race is based on the idea that certain groups share biologically transmitted traits. People classify each other into races based on certain physical characteristics - hair type, eye shape, skin tone, body shape etc.

We know now that these differences are superficial. Genetic studies have shown us that there is no evidence of different biological markers between people of different racial groups.

Individuals of all 'races' are members of a single biological species (Macionis and Plummer 2012).

Therefore, race is a social construction, or an illusion - it is an idea that gives power to one group over another.

Race is never about 'how you look', it is about how one assigns meaning to how you look. With this in mind, race has been used as a tool to further the power and economic goals of dominant groups.

These video clips focus on America's racial history, however similar beliefs about race were and are prevalent in Europe and Ireland.

Watch the following 6-minute video clips from the PBS Series 'The Power of an illusion':

Race - The Power of an Illusion Clip 1



Race – The Power of an Illusion Clip 2



THE IRISH TIMES

Monday, November 20, 2017

South African teenager tells Taoiseach of Drogheda racism

Unicef's global #KidsTakeOver candidate shadows Varadkar for World Children's Day

A 16-year-old South African girl who is spending World Children's Day with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said she has been subject to on-going racist abuse since moving to Drogheda, Co Louth, three years ago.

Joella Dhlamini, originally from Soweto, in Johannesburg, said she has frequently been called a "monkey" and a "gorilla" and has also been subject to the N-word on her way home from school, abuse she had never experienced before moving to Ireland. "Since I came to Ireland I've dealt with loads of racism and the first time, as a 13-year-old I couldn't understand it, because I didn't experience this back home."

She said her mother had advised her to ignore the abusers. "When I told my mam, she said just keep walking because empty tins make a lot of noise and you don't want to get involved in that type of situation."



THE IRISH TIMES

However, she said she has become increasingly *concerned that racist abuse was becoming the “norm” in Ireland and that younger children would accept the abuse they were subject to. “I feel like my little eight-year-old cousins will experience this and they don’t deserve this and they won’t understand what’s going, and as the older relative I will have to explain this to them,” she said. “But I think it’s something we have accepted and I feel it’s something no one should accept. At this point I don’t accept it and I’m going to fight it as much as I can.”*

Joella was participating in Unicef’s global #KidsTakeOver initiative as part of World Children’s Day and spent the day attending engagements with Mr Varadkar. “It has given me an eye opener to politics, which has been amazing and really fulfilling. I’m thinking of going into politics, but I’m not too sure yet,” she said.

Mr Varadkar said he was taking part in the initiative to highlight the plight of children in some of the world’s poorest nations. “I am also looking forward to hearing about Joella’s experience in Ireland since she moved here from South Africa. I’ll do my best to give her an insight into what an average day is like for the Taoiseach and I also want to hear directly from Joella about the issues which are of most concern to her and her peers.”

Joella is one of a number of children from around the world who are “taking over” key roles in media, politics, business, sport and entertainment to highlight the most pressing challenges faced by their generation. She was chosen by Unicef to represent the views of the children of Ireland.

UNIT 1



1

From what you have learned, do ideas about race still exist in Ireland? How can these ideas come across in every-day life?

We all live in a racialized society.

We learn from our parents, teachers, friends, tv, newspapers, about the value of our own 'race' and the value of others.

UNIT 1



2

What traits are associated with the Irish 'race'?

UNIT 1



3

Think about all the Irish people you know, do these traits apply?

ETHNICITY

Talking about people's ethnicity is more helpful than referring to 'races'.
Ethnicity refers to the cultural heritage and identity of a group of people.
Irish people are an ethnic group. Travellers are also an Irish ethnic minority group.

UNIT 1



4

To which ethnic group, if any do you regard yourself as belonging?

5

What expectations do people in society have of your ethnic group?

6

Have these expectations impacted on how you see yourself?

UNIT 2

Racism & Oppression

Racism refers to the supposed racial superiority of one group over another. It is a defining experience for many people in Ireland and the world.

RACISM & OPPRESSION

Oppression is a system of social inequality, that includes bias, prejudice and discrimination - that is woven through our social institutions and embedded within individual minds. What cultural beliefs about ourselves and others have we grown up with?



UNIT 2



1

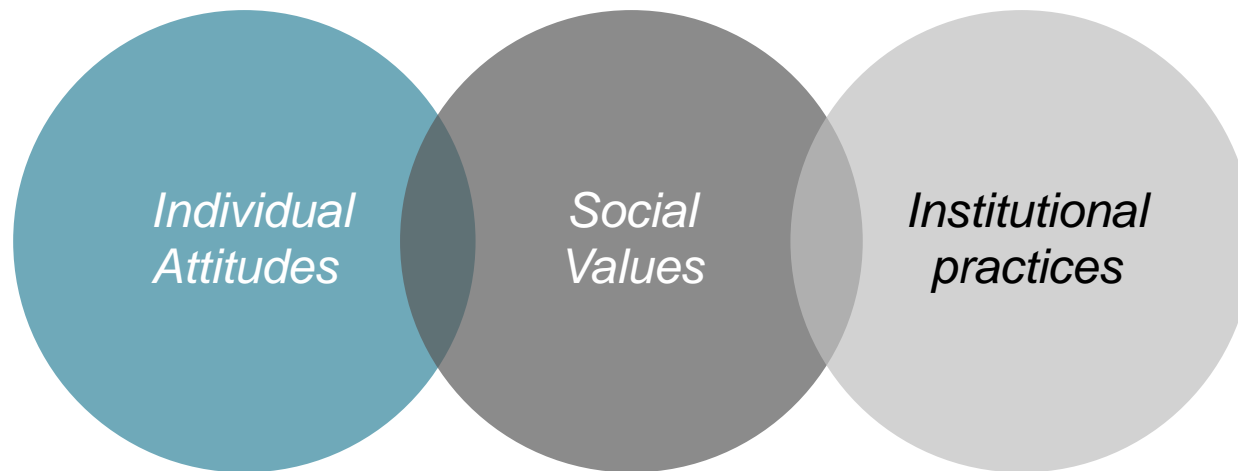
Quickly and honestly, write down your first impressions of these groups...

Jews Africans Irish Muslims Travellers Americans Roma British

(Do not share your responses to the exercise above, as it can re-enforce negative stereotypes)

How can we understand Racism?

Racism is the result of a complex interplay of



It may be expressed in the actions of individuals and institutions and takes a range of forms

Individual Attitudes

these are ideas that people hold about the superiority of one group over another, these can be at a conscious or unconscious level.

Social Values

this refers to the belief that one groups social values are superior to another groups social values

Institutional Practices

This refers to the way things are done in organisations (e.g. schools) or institutions (e.g. families) that can favour or negatively discriminate against certain types of people (e.g. gender or ethnicity).

THE WHITE CULTURAL NORM

Within western societies, in Europe, America and Ireland, racism functions not only through overt prejudice and discrimination (direct racism), but also through the unacknowledged but pervasive 'white cultural norm' (indirect racism) - these norms or ways of behaving and thinking in our society, advantage in particular, those we see as 'white' and adhere to a 'settled' lifestyle.

We can also extend our definition of racism to include those who are targeted because of their cultural and/or religious background.

(Adams, Bell & Griffin 2007)

Recognising Racism

Therefore, racism is happening, not only when a person yells a racist remark to another person across a street, but also when a person from a minority ethnic group does not have an equal chance of accessing a job or work experience, not being able to access important social networks or finding it difficult to get fair and equal treatment from the education system, the police or the county council.

Seeing racism and its constituent parts: prejudice, discrimination, bias and bigotry as a form of oppression allows us to acknowledge the pervasive nature of social inequality, how it is woven throughout our social institutions as well as being embedded within individual consciousness.

HOW IS RACISM EXPRESSED?

Racism is expressed in many ways. An individual can target another person or group because of their skin colour, cultural background or beliefs.

In addition, an organisation can be racist in its practices. This is sometimes called 'institutional racism'. This happens when the practices of an organisation serve to advantage only one or some ethnic or cultural groups. Other ethnic or cultural groups do not gain equal benefit, or are disadvantaged.

Recognising Racism Quiz

Situations that can be a form of Racism

Can you recognise Racism? - do the questionnaire below - say **Yes** if you agree with the statement or **No** if you do not see it as a form of racism.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Making fun of someone's cultural background or physical appearance | ✓ | ✗ |
| 2. Insisting that people of certain ethnic backgrounds "come from" or should "go back to" another country | ✓ | ✗ |
| 3. Pushing someone out of a group due to their ethnicity | ✓ | ✗ |
| 4. Using derogatory terms for people of a certain ethnic backgrounds | ✓ | ✗ |
| 5. Perpetuating stereotypes that individuals of a certain race "should" be smarter than, or less smart than others | ✓ | ✗ |
| 6. Not hiring, promoting or choosing someone because of their ethnic background | ✓ | ✗ |

Recognising Racism Quiz

Situations that can be a form of Racism

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| 7. Punishing someone for not speaking English | ✓ | ✗ |
| 8. Making someone redundant or dismissing them because of his or her ethnic background | ✓ | ✗ |
| 9. Imitating someone's accent or teasing someone about his or her name | ✓ | ✗ |
| 10. Punishing people differently for breaking rules based on their ethnicity | ✓ | ✗ |
| 11. Expecting someone to do more work or less work based on his or her ethnicity | ✓ | ✗ |
| 12. Making someone the butt of jokes or teasing because of his or her ethnicity | ✓ | ✗ |
| 13. Failing to see, acknowledge or listen to people of a certain ethnic group | ✓ | ✗ |

Recognising Racism Quiz

All of the items listed can be forms of racism. If you answered **NO** to any of them you are failing to recognize racism in all its forms.

Each of the examples show a type of racism that can be insidious and flourish when it is not challenged. Some of the examples are more personal whereas others highlight institutional racism.

(Source: Aboutequalopportunities.co.uk)

How to challenge Racism

The first step to challenging racism is to recognise when it occurs. If it is safe, challenge the individual or the organization on their behaviour. If you feel it is not safe to address the situation directly then make notes of what occurred, who was involved and who witnessed it, and bring it to someone in authority.

Sometimes people in authority also fail to recognize racism. Seeking allies from oppressed and advantaged groups, or taking your issue to a higher authority, like the [The Workplace Relations Commission](#) and [ireport.ie](#), can help you to be taken seriously and have your issues addressed.

UNIT 3

Bias

LISTEN

Listen to the first 10 minutes of this podcast about Unconscious Bias (*The Why factor, BBC World Service*) We act according to a range of values and beliefs that we are not even aware of:

Click Image to Play



Read the following case study and consider the questions that follow

In a classroom in Ireland a teacher was greeting his new first year students. He was calling out their names from the roll and asking the children where they lived. He came to a Polish name on the list. The teacher asked the girl where she was from. She named the local town nearby where she has always lived. The teacher replied by asking her 'where are you really from?', she repeated the name of the town. The teacher replied 'yeah, but where are you really from?'. The girl responded that her parents were from Poland.

UNIT 3



1

What hidden bias (on the part of the teacher) does this incident reveal?

2

How could the teacher have used this opportunity for the children to learn about each other's different cultural backgrounds and 'Irishness' in a positive way?

UNIT 3



3

What are my unconscious biases?

4

How might they come across in the classroom?

5

What steps can I take to overcome these biases?

UNIT 4

Privilege & Disadvantage

Messages we receive...

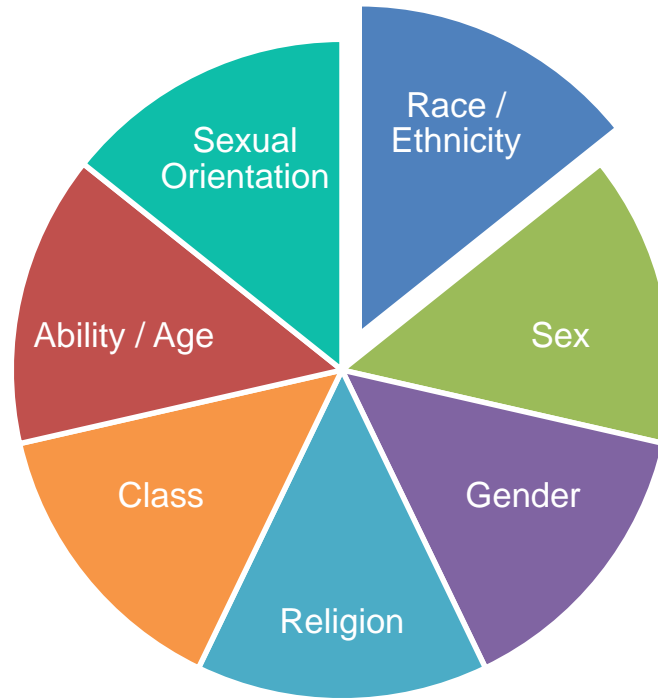
What messages do we receive about the relative worth of light or dark skin?

What messages do we receive about the relative worth of being a Traveller or Roma person, as opposed to being a person from the dominant cultural group?

How have you experienced privilege and disadvantage in your own life? While some aspects of our identity have enabled us to access certain privileges, other aspects of our identity seem to work against us.

Identity

Does the question that follows help you to think deeply about the following **aspects of identity**? Which aspects have advantaged or disadvantaged you?



UNIT 4



	HOW THIS HAS ADVANTAGED ME ...	HOW THIS DISADVANTAGED ME ...
RACE / ETHNIC GROUP		
SEX		
GENDER		
RELIGION		
CLASS		
ABILITY		
SEXUAL ORIENTATION		
AGE		
OTHER		

1

Draw out and fill in the table. Circle the aspect/s of your identity that you are **most aware of**. Why are you most aware of this aspect?

UNIT 4



2

Did this exercise tell you anything about how power is distributed in society?

3

According to your experience, what groups or ideas have more power, what groups or ideas have less power?

Watch this [TED talk](#) by Beverly Daniel Tatum. She talks about how she has helped her son to become aware of difference and see his heritage and colour from a position of strength (13 minutes).

Speaking from an American perspective, she highlights how young children, from minority groups, become aware of race early in their lives. She shows how ideas about race are internalised by white and black groups in America.



Consider the questions that follow...

UNIT 4



4

What important messages will you take with you from this video?

5

How do these ideas have relevance in an Irish context?

UNIT 5

Traveller Identity & Culture

UNIT 5



Awareness Exercise

1

What messages do we receive about the relative worth of being a Traveller or Roma person, as opposed to being a person from the dominant cultural group?

2

Where have these messages come from?

3

Does this affect how we relate to children from this group, or how we describe this group to other people?

Travellers & Discrimination

The Yellow Flag programme is about an approach to diversity, that is inclusive of all people. However, we have included a specific unit on Traveller Culture, as negative feelings towards Travellers are deeply embedded in Irish society, and are often left unchallenged. As a cultural and ethnic group within our society and our schools, their culture and identity must be one of those celebrated by our schools.

Travellers in Ireland deal with discrimination and racism on a daily basis. They experience racism from individuals and organisations. Young people experience individual racism in the form of being denied services (e.g. hairdressing services, entry to restaurants or bars), not being invited to other children's homes, being left out or bullied in school. Children also see their parents experience racism.

The Experience of Racism

Traveller children also experience institutional or structural racism. This is an experience where the institutions and laws seem to work against you. The difficulty Travellers experience in getting access to appropriate accommodation and the long absence of Traveller culture and history from the school curriculum is an example of this.

Government policies in the past tried to 'assimilate' Travellers, with the goal of making them more like settled people. This approach denied people their own sense of identity and culture and tried to make them ashamed of it.

Travellers, despite great challenges, resisted this, and worked collectively over many years to have Traveller ethnicity accepted. The recognition of Traveller ethnicity in March 2016, means that Travellers distinct identity and culture is recognised by the state. It also means that Travellers are entitled to equal and fair treatment, like the other ethnic groups living in Ireland. Travellers right to equal treatment is also outlined in the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004.

Watch the video *I'm Traveller and I'm proud* also
available on the [ITM Website](#)

A short video presented by Travellers for
Traveller Pride Week 2012

UNIT 5



4

How can I help Traveller children build pride in my classroom?

The Myth of Meritocracy

Within the dominant cultural group, there is a widely held belief in meritocracy - this is the idea that if you work hard you can achieve your goals, regardless of where you come from.

This belief does not take into account the structural barriers that are in place for children from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Traveller children.

These barriers include discrimination, a de-valued sense of identity/self, learned through children's interactions with the wider society; poor accommodation, difficulty accessing jobs, lack of money at home and parents limited history in the education system.

The Myth of Meritocracy

We can break this cycle by enabling Traveller and other ethnic minority children to have pride in their identity. Understanding that performance in class, is not just an outcome of 'hard work' but of other supporting factors, can help schools to create environments where academic success is achieved.

Focussing on the culture and experiences that each student brings can help expand everyone's notion of what it is to be 'normal'. It allows each person to see 'success' from a wide range of perspectives.

Maintaining the highest expectations of culturally diverse students for academic success is imperative to this approach.

UNIT 5



5

What measures can we take to help equalise outcomes for our students?

How does Racism affect young Travellers?

Racism has a very real effect on Travellers health and their self-esteem. Those affected have a greater risk of depression, anxiety, stress, psychological distress and long-term illness.

(Krieger, 2000; Karlsen and Nazroo, 2002; Williams et al., 2003)

The effect of Racism on learning

A recent American study of black and Latino students shows that students who are exposed to race-based stressors - such as responding to negative stereotypes, leads to a higher level of stress hormones in the body.

This, in addition to the coping mechanisms employed by students to lessen the effects of discrimination on them results in poorer concentration, motivation, and, impaired learning due to unintended and overt racism.

Promoting positive ethnic identity and reducing student exposure to racial discrimination and improving inter-ethnic relations, were identified in the study as a potential solution (Levy et al, 2016).

Internalised Racism

Internalised racism occurs when members of a minority group start to believe the racist image that is projected of them. This can also be experienced by Travellers.

In this way people can believe themselves to be 'lesser than' and that they deserve the treatment they get. This has a negative impact on their physical and mental health.

Watch this video to hear young Travellers talk about the discrimination they experience: 2 mins



Challenging commonly held negative views about Travellers

As in the video presented in the last unit (Beverly Daniel Tatum), Travellers too need to see their culture from a position of strength.

Schools can demonstrate how members of the Traveller community, young and old, continue to achieve success, despite the obstacles they face. How community members support each other through hard times, and celebrate together. How they have a distinct history and heritage within Irish culture

(Books and videos that demonstrate Traveller success are available in the list of texts under [Step 7](#) on the [Yellowflag website](#)).

Challenging negative stereotypes and racist language will help Traveller children to feel safe and valued.

Many words are used in Ireland to describe Travellers - these are offensive to Travellers and should not be tolerated in school.

Challenging negative stereotypes, when they are raised in class, will show Traveller children that they are supported and teach everyone that these views are not acceptable.

UNIT 5



Read the leaflet: Irish Travellers [Challenging the Myths](#),
did you learn anything new?

6

Think of ways you can help demonstrate Traveller Culture from a position of strength.

7

How can you challenge commonly held negative views or mis-information about Traveller and Roma people in your classroom or social circle?

Go further...

Visit our text list under [Step 7](#) on the [Yellowflag website](#) to find out more about Travellers and Traveller culture.

Also find out more about Traveller and Roma culture and actions for change on www.itmtrav.ie or www.paveepoint.ie.

Contact [your local Traveller organisation](#) to see if they can deliver training in your school about Traveller culture and heritage.

UNIT 6

Being an Intercultural Educator

Well done!

You have come to the final unit. If you have completed all the self-awareness exercises along the way, you should have a much greater knowledge of your feelings, attitudes, knowledge and biases about people.

Having an inter-cultural mindset

Milner (2015) outlines that certain **mind-sets** stifle opportunities for students from diverse cultural groups.

These mindsets are ones that deny the importance of culture in education, fail to recognise diversity (diversity blindness) and avoid or reject students' 'racialised' experiences (seeing race discussions as taboo).

Recognising and acknowledging that students from different cultural backgrounds bring different experiences and values to the classroom, and that these values can differ from our own is crucial.

Building positive relationships with students is a way to finding out more about their culture and beliefs. Giving students a sense of worth regarding their ethnic background, and considering the relationship between ethnicity, power and actions - can help teachers connect with their students.

UNIT 6



1

What matters are most important to my students from diverse cultural backgrounds?

2

What matters are most important to me?

Intercultural educators use cultural conflicts as an opportunity for everyone to learn

Intercultural conflict occurs when a person is racially attacked, either verbally or physically. However, as many people know, much intercultural conflict is more subtle.

Often the people who are offended, are not in a position to defend themselves. If they do defend themselves they can be accused of disrupting the class, or causing trouble.

The following slides offer five examples of intercultural conflict in the class. Think about what you would do and then read our suggested interventions.

UNIT 6 : CASE 1

The students were talking about feminism in class. One girl talked about how one minority religious group is oppressive to women. There was a girl in the class from the religious group in question. While she didn't respond, the teacher could see that her head was lowered and her face was red. The other students in the class were looking at her.



3

How would you react to this situation?

Case 1 : Possible Intervention

The teacher, who is from the dominant cultural group, makes an intercultural response. She explains that many women from many cultural groups can be subject to different forms of oppression. The teacher explains that we cannot know how women from this group feel without speaking to them and hearing their voices. From what she knows, the teacher says that many women from this religious group do not feel oppressed by it, in fact some have said that it is liberating as they are free from the pressures of western society for women to look a certain way (beautiful and sexy). She says that the class will return to the topic at a future lesson when they have time to collect more information.

Further learning about this religious group takes place in future lessons, through the use of videos and a woman from this religious group visiting the class. Overall the teacher's goal is to seek appreciation and greater understanding by the students. The teacher works with students in small groups to share their learning about the topic.

UNIT 6 : CASE 2

The students in class were reading the novel 'Of Mice and Men'. On reading the 'n' word, the students giggled and looked over at the black girl in the class. When she went home that night the girl was very upset and told her father how she was embarrassed and ashamed by the experience.



4

How would you react to this situation?

Case 2 : Possible Intervention

This situation could have been avoided. Before starting the novel the teacher could have spent time looking at some of the language used in the novel and talking about the context of the time.

The teacher might also draw on other language that was used in the past and is no longer used or deemed appropriate in modern speech.

A discussion about what we can learn about the power of language from these kinds of phrases and words - and how it has application in today's world, would also be useful.

Reminding students that the 'n' word today (as it was in the past) is inappropriate and offensive to white and black people alike.

UNIT 6 : CASE 3

Mr Greggs gave out to two students in his science class for not having their work done up to scratch. The students, who came from minority ethnic groups responded by telling Mr Greggs that he was a racist. He dismissed it, saying that they were playing the 'race card' and trying to get out of hard work. He sent them to detention.



5

How would you react to this situation?

Case 3 : Possible Intervention

Mr Gregg (a teacher from a white Irish background) meets the students in detention and explains that he was hurt by their remarks. He asks why they are calling him a racist.

They tell him that he always ignores them in class. They tell him that he only asks questions to the white Irish kids and he never looks over at them in class. They tell him the only time he talks to them is to give out.

Mr Greggs is shocked and hurt, he says that he doesn't think it is true and that he is disappointed they are not doing the work...

...Later, Mr Greggs reflects on what the students have told him. He watches himself in class and notes that his attention does tend to go towards the white Irish students. He often talks to these students about football, local personalities and other aspects of social life.

After difficult reflection Mr Greggs starts to make some changes. He tries to find out more about his students from diverse cultural groups and their interests. Like the other students, he finds moments to chat with them informally too.

He works to ensure his questioning strategy is fair and inclusive, and is conscious of sharing his 'gaze' with all students in the class. Slowly he begins to build relationships and trust with all of his students.

UNIT 6 : CASE 4

The teacher passed around a poem which was written by a Traveller student. The poem had been re-printed in a national newspaper. One boy made a comment saying he must have had help with it. The other children laughed. As there were no other Traveller students in the class at that time (that she knew of), the teacher decided to say nothing.



6

How would you react to this situation?

Case 4 : Possible Intervention

The teacher becomes an ally. She defends the boy who wrote the poem, saying why couldn't he have written it on his own? She says that she is offended by the sniggering, as it reveals a prejudice within her class group.

She outlines that many Travellers were great poets and story tellers in the oral tradition. Today, Travellers attend school and many excel in a wide range of subjects, including English.

She outlines the school policy in relation to racism and the class discuss how it has application for the recent situation. A follow up lesson may focus on the oral tradition of Travellers or other writing of Traveller authors.

UNIT 6 : CASE 5

Geraldine, a Traveller woman was in the Principal's office. She was registering her son to attend school.

When filling out the form she came to a question about her son's ethnic identity. At that moment Geraldine was hit with a number of thoughts - If she said he was a Traveller would he be treated differently by the teachers? If the other kids knew, they might not treat him as an equal, laugh at him, tease him, or call him bad names.

Geraldine shuddered, she did not have a happy time in school herself and wanted her sons experience to be different. At the same time, she wondered if she was being fair to her son, was she deliberately placing him in harms way? She decided not to write on the form that he was a Traveller. The Principal, who was looking on, had expected Geraldine to tick the box, and was surprised. Neither woman said anything.



7

How would you react to this situation?

Case 5 : Possible Intervention

The Principal, when meeting Geraldine could have been more forthcoming about the supports and protections the school has in place for ethnic minorities. She could have talked about the schools involvement in the Yellow Flag Programme and shown Geraldine the Yellow Flag notice board.

The Principal could have talked specifically about the schools background in working with Traveller families, or if it is a new experience, what they hope for their Traveller students.

In this way, Geraldine's decision-making process could have changed. She may have seen that things had changed since she was at school and that the Principal had the best interests of her son at heart. It may have allowed her to identify her son as a Traveller and to see that the fear and shame she feels about her identity (when out in 'settled society') had been challenged. It may have lessened her fears about enrolling her son in the school.

Being an Intercultural Leader

These scenarios demonstrate that a teacher can be an intercultural educator in any lesson, regardless of the subject.

They also demonstrate the importance of establishing a '**safe space**' within a classroom, where young people can feel comfortable within their own skin.

This can only be achieved by **building positive relationships** with the young people. According to Milner, building relationships is about 'meeting students where they are' and 'being willing to find the good and worth in all students' (p. 184).

Ways to build relationships...

Milner suggests practical ways that teachers can build relationship with their students (p186-188):

- Talk with your students to get to know them
- Develop assignments that help you to know your students better
- Encourage students to talk and share ideas in class and to debate issues
- Visit a community site where your students live (like a shop or community centre)
- Engage in whole school practices to build relationships (like the Yellow Flag Programme!)

Tackling Controversial Issues

[Tackling Controversial Issues in the Citizenship Classroom](#) outlines some good strategies for talking about issues, upon which there is disagreement.

This resource also puts forward the idea that '*The creation of a supportive and sensitive classroom ethos is a crucial pre-requisite to constructive dialogue*' (p.22).

They suggest that teachers do this by agreeing core values within the classroom. This could be done by breaking students into small groups to discuss and explore the following questions:

- How would you like to be treated by other students when you are working together in class?
- How should we treat each other when we disagree about serious issues?
- What are your rights and responsibilities as a member of the class?

By taking feedback from each group, the teacher can draw up a list 'our core values', and seek agreement from the class to abide by them.

Aim to raise awareness... you don't have to change attitudes

This strategy, along with the formation of strong relationships with students, can help to create a safe environment for young people to express their views and disagree.

From a teacher's perspective, the resource says *"it is easier to feel confident in tackling controversial issues, if you don't feel under pressure to change attitudes, and if you recognise that it is an acceptable goal simply to raise awareness of issues and to promote critical thinking among students about them."* p21.

UNIT 6



8

Go to the resource: [Tackling Controversial Issues in the Classroom](#), and read the chapter ‘creating a conducive classroom climate, pp 22-28, complete the task p. 27.

9

Which position best supports an intercultural ethos (that respects and values different cultural perspectives)?

Case 6 : Final Reflection

10

What would I like to know more about, so I am empowered to be a competent intercultural educator?

Evaluation

Let us know what you think of this on-screen programme,
click [here](#) to fill out a quick evaluation form

Click on any of the text below to find out more about the topic

- [Intercultural Education In The Post Primary School](#)
- [Intercultural Education In The Primary School](#)
- [Toolkit For Diversity In The Post Primary School](#)
- [Toolkit For Diversity In The Primary School](#)
- [A Whole School Approach To Human Rights](#)
- [Creating An Intercultural Environment Factsheet \(NCCA\)](#)
- [Factsheets For Teachers About Racism](#)
- [Equality In Second Level Schools, A Training Manual For Educators And Trainers](#)
- [Tackling Controversial Issues In The Citizenship Classroom](#)

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Programme for completing this course**

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