

Educational Practice: a commentary

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- **The whole child/learner** (religion, gender, ethnicity, social class...inter-sectionality)
- **The cultural, institutional and societal context**
- Improving the **knowledge base** of teachers
- **A hands on social justice** approach



The whole child/learner

- Beyond the immediate 'label' and certainly not homogenous (all the same)
- **Inter-sectionality** of characteristics matters
- To get it right for every child means **looking beyond the 'individual'**



Improving the knowledge base of teachers (1)

- **Lack of confidence** and information inhibits

- Abandoning '**nonsense**' multiculturalism and narrow views



Runnymede Trust (1997)

1. Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change. (*diverse, changing, deliberative*)
2. Islam is seen as separate and 'other'. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them. (*common humanity*)
3. Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist. (*contributions to world civilisations*)
4. Islam is seen as violent, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a 'clash of civilizations'. (*ignorance, media distortions, political scaremongering*)



5. Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used for political or military advantage. (*diverse beliefs and observance*)
6. Criticisms made of the West by Islam are rejected out of hand. (*legacy of colonialism, needs of neo colonialism*)
7. Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society. (*irrational, misinformation, challenge Islamophobia*)
8. Anti Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal (*creating a counter-narrative*)



Improving the knowledge base of teachers (2)

- **Harmony is no indicator of justice**



Cultural, Institutional and Societal Context (1)

- **Focus on the individual is insufficient** – the wider context shapes and influences – what are the dominant hegemonies in the school community?
- What **opportunity structures are being incubated** in education establishments for diverse learners?
- The role of educational establishments in **'linking' capital** that helps learners to move on and up



Cultural, Institutional and Societal Context (2)

- An educational establishment that is **'fit for purpose'** for diverse learners
- *'Combining academic excellence and cultural ethos'*
- **Council of Europe Guidelines** on *'Countering Intolerance against Muslims through Education'* (issued November 2012)

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/84495>



A 'hands on' social justice approach (1)

- Having a **curriculum** that is **linked to contemporary issues**
- Increase use of **themed learning** and media literacy
- **Learning** takes place **beyond the four walls**
- **Partnership** with others e.g. parents, communities, NGOs, business



A 'hands on' social justice approach (2)

- CforE 4 capacities:

confident individuals

responsible citizens

effective contributors

successful learners



By the end....young people should

- **be more active citizens**
- **have explored the idea that everyone is equal and of equal value**
- **be able to challenge and test those beliefs which they think to be self-evident**
- **be able to recognise prejudice and discrimination**
- **have confidence to challenge ‘everyday’ Islamophobia and other inequalities**
- **want to do as they would be done by**
- **feel a greater sense of solidarity and community cohesion**
- **have established a common identity amongst themselves**
- **be able to evaluate fact from opinion**

(adapted from Paul Vernell's chapter 'Challenging Islamophobia: a whole-school approach' in Arshad, R, Wrigley, T and Pratt, L (eds) in *Social Justice Re-examined: dilemmas and solutions for the classroom teacher* (2012), Trentham Publications)

