Dealing with difference through picturebooks: Using: "The Hueys in the New Jumper" by Oliver Jeffers

BRIEF OVERVIEW / DESCRIPTION

This learning material helps children reflect more deeply on the reasons behind discrimination. After the activity learners may be aware of stereotypes and ways of overcoming them. Learners listen to a read-aloud and explore the meanings through the pictures, words, and intonation. Learners think about aspects that would make them discriminate. Learners think about why difference makes them uncomfortable. On the other hand, learners think about how people may feel when they face discrimination. Learners use art forms to express their perspectives on difference.

AGE RANGE:

6 – 12

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

•   Arguing that people should always be respected
•   Relating and empathizing with others
•   Arguing that human rights should be protected and respected
•   Promoting the view that we should be tolerant
•   Expressing the view that diversity should be valued and respected
•   Showing interest in learning about people's values and world views
•   Engaging well with other people who have a variety of different points of view
•   Accomplishing learning tasks independently
•   Using evidence to support his/her opinions
•   Expressing compassion for people who are being treated unfairly
•   Reflecting critically on his/her prejudices and stereotypes and what lies behind them
•   Reflecting critically on how his/her own world view is just one of many world views

INSTRUCTIONS

Learners listen to a read-aloud to convey meaning and discussion. The teacher may explore the title and the cover so that learners can anticipate the topic.

The teacher is the mediator between the book and the learners. The teacher mediates meanings and emotions through the pictures, words and tone of voice. Learners identify the element of difference in the story that originates discrimination, retrieving information from the reading aloud strategies, certain drawing elements and specific words and expressions. Learners imagine a world in which everybody looks the same and thinks alike. Learners think about the way the Hueys react so fiercely towards Rupert when he first wears his new jumper. Learners think about Oliver Jeffers' message.

In groups, learners brainstorm about what kinds of differences may lead to discrimination at school. Learners talk about social inequality and discrimination, social bias and racial stereotypes. Learners find differences between two or more things (plants, animals) and similarities in people despite differences in skin colour, religion, age and disabilities.

Learners talk about the importance of respecting human rights, especially number 2 - discrimination - 'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs.'

In pairs, learners think of situations where difference is valuable and necessary (e.g. skills in a sports team, fruit in a fruit salad, activities in a playground, clothes to wear etc.). Pairs then write a poem or catchphrase for difference with an illustration. Each learner creates a different Huey using digital drawing tools or coloured markers and pencils on paper. The group design a display that exhibits their work on differences. If digital equipment is available apps such as Padlet or ArtSteps can be used to produce graphical work.

KEY POINTS/ QUESTIONS FOR DEBRIEF/DISCUSSION/ASSESSMENT

The picturebook triggers a discussion about conflicts.

Discussion questions:

- Why do people react fiercely and critically to difference?
- Does it feel risky to be at school with an unusual appearance?
- The story uses difference of choice, clothing and appearance as an example; how much does fashion for certain clothes, hairstyles influence what people like and dislike?
- What message is Oliver Jeffers trying to give to his readers?
- In the end of the story all the Hueys look the same again – what does this say about making rude comments about a new idea?

EQUIPMENT / MATERIALS / SPACE NEEDED

Picturebook, coloured markers, paper, computers and internet

TIME REQUIRED

Variable

PREPARATION

If this activity is conveyed in a foreign language, scaffolding is needed. Teachers should provide vocabulary before-hand.

VARIATIONS / OPTIONS / EXTENSIONS

- Video clips, cartoon strips or literary texts can replace the picturebook. There are many examples exploring the same issue of conformity, exclusion and difference.
- Learners may interview teachers, staff and learners to get their feedback on accepting difference, standing out from the norm and other forms of discrimination at school. After collecting data, learners present the results of the interviews and recommend a campaign against discrimination or about valuing individuality.

MATERIALS/WORKSHEETS/LINKS/HANDOUTS

The picturebook is "The Hueys in the New Jumper" by Oliver Jeffers.

PICTUREBOOK CONTENT SUMMARY

The Hueys are all the same and none of them wore a jumper. Rupert decided to knit a colourful jumper for himself. He was ridiculed and criticised for standing out from the crowd. Gillespie thinks being different is interesting and knits an identical jumper for himself so that he would be different too! All the Hueys decided to get their own jumpers to be different. After all, they become the same again until one day one decides to wear a hat. That changed everything…

Moral- People often criticise individuality and difference before thinking carefully why they disapprove of it.

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