

Beginning conversations about difference, race, ethnicity and racism through ethical education

Anne Marie Kavanagh and Niamh McGuirk

Introduction

One of the principal concerns of ethics is how we should treat other human beings (Walker & Lovat, 2017). Relationships, characterised by our mutuality, interconnectivity and interdependence, are of central importance in ethical education (Ćurko et al., 2015). Racism is a pressing social justice issue with a clear moral dimension; it concerns the harmful and pernicious treatment of other human beings based on “race”. While people have many observable physical characteristics, such as skin colour, hair colour and texture, differently shaped eyes, mouths and noses, scientific evidence based on our genetic make-up proves that there is no such thing as people belonging to different “races” (Garner, 2017; Law, 2010). Race is therefore a social rather than a biological construct. In Ireland, the overwhelming majority of primary teachers are white, female, settled, Catholic and middle class (Bryan, 2010; Keane & Heinz, 2016) and they are teaching in classrooms that are becoming more ethnically diverse (Drudy, 2009). As settled white Irish teacher educators, we acknowledge that our racialised privilege has positioned us to speak on how to engage children in difficult conversations about ethical and controversial issues. However, when those conversations centre on racism and anti-racism, we acknowledge that we can never truly understand the pervasive and pernicious impact of racism on people’s wellbeing, educational outcomes, employment opportunities and quality of life. We recognise that we have blind spots, and we strive to address them through self-reflexivity. In Ireland, racism is a reality for children both inside and outside of schools (Devine, 2011; Kitching, 2014; Mc Ginley, 2020; McGuirk, forthcoming). In particular, Travellers have repeatedly been victims of individual and institutional racism (Joyce, 2018; Mc Ginley, 2020) and research has shown that Travellers and Roma are amongst the most marginalised and disadvantaged communities in Ireland (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017).

This chapter engages with ethical education (EE) and its relationship with social justice education (SJE). This is followed by a critical exploration of racism and its various manifestations. Drawing on pedagogies from EE, this chapter outlines how educators can help children to develop positive attitudes towards difference and to become more ethical, rigorous and critical in their thinking, decision-making and actions. It concludes with exemplars that employ EE pedagogies to explore issues of difference, racial-ethnic stereotyping, individual and institutional racism.

What is ethical education?

EE is diversely known as ethics education, ethics and values education, moral education, values education, education for values, and character education (Centa et al., 2018; Ćurko et al., 2015). While there are similarities between approaches, they are not interchangeable as they vary in terms of their content, pedagogies, aims and foci. While there may be only semantic differences between EE and ethics education, other approaches differ pedagogically and some have a much narrower focus than EE. For example, character education tends to focus exclusively on the inculcation of virtues or character traits deemed desirable in a person of “good” character. Moral education is synonymous with EE in some conceptualisations but closely associated with religious education in others. The waters are further muddied by inconsistencies within conceptualisations of EE itself. For example, some understandings place a greater emphasis on citizenship, while others focus more on rational moral education.

In this chapter, we conceptualise EE as providing a pedagogical space for thinking about and reflecting critically on moral principles, values and virtues and on moral problems and controversial issues that are of interest and relevance to children and society (Centa et al., 2018; Ćurko et al., 2015). EE enables children to identify the ethical dimension of problems and through dialogue, reflection and critical thinking, to form a moral point of view on which to base ethical decision-making and action. Through this process, over time, EE enables children to develop a set of values (e.g. democratic values) and commitments that take the welfare of others and wider society into account (Fisher, 2008). While EE, therefore, fosters specific values, its pedagogies support the development and sharing of children’s diverse opinions and perspectives. Significantly, EE also provides space for children to consider the “why” of moral action, “why *should* I be, or do what is, good?” (Fisher, 2008, p. 64) or indeed why should we collectively do what is good, right, fair and just?

Ethical perspectives and ethical decision-making

The critical process of determining what one should morally do, i.e. what action is right or good in a given situation, is referred to as moral reasoning (Richardson, 2018). The question of what constitutes a “right” or desirable action is influenced by a range of factors, including social norms, time, context and the moral framework or ethical perspective applied by the individual (Norberg & Johansson, 2007). The selected ethical perspective (e.g. ethics of consequence, duty, care, justice or critique) provides different answers to moral questions as the value focus varies. For example, in an ethic of consequence an action is considered ethical or is ethically valued based on its outcome. In an ethic of duty, obligations and fulfilling a duty to others take precedence. Fairness and just treatment take priority in an ethic of justice, while care, empathy, compassion and individual needs and wellbeing take priority in an ethic of care. An ethic of critique adopts a critical perspective and is concerned with challenging inequities, asking critical questions about who benefits from the status quo and bringing about social change (Mathur & Corley, 2014; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

The various options which different ethical perspectives present facilitate critical thinking but also create moral or ethical dilemmas for children as they grapple with a range of often competing concerns resulting in moral conflict. Through dialogue and deliberation,

however, EE provides opportunities for children to work out ways to resolve moral conflict, to develop an understanding of the causes of moral disagreements and to appreciate that viewpoints that differ from their own are valid. Through its signature pedagogies, EE teaches children how to disagree and argue respectfully and constructively so as to develop their understanding of complex issues such as race, ethnicity and racism.

Connecting SJE with the teaching of EE

SJE is a type of moral or ethical education with a particular perspective on how we should live together. It is an ethical stance in and of itself with different conceptualisations foregrounding different ethical perspectives (e.g. critique, care, justice). While both EE and SJE are concerned with moral issues, SJE generally focuses on beliefs and actions which harm others and bring about injustices (such as racism) in social and political contexts. Čurko et al. (2015) contend that EE fosters attitudes and dispositions which enable children “to overcome prejudice, discrimination, and other unethical practices and attitudes” (p. 6). As a discrete subject, EE has much to contribute to SJE, particularly through its emphasis on the moral components of SJE, its signature pedagogies and its capacity to improve the quality and rigour of children’s thinking about social injustices. EE pedagogies such as Philosophy for Children (P4C) and ethical dilemmas provide fora for children to engage critically with how their decisions affect others and how what they do, or fail to do, has a real impact on the lives of others. Therefore, EE has the capacity to strengthen children’s ethical decision-making skills. Ethical frameworks, through their logical sequential steps, provide important insights into social justice dilemmas as they support the application of critical thinking and reasoning skills and provide opportunities to consider multiple perspectives, thus leading to more thoughtful actions (Mathur & Corley, 2014). Fisher (2008), for example, provides a range of useful frameworks which can be used to strengthen children’s reasoning skills; examples include questions which address moral imagination, empathy, consequences, duty, context, hypothetical reasoning and so on. These types of questions are useful when engaging children in rational and affective thinking about difference, stereotyping and racism.

What do we mean by racism?

The way that modern society has developed economically and politically (primarily as a result of colonialism and slavery) has resulted in people being perceived differently due to their racial and ethnic identities (Lentin, 2020). Society ascribes social and political power to individuals and groups in an unequal way and the results of this are revealed as racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Racism manifests in many different ways and can be made visible through stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination (Berman & Paradies, 2010). Racism can be individual or institutional. As educators, it is not enough to address only one-to-one interactions; our awareness and actions as ethical educators also require a commitment to understanding how educational contexts can have the potential to reinforce or disrupt systemic racism.

Individual (or interpersonal) racism can be direct or indirect (Fleras, 2016). Direct (overt) racism can be recognised as name-calling, physical harm or damage to a person or their property. Indirect (covert) racism is less obvious and can manifest in somebody’s attempts to cover-up prejudices in actions or speech (Fleras, 2016). Racial micro-aggressions are

subtle, everyday forms of racism experienced by people of colour such as lack of recognition, stereotyping, throw-away comments, innuendos and put-downs (Fleras, 2016; Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). They are the “commonplace indignities – from the verbal to the nonverbal, from the visual to the behavioural, from offhand comments to clumsy curiosity – that racialised minorities experience as dismissals or denigrations” (Fleras, 2016, p. 7). Commonplace incidences of micro-aggressions include exoticising somebody’s culture, not learning the correct pronunciation of somebody’s name, and disbelieving the possibility of somebody’s origin or nationality, e.g. “No, where are you ‘really’ from?”

Institutional racism comes about when the culture, procedures and policies of an organisation result in unequal outcomes for or treatment of its members (Mampaey & Zanoni, 2016). Examples of institutional racism in educational contexts include fostering majority language skills only, a lack of representation of minoritised communities in formal and hidden curricula, the use of rigid ability grouping (research shows that children from minoritised backgrounds are more likely than other groups to be placed in lower ability streams or tracks which in turn negatively impacts attainment and self-efficacy), and having lower expectations for children from minoritised communities such as Travellers (Baker, Lynch, Cantillon & Walsh, 2009; Mampaey & Zanoni, 2016; Mc Ginley, 2020; Pollock, 2008). Having a critical awareness of how the educational system has the potential to reinforce, highlight or challenge the inequalities that play out in society can impact our decisions and actions as ethical educators.

Racism is a systemic (structural) problem as well as an individual one. This means that due to historical and cultural contexts, the way society functions serves to reinforce racial inequalities. Our identity impacts our engagement with the formal and hidden curriculum. According to Picower (2009), white teachers develop their understandings about race and difference through their previous life-experiences. Therefore, a teacher’s willingness and commitment to becoming a race-conscious educator involves an ongoing process of self-reflection (Mampaey & Zanoni, 2016). The process of teacher self-reflection can help us identify and interrogate our own biases and assumptions so that we become more aware of how they influence our teaching about race, ethnicity and (anti-) racism (Kemple, Lee & Harris, 2016; Sapon-Shevin, 2017). With reflection and awareness, teachers can begin to counteract some of the ways in which institutional racism is reinforced in educational contexts. When reflection and awareness turn into action, teachers can begin to counter a social structure that treats children from minoritised backgrounds unequally (Nieto, 2008).

While this chapter examines racism through an SJE lens, racism’s complexity, pervasiveness and mutability can be further unpacked when explored through an education for sustainable development (ESD) lens. In much of the literature, racism is explored as a structure and practice, which underpins and perpetuates social, political, cultural and economic injustices, yet its role in generating and reinforcing environmental injustices receives considerably less attention. However, a growing body of research points to racially motivated environmental policies and regulations which result in hazardous or polluting industrial facilities being disproportionately located in minoritised communities, particularly Black communities (Newkirk, 2018; Villarosa, 2020). Indeed, evidence of this environmental racism can be found in research which shows that the more highly racially segregated a neighbourhood is, the higher the risk of exposure to pollutants (Bravo, Anthopolos, Bell & Miranda, 2016). These toxic emissions, which contaminate

air, water and soil, come from landfills, chemical plants, incinerators, oil refineries and other industrial sources. The health consequences for minoritised communities are devastating and include increased morbidity from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, various cancers, premature death and most recently increased mortality rates from the Covid-19 virus (National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, 2020; Newkirk, 2018; United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2020; Villarosa, 2020). In a classroom context, EE pedagogies such as ethical dilemmas and case studies can be used to explore environmental racism. Additionally, exploration of the grassroots environmental activism led by minoritised communities provides opportunities for children to see authentic and diverse examples of socio-environmental activism. One such example is Philly Thrive, a community based environmental justice organisation, which mobilises people to challenge climate change, poverty and racism (Philly Thrive, n.d.).

From theory to practice

Later sections in this chapter explore the concepts of recognition and representation and focus specifically on how wider classroom environments can either reinforce or challenge existing inequities. Before that, manifestations of racism on an individual level are addressed. In classrooms, children might more commonly express interpersonal racism and teachers need to respond to these incidences as they arise. The following sections outline ways we can begin to talk to children about issues related to racial and ethnic identities and racism.

Entry points to conversations about race, ethnicity and racism

When discussing any issue with young children, it makes sense to begin with what is accessible, relatable and of interest to them (Kemple et al., 2016). This is particularly relevant when discussing issues which may seem cognitively abstract, for example, issues related to race, ethnicity and racism. This section therefore explores how teachers can initiate conversations about race, ethnicity and racism and make these concepts more accessible to children.

Teachable moments related to race, ethnicity and racism regularly present themselves during the school day. They might arise from a question posed or a comment made by a child based on something they have experienced or observed at school, in the community, or on the news. Equally, they might originate from an intentional decision made by the teacher to explore a story which explicitly deals with racial or ethnic identities (Kemple et al., 2016) or to engage children in an anti-racism focused discussion using EE pedagogies such as P4C.

In order to treat everybody equally, teachers often try to ignore or downplay racial and ethnic differences and focus on sameness instead (Walton et al., 2014). Known as colour-blindness, this minimisation of differences, although well-meaning, is counter-productive. Children notice and attach meaning to race and other forms of difference, particularly physical difference (skin, eye and hair colour, facial features) from an early age (MacNevin & Berman, 2017; Priest et al., 2016). Additionally, research indicates that children are curious about and interested in humans' physical differences (Kemple et al., 2016; MacNevin & Berman, 2017). It is important to name similarities and commonalities, however, discussing the observable and salient aspects of difference makes the

concepts of race and ethnicity accessible to young children and provides opportunities for them to become comfortable with physical differences and to develop positive identifications with ethnic-racial diversity (Kemple et al., 2016). In this context, the following sections explore the EE pedagogies of story, P4C and ethical dilemmas.

Story

In EE, story and picture books provide invaluable tools for initiating discussion on difference and social justice issues more broadly (Cole & Verwayne, 2018; Dever, Sorenson & Brodrick, 2005; Klefstad & Martinez, 2013). Through picture books, children can see a reflection of society and hear the voices of the marginalised and silenced (Souto-Manning, Rabadi-Raol, Robinson & Perez, 2019). Books should act as *mirrors* which affirm all children's identities and reflect their lived experiences, as *windows* which open children's minds to diverse ways of thinking and being and as *maps* which present as yet unimagined future opportunities and possibilities (Bishop, 1990; Myers, 2014). The medium of story enables children to vicariously experience social justice situations and to engage in dialogue about characters' experiences, conflicts and challenges, which they can then relate to their own lives and wider contexts (Klefstad & Martinez, 2013). As issues are discussed within the context of the story and its characters (initially, at least), a safe space is provided for children (Dever et al., 2005). EE pedagogies incorporate stories which foster empathy in children as they provide opportunities for them to get some insight into the perspectives of characters who are mistreated or oppressed (Cole & Verwayne, 2018; Dever et al., 2005). Andreotti (2011) reminds us, however, that due to our own contexts and identities, it is not possible to truly experience what others feel, i.e. to stand in another person's shoes. However, through discussion and roleplay, children can gain some understanding of characters' experiences, feelings and emotions. In EE, picture books are appropriate stimuli for younger children for exploring and learning to understand and respect differences. For older children, stories can act as tools which support and enable them to take action to challenge injustices.

P4C

Research shows that teachers rarely explicitly discuss issues of race and racism, even when children's comments or questions provide ideal springboards for such discussions (Farrago, 2017; Vittrup, 2016). Chang and Conrad (2008) argue that when comments arise, rather than silencing or avoiding them, teachers need to engage in open-ended dialogue with children, to use the language used by the children and to explore the comments and questions within the context of children's own experiences. The EE pedagogy, P4C, as an open-ended community of enquiry approach characterised by children's voice in the form of questions, dialogue and reflection (Robinson, 2015), is therefore an ideal forum for exploring and engaging with issues of race, ethnicity and racism. Dialogue creates opportunities for children to share life experiences, to talk about perceptions of difference, to expose racial injustice and to challenge stereotypes and discrimination (Kemple et al., 2016). According to Sapon-Shevin (2017), if we want children to be "active allies" who take action to challenge oppressive behaviours, they need to develop "repertoires for noticing, naming, and talking about individual

differences and identities, and recognizing ‘unfairness’ (oppression) anchored in those identities” (p. 39).

P4C generally involves children sitting in a circle (often referred to as a “Thinking Circle”) and engaging in dialogical enquiry. So as to create a safe space, the discussion is guided by a set of pre-agreed rules. A (non-moralising) stimulus, such as a poem, an image, a story or a headline, that will generate critical debate is generally shared (Robinson, 2015) and children are encouraged to work collaboratively to devise questions. One question is generally selected for discussion and children are encouraged to listen to each other, consider each other’s points of view, give reasons for their views, build on each other’s ideas, to ask each other questions and challenge each other when required. In EE, P4C provides opportunities for children to further develop their reasoning, critical and creative thinking skills. It provides a safe space for children to reflect critically on commonly held beliefs and assumptions, to question in an age-appropriate way how society enacts power unequally and to imagine alternatives which are essential to bring about change.

Ethical dilemmas

Ethical dilemmas are moral situations in which there are two or more options available, each of which results in the contravention of at least one moral principle (Foster, 2008). Ethical dilemmas have the capacity to challenge children morally and intellectually, particularly through the consideration of competing moral considerations and conflicting ethical values. Dilemmas are generally addressed by identifying the ethical issues involved, establishing the facts, generating a list of the various options available, evaluating these options using critical thinking and reasoning skills often through use of an ethical framework (comprised of various ethical orientations), selecting a course of action, acting and then reflecting on the outcomes (Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics, 2015). Different ethical orientations (e.g. justice, care) can be used simultaneously as each provides important insights (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

Many ethical dilemmas lack detail relating to context, causality and contingency and as the characters involved generally do not speak, we can have no understanding of their thoughts, hopes and fears (Robinson, 2015). This lack of detail makes it challenging to forge the emotional connection with the characters in the dilemma that is needed to further motivate moral action. Thus, they may not seem an obvious choice when it comes to exploring issues related to race, ethnicity and racism. However, these shortcomings can be mitigated by including contextual details in the hypothetical vignettes, for example, about characters’ identities, what they care about and so on. In addition, we argue that rather than focusing on whether or not something is an example of racism, engagement with the main dilemma should provide opportunities for children to explicitly discuss racism and to name and confront incidents of racism. In this way, dilemmas can facilitate children’s critical awareness of racism and have the capacity to motivate them to act to challenge it.

While it is essential to deal with interpersonal racism, as previously stated, a commitment to challenge racism as a systemic, institutional problem is also needed. In this context, the following section explores the concepts of recognition and representation, focusing specifically on how the wider classroom environment can either reinforce or

challenge existing inequities, particularly those relating to power relations and deficit understandings of difference.

Wider classroom environment: issues of recognition and representation

Recognition is an important feature of contemporary SJE. Benjamin and Emejulu (2012) define recognition as involving “supporting, respecting and defending *difference* – those identities, cultures and social practices that are not represented by the majority of the public or dominant social norms” (p. 39). In the classroom, visually representing diverse ways of being in the world and of understanding the world is key as it communicates to all children that they belong and are valued members of the classroom community (Souto-Manning et al., 2019). Positive and accurate representation can challenge deficit-based messages about children’s identities and provide authentic examples of the possibilities open to children now and in the future (MacNevin & Berman, 2017).

In the classroom, having physical resources, artefacts and images that are representative of a wide range of identities for children is essential, e.g. dolls, foods, art materials, books, wall displays and dramatic play props. Recognition and representation require us to consider who is visible and who is invisible in our classroom resources and materials. The presence of such objects helps to normalise diversity and redress the systemic underrepresentation of minoritised groups in classroom materials, however, they must also be accompanied by ongoing formal and informal teaching, discussion and dialogue about difference, race and ethnicity (MacNevin & Berman, 2017).

Conclusion

Talking about difference, race, ethnicity and racism, and employing social justice oriented EE pedagogical approaches are relevant for all children, regardless of school context. EE and SJE advocate that educators adopt pedagogical approaches which support children in challenging prejudices, misconceptions and stereotyping. They advocate that teachers focus on promoting positive attitudes to differences among young children while also addressing questions related to difference and racism as they organically emerge from the children themselves. For older children, more critical approaches are recommended, such as ethical dilemmas which assist children in identifying and engaging critically with issues of race, ethnicity and racism and taking action to challenge them. Talking about difference and race-related topics is challenging and can be daunting for teachers for a range of reasons. These include, a lack of confidence or teaching experience, a shifting and complex terminology of race, finding race-related topics too sensitive or controversial, a fear of causing offence, and concerns that talking about these issues might give rise to racism (Farrago, 2017; McGuirk, forthcoming; Sapon-Shevin, 2017; Vittrup, 2016; Walton et al., 2014). Becoming more comfortable and proactive in talking about difference, race and racism (so that the children can do the same) is a journey for teachers and takes time. As allies to those who experience racism, we recognise the potential of education to contribute to change while at the same time, we recognise that education is also part of the problem. Racism cannot be solved by a few lessons; widespread systemic societal and political change is required. Nonetheless, with this chapter and with these exemplars, we hope to support teachers in bringing about a shift in the

status quo whereby many teachers are reluctant to talk about race, ethnicity and racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Devine, 2011).

Exemplars

These exemplars are not designed to be stand-alone lessons. They are intended to be integrated into long-term plans which are informed by the identities of the children in the classroom and teacher reflection. Before beginning, teachers should think about how children from minoritised backgrounds might engage with the lessons. Consider whether there are any interpersonal issues ongoing in the classroom that could impact the lesson and be aware of supports/mechanisms that are in place if a child shares a traumatic experience. If necessary, adapt the exemplars so that they are suitable to your particular context. Be guided by your school's anti-racism policy. Additionally, as taking action is an important component of SJE, try to provide opportunities for children to share the learning from the exemplars with other classes in the school.

Exemplar 13.1 Different and equal

Lesson: Different and equal (4–7 years)

Previous work

This lesson is designed to build on previous lessons about being unique and special which focused on children's names, family, languages spoken, favourite food, hobbies, colour, etc.

Physical environment

Display with images (and vocabulary) of children with different skin colours, hair colours, types and styles, head coverings, eye colours and shapes, etc.

Teacher notes

Rather than focusing on "sameness", a more appropriate narrative is that we are all unique and special and we share similarities and commonalities with others.

Be guided by the children when it comes to terminology around hair styles and specific religious head coverings. Ask the children (and their parents) in advance of the lesson so that you are not putting children on the spot.

Learning outcomes

That children will be enabled to:

1. Acquire appropriate vocabulary to discuss physical similarities and differences.
2. Develop confidence and pride in their uniqueness, and in their racial and ethnic identities in a safe classroom environment.
3. Explain that although everyone looks different, everyone is equal and is a member of the classroom/school community.

Resources

Picture book: *All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold and Suzanne Kaufman
 Images: from the story (for group discussion)
 Video clip: *What Makes You Special* (Sesame Street): www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=jfgS2mO04fQ

Key vocabulary

Hair length, e.g. short/long
 Texture, e.g. thin/medium/thick
 Straight/curly/wavy/coily/plaited/spiky/Afro
 Cane/cornrows/braids
 Headscarf/hijab (a head covering worn by some Muslims)
 Turban (a head covering worn by some Sikhs)
 Patka (headscarf worn by some Sikh children)
 Skin colours, e.g. black/brown/light brown/dark brown/pale/white/pale white (accept colours suggested by children of that skin colour)

(Continued)

Introduction

Stimulus: *What Makes You Special* (Sesame Street)

Think-Pair-Share/whole class discussion: What is this song about? What does the song tell us about people? What makes you special?

Recap previously work on names/languages spoken/favourite food, etc.

Development

Teacher notes

Before beginning, ensure the children have the vocabulary to discuss similarities and differences and draw on the classroom display to support their discussion. It would be useful if these images were drawn from the story.

Key questions are suggested below so as to generate critical thinking and dialogue.

Stimulus: *All Are Welcome*

1. Discuss the book's cover and title: What do you think the book might be about? Why do you think all the children on the cover are holding hands?
2. Read the story. Refer to various images from the book and begin to model key vocabulary that reflects a range of activities, identities, hair colours/textures, etc.
3. Select a particular page, e.g. the playground scene.
Can you see someone who looks like you? In what way do they look like you?
Can you see someone who looks different to you? In what way do they look different to you?
What colour is your hair? Look into your partner's eyes, what colour are they?
4. Select another page, e.g. the shared reading scene.
How do you think the children are feeling? How do you know? Why do you think the children look so happy? How do we know that they feel like an important part of the class?
How do we know that they all feel welcome?
5. Affirm the identities represented in your local community, school and classroom; we all look different, we speak different languages, we live in different types of homes (houses, estates, apartments, trailers, halting sites). Ensure that the children understand that they are unique and beautiful.
6. Go to the final "You are welcome here" scene. Allocate a group of people to each group of children. Complete speech/thought bubble activity. What do you think the children are thinking/saying?
7. Role play: children engage in group role play based on the key messages/scenes in the book.

Teacher notes

Although teachers may feel uncomfortable discussing race or ethnicity, dismissing or downplaying children's inappropriate language or negative comments leaves vocabulary, stereotypes and prejudices unchallenged and unchanged. If children express prejudices or stereotypes during the course of the role play, encourage the children to engage in critical thinking, e.g. What is your reason for thinking that? Does anyone else agree/disagree/have a different opinion? Why/Why not? Remind children that although we are different, we also have lots of things in common.

Conclusion

1. Linking with earlier discussion and images, use P4C to engage with the question, what is beauty?
 2. Play "Pass the compliment".
-

Follow-up activities

Affirming identities

Story: *Happy in Our Skin* by Fran Manushkin

Songs: *I Love My Hair* and/or *The Colour of Me* and/or *Beautiful Skin* (Sesame Street)

Feeling like an outsider**Story:** *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson**Think-Pair-Share**

Have you ever felt like you did not belong somewhere? How did you feel? Share your experiences with your partner.

How does Angelina feel at the start of the story? The end of the story? What changed?

Why did sharing her story make Angelina feel better? Why is sharing your story important? What can we do to make sure everyone feels like they belong in this classroom?

Action

Discuss things we can do and words we can say to help everyone feel like they belong and are an important part of the class. Create posters/pictures.

Identity-based exclusion

Stimulus: Images showing someone being excluded (range of reasons, e.g. age, skin colour, ethnicity, (dis)ability).

Teacher notes

If you feel it is appropriate in your particular context and you feel you have completed sufficient groundwork, the image that addresses exclusion based on racial/ethnic/religious identity can be used to introduce the word “racism”. You can explain racism as being when someone is treated unfairly because of who they are, physical characteristics they have or aspects of their identity (e.g. race/ethnicity/religion).

Freeze frame/role play

As each group is in role, ask/answer some key questions: What is happening? Who is being left out? Why do you think they are being left out? Is it fair or unfair? What would you say to the person being left out? What would you say to the other children? What should they do? Who should they tell? What happened to x? Why were they left out? Why is leaving them out for that reason unfair? Wrong? What would you do if you were them? What can we do in this classroom?

Action

Ensure the children have the language necessary to manage incidences of exclusion (e.g. it is not okay to say that to me/them, you’re leaving me/them out) and to include others (e.g. would you like to play/sit with us/come for a walk?).

Exemplar 13.2 Racism in society

Lesson: Racism in society (8–12 years)

Previous work

This lesson is designed to build on previous lessons about stereotypes, individual/institutional racism and human rights (particularly the right to equal treatment/not to be discriminated against). If possible, children will have prior experience of using ethical dilemmas as a methodology.

Teacher notes

Racism is not only an individual or interpersonal act, children and adults also experience institutional racism.

Physical environment

- Classroom displays/resources should be inclusive of all members of society, i.e. LGBTQ+ families, people with different racial/ethnic/religious identities, and people with differing abilities.
- Images/posters should be of positive role-models from all racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- Display equality legislation/anti-discriminatory directives in child-friendly language, e.g. the school’s anti-racism policy.

(Continued)

Learning outcomes

That children will be enabled to:

1. Develop critical thinking and decision-making skills through the use of ethical dilemmas.
 2. Recognise that many people's rights and life experiences are impacted by their ethnic/racial identity.
 3. Name the subtle ways institutional racism impacts people's lives and experiences.
 4. Complete an audit on representation within the classroom, school, local toy/bookshop.
 5. Participate in actions that challenge subtle acts of institutional racism within the school and local community.
-

Resources

Ethical dilemma scenarios and questions (photocopy two copies of each of the three scenarios).

Key vocabulary

Individual racism: A person is treated negatively because of who they are, physical characteristics they have or aspects of their identity (e.g. race/ethnicity/religion).

Institutional racism: Because of the way systems in our culture and our society works, a person's racial/ethnic/religious identity makes a difference to their life experiences.

Introduction

Explain to the children that they will be exploring ethical dilemmas in groups of 4–5. Recap the meaning of ethical dilemmas through questioning, e.g. Can anyone give me an example of an ethical dilemma? Based on this example, what is an ethical dilemma? Why are they useful?

Initiate a conversation with them on how they can protect and respect the dignity of all children in the class during their explorations of the dilemmas. The children's suggestions should be recorded and can take the form of a set of short agreed rules.

Teacher notes

Consider how you will employ ethical sensitivity throughout the discussion and decide what ethical stance you might take for each scenario, e.g. neutral facilitator, devil's advocate, ally, official view.

Development

Once a set of principles/rules have been agreed for how they will treat each other, divide the children into groups and give each a scenario and its accompanying set of questions. Ask children to read, discuss and address the scenarios and questions in their groups. Teacher should circulate between the groups, asking questions where necessary to support critical thinking skills. When each group has finished discussing their scenario, take whole class feedback and engage in whole class discussion.

Stimulus: Ethical dilemmas

Scenario A: interpersonal racism – racial slurs

Michelle was always very shy and so when she finally became part of a big group of friends, she was delighted. The friends were always messaging each other but Michelle never really posted too much in the group. One of the girls, Sally, sometimes posted mean comments about other friends that were not in the group. Michelle never said anything because the other girls all put up laughing emojis and Michelle didn't want to lose her friends. Then one day, Sally used a racial slur to describe one of the boys in their class who is a Traveller. Some, but not all, of the girls laughed. Michelle's neighbours are Travellers and so she knows just how hurtful and unacceptable it is when settled people use that offensive word. If she says something, she risks losing her friends, but if she says nothing, she is a bystander to racism. What should Michelle do?

Q: What is the dilemma? What are the options? Who could Michelle ask for advice? If you were to give Michelle advice, what might you say? Who benefits if Michelle says nothing?

Scenario B: institutional racism – negative stereotyping/racial profiling

Stephen was not allowed to go to the shopping centre after school with his classmates. Sometimes though, he told his mam/dad/guardian that he was going to a friend's house after school and, instead, he went to the centre with his pals. Then something bad happened and he didn't know whether to tell someone at home because he might get into trouble for breaking the rules. Stephen's friend Daniel wanted to get new trainers, so they went to the sports shop. As soon as they went in, the security guard started following Daniel around, watching everything he was doing. When Daniel asked the security guard what was wrong, she said that she was used to kids like him stealing and that he should hurry up to either buy whatever he wanted or to leave. Daniel was so upset and explained that it had happened to him a few times before, and it was because of the colour of his skin. Stephen doesn't want to get into trouble, but he knows that what happened to Daniel was wrong and what the security guard said was a type of racism. What should Stephen do?

Q: What is the dilemma? What are the options? Is it okay to lie to your parents/guardians? Should children always do what they are told? How is Daniel being judged? What is negative stereotyping? Where do we get our ideas about other people? Why might the security guard think that? What could/should Stephen's/Daniel's parents do?

Scenario C: institutional racism (school contexts)

The children in sixth class were excited to be having a talk by the deputy principal from the local secondary school. They were nervous about the changes that were coming ahead and were all on their best behaviour when he arrived into their classroom. Their teacher had helped them prepare lots of different questions that they could ask about the timetable, the different subjects and the sports that the school offered. The talk was going really well. Then the deputy principal started talking about the uniform policy and the children were really surprised when he said that no head coverings were allowed and that boys and girls with afro-textured hair had to stick to particular permitted hairstyles. Some of the children in the class wore hijabs and many others had braids, locs and fades. At the end of the day, the children were talking, and some felt that they needed to try to change the secondary school's uniform policy so that it did not automatically exclude aspects of their identities. Someone suggested that they send a letter from the Student Council. However, the children that the policy affected didn't really want to do anything as they were worried that they would be making themselves stand out as "trouble-makers" and it would draw negative attention to them. But if they didn't do something, they would have to change themselves just to fit in in the school. What should they do?

Q: What is the dilemma? What are the options? Why do you think the school made that rule? Should schools be allowed to make whatever rules suit? Does the rule affect all children equally? How are the children being discriminated against? Should people have to change or hide aspects of their identity to fit in?

Conclusion

1. P4C: What is identity? Why does identity matter?
2. Use media sources to identify examples of individual and institutional racism from local/national/international contexts
3. Discussion: How might you respond to discrimination? What might you say if you wanted to challenge someone about it? What might you say if you wanted to support someone? Who could you report it to?

Follow-up activities

Stimulus: Newspaper article reporting the lack of people/characters from minoritised communities in children's literature, e.g. Eyre (2019), www.thebookseller.com/news/white-and-male-characters-dominate-picture-book-bestsellers-1022391

Pair work: Read and summarise main findings.

Group work: Discussion based on key question: What have you learned from this article?

Some people experience institutional racism daily, e.g. through lack of visual representation in classrooms/schools. Devise a series of questions with the children which can be used to audit the classroom's resources, e.g. Do our classroom's toys, books and posters equally represent the ethnic/racial identities of people living in our community/city/country?

Audit: Carry out an audit and represent the results in poster/project form.

Action: Write to principal/management of the school/publishing companies/Ministry for Education requesting more diverse books, toys, etc.

References

- Andreotti, V. (2011). *Actionable postcolonial theory in education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baker, J., Lynch, K., Cantillon, S. & Walsh, J. (2009). *Equality from theory to action* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Benjamin, S. & Emejulu, A. (2012). Learning about concepts, terminology and theories: From ambiguity to clarity. In R. Arshad, T. Wrigley & L. Pratt (Eds.), *Social justice re-examined, dilemmas and solutions for the classroom teacher* (pp. 33–47). Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books Limited.
- Berman, G. & Paradies, Y. (2010). Racism, disadvantage and multiculturalism: Towards effective anti-racist praxis. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(2), 214–232.
- Bishop, R.S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*. Retrieved from <https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2015). The structure of racism in color-blind, “post-racial” America. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(11), 1358–1376.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2009). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States* (3rd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bravo, M.A., Anthopolos, R., Bell, M.L. & Miranda, M.L. (2016). Racial isolation and exposure to airborne particulate matter and ozone in understudied US populations: Environmental justice applications of downscaled numerical model output. *Environmental International*, 92–93, 247–255.
- Bryan, A. (2010). Corporate multiculturalism, diversity management, and positive interculturalism in Irish schools and society. *Irish Educational Studies*, 29(3), 253–269.
- Centa, M., Ćurko, B., Dooley, L., Irwin-Gowran, S., Kojčić, Z., Kragić, I., ... Ward, F. (2018). *The LITTLE guide for teachers of ethical education*. Retrieved from www.ethicaleducation.eu/The_LITTLE_Guide_For_Teachers_of_Ethical_Education.pdf.
- Chang, K. & Conrad, R. (2008). Following children’s leads in conversations about race. In M. Pollock (Ed.), *Everyday antiracism, getting real about race in schools* (pp. 34–38). London: The New Press.
- Cole, K. & Verwayne, D. (2018). Becoming upended: Teaching and learning about race and racism with young children and their families. *Young Children*, 73(2), 34–43.
- Ćurko, B., Feiner, F., Gerjolj, S., Juhant, J., Kreß, K., Mazzoni, V., ... Strahovnik, V. (2015). Ethics and values in education, manual for teachers and educators. Retrieved from https://ethics.community/system-force-download/?file=https%3A%2F%2Fethics.community%2Fcontent%2Fuploads%2F2019%2F09%2FManualTeachers_EN.pdf&filename=ManualTeachers_EN.pdf.
- Department of Justice and Equality (2017). *National Traveller and Roma inclusion strategy 2017–2021*. Dublin: Department of Justice and Equality. Retrieved from www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/National_Traveller_and_Roma_Inclusion_Strategy_2017%E2%80%932021.
- Dever, M.T., Sorenson, B. & Brodrick, J. (2005). Using picture books as vehicle to teach young children about social justice. *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, 18(1), 18–21.
- Devine, D. (2011). *Immigration and schooling in the Republic of Ireland: Making a difference?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Drudy, S. (2009). *Education in Ireland: Challenge and change*. Dublin: Gill & MacMillan.
- Eyre, C. (2019, 13 June). Lack of female and BAME characters in picture books angers industry figures. *The Bookseller*. Retrieved from www.thebookseller.com/news/white-and-male-characters-dominate-picture-book-bestsellers-1022391.
- Farrago, F. (2017). Anti-bias or not: A case study of two early childhood educators. *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies*, 6(1), 7–21.
- Fisher, R. (2008). *Teaching thinking, philosophical enquiry in the classroom* (3rd ed.). London: Bloomsbury.
- Fleras, A. (2016). Theorizing micro-aggressions as racism 3.0: Shifting the discourse. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 48(2), 1–19.
- Garner, S. (2017). *Racisms: An introduction* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

- Keane, E. & Heinz, M. (2016). Excavating an injustice? Nationality/ies, ethnicity/ies and experiences with diversity of initial teacher education applicants and entrants in Ireland in 2014. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(4), 507–527.
- Kemple, K.M., Lee, I.R. & Harris, M. (2016). Young children's curiosity about physical differences. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 44, 97–105.
- Kitching, K. (2014). *The politics of compulsive education: Racism and learner-citizenship*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Klefstad, J.M. & Martinez, K.C. (2013). Promoting young children's cultural awareness and appreciation through multicultural books. *Young Children*, 68(5), 74–81.
- Joyce, S. (2018). Divided spaces: An examination of everyday racism and its impact on young Travellers' spatial mobility. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. UL, Limerick.
- Law, I. (2010). *Racism and ethnicity: Global debates, dilemmas, directions*. London: Pearson Education.
- Lentin, A. (2020). *Why race still matters*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- MacNevin, M. & Berman, R. (2017). The black baby doll doesn't fit the disconnect between early childhood diversity policy, early childhood educator practice, and children's play. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(5–6), 827–839.
- Mampaey, J. & Zanoni, P. (2016). Reproducing monocultural education: Ethnic majority staff's discursive constructions of monocultural school practices. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(7), 928–946.
- Manushkin, F. (2015). *Happy in our skin*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.
- Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics (2015). A framework for ethical decision making. Retrieved from www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/a-framework-for-ethical-decision-making/.
- Mathur, S.R. & Corley, K.M. (2014). Bringing ethics into the classroom: Making a case for frameworks, multiple perspectives and narrative sharing. *International Educational Studies*, 7(9), 136–147.
- Mc Ginley, H. (2020). A critical exploration of intercultural education in a post-primary school in Ireland with particular reference to Travellers. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. NUIG, Galway.
- McGuirk, N. (forthcoming). Anti-racism education in Educate Together primary schools: An exploration of teachers' conceptualisations and practices. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. DCU, Dublin.
- Myers, C. (2014, 15 March). The apartheid of children's literature. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/the-apartheid-of-childrens-literature.html.
- National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (2020). Health equity considerations and racial and ethnic minority groups. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html.
- Newkirk, V.R. (2018, 28 February). Trump's EPA concludes environmental racism is real. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/02/the-trump-administration-finds-that-environmental-racism-is-real/554315/.
- Nieto, S. (2008). Nice is not enough: Defining caring for students of color. In M. Pollock (Ed.), *Everyday antiracism, getting real about race in schools* (pp. 28–32). London: The New Press.
- Norberg, K. & Johansson, O. (2007). Ethical dilemmas of Swedish school leaders, contracts and common themes. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 35(2), 277–294.
- Penfold, A. & Kaufman, S. (2018). *All are welcome*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Pérez Huber, L., & Solorzano, D.G. (2015). Racial microaggressions as a tool for critical race research. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 18(3), 297–320.
- Philly Thrive (n.d.). Philly Thrive organises for a green economy. Retrieved from www.phillythrive.org/.
- Picower, B. (2009). The unexamined whiteness of teaching: How white teachers maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12(2), 197–215.
- Pollock, M. (Ed.) (2008). *Everyday racism, getting real about race in school*. London: The New Press.

- Priest, N., Walton, J., White, F., Kowal, E., Fox, B. & Paradies, Y. (2016). "You are not born racist, are you?" Discussing racism with primary aged-children. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 19(4), 808–934.
- Richardson, H.S. (2018). Moral reasoning. Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reasoning-moral/>.
- Robinson, G. (2015). Feeling the pull: Ethical enquiry and the tension it creates for teachers. *Analytic Teaching and Philosophical Praxis*, 36(1), 44–54.
- Sapon-Shevin, M. (2017). On the impossibility of learning "not to see": Colorblindness, invisibility, and anti-bias education. *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies*, 6(1), 38–51.
- Sesame Street (2017, 1 June). What makes you special [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=jfgS2mO04fQ.
- Shapiro, J.P. & Stefkovich, J.A. (2011). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Souto-Manning, M., Rabadi-Raol, A., Robinson, D. & Perez, A. (2019). What stories do my classroom and its materials tell? Preparing early childhood teachers to engage in equitable and inclusive teaching. *Young Exceptional Children*, 22(2), 62–73.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (2020). Health and environment. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20061002182639/http://epa.gov/pm/health.html>.
- Villarosa, L. (2020, 28 July). Pollution is killing black Americans: This community fought back. *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from www.nytimes.com/2020/07/28/magazine/pollution-philadelphia-black-americans.html.
- Vittrup, B. (2016). Early childhood teachers' approaches to multicultural education and perceived barriers to disseminating anti-bias messages. *Multicultural Education*, 23(3–4), 37–41.
- Walker, P. & Lovat, T. (2017). Should we be talking about ethics or about morals? *Ethics & Behaviour*, 27(5), 436–444.
- Walton, J., Priest, N., Kowal, E., Brickwood, K., Fox, B., White, F. & Paradies, Y. (2014). Talking culture? Egalitarianism, color-blindness and racism in Australian elementary schools. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 39, 112–122.
- Woodson, J. (2019). *The day you begin*. New York: Nancy Paulsen Book.