

Curriculum Checklist

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Why we need a checklist

Just over one-fifth of children and young people living in the UK are from a diverse ethnic community background and are a part of the global majority. Their lived experience will be one where they are likely to; encounter racism, live shorter lives and earn less than their white counterparts.

'Every white child in the UK lives in a country that is ethnically diverse.'

Ethnically diverse communities are significantly under-represented in the creative industries such as professional artists, designers, craftspeople or educators and they are subject to racism* The actions and inactions that have been taken by the education system to date have therefore been inherently racist. This checklist was created by the NSEAD Anti-Racist Art Education Action Group (ARAEA).

NSEAD is actively anti-racist

To be actively anti-racist means opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance. Racism is real and it is experienced in every school, academy and college in this country. NSEAD holds that art education must not be racist. It is therefore challenging for every educator to critically review and revise their curriculum. This checklist is designed to encourage self-reflection with the aim to make our subject actively anti-racist. At times we will stumble, but when we do, we will acknowledge our mistakes and we will make repairs, therefore this checklist will be under constant review by NSEAD.

This checklist was created by the NSEAD Anti-Racist Art Education Action Group (ARAEA). To further inform this important work we are interested to learn from your anti-racist art, craft and design curriculum planning, pedagogies and resources. Please contact: info@nsead.org or visit nsead.org/resources/anti-racist-art-education

Cultural Capital

Key Questions

Examples

How do you address cultural capital?

Do you draw on the cultural and intergenerational knowledge of your students, their friends, carers, families and communities?

Does your curriculum allow students to explore the world around them both historically and through contemporary art and culture?

Is there an opportunity to compare the ways in which similar issues are tackled historically and contemporarily? For example: When researching portraits do you explore the exclusionary historic portraits of white, wealthy, powerful men and their families compared to contemporary portraits that explore a much wider depiction of 'all' lives lived.

How is gender, race, sexuality, disability, class and the protected characteristics represented in the works shown?

Do the works shown perpetuate or challenge unconscious bias?

Intersectionality

Key Questions

All children are sensitive to intersections between race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, class, religion and so on. How might your curriculum inspire and acknowledge our complex identities?

Examples

Does your curriculum value alternative ways of being and doing in the world? Does it acknowledge intersections between ethnicity and for example; gender fluidity, neurodiversity or physical disabilities, etc.

In your school the vast majority of children may largely be of one ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class or gender. How do you ensure that your curriculum enables children to consider a greater diversity of life and culture locally, nationally and globally?

This is especially important where the school is largely mono-cultural as this enables children to be able to live, work and socialise in a multicultural country.

Colonial Legacy

Key Questions

In your curriculum planning is there an awareness of the impact of colonial rule and the richness of pre-colonial civilisations & communities?

Does the curriculum only look at black history through a lens of enslavement?

Have you planned time and resources to properly contextualise the art and artists you are covering?

Examples

If you refer to art, craft or design that is currently held in European museums, but which originates from other countries or civilisations, do you explore:

- How those pieces came to be held there?
- How the objects were originally intended to be used?
- If the object should remain in the possession of a museum?

Have you acknowledged for example, that African heritages are rich and varied and extend beyond the trade in enslaved peoples?

Have you ensured your contextualisation is not through one lens? Have you researched practices from indigenous populations that you refer to? Are you aware of issues around appropriating artworks and taking them out of context which can be highly problematic? For example, First Nation, Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples and Australian paintings should not be reproduced. This is highly disrespectful & unacceptable.

Context & Terminology

Key Questions

The terms 'African art' & 'African artist' conflate the many diverse and varied countries and communities within the continent. In your schemes of work & curriculum planning have you avoided such terminology?

There are some commonly used terms that are offensive. Are you using terms and names that recognise the diversity and distinctiveness within Indigenous communities?

Whilst some terms are much less offensive, many are still unhelpful in tackling racism. It is important to use correct terminology but know that terminology may change over time.

Examples

What part of the African continent is the art from? Do you include North Africa (Egypt, Morocco, Ethiopia etc) as well as sub-Saharan Africa? Note that the inspiration, design, purpose, meaning, processes of manufacture, usage, and value of masks in Nigeria are very different from those 2000 miles away in Mozambique.

Some common terms traditionally used in art projects but which are unacceptable include: Aboriginal, North American Indian, Native and Primitive. Such terminology should be avoided in your curriculum. Instead, try to research the self-chosen names of communities and nations.

NSEAD does not recommend the grouping of artists, makers and designers under the category of 'BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic). This abbreviation is an administrative category that reinforces communities as 'other'. Where possible use self-referred community names. Otherwise, use: 'diverse ethnic communities' or 'global majority'.

*Representation from diverse ethnic communities has declined since the last Census. Almost 2,000 people from diverse ethnic communities have left the industries since 2009, reducing the representation to just 5.4% of the total workforce. Source: thecreativeindustries.co.uk/uk-creative-overview/facts-and-figures/employment-figures

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Criticality

Key Questions

Have you planned in time into your curriculum to develop your students' understanding & critical consciousness of historical and contemporary ideas of race and racial relations?

Examples

Does your curriculum and pedagogy give opportunities to challenge how whiteness, is a system of privilege - and that non-white students and non-white art, craft and design practices can be positioned on the margins of education.

Do the images and pieces you use promote safe discussions and explorations of self, race and ethnicity?

Do the cultures you study promote these debates and challenge the colonial narrative of 'the other'?

Are negative African, Asian or other tropes perpetuated in the curriculum? For example, through enslavement, exoticism and Orientalism. Or through more contemporary images of poverty in Africa, subsequently, rescued by 'white-western saviours'?

How does your curriculum, pedagogies and practices shared provide opportunities to discuss, question and explore historical and contemporary issues around race and ethnic identities?

Unconscious Bias

Key Questions

All of us have unconscious biases and favour that which is closest to our own identity. As educators, this is detrimental to our students' learning and wellbeing. How do we support yourself and your colleagues to have potentially challenging conversations about this?

Do you acknowledge unconscious bias in your curriculum and in your assessments? How do you seek to address this?

Examples

As teachers, we rightly pre-empt what students could explore in their work, however, in doing so is there any unconscious bias at play?

Do you support students who wish to explore art work that is defined by their own ethnicity whilst also recognising that some students may equally not wish to be defined by their own ethnicity in their art work? How do you manage this complex balance?

How do you routinely consider the impact of unconscious bias on learning or wellbeing? For example; as part of meetings (departmental, subject coordinator) do you lead conversations about the use of language & terminology?

How do you ensure assessment is fair and consistent and does not disadvantage certain students through unconscious bias?

When planning your curriculum have you considered all student identities, for example: age, gender, religious or spiritual affiliation, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status

Diversity & Belonging

Key Questions

Is there opportunity to ask about the cultures, makers, artworks and objects that you use?

Does your curriculum refer to work produced by artists that are dual-heritage?

Does your curriculum include artists, makers and designers from a range of ethnically diverse communities?

Is there any reference to artists, makers and designers from your local communities?

Examples

Do the artworks help to build positive identities for all children?

Are there any non-western pieces that could illustrate your teaching?

Have you considered the contemporary art, craft and design that exists within the differing cultures you and your students are researching?

Is there an awareness of pre-colonial communities? For example, could you use pre-colonial names of land or names of communities?

Have you considered the western lens through which art, craft and design is often viewed. For example, in a museum, behind glass cabinets? This may be very different to indigenous populations where what we deem to be a community's or nation's artworks, are in fact meant to be interacted with, worn or used.

The largest population growth is amongst children with dual heritage. Therefore, all children - including and especially children and young people of diverse or dual heritage - will be interested to see work that is not purely European, Asian or African etc.

Consider the percentage of practitioners that are included in your curriculum from the various identities and ethnicities, for example: African and African Diaspora; South, East and South-East Asian Diaspora or Gypsy-Roma.

If there is an imbalance in your curriculum, for example; more white male Europeans than other ethnicities and women, do you question the inequalities that such an imbalance generates?

What proportion of work in your curriculum is art, craft or design? Is there a bias towards one of these more than the others?

How does your curriculum support the development of your students' understanding and moving into the creative industries?

Britain has a long history of different peoples moving into and across Britain. What does this mean in your locality covered in your curriculum?

In some communities there are tensions, does your curriculum enable your students to explore these topics safely?

Are students encouraged to challenge stereotypes?

In your own context and setting, what other need to be asked?



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