

### Oxfam Education

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# Developing Rights Lesson plan 6: Discrimination in education

Age group: 11 - 14

#### Aims:

To help children to understand what it feels like to suffer discrimination, through the medium of a simulation activity.

To encourage pupils to empathise with, and consider the viewpoints of, other groups. This activity is based upon the unequal access to education that existed under the apartheid system in South Africa. It introduces the concept of apartheid as a crucially important reason for the historical denial of the right to education for the majority of South African children.

#### What to do:

Preparation: you will need one sheet of paper and a pencil for each participant. Make two piles with the sheets of paper -- one should contain one-eighth of the number of sheets, and the other, seven-eighths. Do the same with the pencils. Mark with chalk or tape on the floor of the classroom an area which measures one-eighth of its total size (for quick calculation, divide the class area into half and divide one half into four equal parts). Gather together five objects and a cloth large enough to cover them all.

As the activity progresses, with a class of 32 pupils you would end up with the following situation: Four pupils would be seated in the larger area of the room. They would have 28 pencils and 28 sheets of paper. Twenty eight pupils would be seated (or standing) in the smaller area of the room. They would have four pencils and four sheets of paper.

Start by asking pupils to move one-eighth of the total number of tables and chairs into the small area of the floor space, and leave the rest in the larger area. Now select a small group of pupils (equivalent to one-eighth of the total number of pupils) and ask them to stay in the large area. Instruct the larger group to seat themselves in the small area. It should be left to pupils to decide how to arrange themselves -- if they object, tell them firmly that these are the conditions under which the activity is going to be carried out!

Now explain to the class that they are going to take a memory test. (You may wish to organise a different task, but it should be one that the class can tackle confidently and will be motivated to carry out.) Explain that you will be uncovering five hidden objects for ten seconds. In order to pass the test pupils must draw or write down the objects on their own sheet of paper.

Distribute the larger pile of paper and pencils to the smaller group, and the smaller pile of paper and pencils to the larger group. Make it clear that no one is allowed to move from their area of the classroom, nor use anything else but the paper and pencils provided.

Ask pupils to write their names on their papers, then uncover the hidden objects for five seconds. Give pupils two minutes to write or draw the objects on their paper, then collect the sheets and check them to see who has passed the test. It is likely that most in the larger group will have passed, whilst few in the smaller group will have done so. Announce the names of those who have passed, praising them for their excellent work.

It is important that this activity is completed with an adequate debriefing. It is likely that pupils will have strong feelings which they will wish to express. Explain to the class that this activity was a simulation based on the education system in South Africa before 1994. At that time, white people made up just one-eighth of the population, but eight times more money was spent on their education than that of black African children. Discrimination such as this continues in many parts of the world.

Discuss some of the following questions as a class:

- How did each group feel about their position and why?
- What, if anything, did the larger group feel like doing in response to the unjust situation? What did they actually do about it? Which rights did they feel were being denied?
- How were the smaller group advantaged? What would be the long-term consequences
  of this? What did they think about their advantage and did they consider doing anything
  about it? Did they feel guilty about doing well?
- In the longer term, how does the distribution of resources affect education?

#### **Extension work:**

Ask pupils if they can think of any other real-life parallels to this activity and explain that many governments in the South lack the money to ensure that all children achieve their right to an education.

## **Curriculum links:**

England	Scotland	Wales
English: - Group discussion and interaction - different contributions; different views into account; sift, summarise and use the most important points. Citizenship/PSHE: - Effects of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying and discrimination; how to empathise with people different from themselves; to communicate confidently with peers and adults; consider social and moral dilemmas.	English: - Listening in groups; talking in groups; talking about experiences, feelings and opinions. Religious and Moral Education: - Relationships and moral values. PSD: - Social development.	English: - Group discussion and interaction - different contributions; different views into account; sift, summarise and use the most important points. PSE: - Value cultural diversity and equal opportunity and respect the dignity of all; be moved by injustice, exploitation and denial of human rights; communicate confidently one's feelings and views.