



# Diversity and Inclusion

*Despite the rich diversity of humankind, certain groups are privileged in terms of literacy.*

The literacy curriculum should:

- reflect diversity
- challenge prejudice and stereotypes
- welcome difference
- highlight shared values across cultures and
- work collaboratively with parents and communities.

UKLA is reviewing its own position as an inclusive association. The Association recognises that human beings are diverse creations, yet certain voices have tended to be privileged in the research and pedagogic discourses around literacy. In seeking to begin to redress this imbalance, we are asking questions such as:

- What does UKLA offer educationalists and academics from historically under-represented and minority identity groups? For example, black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people, members of LGBTI+ communities.
- What can UKLA committees and members do collectively to recognise the repercussions of privilege in order to combat racism, ableism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice?
- What processes and actions will make diversity and inclusion central and embedded, not an 'add on' to all UKLA's work?
- How might members of UKLA be enabled to become aware of/monitor individual and structural/ institutional discrimination within the institutions they work in, in order to combat that discrimination?

- What practices would encourage a more diverse body of educationalists and researchers to become members of UKLA?
- What can UKLA do to campaign against some of the embedded institutional discriminatory practices – such as colonial, ableist, or sexist curricula; unjust exclusions; discrimination in streaming; in employment practices – in Universities, schools etc?

## Diversity and inclusion – the curriculum

An inclusive curriculum should:

- reflect the ethnic, linguistic, cultural, cognitive and embodied diversity of children and students
- respond positively to diversity and represent the social and cultural composition not only of the school but of society more generally
- raise awareness of different cultures, identities and ways of being, and challenge prejudice and stereotypes
- highlight shared values across cultures and welcome difference
- be carried out by teachers who work collaboratively with parents and communities towards mutually beneficial development of skills, experiences and expertise.

## Sources

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi (2009) *The Danger of a Single Story*. TedGlobal. [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story/transcript?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en)

Barden, O., Youl, W., & Youl, J. (2016) Including Learners from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds, in: H. Fehring and S. Rodrigues *Learning, Teaching, Coaching and Mentoring Adult Learners. Lessons for Professionalism and Partnership*. Abingdon: Routledge pp.60-71.

Chetty, D. (2016) "You Can't Say That! Stories Have To Be About White People", in N. Shukla, (ed.) *The Good Immigrant*. Unbound. [https://www.academia.edu/28762595/\\_You\\_Cant\\_Say\\_That\\_Stories\\_Have\\_To\\_Be\\_About\\_White\\_People\\_](https://www.academia.edu/28762595/_You_Cant_Say_That_Stories_Have_To_Be_About_White_People_)

Chetty, D. (2018) *Beyond the Secret Garden? 'Black Asian and Minority Ethnic' Representations in Children's Literature*. Books for Keeps.

[https://www.academia.edu/37977267/Beyond\\_the\\_Secret\\_Garden\\_Black\\_Asian\\_and\\_Minority\\_Ethnic\\_Representations\\_in\\_Childrens\\_Literature](https://www.academia.edu/37977267/Beyond_the_Secret_Garden_Black_Asian_and_Minority_Ethnic_Representations_in_Childrens_Literature)

Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F. Powell, S. and Drury, R. (2015) *Researching Literacy Lives: Building communities between home and school*. London: Routledge.

Hughes, C. (2013) Introduction and guest editor's note. (2013) 5(4) WOW Review: Reading Across Cultures. (2013). <http://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/review/wow-review-volume-5-issue-4/2/>

Pearce, S. (2012) Confronting dominant whiteness in the primary classroom: progressive student teachers' dilemmas and constraints, *Oxford Review of Education* 38 (4) pp.455-472.

## Classroom example

### The Tsunami project: writing narrative poetry

Sukhvinder Bhoday, a class teacher of 8 and 9 year olds at Elmhurst primary school in the London borough of Newham, and Jane, a visiting consultant, developed an extended multimodal project which aimed to support the language development of bilingual children. They chose to focus the work on a culturally inclusive text (Bednall *et al.*, 2008), the scroll book *Tsunami*, a narrative graphic poem designed by Patua scroll painters from West Bengal, telling of the terrible tsunami that overtook the region in 2004 and dedicated to those who suffered from it (1). They wanted the children to learn to read 'beyond the literal', seeking the deeper meanings of texts to develop the sophisticated inference and deduction skills involved in reading the multi-layers of a text like *Tsunami*, considering the messages conveyed by the pictures and what the words contribute to the meaning and exploring through drama how sound, movement and gesture add to what is being communicated. The project allowed them to develop the children's reading through visual and word based texts, their writing, layout and art skills by making a class scroll and Geography skills by learning about earthquakes, tsunamis and the areas hit by the tsunami in South East Asia. The work was planned for nine afternoon sessions.

### Beginning the project

As the children entered the classroom, they saw the *Tsunami* scroll that they would be using as a model for their own work throughout the project, and a Bengali embroidery, intricately designed, hanging at the front of the room. Sukhvinder explained that the children would be making their own class scroll and poem about a tsunami. Using diagrams and photographs uploaded to the digital flipchart, she and Jane explained that earthquakes and tsunamis are natural disasters which affect people's lives and why they happen. Through drama the children recreated the movement of a huge tsunami wave and discussed how they might show how tsunamis affect people's lives through group freeze framing. In the second session Sukhvinder read the poem to the class and asked for their thoughts. In small groups the children read three verses and annotated them with questions or comments which were shared with the class, thinking about whether the images make the words easier to understand or whether they pose more questions. The session closed by taking suggestions about the meaning of particular verses/ images/ lines now that the children had been able to look more deeply.

## Rich descriptive language

The third session focused on developing rich description. Jane told the class about a previous project which had used the Bengali poet Jasim Uddin's saga poem 'The Field of the Embroidered Quilt' and images from quilts to create poems and artwork. Jane and Sukhvinder shared some of the poems that the class had written and modelled commenting on examples of rich description they had liked, asking the children to do the same. The focus then shifted to examining artwork carefully. Each table had three images from *The Art of Mithila* by Yves Vequaud (2) and after Jane and Sukhvinder modelled commenting on the use of pattern, colour, and the story/ message the artist might be trying to get across, the children chose an image and discussed it with their partners

To consolidate the work on poetic language, the next session concentrated in more detail on the words of the *Tsunami* poem. Sukhvinder asked the children to notice the refrain at the end of each verse. In pairs, the children created their own refrains.

Sukhvinder and Jane had shown the children how to list the actions in each verse, drawing on both words and images and modelled how to turn these lists into poetic lines. In their groups the children orally rehearsed the descriptive lines of poetry they had based on their lists of drama actions then wrote them, with the less fluent writers using writing frames.

## Creating the scroll

Each child made a block print of wave patterns which would be used as a backdrop to the scroll and Jane and Sukhvinder showed the children complex decorative artwork representative of Hindu art so that they could decorate animal templates in that style. With support where needed, the children improved their poems, and copied their verses on plain paper. In the final session the teachers and class assembled the verses and art work on long scrolls.

These extracts show how the children drew on the original poem to make their own moving narrative poems:

***Tsunami*** (corrected spelling; children's own punctuation)

*Reporters are coming with huge big cameras ready to talk.*

*Telling the story across the world.*

*Orphans there, orphans here, orphans everywhere.*

*Is this destiny?*

*Does life have to be like this?*

*Tsunami!*

*You life taker of living.*

*Helicopters fly to help people*

*People fighting for food in village and town*

*I cannot stop the tears in my eyes*

*Or the Tsunami*

*The Tsunami broke*

*Amongst the broken bricks*  
*How much more can I take?*  
*You thief!*  
*Tsunami*  
*You trouble maker*            Channel

*All religions that are buried line by line*  
*Like a water graveyard.*  
*Friends and family died together*  
*Families died all by themselves.*  
*Tsunami! Who killed us all!*  
*A lonely child floats by left behind separated*  
*Who will help them now?*  
*Tears well from my glittering eyes.*  
*Tsunami!!!*  
*You hurt us here*            Ramisha

The project ended on a high note celebrating the collective effort of the children in contributing to the class discussions and the artwork and poetry for the scrolls.

#### Notes

1. Patua scrolls are a form of narrative graphic art. Traditionally they would be taken from home to home and presented accompanied by song. As they travelled, the singers would pick up news and carry it on to their next destination. See <http://www.tarabooks.com/books/books/adults/picture-books-visual-arts/tsunami/> for a description of how the scrolls are made and the words of the English version scroll accompanied by song in Bengali.
2. Mithila is in North East India. The Mithila women paint scenes from the Ramayana in vivid colours. The pictures form part of family ceremonies and village festivals.

This is an extract from a longer article by Jane Bednall and Sukhvinder Bhoday in *English 4-11* (59) Spring, 2017 pp.13-16.

*Owen Barden, Jane Bednall, Sukhvinder Bhoday and Di Leedham*  
*on behalf of UKLA*

See also

**UKLA bookshop** [www.ukla.org/shop](http://www.ukla.org/shop)

*Dyslexia and Inclusion: supporting classroom reading with 7-11 year olds*  
by Rosemary Anderson

*Inclusive Approaches to Teaching Literacy in the Secondary School*  
Edited by Eve Bearne

*Literacy and Community Edited*  
by Eve Bearne and Rebecca Kennedy

*Practical Bilingual Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms*  
by Tözün Issa and Alayne Öztürk

**UKLA website** [www.ukla.org/resources](http://www.ukla.org/resources)

*Diversity and Inclusion* resources for members

*Developing a Culturally Inclusive Curriculum*  
by Jane Bednall and Sharon Fell  
<https://ukla.org/resources/search?keywords=%22culturally%22>

Series: *Diverse Picturebooks*  
by Hannah Lawrence and Samantha Jane Hulston  
<https://ukla.org/resources/collection/diverse-picturebooks>

UKLA Occasional Paper: *English as an Additional Language (EAL)*  
by Naomi Flynn