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Islamophobia Lesson Plan—Part 2

By: Nassim Elbardouh

"To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin." –Bell Hooks

Subject(s): Social justice, social studies, English language arts
Core Competencies: Personal and Social, Thinking, Create and Communicate
Grade Level: Big Ideas and Curricular Competencies are taken from the new **Grade 9 curriculum,** but they can be applied to most intermediate grades.
Time: Approximately one 80-minute block (Part 1 requires 80 minutes as well)

Big Idea(s)

- Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking (English language arts).
- People understand texts differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives (English language arts).
- Emerging ideas and ideologies profoundly influence societies and events (social studies).

Curricular Competencies: Students Will Be Able To (S.W.B.A.T)

- Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful literary and informational texts for a variety of purposes and audience (LA 9).
- Recognize and identify the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives in texts (LA 9).
- Make reasoned ethical judgments about controversial actions in the past and present, and whether we have a responsibility to respond (ethical judgment) (Socials 9).
- Define: stereotypes, Islamophobia, and discrimination.

Materials Required

- Single stories video: *www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en*
- Hamdulillah music video: *www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ISHZQJdeSw*
- Post-its
- True or False Quiz (Included at the end of this lesson plan. Adapted from: Give the Red Card to Racism: *www.srtrc.org/uploaded/ISLAMOPHOBIA%20ED%20PACK%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf*)
- K/W/L chart
- Quotes

- *www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/11/17/muslim-woman-attacked-school_n_8581002.html*

Lesson Summary

This is Part 2 of a two-part lesson plan aimed at getting students to think about how stereotypes are created and what we can do as writers, critical thinkers, musicians, etc., to challenge them. Specifically, this series is focused on Islamophobia and how it impacts Muslims. Many of our Muslim students, particularly those who wear headscarves (hijabs), have reported feeling alienated and judged in the public school system. As educators, we need to ensure that our classrooms are places in which Muslim students feel safe from the negative stereotypes that are propagated by the media. This is of particular importance after terrorist attacks because Muslim students may feel like they are being blamed for the actions of people who have carried out terrorist attacks in their names. It seems absurd to associate the Ku Klux Klan with Christianity, but the same distinction is rarely made for Muslims. As Wajahat Ali shared in the report Impact of School Bullying and Discrimination on California Muslim Students, "your existence is always interrogated, investigated, and questioned."

Key understandings that students will walk away with include, but are not limited to the following:

- To **stereotype** is "to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same" (Merriam Webster Dictionary). If Muslim people are routinely depicted as violent terrorists in the media, the message we are receiving is that Islam is an inherently violent religion and by extension, Muslims are violent.

- Negative stereotypes can lead to **discrimination**, which is "the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people" (Merriam Webster Dictionary).

- Stereotypes about Muslim people can create **Islamophobia**: "unfounded hostility towards Muslims and therefore fear and dislike of all or most Muslims" (University of California's Center for Race and Gender Studies).

- Anytime you let a negative stereotype paint your view of an entire group of people, you aren't using your critical thinking skills. If you are antiracist, a feminist, an LGBTQ ally, or if you believe in equity, then you should learn more about the impact of Islamophobia and work to end it.

Time	Lesson Component	Teacher Activities/optional discussion guide	Student activities
5 minutes	**Introduction**	Last lesson we read a quote and watched a music video. Recall key points as a refresher/to catch up any students who may have been absent during lesson Do monsters have a reflection in the mirror? What does this have to do with why Diaz chose to become an author? "Did you know that vampires have no reflections in a mirror? There's this idea that monsters don't have reflections in a mirror. And what I've always thought isn't that monsters don't have reflections in a mirror. It's that if you want to make a human being into a monster, deny them, at the cultural level, any reflection of themselves. And growing up, I felt like a monster in some ways. I didn't see myself reflected at all. I was like, 'Yo, is something wrong with me? That the whole society seems to think that people like me don't exist?' And part of what inspired me, was this deep desire that before I died, I would make a couple of mirrors. That I would make some mirrors so that kids like me might seem themselves reflected back and might not feel so monstrous for it." –Junot Diaz speaking about why he writes. Today we are going to discuss how Islamophobia, stereotypes and discrimination are linked. Remember to fill out your K/W/L chart because you will need to have it completed by the end of the lesson. **Quick two-minute body break** First we are going to watch a 30-minute music video in which award winning novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice—and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. We will close by reading and discussing the experiences of three Muslim sisters from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.	Listening Two-minute body break: mindful breathing, jumping jacks, etc.
20-minute video	**Lesson Development**	Watch: *www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en* • What stood out for you from this video? What single stories have been told about you? How does this feel?	Students discuss Diaz's quote.

10-minute discussion		**You can have a class discussion about this or use one of her quotes as a starter for a 10-minute free-write. These free-writes can be the basis of poems, personal narratives, etc.* Continue conversation from last lesson-What single stories have you heard about Islam/Muslims? How are Muslims represented in the media? What is the narrative? Is it positive or negative? How does this impact the way that you have viewed Islam and Muslims? **Important**: If you have Muslim students in your class, be sure to monitor this discussion *very carefully.* Try a K/W/L chart or writing activity as an alternative way to access this information. **Recap:** Although Muslims are represented in the media, the ways in which they are portrayed is often negative. What happens when negative stories are told over and over again about a particular group of people? What happens when the mirrors are consistently negative? How does this change how people perceive themselves? Others?	Share back with the large group.
5 minutes		• To **stereotype** is "to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same" (Merriam Webster Dictionary). If Muslim people are routinely depicted as violent terrorists in the media, the message we are receiving is that Islam is an inherently violent religion and by extension, Muslims are violent. • Negative stereotypes can lead to **discrimination**: "the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people" (Merriam Webster Dictionary). • Stereotypes about Muslim people can create **Islamophobia**: "unfounded hostility towards Muslims and therefore fear and dislike of all or most Muslims" (University of California's Center for Race and Gender Studies). • Anytime you let a negative stereotype paint your view of an entire group of people, you aren't using your critical thinking skills. If you are antiracist, a feminist, an LGBTQ ally, or if you believe in equity, then you should learn more about the impact of Islamophobia and work to end it. Write these definitions in your Social Studies dictionaries.	
5 minutes		Hate crimes against Muslims in America have tripled since the attacks in Paris (Campbell, 2016). Canada is no exception. Depending on time, students can read and discuss an article about how a Muslim mother was attacked shortly after the terrorist attacks in Paris. *www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/11/17/muslim-woman-attacked-school_n_8581002.html*	Students discuss in small groups.

5 minutes		Many of these terms are abstract, but we have seen that they have very real impacts on people in our communities. Three sisters in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan were interviewed about their experiences wearing the hijab. In small groups, read and discuss these quotes. Choose one to share back to the group. Be prepared to answer questions about how the quote links to any of the resources we have discussed so far, why you chose that particular quote, and how it made you feel.	Share back with the large group.
5 minutes	**Closure (summarize Big Ideas and Key points)**	Stereotypes about Muslim people can create **Islamophobia**: "unfounded hostility towards Muslims and therefore fear and dislike of all or most Muslims" (University of California's Center for Race and Gender Studies). Islamophobia can have very serious impacts on the safety and wellbeing of Muslims in your community. • Remember that we all have secret worlds inside of us that nobody can see, and that is why it is important to be careful with one another. • Complete K/W/L chart.	
	Assessment (formative and summative)	• Formative: active listening and participation in class discussion, free writes, self-assessment • Summative: K/W/L chart, effective completion of the extension activities (see below).	
10 minutes	**Extensions/ Adaptations**	**French Connection:** A short two-minute video that defines a stereotype • *www.vimeo.com/88978636* • See extensions in Part 1.	