Elbardouh, N. (2021). Islamophobia Lesson Plan (Grade 4) [Sample Lesson Plan]. British Columbia Teachers' Federation. Retrieved December 10, 2021 from https://www.bctf.ca/classroom-resources/details/islamophobia-primary-lesson-plans

Islamophobia Lesson Plan

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: Art, physical and health education, English language arts
Core Competency: Personal and social
Grade Level: Big ideas and curricular competencies are taken from the new **Grade 4 curriculum,** but they can be applied to most primary/lower-intermediate grades.
Time: Three 45-minute blocks

Big idea(s)

- Developing healthy relationships helps us feel connected, supported, and valued (physical & health education).
- Exploring text and story helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world (English Language Arts).
- Creative expression is a means to explore and share one's identity within a community (art).

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

- Draft ideas for images using feelings and imagination. Create and self-assess inner portraits.
- Describe interpersonal skills necessary to build positive relationships (e.g., co-operation, inclusion, communication skills, empathy, and respectful behaviour).
- Ask questions, corroborate inferences, and draw conclusions about the content and origins of different sources (evidence).
- Begin to make connections between stereotypes, discrimination, and Islamophobia.

Materials Required

- flip chart paper and markers
- pencil crayons, pencils, etc.
- inner-portrait assignment and assessment (included at the end of this lesson plan)
- hand printouts (included at the end of this lesson plan)
- optional: picture of an iceberg (two views: top and bottom).

Lesson summary

In this lesson your students will be introduced to the concepts of stereotypes, Islamophobia, and empathy. Students will brainstorm a list of things about themselves that people can't see just by looking at them. Using an interactive iceberg activity (alternate introductory activity included in the extensions section) as a springboard for discussion, students will discuss the ways in which Muslim people are stereotyped, and how these stereotypes can have negative consequences for us all. Students will have the opportunity to create inner portraits. This exercise is a great way to build community at the beginning of the year.

Background information for teachers

Prior to conducting this lesson plan, ask yourself what assumptions you have about Islam and Muslims. What beliefs do you currently hold about Islam and Muslim people? For example, when a Muslim boy from the Middle East acts out in class, do you attribute his actions to his culture and religion, or do you view the behaviour through the same lens that you would use for any other student?

Key points

There are many types of stereotypes. The logic that fuels stereotypes against Indigenous people, women, low-income people, etc., is the same logic that fuels Islamophobia. Remember, a **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 that our students are receiving is that Islam is an inherently violent religion.

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 toward Muslims and therefore fear and dislike of all or most Muslims" (University of California's Center for Race and Gender Studies).

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, as 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 KKK with Christianity, but the same distinction is rarely made for Muslims. As Wajahat Ali shared in his report, Impact of School Bullying and Discrimination on California Muslim Students, "your existence is always interrogated, investigated, and questioned."

Time	Lesson Component	Teacher Activities/optional discussion guide	Student Activities
5 minutes	**Introduction**	To get ready for this lesson, I want you to stand up and raise your hands high above head. Imagine a life jacket being placed over your arms. Buckle the jacket, give yourself a hug and make sure it is on tight. Have a seat and get ready for an adventure!	• Sitting on the carpet • Light stretching • Arrange themselves in rows similar to the seats on a boat
10 minutes for iceberg activity	**Lesson development**	Draw a line of water across the flipchart. Has anyone been in a boat before? Let's imagine that the whole class is on a boat. Draw an iceberg on the water and let the students guess what it is. **It is an iceberg!** • What do we know about icebergs? They are really big. How big? Are they bigger up top or underneath? Draw the bottom. Icebergs are 90% bigger on the bottom. This means we can only see about 10% of whole iceberg. **How might people be similar to icebergs?** • What are the things we can know about a person just on the outside? Raise your hand if you have an idea. Write the things they say as surface appearance: gender, hair colour, height, religion, etc. • Can we tell where somebody is from? Write it under the surface of the iceberg. • Can you see somebody's hopes? Fears? Past experiences? Do they have lots of money? Some people with lots of money don't spend their money on clothes, and some people with little money try very hard to look like they have enough money.	• Students are seated on the carpet. • Students imagine that they are on a boat and guess what the shape that is blocking them is. • Talk about icebergs. • Group discussion—class generates a list of things you can find out about a person just by looking at them and a list of things that are more personal. • Brain break • Writing and colouring at their desks

		• The things we can **see** don't make us who we are, yet we often judge *up here* (point to the tip of the iceberg). **Religion** • Ask students what they know about the headscarf (hijab). • Some Muslim women wear the headscarf. What does this tell you about them? What does the media tell you about them? • Does knowing somebody's religion tell us what they truly believe or how they will act? • Are all Muslims the same? Prompts: are all Indigenous people the same? • Is everyone in this school, class, or grade the same? No—no group of people is the same. • If all we hear about from the media are *negative* stories about Muslims, how might this change our views about Muslim people? Introduce: stereotypes, discrimination, and Islamophobia (see teacher's notes). **What is empathy?** Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of another person. It is important not to judge people based on the tip of their iceberg. We all have secret worlds inside of us that nobody can see. We must be gentle with each other. **Exercise** When I turn on the music, I want you to go get your journals, return to your desks, and write five things about yourself that somebody would not be able to tell just by looking at you. When you are done, put up your hand and I will bring you a piece of paper with a big hand on it. I want you to transfer your personal items onto the fingers of the hand. Put your name in the middle. You can colour and decorate this however you choose. When you are done, you will have created an inner-self portrait. Think of the hand as a picture of what you look like on the inside. Show examples and write steps on the board. Play music to signal them to move back to their desks.	

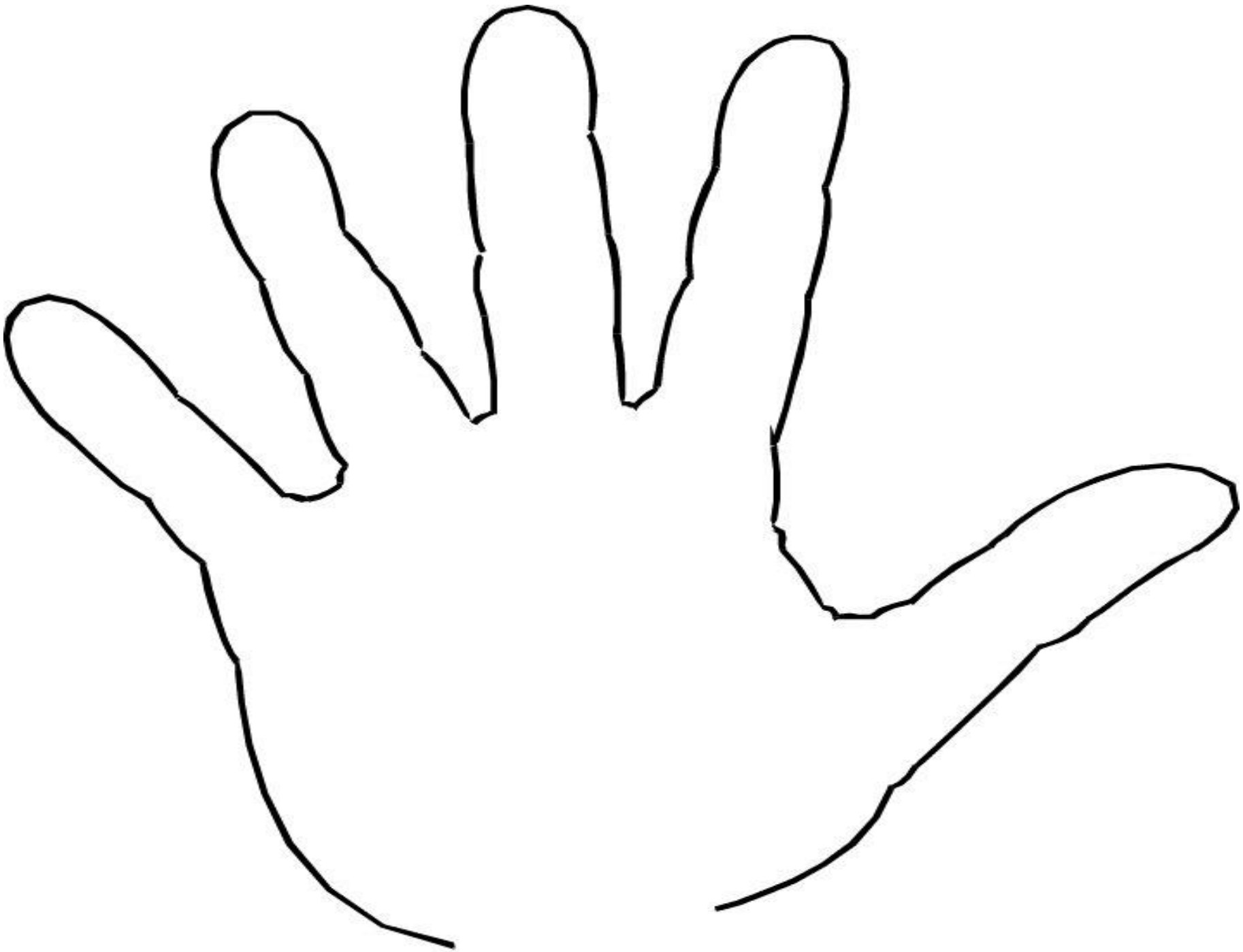
5 minutes	**Closure** (summarize big ideas and key points)	• Remember that we all have secret worlds inside of us that nobody can see, and that is why it is important to be careful with one another. • There is a big difference between what we can *see* and who somebody actually *is*. It is important not to judge people based on the tip of their iceberg. • Many grownups still have difficulties understanding how other people feel. • Empathy is a super skill that you can work on for the rest of your life, and it will help you do better at school and at work. It will also make you a happier person. • Review class definitions of stereotypes, discrimination, and Islamophobia.	
5 minutes	**Assessment** (formative and summative)	• **Formative**: participation, exit slips (write one thing you learned, felt, wondered about.) • **Summative**: see attached self-assessment for inner portrait.	

<table>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Extensions/
Adaptations</td>
<td>
French Connection
A short, two-minute video that defines a stereotype: www.vimeo.com/88978636

Alternative introduction/hook
Move your butt (alternate wording below for primary)
The purpose of this activity is to learn about the things that we can't see/what we have and don't have in common. Arrange chairs in a circle, one less chair than people. The facilitator stands in the middle and explains the rules of the game.

Rules
1. The person in the middle has to say one thing that is true about themselves that people can't know just by looking at them. Use the sentence starter: "Hi my name is _____. Move your but if _____." If the statement is true for you too, you have to move over at least two chairs. Start off superficially and go deeper as the activity continues (examples in the table below).
2. After the first practice round, the teacher sneaks into one of the chairs, leaving one of the participants in the middle.
3. If the person doesn't know what to say, help guide them by asking questions like, "What do you love to do? What is something about yourself that you are proud of?"
4. The game can go on for as long as you want, and the longer it goes, the easier it is to deepen the personal nature of the questions. For example, have you ever witnessed homophobia? Racism? Had a friend help you through something hard?

<table>
<tr><td>Elementary version
"Hi, my name is ____. All my friends who..."</td><td>Secondary version
"Move your but if you..."</td></tr>
<tr><td>• have siblings
• like chocolate
• play an instrument.</td><td>• have siblings
• play an instrument
• can't swim
• have been through something hard.</td></tr>
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Inner Portrait Assignment

Learning Intention

Learning meaningful, personal facts about each other that are not appearance-based helps us to be more empathetic and compassionate toward each other.

Step 1: Write down five facts about yourself that somebody would **not** know just by looking at you. For example: your hopes, dreams, fears, beliefs, favourite memories, family structure, or languages spoken. Do not write facts about yourself that are related to your physical appearance, such as your hair colour or height.

Step 2: Ask an adult or classmate to edit your sentences and check your spelling.

Step 3: Write your name in the middle of your hand cut-out, and write one fact per finger. Decorate your hand with pictures and colours that will help people get to know you. For example, I might colour my name in green because it is my favourite colour.

Step 4: Read the checklist on the next page. Put a check mark if you have met the criteria.

Step 5: Give yourself a mark based on the criteria. Circle the box that best fits and give at least two reasons for why you believe you deserve this mark.

Read the checklist below. Put a check mark if you have met the criteria.

Criteria	Met	Not yet met
I have read the learning intention for the assignment.		
My inner portrait contains five personal and meaningful facts about myself that someone would not know just by looking at me.		
I have asked an adult or classmate to check my spelling or scribe for me (if I needed help).		
I have written down one sentence per finger.		
My name is written clearly.		
I have included at least one picture.		

Step 5: Give yourself a mark based on the criteria. Circle the box that best fits your completion of the assignment, and provide at least two reasons why you believe you deserve this mark.

Not Yet Meeting	Minimally Meeting	Fully Meeting	Exceeding