Diversity Effect Project

Intervention

Overview

This file provides an overview of the design and content of the Diversity Effect Project intervention. The full intervention materials can be found here: [www.diversityeffect.wordpress.com](http://www.diversityeffect.wordpress.com)

**The Intervention**

One of the aims of the Diversity Effect Project was to design an intervention that could be easily picked up and used by teachers nationally and internationally. In each of the four schools, up to 4 x Year 7 tutors or PSHE tutors volunteered to take part in designing and delivering the intervention. Tutors were compensated for their time or teacher cover was provided, depending on the School. Intervention workshops were held from March 2017- April 2018. The first workshop was designed to inform teachers of the research (including full details of the methods), provide background to relevant theory and to share intervention design ideas. The second workshop was designed to review and get feedback on a draft of the intervention materials developed from the first meeting. The final workshop involved the handover of intervention materials and a Q&A opportunity. All meetings were audio-recorded for record keeping purposes, permission to record the sessions was sought from teachers.

The final intervention comprised a short version (4x 20-minute sessions) and a long version of (4x 60 minute sessions) delivered in 4 consecutive weeks in tutor groups or PSHE classes of approximately 25-30 students in each class.Teachers were given an intervention pack containing a handbook, PowerPoint slides and class task sheets**.** All intervention materials are available here: <https://diversityeffect.wordpress.com/intervention-materials/>. The intervention sessions are detailed below.

**Session 1: Understanding Difference**

This session aims to introduce the concepts of diversity (difference), and ethnicity and support students to understand the local rules that allows us to be different. First, the concepts of diversity and difference are introduced. Next, learners are directed to consider themselves and those around them in terms of their shared and different social groups. This exercise begins the process of *categorisation*, which makes different social categories salient. Research in intergroup relations suggests that making group categories salient is an important first step in improving intergroup attitudes. Importantly, the intervention stresses that such difference is positive and that there are shared characteristics between categories. The next slides explicitly engage issues of race and ethnicity, with an exploration of the definitions of these terms. A process of *norm-setting* follows, in which respect for diversity is normalised. Prescriptive norms – messages that people *should* respect diversity – are introduced by coverage of local and national ‘rules’ regarding how social groups should interact. At this stage, tutors also are asked to explain to the class why *s/he* believes that diversity is a positive thing. This is because research suggests that school tutors are viewed as authority figures and role models by young people, and as such, we would expect that a positive, personal statement from the tutor supporting the aims of the intervention will do much to help learners to ‘buy in’ to the intervention sessions. As with each of the sessions, this session ends with a moment of formal reflection, followed by a food for thought.

**Session 2: What it Means to be Different**

This session aims to introduce the concepts of discrimination and stereotyping, as well as encourage students to understand the local rules that allow them to be different. First, the concept of discrimination is introduced, with some historical examples given. Next, the concept of stereotypes is explored. Stereotypes are defined, and learners take part in an exercise that unpacks the fact that stereotypes are often incorrect and almost always unhelpful. Learners will be tasked with considering *counter-stereotypical* examples and shown visual counter-stereotypical examples. This exercise is part of the process of *cognitive training*; by teaching learners to stop, consider, and debunk stereotypes, they will have the tools to do so in the future. This will help them to challenge the stereotypes they use in everyday life and, just as importantly, to reject the stereotypes about themselves. This session ends with a moment of formal reflection, followed by a food for thought.

**Session 3: Standing in Someone else’s Shoes**

This session aims to improve learners’ intergroup attitudes by means of a perspective-taking task. First, the concept of *empathy* is defined and introduced. Psychological research shows that the more we empathise with members of another social group, the less prejudice we have towards that group, so empathy is a very important psychological concept in intergroup relations. Next, learners engage in a *perspective-taking* task. Perspective-taking is a technique by which a person imagines what it is like to be somebody else. Clearly, perspective-taking is closely linked to empathy, and research shows that perspective-taking tasks increase empathy, thereby reducing prejudice. For the perspective-taking task, students are asked to read about and take on the role of a famous figure who has experienced discrimination (e.g. Nelson Mandela or Malala Yousafzai). During this task, students are asked to interview one another. This session ends with a moment of formal reflection, followed by a food for thought.

**Session 4: Embracing our Differences**

Two competing theories of how diverse groups can peacefully coexist have been proposed: *Colourblindness* (“We’re just all the same”) and *Multiculturalism* (“We’re different but equal”). Research strongly suggests that multiculturalism has a more positive effect on intergroup relations. Therefore, the final session of the intervention focuses on fostering a positive spirit of multiculturalism, considering peer norms of diversity and fostering a shared identity. Learners are encouraged to consider an ethos of cultural sharing, giving them opportunity to reflect on how their ethnic culture contributes to the local culture. Next, positive norms of diversity are proposed by presenting real data on what learners’ peers think about racial outgroups. This is important because psychological research suggests that perception of positive ingroup norms is associated with more positive outgroup attitudes. Finally, learners take part in a group exercise that builds on the idea of a shared identity that is based on subordinate cultural identities – a process that relates to psychological theories known as *superordinate group identities* and *recategorization*. In other words, learners are encouraged to celebrate their own identity within the framework of a wider group identity (e.g., “Black people” and “White people” might consider that they are different, but part of a larger group, “British people”). This session ends with a moment of formal reflection, followed by a food for thought.