

The ACT Building Resilience Project

Case Study: Exploring extremism

School: St Bedes & St Joseph's Catholic College, Bradford

St Bedes and St Joseph's Catholic College is a recently established non selective co-educational school taking 2000 pupils aged 11-18 with over 400 in the sixth form. The college opened in 2014 with the merger of two schools in Heaton and Manningham. Pupils have diverse backgrounds and include Mir Pakistani, Polish, Slovakian, Hungarian, Filipino, Black British, Black African and white British.

Aims

- To develop knowledge and skills to examine the meanings of the terms extremism and terrorism
- To evaluate real case studies in considering what extremism might be
- To develop problem solving skills

Actions

During a sequence of lessons, pupils in Years 9 and 10 explored the use of language around extremism and terrorism and competence in being able to manage discussions using this terminology. They debated how young people can become more resilient to extremist propaganda. They looked critically at case studies of well-known terrorist actions using documentary film and explored the use of language by media sources in describing terrorism and extremism and investigated how new media sources can be used by extremists to propagandise extremist dialogue. Pupils also researched a key question of their choice that they had pondered during the project and considered how it might form a piece of extended writing.

Impact

From the start of the project I was open with the pupils about the work, telling them that I was creating a series of activities on the theme of extremism and that at the end of the project they would decide if this is something that should continue to be taught. At the end of the project all the students from each of the 4 classes voted for this theme to be taught the following year as they believed it was critically important. One pupil reported: *'It's important to learn stuff like this'*.

Next steps

I now have the confidence to implement these lessons as a part of our yearly LTP for the Year 9 students.

It is clear that staff need more training in the practical aspect of how you manage a debate/discussion about a controversial topic like this so that it doesn't 'end badly' as one colleague phrased it.

This project allowed me to experiment with different pedagogies, using P4C for the first time through showing students the picture sources and listening to the calls from 9/11 case study. There will be a review of the current SoW to include some of the learning approaches used in the project.