

Conflict Resolution in Schools

Guide for Educators in South Africa

Booklet 7

TOLERANCE

Topics in this booklet:

- Tolerance and Diversity
- Reducing Prejudice
- Respect
- Stereotypes and Preconceptions



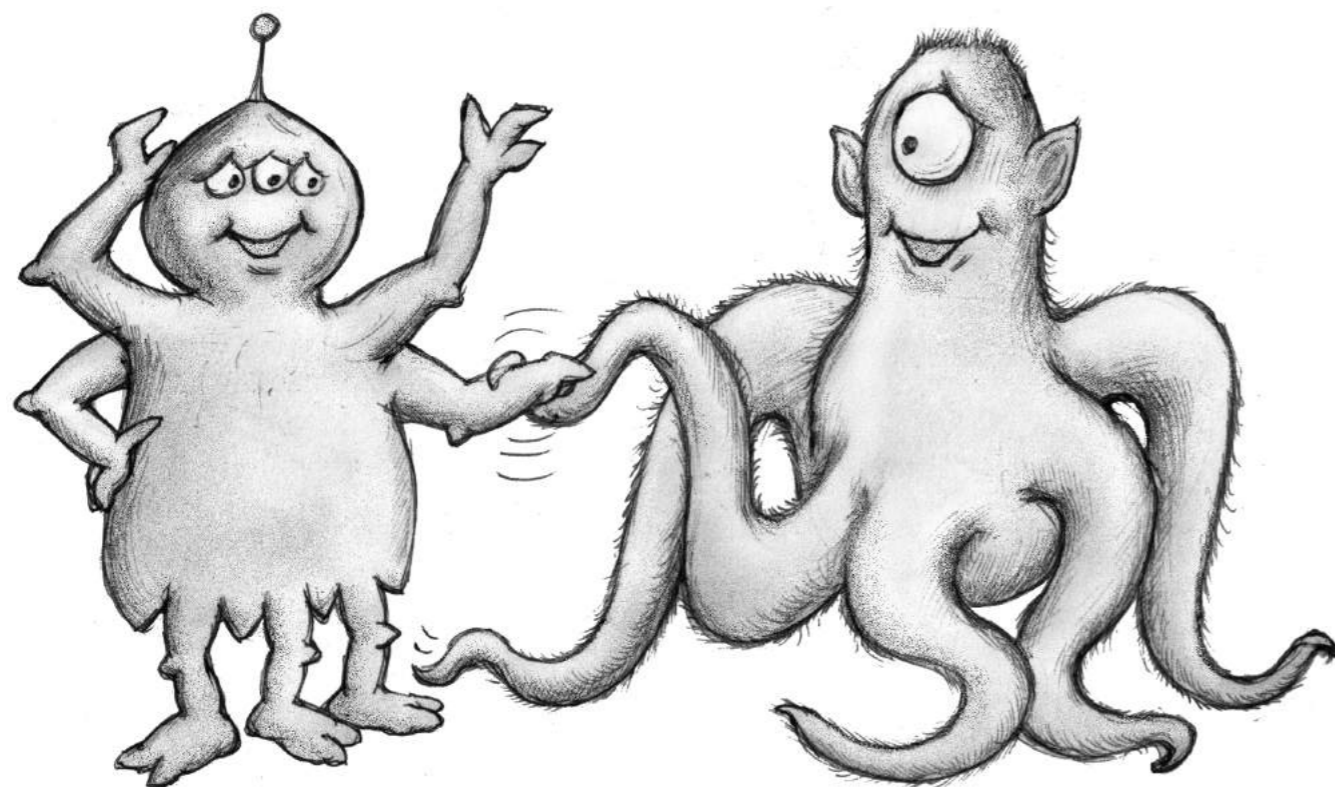
Conflict Resolution for Schools

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Booklet 7 - Tolerance

Contents

	Page
Background	1
Class Lesson 1: Understanding Tolerance	2
Learner Worksheet: Writing About Tolerance	4
Tolerance Activities	5
Class Lesson 2: Stereotypes and Preconceptions	8
Further Resources	Inside Back Cover



if more than one learner has the same country name, but they should all be familiar countries, so clues can be given by other learners). Tell them that they can read the country on the back of other learners, but they are not allowed to tell them what country they are from! Instead they can give them hints about the country – anything they know, or have heard, or believe about the country and its people. In this game it does not matter whether the things are true or false! Each learner has to speak to other learners to obtain clues which point to which country is on their back. They are not allowed to ask any direct questions (e.g. ‘What is your country?’) and the clues given should not be too leading (e.g. ‘the country north-west of South Africa’ is not allowed!).

After 5 to 10 minutes, ask the learners to sit down again. Then, divide the classroom up into ‘continents’. One part of the room is designated as Europe, one as Africa, one as North America, one as Latin America and the Caribbean (South America, Central America and the Caribbean), one as Asia, and one as Australasia (Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific islands).

Once they are all in what they believe is their ‘continent’, they can help each other to remove their labels to see whether they are in the correct ‘continent’. If they are in the wrong ‘continent’, then they should move to the correct one.

Then the members of each continent should work together to discuss the stereotypes and preconceptions that were given to them in the clues about their country. Which were common for their ‘continent’? Agree on a few of the most common – and the most objectionable – and then work on reasons why these are unacceptable to you.

Then, ask each ‘continent’ to provide a spokesperson to tell the class about the stereotypes and preconceptions they were faced with and why these are unacceptable.

Ask the class how such stereotyping leads to the alienation of groups. How does stereotyping lead to conflict and hostility?

Why could societies like Nazi Germany in the 1930’s, (former) Yugoslavia or Cambodia in the 1970’s, or Rwanda in the 1990’s have let intolerance progress to the stage of genocide or mass murder of ethnic groups?

Broaden the discussion into areas such as whether name-calling and stereotyping jokes are just harmless fun, or whether they have more serious consequences.

See ‘Issues to Explore’ below for further suggestions for discussion.

Issues to Explore

See the background information on Tolerance. Use some examples and some key facts from that section.

Tell the learners that prejudice often begins with one single bad experience or observation that gets generalised and fed into a stereotype which can be reinforced by repetition. Categorisation is a natural mental process - as our brain

struggles to make sense of our complex world, it fits our experiences into mental patterns. However, we need to be aware of this and to guard against negative stereotyping! As everybody is unique, we need to be very careful about stereotyping or feeding into prejudices.

Name-calling or labelling can be the beginning of conflict. They threaten the identity of the group under attack. It was said that the Nazi genocide of the Jews began at first as racial jokes, followed by the categorisation of Jews as a racial (rather than a religious) group, setting them apart based on visual identification.

Recall also the Rwandan civil war where the majority Hutus resented the minority Tutsis, who considered themselves to be racially superior to the Hutus, and had been given ruling status under the former colonial administration. The Hutus resentment against the Tutsis festered, and they called them ‘cockroaches’. Eventually the hatred spiralled out of control, becoming a massive genocide.

Name-calling can lead to stereotyping, which in turn can lead to prejudice and racism, which can lead on to scape-goating, then to conflict and violence, which can even progress to genocide.

Ask the learners to work together to stamp out intolerance at its root. Recall the things that the class could do to become more tolerant, such as.

- The ‘Golden Rule’ – do as you would be done by;
- Putting ourselves in the place of others (empathy);
- Accepting others for what they are (respect);
- Working in co-operation with others, rather than in competition;
- Identifying and ‘outing’ prejudices (exposing these for what they are);
- Taking time to learn more about others;
- Celebrating and enjoying diversity.

Add to this by declaring that name-calling, racial and/or discriminatory jokes and stereotyping are in bad taste and unacceptable in the class.

Holocaust survivor Ervin Straubb put forward a powerful message:

“Goodness, like evil, often begins in small steps. Heroes evolve; they aren’t born.”

Gandhi stated more than 50 years ago:

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Learner Worksheet

Not applicable

Class Lesson 2

Stereotypes & Preconceptions

Objectives

To help learners to understand:

- Stereotypes and preconceptions: how we see the world and why we create stereotypes in our minds;
- Why intolerance and discrimination are dangerous and unacceptable and why it is necessary to stop them at the root, e.g. name-calling and labelling.

Age/level

Ages 12 and above

Duration

One or two lessons

Materials

- Blackboard and chalk or flip chart and marker pen;
- Labels with country names on (these can be adhesive, or held in place with pins).

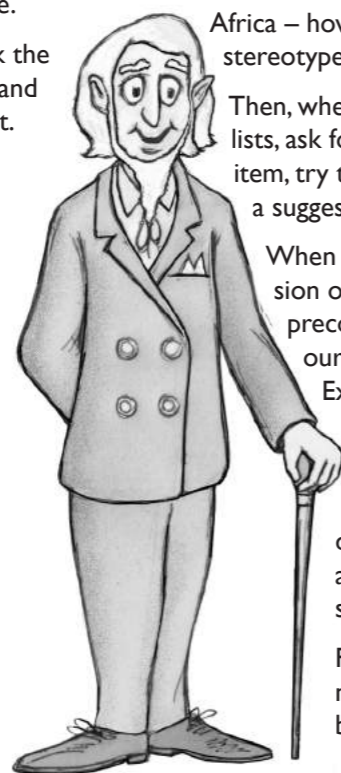
Procedure

Choose from the activities below, or complete the activities in sequence.

The first activity in this lesson is to identify the sort of stereotypes and preconceptions that we hold in relation to other nationalities, races or religions. Stereotypes imply that all members of a particular group act, look, or speak a certain way. Preconceptions are pre-formed thoughts or ideas, not necessarily based on fact or experience.



To begin this lesson, ask the learners to copy down and fill in the following chart.



Using the first column, which is designed to describe key aspects of South Africa, ask them to use words to describe the same attributes for China and the USA. These can be the same or different, depending on what learners' think about the country. If they do not know the answer, ask them to guess, based on what they have heard previously, or simply what they would expect. Also, ask them to think about the descriptions the author has given for South Africa – how true they are, or whether they are stereotypes or preconceptions.

Then, when the learners have completed their own lists, ask for contributions to a class list. For each item, try to find general agreement from the class for a suggestion.

When the list is completed, open a class discussion on the list in order to examine the class' preconceptions and misperceptions about both our own country and other areas of the world. Examine each item to see whether there is truth in it, or whether it is a stereotype, a preconception, or a misperception.

Use this activity as a springboard for a discussion about the nature of stereotyping and why we feel compelled to create stereotypes.

For the next activity, place a label with the name of a country written on it on the back of each learner (it does not matter

South Africa	China	USA
Rainbow Nation		
Friendly people		
Wise people		
Handsome people		
Big people		
Strong women		
Large families		
Stunning scenery		
Wonderful animals		
Beautiful plants		
Warm climate		
Religious mixture		
Traditional healers		

Tolerance

Background

Tolerance is the appreciation of diversity and the ability to live and let others live. It is the ability to exercise a fair and objective attitude towards those whose opinions, practices, religion, nationality and so on differ from one's own.

As William Ury notes:

“Tolerance is not just agreeing with one another or remaining indifferent in the face of injustice, but rather showing respect for the essential humanity in every person.”

*William Ury, Getting To Peace
(New York: The Penguin Group, 1999), 127*

Intolerance is the failure to appreciate and respect the practices, opinions and beliefs of another group.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used the Greek term 'agape' to describe a universal love that 'discovers the neighbour in every man it meets'.

In its *Declaration on the Principles of Tolerance* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) offers a definition of tolerance that most closely matches this manual's use of the word:

'Tolerance is the respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance is harmony in difference'.

Tolerance is viewed as a way of thinking and feeling - but most importantly, of acting - that gives us peace in our individuality, respect for those unlike us, the wisdom to discern humane values and the courage to act upon them.

We practice tolerance when we keep a just, fair and objective attitude towards others. People often have different opinions, religions, cultures, perspectives and practices. Tolerance allows us to accept and appreciate these differences.

We are often emotionally tied to our views and beliefs, yet we change these throughout our lives as we learn and have new experiences and feelings. But we can still become proud and dogmatic about our views and believe that others who do not share these are wrong. True tolerance is having your beliefs and respecting without judgement the beliefs of others, even when they are different to your own.

Children are born without bias or prejudice. Their views, values and beliefs come from their family and society. Parents are the child's first educators. By the time children come to school, their views are already partly formed. However, educators can have a profound influence on learners' attitudes. This is particularly true if they are able to teach them creative and critical thinking skills, and teach values such as tolerance. It is also important for educators



to check their own biases and prejudices, and ensure that these do not negatively influence the learners under their care.

South Africa is a multicultural society (a 'rainbow nation'). Most people in the country have contact with people of different races, genders, religions, ages, economic backgrounds et cetera. Our prejudices, stereotypes and biases are constantly being challenged and our views reassessed based on new experiences and information.

We are all individuals, regardless of colour, race or culture and it is our individual personalities that make life more interesting. Life would be boring if all our friends were exactly like us, we had only one political party and just one religion. South Africa is an interesting and exciting cultural mix, with much scope for learning, sharing views and opinions and expanding our knowledge and understanding.

Differences do not themselves cause conflicts. It is the lack of tolerance for differences that is one of the main causes of conflict. With tolerance, we can live in harmony with those who have views and beliefs different to our own.

Tolerance requires coping skills, especially when we are confronted by somebody with conflicting views, values or beliefs that have strong emotional overtones, such as those on politics or religion. In order to be tolerant, we must be able to manage our emotions.

Class Lesson I

Reducing Prejudice and Increasing Tolerance

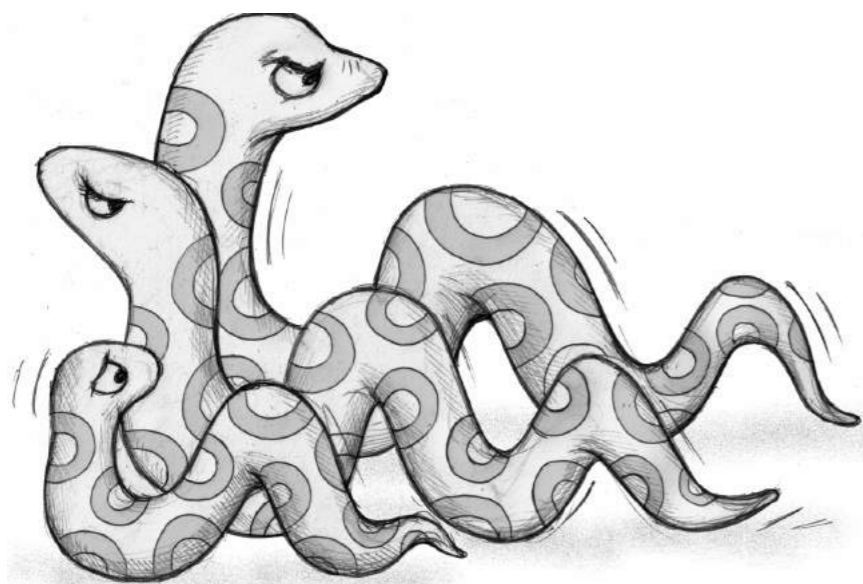
Some people find diversity enriching while others view it as threatening. However, it is known that children develop prejudices and awareness of differences very early on in their lives. These are reinforced by family, peer groups, society, governmental institutions and language.

There is no quick way of reducing learners' prejudices and increasing their tolerance. It has been shown that merely presenting information about different ethnic or minority groups seems to have little effect on attitudes. On the other hand, contact with members of another ethnic group, in a positive and cooperative context, does improve attitudes. It follows that introducing conflict resolution skills and cooperative learning experiences in a multi-cultural class would be beneficial. But other interventions may be needed in a class composed predominantly of a single ethnic or cultural group.

There is also evidence that children who are more sophisticated in possessing such cognitive skills as problem-solving and concept formation are less likely to exhibit prejudiced attitudes and behaviour.

Research indicates that people who feel good about themselves and have strong, healthy self-concepts are much less likely to be prejudiced or intolerant. Educators can therefore help by working to improve the self-esteem of learners and by stressing that putting down another person or group of people does nothing to enhance their own prestige or self-worth (which is, in fact, a very ignorant attitude!).

Many of the lessons in this guide will help learners to build their self-worth and to value diversity and cooperation. Educators can build on these by paying attention to and praising positive behaviour in their class that supports tolerance, cooperation and the celebration of differences and diversity.



Respect

We respect people when we admire, appreciate and hold them in particularly high esteem. We show respect to others, however, by being polite and treating them with courtesy. Showing respect for others is one way of exercising tolerance.

For example:

- 'Do you see how the differences in our class make it more interesting?'
- 'It is so interesting to learn about our different beliefs and religions and yet to see how the core of each is the same...'
- 'Look at how teamwork has achieved great results through using all your different skills and abilities!'
- 'Look at how many solutions you generated through using all your different personalities and creativity!'
- 'None of us could have achieved this on our own. Thank you so much for your co-operation and tolerance in working together.'
- 'I noticed that this group found a really different and interesting way to solve the problem.'

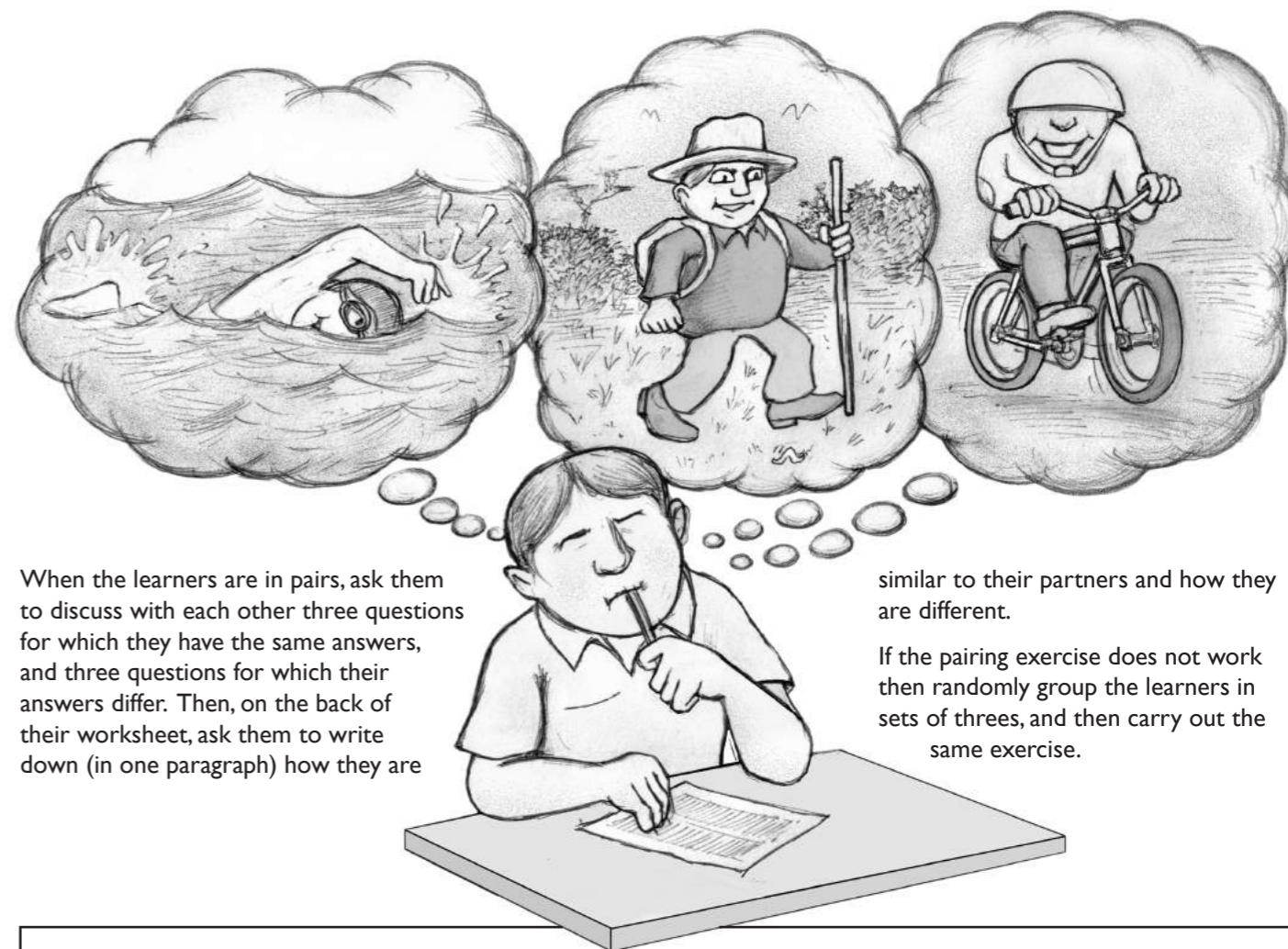
You can also use stock phrases when appropriate, such as:

- 'It takes all kinds to make the world.'
- 'Everybody has their own way.'
- 'You can't fit a square peg into a round hole.'

It is vital that educators examine their own prejudices and biases and work to overcome these, or at the very least to avoid displaying them in front of the learners. Being a tolerant role model (welcoming and accepting diversity) is one way to instil tolerance in others.

Educators can also help by ensuring that learners are allowed freedom of expression in a supportive atmosphere. For example, include some open-ended activity each week with support for a number of responses.

All too often, educators give learners the mistaken impression that there is always a single correct answer or way of doing things. Instead, there should be recognition that there are different ways to achieve the same goal (and different people may be better at working in different ways).



When the learners are in pairs, ask them to discuss with each other three questions for which they have the same answers, and three questions for which their answers differ. Then, on the back of their worksheet, ask them to write down (in one paragraph) how they are

similar to their partners and how they are different.

If the pairing exercise does not work then randomly group the learners in sets of threes, and then carry out the same exercise.

Comparisons Worksheet

- If you could choose just one thing to do in your leisure time, would you:
 - Swim in the sea?
 - Walk through the bush?
 - Ride your bike?
- Would you rather play:
 - Alone?
 - With a few friends?
 - With lots of friends?
- Would you rather:
 - Read a book?
 - Listen to music?
 - Watch TV?
- Would you rather be:
 - Rich?
 - Happy?
 - Famous?
- Would you rather be:
 - Clever?
 - Kind?
 - Tough?
- Would you rather be known as:
 - Brave?
 - Adventurous?
 - Creative?
- What would you most like a friend to be:
 - Funny?
 - Loyal?
 - Honest?
- Which of the following actions would be the hardest for you to do:
 - Admit you broke something?
 - Admit you told a lie?
 - Say you were sorry?

Pen Pals

For older learners, find pen-pals from other countries, other parts of South Africa, or different communities.

Help them to find out and understand the similarities and differences in customs, ways of life, religions etc.

Then, open out the discussion. For example:

- How many of these descriptions have anything to do with looks?
- How important are differences in appearance in day-to-day life?
- Would life on Mars be better if all the people there were similar?
- Why does the world need differences?

Differences – Plus & Minus

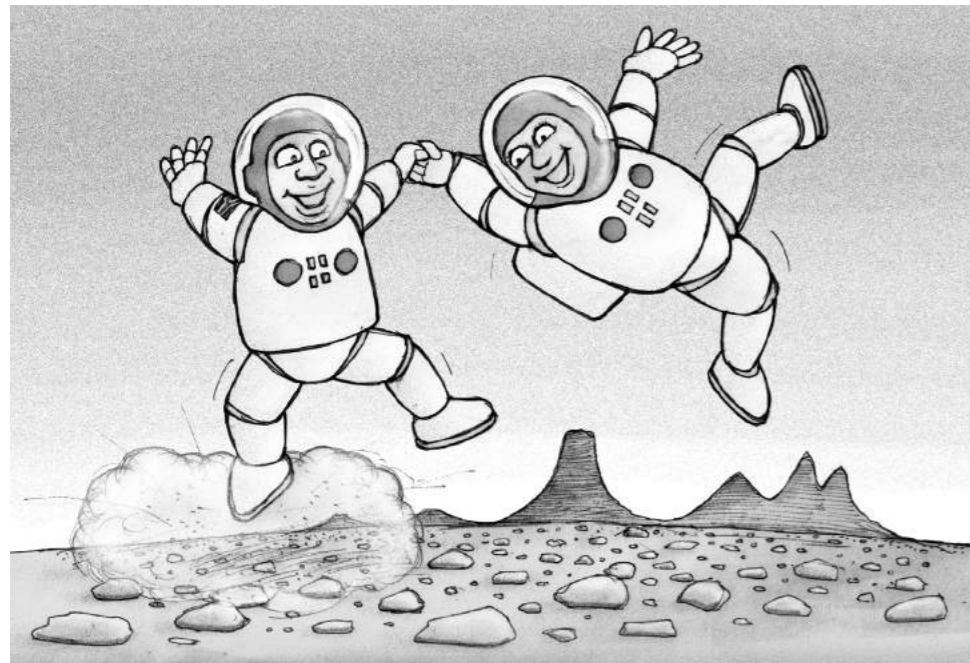
Explain that in many cases, differences can be seen as having positive and negative impacts. Ask the learners to imagine that they had a learner in the class who was in a wheelchair (if you do have a learner in a wheelchair, then use a different example). Ask the learners to think of three examples of negative things about that learner's presence (the minuses). Then, ask them for three positive things about that learner's presence (the pluses). Finally, ask the class for three ways in which it would make no difference at all.

Continue the exercise with other appropriate examples, such as:

- A deaf learner;
- A blind educator;
- A black teacher in an all-white school;
- A non-Afrikaans speaking learner in an Afrikaans school;
- A boy learner in an all girl classroom;
- A Buddhist or Hindu in a Christian school.

Then open up the discussion, for example:

- Why do we often view differences as negative when they also have many positive aspects?
- How can we emphasis the positives?



- If we have strong negative feelings about a particular difference, what can we do about it?

Beliefs & Values

Ask the learners to vote on the following questions – thumbs up for a yes, thumbs down for a no. Then, ask them a selection of questions (chosen to suit their age, background and ability). Stress that everybody can choose what they believe and value – this is an individual choice, one that is right for each learner. Wait long enough between giving out each question so they can look around and see how other learners are voting.

For example:

- Should children have a set bedtime?
- Should children watch as much TV as they like?
- Should children finish their homework before watching television?
- Should children help their parents with jobs around the house?
- Should children respect their parents?
- Do animals have rights?
- Should we protect the environment?
- Should teenagers be allowed to go out with boy- or girlfriends alone?
- Should elderly people receive state pensions?
- Should education be free for all?

After this exercise, comment on the range of different beliefs and values in the classroom. Then, open up the discussion. For example:

- What are beliefs and values?
- How do we acquire them?
- Why are they important?
- How can people of different values get along?

Comparisons

Distribute the comparisons worksheet (see on the next page) and ask learners to complete it.

Then tell the learners that they need to find a partner who has a lot (at least three) of the same answers as they do. To help them to find partners, read out each question in turn and ask the learners to hold up their hands when they have chosen the answer. The learners should watch for other learners who have many of the same answers as they do.

Further Resources

Websites:

Wikipedia Encyclopedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tolerance>

Publications:

Title: Creative Conflict Resolution
Author: William J. Kreidler
Publisher: Scott, Foresman and Company
ISBN 0-673-15642-7

Title: The Values Book
Author: Pam Schiller & Tamera Bryant
Publisher: Gryphon House
ISBN 0-87659-189-6

Title: Managing Conflict with Confidence
Author: Clare Heaton & Maureen Lynch
Publisher: Pearson Education Australia
ISBN 978-174091-059-0
<http://www.pearsoned.com.au>



Understanding Tolerance

Objectives

To help learners to understand tolerance and the importance of tolerance in building peaceful and harmonious communities

Age/level

Age 10 to 14 years

Duration

A lesson or part lesson
Plus writing homework (see below)

Materials

Blackboard and chalk or flip chart and marker pen

Procedure

Introduce the subject of tolerance to the class. Use key information from the background information on Tolerance. Stress the importance of tolerance in building peaceful, harmonious and diverse communities.

Discuss with the class whether they have ever felt different. How did it feel? Ask learners to think about something they do or believe in that is different from what their friends do or believe in.

The discussion will probably centre on the negative aspects of feeling different. Point out that everybody is unique – and unique is a really positive word! What is good about being unique? So why is it good when we are unique, but bad when others are too?!

Brainstorm the different ways of being different! Write these on the board, using normal brainstorming techniques (encouraging all contributions, praising creativity, not judging any contributions). These can include aspects such as: race or colour, culture, religion, family situation, disability, health, appearance, size, intelligence, creativity, skills and abilities, beliefs and values, likes and dislikes, personality, gender, sexuality etc. If important areas are missing from the list, ask the learners: 'what about... shall we add that too?' and add to the list.

Then, when the list is long and diverse, ask the learners to study the list and consider all the many ways in which we can be different. What do they think about that? Isn't it amazing how diverse and interesting our world is? Ask them to look at the different challenges people have to face, and how these can make them resourceful and 'differently able' or talented. When some people already have to face these enormous challenges, why on earth would we want to add to their challenge and pain by being intolerant?

Finally, look at the positive ways of being different – the skills, abilities, creativity and even genius contained therein.

Point out the value of diversity. The more varied our upbringings, culture, religions, perspectives, skills and abilities the more rich and varied will be our interactions and achievements. Open-mindedness and a real joy in learning are needed to truly enjoy diversity.

Tell the learners that prejudice often begins with one single bad experience that gets generalised and then fed into a stereotype. This is a natural mental process. As our brains struggle to make sense of our complex world, they fit our experiences into mental patterns. However, we need to be aware of this and guard against negative stereotyping! As everybody is unique, we need to be very careful about stereotyping or feeding into prejudices.

Ask the learners what they can do to:

- Avoid developing prejudices themselves;
- Change the minds of other people who have prejudices.

Continue the discussion, working towards the need for tolerance, and how this enhances our lives. Then, move on to how the class could work to become more tolerant. See 'Issues to Explore' below.

Give the learners writing homework – see the suggested questions below.

Issues to Explore

See the background information on Tolerance. Use some examples and some key facts from that section.

Learners could avoid prejudice themselves by working to become more tolerant (see below), and by recognising and enjoying diversity.

Learner Worksheet

Writing about Tolerance

If you have experienced intolerance personally, write about that experience. Why do you think it happened? Was it just or fair? What did it make you feel like? Describe your experience to others.

Describe a time you had difficulty in showing tolerance and respect towards another person. What made it difficult? What did you do about it? Is there something you could have done that would have made it easier?

Think of a time somebody (a friend, another learner, family member, etc.) was not very tolerant of you. Write a pretend letter to that person describing what he or she did, how it made you feel, and what you would like this person to do differently in the future.

Think of a world where tolerance was both recognised as a virtue and adopted as 'the way of behaving'. How would this world be different? Draw a picture of what life would be like in this world where tolerance had become a way of life.

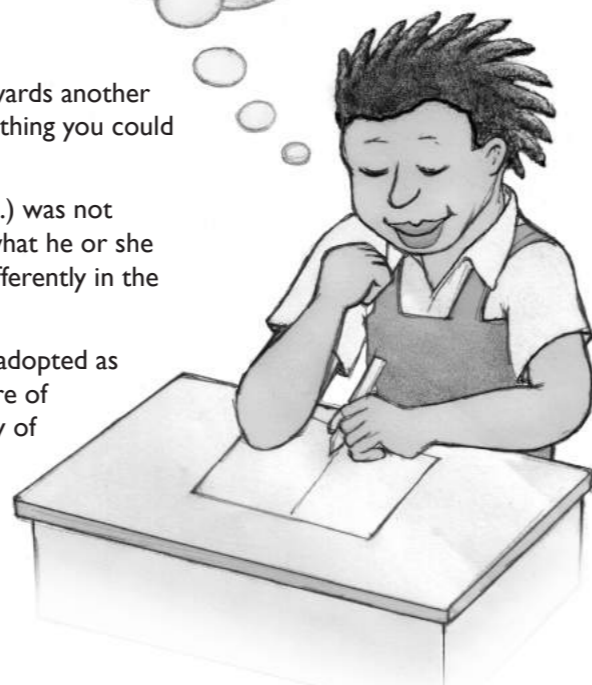
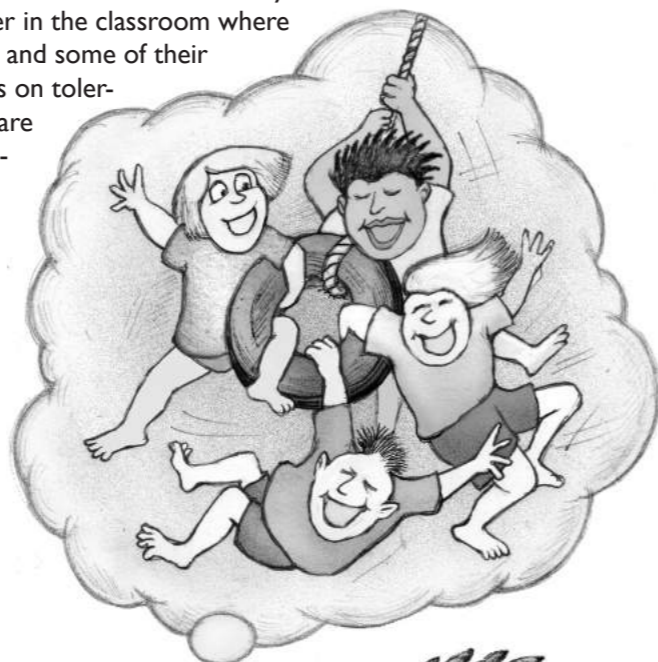
The 'Golden Rule' is 'do as you would be done by'. How does this apply to our 'Rainbow Nation' with its ethnic mix and variety of cultures and religions? What is the relationship between tolerance and harmony in a community?

Learners could work to change the minds of other people who have prejudices by providing practical examples of how their prejudices can be wrong. Being a positive example for your race, gender, religion, disability etc. can be the strongest way to break down stereotypes and prejudices.

The class could work to become more tolerant by:

- The 'Golden Rule': Do as you would be done by;
- Putting ourselves in the place of others (empathy);
- Accepting others for what they are (respect);
- Working in co-operation with others, rather than in competition;
- Identifying and 'outing' prejudices (exposing these for what they are);
- Taking time to learn more about others;
- Celebrating and enjoying diversity.

The class may have other suggestions of their own. They could use these maxims on banners to put up around the classroom. Or they could build a tolerance corner in the classroom where these and some of their essays on tolerance are exhibited.



Tolerance Activities

Objectives

- To give learners the opportunity to practice activities involving tolerance;
- To develop an understanding of the importance of tolerance in building peaceful and harmonious communities.

Age/level

Ages 9 to 14 years

Duration

One lesson or more

Materials

- Blackboard and chalk or flip chart and marker pen
- **The Human Family** – drawing paper, crayons etc.
- **Comparisons** – Comparison worksheets (see below) (could also be drawn on the board before the class, for learners to answer)

Procedure

Review the subject of tolerance with the class.

Then, use some of the tolerance activities below to give the learners an opportunity to practice tolerance.

After each activity where tolerance and/or understanding of tolerance is shown, praise the learners' efforts. Ask whether they found the activity difficult and if so, why. Would anything have made it work better? Do they understand the connection with tolerance and the way in which tolerance can help to build harmonious and accepting groups (and societies)?

Then, continue the discussion about general aspects of tolerance.

Issues to Explore

See the background information on Tolerance. Use some examples and some key facts from that section.

Learner Worksheet

Not applicable

Tolerance Activities

The Human Family

Ask the learners to draw pictures or cartoons of their families and label family members. When they have finished, put them onto the classroom walls. Let the learners look at all the pictures, and then ask them what sort of different



families have not been covered (e.g. single-parent families, childless couples, families with animals etc.)? Discuss how many people were included in most of the families pictured? Are our relatives and grandparents family members too? What does an 'extended family' mean? It is said that this was not a concept in traditional African tribes, as the whole tribe was considered 'family'. In fact, we all belong to a much larger family – the human family.

Face to Face

Assign partners to each learner and ask them to sit or stand facing each other. Every learner has three minutes to write down five ways in which they differ from their partner and five characteristics that they have in common.

After the three minutes are up, each set should change partners and repeat the exercise.

Now, in a class discussion, list the typical different and similar characteristics on the blackboard. After writing each characteristic down, when it is repeated, add the number by the entry, so at the end of the exercise you can see which are the most common similarities and differences.

At the end, discuss the results. Which were the most common? Were there some features that were both differences and similarities (e.g. while both have hair, one learner has curly hair, while another has straight hair)?

Which differences are the most important – and which are the least important?

What features are most people born with? Which features can they change? How can this be done?

Differences on Mars

Ask the learners to pretend that they are going on a trip to Mars. If they could take one person with them, what sort of person would it be (that is, what skills would that person have)?

Leave the learners to think about the question and to write out some suggestions, together with reasons. Then, ask for suggestions. Write these on the blackboard. Discuss why the learners have picked the qualities they did.