Countless Ways

Allowing young people to express their perspectives through story material. The idea is to think about this as similar to a sketch book, where the material is mixed of images, texts, music, videos, and dancehall culture. Mixtapes are something that has not been considered in the classroom. Although the cassette tape is no longer a widely used thing, the concept of the mixtape is something that has not gone away particularly in hip-hop and dancehall culture. Mixtapes are a place where much is shared in a more complex way through narrative and rhythm, through peer networks and informal exchanges. Some mixtapes become iconic and have been reproduced in digital formats, with originals fetching high prices from collectors. Many artists, such as Larry Achiampong, Sondra Perry, Eula Bliss, have taken on this idea and expanded it into the visual through mixing digital images, videos and music to make the ‘mixtape’ performance. It could also be said that Arthur Jafa uses a similar aesthetic as a strategy to make his work.

My proposal for a mixtape methodology is to think about this as a way to begin to build spaces and express opinions through creating digital mixes of images, texts, video and sounds. I think about this as similar to a sketch book or as a playful way of sharing. It’s like an active collage, a way of collecting and curating research material. The idea is to think about engaging young people as contributors and perspectives through story-telling, thinking about narratives and exploring truth and fiction in different contexts and other issues.

In this simple activity that stimulates frank discussions, allowing young people to express their opinions and ideas through mediums they are exploring outside of school.

Why Do Black Lives Matter?

- Begin by asking the question “Do Black Lives Matter?” or “Do you think Black Lives Matter?”
- Working in groups of three or four, ask the young people to answer this by choosing between three right videos, news stories and/or music from the internet. Ask each group to discuss and select the content together.
- Once they have made a selection ask the young people to decide together the order they will present the material to create a narrative about their ideas.
- Finally, invite each group to present their choices to the rest of the class and use this as a way to develop the discussion.

Watch the mixtapes developed by educators at the Serpentine Galleries to inspire young people to reflect on race and racism.

“A Practice of Freedom”

On the reverse is a quote by James Baldwin selected by Barby Asante, alongside a still from Asante’s project with Eula Bliss, “Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race.”

FURTHER STUDY

- Between the World and Me
- Teaching to Transgress
- Visual Culture: The Reader
- Multiculturalism, post-9/11: The Language of Archive

EXERCISE 2

Working in groups, choose a topic based on the BLM principles and develop a factual podcast or a role-play scenario that could be used to share the discussion with others.

EXERCISE 3

A Fictional Writing

Ask students to work in groups to select a topic from the BLM principles and develop a fictional story that imagines the guiding principles in action in the near or imagined future.

What impact would this have on our society?

EXERCISE 4

A Story

Ask students to work in groups to select a topic from the BLM principles and develop a fictional story that imagines the guiding principles in action in the near or imagined future.

What impact would this have on our society?

EXERCISE 5

Ideas for Further Study

You might also open up to more local concerns relating to race and racism. Things to critically explore could include:
- Slavery and colonialism, including post-colonial facts, Independence and the legacies including immigration.
- The riots in the 1980s, education policies, policing/ SJS laws, anti-racist movements and actions.
- War or terror and the rise of Islamophobia.

- Police brutality and racist violence, such as the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the recent murder of Jo Cox.
- Multiculturalism, post-blackness, the time of Black Lives Matter, Trump and Brexit.

Using the above points and more, what activities and approaches could you explore race and racism and encourage young people to develop transformative thinking?
TO ANY CITIZEN OF THIS COUNTRY WHO FIGURES HIMSELF AS RESPONSIBLE—AND PARTICULARLY THOSE OF YOU WHO DEAL WITH THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE—MUST BE PREPARED TO "GO FOR BROKE". OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT IN THE ATTEMPT TO CORRECT SO MANY GENERATIONS OF BAD FAITH AND CRUELTY, WHEN IT IS OPERATING NOT ONLY IN THE CLASSROOM BUT IN SOCIETY, YOU WILL MEET THE MOST FANTASTIC, THE MOST BRUTAL, AND THE MOST DETERMINED RESISTANCE. THERE IS NO POINT IN PRETENDING THAT THIS WON'T HAPPEN.

Quote from James Baldwin, *A Talk to Teachers or The Negro Child — His Self-Image*, 1963

Still from Baldwin’s *Nigger RELOADED*, Barby Asante and sorryyoufeeluncomfortable, October Gallery, 2015