

Community cohesion and the prevention of violent extremism A resource for teachers to use in the classroom

Resource title

GTIP Think Piece - Values and Controversial Issues

Source: <http://www.geography.org.uk/gtip/thinkpieces/valuesandcontroversialissues>

Outline

We are frequently confronted with controversy in various forms - political debates reported in the media, street protests and demonstrations, and impromptu national debates. Geography as a subject can help pupils navigate such complex and sometimes unsettling issues and dilemmas. Some key questions to consider are:

- How do controversial issues relate to the teaching and learning of geography?
- What are possible approaches that geography teachers can adopt when dealing with controversial issues

Where values arise, controversy follows. It has been argued that both geography as a discipline and the process of education are 'shot through with values'. The QCA website explains how the national curriculum for all subjects is based on a statement of values of which several seem particularly pertinent to geography – these include:

- Respect for others including children
- Refusal to support values or actions that may be harmful to individuals or communities
- Accepting responsibility to maintain a sustainable environment for future generations

Links between geography and controversial issues are also explored in relation to the global dimension, particularly in terms of conflict resolution, global citizenship, values and perceptions.

In order to avoid the issues pitfall of 'morally careless' teaching, this web-based resource explores the characteristics of more 'careful' teaching as:

- Teaching to generate a 'culture of argument', where different accounts are listened to and where appropriate countered
- Trying to encourage a tone of 'confident uncertainty' - i.e. confident learners, who know that there is invariably more to know
- Addressing the most difficult questions, including conflicts, forced population movements, growing inequality and environmental sustainability
- Providing opportunities to practise making informed decisions and expressing viewpoints

For teachers looking for materials that provide 'food for thought', this is a practical and illuminating resource, which offers both guidance and a range of ideas for classroom teaching and learning.

Links across other subjects within resource

Links with **PSHE education** and **Citizenship**

Additional support

Oxfam Teaching Controversial Issues - an interesting perspective on teaching controversial issues from a non-governmental organisation, with a downloadable publication devoted to these issues (but not specific to geography). http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/teachers/controversial_issues/index.htm