



Diversity in the National Curriculum—History KS3

Cultural Diversity—A Living History



History, by its very nature should encompass cultural diversity. The aims and purposes of the Key Stage 3 curriculum state that the subject offers opportunities to 'find out what past societies were like, how they organised themselves and what beliefs and cultures influenced people's actions'.¹ Furthermore, it allows students to 'see the diversity of human experience and understand more about themselves as individuals and members of society'.² Why then do teachers struggle to integrate it into schemes of learning which, through Years 7 to 9 supposedly cover British history from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century as well as key events in European and World history?



Complacency in our subject is easy; we focus on those elements we feel comfortable with. African Days are celebrations of culture that sweep up 61 separate countries into one pigeon hole, or a peremptory look at the slave trade rather than an exploration of the great kingdoms that stretched over Zambia and Benin; an examination of the oldest University in the world in Morocco; or a profile of Nkrumah, the Ghanaian



father of African Nationalism in the 1950s. In Year 9 we spend six terms examining the emergence of the modern world through the twentieth century, perhaps twenty minutes on the Second World War in the Pacific and somehow neglect China and Japan altogether. The question becomes therefore, how, as practitioners, we can ensure that a full range of cultural diversity in planning and delivery becomes the norm, rather than the hastily added exception.

One of the greatest problems for teachers and education providers across all disciplines is that we

are somehow magically expected to include the global dimension and very few of us know where to go to find resources, information or advice. In the lectures I have delivered as part of my role in African Initiatives, (www.african-initiatives.org.uk/—a social justice organisation working with communities in Africa) which holds the Global Resource Centre for Bristol and South Glos, it is the single most highlighted obstacle to integrating cultural diversity into our work. Every area and many towns and cities have Development Education Centres which have all of these things on tap. Resources ranging from photographs to Massai artefacts, text books to time lines, games, films, lesson plans, visual, audio, kinaesthetic tasks, assemblies, starters, fillers, plenaries. The possibilities are quite literally endless.



With the help of these resources and ideas teachers can begin to tap into the cultural diversity that is already part of the content of the curriculum. By looking at the rise and fall of the Moghul Empire in India; the myriad of cultures and nationalities that made up Malaysia; or the importance of the oil in the Middle East to Britain eighty years ago the British Empire becomes that bit clearer to 13 year olds who don't 'get' how British culture evolved into its present form. By comparing the Industrial Revolution (often universally classed as '*the most boring subject in Year 8*') to the technical prowess of the Egyptians, or the current progress of the developing world, students' horizons are stretched that little bit further. We do not lose any of the significance of the content we already teach, we just take the significance and ping a few of the cultural threads.



For it is the eurocentricity of the students themselves which is often the hardest thing to counter. An outlook which is gained through Hollywood binoculars and innate media negative stereotyping. One of the most effective and often forgotten ways of bringing cultural diversity into a classroom, even

a Key Stage 3 classroom, is by tapping into the depths of the local community. An exploration of the local authority's website is a start; a phone call to community associations and groups; to charities and non profit organisations or to the LEA can all produce *people*. People who through imparting their own experiences and life stories reach out to students and classes in a way text books and videos never can. A scheme of learning on 1960s Britain can be enriched by a forum of 5 people who grew up or arrived in the local area, ready and willing to answer questions from individuals, groups or pairs. This can then lead to an enquiry or examination of oral history, its benefits and drawbacks.



Sometimes it is our own ignorance that appears insurmountable in days cluttered with bureaucracy and duties outside the classroom. Teachers and facilitators are themselves outside preconceived safety zones when looking at subjects never covered or approached when themselves at school or trained. The internet is a natural resource to turn to for information; websites such as www.globaldimension.org.uk a great starting point for resources and inspiration. Development Education Centres in Reading (www.risc.org.uk), Leeds (www.leedsdec.org.uk) and Birmingham (www.tidec.org) (to name but a few) all have websites. Grants are available to schools from organisations such as the British Council (www.britishcouncil.org) to fund initiatives. Charities such as Oxfam (www.oxfam.org.uk/education), Christian Aid (www.christianaid.org.uk) and Action Aid (www.actionaid.org.uk) all have fantastic education departments—and campaign briefing papers to brush up your knowledge. After all, diverse knowledge has diverse power.

Field trips to archives, museums, heritage sites or galleries and in their simplest form a walk

around the local area, illustrate cultural diversity at every turn if teachers and practitioners are able and willing to emphasise it. Archives can be Aladdin's caves for children who have never seen them before. Lists of statistics become codes just waiting to be broken. The names of convicts sent to Australia, immigrants set for America or lists of soldiers killed in warfare



suddenly become real people, telling real stories. Most places have websites that list monthly events and opportunities, including exhibitions that weave diversity into history; many have mailing lists. All have willing staff who are happy to lead talks, answer questions and most of all, educate.

History is a subject which is so often labelled as irrelevant to the here and now by parents, students and, sadly and increasingly—schools. Cultural diversity is by its very definition the 'living history' of us, our towns, country, continent and world. By using it in our teaching we bring relevance not only to the significant events of the past, but to the understanding of the present, and to the crafting of the history makers and shapers of the future.



¹ www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/secondary_history/teaching?view=get

² *ibid*

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Additional Resources

The **Real Histories Directory** has a number of resources that may help with the teaching of History at KS3. They include the following:

The **Development Education Association** (www.dea.org.uk/) promotes education for a just and sustainable world. They have a national network of member organisations that share this commitment. DEA's focus is primarily on schools and initial teacher education and global youth work.

The **World Education Development Group** (www.wedg.org.uk/) in Kent stocks a wide range of educational materials on global citizenship and different countries, including books, photopacks, DVDs, and artefacts. It lends materials and offers ideas, advice and training. It can also organise workshops for teachers and/or pupils.

GLADE (The Centre for Global and Development Education) (www.glade.org/) serves Somerset and neighbouring areas providing education materials (loans, sales, reference), training, innovative projects for both formal and non-formal education sectors. The current focus is on North-South partnerships between schools, sustainable development through the arts and all aspects of global citizenship.

Leeds Development Education Centre (www.leedsdec.org.uk/) is an educational charity that aims to raise awareness of global sustainable development issues with people in West Yorkshire. They have a wide range of resources for primary and secondary teachers and youth workers available for sale or loan and provide training on a range of global development and environmental issues.

Norfolk Education & Action for Development (www.nead.org.uk/) aims to show the links—environmental, economic, cultural, historical—that exist between people, and by doing so to raise the awareness of the inequalities in our world and increase the understanding of their causes. NEAD undertakes a wide range of educational activities with schools youth groups and community organisations. In addition, it operates a Resource Centre, which loans and sells teaching resources and provides information.

For more on the history of Africa, the Caribbean and India, **Ancient India** (www.ancientindia.co.uk/) is a British Museum site, that explores the people, culture, beliefs and history of the Indus Valley and ancient India using animations, 3D models and objects from The British Museum's collection. BBC World Service—**The Story of Africa** (www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1624_story_of_africa/index.shtml) tells the history of the continent from an African perspective. **Caribbean Histories Revealed** (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/caribbeanhistory/) tells the history of the British Caribbean through government documents, photographs.

For those interested in looking at local history, **Birmingham Black History's** website (www.birminghamblackhistory.com/) was set up to promote events during Birmingham's Black History Month celebrations, but as Black History happens all year round this is a resource for edutainment for all. **Black and Ethnic Minority Experience** (BE-ME) (www.be-me.org/) was established in 1999 to record the experiences of African-Caribbean and Asian people who came to Wolverhampton after World War II. **Butetown History & Arts Centre** (www.bhac.org/) collects, preserves and presents the lived history of old Cardiff Bay. The exhibits, books and other materials that BHAC produce draw on the photographs, documents and memories of local people. **Liverpool Black Heritage** (www.visitliverpool.com/blackheritage/home) website not only gives you the story of Liverpool's black heritage in bygone years but it reveals the many facets of contemporary black Liverpool life. Manchester Jewish Museum (www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com/) tells the story of the Jewish community in Manchester over the last 200 years. **Northamptonshire Black History Project** (www.wellingboroughrec.org.uk/blackh/blackh.asp) records and promotes Black history in Northamptonshire over at least the past 500 years. They have documented 660 Black history references stretching back 800 years and have recorded over 180 oral history interviews. **Preserving Asian Heritage** (www.emen.org.uk/) is an oral history DVD that tells the stories of Asians who were expelled from Uganda during the government of Idi Amin in the 1970s, and who eventually settled in the UK, particularly Leicester.

If you want to explore the history of diverse communities in the UK, **Jewish Museum** (www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/) represents an important educational and cultural resource. The **Romany & Traveller Family History Society** (www.rtfhs.org.uk/) is a subscription-based organisation comprising keen family historians with a special interest in their British Gypsy and Traveller roots.

Channel 4—History in Action: Race in the 20th Century website (www.channel4.com/learning/main/netnotes/programid1008.htm) explores the representations of Empire and immigration in Britain. The **Connections** exhibition and website (www.connections-exhibition.org/) is a travelling exhibition for ages 11 to 14 charting the 'hidden histories' of Asian, Black and Jewish people in Britain. It is available to hire free of charge. There is also a supporting website, interactive CD ROM and teachers' guide. **HomeBeats: Struggles for Racial Justice** (www.irr.org.uk/publication/cdrom/) is a multimedia journey from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean to the making of modern Britain. The **Moving Here** website (www.movinghere.org.uk/) explores and illustrates why people came to England over the last 200 years. The site focuses on Caribbean, Irish, Jewish and South Asian communities at present, looking at what their experiences were and continue to be.

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The Real Histories Directory

The **Real Histories Directory** (www.realhistories.org.uk) has been created as a resource tool for teachers, parents, pupils and the wider community to support them in their teaching and learning about cultural diversity in the UK. The website helps you to locate **resources** in your and other LEAs, such as storytellers, dual language books, culturally diverse toys and relevant **events** taking place in the UK. There are also items of **news** that may be of particular interest to schools and teachers.

You can also submit resources that you would like to include in the directory free of charge by visiting the site, clicking on 'Submit an entry' and following the on-screen instructions.

As well as the varied resources available, each month a new **Topic of the Month** is added with suggestions for using the Directory in the classroom and at home.

We are interested in hearing your views on our Topics and the Real Histories website. You can email comments and suggestions to: realhistories@runnymedetrust.org.