



Global Voices Information Sheet

The Muslim Youth Canada Project



Photo from the Canadian Council of Muslim Women's Muslim Youth Canada national forum, Ottawa, 2009 (MY Canada website).

Background Info

- The Committee on Homeland Security (part of the U.S. government) was formed in 2002 to help protect America from possible terrorist threats after the World Trade Center attacks in 2001. The Committee holds hearings and helps make laws relating to homeland security.
- Chair Peter King called a committee to determine “The Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and that Community’s Response.”
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (part of the Canadian government) has a Multiculturalism program that funds projects to help Canadians foster their cultural ancestry and identities, like Muslim Youth Canada.
- Muslim Youth Canada was led by the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, a national advocacy group, which held discussions about issues relating to Muslim Youth all over Canada during a period of two years. The findings are compiled in a video and toolkit.

Key terms

- **Islam**—One of the major religions of the world, rooted in the religious text of the Koran, and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The word "Islam" is derived from Arabic, which translates to ‘way to peace’ and ‘submission to God.’
- **Muslim**—A person who practices Islam.
- **Hijab**—A headscarf traditionally worn by Muslim women.
- **Civic engagement**— The sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of any community. This can mean volunteering, joining community groups, or voting in elections.
- **Radical**—Departing markedly from the usual or customary; extreme.
- **The Toronto 18**—A series of counter-terrorism raids in the Toronto area in 2006 resulted in the arrest of 18 people alleged to be members of an Islamic terrorist group plotting attacks against targets in Ontario, Canada.
- **Terrorism** —The use of violence, or threats of violence, by individuals or groups against civilians or property. Terrorists seek to create terror as a way of achieving political ends.

Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections:

- Themes: radicalization, isolation, identity, and civic engagement.
- Course Connections: The Arts, Language, and Social Studies.

Materials:

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Global Voices column

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Knowledge and Understanding:

1. This is Me (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Ask students to volunteer qualities that they feel define them, or make them who they are (e.g.: freckles, a big family, soccer skills, etc.). Write these examples on the board.
 - b. When this list is complete, encourage a discussion using the following suggested questions:
 - i. Why did you choose the qualities that you did?
 - ii. Why do you think these qualities make you who you are? Is it because that's what other people see?
 - iii. Do you like some qualities more than you like others? Why?
 - iv. Do these qualities every hold you back from doing certain things?

- c. Explain to students that in the Global Voices column they are about to read, they are going to learn about Canadian youth who are defined and segregated because of some of these qualities.

Thinking:

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
 - b. Pre-reading steps:
 - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column and view the pictures. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
 - ii. Introduce vocabulary: congressional, conversion, extremism, Muslim, testified, mosque, exploited, equated, isolation, identity, vulnerable, immigration, polarizing, mainstream society, positive outlets, civic community, and civically engaged.
 - iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
 - c. Reading steps:
 - i. Go around the circle and have each student read a section of the column to the class, giving each student a turn to read.
 - ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
 - d. Post reading steps:
 - i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
 - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension.
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Ask students to practice their media literacy skills by identifying the following:
 - i. Title: include the full title of the article (also called the headline).
 - ii. Author: give the author's full name; if there is no author given, indicate if the article is an editorial or from a foreign news source.
 - iii. Newspaper: the full name of the newspaper from which the article is taken.
 - iv. Date: the day the article appeared in the newspaper
 - v. Subject: the overall topic that the article is describing.
 - vi. Event: what event led to the writing of the article?
 - vii. Main idea: identify what the article is proving or arguing about the issue. Is it trying to convince readers to take a side? If so, what opinion is it encouraging?
 - viii. Evidence: list several facts/arguments that support the main idea and help to convince the reader or inform them of the issue. Does the author provide enough factual material to support his/her ideas?
 - ix. Significance: explain why this issue is important and whom it may affect.
 - x. Point of view: is the article, in your opinion, balanced or biased? Are different viewpoints presented?
 - b. When this is complete, bring the class back together and discuss student answers.

Communication:

1. Stories of Prejudice and Discrimination (estimated time: 30 minutes)
 - a. Write the words discrimination and prejudice on the board.

- b. Ask students if anyone would like to explain the meaning of the words to the class.
- c. Students might not be aware of the meanings of these words; therefore, provide them with the following definitions:
 - i. Discrimination: making a judgment about a person based on the group, class, or category to which they belong, rather than on individual merit.
 - ii. Prejudice: an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought or reason.
- d. Ask students to reflect and think about whether they have ever witnessed or been part of an instance where discrimination or prejudice were used against another person.
- e. Invite the class to get out of their seats and sit in a circle. Explain to students that they have created a “trust” circle. In this circle they will share their stories of discrimination or prejudice and discuss them together.
- f. Go around the circle and encourage students to share.
- g. When sharing is complete ask students the following questions:
 - i. How did the victims feel in these situations? Did they deserve to feel this way?
 - ii. Why are prejudice and discrimination wrong?
 - iii. What can we do to prevent prejudice and discrimination from occurring? How can we stop it in a situation when it has already occurred?
- h. Following this discussion, ask students to think back to the first activity of the day where they described the qualities that make them who they are. Tell students that they should be proud of all of these qualities.
- i. Ask students to draw a picture of themselves, accentuating the qualities that make them who they are.
- j. Finished drawings can be displayed around the room.

Application:

1. Civic Engagement (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Explain to students that in the Global Voices column, civic engagement is suggested as a way to prevent extremism from evolving. Ask students to explain how civic engagement was explained in the Global Voices column.
 - b. Tell students that, as explained in the column, when a youth’s identity includes a sense of ownership in the civic community, they are less likely to lash out, and more likely to feel like they belong.
 - c. Divide the class into pairs.
 - d. Ask the pairs to work together and create a list outlining what civic engagement could look like for them in their own community.
 - e. When they have finished their lists, bring the class back together and ask pairs to explain their ideas to the class. Ask the students to list the benefits of each activity after it is suggested.
 - f. When this discussion is complete, encourage students to become more engaged in their community through some of the ways they discussed as a class.

Additional Resources:

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

MY Canada <http://www.4mycanada.ca/>