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SURVEY AND TEACHING GUIDELINES AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

**KITS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION
OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS**



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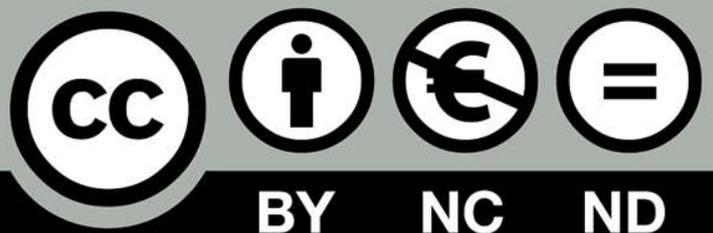
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BRIEF THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION TO SURVEY 10: ANTISEMITISM

What is antisemitism?

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of jews that can be expressed as hatred towards jews. Physical and rhetorical manifestations of antisemitism are directed at both jewish or non-jewish persons and/or their property, at the institutions of jewish communities, and at their places of worship”.¹

Antisemitic manifestations can include attacks against the state of Israel, if regarded to as a jewish collective. However, criticisms against Israel as a country (an international entity), the same as those directed against any other country, cannot be considered antisemitism. Antisemitism often accuses jews of conspiring against humanity, and is sometimes used to blame them for “things going wrong”. It expresses itself through language, publications, actions, and visually, and uses sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

¹ Definition of May 26, 2016, of the the 31 member countries of the IHRA, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)



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What types of antisemitism can appear in the classroom?

Antisemitism can manifest itself in a classroom in different ways, the most common being to insult, criticize, or harass a student for their religion,

culture, customs, or any aspect related to Judaism, whether real or surmised. Thus, the teacher must be mindful to whether there are Jewish students in his/her classroom.

Much of antisemitism is based on antisemitic conspiracy theories, which try to offer a global-scope explanation and blame Jews for “all ills of this world”. These theories often contain some of the following elements:

- Portraying Jews as a threat to society.
- Accusing Jews of making use of hidden and evil methods.
- Defining Jews as a foreign body (“they/them”), seeking power and trying to do harm.
- Questioning the loyalty of Jews to their own states and to people of other religions.

It is always worth to proactively raise awareness and sensitize students against the peculiar logic of conspiracy theories, since it also takes them away from believing in images of the world that reduce it to good versus evil.

Furthermore, as in most hate speech, antisemitism is based on stereotypes

and prejudices, most antisemitic stereotypes often dehumanizing Jews and portraying them as dangerous, inferior, or evil “others”, and being associated with discrimination, marginalization, and persecution.

Lastly, there can also be a more or less unconscious antisemitism in the classroom, especially in the way language is used, so it is important to help students know when they are unintentionally using antisemitic language or antisemitic perceptions of Jews. Such acknowledgment can help fix the problem and encourage further awareness later.

Educators must choose the right time and context to address the topic both in a personal discussion and with the whole classroom. If there are Jewish students in the classroom, teachers should look out for any issues that may arise in the context of the discussions.

What is the first step towards preventing or stopping antisemitism?

It is difficult to deny that in these times, we educate children and teenagers in fear and rejection of those who are different. This is why one of the first steps to prevent antisemitism is to

understand what it is, as well as to dismantle the stereotypes and prejudices on which it is based.



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If a particular antisemitic stereotype comes up in a classroom discussion, patterns of stereotyping need to be addressed and discussed before discussing the particular stereotype and its historical origins. In this regard, it is helpful for teachers to become aware of their own image of Jews and to confront how they themselves use stereotypes.

In general, explaining stereotypes and researching their use is more helpful than getting into arguments. A clear distinction must be made between facts and opinions; there are two types of

stereotypes: one is based on pure fantasy, such as the idea of a world Jewish conspiracy, control of the international media, the world financial system...; the other generalizes in an exaggerated way and distorts fragments of reality. Showing the distortion of these stereotypes can be a fruitful way to dismantle these perceptions.

For example, if Jews are perceived as outstanding in certain jobs or professions, that fact should not automatically denote Jewish control in that field, nor does it mean that Jews are by nature more or less qualified for certain jobs or sectors. There is no difference between Jewish and non-Jewish professionals in any field.

Another of the hoaxes that must be dismantled to prevent or stop antisemitism is the denial of the Holocaust, which is essentially based on lies, just like conspiracy theories. Although it is necessary to check this vision against historical memory and facts, any discussion about whether the Holocaust took place or not is not only misplaced, but also counterproductive, since each true fact can be met with a new lie. Since some people have a solid antisemitic worldview and choose to deny the Holocaust, providing them with information about it is unlikely to solve the problem.

Teachers may first want to ensure that such views, if expressed, remain as a minority within the group, and that students understand why it is wrong to deny the Holocaust and why it is necessary to respond to this quickly.

One way to do this may be to introduce students to recent political efforts to abolish Holocaust denial and show them the arguments used in this context. An example could be the EU Framework Decision on the fight against racism and xenophobia, which states: *“The public approval, denial, or flagrant trivialization of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes shall be criminalized if the crime is directed*

against a group of people because of their race, color, religion, descent, or national or ethnic origin”².

Therefore, the first step is to make known the situation that these people live, their culture, their history, etc., and teach what antisemitism is. But it is also very important to develop values like diversity, empathy, tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the classroom to prevent any type of discrimination. To do this, we recommend to work on the Didactic Unit on cultural diversity, including the OER Kit on cultural diversity.

2 “EU: Common Criminal Provisions Against Racism and Xenophobia”, Presidencia Alemana

de la Unión Europea, nota de prensa, 20 de abril del 2007



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS – SURVEY 10

How to detect antisemitic harassment?

1. The first step will be to detect if there are vulnerable students in the classroom, either because of their religion or culture, and to monitor them to find out if they have any conflict with the rest of the students.
2. Know how to differentiate between a specific conflict and a case of antisemitic harassment. For this, it is usually considered that an action of harassment or abuse repeated three times or more is already bullying, and there must be intentionality and an imbalance of power, which in the case of antisemitic bullying is evident because these students are especially vulnerable.
3. Also detect less obvious cases of harassment or discrimination; keep in mind that physical aggression tends to be the most obvious, but most bullying is psychological or verbal. Special attention should also be paid to *cyberbullying*, as it is an increasingly frequent and especially severe phenomenon, because vulnerable students can be harassed 24 hours a day, both inside and outside the classroom.
4. Analyze if there is belief in the classroom about antisemitic conspiracy theories, lies such as Holocaust denial, and/or an unconscious use of antisemitic language by the students.
5. In addition to detecting harassment or discrimination, it is also very important to pay attention to aspects or situations that are a symptom of something not going well:
 - a) Changes in behavior or habits, meaning that you need to observe if the vulnerable student drops their grade averages, loses interest in certain activities, has mood changes, changes their friendships, etc.
 - b) If you detect that the vulnerable student is isolated and some classmates avoid being with them, this is considered a relational aggression (group exclusion).

- c) Outbursts of anger, problems with authority, and/or problems in regulating emotions are a symptom that bullying may be taking place, and both the harassers and the harassed student may have these attitudes.
- d) Leaders and privileges: there are usually students in the classroom who take on the role of leaders and who usually have other students who follow them. These situations must be watched in case the leadership turns negative, since they can use their “higher position” to harass vulnerable students or to encourage their followers to harass.

What to do before a situation of antisemitism in the classroom?

1. The best option is always prevention, which is why educating in values like dialogue, empathy, tolerance, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts is essential, especially at younger ages. It is also essential to learn what antisemitism is and its main causes, in order to avoid it.
2. In cases in which it is too late for prevention, because harassment is already taking place, the first step is to investigate and gather information, and speak with the parties involved.
3. Once you have all the necessary information, a sanction will be required in the case of the harasser(s), adjusted to the seriousness of their acts, but it is also essential for this sanction to be of an educational and not punitive nature. This means that it is necessary to work with the harasser(s) on empathy and solidarity, and make them understand how their actions can impact other people (and especially the harassed person).
4. In the case of the victim, it is recommended to create and maintain a climate of communication and trust, show support, but also work on assertiveness, learning to say no, and to set limits, always without resorting to violence. If they have any feelings of guilt, make it clear to them that the harassers are to blame, not him/her. Lastly, show them that a boost in self-confidence and a change in attitude can also make things better.
5. In the case of witnesses, make them understand that not opposing an unfair situation makes them accomplices of harassers; explain them that harassers often

seek their praise -the benefits of being “dominant” students, so if they react with rejection towards any of these situations, harassers will be much more likely to stop.

6. Lastly, we must add that a very useful prevention tool is to assign the figure of two or three student observers who identify and report situations of bullying (peer prevention).

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SURVEY 10: ANTISEMITISM

Do you know what antisemitism is?

1. The rejection, hatred, and discrimination towards jews.
2. The rejection, hatred, and discrimination towards muslims.
3. The rejection, hatred, and discrimination towards others because of their ideology.

Which of these situations is a sign of antisemitism?

1. Physically assaulting a person for being jewish.
2. Rejecting the entrance of a person to a party for being jewish.
3. Using the word "jew" as a derogatory term or in a pejorative tone.
4. All of the above.

What would you do if you saw a discriminating comment towards jews in a social network?

1. Report the comment.
2. It's just a joke, it has no importance.
3. Give it a like.

What would you do if someone shouted "*filthy jew!*" to one of your classmates?

1. Defend him/her.
2. Look away; I don't want any trouble.
3. Shout at my classmate too, I don't want to end up criticized too.

Have you ever witnessed an antisemitic incident?

1. No, never.
2. Yes, especially in social networks and the TV.
3. I think not.



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