

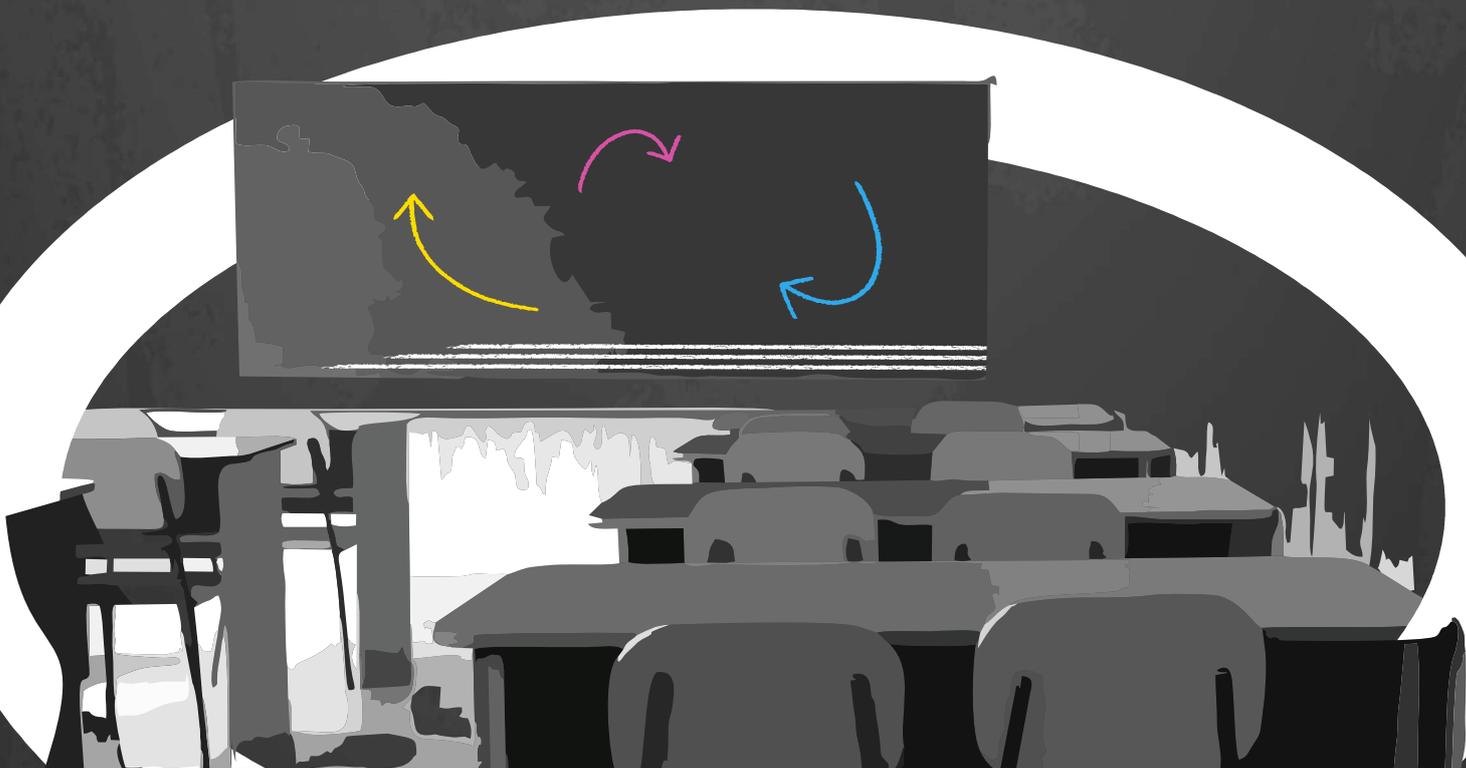


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SURVEY AND TEACHING GUIDELINES AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

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



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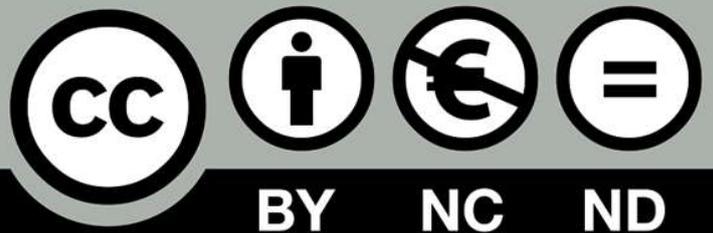
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BRIEF THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION TO SUEVEY 8: ISLAMOPHOBIA

What is islamophobia?

islamophobia is a form of rejection, aversion, and hostility towards islam and everything related to it -whether real or not, meaning also to things linked to it, even if they actually have no place in it- and towards muslims, which in certain circumstances can be combined with forms of religious intolerance, racism, xenophobia... It manifests itself in the form of prejudice, discrimination, offenses, aggression, and violence.

However, what *is* and *isn't* islamophobia is still an unfinished debate by academics and the different social agents dedicated to this issue. The Council of Europe and the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination define islamophobia as:

"[...] a form of racism and xenophobia manifested through hostility, exclusion, rejection, and hatred against muslims,

especially when the muslim population is a minority, which happens more often in western countries."

Therefore, islamophobia is a form of specific, anti-muslim racism.

What types of islamophobia can happen in the classroom?

islamophobia can manifest itself in different ways in the classroom, the most common being insults, criticism, or harassment of a student because of their religion or culture, or due to any aspect related to islam and muslims, whether real or not.

Thus, the teacher must be mindful to whether there are muslim students in his/her classroom, and identify those who are most vulnerable despite not being muslim due to their origin,

clothing, culture, language, skin color, etc.

Islamophobia, like most hate speech, is based on stereotypes and prejudices, which lead to discrimination, some of the most frequent of these being:

- The belief that Islam is a monolithic block, static and resistant to change.
- The belief that Islam is radically different from other religions and cultures with which it doesn't share values nor influences.
- Deeming Islam as inferior to Western culture: primitive, irrational, barbaric, and sexist.
- The idea that Islam is, *per se*, violent and hostile, prone to racism and the clash of civilizations.
- The idea that political ideology and religion are intimately linked in Islam.
- The global and direct rejection of criticism towards Western societies made from Muslim circles.
- The justification of discriminatory and excluding practices towards Muslims.
- The consideration of such hostility towards Muslims as something natural and usual.

Lastly, it is key to point out that one can suffer Islamophobia and not be a Muslim; for example, a student of Arab origin who is an atheist or follows any

other religion than Islam, but because of his/her appearance, culture, and language is assumed to be a Muslim by harassers.

What is the first step to prevent or stop Islamophobia?

It is difficult to deny that in our time we educate children and teenagers in fear and rejection of what is different and foreign, because we start from the identification of Muslim people with terrorism, violence, aggression, immorality and evil in society.

That is why one of the first steps to prevent Islamophobia is to dismantle the stereotypes and prejudices on which it is based. Also, by making a part of the history of Islam more known, Islamophobia is also fought against, because there are many Muslims who have left and continue to leave an undeniable legacy over the centuries.

Therefore, the first step is to raise awareness on the situation that these people live, their culture, their history, religion, and teach about what Islamophobia is, and develop values like 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 for Cultural Diversity Didactic Unit, included in the Kit for Cultural Diversity (OER).



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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TEACHER ON SURVEY 8

How can you detect islamophobic bullying?

1. The first step is to detect if there vulnerable students in the classroom, either because of their skin color, origin, place of birth, culture, religion, or language, and monitor them to find out if there is any conflict with the rest of the students.
2. Know how to differentiate between an isolated incident or a case of islamophobic bullying. For this, it is usually considered that an abuse or harassment repeated three times or more has become bullying. There must also be intentionality and an imbalance of power, which is evident in islamophobic bullying, since these students are especially vulnerable.
3. Social or cultural obstacles rarely appear alone; they are usually accompanied by economic obstacles, which is why it is necessary to differentiate between islamophobia, racism, xenophobia, and aporophobia. For example: if there are two muslim students, one with a good economic position and the other in a situation of poverty, the latter will usually be more vulnerable to bullying, especially bullying linked to aporophobia.
4. Be careful to notice less obvious cases of harassment or discrimination; physical aggression is usually the most obvious, but most bullying is psychological or verbal. Also, pay special attention to cyberbullying, as it is an increasingly frequent and especially serious phenomenon, because vulnerable students can be harassed 24/7, both inside and outside the classroom.
5. In addition to detecting harassment or discrimination, pay attention to other aspects or situations that are a symptom that something is not going well:
 - a) Changes in behavior or habits: it is necessary to notice if the vulnerable student drops their average grades, loses interest in certain activities, has a changing mood, changes their friendships, etc.

- b) If you notice that the vulnerable student becomes isolated and their classmates avoid being with him/her, this is considered a relational aggression: exclusion from the group.
- c) Outbursts of anger, problems with authority, and problems regulating emotions are a symptom that bullying may be taking place, and both harassers and the harassed may have these attitudes.
- d) Leaders and privileges: in a classroom there are usually students who assume the role of leaders, and who usually have other students who follow them; these situations must be watched carefully before the leadership becomes negative, using this situation to harass vulnerable students or to encourage “followers” to harass them.

What can you do with a situation of islamophobia in the classroom?

1. The best option is always prevention, which is why it is key to educate the students in values like dialogue, empathy, tolerance, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, especially at younger ages. It is also essential for them to learn what islamophobia is, and the main reasons that cause it, in order to avoid it.
2. In cases where prevention is no longer an option (when harassment is already happening), the first step is to investigate and gather information, speaking with the parties involved.
3. Once you have all the necessary information, a sanction is required for harassers, adjusted to the seriousness of their actions, but it is essential that this sanction has an educational and not a punitive nature, meaning that it is necessary to work with the harasser’s empathy and solidarity, and make them understand how their actions can impact other people, especially the harassed person.
4. In the case of the victim, it is advisable to create and maintain a climate of communication, trust, and show support, but also working on assertiveness, on 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 aggressors are to blame, never him/her. Lastly, show them that a boost in self-confidence and a change in attitude can also improve things.
5. Regarding witnesses, explain to them that not opposing an unfair situation makes them accomplices, that many times harassers seek their applause, the benefits of

being dominant, so if they react with rejection towards a bullying situation, it is much more likely to stop.

6. Lastly, one of the most useful prevention tools is to assign the figure of two or three student observers who identify and report situations of bullying (peer prevention).

Photo by [ibrahim abdullah](#) in [Unsplash](#)



SURVEY 8: ISLAMOPHOBIA

There is a girl who wears a hijab (veil) in your classroom; what do you think about it?

1. I respect her decision.
2. I don't think she should be allowed to wear it, she should adapt to our culture.
3. I don't understand why she wears it.

Do you know what discrimination or rejection to muslims due to their religion is called?

1. Aporophobia.
2. islamophobia.
3. Ideological hatred.

What would you do if you find content with signs of islamophobia on social media?

1. I would report it.
2. Depending on whether it's funny or not, I might share it.
3. I would ignore it.

Are any of these statements islamophobic?

"All muslims are dangerous"/ "muslims are discriminated against on TV"/ "The other day a muslim boy was beaten up in my neighborhood, he probably deserved it".

1. Yes, they all are.
2. I am not sure.
3. No, I don't think they are discriminatory.

How would you act if a new muslim student came to your class?

1. I would introduce myself and my friends to him/her.
2. I don't care, it wouldn't change anything.
3. I better not get close...



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