



Equal Opportunity and Diversity Learner Materials: Adult Learners

- Authentic Material:** Selected articles from <http://www.bbc.co.uk>
- EO+D Themes:** 'Honour' killings, civil partnerships, euthanasia
- Language Level:** Upper Intermediate and above

Possible syllabus fit

The themes enable learners to consider controversial views on contemporary issues, discuss arguments and come to their own decisions. The lesson could be thematically and linguistically linked to material in *New Cutting Edge Upper Intermediate* by Cunningham and Moor (Pearson-Longman) by recycling and extending the language to discuss controversial issues on pages 121 – 123. It also enables learners to target the following CEFR learning aims at B2 – C1 level:

- Subjectively respond to ideas presented within a text, evaluating them as I read
- Justify my opinions precisely with degrees of certainty/uncertainty
- Select appropriate language and phrases to take the floor or buy time in a discussion
- Follow and contribute to a group discussion on abstract, complex and unfamiliar topics

Suggested procedure

1. Background to issues – to set the context for learners and activate schemata

Show visuals: equality poster related to honour killings, 'Pride and Groom' from the 'gay times' and the RIP graphic.

Ls work in pairs and predict the content of the articles – discuss briefly what they know about the issues.

2. Skimming for gist – to enable Ls to understand the general meaning of the articles

Set a time limit for skimming and ask Ls to read, then share the main points of the 3 articles (see Handout) with their partners.

3. Pyramid discussion – to enable Ls to develop oral fluency and confidence in expressing opinions on polemic issues

Set up a pyramid discussion where Ls discuss their opinions of the issues in pairs, then mini groups.

4. Scanning for details – to enable Ls to gain a deeper understanding of the diverse views expressed in the articles

Ls scan the articles and note down three arguments in favour of the positions expressed and three arguments against.

Feedback: share notes in groups and discuss which article(s) provides a balanced argument.

5. Authentic model – to provide Ls with a scaffold of the target language in a real context

Record an authentic discussion from TV where one of the issues is being discussed. Alternatively, you could make a recording of a different controversial issue which your Ls are interested in. Select an example where English is used as a lingua franca to provide realistic and meaningful models.

Ls listen for gist – identify the controversial issue being discussed.

Ls then listen for specific information by making mind maps of the main arguments for / against.

Feedback by sharing ideas with whole class.

6. Language focus – to enable Ls to identify how target expressions are used in a meaningful context

Set a noticing task and have them sort expressions into these categories:

- agreeing and disagreeing
- seeking others' opinions
- convincing each other of their position
- weighing up arguments
- reaching conclusions

Feedback by sharing and focusing on any particular language features – deal with any meaning problems, etc.

7. Group discussion – to enable Ls to express their opinions on controversial issues by listening to each others' viewpoints and reaching a conclusion

Ls choose one of the issues and have a group discussion using the target expressions.

Feedback to rest of class with summary of key arguments and decisions made.

8. Reflective review – to enable Ls to perceive their learning as coherent and develop their metacognitive awareness

Run a reflective review re what you did in the lesson and why you did each stage. Focus your questions on the EO+D issues raised and have them reflect on the new aspects they considered.

Adapted from Lesson Materials designed by Liz Fishwick, Public Courses Coordinator, British Council Brussels

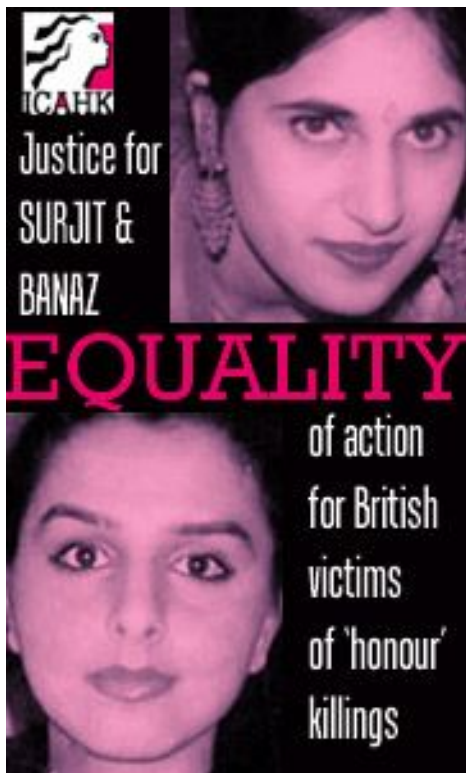
There are a number of websites with up to date articles, comments and debate from a range of global contributors. These sites enable learners to develop reading skills and raise their awareness of global issues. You could also visit:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree>

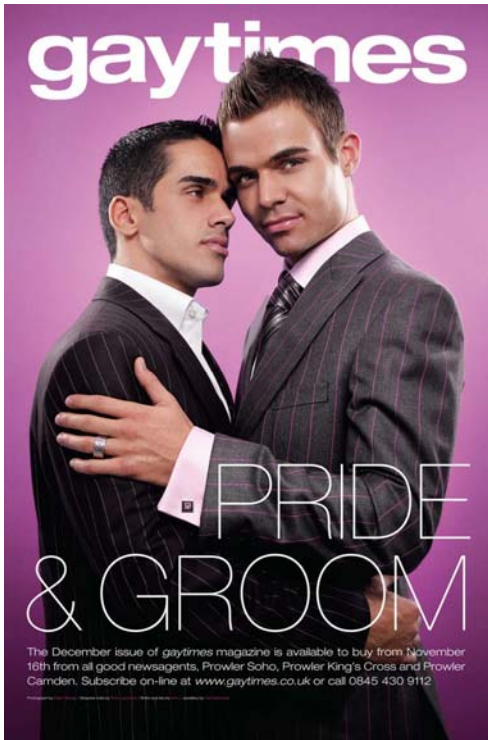
Discussing Controversial Issues

Your Learning Aims:

- Subjectively respond to ideas presented within a text, evaluating them as I read
 - Justify my opinions precisely with degrees of certainty/uncertainty
 - Select appropriate language and phrases to take the floor or buy time in a discussion
 - Follow and contribute to a group discussion on abstract, complex and unfamiliar topics
- Look at these pictures and discuss with your partner:
- What are the three issues?
 - Why are they 'controversial'?



Source: <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/index.php>



Source: <http://www.gaytimes.co.uk>



Source: <http://www.wac.co.uk/mediaplayer/media/web/thumbs/euthanasia.jpg>

- Read the text and answer the question below:

Same sex marriage <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/samesexmarriage/intro.shtml>

Should same-sex couples committed to a long-term and monogamous relationship be allowed to marry?

Marriage has been one of the fundamental organising principles of human society since history began. It is important to the future of society because it provides the best social structure within which to bear and raise children. Most people accept that marriage and family are key institutions in society, and something that it is appropriate for the law to regulate.

In a real sense, there are three partners to every civil marriage: two willing spouses and an approving State. And because marriage is thought by many people to be an inseparable part of the nature of the family, the proper rearing of children, the regulating of human relationships and the nature and stability of human society, there is little doubt that it is a suitable area for ethical analysis.

Why is same-sex marriage so topical?

- same-sex marriage has become legal in some countries - Belgium, Canada and the Netherlands have recently legalised it
- [civil partnerships](#) are legal in the UK as of December 2005
- US court decisions in 2003 suggested that it would soon be legal there - however, elections in 2004 showed that the opponents of gay marriage had not abandoned the fight to stop it
- the family laws of many countries now treat same-sex and opposite-sex couples equally, or almost equally
- there is no longer a single code of sexual morality
- personal freedom of choice is now a significant element in morality
- people are now more accepting of different sexualities and see restrictions on consensual adult sexual behaviour as unacceptable
- the link between sex and procreation has been weakened by reliable contraception
- enjoyment and the expression of affection are just as or more important aims of sex than conceiving children
- reproductive technology allows same-sex partners to have children
- gay activists have made the issue a priority
- court action in Europe and the USA has made discrimination based on sexual orientation illegal

- Think and write down 3 arguments for and 3 arguments against.

- Read the text and answer the question below:

Honour Crime

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/honourcrimes/crimesofhonour_1.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/honourcrimes/crimesofhonour_4.shtml

Should honour crime be a private matter and stay within the family affected?

Crimes of 'honour'

Honour killing is the murder of a woman accused of bringing shame upon her family. Killing in the name of honour is often considered to be a private matter for the affected family. In recent years, more and more cases have reached the UK courts but many crimes still remain unresolved or even undetected.

So-called honour killing is usually committed by male family members against a female relative. In some communities mothers and sisters may also play a part. Some of the most common reasons for murdering a family member include: refusal to enter an arranged marriage, seeking a divorce - even from an abusive husband - or committing adultery.

In some cases, women who have been sexually assaulted or raped are then murdered for the 'dishonour' of having been a victim of an attack.

Honour killing is an ancient tribal custom and an allegation against a woman can be enough to defile a family's honour and justify her murder.

Men who kill their wives, sisters or daughters argue that a life without honour is not worth living.

The United Nations Population Fund estimates that the annual worldwide total of killings might be as high as 5,000 women.

A global problem

Outside the UK, honour killings have been reported in countries throughout the world including: Bangladesh, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Sweden, Turkey, and Uganda.

The practice is common in Pakistan where police believe that up to 4,000 people, mostly women, have died in brutal honour killings in the four years between 2000 and 2004. Hundreds of women are raped or killed there each year in so-called honour attacks for behaviour including extramarital affairs or marriage without a family's consent.

In a recent case (June 2005), Jali Ahmed set fire to his sleeping wife and daughter and burned them to death in an honour killing. The 20-year-old girl was killed for having had an affair and her mother for not doing enough to discourage her daughter.

In another harrowing case, a Pakistani widow and her two daughters were beaten and forced to parade naked through a market after her son allegedly had an affair with another man's wife.

And in June 2002, a 30-year-old woman claimed she was gang raped on the orders of a tribal council to atone for her brother's alleged affair with a member of a powerful rival clan. Mukhtar Mai's family said the charge against her 12-year-old brother, Shakoor, was fabricated.

The family claims Shakoor was sodomised by a group of men from the local Mastoi clan. After they threatened to report the incident to the police, Mai was gang raped allegedly by four men.

- Think and write down 3 arguments for and 3 arguments against.

- Read the text and answer the question below:

Euthanasia

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/euthanasia/overview/problems.shtml>

Should a person have the right to decide when they die?

A question of rights

Does an individual who has no hope of recovery have the right to decide how and when to end their life?

Why euthanasia should be allowed

Those in favour of euthanasia argue that a civilised society should allow people to die in dignity and without pain, and should allow others to help them do so if they cannot manage it on their own.

They say that our bodies are our own, and we should be allowed to do what we want with them. So it's wrong to make anyone live longer than they want. In fact making people go on living when they don't want to violates their personal freedom and human rights. It's immoral, they say to force people to continue living in suffering and pain.

They add that as suicide is not a crime, euthanasia should not be a crime.

Why euthanasia should be forbidden

Religious opponents of euthanasia believe that life is given by God, and only God should decide when to end it.

Other opponents fear that if euthanasia was made legal, the laws regulating it would be abused, and people would be killed who didn't really want to die.

The legal position

Euthanasia is illegal in most countries, although doctors do sometimes carry out euthanasia even where it is illegal.

Euthanasia is illegal in Britain. To kill another person deliberately is murder, even if the other person asks you to kill them.

It is also a criminal offence in Britain, punishable by 14 years' imprisonment, to assist, aid or counsel somebody in relation to taking their own life.

(Legal position stated at March 2002)

Changing attitudes

The Times (24 January 2007) reported that, according to the 2007 British Social Attitudes survey, 80% of the public said they wanted the law changed to give terminally ill patients the right to die with a doctor's help.

In the same survey, 45% supported giving patients with non-terminal illnesses the option of euthanasia. "A majority" was opposed to relatives being involved in a patient's death.

- Think and write down 3 arguments for and 3 arguments against.

The Debate

- ▶ Now choose one of the issues and discuss it with your group. Summarise the following:
 - The arguments for
 - The arguments against
 - Any conclusions?

Review

- ▶ After the discussion, reflect on these questions:
 - Did you enjoy the discussion?
 - Did you think you contributed all that you had to say on the issue?
 - Did you want to say more? Why?
 - How do you think it could have been better?
 - Did you hear any useful language?
 - Did the discussion give you new ideas about an issue? Why?

Useful Language

Here are some expressions which can give a debate more structure. They can also help the discussion work more effectively.

- ▶ Look at the expressions and decide how they are used
- ▶ Group them

I (really) feel that...
In my opinion/view...
I reckon...
The way I see it ...
As far as I'm concerned...
If you ask me,... I (tend to) think that...

That's (exactly) how I feel.
I have to agree with (name of participant).
I totally agree.
I'm completely with you on that (point).
I'd go along with that.

I'm with you up to a point, but...
I see what you're saying but...
I kind of agree with you but...
I totally disagree!
That's absolute nonsense!

Do you (really) think that...
How do you feel about...?
What are your thoughts /views

Do you mean that...?
Is it true that...?
Are you serious?

Agreeing with other opinions

Giving opinions

Asking for verification

Asking for opinions

Disagreeing with other opinions

- ▶ Which ones:
 - Are appropriate for a discussion with friends?
 - Are appropriate for a formal debate?
 - Could be rude and should be used with caution?
- ▶ Prepare with your group and try to use the expressions
- ▶ Sit with another group and present your case