



Mix-d:TM Walsall Youth Conference

Debate, consultation and fact-find about the UK's fastest growing population.

The Report

Mix-d: Walsall Youth Conference

Date: Tuesday 13th July 2010

Venue: County Inn, Walsall.



Walsall Council

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The Mix-d Concept

Mix-d is something you feel or you don't. Mix-d describes a day to day lived experience in which who you are, or what you are, may be questioned.

Everyone likes to grow up knowing where they have come from, but in the real world things often end up being a bit more confusing.

The role of the Multiple Heritage Project involves work with young people who want to know if other individuals experience any of the following:

- Feeling pulled in different directions, expected to choose one cultural lifestyle over another
- Feeling you have too little understanding of both parent backgrounds
- Being accused of not being Black/White/Asian enough

However, you may also be completely comfortable with your identity and feel you have a positive contribution to make to this important discussion.

Mix-d people are one of the UK's fastest growing ethnic minority groups. The Multiple Heritage Project tackles issues which are important to this group.

The mix-d concept aims to capture the unique experiences of an ever-growing number of individuals in the UK who seek a place where they can discuss issues related to their mix-d backgrounds.

Mix-d people say they don't want to be seen as victims or attention-seekers. Instead, they simply want to affirm a positive self-identity.

Many such conversations have traditionally met with awkwardness, been ignored or trivialised in the public arena.

The mix-d concept is not about keeping old arguments alive. The work of the Multiple Heritage Project is a contribution to an ongoing discussion and a space for people from mix-d backgrounds to have a voice and share their points of view.

Bradley Lincoln, Founder of the Multiple Heritage Project & Mix-d Concept



The Mix-d Conference

This was the second conference for young people of mixed race in Walsall. Many mix-d young people from schools and colleges across the city met to discuss issues about being mixed race.

The aim of the day was to give you a safe space to talk about how it feels to be mix-d and to use your ideas to help your families learn more about you and professionals who work with you to do a better job.

Mix-d is an organisation that feels an open space to talk about being mixed race is important because some young people tell us they never get the opportunity to do this. A space to talk is also important because despite the fact that mix-d people are one of the fastest growing ethnic minority groups in the UK, you tend to be ignored or stereotyped by people who make decisions about what happens to you.

We decided to use mix-d young people to run your workshops because we felt that they would understand your feelings better. On the day of the conference, some of you had a lot to say and some of you didn't want to say very much. Conferences like these can be a time for participants to take in lots of information and think about what was said after the event – especially as some you may have heard for these things for the first time.

Here are some of the main ideas that came out of your workshops:

- Being mix-d brings cultures together.
- Being mix-d is more than a black-white thing. Mix-d can be used to describe lots of different cultures, nationalities and ethnicities coming together.
- The negative points about being mix-d are that people tend to stereotype you and the discrimination you sometimes face can be demoralising.
- Events and activities that highlighted mix-d issues should be spread throughout the year - not just located in a Black History Month and not just for mix-d people.

Some of you were apprehensive at the start of the day because you didn't know what to expect. However, by the end of the day you felt very relaxed, had thoroughly enjoyed your day and didn't want it to end. Most of you said you wanted more opportunities like this to talk about your experiences of being mix-d. This Big Conversation that has been started by you must not end here. The conference is just a way to move the discussion forward. It is just the beginning!

Some of the things you talked about...

identity

“ I can mix between different groups of friends. ”

“ You should be proud to be mixed race. ”

“ My friends say I have the best of both worlds. ”

“ stereotyping & discrimination ”

People assume you are looking for trouble.

“ Teachers don't do anything if you tell them what people say. ”

“ Teachers discriminate by not doing anything about racist behaviour. ”



assumptions about appearances

“

My brother looks white, has ginger hair

”

and he's mixed race.

“ I like to have a tan so people can see better that I am mixed. I don't want to look pale. When my mum (who is black) picked me up from school they thought she was my nanny not my mum. They were being funny with her – it's so ignorant that they can only see people in a certain way.”

“

I'm not black, I'm mixed – what gives them the

”

right to call me black?

appropriate language

“ I hate that word 'half caste' – you have to realise what that means – I used to use that but now I understand what it means – you're not half of anything.”

about being at the conference

“ I’ve learned how to deal with things positively rather than fight. ”

“ I like the fact that we talked to people I don’t know because I can now do it again. ”

“ Before I came I was nervous but I’m much more confident now. ”

“ I feel comfortable talking about it with other mixed people - we don’t speak about it in school. ”

“ I enjoyed meeting new people and talking about who you are. ”

“ I liked being around other mixed race people and love getting other views. ”

“ I want more meetings...it is brushed under the carpet at school. ”



School Action Plans

Aldridge School

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| <p>GOAL: Video footage on screens to show equality etc. Heading: Mixed-Race project.....Unity and cohesion</p> | | |
| <p>WHAT: An easier way to show pupils that different cultures work together within schools.</p> | <p>WHEN: During assemblies/ form time - On the plasma screens around school throughout the year - Start the project from September.</p> | <p>WHO: Anyone from any cultural background could get involved. Sofia will ask headmaster for permission.</p> |
| <p>GOAL: Educating staff and pupils</p> | | |
| <p>WHAT: Incorporating into lessons etc. - Teach that people should be treated equally regardless of their race. - Teach offensive and acceptable terminology.</p> | <p>WHEN: During form time/ PSHE</p> | <p>WHO: Members of staff who have to teach pupils.</p> |

Aldridge Science College

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| GOAL: Assemblies | | |
| WHAT: What we've learnt today. Display Flags. Why we are proud of who we are. | WHEN: Next Term, October for B.H.M | WHO: Everyone who attended, some people behind the scenes. Pictures of all peeps in school who are mix-d (with permission). |
| GOAL: Weekly meetings and workshops for other students who didn't attend. | | |
| WHAT: Share what was learnt (workshops). - Plan other ways to create awareness. | WHEN: After assembly, during form and lunch. | WHO: Everyone who attended. |
| GOAL: Foods from other cultures | | |
| WHAT: A whole week of different foods from different cultures. - Promote w/posters. | WHEN: Once a week every half term, after September. | WHO: Everyone give input. |
| GOAL: Re-do Display | | |
| WHAT: Create awareness and share what was learnt. | WHEN: Before assemblies, September. | WHO: Everyone adds their own piece. |

Aldridge Science College: Main Aim

- Get an understanding of Mix-d: people and ways to deal with discrimination.
- Being proud of heritage and confident of who they are and don't let others put you down.
- Terminology how to refer to people of mix-d heritage

Bluecoat Comprehensive School

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| GOAL: Dual Heritage Assembly | | |
| WHAT: What is it? What we learnt at the conference? - Introducing the enter-prize day | WHEN: January 2011 | WHO: Dual heritage people. Mr Wiley Miss Rashid Mr Williams |
| GOAL: Dual Heritage Enterprise Day | | |
| WHAT: Workshops, Stereotypes, Famous people, Outside agencies to come in. Displays book (make one) | WHEN: February 2011 | WHO: Pupils Mr Wiley Miss Rashid Mr Williams |
| GOAL: Dual Heritage Mentors/6th Form Mentors | | |
| WHAT: Stop racism. Someone the pupils can talk to – understand dual heritage. Cool off room. | WHEN: September 2011 | WHO: Teacher – Mr Wiley Mark, Fiona Roberts, Jodie, Speak to Miss Cuff |

Poolhayes School

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| <p>GOAL: To get people to realise and understand what it is like to be in the shoes of Mixed Race</p> | | |
| <p>WHAT: Assembly/Form</p> | <p>WHEN: During form time and School. September.</p> | <p>WHO: Small hand picked groups. Mixed race/White/Asian/Black. Two from each background.</p> |
| <p>GOAL: Raising teacher awareness</p> | | |
| <p>WHAT: Having a mentor for the kids so that they have someone to talk to if needs be.</p> | <p>WHEN: As soon as possible. Teacher meetings.</p> | <p>WHO: The people that attended Mix-d to give their opinion.</p> |

Sheffield School

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| <p>GOAL: Educate the other pupils at school...staff</p> | | |
| <p>WHAT: : - Assembly - Lessons - Productions</p> | <p>WHEN: Black History Month.... A Culture Week.</p> | <p>WHO: Us, Mixed race people...</p> |
| <p>GOAL: Staff Training</p> | | |
| <p>WHAT: Tell them our views on how they deliver their lesson - Preferred terminology - Training day</p> | <p>WHEN: Next few months</p> | <p>WHO: Denvor, Mix-d UK group.</p> |
| <p>GOAL: 1 - Black History Month, 2 - A Culture Week, 3 - Staff</p> | | |
| <p>1 – Make it more interactive so we learn more by doing assemblies and lessons.</p> | <p>2 – Learn about all different cultures by doing cultural cooking and lessons about different cultures.</p> | <p>3 – Tell them what we prefer to be called. How we feel when we learn about slavery etc...</p> |

Sheffield School

- Caribbean Cooking (Taste of different cultures)
- Jamaican Dancing
- Black History Month
- A Culture Day (Learn about everyone's race)
- Cultural Music
- A Culture Week
- More Information (Black History Month)
- African Art
- Learn about Black/Mixed race famous people
- More displays around school
- Staff training – Racial awareness
- Assemblies
- More interactive

Conference notes to professionals

“Let’s challenge young people!”

Mix-d is constantly re-energised by mix-d young people wanting to be engaged and heard on this topic. However, we are also greatly saddened by how de-skilled our young people (of any ethnicity) have become in debating, articulating and expressing opinions in general. Any professionals who wish to lead out in a discussion or debate in this area must encourage fellow professionals to re-ignite those skills across the curriculum for the sake of all our young people and all our futures.

“It puts young people in the driving seat!”

A key outcome of the way the conference model operates is to share lived experiences and maximise peer support. This is a more crucial benefit, from our point of view, than utilising skilled, professional facilitators in workshops. Even though the youth facilitators undergo intensive, high-quality training their main qualifications are their enthusiasm and empathy with the young people who attend. It’s young people connecting with other young people – it’s time for the so-called academics and professionals to take a back seat and listen.

“It’s a process!”

The conference day is about the young people being involved and included in a process. Young people take as much or as little as they chose from their engagement in the whole experience. There will be different parts of the day that speak more to some young people and less to others. Some young people are more appreciative of the whole experience some time after the event, whilst others ‘soak up’ the whole day. It’s a process that comprises part of a journey. The young people’s conference is not complete, neither is it the end - it ‘adds to’ and complements. For most young people, it is probably just the beginning...

Mix-d: Matrix of reflection

The aim of the following exercise is for individuals and organisations to reflect on their current activities related to the mix-d concept. The activity personalises the action that needs to be taken in improving outcomes for mix-d young people by working through the matrix arriving all parties involved can arrive at a unique set of recommendations. It is important that parents, carers, children's services and the young people themselves ask some difficult questions and have a discussion about the issues raised in this reflection exercise.

Mix-d: Young People

Always

Mostly

Sometimes

Never

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| I make an effort to find out about mix-d icons of and their 'journeys' to individual success. | | | | |
| I try to find out about mix-d icons who are famous for more than sports and entertainment. | | | | |
| I take responsibility for my own learning. | | | | |
| I can resist pressure from my peers to act like I don't care about schoolwork. | | | | |
| I can confidently challenge authority where appropriate without losing my temper. | | | | |
| I feel good about being a person of mix-d. | | | | |
| I know what qualifications I need to achieve my goals. | | | | |
| I have a career plan and clear goals for my life. | | | | |
| I am a good role model for other young people. | | | | |

Schools (cont.)**Always****Mostly****Sometimes****Never**

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|---|--|--|--|--|
| (Recorded) exclusion rates for mix-d pupils are proportionate. | | | | |
| Exclusion rates for mix-d pupils are monitored by 'reason' and analysed. | | | | |
| Mix-d pupils 'exclusion' rates (where they remain on the premises) are proportionate. | | | | |
| We are keen to seek the opinion of parents/carers of mix-d pupils on issues relating to students' school careers. | | | | |
| We create opportunities for parents/carers of mix-d young people to articulate their fears and expectations. | | | | |

Local Authority**Always****Mostly****Sometimes****Never**

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|---|--|--|--|--|
| We ensure training is offered to schools on mix-d issues. | | | | |
| The EMAG Service supports and challenges schools on mix-d issues (see 'SCHOOLS'). | | | | |
| Other School Improvement Professionals support and challenge schools on mix-d issues apart from EMAG staff. | | | | |
| School Improvement Professionals are aware of local levels of achievement/rates of exclusion for mix-d pupils as set against national ones. | | | | |

**Parents and Carers
of Mix-d: Young People**

Always Mostly Sometimes Never

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|---|--|--|--|--|
| I make a point of finding out how my child is performing at school or college. | | | | |
| I try to find out about mix-d icons who are famous for more than sports and entertainment. | | | | |
| I challenge my child's behaviour appropriately. | | | | |
| I provide academic and vocational challenges for my child. | | | | |
| I can confidently challenge authority where appropriate without losing my temper. | | | | |
| I am a good role model for my child. | | | | |
| I know what is expected of my child at his/her school or college. | | | | |
| I know how to support my child with their homework or where to go for support. | | | | |
| I know the correct procedures to follow if I need to speak to someone at my child's school or college. | | | | |
| I discuss/negotiate career plans with my child. | | | | |
| I request that the school provides resources reflecting mix-d issues and offer support where necessary. | | | | |
| I know what is included in my child's curricular or where I could find out. | | | | |
| I know what qualifications are necessary for my child to achieve his/her goals. | | | | |
| I feel confident about attending my child's school or college. | | | | |

Mix-d: expresses sincere thanks to the schools and colleges that supported young people in attending this event.