

Category 2:

Interrogate the truth

Social Justice and the Curriculum

Drawing on his experiences as a black teacher and student, author Jeffrey Boakye argues that if we are to create a socially just future for everyone, the school curriculum must be a place where historical narratives, assumptions and distortions are explored, interrogated and challenged.

Transcript

Social justice as a concept - I've done my research on this - it goes back to the 19th century.

Because that's a time when in this part of the world, in the West, you had industrialization kicking off; you had countries forming empires, so suddenly there was a need for social inequality because that's how countries get on - you know, you exploit people, you take from places, you colonize, you have workers at different levels, so the concept of needing justice in society became really sharp in the West.

So, your curriculum has to have a position that factors that in, because there is social injustice built into society.

Individual people need to shape their own arguments, but I can tell you what I believe to be true about social justice. A lot of people can't because they haven't been invited to interrogate it. So, I feel as though the curriculum needs to be a place that fosters a spirit of interrogating the accepted truths and norms and the status quo, seeking to discover what actually happened, with a view to putting your best foot forward in a deliberate and benevolent direction of 'can we make things better and fairer?'

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