Citizenship Projects 2020 - 2021 Pitfalls & Suggestions

Title 4

Break down the title to see what you really need to be doing:

Research hate incidents and establish whether such incidents are an issue for young people in Ireland. Use your findings to inform a day in your school that celebrates diversity and inclusion.

1st Caveat: One of the big warnings for this title is that there is a very specific and meaningful difference between 'hate incidents' and 'hate crimes'. The former is not a crime, while the latter clearly is.

Here's how the Garda Siochana define both terms:

Hate Incident: **Any non-crime incident** which is perceived by any person to, in whole or in part, be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on actual or perceived age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender.

Hate Crime: **Any criminal offence** which is perceived by the victim or any other person to, in whole or in part, be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on actual or perceived age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender. *Are there any potential problems with these definitions you can see?*

Hopefully, it will be evident that the categories for defining these two terms draw directly from the 2000-2015 Equality Acts, which are the same grounds under which employment discrimination (for example) is not permitted.

2nd Caveat: The goal of this project is not to turn you into the 'Famous Five' or 'Secret Seven'. i.e. you're not supposed to be rooting out hate incidents in your school and dobbing people in to the authorities. The 'research' you undertake should be drawn (as much as is possible) from scholarly work on this subject. If your research includes any information you will gather yourself (such as a survey), you need to be ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN that you conduct the survey in an appropriate manner, with all the relevant precautions around **anonymising** the data.

Section A – Research

The most important part of this 'research' is to differentiate between <u>generalized</u> and <u>specific</u> approaches to 'hate incidents'. The definitions outlined above identify NINE groups that might be considered targets of hate incidents. My STRONG recommendation is that you **SHOULD** investigate **ONE** of those grounds in detail. If working in a group, you might decide that each member of the group is going to work on one area, but that ultimately, your 'day in school' will deal with multiple grounds upon which diversity and inclusion should be celebrated.

The second way that you **MUST** bring focus to your research (very overtly going back to the title above) is to see whether those incidents "*are an issue for young people in Ireland*". In other words, you might find that certain issues are a problem for older people, but not younger people. As you are gathering your data, pay particular attention to references to young people. When searching for reports from the Government or NGOs, focus upon those that focus upon the experiences of young people. This way, you'll be able to draw conclusions more directly from the material you have gathered, rather than having to make broader claims based on limited information.

In trying to "establish whether such incidents are an issue", you must classify the material you have gathered into THREE separate categories: "**Are an Issue**", "**Are not an Issue**", or "**Inconclusive**". I would strongly recommend that you label your Bibliography out along those lines also. This will help with both gathering and assessing the evidence you need to evaluate.

Based on the research undertaken, you must decide at the end of this section whether or not you feel the specific area you examined is an issue. You should do this based on the '**preponderance of evidence**' – i.e. taking all of the information into consideration and seeing where the balance falls. However, you might decide that an area is an issue in a certain sub-groups (e.g. geographic, or socio-economic groups). In other words, you can narrow down the scope of what you are doing in order to come to a more informed judgment and manageable project.

Depending on the type of action you decide upon (facilitating class discussions, group presentation, etc.) the way in which you make the link between your research and your action will vary, but will roughly speaking sound like this: "Having seen multiple references to x, y, and z in the research I conducted, I decided that the most appropriate way to highlight this would be..." Make this action be '**INFORMED**' by everything that you have read!

Section B – The Action Plan

The 'action' section of this project is more expansive than some of the others. The key idea is to show how the earlier research has informed your choice of action. The goal of the action is a day that 'celebrates' diversity and inclusion. But how are you going to frame your celebration in a way that includes the research you've undertaken? The school's student body profile will also have a big impact here…

Needless to say, Covid-19 restrictions will have a dramatic impact on how you organize your action. What alternative ways of 'celebrating' diversity and inclusion can you imagine? (Digital/Zoom presentation, a postering campaign, presentations to a class or year group, a social media campaign based around school events, cooperation of the school's sports teams, performances streamed or recorded, etc.). If in a group project, you'll need sentences that sound something like: "It was my job to focus on…, while my partner did…". Make sure that your roles are clearly defined and that the logic for those allocation of tasks makes sense.

You need to 'critically analyse' your action plan. Clearly, Covid-19 will be an issue here, but there will also be other specific problems that you'll identify yourself. Were the teachers/school management cooperative, encouraging, too busy? Logistical challenges (that last year wouldn't really have been an issue) might become very complex now, bear that in mind and mention how you at least tried to overcome one of those difficulties.

Like some of the other projects, the 'outcomes' of this project are going to be very difficult to quantify. Focus, perhaps, on how many people were involved overall in the 'celebration' you organized. Did you focus on quality ahead of quantity? Could you conduct a 'feedback session' or 'focus group' to draw together some ideas that you could refer to here? You might need to be a little bit creative with this section, but take as broad an interpretation of 'outcomes' as you need, bearing in mind that things like 'skills or insights you developed' aren't meant for this section, they go in Section C, below!

Section C – The Review

This section will inevitably be far tighter on the word count, but obviously you'll be focussing primarily in on "academic skills", which will include drafting and editing, drawing together research conclusions, communication skills etc. In your "insights gained" section, you can reflect on both the issues around mobile phone usage and the process of making recommendations. Even if you've done an individual project, you'll have done some degree of 'peer reviewing' and contributing to the projects of others, and received some suggestions from the teachers/parents/or any number of other people. Chose one example to explain in detail (maybe you might even note if some of those bits of feedback ended up having a negative impact). The 'reflection' component is asking you to reflect back on the PROCESS – did you re-evaluate the plan as you went along? Were you thinking about how well (or poorly) things were going as things progressed? Make sure that you consult the 'Section C' sample handout and watch the video on www.polsocpodcast.com for more advice.

Bibliography – some indicative sources to get you started!

To find relevant articles that I've been sharing for a while, look back over the 'feed' of the @khpolsoc twitter feed. You'll find lots of little gems there. Ultimately, though, if you're only relying on these articles, your research won't look unique, so you MUST locate some relevant articles of your own! (you'll need to bear the distinction between crimes and incidents in mind here, throughout the literature and separate them out as appropriate)

Newspaper Articles: (bear in mind that these are often 'click bait' and might have significant bias)
https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/number-of-hate-crimes-fall-26-on-previous-year-1.4280969

Government/NGO/International Reports:
https://www.youth.ie/programmes/equality-intercultural/no-hate-speech/ This page from the National Youth Council of Ireland should be your first port of call.
https://www.garda.ie/en/Crime/Hate-crime/What-is-hate-crime-.html
https://inar.ie/hate-crime-legislation/
https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/2020-01/2019SubmissionHateSpeech%26HateCrimeFINAL.pdf
Submission to the Department of Justice and Equality: Hate Speech and Hate Crime (2019)
https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/download/doc/responding_to_racist_incidents_and_racist_crimes_in_ireland.doc again, slightly older, but directly from the IHREC (2010)
https://www.iccl.ie/tag/hate-crime/ some relevant insights from the Irish Council for Civil Liberties
https://lgbt.ie/get-information/harassment-and-violence/ LBGT issues
https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/ireland_-_transphobia_in_ireland_report.pdf This report on transphobia has some useful methodology and definitions that can be more broadly applied.
Scholarly Journals/Universities: - a starting point only…
https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/law/ccjhr/publicationsseptember2018/Nasc-CCJHRRacismandHateCrimeConferenceSummaryOct2013.pdf A report from a 2013 conference on the topic.