

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARS

Jaziea Farag is an award-winning Children's author, an Education Advisor for Wales for a Fostering Agency and Speech and Language Specialist Teacher. She is an Early Years and Racial Trauma Consultant and currently completing her PhD. Her research interests include creating feelings of belonging for families in Early Years settings as well as educational and vocational aspirations of Black and Minority Ethnic learners and the links with Racial Trauma.

She has been teaching for over a decade in Wales and formerly taught during the Educational Reform in Abu Dhabi and as a part of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team for a Local Education Authority. She is an active champion of Anti racist practice in education and works closely with DARPL to facilitate training for Governors, Practitioners and Senior Leaders to nurture their journey to anti-racism. A highlight of her career so far was being asked to set up the first Teacher Network for BERA.

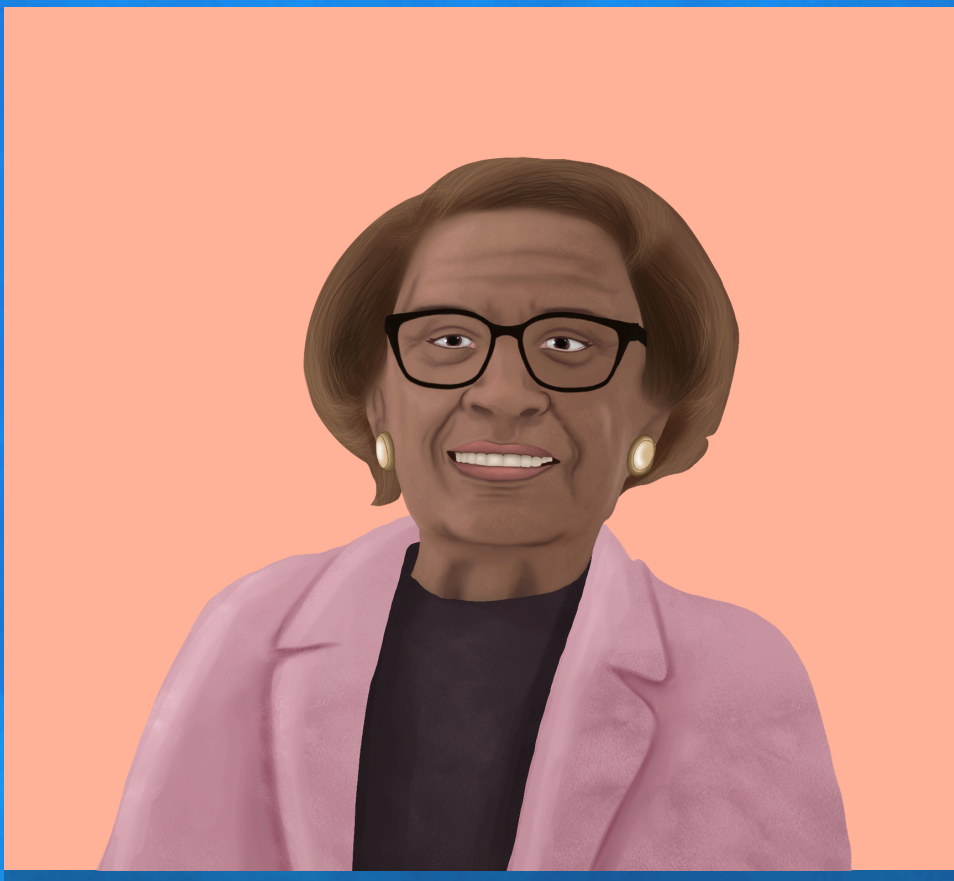
During my years of teaching and now as a consultant my thoughts on the fundamentals of how children learn have stayed predominantly the same. I have always considered that children learn best when they feel safe and valued. I strongly believe that it is meaningless planning for learning unless you first plan how you are going to meet these basic needs for all children in your setting. To do that, I feel that practitioners need to focus not just on the resources, environment and learning experiences but the values, wellbeing and self-awareness of all the adults who are interacting with the little people in your care. I think we sometimes underestimate and undervalue the power of a positive role model and the impact of the connections they build with young people. I therefore always try to reflect on how I am feeling and my responses when I enter a classroom or setting as I truly believe that an enthusiastic adult that shows interest can really spark engagement and therefore learning. Another area of education that I always try to incorporate into my practice no matter where I am working is the involvement of the wider community around a child and ensuring that I am not working in isolation, this should include families and members of the community.

My first memories of school are great ones. Laughter, friendships and lots of outdoor play. I attended a Primary School with a high level of culture and diversity in terms of its pupils until I was 7, and then we moved out of the area, so I attended a very different school from Year 2 onwards. Moving to this school was the first time I became aware of my race and have vivid memories of the first day and several events that followed where I felt othered, alone or very 'on display.' Through the entirety of my education, I was never taught by anyone that looked like me and it is only looking back and reflecting, that I realise the impact that had on me personally and the influence it had on my teaching philosophy. It led me to really spend time when I was in the classroom planning for a diverse and inclusive education, but it wasn't always easy to find the information or resources particularly in Wales. This is when my interest in the family as a source of support and learning began and the quest to ensure that all children get to see themselves reflected in their education. A lot of my professional choices have stemmed from those values and this project looking at Educational Scholars has just filled me with joy and 'a-ha' moments as well as more questions. We need to give learners a fuller education so that they can make their own informed decisions.

Jaziea Farag



DR EVELYN MOORE



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dr. Evelyn Moore was a teacher and is a pioneer in early childhood education.

Dr. Moore had originally trained as a teacher for neurodivergent and physically disabled children. Her teaching career started in a pre-school and she quickly realised that she was never taught theories on child development during her teacher training - something that was common in the 1960s.

She went on to gain a master's degree in early childhood education and is the founder and Executive Director Emeritus of the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI). This organisation strives to make sure all Black children have access to high-quality early education.

DR EVELYN MOORE'S WORK

Dr. Evelyn Moore grew up in a small town in Michigan, in a low-income household with her mum and dad. Her experiences throughout her childhood and those she had in the earlier years of her teaching career shaped her approach to education.

In her first years as a teacher, she taught at a preschool focused on providing high-quality education to African American children living in poverty. She saw that many of the Black children she was teaching were considered to have special educational needs and began to question why this was. Dr. Moore noticed that teachers had assumptions that were made on the various intersections of a child's life such as the colour of their skin, their gender and their socio-economic background. These assumptions were impacting how they viewed, interacted with, and taught children.

"When you come into the classroom and you have this bias already, because they're disadvantaged, you're not going to teach from the strengths of these children."

(Dr. E. Moore)

Dr. Moore explored the use of deficit language and how that contributed to the assumptions we make about children. She thought that children would have a better experience of their education if their teachers took the time to understand and be interested in who they are. Part of this means getting parents involved in their children's learning, making sure they understand what their children are being taught and why it is important.

Dr. Evelyn Moore believed that if we reframe the way we look at all children to explicitly focus on what they can do then we can change the culture of the whole setting.

REFLECTIONS ON DR EVELYN MOORE'S WORK

Think about a time when you have made an assumption about a child, their family or a colleague. Where does this assumption come from?



Do you view children's culture, their race, their socio-economic background, their language(s) as a strength or a deficit?

How do your views and assumptions impact how you interact with, support and teach children?



Reflect on the language you and your team use about children and their families? Are you using deficit language? If so, how could you actively change that?



REFERENCES

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