

# Decolonising the Curriculum resources



These resources have been compiled by the Decolonising the Curriculum Working Group, whose members are:

- **Dr Allan Laville,**  
Chair, Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Vice Chancellor's Office & Associate Professor, School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences
- **Dr Alejandra Perotti,**  
Associate Professor, Department of Ecology
- **Cara Rothwell,**  
RUSU Student Engagement Co-ordinator Inclusivity & Sustainability
- **Dr Edward Powell,**  
Study Advisor, Library
- **Dr Eileen Hyder,**  
Academic Developer, Centre for Quality Support and Development
- **Dr Emma Pape,**  
Lecturer in Social Psychology, School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences
- **Florencia Botta,**  
PGR Student, Department of Archaeology
- **Dr Gundula Muedner,**  
Associate Professor, Department of Archaeology
- **Dr Joanna John,**  
Joint Head of Doctoral Skills Training and Development, Graduate School
- **Katherine Pritchard,**  
Lecturer, School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences
- **Professor Katrina Bicknell,**  
Professor, Department of Pharmacy
- **Kyle Smith,**  
RUSU Student Engagement Co-ordinator Inclusivity & Sustainability (until March 2022)
- **Dr Lydia Lee,**  
Lecturer, School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences
- **Dr Michael Kilmister,**  
Instructional Designer, Henley Business School
- **Dr Nasreen Majid,**  
Associate Professor, Institute of Education
- **Dr Nicola Abram,**  
Associate Professor, Department of English Literature
- **Dr Noor Mat Nayan,**  
Lecturer, International Study & Language Institute
- **Bethany Nugus,**  
RUSU Education Officer (2021–22)
- **Ruth Adeniyi,**  
RUSU Black Students' Officer (2021–22)
- **Shakera Green,**  
RUSU EDI Project Co-ordinator
- **Sinead O'Flynn,**  
Executive Administration Officer, Vice Chancellor's Office
- **Tarek Ahmed,**  
RUSU Minority Ethnic Students' Officer (2021–22)
- **Dr Vishnu Nair,**  
Lecturer, School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences
- **Dr Yue Yue,**  
Lecturer, School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences

## Contents

---

<b>Decolonising the Curriculum – Scoping for institutional vision</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction from the Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr Al Laville	4
Student perspective	5
Staff perspective	6
<b>What we have done so far</b>	<b>7</b>
Staff Development	7
<b>Inclusion Consultants:</b>	<b>8</b>
Examples of best practice:	8
Frequently Asked Questions	9
<b>What Next:</b>	<b>13</b>
Resources	13
Question-led approach to decolonising the curriculum	13
<b>Decolonising the curriculum – six case studies</b>	<b>15</b>
DtC for a fully online course/MOOC – a case study	15
Decolonising the curriculum in Evidence-Based Psychological Treatments	18
Decolonising the Curriculum – Diversity Framework Thinking Like an Economist Part 1 module	19
Diversity in Law Engaging with Race in the Legal Skills Part 1 Module	21
Case study – Diversification of Theorist Sources in Mathematics Education	22
Case Study – Culturally Sustaining and Decolonisation Practices in Speech and Language Therapy	23
<b>Further reading and viewing</b>	<b>25</b>
Recommendations from the Inclusion Consultants	26



# Decolonising the Curriculum – Scoping for institutional vision

## Introduction from the Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr Al Laville

---

In June 2020, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Robert Van de Noort commissioned the [Race Equality Review](#), which I co-led with Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Parveen Yaqoob OBE. The aim of the review was to obtain a better understanding of race equality at the University for both staff and students. The review explored the following themes: representation, student experience and attainment, staff experience and advancement, and culture.

As lead on student experience and attainment, it was very important to consider a focus on decolonising the curriculum. In my view, decolonising the curriculum starts by reviewing your teaching and learning practices to make sure a diverse range of students are represented. It is far more than adding ethnic minority authors to your reading lists, it is embedding diverse viewpoints, experiences, beliefs, and frameworks throughout your teaching content and teaching methods. It is also making sure that assessment methods reflect the changes in teaching content.

As part of the Race Equality Review (2021), I led on creating the recommendation for decolonising the curriculum at the University of Reading and since then, I have had the pleasure of being Chair for the institutional Decolonising the Curriculum Working Group. As decolonising the curriculum means different things to different people, the working group has engaged in listening exercises with colleagues to establish a vision for decolonising the curriculum at UoR. We have also worked in collaboration with RUSU to make sure student voice is at the centre of our work. In addition, as part of the focus group work by the SAGES-EDI Race Equality Initiative (Mpofu-Coles et al., 2021), we have included further student views on decolonising the curriculum.

## Student perspective

Students stated that there is much interest in decolonising the curriculum and a need to learn more about the historical origin of their disciplines. Students want to consider different perspectives within the classroom and to have access to a diverse range of resources within teaching and learning.

For students, visible representation of the diversity of the student body within the curriculum should be at the centre of decolonising the curriculum. This includes the importance of making sure that current teaching content is not removed but presented allowing the expression and debate of diverse views in a safe and supportive environment for students. As the student population is very diverse, there is a need to present a wide range of perspectives and lived experiences, which would aid representation and learning. Furthermore, recognising the relationship between communities was also seen to be important.

Students also recognised the need for an organic transition from conceptual decolonisation of the curriculum to classroom practice. This includes clear evidence that lecturers care about the course content, are interested in decolonised research within specific disciplines and are looking at the material from a range of perspectives. In some disciplines where curriculum content might be seen as more constrained, it is still possible to include diverse perspectives by critically reflecting on the history and current practices within the subject from a post-colonial perspective, and by ensuring that reading lists include work by researchers from diverse backgrounds.

Students commented that the content of modules and programmes tend to reflect the interests and knowledge of staff, who are predominantly white, so there are limited opportunities to engage with subjects from a non-Western perspective. Field class and study abroad locations are not diverse. Although there are notable exceptions, reading lists tend to be dominated by white, western academics, and areas of research associated with the global south are often described as 'under-researched' when they are actually well researched by scholars in the global south, all conveying the message that research originating outside the Anglo-American academy is less valuable.

Regarding intersectionality, there was an acknowledgement that a lot has been done to help females succeed in STEM subjects, but when gender is the focus, race is often overlooked. Events that focus on the achievements of women in a discipline rarely showcase BAME women.





## Staff perspective

In our listening exercises, colleagues have shared the importance of decolonising the curriculum and that this needs to be university-wide and inclusive of a variety of staff and student views. The approach to decolonising the curriculum needs to be supported by networking opportunities to further support decolonising the curriculum within UoR's specific context and considering local communities. Furthermore, our approach must be guided by a) an understanding of the historical and ongoing impact of colonialism and coloniality of our disciplines and providing origin stories, b) interrogating Eurocentrism in knowledge production, including in our teaching and assessment methods, c) resisting essentialism – the belief that all individuals of the same ethnic or cultural groups share similar traits, d) focusing on individual positionality by analysing social identity (e.g., race, sexuality) and locating oneself in the societal matrix of power, and e) acknowledging, critiquing and changing the influence of systemic racism throughout all power structures. Furthermore, we must give consideration to our external partners, such as placement providers, and how we work with them to ensure the reach of this work goes beyond the University e.g., University practice and principles are aligned with conduct and approaches within placement settings.



As an institution mandated to produce and reproduce knowledge, through research and teaching, the University has an opportunity – and, indeed, a responsibility – to dismantle structures of 'imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy' (bell hooks) and instead to cultivate freedom, respect, interdependence and equity amongst its staff and students. To decolonise is to address the historic and ongoing impact of coloniality on the institution and its disciplines, and to nurture a community of difference and a richer picture of global knowledge.

Decolonising cannot be a bordered task: its work does not begin and end with changing the texts or topics we teach. Decolonising the curriculum entails decolonising the University, which first requires 'decolonising the mind' (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o).



Without actively decolonising, a colonial approach remains normative. This reproduces existing unjust patterns of advantage and disadvantage, which in turn maintain the racialised status quo in terms of degree outcomes, graduate employment, social status and political enfranchisement.

# What we have done so far

## Staff Development

Because we recognise the importance of providing opportunities for staff to develop their understanding and expertise in racial equity, a regular programme of sessions on decolonising the curriculum/anti-racist pedagogy has been offered on CQSD's T&L programme since the publication of the Race Equality Review (2021). We have run 8 webinars and it has been encouraging to see many staff attending these (326 colleagues) to learn more about decolonising the curriculum.

Feedback has been very positive:

- "It gave me lots of ideas for my own work, e.g., assessment idea"
- "This was one of the most useful sessions on EDI"
- "I am thinking of ways to facilitate a discussion around decolonisation and epistemologies with new international students"
- "So much to go away and think about, how we are all taking a step, how important it is to take that step, where to start, how to move forward. I've got so much to follow up on"
- "The discussion, the insights and the honest, and sometimes frank, messages. It certainly challenges you (in a good way) to look at what you are doing and what you can do to be part of the solution. But also, the importance of realising what is going on 'inside' of you and understanding that there is room for improvement and learning for everyone."

Most of these sessions were recorded and available to view through UoR Learn.

In addition, bespoke sessions have been happening locally around the University. Dr Eileen Hyder, D&I lead on the Curriculum Framework, has been asked to run/support workshops in SAGES, SMPCS and IoE. Feedback from the SMPCS session showed the value of situating this training in a particular disciplinary and departmental context:

- "Thank you so much for coming to speak to us today. We really appreciate the time you took to go through our module descriptions and webpages to pull out common themes. Your session was really informative and will support our staff with engaging with inclusive curriculum actions."
- "Really impressed with all the preparation you'd done, quoting from our module descriptions, newspaper STEM and diversity quotes etc, really bringing it alive for us – it's so easy to think that this doesn't concern us in STEM. Made me think a lot, and great preparation for meeting with my peer review partner next week."



# Inclusion Consultants:

Our student Inclusion Consultants ([current University of Reading students advising on inclusive practices](#)), have contributed significantly to the work to decolonise our curricula by sharing examples of best practice at UoR, which students have appreciated, and by providing answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

## Examples of best practice:

---

“In Public Law we discussed world constitutions e.g., Indian Constitution and debated about contentious issues such as how menstruating women are not allowed to go on pilgrimages. This resonates with many students who come from Indian culture, such as myself, and so it was comforting to see other students on my course discussing and also learning about these issues.”

“In one of my modules, my lecturer asked us the difference between policies in the UK and our individual countries. The topic at the time was the guidance for fruit and vegetables to eat “5-a-day” and whether it’s the same with our countries or if it’s different. The fact that he even asked surprised me and made me look forward to more of his lessons. I would also like to add that he engages with the students like this on many occasions and draws out our unique perspectives.”

“One of my modules in APD is called Addressing Poverty and we look at different countries, so it’s not just what poverty looks like in developed nations, which would be western-centric. It means when you have students from the countries being discussed you can ask for their views, for example, “I only know about this country from what I’ve read, so please let me know if your experience is different, as a Chinese person”.”

“We have a module called International Planning in Architecture. We look at different countries but more than that, one of the good practices is emailed guidelines on how to interact. It discusses how to respond to each other, how to disagree constructively but politely. It’s useful for international students from more passive learning cultures.”

“We have problem questions in exams, and they embed different cultures into the questions, the names are from other cultures. They also add cultural contexts in essay questions, like references to Eid and cultural holidays. I thought “oh, they’ve taken the time to include different backgrounds”. It resonates with you and improves your performance if the exam looks back at you.”

“In one of our assignments (problem-based learning task about a patient suffering from diabetes). The patient was from an Afro-Caribbean descent and the last question for the assignment was “How might the patient’s ethnicity (e.g., his Afro-Caribbean descent) have affected his diagnosis, treatment and ongoing care?”. I really think that including questions like this not only got students to look at clinical side when answering the question, but I liked how the word “treatment” could also be understood to be, the treatment of a person and therefore gave scope to talk about racial discrimination in healthcare. This was also discussed in the feedback session for the assignment and so students who may not have picked up on that could get an insight into something they may not particularly understand. It also opened up the discussion about cultural sensitivity when giving non-pharmacological advice to a patient whose cultural food may be the reason why they are becoming ill.”

“In one of my modules in Psychology, we would actively criticise the lack of cross-cultural validity and generalisability of evidence, theories and studies.”

## Frequently Asked Questions

We acknowledge that colleagues might have questions about decolonising the curriculum. Therefore, the Inclusion Consultants have provided the following FAQ to show the benefits of decolonising the curriculum for students:

### What is decolonising the curriculum?

#### Santhiya:

A large part of our knowledge is from a westernised perspective which means subtle assumptions based on our colonial past can affect the way we teach and learn. Decolonising the curriculum is about challenging these assumptions to avoid reinforcing feelings of marginalisation for underrepresented students, which is important as we have an [awarding gap at the University of Reading](#).

It also equips students to live in a diverse world. For example, in Pharmacy, students are taught how skin conditions will present on different skin tones which means our graduates can help tackle systemic racism in healthcare.

### Why is decolonising the curriculum important?

#### Jingheng:

It might seem like a 'trendy' thing to do but there are important benefits like better student engagement, enhancing staff-student relationships, dispelling prejudices, broadening the worldview of students and fostering a greater sense of belonging ([which is linked to academic success and motivation](#)).

#### Tarek:

Focussing on diverse experiences allows us to ensure that those who are often disadvantaged are always being considered throughout the university and across all disciplines. That helps students to not fall victim to unconscious biases whilst they study.

### Is focusing on diverse experiences ever a disadvantage to white students?

#### Santhiya:

Focusing on diverse experiences would actually be an advantage to white students who will broaden their depth of knowledge and learn from all kinds of academics.

#### Jingheng:

It's undeniable that there are narratives out there that those from majority cultures are responsible for the wrongs of the past. That just creates unnecessary divisions, when we see decolonising the curriculum as a way to foster integration. It's about creating a greater understanding between those in positions of privilege and those in less fortunate positions. Healthy and productive conversations about sensitive issues like racism and discrimination whilst emphasizing relationships and responsibilities towards one another will benefit everyone.



## I don't think this suits my subject, what can I do?

### Santhiya:

I can see how it would be easier for the humanities based subjects in comparison to the STEM subjects when it comes to decolonising the curriculum. I feel that this is because you don't have the same kind of reading lists or discussions around society. Rowena Arshad offers really useful insight to this problem, recommending that the subject is examined to ensure that marginalised groups haven't been dismissed and that a global approach is adopted. When STEM students picture a scientist or a mathematician, who are they thinking of?

### Tarek

Even if you feel like this does not apply to the subject, the chances are that there's someone else who feels differently and may not have had a positive experience. All subjects have room for improving student experience for everyone.

### Jingheng

I agree with Tarek. Research over the past few decades has demonstrated that regardless of the discipline, there's room for a reflexive examination of how and what is being taught.

Here's an example. With regards to the build environment, Robert Moses' height limit for overpasses restricting the free passage of buses from poor/ segregated areas demonstrates how racism can be embedded in seemingly neutral infrastructure. When used as a topic for class discussion, it can encourage and enhance students to examine their surroundings with a more critical perspective, and potentially consider inherent bias and better solutions.

## Isn't this really about the students' attitudes to learning at the end of the day?

### Santhiya

To an extent, but it's also about providing an inclusive environment which gives everyone a fair chance to succeed. Representation and diversity are crucial facets in creating a sense of belonging. When we're unable to relate to our studies, it creates a 'distancing' feeling and possibly even a dislike for the subject. Therefore taking actions such as diversifying the reading lists and actively recognising scholars from non-western backgrounds will allow students from BAME backgrounds like myself to be seen and be proud of their culture, improving student satisfaction.

### Tarek

As important as attitude plays in everything that we do, it is not the only factor which can impact how a particular student performs. We're all aware how a bad experience or some negative news can leave a lasting impact for several days, weeks, months, or even years! So, put yourself in a position where you constantly felt left out and perhaps suffered from bullying/prejudice? You can imagine how much that could impact EVERYTHING, especially academic performance which usually depreciates when an individual is struggling. Is that fair? Of course, it isn't!



## I haven't had any issues with my teaching before. Why do I need to change my approach?

### Santhiya:

Colonial thinking has been embedded for a long time and almost 'accepted' by students. We know that a decolonised approach makes students more engaged especially those of us from ethnic minority backgrounds. It will also allow for active discussion and debate.

### Tarek

Imagine if you could do it EVEN better by improving engagement and then getting better results? Well...we think that's what DTC can do! A lot of students feel like the curriculum cannot be changed or that speaking out could negatively impact their university experience. But as we become more inclusive we're seeing that students from all backgrounds agree that a less Eurocentric curriculum would increase their interest and help us get better results.

### Jingheng

Based on student feedback we have gathered, many of the challenges and concerns students face are not reported for a myriad of reasons. We believe that decolonising the curriculum can help to improve the student experience significantly. In addition, it is about enhancing rather than completely changing existing approaches to teaching.

## I have too many important things to focus on to do this.

### Santhiya

It is impossible for change to happen overnight. In order to be effective small steps need to be taken. I can see how staff could feel overwhelmed and like this is an extra big responsibility being added but it's about incremental improvements. It's a collective task where efforts from everyone are paramount and we are all improving together without judgement or an expectation that it will be done perfectly every time.

### Tarek

We're not going to pretend that this is a "quick fix" or easy to do because it isn't. It requires real effort and integration with relevant teams to create a more decolonised curriculum. But the benefits that we've already mentioned are surely worth it ... and if anything – universities should develop the next generation of academics who have expertise in the widest range of topics within a respective discipline.



## How do we know if this stuff actually works?

### Santhiya

What we know is that it's important to us and helps us to actively engage with the subject. Even just seeing our home culture discussed in class feels inspiring and makes us want to keep coming.

### Tarek

Ahhhh – the BIG question! It's a tough one to answer. Of course, we could look at the awarding gap and whether following DTC's implementation we see a reduction. Equally, looking at whether grades have increased or what student satisfaction surveys say could also be used. But mainly, through DTC, we hope that our academics see the biggest difference. Increased engagement, better discussions and debate in class, and overall a happy atmosphere within the classroom all whilst maintaining results...

### Jingheng

One of the major objectives is to reduce the awarding gap, and a reduction in the disparities can be easily tracked. But equally as important are various aspects of the students' experience, be it improvement in engagement and interaction, or even developing their competencies and confidence.



# What Next:

## Resources

It is clear from discussions with staff that we need to develop and provide resources that support a structured and staged approach in order to move forward with decolonising curricula across the institution. These resources include the following thematic areas: a) nurturing the interests of staff and students across the university in decolonial histories, philosophies, research methodologies and teaching practices, by giving a platform to actively engage with decolonial scholarship, b) centring decolonisation and critical pedagogical approaches within teaching and learning practices including teaching philosophy, content and teaching and assessment methods, c) advance decolonisation through representation of, and consultation with, minoritized and diverse communities in teaching and learning spaces,

d) interactions and relationships between staff and students including decentring of power through nurturing and supporting authentic student-staff partnerships, and e) within research to include decolonial research methodologies and the inclusion of diverse communities and perspectives.

The initial set of resources below focus on the second thematic area. Question banks are provided to promote a question-led approach in order to prompt individual reflection and inform further discussion with module and programme teams. A series of case studies by colleagues from different disciplines and at different stages of decolonising their curricula is also provided. Future resources will be created and shared in 2022/23.

## Question-led approach to decolonising the curriculum

Colleagues from the decolonising the curriculum working group have created the following questions to support you with decolonising the curriculum at local level. The questions should be used to prompt individual reflection and to inform further discussion with module and programme teams.

Questions to support the decolonising of teaching content, teaching methods and assessment methods:

- Who has drawn on/draws on the knowledge created by [insert discipline]?
  - e.g. Who has drawn on/draws on the knowledge created by mathematicians?
- How has the knowledge created by [insert discipline] been used? Was the knowledge created by [insert discipline] used to disadvantage, oppress, or in any way further colonialism?
  - e.g. How has the knowledge created by mathematicians been used? Has it been used to disadvantage or oppress others?
- As we create new knowledge in this discipline, how can we ensure this knowledge does not contribute to disadvantage or oppression?
- How have [insert discipline] improved the world?
  - e.g. How have economists improved the world?
- How could you change the world for the better as a [insert discipline]?
  - e.g. How could you change the world for the better as an economist?
- Do you confront the unequal distribution of power and blind spots in the underpinnings of the discipline?
- Are students encouraged and supported to familiarize themselves with the discipline's origins and past?
- Do students have opportunities to reflect on how knowledge in the discipline was defined in the first place, who were considered legitimate producers of knowledge, what knowledge claims were made and what epistemologies were employed?

- Are there opportunities to interrogate the canon of texts in the discipline – how and why certain bodies of knowledge were identified and marked as foundational?
  - What ideas/figures/histories have been hidden/excluded from the curriculum in this discipline? Why? How has this come about? What agenda has it served?
  - Where and how have ideas/beliefs linked to white supremacy influenced the curriculum within our discipline?
  - How has our discipline/global progress been held back/compromised through exclusion?
  - How will our discipline/global progress be further held back/compromised if we don't change?
  - What changes need to be made in the curriculum of our discipline? How could such change come about?
  - What resources within your school/context are available to support decolonising the curriculum activities?
  - Within the scope of your teaching/subject matter, how might you engage colleagues and/or students to support decolonisation activities?
  - How does your teaching content fit within the overall programme structure and do decolonised approaches feature across the whole programme?
3. For whom do you design your curriculum? Who is your ideal, imagined student and what assumptions do you make about their backgrounds, culture, languages and schooling?
  4. To what extent does your curriculum draw on subjugated histories, voices, cultures and languages?
  5. How does your teaching recognise and affirm the agency of Black and first-generation students? How does your teaching legitimate and respect their experiences and cultures?
  6. Can you speak indigenous or regional languages and relate to the cultures and lived experiences of all students? Do you draw on these valuable resources in your teaching?
  7. How does your curriculum level the playing field by requiring traditional/white students to acquire the intellectual and cultural resources to function effectively in a plural society?
  8. How do you build a learning community in your classroom where students learn actively from each other and draw on their own knowledge sources?
  9. How do your assumptions about curriculum knowledge play out in the criteria that you use to assess students? What can you do to make your assessment practices more fair and valid for all students, without inducing high levels of anxiety? What assessment methods could show what all students are capable of, drawing on their strengths and promoting their agency and creativity? How do you reimagine your assessment practices that will centre critical and decolonial literacies? (e.g., creating art, analysing text or research from your discipline and locating them in a power, socio-political context)
  10. How far do your teaching and assessment methods allow students to feel included without assuming assimilation?

### **Additional questions from**

<https://theconversation.com/questions-academics-can-ask-to-decolonise-their-classrooms-103251>:

Please note some questions have been revised to include aspects relevant to the University of Reading.

1. What principles, norms, values and worldviews inform your selection of knowledge for your curriculum? (think about absences as well as presences, centres as well as margins)
2. What are your social identities and how does it influence your research methodologies and teaching philosophy?

# Decolonising the curriculum – six case studies

To further support colleagues with decolonising the curriculum, we have supplied six case studies to illustrate how colleagues at the University of Reading are undertaking this work.

## DtC for a fully online course/MOOC – a case study

**Michael Kilmister**

### Introduction

This case study critically reflects on my experience of designing and developing a fully online course focused on Indigenous peoples' experiences and struggles in the 21st century. My involvement in the course was as an instructional/learning designer, so my reflections will be from that perspective. The paper uses these reflections as a springboard to interrogate approaches to decolonising the curriculum (DtC) in the context of online teaching, while also recognising the limitations of this teaching and learning mode.

### Background

Online teaching is often considered to run counter to the demands and considerations of DtC agendas. Online delivery has been criticised within the academy for being driven by technological determinism, undermining educator agency, and making higher education impersonal and mechanical (Watermeyer et al., 2020), all problems antithetical to DtC. MOOCs (massive open online courses) are seen as especially suspect for they are predominantly created by universities in the Global North using centralised, for-profit platforms and pushed out to learners in the Global South with little regard to local infrastructure, values, and learning needs (Adam, 2019). Yet, despite these problems, online courses can be student-centred and can help make universities more equitable by opening study pathways for students who cannot attend traditional face-to-face classes (Ubell, 2021). I argue online learning should be an ongoing part of discussions about how we can decolonise our teaching.

Student-centredness is at the core of the course evaluated for this case study. Indigenous Peoples of the Contemporary World is a third-year anthropology course delivered at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Its content examines the conditions of Indigenous peoples

within post-colonial contexts around the world. Courses and research on topics of importance to Indigenous peoples are a strength of the university: it has a small but growing percentage of Aboriginal Australian students; a number of scholarships and programmes that support Aboriginal students; there is an Indigenous studies centre (the Wollotuka Institute) located at its primary campus, with satellite centres at some other campus locations; and two of its campuses are located on traditional lands that are sites of learning for their traditional owners. Due to low enrolment numbers in the course's face-to-face guise – and its central position in the anthropology curriculum from the perspectives of advocacy, equity and justice – it was included in the university's 'Bachelor of Arts Online,' which was a strategic T&L project developed between 2018 and 2021. Beginning late 2020, the course was entirely redesigned as a fully online experience that incorporated a MOOC component in its structure (that is, enrolled students learnt with non-enrolled students during the first three weeks of the course). All 12 weeks of the course were delivered on FutureLearn, but the learning design was platform agnostic. The redesigned course had its first run in the second half of 2021.

### Evaluation of the case

An early step in the redesign process was recognising the positionality of the teaching team: the lead educator, the tutor, and the learning designer are all white. Given our race and backgrounds, and our privileged position as educators at a Western institution, we were conscious of not being seen to be speaking *for* Indigenous peoples. Rather, we wanted the course to amplify their voices and to advocate for their rights. We phrased this aspiration in the course as 'speaking in concert with' Indigenous peoples. Inside the course, we were

explicit in acknowledging our positionality and encouraged students to become allies for justice, equity, and inclusion; they, too, can call attention to the plight of Indigenous and marginalised peoples. There were limits to this advocacy however. For example, the most direct forms of fighting injustice, such as attending rallies or engaging in social media advocacy, were not permissible under the university's health and safety guidance/policy, nor would this be appropriate or possible for all students. So, allyship within the confines of the course remained theoretical/aspirational rather than actual.

We were eager to decentre our own voices to make space for Indigenous voices. This was accomplished by engaging educators from the Wollotuka Institute, interviewing Indigenous peoples external to the university (and paying them for their time), liaising with a non-profit Indigenous rights advocacy group, and making a strident effort to include academic and non-academic sources created by or for Indigenous peoples (or at least containing Indigenous voices/perspectives). Yet, there were limits here. Most aspects of the course were not co-designed with Indigenous peoples; funding and course development timelines did not extend this option to us. Finding public domain imagery to support the learning proved challenging as many 'stereotypical' images of Indigeneity were not representative of modern Indigenous peoples. Even beyond person-focused photography there were myriad ethical challenges to navigate. Objects and artwork hosted on the web were typically not accompanied by contextual descriptors, so I was unsure if we would be (mis)appropriating objects of spiritual significance if they were used to support the learning content. (And tight development timelines and a limited development budget meant I did not have the resources to seek approval from traditional owners for the use of this imagery in the course.) While archival institutions like the British Museum collect vast visual material relating to and belonging to Indigenous peoples which they publish on their websites, there are manifold problems here: in the main, these items were taken from their traditional owners without permission and shipped outside their places of origin to be displayed without context in the

metropole. Terminology, too, proved challenging. In seeking to develop a standardised terminology for the course – pertinent for deciding whether we would capitalise words like Indigenous when we were talking about non-Australian Indigenous peoples – I suggested to the lead educator we follow the Australian Human Rights Commission's guidelines. (Their guidance is to only capitalise Indigenous when referring to Australia's Indigenous peoples.) However, some students pointed out this was not necessarily representative of non-Australian perspectives on Indigenous identities and was a decision that privileged the state over Indigenous peoples.

A major plank for implementing DtC in the course was making the online classroom a 'lateral' space where students were empowered to present their views at every stage. This was accomplished by student-led asynchronous seminars – time was made every week for groups of students to lead an asynchronous discussion about an Indigenous rights issue of their choosing – and encouraging participation in discussion boards. Encouragement came in the form of explaining to students the decolonial pedagogy behind the course: the content we designed and presented was not final, and we expected them to critique it honestly. We wanted learners to understand that we aimed to learn *with them* rather than teach them. This aligns with Walsh's (2018) contention that decoloniality is not a static condition. However, due to several factors it was not possible to co-design the course with students, so the design was less participatory and inclusive than the delivery.

While the course sought to create dialogical spaces that critiqued Western paradigms, the requirements of awarding a degree and assessment policy meant students needed to be assessed according to institutional norms and priorities, such as ensuring employability outcomes. We attempted to ease this tension by giving assessments an audience and distributing tasks frequently throughout the course. For example, the student led-seminars were assessed, and regular in-class tasks built towards the most heavily weighted final assessment (a mock application to an NGO that funded Indigenous rights causes).

Overall, the redesigned course was well received by students. Fifty per cent of the cohort responded to the University's student feedback on teaching survey, rating the course 4.6/5 overall. This was above the school's average of 4.29/5 during the same period. As pointed out above, there are elements of the course that can be improved, and I understand iterative changes suggested by faculty and students are being made.

## Reflections

Here are some key takeaways I took away from redesigning Indigenous Peoples of the Contemporary World for fully online delivery.

- **I need to offer safe dialogical spaces for meaningful discourse.** Online teaching offers powerful ways to enhance participation through discussion boards and asynchronous ways of learning that are always available to learners. I should seek to empower students to present their diverse viewpoints and to challenge the educator and the perspectives presented in the content, but also design guardrails to keep the conversations inclusive.
- **Consider offering drop-in sessions or ways of engagement outside structured learning where students feel comfortable to express their concerns/views.** Learning management systems are their own pre-existing framework that represents certain pedagogical and technological imperatives; it might be necessary to step outside these frameworks to reimagine and critique teaching and learning and the institution.
- **I always need to be open to evolving the course.** As Western paradigms of universal knowledge are dismantled, it is expected that marginalised and suppressed perspectives on topics will continually emerge. Be prepared to displace established content and approaches to make visible other forms of knowledge. Decoloniality is an ongoing process, so there is no point at which I can consider a course 'decolonised.'
- **Seek to involve diverse voices in the course design and review as far as practicable.** This might include co-design with students, or collaboration with community groups.

I should try to seek a budget for these activities because it is usually appropriate to compensate people for their time.

- **Reflect on the use of imagery in the course.** Ask myself: Do I understand the context of the image? Am I misappropriating an object? Would it be appropriate to use this image in this way?
- **Making assessment 'organic,' authentic to the subject matter, and flexible.** (By organic, I mean situated and conducted within the course of regular learning – so, an example might be assessing students' contributions to the learning.) Being open to students presenting their assessment in different modes rather than sticking to established norms and structures also seems important to DtC.
- **Openly recognise and reflect on my positionality and privilege and encourage students and faculty to recognise and reflect on their own privilege and context.**
- **Decolonial thinking as praxis.** I want to keep reflecting on ways students can engage in affirmative action and allyship safely. That is, putting into practice the movement and meaning of decoloniality. If this is possible within the scope of my courses, then it is pedagogically sound to allow space for students to reflect on these experiences.

## References

- Adam, T.** (2019) Digital neocolonialism and massive open online courses (MOOCs): Colonial pasts and neoliberal futures, *Learning, Media and Technology*, 44:3, 365–380. DOI: 10.1080/17439884.2019.1640740
- Ubell, R.** (2021). *Staying online: How to navigate digital higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Walsh, C.** (2018). The decolonial for: Resurgences, shifts, and movements. In W. Mignolo & C. Walsh (Eds.), *On Decoloniality* (pp. 15–32). Duke University Press.
- Watermeyer, R., Crick, T., Knight, C., and Goodall, J.** (2020). COVID-19 and digital disruption in UK universities: afflictions and affordances of emergency online migration. *Higher Education*, 81, 623–641. DOI: 10.1007/s10734-020-00561-y

## Decolonising the curriculum in Evidence-Based Psychological Treatments

---

### Nakita Oldacre

For me, decolonising the curriculum isn't about abolishing the current curriculum content or making changes all at once and expecting staff and students to adhere. Decolonising the curriculum is a process that requires feedback from both students and staff before the changes can be deemed effective. It's also important that these changes are realistic, proportionate, and gradual, so that such changes can not only be implemented, but also sustained.

By adopting a sustainable decolonising approach, we can build a stronger foundation for changes and active learning to occur. When active learning occurs, both students and staff have a safe platform to challenge their core values and unconscious bias without judgment. This is beneficial to all involved as it can improve critical reasoning skills in a way which is meaningful and therefore deconstruct biased views. It's all well and good making changes but if they are not meaningful then they are not sustainable. Making a change to actually make a change should be at the heart of decolonising the curriculum.

A recent example of such practice was demonstrated when we reviewed a vignette example based on a 68-year-old Black British woman. We considered the concept of intersectionality and felt that given her age, it was likely she identifies as being Black British rather than being Black British. Although this change was small, it was incredibly powerful as it allowed the vignette to really come to life.

As staff, we were able to discuss what it means to be 'Black British' and how this term has so much variation depending on the age and experience of a person. A 30-year-old 3rd generation female, compared to a 68-year-old, 1st generation female will have a completely different experience of identifying with Black British culture. Identifying with Black British culture myself, I was able to reflect on my own experiences as well as the experiences of my family members. This allowed my colleagues access to what it means to identify with Black British culture in an authentic way. As a result of sharing my experience my colleagues stated they are now able to gain some insight in the intersectionality that occurs in culture and that being Black British is not a one size fits all label.

Such discussions transferred from the staffing team to the classroom and were very well received by all students. It has helped all students, but especially those who identify as the BAME minority to consider their own intersectionality on a personal and professional level. By bringing such discussions in the classroom, this has helped to build a more inclusive environment as it encourages students and staff from BAME minorities to bring their whole self to the classroom. This eliminates the notion that BAME staff and students need to restrict parts of their identity to thrive within the Higher Education environment.

Overall, making small changes has allowed me to consider a diversity of pedagogy when designing my lectures to evoke more inclusive and discussion-based teaching.

# Decolonising the Curriculum – Diversity Framework

## Thinking Like an Economist Part 1 module

**Giovanni Razzu**

### Context/Background

The teaching of Economics is undergoing a substantial consideration of the curriculum. This is due mostly to frustration that began following the financial crisis of 2008 in response to a curriculum deemed oversimplified and blind to history, power, and notions of fairness. Topics such as income distribution and the environment were only marginally touched upon, despite the famous address by the Royal Economics Society President in 1997 on “Bringing Income Distribution in from the cold” and the fact that concerns about these have intensified a lot since then. Students have also started to demand more and more relevant consideration of ethical questions in the curricula they are exposed to in their programme of studies and to openly challenge the orthodox free-market teaching, arguing that alternative ways of thinking have been pushed to the margins.

Economics is a very diverse discipline, not in the demographic of those who practice it unfortunately but certainly in its coverage, both in the topics as well as methodological approaches it adopts.

The objective of a new module, called ‘Thinking Like an Economist’, was exactly to show this diversity of approaches and methods. This diversity allows economists to analyse a wide range of issues, provide insights on almost anything that affects societies, link and draw from other disciplines in a positive and constructive way so that understanding of real-world phenomena is enhanced.

### The module

The module EC131 aims to address the challenges posed by the context briefly described above and that economics is a diverse discipline, more specifically to provide students with an understanding of the range of theoretical approaches within economics and the ways in which economic thinking can be applied to analyse a variety of issues in the world. We thought it very important to do this from the very beginning of the students’ journey in and exposure to economics.

There was also another important, but more ‘local’ diversity objective, which was to expose students to the positive demographic diversity of members of staff in the Department and the wide range of topics and approaches they research, given the mostly applied nature of the research carried out.

To achieve all of this, the module was structured with a careful selection of topics and colleagues who gave lectures on those topics. Three guiding elements to this selection were:

- The range of topics, which should include those considered more “mainstream” as well as others considered much less so;
- The range of methodological approaches adopted to analyse the topics, also to include approaches that draw from other disciplines as far as possible;
- The lecturers, to include senior and less senior colleagues, with a good gender balance.

The application of these selection criteria resulted in a module which covered ten topics, including the consideration of moral duties in economics, gender inequality, conflict, unfreedom and slavery, behaviour and taxation, environmental regulation, and beauty. These topics also offered the opportunity to show how economics can be enriched by application of approaches from philosophy, psychology, geography, history, politics and international relations and so on. Students were also exposed to ten different colleagues who based their lectures on their research on those topics. The two written assessments also supported students to approach economics with a diversity mindset: the first one asks them to engage with, understand and interpret a piece of work done by another researcher, from the lectures covered at that point. The second asks them to employ that diversity mindset to a topic of their own choice.

## Next Steps

The module has been running for one year, but some lessons are emerging. Attendance was excellent throughout the term, despite the hybrid teaching approach, which suggests strong interest in the module. However, I sense students do not find it easy to think like an economist in this way and I wonder whether some more exposure to the discipline would help them to think more widely. Although only a small number of students completed evaluation on the module, overall satisfaction among these was 4.6.



# Diversity in Law

## Engaging with Race in the Legal Skills Part 1 Module

---

### Sharon Sinclair-Graham

School Director of Teaching and Learning  
Module Convenor Legal Skills

### 1 Background

I took over the Legal Skills module in August 2020. The module is run in the first three weeks of the Autumn Term, so no changes could be made at such a late stage, so I ran the course with five other colleagues also taking tutorial groups. The module is designed to equip students with key skills that they will need both in their academic studies but also into their careers: research, ability to answer problem questions, teamwork and reading cases as a representative sample. What became apparent was the students struggled with the materials and class engagement was limited. Therefore, I aimed to restructure the module and add more engaging and relevant topics for the students.

### 2 Objectives

Diversity and Inclusion is a very important element of the education of our students, I wanted three silos that I could use to underpin the work that we would do in Legal Skills that would generate debate, understanding and engagement amongst the students.

### 3 Implementation

I applied for two student partners in the late Autumn and was fortunate to be assigned two students, both of whom were BAME and shared the same goals as I, to make legal skills more inclusive. The students and I met regularly to discuss the ideas I had, but also to give me feedback on what they thought would work well, what should be included and how I could structure some of the sessions and what they saw as the legacy issues of the module.

Diversity and Inclusion is something that I feel passionate about in all its forms, so the decision was made to have three silos: gender, race, and religion. Following the events and aftermath of the killing of George Floyd and our School's

Black History month, I was left with food for thought on how I could make a small difference. I wanted to include race as a silo in Legal Skills – to demonstrate to the students that race has long been an issue, not just the events of 2020. My focus became Stephen Lawrence and the systemic racism within the police investigation, which still has not been thoroughly addressed today. Included in the materials were reports by MacPherson who recognised that the Metropolitan Police were “institutionally racist”, YouTube clips, links to documentaries regarding the five men accused of the murder, and newspaper articles, all playing a part in the two tutorials dedicated to exploring racism, whilst also utilising the key legal skills required.

### 4 Impact

The students were totally engaged with the silos. The Stephen Lawrence case brought much debate amongst the students, and the learning of the skills required became secondary to their engagement with the materials. It was clear that students were passionate about the issue, and many chose it as a focus for their group presentation. The average score in the module evaluations moved from 3 in the previous year to 4, evidence that the students were engaged with the material, but also learning new skills.

### 5 Reflections

On the whole the module went well. There are tweaks that need to be made over this summer period before the next academic year, but for me the biggest takeaway is that learning about new skills does not necessarily have to be “dry and boring” but choosing topics that mean something to the students ensures that they engage in a meaningful way and the skills they are learning almost become subordinate to their passion for the topics being taught and discussed.

## Case study – Diversification of Theorist Sources in Mathematics Education

---

### Dr. Natthapoj Vincent Trakulphadetkrai

Associate Professor of Mathematics Education  
Institute of Education

I have taught (a BA in Primary Education 20-credit module) for almost ten years to teacher trainees with a focus on how to apply various theories to inform primary mathematics teaching. Interestingly, it only occurred to me just before the start of the current academic year that the fact that the module had covered theoretical works that are exclusively of white men was problematic. Not having enough time to research about the work of non-white and/or female theorists myself in time for the start of the module, I had two options between waiting until the following academic year to do something about it or to think of a way now to address the issue of underrepresentation of the theorists being taught this current academic year. The latter option was chosen by reducing the number of white male theorists being covered by me to make room for a session whereby students assigned to work in pairs to research about and then present the work of a non-white and/or female theorist to their peers.

While this is less about 'decolonising' the curriculum and more about 'diversifying' it, it is still important as it sent a clear message to this year's ED1AC4 students (all of whom are female and a third are non-white) that knowledge is not generated by white males only, and that if we looked hard enough we would see that knowledge creators can also be female and/or non-white.

Following this experience, students' feedback indicated that they are supportive of this tweak to the module's design as it gave them great exposure to more ethnically diverse theorists. For example, a student commented how they appreciated this learning activity because of the fact that *"there are so many ethnic minority researchers that aren't as credited as their white counterparts so I appreciated the exposure minorities were given during our task."* Similarly, another student commented that "It was good because we were able to gain some knowledge of other important theories that otherwise we probably wouldn't have learnt about because theories by white males are the most prominent." A third student commented that the task "Made me realise that majority of theorists are white male and so by looking at other theorists who are non-white / male, allowed us to understand other points of view."

Going forward, I need to decide if I want to be the one researching about and teaching the work of non-white male theorists or repeating what I have done this academic year (i.e., providing students with an opportunity to engage in student-led research and presentations). The latter may be chosen given the highly positive feedback from the students. Finally, if the same activity is to be repeated, I would need to remember to give students some tips on how to make Google search engine not show 'white results' only, as students commented that it was difficult to come across non-white female theorists whose work can be meaningfully applied to mathematics teaching and learning.

# Case Study – Culturally Sustaining and Decolonisation Practices in Speech and Language Therapy

**Vishnu Nair**

School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences

## Introduction

Speech and language therapy (SLT) is a rehabilitation profession that diagnose, assess, and treat speech, language, and communication difficulties (e.g., RCSLT, n.d). The profession originated in Europe and was popularized following the Second World War. It was argued that post world-war “speech” was commodified as a necessary tool to the functioning of the industrial capitalistic societies (St. Pierre & St. Pierre, 2018). Any variation associated with speech was pathologized and problematized as a disorder. Additionally, SLT was described as the fourth Whitest profession in the US (Thompson, 2013). In the UK, although the precise statistics is unknown, the professional practice is still dominated by White women. In countries such as South Africa only White speech and language therapists were allowed to clinically practice and minoritized populations were denied access to speech and language clinical services (e.g., Abrahams et al. 2019). Thus, the foundation of SLT was rooted in ableism, capitalism, racism, and medicalization.

There have been minimal initiatives within SLT to acknowledge and confront its racist and ableist history. Although these attempts have failed in the past, more recently (following the BLM movement globally) there have been substantial efforts initiated by minoritized scholars and clinicians to center race and ableism within the profession (e.g., Yu et al. 2021). Most clinical practices, for example, the speech, language, communication norms in SLT are based on heterosexual White able-bodied standards. Black and Brown individuals who deviate from these norms are pathologized and recommended for remedial interventions (e.g., Yu et al. 2021). This is compounded by the fact that professional training in SLT contributes to othering of minoritized students because of institutional racism and marginalization. There is an urgent need to decolonize the profession given the

core of pedagogical and clinical approaches in SLT are based on a Euro-centric epistemology. A new thinking anchored through anti-racist, decolonial approaches will advance social justice and pose a significant challenge to the dominant Eurocentrism and racism entrenched in the profession (Pillay & Kathard, 2015).

## Context of the module

Although in the past there were discussions about infusing social justice in the SLT curriculum, these efforts have resulted in performative diversity measures. Performative diversity measures perpetuate performative acts that suffer a failure at implementing meaningful changes to interrogate the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism and racism. At the level of training, performative diversity measures prevent meaningful discussion of colonialism and racism in the classroom. It results in superficial acts such as creating a tool kit for well-being or scheduling a lecture on diversity towards the end of the module. In order to move beyond such superficial acts in student training, SLT needs to infuse decolonization and social justice across the curriculum. The infusion approach needs to be supported by a foundational module where students are provided with critical discourses on decolonization. (e.g., Horton et al. 2009). The current module is situated within this context where students are prepared for reflection and praxis through decolonial and critical approaches. The module is aimed at developing criticality where students are equipped to not only question Euro-centrism in knowledge production but also to expand their thinking on how to transform research, pedagogy and praxis. One of the core aims of the module is to question knowledge construction from a zero-point epistemology (Mignolo, 2009). The neutrality of medicine, science, humanities or social sciences must be questioned and examined for its geo-political influences (Mignolo, 2009). For SLT, this would mean employing critical approaches to

examine how historical and current practices are anchored through the marginalization and exclusion of minoritized groups. It would decenter a cursory diversification of the learning content to interrogating how clinical practices such as standardized testing are rooted in racist and eugenic practices.

The core aims of the module are:

- a. Critically identify and interrogate colonial ideologies that create unequal health disparities for minoritized communities
- b. introduce students to the core principles of decolonial, critical and culturally sustaining practices
- c. provide theoretical knowledge on concepts such as ableism, models of disability, intersectionality, positionality, disorder vs disability, raciolinguistics, and neurodiversity
- d. enable students to co-create just and humane research and clinical practices that centres families (and communities) of disabled individuals.

### Learning outcomes

- a. demonstrate an in-depth knowledge on how historical and colonial legacies have shaped and influenced SLT as a disciplinary field
- b. critically analyse how ableism, colonialism, raciolinguistic ideologies are co-constructed and manifested in language assessment and intervention
- c. critique the difference(s) between charity, medical, social and neurodiverse models of disability
- d. reflect on one's own positionality using a social identity map and its implications on SLT service delivery
- e. create a framework for culturally sustaining clinical approaches for facilitating and supporting language and communication in disabled individuals

### Timeline, assessment, and future plans

The module will be first introduced to third year undergraduate and second year master students during spring 2023. Two summative assessments are proposed – a) a written piece focusing on critically interrogating a clinical concept in SLT,

and b) creating a poster utilising art. The module intends to build a staff-student partnership that would decenter the power relationship between the student and the educator. In the future, this will be achieved by evaluating and revising the module through a process of student-staff collaboration and feedback. It will help revisiting the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used in the module and revise assessments centering student voices.

### References

- Abrahams, K., Kathard, H., Harty, M., & Pillay, M.** (2019). Inequity and the professionalisation of speech-language pathology. *Professions and Professionalism*, 9(3).
- Horton-Ikard, R., Munoz, M. L., Thomas-Tate, S., & Keller-Bell, Y.** (2009). Establishing a pedagogical framework for the multicultural course in communication sciences and disorders. *American Journal of Speech-language Pathology*, 18(2), 192-206
- Mignolo, W. D.** (2009). Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom. *Theory, culture & society*, 26(7-8), 159-181.
- Pierre, J. S., & Pierre, C. S.** (2018). Governing the voice: A critical history of speech-language pathology. *Foucault Studies*, 151-184.
- Pillay, M., & Kathard, H.** (2015). Decolonizing health professionals' education: audiology & speech therapy in South Africa. *African Journal of Rhetoric*, 7(1), 193-227.
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists** (n.d). *What is Speech and Language Therapy?* Retrieved from: <https://www.rcslt.org/speech-and-language-therapy/>
- Thompson, D** (2013). *The 33 Whitest jobs in America*. *Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/11/the-33-whitest-jobs-in-america/281180/>
- Yu, B., Horton, R., Munson, B., Newkirk-Turner, B. L., Johnson, V. E., Khamis-Dakwar, R., ... & Hyter, Y. D.** (2022). Making race visible in the speech, language, and hearing sciences: A critical discourse analysis. *American Journal of Speech-language Pathology*, 31(2), 578-600.

## Further reading and viewing

Colleagues from the Decolonising the Curriculum Working Group and the Inclusion Consultants have provided reflections on resources, which they consider to be key reading and viewing.

**Saad, L.F. (2020). *Me and White Supremacy*. London: Quercus**

**Dr Eileen Hyder, Academic Developer**

A book that was very powerful for me was 'Me and White Supremacy' by Layla F Saad. I bought the book because it was recommended to me by someone whose opinion I trust but I wasn't sure it would be useful for me because I don't identify as a white supremacist. The book was a real eye opener in terms of bringing into focus things about myself that I wasn't aware of.

A good example comes from the section 'You and white superiority'.

The idea of whiteness being 'of higher rank, quality, or importance' begins before you are even consciously aware of it. And because you are unaware of it, it goes largely unchallenged and becomes an internal truth that is deeply held even though it was not intentionally chosen.

How does white superiority show up?

- Believing African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is 'ghetto' and thinking the correct way to talk is the way other white people talk
- Primarily buying from and working with white entrepreneurs and service providers, whether intentionally or unintentionally

This made me realise that I did classify types of English as standard and non-standard and considered standard better than non-standard. This was an uncomfortable realization and one I needed to reflect on more broadly than just in relation to language. Where else might I unconsciously hold white supremacist views?

The book also made me think about whether I primarily buy from white producers. I came across Jamii – a platform for Black creators and makers – and Bad Form (a books magazine by and about writers of colour). I am making more conscious choices about what I buy and what I read but, to be a true ally, it isn't sufficient to simply make changes at a personal level. The next stage is to think about how I can draw on my learning to influence others (students, colleagues, friends, family).

**Akala (2018) *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire*. London: Two Roads.**

**Katherine Pritchard, Lecturer**

I deliberately started my reading around race and racism by reading books by British Authors who lived and grew up in Britain. As I started to think about racism I became aware of a voice in my head saying that racism was worse in America which I knew to be a personal bias and not based on any knowledge I had, so I wanted to begin my journey with books that challenged this bias and highlighted racism in this country. I chose this book after watching an interview with Akala and James O'Brien about the book. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atfVUgyEIOI>

This book is part history book and part autobiography which I found to be a powerful combination as I began to learn about the impact of Britain's history on real people and the systems that we exist within.

Reading this book was when I started to understand the term 'white privilege' and how it applied directly to me. I am racialised as white so.... I can feel safe if I approach a police officer for help, I can drive my car and assume I won't get pulled over, my name won't cause people to pass me by when I apply for jobs/university etc (consciously or unconsciously), I can assume that if I make a mistake (or even commit a crime) I am more likely to be given the benefit of the doubt (not be jailed, expelled or sacked), I can assume I will not be searched at an airport, I don't have to worry about my children being bullied because of their skin colour and many other ways in which I am at an advantage/privileged because of my skin colour.

The book also made me really think about how I perceive and interpret what I see in the media and I now find myself questioning every headline and news report, looking for the bias that I am being sold. See the end of chapter 9 for an interesting discussion on the media reporting of the school system.

I would especially recommend this as a good place to start if you are beginning your journey.

## Recommendations from the Inclusion Consultants

I would recommend these books as they highlight the personal, making everything more relatable.

- [\*Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism\*](#)
- [\*Trans: A Memoir\*](#)
- [\*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West\*](#)
- [\*Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?\*](#)
- [\*Black Boy\*](#)
- [\*Real Queer America: LGBT Stories from Red States\*](#)
- [\*Queer \(In\)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States\*](#)
- [\*Misogynation: The True Scale of Sexism\*](#)
- [\*Everyday Sexism\*](#)
- [\*Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent\*](#)
- [\*When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir\*](#)

Spivak's "[Can the subaltern speak?](#)" and Connell's Paper on "[Decolonisation of Knowledge](#)." The main takeaway from the former is the multiple barriers that the disadvantaged face in simply trying to be heard, and I think staff will find it useful in drawing their own conclusions about how it can benefit their teaching. As for the latter, it links back to what I mentioned about stronger connections between a more diverse content to student perception.

'**Get Out**' is such a good film which touches on themes around race in a comedic/horror style!

**Daryl Davis' Ted Talk** on how he (a black man) became best friends with KKK members and has converted hundreds of KKK members through kindness and discussion. Davis' talk is proof how we need to have difficult conversations with those we disagree with even if those views may seem radical.

'**King Richard**' really reflects the phrase often said to BAME or low socio-economic individuals that they must work "twice as hard" to be seen.

'**Hidden Figures**' is amazing empowering film about African American women who worked at NASA, also based on a true story.

'**A time to kill**' is also a very good movie. Though it is set in the US, it outlines the injustice faced by black people.

'**The Colour of Law**' is a book about race within America and how it moulded the legal system.

I think "**When They See Us**" is a great watch for everyone. It really shows you the trauma that people experienced back then which can help you understand why some people act the way they do today like why people are less likely to just trust anyone.

'**Reframing the curriculum: a transformative approach**' by Kathy Luckett is an excellent journal article talking about transforming the curriculum by challenging societal injustices and to achieve the goal of equity of outcomes.

Some books like '**Why I Am No Longer Talking to White People About Race**' (I found this a nice introduction to understanding race and racism within Britain, author also relates to her own life experiences), David Olusaoga '**Black and British: A Forgotten History**' (this is a hefty book that goes into more detail about black history), '**Dismantling Race in Higher Education**' by Jason Arday and Heidi Mirza (have chapters by various authors discussing race, the curriculum, racism at university).

'**The Imitation Game**' although not directly related to race, it shows how women and homosexual individuals were hidden and treated, although being such inspirational people. It was relevant in 2020 (I think) when the new £50 note was introduced with Alan's face printed on it.

**'A United Kingdom'** – again another really good film, highlights the problem of racism within the UK politically and socially. Also emphasises the issue of classism.

**'The Help'** – really enjoyed this movie, was an eye opener to the lives of many black women during the 1960s in America. It shows the racism and hardships they suffered and how they supported each other throughout.

**'The Express'** although based in America and surrounds American football, it follows the true journey of a young Black man who plays college football in the 50s, they decide to play in the south where they're greeted with a lot of racism.

**'Self-Made: Inspired by the life of Madam C.J. Walker'** follows a black female entrepreneur who created hair product for Black women.

**'Loving'** – an American movie based upon how an interracial couple fought for their right to marriage, overturning the supreme court's decision.

**'12 years a slave'** – a movie about how an African-American man who thought he was a free man, only to realise that he was sold into slavery.

There is a project called [Project Implicit](#) by Harvard that takes a closer look at colonisation. Further reads can be found, as well as Implicit Association Tests that measures the strength of associations between concepts (e.g., black people, gay people) and evaluations (e.g., good, bad) or stereotypes (e.g., athletic, clumsy). project relates to the concern about how data collected for the databases used in Artificial Intelligence can be racially biased, resulting in unwanted actions performed by technology that uses these databases, for example self-driving cars not recognising dark skinned pedestrians and increasing the chance of them being in an accident.



## DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM

 For more information, please contact:

**Dr Allán Laville**

Dean for Diversity and Inclusion

[allan.laville@reading.ac.uk](mailto:allan.laville@reading.ac.uk)

[www.reading.ac.uk](http://www.reading.ac.uk)



THE QUEEN'S  
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES  
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION  
2021