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DECOLONISING DMU



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Decolonising DMU: How we can make our teaching truly inclusive

**Dr Hardeep Basra
Dr Melanie Crofts**



Session Overview



Session Context



Decolonising the Curriculum



Decolonising the PGCAP



Summary



Questions/Discussion



Session Context: Where is Started

Degree Awarding Gap

- Gap between white & BAME students obtaining 1st & 2:1 is 13.3%
- Variation across ethnicities: Black African (23.3%), Black Caribbean (19.2%) and other Black background (24.4%) Chinese (4.4%), mixed (4.8%) and Asian Indian (4.8%).

(Students statistical report 2020, Advance HE)

- Overall gap at DMU (2018/19) 15.6%



The Deficit Model

“...the deficit model focuses on the attributes and characteristics of the student as the main contributing factors for attainment differentials...The model does not therefore allow for an examination of societal or institutional structures and the discrimination that exists within them...ownership, accountability and responsibility for the inequalities in attainment similarly are not placed with the institution, only the individual.” (UUK/NUS, May 2019, p.16).

Session Context: Where is Started



UNAPOLOGETICALLY
BAME
MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD!
AN EVENT BY STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS.

DECOLONISING DMU
BAME ATTAINMENT GAP
WHITE PRIVILEGE
MICRO AGGRESSIONS

DMU'S VISION IS TO HAVE AN ANTI-RACIST
UNIVERSITY?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**2ND
DEC
5PM**

THE GALLERY
DMU CAMPUS
#FREEPIZZA

REGISTER @ [EVENTBRITE/UNAPOLOGETICALLYBAME](#)

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO THE
CONVERSATION REGARDLESS OF RACE

Recognising students of colour at DMU

- Students of colour: 54% of the student body at DMU; many use English as a second or third language
- Over 2,500 international students from more than 130 countries
- Diverse identities and lived experiences; complex and fluid
- BAME label homogenises student identity



Session Context: How It's Going

- Building an anti-racist university
- Safe space
- More than curriculum
- Mindset changes: disrupting/decolonising teaching and learning practices, spaces and experiences
- Students reflected in the curriculum – *resources, examples, relatable content, role models*
- Equip **ALL** students with the skills to positively work in a global & diverse environment
- **Terminology:** Black, Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME), Black, Students/People of Colour

Session Context

“Accepting the decentering of the West globally, embracing multiculturalism, compels educators for focus attention on the issue of voice. Who speaks? Who listens? And why?” bell hooks ‘Teaching to Transgress’ 1994
Routledge p40





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Decolonising the Curriculum

Dr Melanie Crofts – Staff Workstream Lead DDMU



Issues in Decolonising

- Institutional: cultures; management structures; governance; internal regulation and performance management; policies; and procedures.
- Staff-related: workloads; curriculum design, delivery and assessment; management and delivery of research and public engagement; approaches to professional development; the regulation of relationships; the role of professional services' staff in the design and delivery of services.
- Student-related: co-production/co-creation of the curriculum; engagement with student support services; volunteering and public engagement; the role of students' unions and societies; and relationships developed on-campus.



Co-creation

- To ensure that every student at DMU can achieve their potential and can see themselves and people like them reflected in the course(s) they study.
- Consider how students can co-create curriculum and assessment design
- Students as partners
- Opportunities to do this e.g. Curriculum Review in BAL



Curriculum Activity

- Thinking about relationships, personal development, community, and teaching and learning, what might decolonisation look like in your own practice?
- What things might you/your teams want to think about to decolonise their working practices?
- What things are you/your teams already doing to try and decolonise working practices?
- Beyond Diversification?
- Adapted from SOAS Learning and Teaching Toolkit:
<https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/decolonisingsoas/learning-teaching/>



Questions to Consider

- To what extent does the content of my curriculum presume a particular profile/mindset of student and their orientation to the world?
- To what extent does my curriculum allow students to understand the origins and purposes of this field of study in its historical context?
- Does the curriculum allow for/encourage a critical approach to received/authoritative texts as a central feature of study, and not just something supplementary?
- What is the demographic profile of authors on the curriculum?
- Do modules enable the use of non-English sources in the curriculum
- Do the dynamics of the lecture/seminar/tutorial help to engage students who have been discouraged to actively participate or take risks in academic work as a result of structural and interpersonal racism?
- To what extent are tutors and students aware of what might constitute racist or racialising behaviour in a learning context?
- How are students' own challenges and aspirations factored into the kinds of pedagogy practiced? Do we know what they are?



Possible Adaptations

- Re-organise material to bring different issues to prominence; in particular through bringing various kinds of critical perspectives.
- Consult a wider range of journals or textbooks for source materials, particularly journals from the Global South.
- Read articles about pedagogy in your field which speak to diversity, coloniality, inclusion and critical thinking.
- Talk to students about what kinds of content they would like to see addressed and signal willingness to engage with issues related to inequalities and discrimination.
- Teach 'controversies' around key issues in the field.
- Contextualise the subject in its historical moment, making explicit the kinds of assumptions and aspirations that generated it.
- Diversify the kinds of source material that come into the classroom; intelligent writing or comment on particular issues might well be available online in non-academic form.
- Teach the material in a way which allows students to make connections to their existing knowledges and experiences.
- Proactively disrupt patterns of dominance emergent in classroom discussions by restructuring the conversation or workflow.
- Have conversations about race and racism with colleagues and students.



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Decolonising the Curriculum

Good Practice Examples

More can be found: <https://decolonisingdmu.our.dmu.ac.uk/staff/toolkit/work-with-tutors/>



ANU KOSKELA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning by reflecting on their own everyday linguistic experiences with a module that includes writing about their own 'linguistic observations'. As the focus of this is on the students' own experience, it is sensitive to the students' own socio-cultural identity and history. For example, bilingual and international students have written pieces commenting on linguistic differences between the languages they speak or some of the misunderstandings they have encountered as non-native speakers of English. Students have also reflected on slang uses specific to their own dialect and social group. Students are encouraged to work in inclusive and engaged manner with their peers, with peer feedback and collaboration, as students can learn from each other's experiences.



ROGER SAUNDERS

MARKETING

As an advocate of student-centred learning and assessment I have encouraged students to apply their own ethnic and cultural perspectives to the assessment and creation of advertising and other forms of marketing communications. In understanding that brands have a responsibility to speak to inclusive audiences they can choose any campaign to assess and in answering the D&AD New Blood Awards briefs they have the opportunity to consider different audiences, both domestic and international. The module, Campaign Planning, also addresses the issues of individual learner needs by offering communication in a variety of formats and encouraging different approaches to engagement through the use of a workbook. This enables students to control their own learning in terms of time and depth of interaction, while at the same time providing individualised support outside of the classroom. Students focus on what they want or need to know and consequently are able to move at their own pace through the module and in relation to the assessments.



SUMEYA LOONAT

BAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

International students studying on Business programmes are given the opportunity to co-create study skills resources to develop their learning by attending my drop-in sessions and workshops on English language and academic writing skills. Through student feedback from these sessions I produced a referencing guide for international students which took their learning perspectives into account by using contextualised examples and keeping the design, content and language simplified and accessible. Resources created are intended to be used as supplements alongside central university materials and have been very well received by module tutors and students within the Business and Law faculty. Academic skills workshops are also embedded into some Business programmes with a large international student cohort so that students can access contextualised academic support and while these sessions are not compulsory, attendance is always at its maximum!



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Decolonising the Curriculum

Resources: A Starting Point



Library and Learning Services

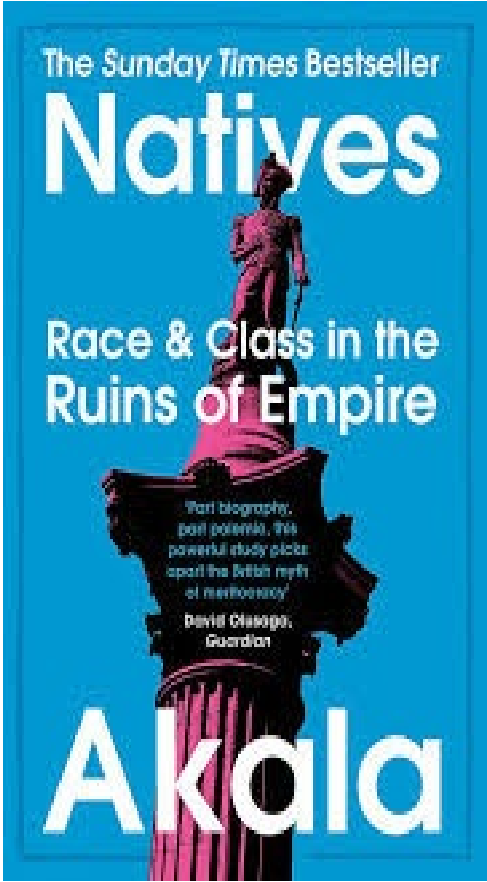
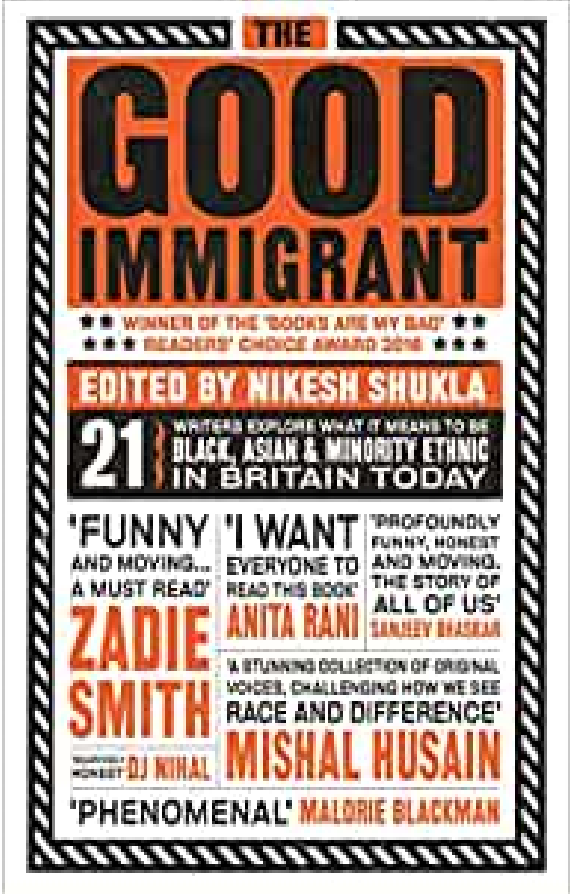
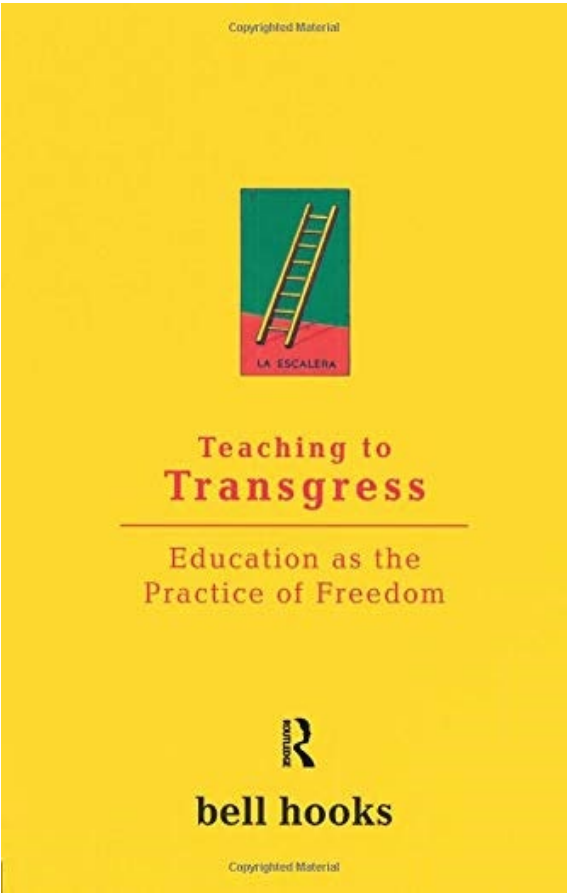
Resources

Some specific databases:

- Black Lives matter Springer nature for researchers (collection of books and journals)
- Black Freedom Struggle in the United States
- History Vault, Black freedom struggle in the twentieth century
- Making Open Access journals truly global
- Diverse leisure reading collection with global representation offering insight into cultures and lived experiences of people from around the world.

See <https://library.dmu.ac.uk/decolonisingDMU/home> for the Library Decolonising DMU guide including useful resources and decolonising reading list tools

Narrative through





- **What do you need to assist you/support you in the process of decolonising the curriculum?**



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Decolonising the PGCAP

Hardeep Basra: Academic Development Consultant and
Member of DDMU Community of Practice



Decolonising the PGCAP

- **Programme Leader for the PGCAP**
- hardeep.basra@dmu.ac.uk
- Decolonising more than just the curriculum-we need decolonise pedagogy. We need to rethink, reframe and reconstruct the current PGCAP curriculum in order to make it better, and more inclusive.



Decolonising the PGCAP

- Recognising that more needs to be done to challenge (disrupt) our pedagogic practices beyond the realms of inclusive practice.
- It challenges existing scholarship of learning and teaching and pedagogic approaches claiming HEIs are reinforcing whiteness through knowledge, norms and behaviours which does not fully prepare academics to consider anti-racist practices or the impact of their teaching on diverse students.
- To get new teachers in HE to conceptualise and position their teaching as truly inclusive and to consider anti-racist approaches to learning and teaching.



How?

- Explicit embedding of the Decolonising DMU project in the PGCAP curriculum
 - Decolonising the curriculum (what you teach)
 - Decolonising learning & teaching approaches (how you teach)
- Revising the reading list
 - Critical race theory
 - Critical pedagogy
 - Authors of the global south



How?

- Empowering new academics to understand their teaching practice in the context of the DDMU project
- Toolkit/resources – CAI/DDMU Expert Group
- A range of activities for them to shape/rethink their practice
- Action research
- Case studies
- We also need to look at who teaches on the PGCAP



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Summary and Discussion



Dignity of difference

Diversify the syllabus, canon, curriculum, infrastructure and staff

Decentre knowledge and knowledge production away from the global North

Devalue hierarchies and revalue relationality

Disinvest from power structures that reinforce metrics, citations and rankings

Diminish some voices and opinions that have predominated, and magnify those that have been unheard



Questions Discussion Reflections



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