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Pedagogies that enable racism

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Racism is all forms of discrimination and/or disadvantage accruing from processes of racialisation (SOAS 2018). A survey report in 2016 commissioned by University College Union (UCU 2016 as cited in Bhopal and Pitkin 2018) and more recently by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2019) found that racism is present in Higher Education (HE) for staff and students. The term racist pedagogy or Western/Eurocentric or ethnic neutral pedagogy is described as a dominating construct or strategy in curriculum design, that results in racialised disadvantages for the Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) populations (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and Council of Europe 2010, DaCunha & Cidalia 2016, Showunmi et al. 2016, Jivraj 2020). This is structural racism which “is understood as the patterned production of hierarchical entitlements and life-chances between racially-identified groups, based on forms of social control” (SOAS 2018, p.3). The following sections present the diversity of knowledges and action in addressing a racist pedagogy from curriculum, institutional

Introduction

On searching for research regarding racist pedagogy in HE, literature continuously deferred to the term antiracist pedagogy. Within relevant papers, racist pedagogy may have an introductory discussion regarding e.g., discriminatory, exclusory or Eurocentric curriculum and consequences (i.e., Wagner, 2005; Montgomery, 2013). A rapid evaluation scoping of research literature was carried out, into the subject of pedagogy/ies in HE that is perpetuating and or supporting racism in the curriculum. This had to be extrapolated from literature related to antiracist pedagogy of curriculum design. From EBSCO, the databases Academic Complete, ERIC and Education Research Complete were searched for relevant research.

There are key learning needs, education and training of students within the curriculum and staff, on culture as an institutional approach. Specifically exploring culture as a tool for learning and to adjust to cultures (Jabbar and Mirza 2019), cultural awareness (Singh 2019), culture as core topic as a levelling technique/promoting equity by both explaining and solving problems (Jeyasingham and Morton 2019) and staff understanding cultural norms and diversity. Including immersion into issues of power and privilege, through the lens of social justice (Hill, Philpot, Walton-Fisette 2018).

Appreciating disparate learning needs of Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic and White students being different regarding racism and these need to be built into the curriculum (Jeyasingham and Morton 2019, Singh 2019). Student feedback that Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic and White students receive and perceive training about race and racism differently (Singh 2019). Literature resources and reading lists for courses tend to be Eurocentric and White male dominated in sciences (Crilly, Panesar and Suka-Bill 2020, Schucan Bird & Pitman 2020)

Solutions for change as part of an institutional approach includes collaboration between staff and students to co-design and apply antiracist pedagogy to change the curriculum (e.g., diversifying the reading lists [Crilly, Panesar and Suka-Bill 2020, Schucan Bird & Pitman 2020]): Internationalising the curriculum content (Jeyasingham and Morton 2019); applying a strength-based frame for curriculum that values diversity; and staff to reflect and review how teaching practices construct race, whiteness [or 'Eurocentricness'] and oppression, to improve the awarding gap (Jabbar and Mirza 2019, Jeyasingham and Morton 2019).

In relation to Husbands and Pearce's (2012) nine items for effective pedagogy delivery, the solutions for change relate to 5 of the items: Co-design, integrating what teachers know, want to do and why they act, relating to short and long-term goals, relating to scaffolding, and integrating diverse needs. Current strategies to embed antiracist pedagogy is reduced in its effectiveness when they are not integrated into these items for sustainable change. The literature indicates that the curriculum and underlying pedagogy continues to be racist, because changes to curriculum are still being requested to stop disadvantaging Black, Asian and minority ethnic students (Tate & Bagguley, 2017).

Removing racist pedagogy or implementing meaningfully antiracist pedagogy is not an easy fix of just including diverse and racial content into courses and curriculum of disciplines. The past attempts of institutions implementing antiracist policies have failed as we are here writing an antiracist policy guide for HE. The reason for failure is offered by: Tate and Bagguley (2017), in that, the past liberal inclusive approaches to embed antiracism have not taken into account the pervasiveness of the Racial Contract (Leonardo, 2013). The Racial Contract is intensely continuing the protection of the White privilege space of power, which has a strong emotional reaction to protect those it relates to, thus maintaining the oppression and inequality for Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic staff and students (Tate and Bagguley 2017). The Racial Contract sustains the dominance of western/Eurocentric focus of curriculum and hence racist pedagogy (Tate and Bagguley 2017).

Epistemic exploitation is an additional coercive and exploitative labour for Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic populations, to educate their oppressors regarding how the oppressors

are oppressing (Berenstain 2016). This labour is time consuming, emotionally harrowing and not remunerated, the latter really emphasises the imbalance of power (Berenstain 2016). Hence all this leading to the shift to equity being short lived or not felt at all. This space has to be disrupted for real meaningful actions for change to take root and lead to positive progress. It requires a whole institution approach for antiracist transformative change, to enable antiracist pedagogy to reach and land across the HE hierarchy, through meaningful actions for the betterment of all students, and furthermore contributing to social change (Kishimoto 2018). Within this transformational framework, is incorporated the political character of HE and racialisation, and the dynamic inter-relationships of knowledge, cultures and systems of power (SOAS 2018). This acknowledgement of White privilege power structures and processes through transparent and uncomfortable discussions and strategic planning to action meaningful antiracist change, will break the stronghold of the Racial Contract and remove the continuance of epistemic exploitation.

“When racism is understood only as individual prejudice, racism embedded in institutions is ignored. At the same time, focusing only on institutional racism allows individuals benefiting from racism to avoid any responsibility” (Kishimoto 2018, p. 542).

Voice of the author

From my observations, politically and policy-wise, race and racism are continually left out of the discussions to implement meaningful actions; and to monitor, review, and follow up. To make actions is about continuous monitoring, review, outcome measures and persistence in collaboration with all stakeholders. The continuous quest for more reviews and consultations only makes the people in the White privilege power base feel better and stay in power and keeps opening up and lay bare the historical scars and noxious consequences of inaction. James Baldwin timelessly said, "as a negro to be conscious is to be in rage all the time" because everywhere the system is disadvantaging most Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic persons. It is not about creating a colour-blind society or institution, or even about allyship. It is about making authentic antiracist actions that is deep seeded in the institutions of power, because in the end this benefits all in society. So, in HE there must be no more gestures of tokenism, for now is the time to whole-heartedly embrace social justice in education through actioning antiracist pedagogy. Start right, start somewhere, and it will go everywhere.

Change Domains

Re-thinking leadership

Based on the National Education Union (2019, p.9) framework for schools developing a whole institutional antiracist approach, ensuring that leadership models are invested in commitment to antiracist values and a whole school/college approach to race equality. Considering leadership as an opportunity to challenge race inequality, achieve cultural inclusion and respond to the differences in students' lives caused by racism, poverty and discrimination. Higher education institutions must centrally put in place infrastructure, policies and resources to commit to being antiracist and offer diverse internationalising, not western/Eurocentric, curriculum content. Institutions can explicate their position as an anti-racist campus and this could be embedded in the institutional vision statement, in its working philosophy, in its workforce and how it supports its Black, Asian and minoritised

ethnic staff and students. Policies and procedures for staff and students must explicitly enable a racism free safe zone. Reported issues of racism MUST be recorded and the meaningful learning, actions and outcomes documented.

In HE, embedding antiracist pedagogy will require recognition of alternative perspectives in analysis of privilege and White power relations, including race gender and class. This shows authenticity, transparency and commitment to be an antiracist university with antiracist curricula. Review and monitor annually through student and staff feedback, and record and share action changes.

Effective pedagogy in race equality

Integrating Husbands and Pearce's (2012) 9 items of effective pedagogy in the whole institution strategy to deliver antiracist pedagogy in curriculum. Monitor and review curriculum against the framework and its 9 items, and record and share action changes. The schools/faculties have to explicitly take the antiracist position which is evident in all their materials from promo to teaching delivery and content and learning materials. Monitor and review curriculum against Husbands and Pearce's (2012) antiracist education institution framework and its 9 items, and record and share action changes.

Diversifying reading and literature

Diversify and internationalise the reading lists, reducing the western centric and White male author overrepresentation, co-produce with students. Review and monitor annually through student and staff feedback, and record and share action changes.

Key learning regarding racism is built into all modules in the curricula, integrated with the different learning needs and outcomes, and teaching methods for the Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic and White students, assuring that the classroom is a safe space. Annually monitor and review from student feedback. Annually monitor and review curriculum against Husbands and Pearce's (2012) antiracist education institution framework and its 9 items, and record and share actions changes.

All modules in courses should include race, inequality and colonialism into subjects, to enable explicit understanding and discussion and reduce western/Eurocentric concept/topic dominance. This will go towards improving the resilience of Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic students in White spaces and promoting the active adjacency positioning of White students against racism. Annually monitor and review from student feedback, and record and share action changes.

Equity and equality impact reviews of modules

Annual reflection and reviewing of modules by staff to recheck the positional stance of modules in relation to antiracism and collect data to demonstrate impact of change due to antiracist pedagogy, e.g., student satisfaction, pass rates and staff diversity separated into ethnicities for comparing with previous years. Record and share action changes.

Reflective questions

- How do you measure that you are promoting an antiracist organisation and have a culturally intelligent organisation?

- Whose voices are heard in your institution?
- Do Black staff feel valued and safe?
- Do Black parents feel valued and respected in school/college?
- Wellbeing & Belonging - Which students feel a sense of belonging? Why?
- Is student wellbeing seen as a priority??
- What are the links between racism and wellbeing?
- Community - What is the local history in your area? How can you use it to discuss protests, struggles or campaigns led by Black communities in your area?"
- What antiracist pedagogical strategies are you using?
- Is your curriculum predominantly white, western, Eurocentric or ethnically neutral?
- What antiracist strategies are you using?
- Is your service culturally intelligent?
- Do you engage in or feel able to discuss race or racism in the classroom environment in relation to classroom dynamics and or placement environment and or learning materials and or study skills support?

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