

Beyond Decolonisation: Transforming University Culture and Curriculum

The term 'Decolonisation' in higher education carries diverse meanings, presenting both challenges and opportunities. The conference emerged from discussions within the NERUPI Student and Staff Race and Ethnic Equity (SsREE) working group about the unexplained degree awarding gap between different ethnic groups. It became clear that a transformative approach was required, focussing on innovative practice that fosters cultural shifts towards a more inclusive ethos. The conference will delve into the historical roots of decolonisation, reflect on personal decolonisation journeys, enable sharing of experiences and explore actionable strategies to support change and APP intervention strategies. Hear from speakers spearheading decolonisation efforts and discover subject-specific approaches designed to revitalise the curriculum and transform the culture of higher education.

9:00 **Coffee & Registration Images of De(Colonisation) Display**

9:30 **Welcome and Introduction**

9:45 **What is Decolonisation?**

Dr Gurnam Singh, Hon Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Warwick

Visiting Fellow in Race & Education, University of the Arts London; Visiting Professor, Social Work, Liverpool Hope

Has decolonisation of the academy reached a dead end, in which case what next?

The decolonisation of the academy in the UK is a complex and ongoing process. While the intellectual roots of this project can be traced back to anti-colonial movements and the development of postcolonial studies in the mid-20th century, the active project to dismantle and rebuild curriculums is a more recent phenomenon. This movement has been driven by the increasing presence and activism of non-white students and faculty, particularly following the expansion of higher education in the UK over the past few decades. However, it was not until the racist murder of George Floyd in 2020 that many institutions began to openly declare their commitment to decolonisation. Despite these emerging initiatives, with the aim to provoke debate, this presentation will outline some of the significant challenges that remain in both the conceptualisation and implementation of the decolonisation project.

10:30 **Coffee break, poster and photography viewing**

11:00 **Personal Decolonisation Journeys**

Dr Deborah Husbands, Reader (Associate Professor) in Race & Sociocultural

Psychology, University of Westminster. Chartered Psychologist, FHEA, Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society

Decolonising the Academy: A Journey of Self-Reflection

The call to decolonise our institutions is met with a deafening silence from some corners and a chorus of action from others. But true progress begins within. This session isn't about where your university stands - it's about where YOU stand. Critical race theory guides us as we harness the power of storytelling. We'll delve into personal and cultural narratives, using artefacts that resonate with your heritage, ethnicity, background, and lived experiences. Bring a photograph, a poem, a piece of art - anything that ignites your story. Through self-reflection and shared narratives, This session is more than a lecture - it's a catalyst for personal exploration and collective action. Let's decolonise the academy, one powerful story at a time.

Beyond Decolonisation: Transforming University Culture and Curriculum**11:45 Parallel Sessions****Decolonising Personal Mental Health & Student Wellbeing**

Fatmata K Daramy, Doctoral Researcher, University of Leicester, and SsREE Co-lead

The session will discuss mental health and wellbeing within higher education for academic, professional staff and students, as well as focusing on the mental health challenges outreach staff might encounter. We'll explore research insights and changing patterns, addressing the key issues faced by students and staff.

Throughout the session, we will pose the question: 'What Does Decolonisation Have to Do with Mental Health Anyway?' The influence of social media, and the complexity of intersectional identities will also be addressed. The session will then delve into decolonisation methods tailored for managing student and personal mental health whilst working in both university and outreach environments.

Creating Institutional Change (EDI)

Megha Kashyap, Decolonising Research Fellow, London South Bank University

Decolonising the university: Approach and practice

UK universities have been engaging with decolonising the curriculum for quite some time now. Some universities now have staff roles to drive policy and practice on decolonising the university. LSBU has an Academic Board approved vision statement highlighting eight principles that seeks to address racial inequalities within the curriculum, research, and practice. Appointed as the Decolonising Research Fellow for LSBU, I have been leading the institutional plans on decolonising. In this practice session, I shall share the approach and practice that we have adopted as a university to continue our engagement on decolonising the university.

Addressing Awarding Gaps through Decolonisation and Anti-Racism

Dr Eileen Pollard, Senior Lecturer in Academic Development, Manchester Metropolitan University

This talk will take as a case study the work at Manchester Metropolitan University to address ethnicity awarding gaps through decolonisation and anti-racism. It will consider the story so far in terms of this work both within the University Teaching Academy, through their position as Educational Developers and via their website and resources, as well as across Faculties and Professional Services.

12:30 Lunch

Beyond Decolonisation: Transforming University Culture and Curriculum**13:15 Transforming Curriculum and Pedagogy**

Dr Constantino Dumangane Jr, Assistant Professor in Education, University of York
Decolonising an Education Department: Early Stages

Decolonising a department within a university can be a challenging, long overdue - but exciting process to engage with for some, while for others it can also be a frustrating, resistant and abstrusive process. This presentation/workshop begins with a discussion on how decolonisation was understood by a small group of staff and students in the education department at the University of York who wanted to effect change within the department. A brief discussion of why there was and is a need to decolonise is discussed. Next, the creation of the Decolonising Education Collective (DEC) group, its ethos, and the success it has achieved in four short years will be discussed. Future DEC challenges are reflected upon and ratiocinated. Finally, attendees of the conference will be engaged in reflecting on case studies that have been used to foster discussion and action on decolonisation within and outside of the department.

Key words: Decolonisation, Power Dynamics, Co-creation, Student Voice, Activism, 'Ally-ship', Safety

Dr Syra Shakir, Associate Professor Learning and Teaching, Leeds Trinity University
Decolonise your mind!

To decolonise your pedagogy, curriculum and support to students you must first decolonise your mind. This involves decolonizing our psychology and internal self-reflection. So how do we decolonise? The easy trap staff often fall into is to simply diversify although this is only one ingredient of the decolonized approach. Decolonising our education means that we have to first understand the profound impact colonisation has had on our education and our society, rethinking what we learn, how we learn and how we teach. This interactive workshop will provide a practical framework for decolonising.

14:15 Decolonising Subject Disciplines: Parallel Sessions

Law Shaid Parveen, Associate Dean for Enterprise & Engagement, Aston Law School
Using the Master's tools, to dismantle the master's house, to deconstruct the law school curriculum!

Whilst law schools have attempted to take some step towards decolonising the curriculum, they have been ad hoc and not consistently applied.

The workshop adopts a contextual and contemporary approach and seeks to explore how we can use the "masters tools," to deconstruct the curriculum and to adopt an approach where students question, analyse, and inform with a view to equipping them with the challenges they may face in the future.

Medicine & Healthcare Sumaya Ahmed, Senior Lecturer in Chiropractic, London South Bank University

This session will investigate some of the historical aspects of healthcare, the impact of colonialism on healthcare, health inequalities and the literature used in education today. We will also take a patient centred approach, as to how we can assess, address and meet the needs of our minoritized ethnic patients.

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Arts Dr Amita Nijhawan, Educational Developer, University of the Arts London

I will discuss the particular challenges of decoloniality and social justice in the arts. The arts industries pose unique challenges for minoritized communities, often gatekeeping through maintaining a homogenised artistic aesthetic, keeping awards and funding avenues closed to minoritized identities, and by ignoring minoritized artists in research, practice and teaching. However, using creative approaches in HE and mobilising the potential of the arts as a means to explore and express social and climate justice, presents unique opportunities.

Humanities & Social Sciences Gihan Ismail, Associate Lecturer, Oxford Brookes University

Decolonising Social Sciences and Humanities: Possibilities in Higher Education

This abstract reflects on calls for decoloniality from the university and academics in British higher education. It acknowledges divergent perspectives on strategies and priorities, emphasising the need for collective action beyond the decoloniality gaze. The discussant aims to offer spaces for critical insights into the debate, aiming to stimulate necessary dialogues on decolonisation in humanities and social sciences.

STEM Dr Meghna Nag Chowdhuri, Research Fellow, University College London

Decolonising STEM education

In this session, I will use the lens of decolonisation to understand the injustices that persist in STEM education globally. Using findings from my research in international contexts, both in formal and informal STEM learning, I will explore how pedagogical interventions can support the decolonising efforts. I will introduce practical tools that my research has developed to support practitioners and educators in enabling critical reflection of their practices and support their journey towards educational justice and decolonialism. I will conclude by outlining the challenging that persist in this decolonial effort, particularly for STEM education.

15:00 **Dessert Break**

15:15 **Panel Discussion: Decolonisation in Action**

Chair: Dr Dave S. P Thomas, Associate Professor of Inclusive Curriculum, Solent University
Dr Constantino Dumangane Jr, Megha Kashyap, Shaid Parveen, Dr Eileen Pollard, Dr Syra Shakir

16:00 **Close and Thanks**

16:10 **Drinks Reception and Networking**