

Paper title: On Air, Off Script: Exploring Race and othering in curriculum development through Podcasts.

Working Paper / Conference research output

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Abstract

The UK higher education sector faces growing scrutiny over structural inequalities and the persistent degree-awarding gap between white students and students from non-white backgrounds. The author addresses these disparities using podcasts and digital content creation to aid critical reflection with staff and students as part of decolonial approaches, and anti-racism efforts in curriculum development. Using a recent case study from the author's research project '*Disrupting the Discourse: The Culture Decoded series*,' some of the podcast episodes include '*The Impossibility of Blackness in the Classroom*.' Therefore, introducing the concept of "facilitating learning from the margins" an educational strategy that prioritises the experiences, voices, and needs of marginalised students often underrepresented in mainstream academic environments. An approach that encourages educators to shift their focus from dominant perspectives to ensure that diverse viewpoints are both acknowledged and integrated into the learning process.

Key elements of this facilitation include fostering inclusivity, implementing culturally responsive teaching, encouraging critical pedagogy, and empowering marginalised students. Inclusivity is achieved by creating spaces where students experiencing othering feel valued, and culturally responsive teaching integrates students' cultural backgrounds into the educational experience. Critical pedagogy encourages learners to challenge dominant narratives and question systemic inequalities, while empowering students with the confidence and skills to advocate for themselves and their communities.

The author explores interdisciplinary approaches to group work and collaboration in teaching, arguing that collaborative efforts between educators foster both personal and professional empowerment. By modelling compassion, vulnerability, and congruence in a neoliberal and neo-colonial educational landscape, the author demonstrates how educators can respond to oppressive forces in higher education through praxis, critical reflection combined with action. Ultimately, this paper argues that focusing on the margins fosters equity, promotes social justice, and ensures

the success of all learners, particularly those who have historically been underserved by traditional educational systems. Through this approach, educators can transform both their practices and the broader structures of higher education.

Holding the Space: Shining a Light on Black Academics 2025, University of Westminster

Session 2 – Theme 2: Critical pedagogies: Social justice, decolonial and anti-racist work in higher education			
	Name	Affiliation	Title of Presentation
10-45-12.00	Roseanne Chantiluke	University of Bristol	<i>Praxis as pedagogy, pedagogy as praxis: personal reflections on student activism and teaching as a Black researcher</i>
	Jason Forrest	University of the Arts	Critical Pedagogy Addressing Climate Justice
	Kevin J Brazant	University of the Arts	On Air, Off Script: Exploring Race and othering in curriculum development through Podcasts.

Disrupt the Discourse Podcast Playlist

Episode title	Episode description
<p>#1 Episode 1. In conversation with Dr Muna Abdi: The impossibility of Blackness in the Classroom.</p> <p>Access episode</p>	<p>Dr Muna Abdi is the Founder and Director of MA Education Consultancy and is an anti-racist and de-colonial scholar, educator and consultant. In our first episode we explore the challenges of navigating systems and structures that are around us, preventing those not racialised as white from accessing spaces to the fullest degree. We unpack social justice as the removal of those barriers, ultimately dismantling those systems, so that people don't have to ask the question of which aspects of their identity they can show up with.</p>
<p>#2 Episode 2. In conversation with Dr Tamsin Bowers-Brown: The student voice as part of assessment.</p> <p>Access Episode</p>	<p>Dr Tamsin Bowers - Brown is the Director of the Office for Institutional Equity at Leeds Trinity University and is an Associate Professor in Learning and Teaching. In this episode. We explore the need to bring students lived experiences as part of learning, teaching and assessment. Tamsin shares some of her own pedagogic practice and insights from inspiring scholars and practitioners who influence and shape her pedagogy.</p>
<p>#3 Episode 3. In conversation with Dr Lindy - Ann Blaize Alfred: Moving from a deficit model and developing staff competence in Race Equity.</p> <p>Access Episode</p>	<p>Dr Lindy - Ann Blaize Alfred is an Academic Developer at Sheffield Hallam University supporting the development of staff competence in Race Equity. We catch up with Dr Blaize Alfred who explores the application of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Intersectionality and its application to our daily racial narratives in and beyond the academy. We unpack storytelling and privilege listening to people's lived experiences and how this connects within our curriculum context and subjects as not only students but as staff.</p>
<p>#4 Episode 4. In conversation with Dr Arun Verma: Intersectionality as a way of seeing the World.</p>	<p>Dr Arun Verma is the Head of the Race Equality Charter at Advance HE. He completed his doctorate exploring the role of intersecting personal and professional identities in professional education. In this episode we explore intersectionality as a metaphor and debunk any myths surrounding the complexity of its application to learning teaching and pedagogy.</p>

<p>Access Episode</p>	
<p>#5 Episode 5. In conversation with Thesna Aston: Decoding Critical Race Theory.</p> <p>Access Episode</p>	<p>Thesna Aston, is a Critical Race Theory Practitioner and writer for the 'Fair Digest'. She is a Human Rights Activist and Businesswoman currently based in South Africa. In this episode we explore Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a tool for understanding minoritised people's experiences within Hegemonic Whiteness and educational space.</p>
<p>#6 Episode 6. In conversation with Malcolm Richards: Valuing Oral Traditions with Malcolm Richards.</p> <p>Access Episode</p>	<p>Malcolm Richards is an independent researcher at the University of Exeter and a graduate from the supplementary school movement. He is a former teacher, senior leader and local authority advisor in England and Wales Schools In this episode Malcolm unpacks critical dialogue, its importance and how it relates to our understanding not only of the student experience but of our staff experiences as well.</p>
<p>#7 Episode 7. In conversation with Associate Professor, Janet Douglas Gardner: Bringing your Culture into the Classroom.</p> <p>Access Episode</p>	<p>Janet Douglas -Gardner is an Associate Teaching Professor and Senior Fellow at the Higher Education Authority (HEA). She is a Teacher Educator within the School of Social Sciences and Professions and is the staff lead for the University's Black Asian and Minority Voice Network and co-chair of the committee. In this episode we explore our preparing students for the teaching professions and them going into multicultural, multilingual classrooms. Janet suggests ways that students can use their heritage languages, to connect with the stories of their youth as part of learning and teaching.</p>
<p>#8 Episode 8. In conversation with James Hunting: The Ability to BE without BElonging.</p> <p>Access Episode</p>	<p>James Hunting has worked in textiles posing questions on imagery, process and identity for over 30 years. He is an educator who brings this questioning approach to pedagogical norms, ensuring that the individuals are heard and above all listened to. In this episode, we explore James's philosophy about having the ability to 'BE' without 'BElonging' and how this drives his teaching and learning, and curriculum planning. He sees this as a way of allowing the team to see each student as individuals, constructing an environment that works for them all.</p>
<p>#9 Episode 9. In conversation with Nkasi Stoll: The Black Students</p>	<p>Nkasi Stoll is an ESRC funded PhD Candidate at Kings College London and research lead for the 'Black Student Wellbeing study' in collaboration with 'Student Minds'. She is also the Co-Founder of 'Black People Talk' and</p>

<p>Wellbeing Study and Black Students Talk.</p> <p>Access Episode</p>	<p>Director of 'Black Students Talk' which designs, delivers and evaluates services and public engagement activities focused on inequalities in mental health services.</p>
<p>#10 Episode 10. In conversation with Dr. Theo Gilbert: The use of Authentic Assessments in improving Degree Outcomes.</p> <p>Access Episode</p>	<p>Dr. Theo Gilbert, is an Associate Professor of Teaching and Learning at the University of Hertfordshire and was awarded the 2018 Times Higher Education's/ Advance HE's 'Most Innovative Teacher of the Year.' In 2020 delivered the keynote to the annual symposium of National Teaching Fellows/CATE. Theo translates, rich current scholarship on the evolution of compassion as a psychobiological motivation (i.e. to not normalise distress or disadvantage others and to do something helpful to reduce or prevent that) into practical compassionate communications strategies in task-focused team/ group work.</p>

References

Brazant, J, K (2021) The Disrupt the Discourse Podcast: Inspired by Critical Pedagogies and values of Social Justice in Education. Accessible: <https://open.spotify.com/show/3QsBkksam4ryPXbN8DfhZK?si=eb9980f873854666>

Brazant, J. K, (2024) Disrupt the Discourse: a digital resource to aid the development of a disruptive pedagogy for praxis and social justice. Included as a case study in the Inclusive Practice Compendium produced by the Centre for Equity and Inclusion (CEI) at London Metropolitan University. Accessible here: <https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/about/centre-for-equity-and-inclusion/inclusive-practice-compendium/disrupt-the-discourse/>

Brazant, J.K, (2024) 'Disrupt the Discourse: An eLearning course and digital toolkit to aid the development of an anti-racist pedagogy.' As part of the 'Disrupting the Discourse: The Culture Decoded series.' http://decolonialsubversions.org/main_issue_2023.html

Brazant, J.K, (2024). Disrupting the Discourse: Towards a Disruptive Pedagogy. 'Race' and Socially Engaged Research Working Paper 2023: Contributions from inaugural conference held in York. Volume 1, pp. 66-68, <https://sites.google.com/view/raceandsociallyengagedresearch/publications/working-paper/2024-volume-1/disrupting-the-discourse-toward-a-disruptive-pedaogy?authuser=0>

Brazant, K. 'Towards a Disruptive Pedagogy in Higher Education: Fostering Inclusivity and Empowering Students of Colour' (2023) blog post. <https://sites.google.com/view/raceandsociallyengagedresearch/publications/blog/towards-a-disruptive-pedaogy-in-higher-education>

