



# Decolonising Education Collective



Zara and Anjie



# Decolonising Education Collective

Overview/Background/and Introduction to Today's  
Student Speakers



Constantino Dumangane Jr

# Universities and Social Justice

**It is often taken for granted that the university is a force for social justice, where critical thought can be used to challenge the status quo. However, if we place the university in its social context, if anything we quickly realise that the opposite is [often] true (Andrews, 2018)**

# Parrhesia - Speaking 'Truth' to Power through Student Voice

## Parrhesia:

In the classical sense, parrhesia describes, for example, a philosopher's need to 'speak truthfully' to a ruler. In speaking out in this manner the speaker may make themselves very vulnerable and stand in an uncertain or risky position with their intended audience. The content of what is said may be carefully chosen, a deliberate decision on the part of the speaker, or be an unintended consequence of what they say. The speaker is usually aware that they are communicating some 'truth'. ... 'Parrhesia is also a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or other people through criticism (self-criticism or criticism of other people), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty.' - Michel Foucault, *Courage of truth lectures*, 1983-1984; Foucault, M. (2011). *The courage of truth*. Springer.

## Student Voice

"The single problem plaguing all students ... everywhere is the crisis of disconnection. Meaningful Student Involvement happens when the roles of students are actively re-aligned from being the passive recipients of schools to becoming active partners throughout the educational process. ... It is not enough to simply listen to student voice. Educators have an ethical imperative to do something with students, and that is why meaningful student involvement is vital to [educational] improvement."

- Adam Fletcher, youth empowerment advocate and motivational speaker

# Today's speakers: DEC Student Justice Warriors

**Anjie Shah**



**Zara Sharif**



# Today's Plan;

- What does it mean to decolonise
- What is DEC?
- Our work
- Reflections



What does it mean  
to decolonise?

# What is the Decolonising Education Collective - DEC

Group of **students** and **staff** who take action together to decolonise teaching and learning in the Department of Education. DEC is about the

**Student-related: co-production/co-creation of the curriculum;**

To date, the group has:

- Set up a reading group for learning and exploration
- Reported on current and good practices
- Developed a core UG induction programme
- Produced and used decolonising case studies
- Introduced changes to the module feedback form
- Reverse mentored and trained staff and students
- Contributed to the redesign of the BA Education programme and the design of the MSc Environmental Sustainability Education and Communication programme
- Created an interactive workshop for reflection and action





# Summer Internships

## July 2021;

- 6-week paid internship focusing on how the Department of Education at the University of York could start the process of decolonising. This included reviewing degrees offered, taught content, reading lists, learning/module outcomes and pedagogy. A catalogue of good examples was provided as a framework to base changes off. This ended up being a 50,000 word report.

## July 2022;

- 6- weeks summer internship which centered around reverse mentoring staff in Department of Education on decolonial practice



Decolonising Education Internship Report  
2021

**Department of Education, University of York**

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## Critical questions

We understand that there may be some psychologists/educationalists/ sociologists etc who need to be taught or who have research which is crucial to courses but we still need to acknowledge the racial bias that may have influenced some of these pieces of research. Engaging students in critical thinking and asking questions that go beyond the standard strengths and limitations allows for more thought provoking discussions and better understanding of the system as well as how big pieces of research may influence policy and practice. Examples of questions/ topics to discuss with students include;

- Who was the researcher, what was their experience in relation to this issue/area?
- Why were they interested?
- How does this affect policy?
- Who creates policies?
- Who benefits from these policies and practices?
- Could the findings be off putting for certain groups?
- Are we excluding certain groups? What's the problem with this?
- Why is it a problem that only a western sample has been used? How does this affect our attitudes in education now?

UCL	Undergraduate	Education I	There are quite a few so i'll give a brief summary	<p>The worlds of UCL module (FIRST year-optional) ; This module will look at the history of education through UCL's own institutions, with historical context to explain the evolution of the education system students will critically examine the connection between British education and empire asking what impact the legacies have today. a general introduction to the history of universities and schooling in the UK whilst working on practical skills too. Policy and politics in Ed (Second year- compulsory) detailed analysis of education policy and the underlying political trends behind how governments around the world have chosen to organise education. It covers major debates within education policy-making and considers the numerous ways in which politicians have sought to change education systems through policy. This involves an examination of different policy areas and their relationship to the social and economic context of the time, using sociological approaches. Educating minorities, migrants and refugees (second year - optional), this just looks at things like the right to education, different national educational systems, opportunities for migrants minorities and refugees etc.</p>	First Year / second year	Optional / compulsory	<p>This whole course just seems like it has some really good core modules and optional modules, they cover issues in a lot of depth and consider the past as well as how those theories and practices infiltrate into our current system. I know that Eysenck studied there and he's a prominent name in Intelligence psychology but he held racist views and has been stripped of his titles etc. I think UCL does inform their students of that and whilst they can't change history they can teach it in a way which acknowledges the past and how those racial ideas and beliefs may have affected theories - theories we still use today. UCL attract a third of all education students nationally and so to see them making such a huge effort makes them even more attractive when looking for PG courses, knowing they've accepted their history and are working towards changing makes it feel like a more welcoming place for BAME students and staff likely too.</p>
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Univeristy of Edinburgh	Postgradu ate	Education (MSc); Child and Adolesce nt Psycholog y pathways	Education Policy and the Politics of Education	<p>Education policy is seen as dynamic, changeable and global in it's concerns, form and presentation. This course explores issues in the politics of education and education policy, drawing on concepts on concepts from the social science such as the state, globalisation, neo-liberalism, discourses, policy learning and policy borriwng. concerning areas of policy, school curriculum, higher education and learning in community, the course combines the theoretical discussion and cases studiesat (sub) national, reginoal and global levels. At each of these levels it is concerned both with the policy discourse and with the way in which policy is made. It also reflects upon the influence on policy-making of different bodies and stakeholders. Through examination of specific policy documentation, and visits to policy making communities, students will be able to comprehend the reality of policy analysis as well as understand the relevance of more theoretical and substantive discourses.</p>	one year cours e	Compulsory	<p>I think this unit is just much more applicable to us as education students than what we did when we studies politics, it integrates politics into policy making which makes it easier to understand but is also beneficial for students who are thinking about going into policy making in the future. It may even be useful for the PGCE students to better understand educational policy and how it comes about. Again the reading list is quite diverse and considers Asia as well as general global education policy and policy borrowing. I just think it would be really useful for students in the department regardless of UG/PG to understand how educational policy works and a bit about who is involved in the making of it so we have a better understanding of our system and whose created it.</p>
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## Module feedback forms

“The experience of this module, including lectures and co-readings, allows me to critique mainstream or dominant worldviews.”

# STEP 1 Project

The **STEP 1 Project** is a compulsory first year project where students worked in small groups to create teaching resources to be used in school around the theme of “**Anti-Racist Education**”.

The Project was facilitated by the amazing **Michelle Codrington-Rodgers**, a citizenship and PSHE teacher based in Oxford, and **former president of the the NASUWT**, and the first black president!



**Key question:** what do you consider as foods of your culture?

**Game:** Look at the pictures on the left and in groups try to work out what countries/culture they may be from

Hints of what they are:

- 1- Hirara
- 2- Conch fritters
- 3- Kibbeh
- 4- Kisir



## Thinking about culture & identity

### STARTER ACTIVITY

Task: Form Groups of four. What is important you your family? How does this differ from your friends?

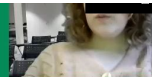


# KS3 Food Tech - Rice Pudding



# GCSE Drama - “By a white man for a white future?”

## Time to reflect



1. Have you been exposed to anything new after this session?
2. Why is theatre a useful tool in creating an anti-racist learning environment?
3. Do we need plays with black content or plays by black writers? Why? EG: A play written by a white man about racism - is that helpful?
4. How would you pitch a change in the syllabus?
5. After this issue is resolved, what is the next step?

## Call to action: Year 10 Drama Students

GCSE DRAMA: By the white man for a white future?



# Teaching and Learning Workshops



# Case Studies

In break out rooms please review Case Study 4 and discuss the questions beneath, we will meet back in the main room in 10 minutes to discuss

# Awards

- We've been nominated as individuals and as a group for multiple awards!!
- Under the LOVE YORK awards we were nominated under; **Outstanding Contribution to Academic Experience & Liberation in Leadership.**
- We were also nominated for and won the **Inclusive Education Award** at the University of York's **Inclusive Impact Awards & EDI Exchange Launch**



# AWARDS



UNIVERSITY  
*of York*

This **Inclusive Impact Award** is presented to

*The Decolonising Education Collective*

in recognition of their contribution  
towards advancing purposeful change  
in Equality, Diversity & Inclusion  
at the University of York

Signed

Date

02.11.22





# Personal Reflections

QUESTIONS?

EMAIL US!!

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