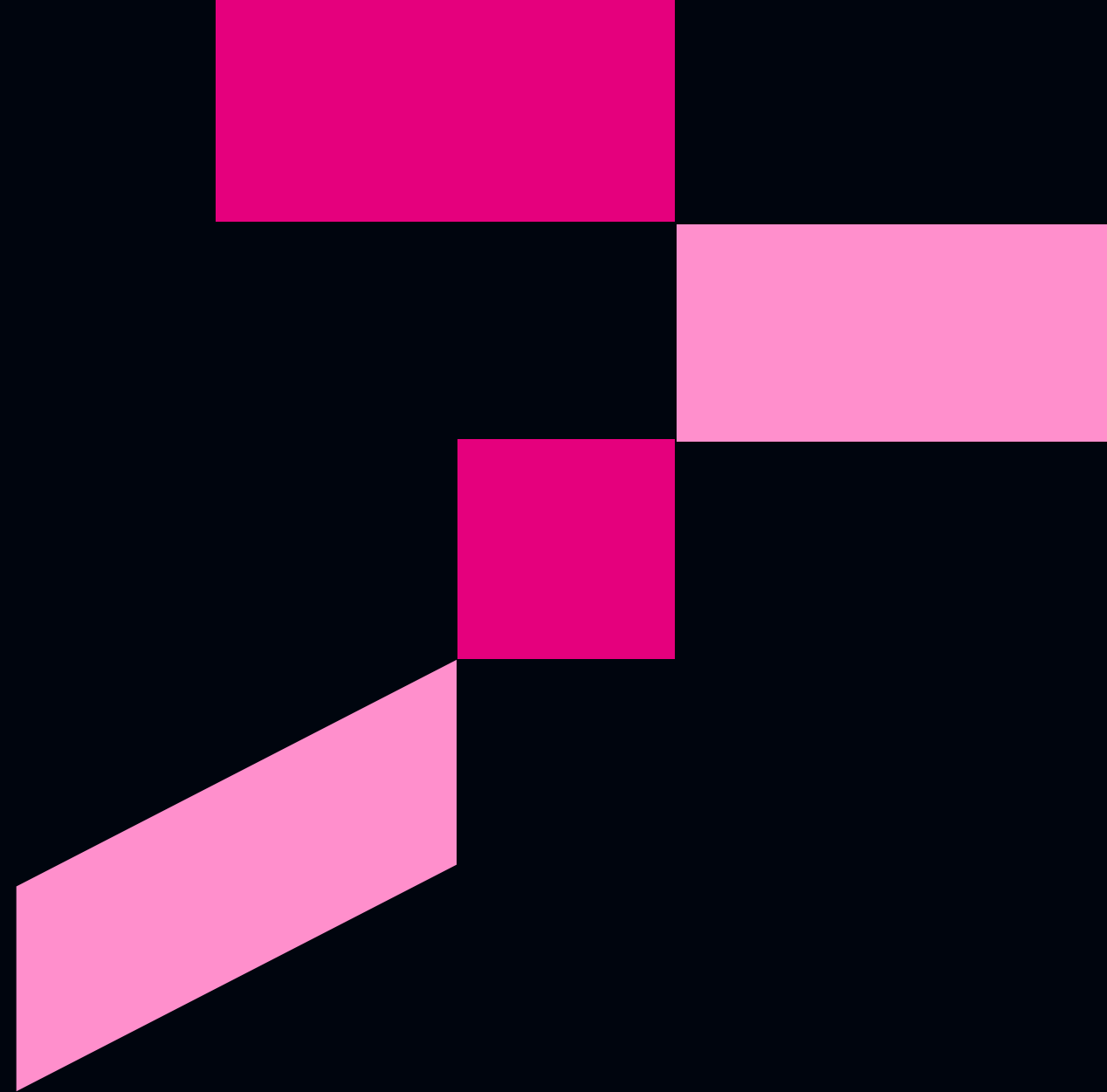University of Kent

Developing culturally appropriate curricula: a cross-disciplinary exchange.

Lucy Panesar, Kaveh Abbasian,
Aaron Berko, Rinchan Mirza
and Joel Montgomery

The PGCHE Curriculum

Lucy Panesar
Lecturer in Higher Education

University of Kent

PGCHE/AFS compulsory modules

8190
Intro To

8310
Context

PGCHE optional modules

8210
Ass + Fbk

8330
Inc Uni

8220
Ind Inv

8260
Int HE

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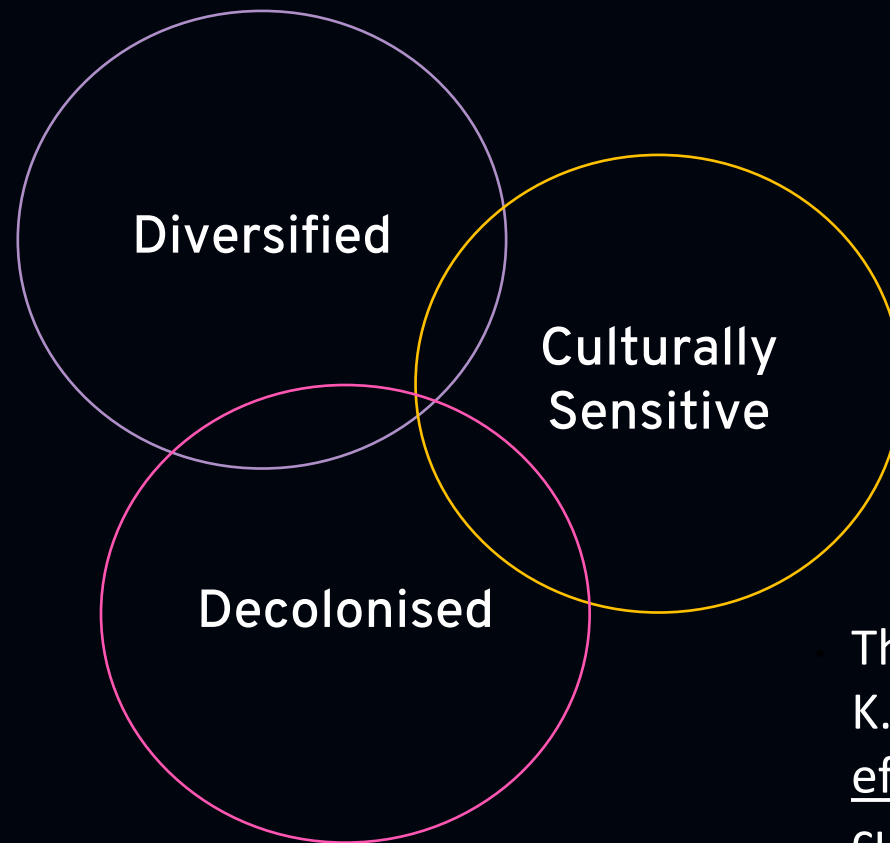
3

The Inclusive University - Learning Outcomes:

1. Through critical engagement with relevant literature and theory, demonstrate a broad understanding of the social, political and educational developments that have resulted in national, institutional and discipline-specific initiatives designed to promote inclusivity in higher education.

2. Explain and apply key issues, concepts, and theories relevant to the promotion of inclusion.

3. Appreciate a diverse range of learner experiences in higher education and their implications for inclusivity in universities

4. Critically evaluate policies or practices related to curriculum design, teaching, assessment, or student support, drawing on theories, concepts and/or evidence relevant to the promotion of inclusion in higher education

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8330 session themes

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Introduction → Intersectionality → Life in Universities → Rethinking the Curriculum → Rethinking pedagogic practices

University of Kent (2023) Diversity Mark

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Diversified

Culturally Sensitive

Decolonised

Thomas, D.S.P. & Quinlan, K.M. (2022) Reimagining curricula: effects of cultural (in)sensitivity of curricula on racially minoritised students' engagement

Thomas, D. and Jivraj, S. (eds.) (2020)
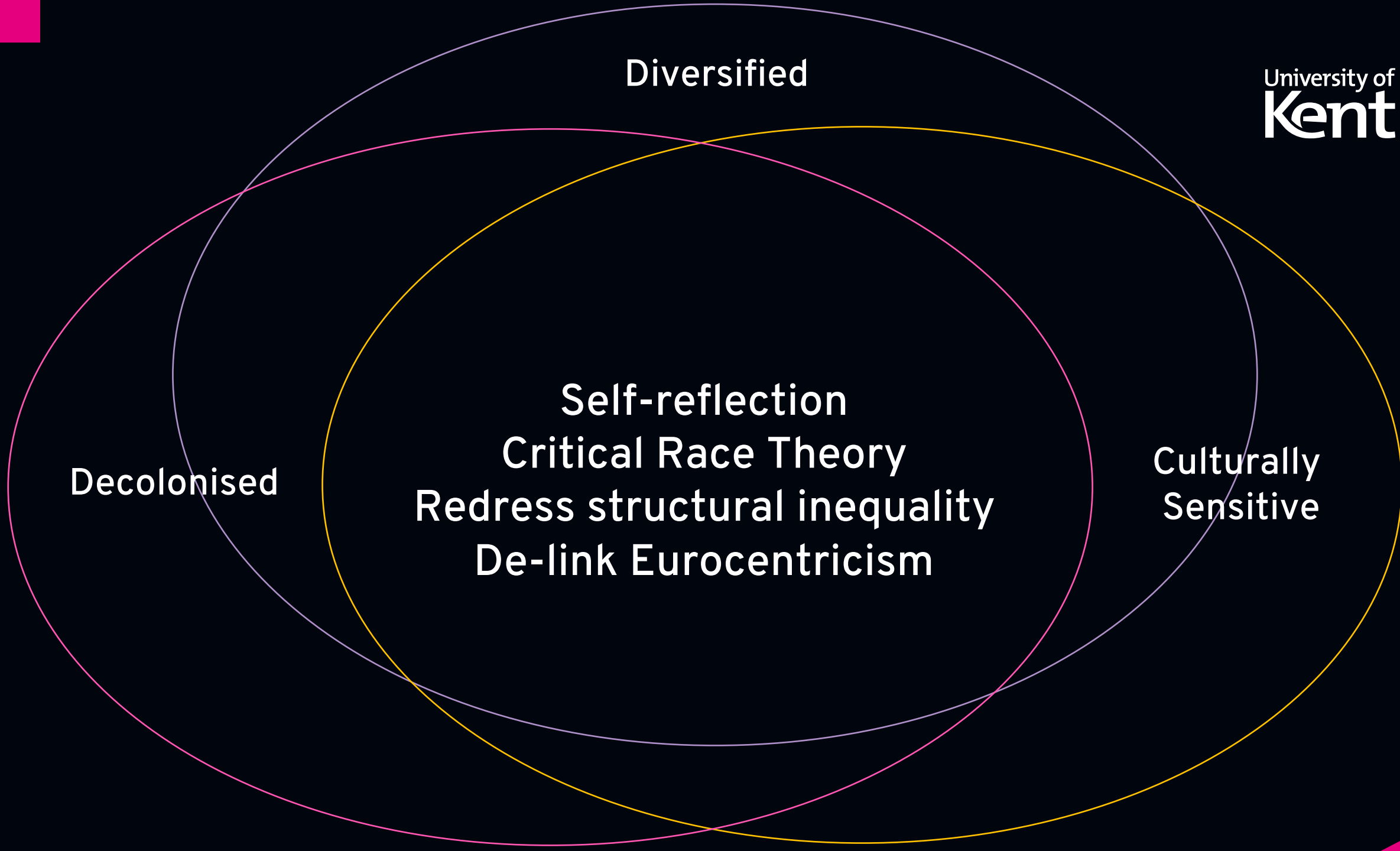
Towards Decolonising the University

TOWARDS DECOLONISING THE UNIVERSITY
A KALEIDOSCOPE FOR EMPOWERED ACTION

University of Kent (2021) Anti-Racism Strategy

'Decolonisation approaches are increasingly used as a vehicle for developing pedagogy which is inclusive of racially minoritised students. We recognise that both the term 'decolonisation' used as a metaphor in this way, and whether the University should be 'decolonising' as a process are contested. **Nevertheless, it is something that Kent will pursue.'** (p.12)

"decolonising education requires a decolonial transformation, organised and underscored by a critical race methodology and social justice imperatives, in order to redress structural inequality in the academe. It requires a relationship with the past and an appetite to become a part of living history, in order to de-link Eurocentrism from epistemic justice. It **requires faculty and the institutions to proactively undergo the uncomfortable process of self-reflection.**"

(Thomas in Thomas and Jivraj, 2020. p.61)

Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales (CSCS)

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Grouped into four dimensions:

1. **Diversity represented**, which refers to whether ethnically diverse peoples' experiences and perspectives are represented (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019).

2. **Positive portrayals**, which captures how racialised minority groups are represented, seeking to overcome stereotypes (Bryan-Gooden et al., 2019).

3. **Challenge power**, which refers to encouraging students to develop critical consciousness and socio-political awareness (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995).

4. **Inclusive classroom interactions** focus on classroom interactions between teachers and students and among peers (Holgate, 2016)

(Thomas and Quinlan, 2021)

[slide from module UELT8330 session 4]

Meta-curriculum review

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Group activity:

1. Apply the four dimensions of Thomas and Quinlan's 'Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scale' (2021) to review module 8330 content for session 1, 2, 3

2. Submit ratings for each dimension + free-text feedback to Vevox survey (click clipboard icon to enter the survey)

3. Share reflections on the experience of completing this activity (good, bad, ugly!?)

Join at:
vevox.app

ID:
132-943-985

[slide from module UELT8330 session 4]

Module 8330 participant ratings of session content against Thomas and Quinlan's 'Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scale' (2021) (5* = exceeded to 1* = not achieved).

The average rating for each dimension was:

- Diversity Represented = 3.93*

- Positive Portrayals = 4.07*

- Challenge Power = 3.93*

- Inclusive Classroom Interactions = 4.14*

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The Inclusive University - Learning Outcomes:

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1. Through critical engagement with relevant literature and theory, demonstrate a broad understanding of the social, political and educational developments that have resulted in national, institutional and discipline-specific initiatives designed to promote inclusivity in higher education.

2. Explain and apply key issues, concepts, and theories relevant to the promotion of inclusion.

3. Appreciate a diverse range of learner experiences in higher education and their implications for inclusivity in universities

4. Critically evaluate policies or practices related to curriculum design, teaching, assessment, or student support, drawing on theories, concepts and/or evidence relevant to the promotion of inclusion in higher education

The Filmmaking Curriculum

Kaveh Abbasian
Lecturer in Film and Media Practice and Director of EDI for the School of Arts

University of Kent

The Chemistry Curriculum

Aaron Berko

Lecturer in Chemistry and Forensic Science and EDI Lead for the school of Chemistry and Forensic Science

Decolonising the curriculum – definition

Confront and challenge epistemic injustice

Promote a curriculum that reflects the multiple histories of all students

Dismantle existing academic ideologies

Decolonising the curriculum – drawbacks and challenges

- Conceptualisation, operation, and positioning of this phenomenon has often been subjective.

- Ideologies and concepts are interpreted in a highly nuanced way giving rise to the multivariant approach to its operation.

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Key Aims and Objectives

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HE should acknowledge "the centrality of Whiteness and how it saturates the Academy" (Andrews,2019).

A pedagogy centred on multiplicity (Arday et al, 2020, Bhambra et al, 2018).

Diversify the curriculum (Adewumi and Mitton, 2022, Thomas and Quinlan, 2022).

A pedagogy of co-presence or Curriculum reconciliation (Fildes et al, 2021).

Develop culturally sensitive and responsive pedagogical practices (Thomas and Quinlan, 2022).

Develop an inclusive university culture (McDuff et al, 2018).

Decolonising Chemistry – why is it needed?

- A recent report on progression trends by the Royal Society of Chemistry highlighted a sharp decline in the number of students from racially minoritized groups who move from undergraduate to PhD level
- The percentage at undergraduate level was 24.7% dropping to 12.6% at PhD level to an alarmingly low level of 4.7% at the professorial level.
- For black participants - undergraduate level - 4.6% of participants drops to 1.3% at PhD level, 0.9% for non-professorial staff and 0% for professors.

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Decolonising Chemistry - why is it needed?

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"Founding Father" continue to be ubiquitous in teaching of chemistry

Decolonisation is often not considered an issue of importance in teaching scientific concepts

Role Model Scientists from Different Backgrounds and Culture are often not highlighted

Global context of chemistry not often highlighted => non diverse reading list

Decolonising Chemistry – a proposed approach for Kent

- Develop a conceptual understanding of decolonisation in a chemistry context.

- Embed the impacts of Chemistry in Different Global Contexts in the curriculum [Dessent et al, 2021].

- Highlight Role Model Scientists from Different Backgrounds and Cultures during content delivery Dessent et al, 2021].

- Present the different global thoughts and influences that have contributed to chemistry development [Dessent et al, 2021].

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Decolonising Chemistry
– a proposed approach for Kent

University of **Kent**

- Diversify the curriculum, bring racially minoritized academics to the centre of knowledge production and dissemination (Adewumi and Mitton, 2022, Thomas and Quinlan, 2022).

- Mentor racially minoritized students and providing support for them to access postgraduate studies.

- Develop research collaborations with scientists in the global south and global north.

Conclusion

Decolonising the curriculum is not without its critics and challenges but there is a real exploitable opportunity to gain ground in the current climate of advocacy and agency on the topic.

•THANK YOU

Decolonising the curriculum aims, challenges and opportunities

CLICK LINK ABOVE
TO READ FULL ESSAY

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The Business Curriculum

Joel Montgomery
Lecturer in Leadership

- Dar, S., Liu, H., Martinez Dy, A., & Brewis, D. N. (2021). The business school is racist: Act up!. Organization, 28(4), 695-706.

- **Paper argues: Capitalism is a racist phenomenon**, and therefore business schools have often ignored the **foundations of capitalism** whilst **glorifying its business wealth-maximising tendencies** neglecting the impact of capitalism on non-white students and staff
- By not recognising the past and valuing white knowledge at the expense of non-white individuals, the business school's knowledge production is homogenous and erases the lived experience of Indigenous genocide, extractive colonialism and Black chattel slavery in capital accumulation
- They highlight how non-white scholars in the academy opinions are considered space invaders (Puwar, 2004) rather than equal. Therefore, it is a must within business schools to **seek and air the voices of others**, voices of individuals with more acute knowledge outside of the taken-for-granted assumptions

- So, what did I do in Kent Business school? – A diversification of my inherited modules "Recommended" reading list through a simple, easily imitable approach:

- (1) Analyse the origins of the extant literature through onlin, publically accessible information facilities such as Linkedin, ResearchGate, online employee profiles etc

    - Only 6 of 22 were female. When considering the first authors, just 2 of 9 were female
   - Amazingly, ***only one co-author*** came from a different geographical region than Europe and America

WHAT?

Week	Topic	Additional Recommended Reading	Pedagogical Utility
25	Introduction		
26	Individual differences and psychometrics	Muro, A., Feliu-Soler, A., & Castellà, J. (2021). Psychological impact of COVID-19 lockdowns among adult women: the predictive role of individual differences and lockdown duration. Women & health, 61(7), 668-679.	To start, this peer-reviewed study stems from a journal article that focuses on women's healthcare, providing the voice of a more diverse gendered base. Although the authors stem from Europe, this is still positive. Additionally, the article has some very interesting conclusions concerning individual differences during very recent phenomena and thus pedagogically interesting for this week's content.
27	Selection	Atmor, N., Friedberg, C., & Kenig, O. (2023). Candidate Selection Methods and the Representation of Women in the Knesset, 1992–2021. Israel Studies, 28(1), 31-48.	This journal features studies from Israel and thus represents a middle eastern perspective which this module is crying out for. Pedagogically, it's vitally important to display selection techniques from numerous different regions. The contemporary workplace is not a one size fits all and different cultures have different selection techniques.
28	Group processes	Farashah, A. D., & Blomquist, T. (2021). Work experiences of qualified immigrants: a review of theoretical progress. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal.	This journal is a EDI/HR/Organisational behaviour based journal that encourages voices from differing perspectives. This is pedagogically advantageous because it displays the impact of social identity theory (a key theory to this weeks content) on qualified migrant workers, representing and airing the voices and lived experiences of a different group of individuals to what is normally studied.
29	Wellbeing	Singha, S., & Sivarethinamohan, R. (2022). Formation of positive organizational climate: integration of Ubuntu diversity management in banks. Journal of International Women's Studies, 24(4), 10.	This journal and article stem from an entirely different perspective, discussing the need for ubuntu, a selfless approach to combat stress and form a positive organisational culture.

Reference links

- Adewumi and Mitton (2022). Diversifying the social policy curriculum: A collaborative approach.

- Arday, Belluigi and Thomas (2021). Attempting to break the chain: reimaging inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy.

- Dar, Liu, Martinez Dy and Brewis (2021). The business school is racist: Act up!

- Dessent, Dawood, Jones, Matharu, Smith, and Uleanya (2021) Decolonizing the undergraduate chemistry curriculum: An account of how to start.

- Fildes, Beck, Bur, Burns, Chisholm, Dillon, Kuit, McMahon, Neale, Paton-Walsh, and Powell (2021). The first steps on the journey towards curriculum reconciliation in science, medicine and health education.

- Thomas and Jivraj (eds) (2020) Towards Decolonising the University: A Kaleidoscope for Empowered Action

- Thomas and Quinlan (2022) Reimagining curricula: effects of cultural (in)sensitivity of curricula on racially minoritised students' engagement

- University of Kent (2021) Anti-Racism Strategy

- University of Kent (2023) Diversity Mark

University of Kent

Thank you.
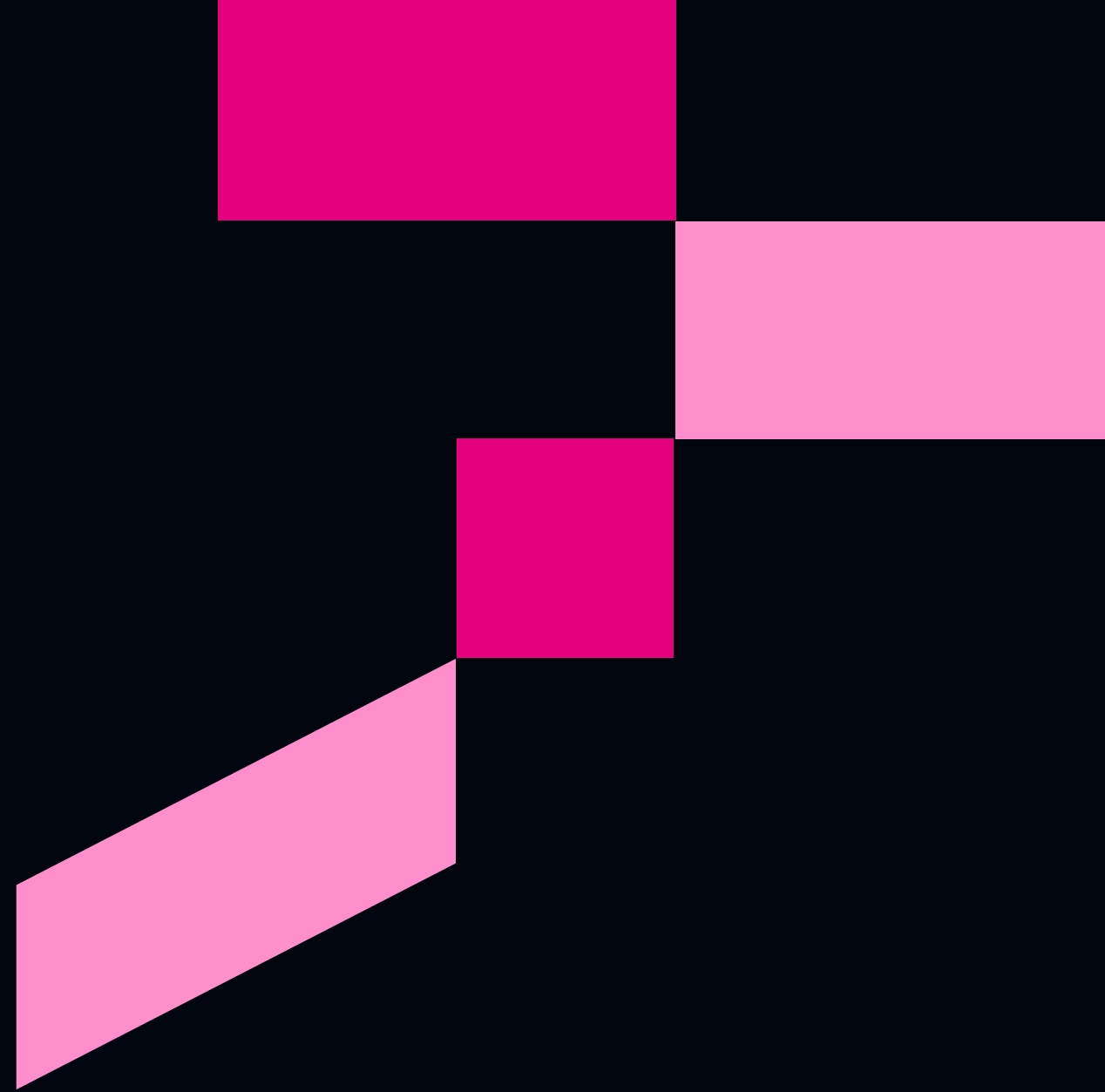
Decolonising the Curriculum – a case study from Economic History

- In September 2022 I took over as the convenor of the ECON3110 'The Economic Development of Europe: An Introduction' stage 1 module at the School of Economics, University of Kent

- Although students appreciated the effort I put into preparing my lectures and workshops they were unsure of why other regions of world, especially those in the global south, were not included in the scope of the module

Decolonising the Curriculum – a case study from Economic History

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- Their desire to understand the deep historical origins of underdevelopment outside of Western Europe stemmed not just from their general curiosity but also from a need to relate their academic studies to their own personal backgrounds and experiences.

- For them to express an interest in better aligning the content of the module to their own personal histories and experiences reaffirmed an important finding in the literature that links the ethnic and cultural sensitivity of higher education curricula with overall student engagement and attainment (Thomas & Quinlan, 2021; Adewumi & Lavinia, 2022).

Decolonising the Curriculum – a case study from Economic History

University of Kent

- Moving quickly to respond to the feedback I received I made changes to the scope and content of the module for the 2023-2024 academic year and related them to important findings in the literature on decolonising the curriculum in higher education institutions

- For the rest of this short presentation, I will describe the main change I made to the module and relate it to an important finding in the literature on higher education

Decolonising the Curriculum – a case study from Economic History

- Rather than focusing on the long-run economic development of Western Europe the module now examines two interrelated themes in economic history: (I) to what extent does history matter for long-run economic development; (ii) what are the channels of persistence through which the influence of history is transmitted over time

- Reorganising the module around these broad themes allowed me to bring in materials from ex-colonies, whose diverse histories and developmental experiences could better engage BAME students

Decolonising the Curriculum – a case study from Economic History

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- Several studies have shown that the lack of scope and breadth in university modules across the UK 'creates difficulties for learners attempting to engage in a curriculum that reflects their history and lived experiences' (Arday et al., 2020, p. 2).

- This is particularly the case with BAME students who have 'fewer academic interactions with their teachers' relative to their White counterparts (Thomas & Quinlan, 2021, p. 42).

- An important reason behind such a finding is BAME students wanting to see themselves 'reflected in the knowledge provided in attempting to establish a sense of belonging' (Arday et al., 2020, p. 9).

Decolonising the Curriculum – a case study from Economic History

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Decolonising the Curriculum – a case study from Economic History

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- It was with these considerations in mind that I decided to restructure the module to better align it with the diverse cultures, histories, identities, and contexts of my students, with the eventual objective of raising their engagement and attainment.

THANK YOU !