DIGITAL CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

For Enhancing Dialogues About Equality, Diversity And Inclusion In The Context Of Higher Education Learning And Teaching

LITERATURE REVIEW REPORT

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# DIGITAL CRITICAL PEDAGOGY:
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This CAPE-funded research project examines how learning and teaching of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in university courses can be enhanced through digital critical pedagogies. This is urgent given the need to weave EDI more thoroughly into university learning experiences and the potentials of digital critical pedagogies – when designed and implemented effectively – to support with this. The project has three strands: 1) a literature review, 2) an interview study with Middlesex University (MU) academics and 3) a collaborative innovation workshop to develop concrete recommendations about how digital critical pedagogies to enhance learning and teaching dialogues about EDI can be more systematically advanced in the university and in higher education more broadly.

This report focuses on the first strand of the project, the literature review, which was a collaborative and interdisciplinary venture taken on by academics across the university (see Appendix 1 for profiles of the advisory group).

The report first provides a rationale for the research, followed by a detailed account of how we conducted the literature review. The findings from the literature review are organised around five emergent themes that we present as essential components of digital critical pedagogies.

1. Digitally mediated dialogues
2. The nature of ‘safe space’ online
3. Interweaving with public pedagogies
4. Digital inclusion
5. Pedagogical risk-taking
The Black Lives Matter movement has emphasised the need for more explicit discussions with HE learners about EDI regardless of the course they are studying. In learning and teaching about EDI, there is widespread recognition that what we need are dialogic and empathic spaces in which learners can engage in processes of deep collaborative reflection (Cole, 2017).

Critical pedagogies are a commitment to learning and teaching that centres on meaningful dialogues with and between learners. Such dialogues connect learning in the classroom with ‘real life’ experiences in ways that prompt further inquiry and insight, and are a step towards self-actualisation (hooks, 1994).

To elucidate critical pedagogic approaches that enable personal transformation, bell hooks uses the term ‘liberatory theorizing’ (2003, 2014). In liberatory theorizing, theory is positioned as a profoundly personal and dynamic means for making sense of individual – often painful - experiences. hooks says of her own relationship with theory that it ‘emerges from the concrete, from my efforts to make sense of everyday life experiences, from my efforts to intervene critically in my life and the lives of others’ (hooks, 2003, p. 71).
Practically, critical pedagogies depend on establishing meaningful connections between our everyday lived experience and theory as it is encountered in academic spaces and texts.

In Freire’s original outlines of critical pedagogy (1968/2017), he suggested the use of teacher-curated images as a way of enabling learners to make these connections. In today’s world of mobile learning and social media, these connections can be forged even more readily, with learners themselves developing the content that creates a dialogue between theory and the world around them, rather than relying on teachers’ chosen words and images (Sakr, 2020).

However, teachers have encountered various issues in enabling such connections between everyday experience and theories encountered through academic learning.

Research has shown that students can feel too intimidated to engage fully in theoretical dialogues via social media (Lackovic, Kerry, Lowe & Lowe, 2017). Other studies have shown that some learners are reluctant to use social media because they see it as ‘anti-academic’, a potential ‘cheapening’ of their consumption of the academic experience of attending university (Stirling, 2016; Sakr, 2020).

For example, a learner might see a situation in life that validates, extends or challenges a theoretical lens they’ve learned about in university; on seeing the situation, they can record it immediately thorough an image or visual on social media.

Pimmer, Mateescu & Grohbiel (2016) suggest that creating digital representations of learning via social media platforms on mobile devices can offer learners the opportunity to connect theoretical learning with what they experience in their everyday lives, and to make these connections as and when they become apparent.
Given this complexity, it is crucial that we develop a better understanding of the platforms and practices that facilitate effective digital critical pedagogies. Some of the questions we need to engage with are:

- Which digital platforms are best for enabling digital critical pedagogies among HE learners with regards to EDI teaching and learning? Why do some digital platforms work better than others for enabling liberatory theorizing? What are the factors that need to be considered when choosing digital platforms for critical pedagogies relating to EDI?

- How can learning practices in digital platforms be best designed to enable critical digital pedagogies to flourish when teaching EDI? What kinds of digital learning practices best support meaningful and open dialogues between students? What kinds of digital learning practices are best suited to supporting students to make links between their classroom learning and their real world experience?

- How do we connect different learning spaces to support digital critical pedagogies in EDI teaching? What relationships between the different spaces involved (in-person academic, digital academic, social media etc.) are necessary in order to facilitate liberatory theorizing? And what are the factors that might inhibit effective digital critical pedagogies in any or all of these spaces?
METHODOLOGY

The project is situated in a pragmatist tradition – it is research designed to enable those working ‘on the ground’ to collaboratively problem-solve in response to challenges we face as a university community. The overarching project is made up of three stages and in all of these stages, the research is co-produced with a diverse group of lecturers working in MU.

For the literature review (the first strand of the project), an advisory group made up of 12 MU academics from across the university’s disciplines were an integral part of making sense of the diverse literature included in the review. We therefore think about this component of the project as a ‘collaborative narrative literature review’. The advisory group played a part in shaping the search terms that we used, advising on additional articles to include and developing our understanding and articulation of the emergent themes.

The aim of the literature review was to identity themes in existing literature on the use of digital critical pedagogies for enhancing dialogues around EDI in higher education around the world.
METHODOLOGY

DATABASES AND JOURNALS

The search was carried out across five databases (Education Research Complete, Education Journals Collection of Taylor and Francis, Middlesex University Research Repository, Humanities International Complete, and SAGE journals online) and 22 education journals relevant to our focus.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

- Publication date: studies published in the last ten years (2011-2021).
- Topic/Focus: a focus on the use of digital critical pedagogies for Teaching EDI in universities around the world (objective 1).
- Research base: empirical studies, reviews, commentaries and pedagogical accounts/reflections were included.
- Age-range of learners: primarily studies focusing on higher education students, with some possibility of including younger age group learners if particularly relevant to the topic.
- Geographical spread: as review specifically considers universities around the world, studies are not limited to just the UK and will include studies from around the world.
- Research base: qualitative or quantitative.
- Language: articles published in English language.

SEARCH TERMS


Using these terms, the initial search returned 168 results.

SIFTING PROCESS

Based on manual sifting of the titles and abstracts of the articles, a list of 34 articles were identified to be read in full. Having read the full articles, we discounted a further nine articles on the basis that they did not have a clear critical pedagogies foundation. They typically looked at digital learning from a technical, rather than critical pedagogical perspective. Our review was therefore based on 25 articles.

Our analysis of the articles involved both researchers reading the articles independently, making notes on the article in line with the objectives of the review and meeting on a weekly basis to discuss emergent and developing themes. We met to do this four times over the course of four weeks, and in the final meeting, agreed on five overarching themes that are presented in the following section.
FINDINGS

Through our analysis, we developed five central themes from the literature review. These are best conceptualised as areas of special consideration when exploring and designing digital critical pedagogies for enhancing dialogues about EDI in learning and teaching contexts. They represent elements of practice to reflect on carefully and develop further as part of the practice of digital critical pedagogies. We suggest that by exploring each of these themes, pedagogues can advance their own digital critical pedagogies in an exploratory and reflective way.
FINDINGS

DIGITALLY MEDIATED DIALOGUE

Authentic and open dialogue has a special role to play in critical pedagogies as envisaged by bell hooks (1994, 2003). At the same time, dialogues are not a neutral social justice mechanism leaving everyone in them feeling empowered.

"Dialogues ride on power differentials and inequalities whether they take place in physical or digital spaces (Bali, 2014)."

Our capacity to engage in dialogue depends on our presence as individuals. Borup et al. (2013) offer a helpful way for thinking about presence, drawing on the Community of Inquiry framework offered by Garrison et al. (2000). In this framework, presence is defined as the capacity of learners to project their full selves, emotionally and socially, via mediated forms of communication. There have been concerns in the literature that digitally mediated learning and teaching makes it much harder to realise presence. Boler (2015) for example is deeply sceptical of the potential to move critical pedagogies online, particularly when asynchronous mediation is involved. She suggests that such mediation makes the banking model (Freire, 1968/2017) the norm and full explorations of identity and difference among individuals are reduced to ‘drive-by-difference’ (Boler, 2015, p. 1495) – a purely superficial engagement with diversity and intersectionality among learners.

In digital spaces, we need to be aware of the way that even the most basic of parameters (such as internet connectivity) shape who can have a voice within dialogue, and we cannot underestimate the importance of this as a consideration in digital critical pedagogies.
In the literature, we see this 'drive by difference' in practice in Sakr's (2020) study of how learners engaged with EDI via dialogues on Instagram. Learners in this study tended to employ simplistic visual representations of diversity (often downloaded from Google Images) but developed a much richer and deeper discussion in the face to face debates in the physical classroom. This may be because genuine and authentic engagement with difference requires, as Boler (2015, p. 1495) suggests; 'proximate bodies and tangible emotions'. The central question here is whether digitally mediated dialogues offer enough presence among learners. This is a similar concern for Smith and Jeffery (2013) and Regan et al. (2012) who both consider the loss of 'teachable moments' when dialogues are digitally mediated. Without the 'here and now' aspect of learning and teaching face to face, can asynchronous dialogues ever create the rich, exploratory and potentially contentious dialogues that are so fundamental to critical pedagogies?

Borup et al. (2013) approach this quite differently, with a focus not on whether presence is improved or diminished but instead a careful consideration of how presence (and therefore dialogue) is shaped by the affordances of particular types of digitally mediated communication. This is similar to Kress's (2005) conceptualisations of 'gains and losses' in relation to multimodal, multimedia platforms. Borup et al. (2013) suggest, for example, that written exchanges (e.g. in the chat function of a synchronous meeting, or an asynchronous forum) involves working with the 'leanness' of text. They explore what happens when you bring in other modes of communication, such as learners leaving each other audio or video messages rather than written exchanges.

As well as thinking about particular modes of digitally mediated dialogue, we also need to consider how these modes interconnect and interact with one another.

Bali (2014) suggests that while some learners may feel more comfortable in posting in the chat function of a synchronous meeting, their presence will depend on which forms of communication are prioritised by the teacher.

Borup et al. (2013) also make the important point that how presence is shaped in digitally mediated communication will not be universal. If we define presence as the capacity to project our full selves, then this capacity will be shaped also by who we are as well as the affordances of the platform and exchange. An extravert might not want to establish presence in the same way that an introvert would, and so we cannot make any sweeping generalisations about students' experiences of presence via diverse digital mediation.
CONCEPTUALISING AND CREATING A ‘SAFE SPACE’ ONLINE

The idea of creating a ‘safe space’ for learners’ dialogues is already complex in the context of traditional critical pedagogies. For bell hooks (1994, 2003), teachers need to find a balance between facilitating and maintaining a dialogic space which allows for vulnerability as part of learning and teaching (including the teacher’s own vulnerability) while not aspiring to a sanitised, colonising view of harmony between learners.

The literature in this field begins to explore the complexities of managing the creation of ‘safe space’ online. Part of how we think about the safe space in digital critical pedagogies relates back to the previous theme of dialogue, in that how presence is mediated will impact on the capacity to create a ‘safe space’ for dialogue. Boler (2015) warned that in too much online learning and teaching we end up with ‘drive by difference’ rather than deep and meaningful engagements with diversity. When we divorce ourselves from our physical presence—from our facial expressions, body orientation, gesture and so on—the ways in which we can collaboratively construct a safe space for dialogue change. A teacher cannot ‘read the room’ in the way that they might do when they are in a physical classroom. They cannot see who feels uncomfortable or they might not appreciate the vulnerability that a learner is showing by sharing a particular story or perspective. Boler suggests that embodied multimodal communication is a key component of enabling spaces for genuine and open dialogue.

Answering this question becomes even more complex when digital critical pedagogies open up to public pedagogies taking place via social media. The possibilities of interweaving with public pedagogies are considered in more detail in the following theme, but it is important to note how public pedagogies enacted via social media can pose particular challenges for creating a dialogic safe space. Twitter and Instagram aren’t necessarily safe spaces; this is something that we all know from our personal lives. The potentials for trolling and online abuse are real, as both Ringrose (2018) and Hills (2018) find in their explorations of learning about higher education teaching through the public pedagogies of social media. Sakr (2020) engages with the struggle of establishing and maintaining a safe space for students when using Instagram as part of a critical pedagogical approach, but the careful planning that is characteristic of this learning experiment risks ‘sanitising’ the space rather than making it safe. Learners in this study only really engaged with each other through Instagram, and even then, typically limited themselves to ‘liking’ each other’s posts rather than engaging in a deeper way. Where does the balance lie between safety and sanitisation?

Castillo-Montoya et al. (2019) present a much more dynamic approach to ‘safe space’ as part of digital critical pedagogies involving social media. They proactively prioritise self-care and the care of others (i.e. an ethics of care) in relation to their use of social media as part of Black Lives Matter movement. Rather than seeing the safe space as something that a teacher creates for learners, the approach is to create a context in which learners can care for themselves and each other and that this caring is seen as part of the pedagogical work, rather than something separate from it. A final point to make about safe space is that it’s not just learners for whom we need to think about making the time and space to be vulnerable. Pedagogical risk-taking is the fifth theme in these findings, but of course teachers’ risk-taking depends on the creation of a safe space in learning and teaching for productive failure (Rosenblum & Harris, 2017).

Is it possible to do the necessary communicative work in an online space?
INTERWEAVING WITH PUBLIC PEDAGOGIES

The review suggests that an innovative route in developing critical pedagogies involves interweaving ring-fenced learning and teaching spaces (e.g. the learning management system, or the preferred synchronous meeting platform used by the institution) with public pedagogies enacted in social media spaces. Public pedagogies are processes of learning that take place in what Hill (2018) calls ‘digital counterpublics’. These are online spaces, often associated with grassroots movements (such as Black Lives Matter) or marginalised groups finding their voice. From the literature, Hill (2018), Ringrose (2018) and Castillo-Montoya et al. (2019) all focus on navigating public pedagogies as part of a digital critical pedagogical approach. They investigate what happens when we open up learning and teaching spaces to engage with wider social movements across the world. Castillo-Montoya et al. (2019) take this opening up even further by using BLM social media as a means to develop principles for a racially liberatory pedagogy. In this case, the public pedagogies come first and the classroom pedagogies follow. They explain (p. 140-141):

Twitter allows professors and students alike to engage with free and accessible ‘live’ content that is rapidly unfolding. This approach may help students see how issues are formulated and how various perspectives shift and shape the discourse. With this said, we encourage college instructors interested in using social media in the classroom to carefully consider the vulnerabilities, emotions, and other issues that may result.

The review demonstrates that interweaving with public pedagogies is far from easy. Hill (2018) discusses the surveillance that is enacted through these spaces, as well as suggesting that they enable a ‘new surveillance’ (counter-acts of surveillance, e.g. focused on police brutality). Ringrose (2018) encounters misogynistic trolling in her engagement with Twitter and wonders about the ethics of inviting learners into this potentially harmful space. While Hill and Ringrose both engage with the darker sides of public pedagogies, other researchers have sought to use social media as part of digital critical pedagogies without engaging with the totality of the platform. Sakr (2020) for example, invited learners to use Instagram to extend classroom dialogues about EDI, but the parameters of this project meant that the students are essentially cordoned off from the public pedagogies of Instagram. They communicate with one another rather than engaging with wider dialogues. This links back to the earlier theme of ‘safe space’, since it eludes to a difficult line to tread between safety and sanitisation.

HOW DO WE KEEP LEARNERS SAFE IN THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC PEDAGOGIES WITHOUT SANITISING THE SOCIAL MEDIA THAT THEY ENGAGE WITH?
Interweaving with public pedagogies (continued)

The idea of interweaving with public pedagogies invites us to ask about the role of the critical pedagogue in relation to this interweaving work. What form does the pedagogical practice take in this situation? Some possibilities highlighted in the literature include:

- Inviting learners into the public pedagogies. Critical pedagogues can support learners to take their first steps in engaging with the public pedagogies enacted in different social media spaces. In doing this, they can make careful choices about the kind of introduction that would support learners the most. For example, Ringrose (2018), while deeply aware of the ‘dark side’ of Twitter and other social media, highlights that dialogues about feminist memes are an exciting way into discussions about gender and feminism with learners. They also represent an intersection between public pedagogies and activism, which in turn feeds into a digital critical pedagogy where the aim is not just to support learners to reflect but also to take action.

- Enabling learners to access public pedagogies. Berman (2020) highlights the potential to romanticise informal learning spaces, including digital spaces such as social media, on the false assumptions that all learners can jump right in to using them. A critical pedagogue is aware of these assumptions and determines the necessary practical support to enable all learners to access public pedagogies. On a practical level, this may involve supporting learners to set up an account on a social media platform and introducing the very basics of posting content and engaging with others’ content on this platform. This is echoed in Sakr (2020) where many of the learners struggled to engage with Instagram on a technical level, while the facilitators had assumed that this would be unproblematic.

- Teach learners the ‘language’ of the social media platform. Sakr (2020) discusses the need for students using Instagram to learn the visual language that underpins Instagram exchanges. Without this, as novices, they are likely to struggle to engage with wider public pedagogies that are going on and may not see the possibilities available through the digital counterpublic. So on a practical level, a critical pedagogue may need to support learners to take ‘better’ photographs or write ‘better’ tweets that gain more traction and enable more interaction with public pedagogies.

- Shaping together an ‘ethics of care’ to support engagement with public pedagogies. As noted above, social media can be a dangerous social space, in which you can suffer trolling and abuse. Castillo-Montoya et al. (2019) stress the need for an ethics of care in social media spaces, which involves guiding learners to look after themselves as well as looking after others. A key role of the pedagogue therefore is to hold this line, to support learners to build a ‘safe space’ (though not a sanitised space) in their interactions with public pedagogies. Linked to this is the need for criticality. Talib (2018) suggests that learners need support in approaching social media through a critical lens, constantly questioning the alliances, agendas and power dynamics upon which the platforms rest. This criticality is part of an ethics of care. When we are critical of what others say, we can protect ourselves from harm.
EXPANDED DEFINITIONS OF DIGITAL INCLUSION

The literature suggests the need for an expanded vision of digital inclusion and that fostering this expanded digital inclusion is key to digital critical pedagogies. Seale and Dutton (2012) conceptualise digital inclusion not just as access and use (as in Prata-Linhoares et al., 2020, who document access and use of digital technologies as part of education during the pandemic and the social distancing measures put in place), but also in terms of participation, equity and empowerment. This means that it is not just whether or not you have access to the physical resources, but also about whether you are empowered to engage digitally as part of your own personal identity and self-expression.

Too often, digital inclusion initiatives focus on getting individuals online in order to engage in education or employment, rather than it being about the authentic empowerment of an individual or group.

To understand more about digital inclusion practices, Seale and Dutton (2012) suggest that we have to ask deeper questions about the nature of empowerment in learning and teaching, and the use of digital technologies and platforms. Just as having access does not automatically lead to digital inclusion, non-use cannot simply be read as digital exclusion. To equate the two is disempowering for the learner and fails to engage with the agency.

While Seale and Dutton (2012) offer a helpful five-element model of digital inclusion (access, use, participation, equity and empowerment), Bali (2014) reminds us of how these elements are intertwined. She reports on the impact of internet connectivity issues in the context of intercultural dialogues between HE students in Egypt with students in the US. The Egyptian students were disproportionately affected by internet connectivity issues, and had less of a voice as a result. The most disadvantaged Egyptian students were the worst off in terms of internet connectivity and this hindered their participation and empowerment in a recursive fashion.

The review begins to ask what is required in order to achieve the participation and empowerment involved in authentic digital inclusion. Talib (2018) suggests that a central element is digital critical literacies, which must run like a thread through digital critical pedagogies. If learners are going to use social media as part of their learning and teaching (formally and informally), they need to know how to critically engage with the messaging they encounter. This involves deconstructing not just the content posted on platforms, but the platforms themselves and the agendas integral to their affordances.

Similarly, Pedersen et al. (2018) argues the need to grow digital citizenship as part of an online education. They suggest that learners’ capabilities (what they are able to do), belonging (the extent to which they feel a part of something) and becoming (the possibilities for growth and development) are central to digital critical pedagogies.

“To understand digital inclusion in terms of empowerment we have to get closer to individuals’ experiences with digital practices and platforms and understand what’s going on for them more fully.”
PEDAGOGICAL RISK-TAKING

The review highlights the need for pedagogical risk-taking as part of the project of articulating and experimenting with digital critical pedagogies. As Rosenblum and Harris (2019) note, a commitment to risk-taking is already part of the critical pedagogy described by hooks (1994, 2003).

Pedersen et al. (2018) describe a shift to hybrid (rather than digital or online) pedagogies, because the term ‘hybrid’ emphasises the extent to which the pedagogies are always on the cusp of becoming, they are more ‘not quite there’ than ‘there’.

Seeing the pedagogies through this lens introduces (or brings to the fore) experimentation, risk-taking and the capacity to be alive to difference. While this can lead to feelings of stress, it also creates an opportunity for rejuvenation among educators who have the opportunity to throw out the rulebook and innovate in the context of their pedagogical approach (Regan et al., 2012).

Risk-taking is inherent in the work of ‘opening out’ the learning space so that it includes the wider world (e.g. through social media, as in the ‘interweaving with public pedagogies’ theme). Ringrose (2018), Hill (2018), Castillo-Montoya et al. (2019) and Sakr (2020) all engage to some extent with this opening out via social media. Rosenblum and Harris (2019) describe an initiative connecting students digitally and asynchronously across two universities in the US, using critical digital pedagogy as a means to support their collaboration and openness. These projects are not without challenges. In the case of Rosenblum and Harris (2019) the challenges were in terms of the risk of the project failing and learners dropping out of the course, performing poorly in assessments and/or offering negative feedback about the course which would impact negatively on Rosenblum and Harris’ reputations as educators.

Critical pedagogies depend on having room to fail productively, but not everyone has access to this room to fail in the same way (Rosenblum and Harris 2019).

Pedagogical risk-taking therefore involves exposure and this can be intimidating. Communities of practice offer an important way to enable this pedagogical risk-taking so that it is collaborative and supportive and that everyone feels that there is necessary room to fail (as well as succeed). Anderson (2020), in discussing the digital pedagogy pivot we have seen in response to COVID19, suggests that communities of practice are essential to support collaboration, practice sharing, practice development. Putting communities of practice at the centre of digital critical pedagogies is an active way of pushing back against the discourse of ‘inevitable de-humanisation’ that characterises some writing on digital critical pedagogies (Morris & Stommel, 2018, Boler, 2015). Pedersen et al. (2018) experiment with the workshopping around hybrid pedagogies as a way to establish risk-taking within communities of practice. Everett and Oswald (2018) take this further by focusing on how students can be brought into communities of pedagogical innovation. They describe the impact of students being paid to create accessible learning materials as part of inclusion strategies at two universities. This is a practical way to bring learners on board with digital critical pedagogies innovations.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

All of the themes explained above suggest avenues for further research. For example we need further research to consider:

- The affordances of different types of digitally mediated communication in terms of dialogue, presence and voice. We need careful observational research to identify which learners are heard in different types of digitally mediated communication used in learning and teaching.

- What does a ‘safe space’ look and feel like in the context of digital critical pedagogies? How do we know if we are in a safe space (as opposed to a sanitised space) for dialogue? What feels safe to learners? What feels safe to teachers? How are safe spaces cultivated? Again, we need careful observational research, as well as interview studies, to understand more about this key concept in digital critical pedagogies.

- What are the benefits of interweaving with public pedagogies as part of digital critical pedagogies? While there are some exciting and innovative studies that begin to explore this, we need to know far more about the learners’ experiences when they engage with public pedagogies and the ways that this interweaving can be written into learning, teaching and assessment. Longitudinal research would be helpful here to understand more about the process through which teachers learn to interweave their traditional pedagogies with public pedagogies and what supports them in this navigation.

- What are the hallmarks of digital inclusion in the context of digital critical pedagogies? What do critical pedagogues need to be aware of in terms of access, use, participation, equity and empowerment, and what measures can they take to design a pedagogical approach to heighten digital inclusion? Pedagogical workshopping would be an appropriate methodology here, enabling teachers to carry out pedagogical design with expanded definitions of digital inclusion at the forefront of their minds.

Across all of the literature, a recurring gap is the voice of learners.

Although a few of the articles did carry out interviews with learners, the dominant voice in articulating and understanding digital critical pedagogies is undeniably that of the teacher. There is an urgent need for research that bridges the gap between learner and teacher in defining, planning and implementing digital critical pedagogies. For example, this could be achieved through communities of practice that are co-led by learners and teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING AN IMPACT ON PRACTICE

The findings from this review are offered as a starting point for future dialogues and initiatives. The themes identified from the review are not so much ‘knowledge’ as points for reflection on practice. There are various ways that the report findings can be brought to life both for MU academics and further afield. To start with, we would suggest:

- An asynchronous online training module for staff, which is based around brief summaries of key pieces of research in the review followed by the opportunity to reflect on your own practice and commit to actions and experiments for the future.

- Collaborative action research. Inviting academics across the university to start action research projects, on different scales, to further research around any of the issues identified through the review (with coaching to support the development of the action research projects).
About the authors

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Dr Rima Saini is a Lecturer in the Sociology of Race in the School of Law at Middlesex University London and Programme Co-Leader for the BA Sociology, BA Sociology with Criminology and BA Sociology with Psychology undergraduate programmes. She supervises PhD students in the Department of Criminology and Sociology and the Department of Education respectively on theses pertaining to race and gender identification in Grenada, and the mentoring of young Black Caribbean males in the UK. She is co-lead of the MDX School of Law Decolonisation Working Group, a Steering Group member of MDX-ARN (the Middlesex University Anti-Racist Network), and a member of the MDX EDI Framework Writing Group advising on issues of decolonisation, anti-racism, access and inclusion across the University and supporting as well as leading on initiatives in this area.

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Bola Oggunnaike has over twenty years' experience in front line social work Children and Families and also working as an independent social worker specializing in Parenting, Special Guardianship and Residential assessments. She has been teaching BA and MA social work modules at Middlesex university since 2016 and has also been involved in several research projects within the social work team.
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