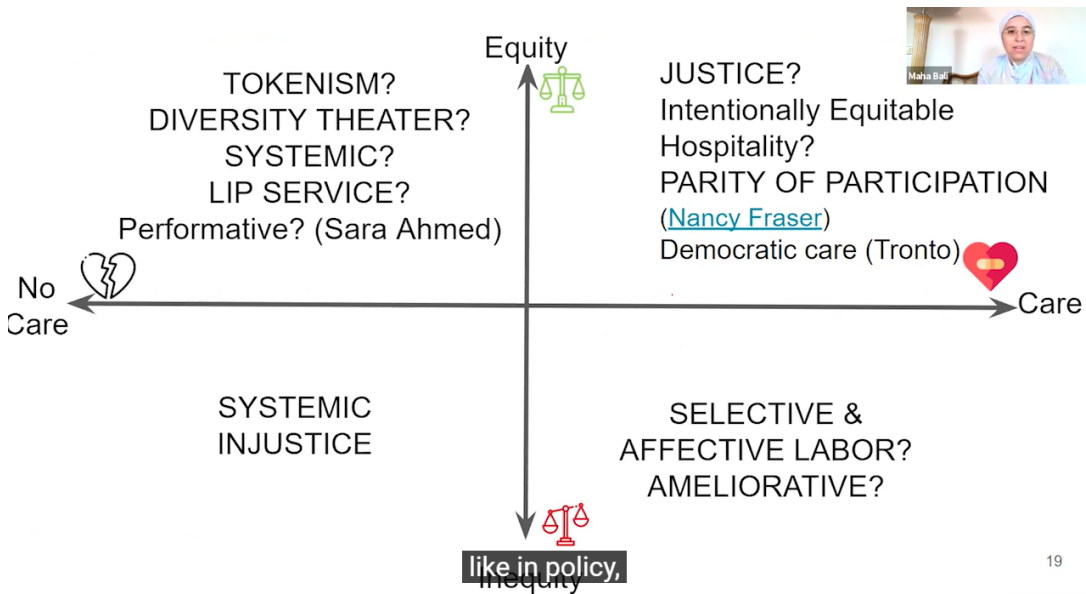# Student-led Project: Desk Research

Introduction

This resource, collated in January 2022, contains some key existing theory, practice and research relating to equity in blended learning and teaching. We note that there is more than one definition of equity and that when considering equity, it is vital to ask who is creating that definition to ensure that it is not being 'imposed' on a group based on a third party's definition.

Dr Maha Bali's video on Building Community Online with Equity Care is a good starting point for this thinking. When considering equity, who decides what it is that we're trying to reach. Are we considering invisible needs? Introducing the equity/care matrix and the idea that equity without care is imposing equity on someone without checking what they need

For a basic overview and set of definitions relating to blended Learning, take a look at the Knowledge Hub from AdvanceHE and their Starter Tools for Blended Learning.

Themes emerging from research

Theme: Pedagogy
(course design, assessment design, misconceptions relating to online learning and teaching)

These resources consider how learning and teaching design can be adapted to include equitable practices. They examine how education is delivered to students and how they can be taught about equity in both online and face to face provision.

1. Teaching in Higher Ed Podcast with Christian Friedrich *Equity in Learning Design*
   https://teachinginhighered.com/podcast/equity-learning-design/

Dr Friedrich talks about accessibility of online learning as well as the importance of pedagogy in setting up digital learning environments in ensuring marginalised groups are supported.

2. Blog Post: Entangled *Pedagogy Applied to Learning Spaces and Hyflex Teaching*
   https://blog.mahabali.me/educational-technology-2/entangled-pedagogy-applied-to-learning-spaces-and-hyflex-teaching

In this blog post, Dr Maha Bali explores the idea of entangled pedagogy as a tool for creating learning in digital spaces that allows for elevating the agency of a varied group of stakeholders in education.

3. Online Learning as Embodied, Socially Meaningful Experience
   https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs42438-019-00048-9

An article on the misconceptions we may have about online learning. It gives insights into the importance of moving beyond thinking of challenges digital learners face only in contexts of distance and technology into taking into account limiting factors such as time, policy, infrastructure and pedagogy.

4. *Critical pedagogy and teacher professional development for online and blended learning: the equity imperative in the shift to digital*
   https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11423-020-09864-4.pdf

Critical pedagogy as an overarching framework for educational practitioners, advocating reflectiveness on their own role as educators and contextualising learners' circumstances to avoid marginalising students.

5. Universal Design Learning
   Universal design for learning: an introduction and getting started | THE Campus Learn, Share, Connect (timeshighereducation.com)
   UDL: Research Evidence (cast.org)

Learner centred principles to help design flexible and inclusive curriculum

6. University of Glasgow Inclusive Education Approach

Inclusive education is a huge part of learning and teaching at Glasgow, after the Understanding Racism report was published in 2020. It forms a pivotal part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy: https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_775156_smxx.pdf

The University also has an Inclusive Education Policy:
https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_543881_smxx.pdf

Theme: Accessibility

(facilities, internet connection, teaching and learning across different devices, learners and staff digital skills levels, learners and staff studying environments - living circumstances, need for quiet spaces to learn etc)

A selection of resources relating to the impact of accessibility on the learning experience with guidelines and ideas for creating accessible spaces for learners. These include examples of how to infuse flexibility and responsiveness into learning spaces so that a student's experience is not negatively impacted, regardless of the delivery mode.

7. *Sample Community Ground Rules* – Accessibility
    https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/2017/10/06/community-groundrules

Guidelines for creating safe, equitable online spaces for learners.

8. *Online Teaching: Accessibility and Inclusive Learning*
    https://www.futurelearn.com/microcredentials/online-teaching-accessibility-and-inclusive-learning

9. Herriot Watt: Responsive Blended Learning Approach
    https://lta.hw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/10_RBL-Teaching-online-and-on-campus-simultaneously.pdf
    https://lta.hw.ac.uk/resources/responsive-blended-learning/

Students and staff working together to inspire learning that can happen successfully either online or F2F or blended – that is, if new restrictions are imposed or lifted, the learning experience will not be impacted. This helps to build something inherently flexible and responsive.

Theme: Digital Technologies

(inherent bias in how the digital technologies are designed and its influence on education)

A selection of resources which consider how digital technologies can contain inherent biases. The resources provide alternatives on how to counteract this, and the influence of digital technologies in education equity.

10. *Challenging assumptions about 'moving online' in response to COVID19, and some practical advice* - Digital Tech
    https://mededpublish.org/articles/9-83

A more general article on designing online teaching from on-campus materials. Useful in setting up the landscape of potential misconceptions of those previously unfamiliar with digital teaching and giving simple directions on how to avoid creating online learning that can lead to marginalisation.

Theme: Datafication of education
(issues relating to privacy, impact of neoliberal agendas on education - private sector encroaching on education sector, impact of technological advancements, for example algorithms, on how marginalised groups can be further - othered)

The section focuses on the relationship between education, technology, surveillance and privacy. It explores the extent to which technology is being given a greater role in recording, interpreting and reporting on social and educational activity, often in the name of security, trustworthiness, and equity.

11.   https://www.screeningsurveillance.com
        Short movies created as part of a Big Data Surveillance Project at Queen's University in Canada.

12.   https://er.educause.edu/articles/2017/7/pedagogy-and-the-logic-of-platforms
        An account of resistance in action.

13.   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17439884.2019.1583672?needAccess=true
        Paper arguing the idea of anonymity among online students, triggering reflections relating to issues of privacy as well as platform capitalism in educational contexts.

14.   https://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/id/eprint/76458/1/STHV_final_author_version_introna.pdf
        http://oro.open.ac.uk/36594/2/ECE12B6B.pdf
        Discusses the topic of learning analytics and privacy, providing a useful set of ideas to work with in thinking about how the issues we are looking at might apply specifically to education.

15.   https://www.ted.com/talks/cathy_o_neil_the_era_of_blind_faith_in_big_data_must_end
        https://www.socialcooling.com
        The talk, in which algorithms are described as "opinions embedded in code". It urges the audience to look past the apparent objectivity of algorithms and see them as tools that primarily work to replicate the 'status quo' - often with many biases attached. The author argues that algorithms can be checked for fairness, and fixed.

16.   https://soundcloud.com/eetheducationesearcher/automated-surveillance-in-education-chris-gilliard
        Talk about the automated forms of surveillance that are coming into colleges and universities – from 'online examination proctoring' to the use of 'Alexa' in classrooms. Why do people in EdTech seem reluctant to call out the harms arising from these technologies? Can we ever trust 'big tech' companies like Amazon? What hope is there for grassroots resistance against oppressive technologies in education?

Theme: Equity diversity and inclusion

These resources focus on race equality and decolonising the curriculum, showcasing work happening in the sector relating to inclusivity within learning and teaching. The selection also includes resources relating to identifying bias, and embedding equity within learning and teaching.

17.   The University of Harvard *Project Implicit*
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

A now internationally renowned, albeit still valid, test to help gauge bias across a number of areas.

18.   *Why is my* curriculum *white?*
https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/why-is-my-curriculum-white-decolonising-the-academy

19.   OU Micro-credentials
Online Teaching: Embedding Social, Race and Gender-Related Equity

20.   Ongoing sector work from QAA available at
https://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/resilient-learning-communities/institutional-work

University of Dundee - working on attainment gaps (year 2 plan).

Edinburgh Napier University - the Digital Support Partnership Research Project had an equality impact assessment (year 1 report).

Robert Gordon University - Promoting Retention and Success Through Inclusive Practice - two strands to the project: enhancing the accessibility of online learning and a specific project exploring disparities with performance/feedback from male students. The work is continuing into year 2 (year 1 report/year 2 plan).

University of Stirling - Decolonising the Curriculum - building on the year 1 collaborative cluster work and aligns with the university's student partnership working to jointly create an anti-racism and race equality strategy (year 2 plan).

University of Strathclyde - the University has established a Race Equality Working Group (year 1/2 plans).

University of Edinburgh had a member of staff and a student intern contributing to the Decolonising the Curriculum collaborative cluster - might be useful to understand what they got out of their cluster involvement and how they are using cluster learning to inform practice at Edinburgh (year 1 report)

University of the West of Scotland - Development of the UWS Curriculum Framework is being informed by equality impact assessments (year 1 report).