

Delivering an Anti-Racist Curriculum



Principles of respectful enquiry

- Honour confidentiality
- Pay attention to each other
- Welcome and respect the diversity of voices in the room, particularly racially minoritized colleagues
- Be mindful of the impact of what we say
- Give and receive caring feedback
- Practice and respect self-care

(Facilitating Anti-Racist Curriculum Conversations, available from the ARC Guide, Advance HE website)

About this session

- Not anti-racism training
- Purpose: to support us to progress the delivery of an anti-racist curriculum by:
 - Developing our understanding of the general context and why this work is necessary;
 - Establishing our current position;
 - Creating a map of the priority actions we need to take and the challenges we face.

General context

- The urgent need to address racism has become increasingly evident in recent years, both in general (e.g. *Black Lives Matter*) and in higher education in particular (e.g. *Rhodes Must Fall*; *Why Is My Curriculum White?*)
- Awarding gaps between student groups
- Attention on decolonising the curriculum

EHRC findings 2019

- ‘Racial harassment is a common experience for a wide range of students and staff at universities across England, Scotland and Wales’
- ‘Racial harassment can have a profound impact on an individual’s mental health, educational outcomes and career’



EHRC findings 2019 cont.

- ‘Around a quarter of students from an ethnic minority background (24%), and 9% of White students, said they had experienced racial harassment since starting their course. This equates to 13% of all students.’
- ‘Around 1 in 20 students who responded to our call for evidence said racial harassment caused them to leave their studies.’
- ‘Around 3 in 20 staff said racial harassment caused them to leave their jobs, with many more saying they were considering, or had considered, doing so.’



EHRC findings 2019 cont.

- ‘Staff and students are not adequately protected by the law’
- ‘The higher education sector does not fully understand racial harassment and university staff lack confidence in dealing with race issues’
- ‘Most students and staff do not report racial harassment’
- ‘Under-reporting and recording restricts the universities’ ability to take action’
- ‘Universities are overconfident in their complaint handling processes’
- ‘Universities are not following guidance on how to handle complaints’
- ‘Some universities are taking steps to improve reporting’
- ‘There needs to be leadership to help embed a culture where racial harassment is not tolerated’

Helpful resources

Tackling Racism on Campus

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/tackling-racism-campus>

Anti-Racist Curriculum Guide

www.advance-he.ac.uk/anti-racist-curriculum-project

Further resources that build on this Guide

www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/resilient-learning-communities/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/anti-racist-curriculum-project

Anti-Racist Curriculum Guide

Foundations

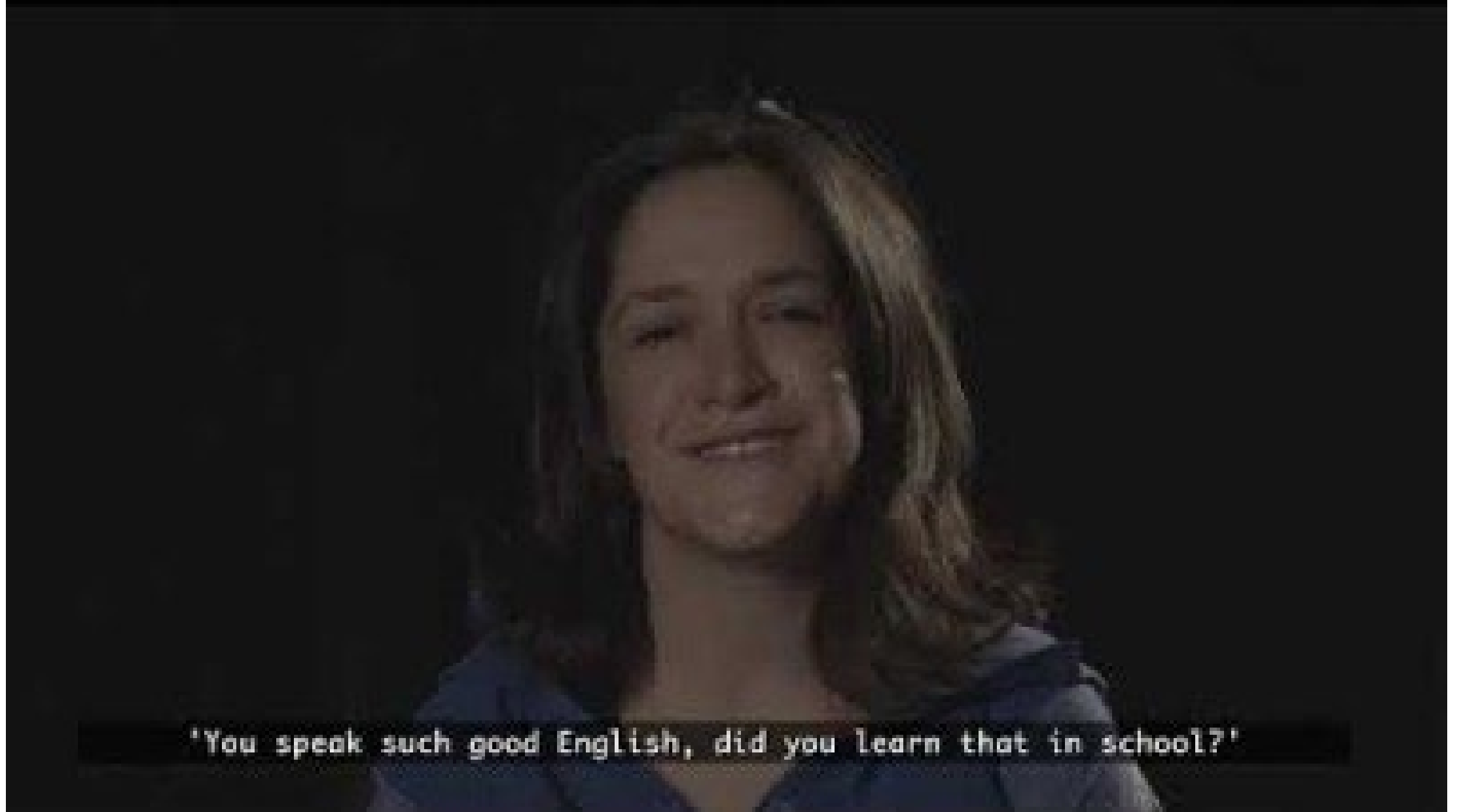
1. What we mean by Anti-Racist Curriculum
2. Mapping the History of Anti-Racist Curriculum work in tertiary education
3. Student Voices Film
4. Staff Voices Film
5. Facilitating Anti-Racist Curriculum Conversations
6. Allyship in developing an Anti-Racist Curriculum
7. Barriers and Enablers Sketches
8. Building on what's already there - Tackling Racism on Campus / Advance HE
9. A Brief Introduction to Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Reflecting and learning

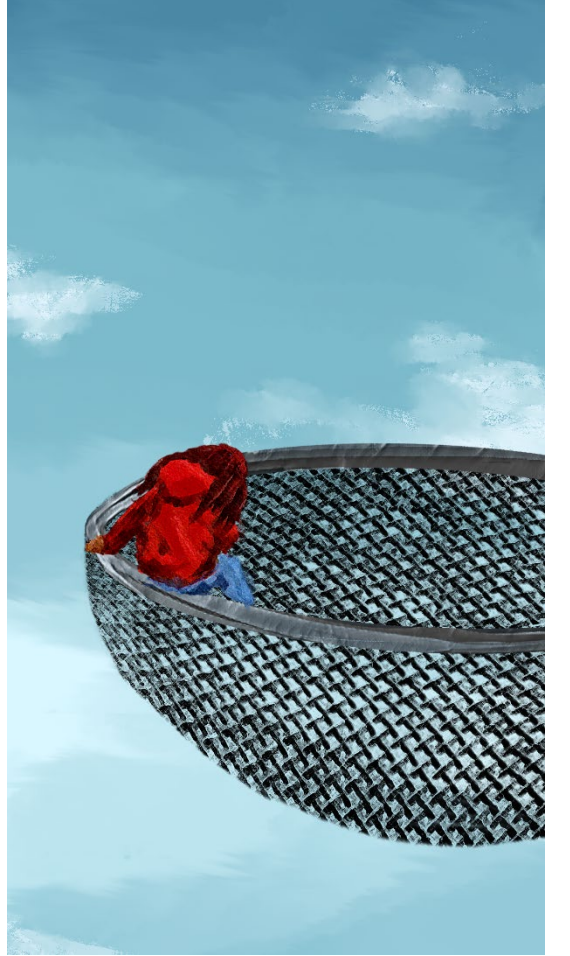
10. Language Matters Portfolio
11. Staff Stories with Anti-Racist Curriculum Reflections
12. Developing an Anti-Racist approach to Teaching
13. Guide to running focus groups discussing Anti-Racist Curriculum

Planning and Doing

14. Planning an Anti-Racist Curriculum
15. Embedding Anti-Racist Curriculum principles into the Curriculum Lifecycle
16. Involving Students in developing an Anti-Racist Curriculum



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mtoUKbpobQ>



Terminology: General

‘...it is imperative to engage in ceaseless probing conversations about the use of terminology and how it impacts on perceptions about students and their needs.’

(Gabi and Gomes in Verma 2022, p. 56)

Terminology: Race

‘Racial categorisation schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. Race is a made-up social construct, and not an actual biological fact.’

(Race Literacy Glossary, available from the Advance HE website)

It is important to recognise that we are *all* racialised, and that not everybody who is racialised as ‘White’ would have been in the past

Terminology: Racism

‘Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power

Racism = a system of advantage based on race

Racism = a system of oppression based on race

Racism = a white supremacy system

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.’

(Race Literacy Glossary, available from the Advance HE website)

Terminology: Racism and Anti-Racism

‘RACIST: One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea.

ANTIRACIST: One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.’

(Kendi 2019 p. 13)

Terminology: Anti-Racist Curriculum

- 'An approach and a spirit of curricular reform: a continual process rather than a final destination'
- 'Cultivating an understanding and self-awareness about our own positionality in the world and academia, and by extension how this impacts upon what we teach and how we teach it'
- 'Reframing the way that we think about curricula with a very strong anti-racist consciousness applied to those discussions'
- 'Acknowledging and teaching explicitly about racism and anti-racism, both past and present within our curricula and within our institutions'
- 'Debunking the myth of objectivity, in scholarship, pedagogical and academic work, to interrogate the pathways and privileges that lead to certain knowledge and narratives to be amplified or silenced'
- 'Taking an intersectional approach with race at the helm'
- 'Ensuring our Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and staff see themselves reflected in the curriculum, not as an exception but a central and valued part of it'
- 'Cultivating spaces for people to feel safe to discuss race'

(What we mean by Anti-Racist Curriculum, available from the ARC Guide, Advance HE website)

Terminology: Decolonisation

‘Decolonisation may be defined as the active resistance against colonial powers, and a shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, psychic independence and power that originate from a colonised nation’s own indigenous culture. This process occurs politically and also applies to personal and societal psychic, cultural, political, agricultural, and educational deconstruction of colonial oppression.’

(Race Literacy Glossary, available from the Advance HE website)

Terminology: Decolonisation

‘Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. The easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship, evidenced by the increasing number of calls to “decolonize our schools,” or use “decolonizing methods,” or, “decolonize student thinking”, turns decolonization into a metaphor. As important as their goals may be, social justice, critical methodologies, or approaches that decenter settler perspectives have objectives that may be incommensurable with decolonization.’

(Tuck and Yang 2012)

	WHITE SUPREMACY	WHITE INDIFFERENCE	WHITE AWARENESS	WHITE ALLYSHIP
1. Fostering an anti-racist culture of understanding	Acceptance and active support of existing culture including active denial of FE/HE culture supporting embedded racism.	Relates to racism through the prism of liberal 'political correctness' and therefore does not engage fully with the idea of FE/HE culture being impacted by racism.	Recognises the link between racism and power and seeks to find ways to address the FE/HE culture. Seek to address racism but through opaque language (EDI banner).	Interventions in place addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representation of BAME people decision-making • all discipline research environments operate through active rejection of white hierarchy • culture to call out and address racism is actively in place
2. Supporting an Anti-Racist Curriculum	Does not engage with curricula review based on removing embedded racism, takes steps to preserve existing curriculum and prevent redress.	Continued and dedicated defence of western 'universalism'; and the right to offend.	Engages with the concepts of historical racism and with debates around learning & teaching as vehicles though requires 'convincing' in terms of application to all disciplines.	Programme of curriculum review results in curricula; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • free from components that reproduce racism • learning that acknowledges and addresses racism where it has existed • expects capability to call out/question in the learning environment
3. Constructing systematic, anti-racist development practices	Does not recognise that development routes within FE/ HE supports existing hierarchy of whiteness through the development on offer, the delivery and the content.	Unwilling participant in development activities and events, questions purpose and has some desire not to engage beyond the minimum.	Accepts racism as a product of society and engages with unconscious bias concepts. Seeks to engage across a range of events and activities but does not embed development beyond the development space. There is an emotional engagement with racism and its impact.	All development offerings for staff and students embodies anti-racism; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • induction and continuing development models are anti-racist • specific race equality training explores institutional racism, white privilege, power and microaggressions • trainers have been through anti-racist modules • training and development is reviewed via curriculum review principles
4. Investing in a diverse workforce	The FE/HE does not engage with efforts to diversify the employee population preferring to reinforce the status quo activity supporting the assumption that genuine meritocracy exists.	Belief in meritocracy but also that there is some 'deserving disadvantages' deserve help.	Supports the ideas behind diversity in the workforce (student population) though tangible and SMART activity is not realised.	Scotland's colleges and universities reflect diversity at all levels actions include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment processes reviewed and amended • monitoring and evaluation of applicant, shortlisting, appointments progression/promotion transparent promotion data • positive action measures in place

	WHITE SUPREMACY	WHITE INDIFFERENCE	WHITE AWARENESS	WHITE ALLYSHIP
5. Recording and responding effectively to racist incidents	The FE/HE does not actively engage in discussions about racism and questions the relevance of racism in staff/student behaviours resulting in poor to non-existent incident reporting.	There is a lack of engagement with what would constitute racist behaviour in terms of incidents that occur or in one's own behaviour or in the structures of the FE/HE.	Discussions around race and racism are tentatively approached. Language is a difficult area, so articulation for individuals/organisation is emotive rather than rational and action focused.	Racist incidents are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treated as racist, recorded, investigated and resolved using secure and robust systems • processes embed addressing racism • those investigating have been appropriately trained and follow a victim-led approach • the FE/HE routinely reports on incidents
6. Monitoring and reviewing organisational race data	The FE/HE does not accept that data reveals links to privilege and as a result denies the need to address unreasonable advantage resulting from being white.	Assumes responsibility of 'poor' data is always down to individuals rather than addressing FE/HE issues that prevent data sharing. Requires legal basis to engage in the area and even then with reticence.	Data becomes the proxy for activity to address racism. Efforts focus on quantitative rather than lived-experience due to the nature of discussion about numbers being less 'awkward'.	The FE/HE ensures all reporting on 'people' information explicitly reports ethnicity data; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • across the employee/student journey • understands the story in the data, e.g. the BAME attainment gap • data is robust and accurate • data includes complaint/grievance/etc • data supports equality impact assessment and evidence based action planning • data is reported to relevant committees/boards
7. Consulting with Black community partners	There is no attempt to engage with Black/BAME members of the FE/HE community – there is a denial that specific lived-experience is relevant in the FE/HE environment.	There is no acceptance of whiteness and white privilege and therefore engaging with groups of interest is secondary to engaging with the overall population. The lived-experience is denied based on meritocracy and the right to offend.	There is a desire to engage with relevant issues in relevant spaces - EDI Committee/Board. There is minor progress in embedding anti-racism via data rather than action.	The FE/HE clearly demonstrates engagement with the BAME community; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops and supports staff and student networks • engages beyond the institution through professional and academic bodies in shaping activities • creates open space and amplifies voices through engagement activities such as staff/student surveys
8. Being held accountable	The FE/HE does not participate in public or visible actions address racial bias or inequality. There is no drive/basis to support individuals to accept and take responsibility.	There is a focus on BAME staff and students building resilience, rather than an institutional responsibility.	There is an understanding the need to overcome unconscious bias which supports personal/institutional responsibility.	The FE/HE takes a lead role in accepting and taking responsibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signs The Declaration • undertakes a Statement Self-Assessment • sets expectations for all employees around behaviour • takes action against unacceptable behaviour • supports a call it out ethos

Activity

- Discuss the following two questions in pairs. Write each contribution down on one of the pieces of paper provided.
- You have twenty minutes for this activity.
- When this activity is complete, we will collectively analyse and evaluate the contributions, grouping them by theme and priority.
- The aim is to create a map of the areas we agree are the highest priority in order to support the delivery of a curriculum that is anti-racist.



What actions must be **prioritised** to enable the delivery of a curriculum that is anti-racist?

What are the **challenges** in taking these priority actions?

Next Steps

References

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- Welsh Government (2022): *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan*. www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-action-plan