Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland

&

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

CERES

3rd International Conference
2017

Activism and antiracism in education: telling our stories

Thursday 15th - Friday 16th June 2017
Paterson's Land, University of Edinburgh

PROGRAMME

CONFERENCE

WELCOME

Dear Conference Delegate,

Welcome to Edinburgh and the University of Edinburgh. I hope you will have a fruitful and enjoyable conference. If this is a return visit, welcome back.

In 2013, the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) organized its first international conference. We were concerned that there was an emerging view from policy makers and practitioners that 'race' was an area that had been well covered. In the 2013 conference, one of the keynote speakers Philomena Essed talked about an emerging line of thinking gaining legitimacy – that of 'entitlement racism' – a right to be offensive.

The title of the 2015 and second International conference was *The Stubborn Persistence of Racism.* Despite years of legislation, policies and staff development, racism continues to thrive in our corridors, playgrounds, schools, further and higher institutions. Gloria Ladson-Billings, one of the 2015 keynotes urged us to reclaim the curriculum as a vehicle for educating for change.

In this our third conference, we wanted to provide spaces for those of us engaged in educating and acting against racism to dialogue and to re-energise. The title of this third conference is 'Activism and antiracism in education: telling our stories'. We hope you will be able to use the next two days to connect with each other, forge possibilities for collaboration and to extend our debate on how racism is shaped, perpetuated and operationalized in our different country contexts.

Finally, after all of this, I hope you will have the time to explore this magnificent city - with Edinburgh Castle dominating the skyline and to take a leisurely wander down the famous Royal Mile or for those more energetic, up to the top of the extinct volcano - Arthur's Seat - for panoramic views of the city. For those who like to delve into the past, there is always Mary King's Close with its underground tunnels and a reputation for hauntings.

Rowena Arshad OBE Head of the Moray House School of Education Co-Director of CERES University of Edinburgh

ABOUT CERES

The Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) is an interdisciplinary research Centre for the study of 'race', ethnicity, languages, culture and migration.

Associates and partners of CERES draw our conceptual base from critical social justice theories and approaches. While accepting the need to address individual forms of prejudice, Centre members focus our research on the cultural and institutional processes which impact on the life chances of marginalised individuals and groups.

The main objective of CERES is to contribute to the processes that enable people to be treated with respect, fulfill their potential and have equitable experiences by:

- Progressing and embedding issues of social justice, rights and anti-discriminatory practice in society and its institutions.
- Working with children, families and communities to contribute towards participation and self-emancipation.

The Centre draws its expertise from a range of people who have promoted equity and challenged discrimination in various ways in Scotland and beyond. Some are academics, others practitioners within the public, voluntary and private sector but all are activists in challenging prejudice and discrimination. The Centre carries out a range of activities. These activities occur in various contexts and include:

- Undertaking research
- Producing books, briefings, journal articles, training materials
- Organising seminars, conferences and fora
- Analysing and commentating on local/national/international policy and legislative developments and disseminating examples of innovative practice
- Providing advice to policy makers, practitioners and the public

The CERES Directors are:

Rowena Arshad
Yvonne Foley
Andy Hancock
Kristina Konstantoni
Fiona O'Hanlon
Mike Orr
Marlies Kustatscher
Rosa Murray

CERES Research Associate: Jonathan Hancock

THURSDAY 15TH JUNE 2017

Please note that registration, all seminars and presentations will be in Paterson's Land G43

Coffee and Tea will be in Paterson's Land, G42

Lunch will be in Paterson's Land, G41

9.00 – 9.30
Registration and Coffee

9.30 – 10.45
Keynote Lecture:
Racialization Relations – The Making and Re-making of Race
Professor Nasar Meer
University of Edinburgh
Paterson's Land G43

Chair: Dr Rowena Arshad

10.45 – 11.00
Coffee Break
Paterson's Land G42

11.00 – 12.30

Teaching in the context of police violence to African-American students: Reports from social justice-oriented teachers on how they responded to police brutality in their classrooms
Jessica T. Schiller, Towson University

'Race' equality in primary schools: examining teacher commitment, curriculum spaces and policy directions in Scotland.
Ania Byerly, University of Edinburgh

Minority youth voices and lessons for education
Rowena Arshad, University of Edinburgh, Peter Hopkins, University of Newcastle, Katherine Botterill, Edinburgh Napier University and Gurchathen Sanghera, St Andrew's University

Panel Chair: Andy Hancock

12.30 – 1.30
Lunch

1.30 – 3.00

Destination Cultural Proficiency: an Equalities journey with school leaders
Sandra Scott and Nikhat Yusaf, EAL Teachers, Edinburgh

Picture books: A Trojan Horse for the Controversial, Critical and Complex
Rowan Oberman and Ben Mallon, The Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education, DCU Institute of Education

Pre-figurative Interventions: The Power of Multilingual, Multimodal, and Multicultural Picturebooks
Julie McAdam, Dr. Lavinia Hirsu and Susanne Abou-Ghaida, University of Glasgow

Panel Chair: Yvonne Foley

3.00 – 3.30
Coffee Break

3.30 – 5.00
Policy, Pedagogy and Pupil Perceptions: EAL in Scotland and England
Yvonne Foley, Charles Anderson, Pauline Sangster, University of Edinburgh and Viv Edwards, Naz Rasool University of Reading

Diversity, Pedagogy and the Creative Arts: A study exploring the perceptions and experiences of diverse students in a Higher Education Arts academy.
Siobhan Clay, Educational Developer, University of the Arts London

Exploring Cool Britannia and Multi-Ethnic Britain: Uncorking the Champagne Supernova
Jason Arday, Senior Lecturer, University of East London

Panel Chair: Mike Orr

FRIDAY 16TH JUNE 2017

9.00 – 10.30

Employment Discrimination Activism and Intergenerational Change
Reginald A. Byron, Southwestern University

The Struggle to Challenge the Islamophobic Discourse in Academia in a 'War on Terror' Era: Muslim Academics Attempts.
Ibtihal Ramadan, PhD Candidate, University of Edinburgh

Fighting the Tide: An Exploration into Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Doctoral Students' perception of a career in Academia
Jason Arday, Senior Lecturer, East London University

Panel Chair: Rosa Murray

10.30 – 11.00
Coffee break

11.00 – 12.00

Heritage Language Learning in Scotland: a case of linguistic apartheid?
Andy Hancock, University of Edinburgh

Scotland's BSL Act - how it has come about and what difference it might make?
Rachel O'Neill, University of Edinburgh

Panel Chair: Fiona O'Hanlon

12.00 – 1.00
Lunch

1.00 – 3.00
Workshop: Identifying and tackling Islamophobia at School
Farkhanda Chaudry, Equality Unit, East Renfrewshire Council

3.00 – 4.00
Presentation and Discussion: Experiencing Islamophobia – stories from Muslim schoolchildren in Edinburgh
Samena Dean, Community Activist, Edinburgh

4.00 Close and Departure

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Racialization Relations – The Making and Re-making of Race
This paper will argue that race making is continual feature of modern societies and that our challenge is to understand how racializations are connected. To this end the paper supports Goldberg's (2009) insistence that in addition to comparativist methodologies employed in the study of race, we also need relational methodologies. That is to say that where the former compares and contrasts, the latter also seeks to connect. One contemporary example is Islamophobia and the wider securitisation of Muslims. I will argue that it is an error to treat this as a matter of religious intolerance or to isolate it from the experiences of other racialized minorities. Conceptually this means drawing on ideas of racialization to illustrate the conceptual and empirical relations between Islamophobia and other forms of racism, and in this paper antisemitism in particular.

Biography
Nasar Meer is Professor of Race, Identity and Citizenship in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. His publications include: *Islam and Modernity (4 Volumes)* (ed, 2017); *Interculturalism and multiculturalism: Debating the dividing lines* (co-ed, 2016); *Citizenship, Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism: The rise of Muslim consciousness* (2015, 2nd Edition); *Racialization and religion* (ed, 2014), *Race and Ethnicity* (2014) and *European Multiculturalism(s): Religious, Cultural and Ethnic Challenges* (co-edited, 2012). In 2016 he was awarded the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) Thomas Reid Medal for excellence in the social sciences, and in 2017 he was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

ABSTRACTS

Theme 1: Reclaiming teacher activism/political literacy

Teaching in the context of police violence to African-American students: Reports from social justice-oriented teachers on how they responded to police brutality in their classrooms
Jessica T. Schiller, Towson University

The events of the spring of 2015 in Baltimore, a city in the United States, captured worldwide attention. After the death of Freddie Gray, a young African-American man at the hands of the police, students took to the streets. There was violence and chaos, followed by closing the schools and a week-long curfew for all residents. What did teachers do to help students process this experience? How did they handle discussions with students once they came back to school? The subject of this paper is to tell the stories of how teachers handled the difficult and critical conversations that ensued after students in Baltimore's public school, the large majority of whom are African-American. This moment forced teachers to think about and discuss issues they are not normally trained to deal with: racism, police brutality, civic unrest, and social justice. Rather than shy away from these conversation, each teacher interviewed for this study, stepped into a conversation with students about these topics. Each teacher comes from a different perspective and approached the conversation in a different way, but all of them took this opportunity to help their students understand that particular historical, social, and political moment. They stepped outside their traditional roles and veered away from the curriculum to engage in controversy with students. Diana Hess (2009) suggests that teachers do this more regularly in classrooms, but in this instance, teachers were given little choice. The paper shares the results of interviews with 10 social-justice oriented teachers from all over the city, and explores the choices that teachers made and how they navigated this difficult moment.

'Race' equality in primary schools: examining teacher commitment, curriculum spaces and policy directions in Scotland.
Ania Byerly, University of Edinburgh

This research set out to investigate what are primary school teachers' perspectives on multicultural and anti-racist education in the context of Scotland, where legislation and educational policies are in theory demanding educators to be proactive. However, growing push for teacher accountability, value of exam results and the persistence of the myth of meritocracy mean that at the level of practice, whether teachers actually engage in critical multicultural education is not always clear. This study was concerned with the personal, institutional and structural aspects of teachers' work, considering the context that teachers are immersed in. Through a series of nested case studies, it explored individual teachers' trajectories of commitment to critical multicultural practice (the micro level), as embedded in the meso level of school-specific context and the macro level of national and Local Authority policy guidance on 'race' equality. Observations and interviews with 9 primary school teachers in 4 schools, in both rural and urban local authorities, were carried out. Additional interviews with 4 Head Teachers, 3 English as an Additional Language Teachers and 5 other Key Informants took place in order to critically reflect on the context and possibilities of classroom work in the chosen settings. The findings suggest that there is no one definition of the study's central concepts to which all teachers can ascribe. Whether or not teachers took up issues of discrimination and difference as part of the curriculum depended more on their own

dispositions and characteristics rather than on any official policy, with which they rarely engaged. Teachers' prior knowledge, attitudes to diversity and personal experiences of discrimination influenced their commitment to social justice and exercising agency in practice. Structural and institutional boundaries acted as directions, limits, opportunities or enablers, depending on the context. These related to factors such as leadership and specialist expertise within the school (the meso level) more than any guidance from the macro level. Teacher autonomy and agency in their efforts to 'fit in' critical multicultural content within an already overcrowded curriculum also depended on micro and meso level factors, such as their reflexivity, own understanding of professionalism and ability to harness a school-level focus on equality and inclusion. It is argued that those teachers who had an activist mindset and worked under the direction of a committed Head Teacher, felt more empowered to enact their personal commitment to social justice in the classroom.

Destination Cultural Proficiency: an Equalities journey with school leaders
Sandra Scott and Nikhat Yusaf, EAL Teachers

We are teacher-activists who would like to share the story of our Equalities work in a centralised Additional Support for Learning service in a major Scottish city. Our position is unusual as it has arisen from the constraints facing all public services yet has given us the opportunity to embark on sector-leading new approaches to engaging school leaders in inclusive education. Our presentation will trace the development of our strategy from a single training session for our own colleagues to the city wide programme we have established. The driving force behind our work is our commitment to improving outcomes for Minority Ethnic students and their families and our experience as teachers has taught us that we need to engage school leaders as agents of change. As we continue to develop our work, we hope to inspire school leaders to adopt a Cultural Proficiency model to examine and reflect on their own cultural values, assumptions and behaviours and consider how they might lead their learning communities to challenge racism and inequality.

Theme 2: The power of intergenerational activism and solidarity

Employment Discrimination Activism and Intergenerational Change
Reginald A. Byron, Southwestern University

The United States and Britain have both had tumultuous race relations histories. Indeed, from slavery, to white supremacist groups during the Civil Rights movements in the 1960s (Ku Klux Klan; White Defence League), to contemporary far-right political parties (Tea Party; UKIP) and white nationalist groups (American Freedom Party; English Defence League), there appears to be parallel intergenerational racist realities. Because labor has always played a central role in these realities, the workplace is an important sphere from which to understand racial inequality and activism working toward social change. This paper utilizes 100 cases of race based employment discrimination (65 from U.S. fair employment practice agencies and 35 from UK employment tribunals) that transpired across three decades the 1990s, 2000s, and early 2010s - to investigate how everyday racial and ethnic minority complainants are devalued as employers defend against discrimination claims and how minorities seek to challenge this inequality. Over time, employers have been less likely to use or defend overt forms of racial devaluation (e.g., racist hate speech; albeit nationalism is still common) and now tend to construct narratives of "colorblind" meritocratic worker deficiencies to explain racial gaps in employment. Workers, in contrast, have used a consistent counter-strategy whereby they employ a perpetrator model of legal recourse (Nelson, Berrey, Nielsen 2008) and highlight distinct "bad

apple" culprits as the cause for concern. Although this longstanding approach to employee activism may lead to benefits for some individuals, the greater cultural resonance of employer discourses of meritocracy may explain why it is so hard for employees to win contemporary racial discrimination cases (i.e., Brown & Erskine 2009; Hirsh 2008). To truly engage the power of intergenerational employment discrimination anti-racist activism, employees must move beyond perpetrator models and challenge the "colorblind" foundation of employer legitimations regarding rule compliance and ideal work ethics.

The Struggle to Challenge the Islamophobic Discourse in Academia in a 'War on Terror' Era: Muslim Academics Attempts.
Ibtihal Ramadan, University of Edinburgh

Dismantling the Islamophobic Discourse in Academia: Muslim Academics Academia in the UK has recently witnessed several initiatives of non-white students' and non-white academics this suggests a separatist style campaign – aren't white students and academics involved? that question the privileging of Eurocentric perspectives in Humanities and Social Science subjects and show less regard to other perspectives on these subjects; for example, the NUS Black Students' campaign at UCL (2014) 'Why is My Curriculum White?', 'Rhodes Statue Must Fall' in Oxford in January 2016 and the 'Black Studies Movement' (Andrews, 2015). These initiatives principally aim at decolonising the academy through demanding a diverse curriculum, which recognises scholarship that is produced by non- mainstream authors, but ultimately provides other perspectives. Using the notions of 'epistemic racism' (Grosfoguel, 2006; 2012) and 'apartheid of knowledge' (Villalpando and Delgado Bernal, 2002), this paper presents some of the accounts of Muslim academics in HSS fields, participants in my PhD research, regarding their attempts to recalibrate the prevalent, utterly negative image of Muslims in the UK, to which academia is complicit. Their accounts highlight how the inertia of the White institution against shaking the normative discourse regarding Muslims/ Islam operates through diverse actors, being (senior) staff, White students, and publishers, who perform direct and indirect pressures to preserve the canon. The findings in this respect also suggest that the enactment of the Prevent Duty at higher education institutions has created an atmosphere of fear within academia, including some Muslim academics, to challenge the normative academic discourse on Muslims. This may in effect lead to some Muslim academics either choosing to steer clear from controversy or to normalise their classroom input and/or research output.

Fighting the Tide: An Exploration into Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Doctoral Students' perception of a career in Academia
Jason Arday, East London University

This paper describes the experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Doctoral Research students' perceptions of a career in academia within the United Kingdom (UK). Varying discourses indicate an overwhelming disparity in relation to the dearth of representation and diversification of staff within the higher education (HE) sector. Statistical data reveals that across the UK within higher education institutions, BME individuals only constitute 7.8% per cent of university academic staff (ECU, 2014). This research explores the challenges that BME Doctoral students face in attempting to navigate their way through the racialised terrain of academia. The ethnicities of the participating academics comprised of Asian, Black, Mixed Heritage and Other. Twenty participant narratives are presented which reveal experiences aligned to micro-aggressions, institutionalised racism, White privilege, representation, marginalisation and limited career opportunities. The study draws upon a Critical Race Theory (CRT) theoretical framework to understand and analyse racialised

experiences encountered within the Academy. The findings presented suggest that in comparison to their White counterparts, BME individuals continuously encounter several challenges aligned to overt and covert racialised experiences in their pursuit of an academic career. The landscape of inequality and discrimination which continually undermines notions of equality and diversity within higher education, persistently disadvantage BME individuals within the Academy, resulting in a sector that continues to remain inherently and normatively White despite ever increasing BME student populations. This paper considers the interplay between institutional racism within higher education and the effect on BME representation within academia. This research advocates that significant change is required within the UK higher education sector to actively diversify academic staff populations and provide adequate opportunities for BME individuals to be able to access the Academy and pursue academic careers.

Exploring Cool Britannia and Multi-Ethnic Britain: Uncorking the Champagne Supernova
Jason Arday, Senior Lecturer, East London University

The 'Cool Britannia' years provided a period in which Britain became the epicenter of the cultural, political and musical world. This brought with it an increased sense of pride in British culture throughout most of the 1990's, a period of euphoria inspired by the swinging 1960's, with this phenomena reaching a crescendo during the installation of a New Labour Government in 1997 under the leadership of Tony Blair. This period signalled for many a renewed sense of optimism, hope and expectation following a tumultuous period totalling two decades of what some may consider to be oppressive Conservative rule. This sense of euphoria was spearheaded by Blair's perceived young, cool and appealing New Labour, which became the catalyst for reducing the unequal societal deficit created by the previous administration. In considering the impact of this cosmopolitan period of time, a narrative that often gets submersed within the hysteria that surrounded 'Cool Britannia' which observed a rise British patriotism, is how this phenomenon impacted multi-ethnic Britain. The experiences of Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) groups have always provided differing contexts due to the continual institutionalised discrimination and oppression faced by this particular demographic, a context compounded by Britain's historically racist institutional structures. This paper utilises compelling empirical narratives to provide an alternative soundtrack to the era by chronicling contrasting tales of inclusion, exclusion and marginalisation for BME individuals during this period at the height of 'Cool Britannia'. Theoretical lenses such as Critical Whiteness Studies (CRT) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) are utilised to explore contexts provided from migrant workers, activists and teenagers at this time, in a period that also oversaw the release of The MacPherson Report in response to the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the continuous systematic victimization of young black males by law enforcement, with emerging patterns of racial discrimination evident for all to observe. This paper concludes with a compelling argument for how such a revered period of time very much represents differing narratives for multi-ethnic communities, which align with positive and negative experiences of the 'Cool Britannia' years, in what became a defining period in recent history for attempting to define 'Britishness', 'Multi-Culturalism' and 'Racial discrimination' within British society.

Theme 3: Countering monolingual hegemony in education

Picture books: A Trojan Horse for the Controversial, Critical and Complex
Rowan Oberman and Ben Mallon, The Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship

Education, DCU Institute of Education

Picture books have been presented as an innocuous vehicle from which teachers can venture into exploration of diverse, challenging and controversial themes (Dolan 2014, Roche, 2014, Hope, 2008). So called "global literature" is seen as enabling marginalised voices and perspectives to be visible in lessons and classroom practice (Short, 2009; Dunkerly-Bean et. al., 2017). Critical literacy strategies, including with the use of picture books, encourage children to challenge dominant narratives, question the authority of texts and engage with multiple viewpoints (Comber, 2001; Andreottti, 2006; Freebody and Luke, 1990; Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys, 2002; Vasquez, 2001). Postmodern picture books are seen as particularly suitable for critical literacy as they fracture and problematize traditional perspectives and structures through less linear narratives, the use of different modalities and the inclusion of new themes (Hasset and Curwood, 2009, Dresang, 2003). Picture books can provide a safe medium for introducing controversial or political issues including race, conflict and migration (Dolan, 2014; Hope, 2008). This paper brings together examples of practice, research and perspectives on the use of picture books to explore global and justice issues in education. Drawing on their own experiences of using picture books in global citizenship education programmes, with children and in teacher education, the paper discusses the possibilities and challenges that picture books presents for decolonising the curriculum. The paper considers the respective roles of and dynamic between the children, teacher and texts and explores issues of authenticity, criticality and authority.

Heritage Language Learning in Scotland: a case of linguistic apartheid?
Andy Hancock, University of Edinburgh

The Scottish Government's 1+2 Language Strategy has made a significant contribution to language policy in education in Scotland but currently there are very few opportunities for children and young people to use and develop their heritage languages in mainstream schools for educational purposes. Consequently, it has been left to the efforts of concerned minoritised parents to establish and organise evening and weekend schools themselves in order to develop their children's heritage languages as it is integral to their identity and cultural traditions. This paper draws on data gathered from an online questionnaire and interviews with complementary school providers to critique the Scottish Government's commitment, in the 1+2 language Strategy, to further develop links involving 'cultural organisations' and 'language communities' to 'derive maximum benefit from 'foreign language communities in Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2012: 24).

Pre-figurative Interventions: The Power of Multilingual, Multimodal, and Multicultural Picturebooks
Julie McAdam, Lavinia Hirsu and Susanne Abou-Ghaida, University of Glasgow

This paper introduces findings from an innovative pilot study that examined the ways in which young bilingual and monolingual students responded to picturebooks in languages other than English. We started out by using postmodern Arabic picturebooks, (e.g. *Amma Osha* by Fatima Sharafeddine and *Al Khanas* by Mathilde Chevre), and drew on our research knowledge of how texts work multimodally, multilingually and multiculturally to design a range of culturally relevant pedagogical strategies to record the children's multilingual responses to the texts and related themes within the texts. We built on the rich linguistic diversity of the students and sourced texts in a range of languages. Initial findings pointed towards the potential of using multimodal, multilingual and multicultural literature to promote: Confidence and curiosity in all language learners; Intercultural dialogue; Desire to use/find texts in

multiple languages in public spaces across the city. By drawing on concepts of pre-figurative practice (Fielding and Moss 2010) that embraced multilingual views of language, we enacted ways of working that would challenge the monolingual hegemony of the school space. In a world where education is obsessed with market forces and pupil success in exams, this pilot project revealed the complexity and tensions that exist within the school space in relation to language and culture. These tensions were clustered around resistance from the pupils and were grounded in their assumptions about language, relationships and power. We would argue that 'prefigurative interventions' (ibid) should be encouraged as a means of moving past a critique of the present to allow disruptions to the status quo to be practiced now.

Policy, Pedagogy and Pupil Perceptions: EAL in Scotland and England
Yvonne Foley, Charles Anderson, Pauline Sangster, University of Edinburgh and Viv Edwards, Naz Rasool University of Reading

There are increasing numbers of pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) in schools in the United Kingdom. In excess of a million pupils in UK schools currently speak one or more languages in addition to English. This number has more than doubled since 1997 (PLASC, DfE, 1997-2012). This paper will present findings from a research project that used focus group discussions and individual student and teacher interviews to address two main questions: what are the perceptions of EAL learners of their language learning experiences? And how do these perceptions differ from those of their teachers? The study enabled us to foreground EAL learners' own voices in terms of how they represented their school experiences within an English-medium environment. Findings and recommendations about ways in which their perceptions could be used to improve their learning experiences in UK schooling will be discussed.

Scotland's BSL Act - how it has come about and what difference it might make?
Rachel O'Neill, University of Edinburgh

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act was passed in 2015, modelled partly on the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005. Both Acts are enabling acts, designed to change attitudes towards the minority languages. But there are differences between the Gaelic speaking and the Deaf communities: Gaelic was a language taught at university level for over a century, with an independent board of Gaelic users directing language planning activities. British Sign Language, on the other hand, has only been researched from the 1980s and is still very much a marginalised language. The role of the National Advisory Group, not mentioned in the BSL Act, is very different from the Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This talk will examine the issues in gaining the BSL Act, and the possible implications for education now that the first National Plan is being drawn up.

Theme 4: Decolonising the curriculum

Diversity, Pedagogy and the Creative Arts: A study exploring the perceptions and experiences of diverse students in a Higher Education Arts academy.
Siobhan Clay, Educational Developer, University of the Arts London

This study is positioned amid the current Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) attainment gap in UK Higher Education and takes as its context, the discourse on the lack of BAME academics in UK universities, an issue more pronounced in the

creative disciplines. This paper discusses qualitative research exploring the narratives of nine undergraduate Fine Art and Design students from a range of BAME and White backgrounds. The research aims to understand the impact: student-tutor relationships, the curriculum, creative pedagogies and the invisibility of diverse teaching staff have on their experience and their sense of belonging within the academy. This paper draws on Critical race Theory, Whiteness and cultural capital frameworks to understand how institutional practices might support or hinder students returning to the academy as staff. The research findings indicate that good student - tutor relationships can cross gender, race and class boundaries and play a pivotal role in supporting students to navigate the uncertainty, ambiguity and risk-taking inherent in art practice. However they also show that for BAME students, uncertainty and risk can be greatly increased when Race and identity work is avoided, misunderstood or ignored by staff. Feelings of 'other' are compounded by narrow, western centric curriculums where students are largely invisible, mirrored in a staff demographic that fails to reflect the increasingly diverse student population. Despite difficult encounters in the academy, the findings present an overwhelming interest in teaching as a future career. This paper makes the case for undertaking a critical review of creative pedagogy, studio dialogue and curriculum content/development to harness BAME student's enthusiasm for teaching and to remediate the current lack of BAME staff in the academy.

Minority youth voices and lessons for education

Rowena Arshad, University of Edinburgh, Peter Hopkins, University of Newcastle, Katherine Botterill, Edinburgh Napier University and Gurchathen Sanghera, St Andrew's University

Drawing from a large scale qualitative study exploring the everyday experiences of 382 pre-dominantly black and minority ethnic young people in Scotland aged 12-25, this session examines issues emerging from the perspective of young people in relation to school ethos and curriculum. The study was conducted in 2014 during the year of the Scottish Referendum which gave a vote to every 16 year old for the first time. The study suggests that young people are not always disempowered by ascribed identities but instead are developing sophisticated and complex ways how they defining who they are and how they want to be.The study also finds that young people are a vibrant group with attitudes and views towards difference that may well be outstripping those older than them. How do we need to reconsider the curriculum in light of this?