DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM FROM A UOFG STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE AWAY DAY – SESSION 1

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A SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE ON DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM

- "The **intercultural curriculum creates a space in which learners and teachers cohabit** and where different perspectives are acknowledged, welcomed and learned from. These **spaces for learning in higher education are invaluable** in UK higher education in our times."[1] - *Dr Catriona Cunningham*

- "There is however a **variation in terms of language** used in the responses with those who use phrases like **'anti-racism'** and **'decolonisation'** in addition to the more commonly used terms like **inclusion, diversity and addressing unconscious bias**."[2]

- "For one colleague, involvement in this group had really highlighted how much awareness raising we need to do around this work: 'The shocking aspect of this work is **how much racism pervades our higher education systems in Scotland** - only now are we beginning to hear this spoken of openly. This [QAA] project can raise awareness of this."[3]

[1] THEMATIC SERIES RESOURCE, ADVANCE HE
[2] TEACHING IN A DIVERSE SCOTLAND, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT
[3] DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC: COLLABORATIVE CLUSTER FINAL REPORT, QAA SCOTLAND

RELATING THIS TO UOFG, AND THE ASSOCIATED CHALLENGES

Three major themes from discussion with SRC Council members:

- Introducing Decolonising the Curriculum as teaching practise and collective dialogue

- Consideration of tokenism

- Lack of common understanding of what decolonising the curriculum means in practice

I also went to the JMS to collect student viewpoints, which varied in their tone...

"You can't decolonise in STEM"   "I don't know what that is"

"Um.. What is that?"

Other students had more wide ranging perspectives...

"If we didn't live in a racist society, my curriculum would already be decolonised"

"Yes there are biases in [genetics teaching], but I don't know how to describe it. Most of the staff are white... I haven't heard of any experiences of direct discrimination, but it does feel like there is an inate bias in the atmosphere and there are not many [ethnic] minorities in a position of power."

"It is diverse but it is still white dominated. We need to look at the bigger picture and not just take things as fact."

"Yeah definitely in computing it is a problem... we only learn about computers, but it is very white dominated."

NOW IT'S OVER TO YOU!

- We have heard about why decolonising is important and the benefit it can have for students

- We have also heard the various student opinions on decolonising

- But what are your perspectives?

- How could you decolonize your subject area? What areas of the curriculum you teach could you adapt to move away from perspectives in the curriculum that may no longer be accurate, reliable or culturally responsive?

   Some things to consider include how to remove the perspective of post-colonial thought,

   reflection on the way materials are presented, and discussion in the classroom.