



Developing staff knowledge and training on decolonisation and decoloniality: Practical tools and inclusive practices



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Background

The call to decolonise curricula has gained significant momentum globally, but progress in higher education remains uneven and often symbolic (Arday et al., 2021; Bhambra et al., 2018). While many initiatives focus on content diversification, there is a parallel need to address **structural exclusions** and **pedagogical practices** that marginalise disabled, neurodivergent and intersectionally disadvantaged students.

Current teaching and learning environments in HE often reflect **ableist** and **colonial legacies**.

These are embedded in *epistemic hierarchies, standardised assessments, and normative expectations of behaviour, cognition, and participation* (Goodley, 2014; Kuppers, 2022).

Background: SEND in HE

- According to *Advance HE* (2024), **14.7%** of UK-domiciled undergraduates declare a known disability, with **5.5%** identifying as having a *specific learning difficulty* such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or ADHD.
- However, these figures underrepresent true prevalence, especially for neurodivergent and minoritised students who often face intersecting barriers to diagnosis, disclosure, and support (HESA, 2024; Brown & Leigh, 2020).

Background

To support this shift, staff need more than policy awareness – they need **practical, dialogic tools** to explore positionality, power, and inclusive praxis in their disciplines. Reflexive frameworks offer useful starting points. Yet uptake depends on time, institutional backing, and a culture of psychological safety.

Aim: Empower staff with accessible, reflective tools

Question: *How can practical and dialogic tools support cross-disciplinary decolonial practice?*



Methods

- Multi-modal support:
 - Toolkit, workshops, 1-to-1s (*podcast from Sep 25 onwards*)
- Qualitative feedback via forms, testimonials
- Internal conferences and SharePoint site

Faculty/Professional Service	Position	Number
Faculty of Education, Society & Creative Industry	Associate Professor/Professor	2
	Senior Lecturer / Lecturer	15
	Salaried Academic Tutor/AT	1
Faculty of Business & Technology	Associate Professor/Professor	0
	Senior Lecturer / Lecturer	2
	Salaried Academic Tutor/AT	0
Faculty of Health Sciences & Wellbeing	Associate Professor/Professor	0
	Senior Lecturer / Lecturer	8
	Salaried Academic Tutor/AT	0
Home Student Recruitment		6
Library		3
HR		3

Workshop Participants

- 40 responses from mixed disciplines
- Confidence in key decolonial areas:
 - **Decoloniality** and **Belonging**: mostly confident
 - **Plurality**: mixed
- Areas of perceived control:
 - Reading lists
 - Teaching materials
 - Classroom discussion

What Staff Found Useful

Most valued:

- Critiquing dominant knowledge (e.g. Maslow, Bloom)
- Practical reflection tasks

Participant reflections:

- “Critically analysing traditional theories”
- “Looking again at module guides with the team”

Cross-Disciplinary Impact

- Health & Nursing: Decolonising NHS-facing modules
- Social Sciences:
 - “Your practical toolkit is bloody marvellous”
- Teacher Education: Planning long-term changes

Workshop Feedback

- “I now have the confidence to develop critical thinking in my learners”
- “It’s been interesting to reflect on my positionality”
- “Decolonial approaches aren’t difficult when you break it down”
- “We need to go beyond reading lists”

Conclusion & Next Steps

Toolkit enables reflective, practical engagement. It has been clear so far that pedagogical shifts have been visible across disciplines.

Confidence grows with relational, dialogic support, fostering inclusive education and epistemic justice.

Practical tools matter—break down the abstract as long as we build time & structure for reflection

Expand podcast & toolkit uptake to explore impact on learners & assessment

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