

Funding from the Diversifying the Curriculum fund was used to support the 'Racism and Resistance in Education' module that I convene. This popular 3rd year elective module, having run for the 2nd time this year, covers a range of topics in the field of race, ethnicity and education. In doing so, it draws on themes relevant to the broader fields of Education Studies, the Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, and the Social Sciences more broadly. Specifically, the module looks at curricula, teaching and teachers, school exclusions, police in schools, security on campus, decolonising the curriculum, and more.

The funding was used specifically to enable two guest sessions on the module. The first session was delivered by Dr Ian Cushing, a leading scholar whose work highlights the ways in which the language and expression of Black students is criminalised and pathologised in schools. Many students noted that this was their favourite session across the whole module, and seemed to value having a lecturer who could talk so directly about their own primary research. The subject featured significantly in student assignments. Students who plan to pursue a career in teaching, including two who currently work as teaching assistants, also noted how the learning had led them to reflect critically on their future practice in the classroom.

The second guest session was delivered by Dr Siobhan O'Neill, an early career academic of colour who recently completed a PhD at the University of Manchester, exploring how race and whiteness operate in the curricula of Politics and International Relations. This session focused on decolonising the university and generated much discussion amongst students which continued into future sessions. The question of decolonising was particularly pertinent to the theme of social responsibility, and to the university of Manchester – not least, because of the university's ongoing complicity in the oppression and colonisation of Palestinians, as highlighted by recent student protests and encampment. This relevance, and questions of the university's ability to live up to its claims of being socially responsible, was not lost upon many students.

The students also appreciated having somebody who had conducted primary research and was able to offer examples related to the University of Manchester. For some students, Siobhan was the first woman of colour who they had been taught by, at the end of a 3-year degree!

Overall, this funding really expanded the scope of the module, made it more interesting and engaging for students, and brought a focus to urgent issues pertaining to social responsibility. The funding was incredibly beneficial.

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