

Title of presentation

The path of decolonising the Kaplan International Pathways (KIP) curriculum – reflections and lessons learned

Presenters

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Abstract

Based on a reflective paper in progress, this Infographic will present its arguments in light of Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 10.

Context

KIP provides international students with pathways to UK universities through academic programmes focusing on English, academic skills and subject knowledge. Across the network, curriculum review has taken place in terms of Active Learning, and since 2020, EDI and decolonising the curriculum have been discussed.

Practice

Following the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, KIP moved towards the Higher Ground (HG) project – which focuses on racial justice across different areas of the business e.g. recruitment; communication and curriculum. Padlet boards were set up to discuss issues anonymously - from this emerged the EDI in the Curriculum project.

The project has different strands – Decolonising and Racial Justice; SEND; Gender and Sexual Orientation, with staff members from across the KIP network volunteering in addition to their existing roles. A ChangeLab approach (Virkkunen and Newnham, 2013) has been taken to EDI meetings, allowing points of action to emerge from the discussion by analysing module materials

and marking criteria. A proposal of changes will be submitted at the end of February.

Successes

HG groups for ethnic minority staff and allies have been established at college level e.g. in Nottingham and London.

Colonised elements of the curriculum or racism being viewed as a non-issue have become evident: accents mentioned in speaking marking criteria; Eurocentrism in module content e.g. Philosophy or Social Science; lack of personalisation for some assessments; lack of student training on global citizenship; lack of staff training on dealing with racism in the classroom or college; the need for module development to avoid being actioned in silos.

Lessons Learned

Despite the above successes, it is proposed that for decolonisation processes to be sustainable, and therefore contribute to achieving the SDGs overall and not merely ticking boxes, decolonisation processes should sit outside of the EDI umbrella (Bell, 2021) as was initially the case at KIP. Diversity is not synonymous with decolonisation (Ventour, 2021), therefore, this would avoid fundamental changes needed being hidden under EDI and ensure colonised elements of the curriculum are truly tackled. Whilst the intersectionality of different EDI areas is evident, maintaining decolonisation under the EDI umbrella risks the success of the overall EDI work, as the structures need to change in order for EDI changes to be successful (Bell, 2021). Without these changes, there is a risk of being complicit with racial injustice.

References

Bell, D. (2021) Preludes to Curricula Decolonisation. AdvanceHE Race Equality Colloquium, Online, 29 June, 2021. Unpublished.

Ventour, T. (2021) Telling it like it is: Decolonisation is not Diversity Available at: <https://www.diverseeducators.co.uk/telling-it-like-it-is-decolonisation-is-not-diversity/> [Accessed 18 February 2022].

Virkkunen, J. and Newnham, D. S. (2013) The Change Laboratory – An Instrument for Agency Building and Expansive Learning. In The Change Laboratory – A Tool for Collaborative Development of Work and Education. Rotterdam: SensePublishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-326-3_2