The Pedagogies for Social Justice Project

Unpacking the curriculum at Westminster: A decolonial enquiry

Survey 2024

What follows are the questions used in our 2024 survey of students and staff at the University of Westminster. The survey was open for 6 weeks in April and May of 2024 and received 345 responses.

We are making the survey available under a creative commons license (see below) so that others can use and adapt it.

The survey is reproduced here in its entirety.

If you have any questions about the survey or the Pedagogies for Social Justice project please email: psj@westminster.ac.uk or see our website: https://blog.westminster.ac.uk/psj

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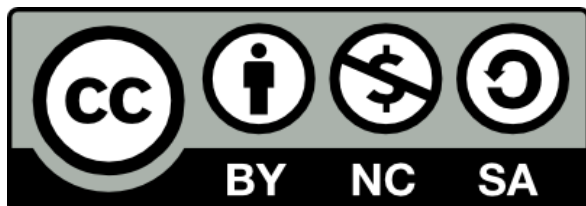
Unpacking the curriculum at Westminster: A decolonial enquiry

About the project

This survey is part of the Pedagogies for Social Justice (PSJ) project, based at the University of Westminster. We are carrying out this research to explore the aspirations and dreams of students and staff around decolonising the curriculum. For us, engaging with education in ways that help to liberate ourselves and others, demands a rethinking of the ideas and structures sustained by culture, media, policy, social environments and education itself. As bell hooks (1994) reminds us, education is a practice of freedom. Therefore, our classrooms and educational spaces should be hubs for infinite possibilities and dreams. Your participation in this survey will help us understand where change is needed and how you see meaningful change taking place.
Our overall aims are:

- To gain insight into student and staff perceptions about the process of decolonising the curriculum.
- To identify individuals or groups who might be key agents for driving change within the university, as well as to pinpoint areas where opportunities for change may be present.
- To explore student and staff dreams and aspirations for decolonial initiatives within the university community.

Who are the researchers?

We are a collective of five student and academic researchers, who are members of the Pedagogies for Social Justice Project. The PSJ project is a multidisciplinary initiative aimed at advancing educational practices that promote equity, inclusivity, and social justice within higher education. Our diverse team brings together expertise from various academic backgrounds, united by a shared commitment to fostering positive change through collaborative research, advocacy, and community engagement.
Project members: Kyra Araneta, Dr Jennifer Fraser, Dr Fatima Maatwk, Ozge Suvari and Esra Tahir

What do we mean by 'decolonising the curriculum'?

We understand decolonising the curriculum as any efforts directed at challenging and reshaping the colonial and Euro/Western-centric biases in our educational systems. It involves acknowledging, critiquing and dismantling forms of coloniality embedded in the content and delivery of the curriculum,

as well as the power dynamics that influence our teaching and learning environments.

Who is eligible to take the survey?

Any current student or staff of the University of Westminster

What does participating entail?

Participating involves providing some information about yourself, such as, your level and area of study, student/staff status, ethnic identity, gender and age. We will then ask a series of questions about your perceptions of coloniality and decolonisation efforts within the university, including your aspirations and dreams.

The survey should take you about 10-15 minutes to complete. If you choose not to answer any of the open questions, the survey will take about 5 minutes.

What are the benefits and risks of taking part?

There are considerable benefits to participating. You will be contributing to ongoing conversation and action surrounding decolonisation efforts within our university, ensuring that your voice is heard in shaping the future of our educational community. Your insights and feedback will help identify areas for improvement and guide initiatives aimed at creating a more inclusive and equitable curriculum. There should be no risks to you in taking part in this project. No individuals should be identifiable from the survey data, or any publications, reports or outputs arising from it. You will also not be obliged to recount any difficult or painful experiences unless you choose to, and all of the questions are designed to be optional. If the survey does raise issues you feel you need to discuss further, please reach out to us at: psj@westminster.ac.uk

What will happen to my data?

Responses to this online survey are confidential and will not be shared beyond the project team. Data will be stored in encrypted and password protected files, complying with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. The information you provide in the survey will be analysed by the researchers and may be published in reports, academic publications, toolkits or best practice guidance or presented at academic conferences. Direct quotes from the survey may be (anonymously) used in any outputs.

I would like to participate. What do I do next?

If you would like to complete the survey, please confirm that you have read and understood the information on this page and the following consent criteria. You will then be able to start the survey. You can save your responses mid-way through and return later to continue where you left off any time before the survey closes on 14 May 2024.

If you have any questions or concerns before completing the survey please email the project team at: psj@westminster.ac.uk

Consent

By completing the survey you are agreeing to the following:

- My participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and I do not have to answer particular questions if I do not wish to do so.

- I have read and understood the information about the project and survey.

- I understand my responses will be anonymous.

- I agree to my survey responses being saved and stored electronically.

- I understand that if I complete the survey by clicking 'finish' at the end, my responses will form part

of the research data and cannot be removed from the dataset.

- I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in reports, publications and other outputs.

This project has been approved by the University of Westminster ETH2324-1824.

If you have a complaint about this research project you can contact the Interim Head of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (University of Westminster), Dr Thomas Moore by email (t.moore@westminster.ac.uk) or by telephone (0207 911 5000 ext 68920).

1. I am a University of Westminster student or member of staff. I have read the survey information and consent to participate. *

○ Yes
○ No

2. What is your role at Westminster?

○ Student
○ Academic staff (including PTVLs)
○ Professional Services staff

3. What level are you currently studying at?

○ Foundation year
○ Undergraduate
○ Postgraduate Taught (e.g. MSc, MA)
○ Postgraduate Research (e.g. PhD)

4. Are you studying full or part time?

○ Full time
○ Part time

5. What is your fee status?

○ Home student
○ International student

6. Which School are you studying in?

○ Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation
○ School of Accounting and Finance
○ School of Applied Management
○ School of Architecture and Cities
○ School of Arts
○ School of Computer Science and Engineering
○ School of Humanities
○ School of Law

○ School of Life Sciences

○ School of Management and Marketing

○ School of Media Communications

○ School of Organisations, Economy and Society

○ School of Social Sciences

7. Which part of the University do you work in?

○ Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation

○ Professional Services

○ School of Accounting and Finance

○ School of Applied Management

○ School of Architecture and Cities

○ School of Arts

○ School of Computer Science and Engineering

○ School of Humanities

○ School of Law

○ School of Life Sciences

○ School of Management and Marketing

○ School of Media Communications

○ School of Organisations, Economy and Society

○ School of Social Sciences

8. What is your age?

○ 20 years and under

○ 21-24 years

○ 25-29 years

○ 30 years and older

9. How do you understand your gender?

○ Agender

○ Man

- ○ Non-binary
- ○ Questioning or unsure
- ○ Woman
- ○ A different gender

10. Please enter your gender identity here.

[ ]

11. What is your ethnic group?

Please choose an option that best describes your ethnic group or background. We have chosen to use the same categories as used by the Office of National Statistics, which are, like any attempts to categorise things, imperfect. If you choose any other ethnic group as an option, you will be offered space to describe your ethnic background.

- ○ Arab
- ○ Asian/Asian British: Indian
- ○ Asian/Asian British: Pakistani
- ○ Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi
- ○ Asian/Asian British: Chinese
- ○ Any other Asian background
- ○ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African
- ○ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean
- ○ Any other Black/African/Caribbean background
- ○ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African
- ○ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean
- ○ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian
- ○ Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background
- ○ White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- ○ White: Irish
- ○ White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ○ Any other White background
- ○ Any other ethnic group

12. Please describe you ethnic background here.

13. Please describe you ethnic background here.

14. Please describe you ethnic background here.

15. Please describe you ethnic background here.

16. Please describe you ethnic background here.

17. Have your lived experiences shaped your understanding of decolonial work?

○ Yes, a great deal

○ Yes, a little

○ I'm not sure

○ No, not very much

○ No, not at all

18. Is decolonising the university something that you are concerned about?

○ Yes, a great deal
○ Yes, a little
○ I'm not sure
○ No, not very much
○ No, not at all

19. Have you engaged in discussions or actions related to decolonisation at Westminster?

○ Yes, a great deal
○ Yes, a little
○ I'm not sure
○ No, not very much
○ No, not at all

20. Does the curriculum on your course(s) acknowledge the impact of colonialism on contemporary social structures and power dynamics?

○ Yes, a great deal
○ Yes, a little
○ I'm not sure
○ No, not very much
○ No, not at all

21. Does the curriculum on your course(s) address the contributions and perspectives of non-Western cultures and histories?

○ Yes, a great deal
○ Yes, a little
○ I'm not sure
○ No, not very much
○ No, not at all

22. Are there biases or gaps in the curriculum on your course(s) that reinforce colonial narratives or cultural stereotypes?

○ Yes, a great deal

○ Yes, a little

○ I'm not sure

○ No, not very much

○ No, not at all

23. How committed do you think your School/area of work or study is to decolonising the curriculum?

○ Yes, a great deal

○ Yes, a little

○ I'm not sure

○ No, not very much

○ No, not at all

24. Is there anything missing from Westminster's efforts to decolonise the curriculum? This could be perspectives, voices, types of work etc.

25. Who do you think is responsible for bringing about change in the curriculum? Please choose all that apply.

- [ ] Students
- [ ] Academic staff
- [ ] Professional services staff
- [ ] University management
- [ ] Someone else?

26. Who else do you think is responsible for bringing about change in the curriculum?

[ ]

27. Who do you think is actively making changes in the curriculum? Please choose all that apply.

- [ ] Students
- [ ] Academic staff
- [ ] Professional services staff
- [ ] University management
- [ ] Someone else?

28. Who else do you think is actively making changes in the curriculum?

[ ]

29. Which areas of the curriculum would benefit most from decolonial approaches? Please choose all that apply.

- [ ] Reading lists
- [ ] Assessments
- [ ] Classroom spaces
- [ ] Seminars and seminar materials

☐ Lectures and lecture materials

☐ Relationships between students and staff

☐ Other areas?

30. Which other areas of the curriculum would benefit most from decolonial approaches?

_____

31. Where do you see the most promising possibilities for decolonial change within the curriculum?

_____

32. How important is it to you that the university community is engaged in decolonial scholarship and activism?

○ Very important
○ Somewhat important
○ Neither important nor unimportant
○ Not particularly important
○ Not at all important

33. How would you like to see the university community engaged in decolonial scholarship and activism?

[ ]

34. Is it important to you that decolonial initiatives are actively shaping the future of the educational community at Westminster?

○ Very important
○ Somewhat important
○ Neither important nor unimportant
○ Not particularly important
○ Not at all important

35. How do you see decolonial initiatives shaping the future of the educational community at Westminster?

[ ]

36. What dreams and aspirations do you hold for decolonial work around the curriculum and learning and teaching practices?

[ ]

37. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about your ideas and/or experiences of decolonising the curriculum at Westminster?