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Research at the University of York St John

5. Exploring how Reading List Design is Influenced by Power and Structures with Undergraduate Students. Dr Clare McCluskey Dean.

Clare (she/her) is Academic Liaison Librarian at York St John University, UK

I begin this chapter on the exploration of power and structures in reading list design and use with an overview of key writers who have shaped my view of feminism, and therefore impacted upon my work as an academic librarian in a university setting, in particular Sara Ahmed's work on complaint and intersectional feminism. This will lead into a consideration of the experiences of those whose voices and experiences are not well represented in traditional university curricula, referring to the work of authors such as Reni Eddo-Lodge and Louise Owusu-Kwarteng on their experiences in Higher Education as Black women, and reports looking at LGBTQ+ representation. Finally, I will outline some of the initiatives that I have been able to try out in my role and in conjunction with colleagues across my workplace, based in critical information literacy and linking to marginalised voices in reading lists in terms of authorship and information format. There is no doubt that my approach to my work is informed by beliefs central to my principles as an intersectional feminist. Each informs the other, each has evolved as my career has progressed, and each will continue to evolve. Therefore, this is a very personal response to particular issues at play in my own practice. Nevertheless, I hope that others will recognise aspects from their own experience and be able to adapt some of the ideas for their own contexts.

Key influences

Writing this as a UK-based white, straight, cis woman means I have benefitted, and continue to benefit, from the privilege that my identities afford in this society. The situations I am about to present are those encountered every day by many who do not have such privilege. In seeking to present the experiences of those who have been, and continue to be, marginalised, I will use more extended quotes than some may expect. I believe it is important that their words are presented as originally written and not subject to reinterpretation through my privileged lens. I have used the authors' own descriptions of their communities and identities, so I am not imposing those from my position, which means that capitalisation and acronyms are consistent with the original works. This is in line with the recommendation of Sabah Choudrey that "If you are not sure what words

to use to describe a person's identity[…]the best thing to do is just ask."
(Choudrey, 2016, p. 5). Similarly, I will also be following citational practice
which helps to contribute to what Sara Ahmed calls "the feminist
memory" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 15), including first names and seeking to use a
resource base that is not skewed to the most powerful. This is a new way
of writing for me, and one I seek to continue.

The work of Sara Ahmed has been a powerful influence on my view of
feminism. Writing as a woman of colour and a member of the LGBTQ+
community, Ahmed shines a light on many of the structures which
marginalise groups in society:

"Not to inhabit a norm (or not quite to inhabit a norm) can be experienced
as not dwelling so easily where you reside. You might be asked questions;
you might be made to feel questionable, so that you come to feel that you
do not belong in the places you live, the places you experience as home;
you might turn up and not be allowed in, or find it too uncomfortable to
stay." (Ahmed, 2017, p. 115)

Given that Ahmed has over thirty years' experience in working in
universities, as a student and as an academic, many of her examples of
inequality resonate with my own experiences of working in the same
sector, and situations I have witnessed. She raises the problems of
institutional whiteness, and institutional sexism and racism, along with the
extra problems encountered for those who speak out after experiencing
these injustices:

"How many times have I had male colleagues defending all-male reading
lists, all-male speaker lists, all-male reference lists? To give an account of
these defences is to give an account of how worlds are reproduced."
(Ahmed, 2012, p. 178)

Some typical responses to this are outlined, along with the accusations
aimed at the person raising the issue:

"That's just who turned up[…]The friendly tone ceases. You are the
problem, they say. In assuming we have a problem, you are the
problem[…]Those who point out restrictions and blockages become
identified with the restrictions and blockages they point to, as if we are
creating what we are describing." (Ahmed, 2012, pp. 179–180)

The wider effects of the default 'normal' option being particularly white
and male are then impacting upon students studying in this sector:

"In my department I have always taught a course on race, which foregrounds how race emerges through histories of European imperialism. I teach the work of black writers and writers of color, especially black feminists and feminists of color. Every year I have taught this course, black students and students of color have come to my office to tell me that was the first time that they had been taught materials that they could relate to their own experiences[…]the foundation upon which the house has been built creates strangers; those who are passing by at the edges of social experiences; those who, when they meet themselves in the materials, feel grief for not having met themselves before." (Ahmed, 2017, pp. 111–112)

Even when a student is doing well academically, according to the norms of the university they attend, this does not tell the whole story and can mask their feelings of alienation. As Jenny Peachey (2020) reflects, "for all that I excelled academically, I found the non-academic part of the experience bewildering, destabilising and difficult." Working in a university in the UK, I seek out accounts of experiences of those who are also part of the Higher Education community, in order to inform and influence my work. This includes reflections and research from the perspective of many who have found that they are just not represented in the curriculum in their university, or the research being published in their subject area.

Representation in university curricula

Reni Eddo-Lodge (2018) gives an account of how, as a Black woman, her experiences were not reflected at all in her initial studies at university, and how transformative she found a single module which did bring them into focus:

"It wasn't until my second year of university that I started to think about black British history. I must have been about nineteen or twenty[…]I'd only ever encountered black history through American-centric educational displays and lesson plans in primary and secondary school. With a heavy emphasis on Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad and Martin Luther King, Jr, the household names of America's civil rights movement felt important to me, but also a million miles away from my life as a young black girl growing up in north London. But this short university module changed my perspective completely. It dragged Britain's colonial history and slave-trading past incredibly close to home." (Eddo-Lodge, 2018, p. 1)

Both of the accounts, from Sara Ahmed and Reni Eddo-Lodge, mention specific modules on race as the medium through which texts from the perspective of Black scholars and scholars of colour are introduced. There is, therefore, a lack of representation in modules where race is not the focus. This is brought to the fore in research by Louise Owusu-Kwarteng (2019, p. 9), who says that there is:

"Limited understanding around diverse BAME cultures, religions and languages, failure to ensure that the curriculum includes content which analyses varied social groups and their experiences, and opportunities for students to express their views on these issues and their own encounters. Instead, students are frequently expected to assimilate, and their lived experiences are negated."

It is also a consideration of Elizabeth Charles (2019):

"The issue for students who are other (BAME, LGBTQ, etc.) is that they come to university to learn about a subject they are interested in and look to the academic to be the expert on this[…] What happens when they become aware of a lack of visibility of plural voices, or of people like them as having contributed to the subject, or who might have a different narrative to the 'story' being told? What happens to the student when they do not hear their voice at all, or when they do, it is glossed over or framed as a negative? The message that is being communicated is then that you don't belong, or that people like you have made no contribution to this subject area. More importantly, if you as the non-expert want to start a discussion about this lack of inclusivity, how do you phrase this so that it is seen as contributing to a discussion rather than disrupting the orderly flow of the class?"

Research by Sofia Akel at Goldsmiths, University of London found that 74% of students surveyed believed that their university curriculum was Eurocentric, and that many of these respondents also felt that they had to shift to conform with their lecturers' views in order to secure good marks. 80% of respondents said that their courses represented the white experience, with only 28% believing the same to be true of the BME[3] experience (2019, p. 6). All of this reflects a state of institutional and

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[3] The report uses the term BME, as opposed to BAME, and so I have maintained the use of that acronym while discussing the research in the report.

systemic racism in relation to the student experience in Higher Education in the UK.

Research focusing on the experiences of LGBTQ+ students mirrors the findings of these authors. Stephanie Mckendry and Matson Lawrence (2017) undertook a large-scale study of trans students in Further and Higher Education in Scotland. What they found was that there was evidence of barriers to learning for these students, and that, "Research participants often had very low expectations and many felt unsafe or unwelcome within classroom and wider campus environments"(p.1). This is compounded, according to Sonja Ellis (2009), by the fact that this is the first opportunity many LGBTQ+ students will have had to explore their identity away from the influence of their home or school environments. Where representation is lacking, greater feelings of isolation result, and representation in terms of the curriculum was indeed felt to be inadequate, with only 17.5% of their respondents (all from the LGBTQ+ community) indicating agreement that LGBT issues were adequately represented within the curriculum (Ellis, 2009, p. 734). Mckendry and Lawrence (2017) specifically recommend that those who design and teach courses, "consider trans inclusion and inadvertent transphobia within the curriculum and ways to involve trans history, identity and experience within content." (pp.18-19), as a way of tackling marginalisation.

The issue of representation in reading lists specifically has been picked up in the mainstream media in the UK. The Independent newspaper reported on a study by Karen Schucan Bird and Lesley Pitman (2019), which concluded that reading lists "did not represent the diverse local student body", with the headline "White Eurocentric males overrepresented in university reading lists, study finds" (Eleanor Busby, 2019). This follows on from an article in The Guardian on diverse reading lists and the need for representation, written by Rianna Walcott, herself a Black PhD student (Walcott, 2018). Issues of representation in the wider publishing industry are also making their way into the media (Arifa Akbar, 2017), with diversity in children's literature being under the spotlight too (*World Book Day*, 2019).

I was recently asked to write a blog post for our university's LGBT staff network about how I, as an ally, work towards inclusion in my everyday practice as a librarian. This was done in partnership with a colleague who is a member of the LGBTQ+ community. It forced me to reflect upon how I put my allyship into practice, day to day. As that work friend, Tom Peach, says:

"We must recognise that our work has consequences. Consequences for a child who cannot see themselves represented in children's books. Consequences for a teen who can't find sexual health advice that recognises them. Consequences for a young adult who doesn't find romance like they experience. Consequences for a student looking for queer perspectives in their knowledge discipline. Consequences for the lecturer wanting to include queer voices in their teaching. The consequences can be erasure, invisibility, mischaracterisation, not feeling welcome, being forgotten, and so on." (Peach, 2019)

I link my responsibilities in addressing these issues to critical librarianship and critical information literacy and the initiatives I have implemented reflect this.

Addressing the issues

Critical information literacy is based on the tenet that:

"Information literacy instruction should resist the tendency to reinforce and reproduce hegemonic knowledge, and instead nurture students' understandings of how information and knowledge are formed by unequal power relations based on class, race, gender, and sexuality. (Ian Beilin, 2015)"

A key theorist in the area of critical information literacy is Jim Elmborg, who addresses the 'literacy' part of information literacy and asserts that it is often omitted from librarianship literature on the topic. Aligning with the work of Paulo Freire (1972), Elmborg (2012) draws our attention to the position that literacy is a loaded term and linked to oppression, and that it is the responsibility of librarians to both be aware of this and design instruction around it. Essentially, we should shift our ideas of what education is and does:

"A critical approach to information literacy development means changing the view of education as the transfer of information, or 'getting the right knowledge into students' heads' to an awareness of each person's agency and ability to make meaning within the library setting." (Jim Elmborg, 2010, p. 71)

And we should all be aware of the power and structures at play in the experiences of those with whom we work:

"Being a literacy worker involves something other than imparting skills. It connects daily work with students, colleagues, and institutions to larger ideological questions about who belongs in higher education and how to make higher education as accessible as possible to everyone." (James Elmborg, 2012, p. 94)

Lauren Smith (2013) aligned research findings on the political engagement of young people with this approach to information literacy, arguing that the skills models of information literacy, such as that from the SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy (2011), which is used widely in the UK Higher Education context (Buckley Woods & Beecroft; DaCosta, 2010; Jackson, 2012; Jarson, 2010; Johnston & Webber, 2003; Vitae, 2012), do not aid them in critically assessing "the information they encounter and the structures in which the information and knowledge is held" (Smith, 2013, p. 16).

This idea of moving away from prescribed skills models also appears in research linked to learning development. Christina Donovan and Marianne Erskine-Shaw (2019) argue for this, asserting that students need to be at the heart of finding their own academic identity and that this is, necessarily, a social and emotional process, and made even more so when those who come from backgrounds for whom Higher Education is not the given norm are challenged to fit in at university. A deficit model of skills to help someone fit in is not the approach to take, as this only furthers isolation and marginalisation, and maintains the existing privileges of those in the more powerful positions. Instead, the environment itself must be investigated and social and structural changes implemented, with the student's own journey central.

Influencing structural change in practice

My practice is based in an English university. I work full time in a team of 6 academic liaison librarians who are each assigned specific programmes with which to work. We are each responsible for working with all of the staff and students on those programmes on collection development, providing reading lists, providing embedded information literacy in those courses (be it through workshops designed and delivered by the librarian, or through working with the academics to incorporate information literacy into the programme's learning outcomes), and ad hoc tutorials for anyone who wishes to book in for one. I have been researching my practice and how information literacy is viewed and embedded in the curriculum as part

of my doctoral research, and much of it centres on the importance of working in partnership with academic staff, in communities of practice (Dean, 2020). I realise this is not the same for everyone, and different libraries and universities have different structures in place. For that reason, I present snapshots of my practice within that context, in the knowledge that enacting them as I have is not possible for everyone, but that they may help either as new ideas for someone else's practice, or as evidence of such initiatives taking place elsewhere, if justifications are needed to try such approaches at one's own institution.

The initiatives discussed centre on the consideration of the structures in academic publishing which lead to the content made available in the traditional scholarly mechanisms of journals and monographs. Elizabeth le Roux (2015) argues that these traditional publications are skewed and discriminatory in terms of race, a North-South global divide and gender. However, these sources are those which are often listed as 'academic' in assessment criteria. Melissa Gustafson (2017, p. 3) recommends, librarians should provide:

"Faculty and students with the knowledge they need to empower themselves as authors and information users in their professional lives by highlighting the problematic issues that exist in the academic ecosystem regardless of discipline or experience."

Although I would go one stage further and say that, as an academic librarian, I should be working in conjunction with colleagues and students and be committed to learning from them too. I am not the expert here. But I do have a responsibility to take on the labour of highlighting inequalities, and I am in a position in which I can lobby and work with others to implement change.

A simple way of highlighting that these hierarchical structures exist is to outline a few accounts from those who have been affected; the first step in empowering students to:

"Be able to reflect on the implications of how[…]knowledge is historically constituted and reproduced, to understand the racialised, gendered and classed contexts in which it developed and to notice the silences and exclusions upon which it establishes its authority." (Anita Rupprecht, 2019, p. 16)

This is ideal for those situations where you are offered a small amount of time in a timetabled session, or it can be an introduction to the topic at the

beginning of a more interactive workshop. I have a set of slides with an overview and key quotes from various perspectives (disabled people, LGBTQ+, women, people of colour) and I have been able to use them in a variety of subject areas and situations. I have highlighted three examples here to which I return repeatedly and tend to form the core of the presentation.

I have already referred to the work of Sara Ahmed here and her blog is an easily accessible account of structural inequalities she has encountered. I mean easily accessible in terms of its lack of paywall and in its content, and I will return to both of these issues later in the chapter. There is one specific blog post, 'On making feminist points' (Ahmed, 2013b) which is powerful in highlighting marginalisation and focuses on citation as a method via which women, and especially women of colour, are excluded from the norm. The first post on the blog , 'Hello feminist killjoys!' (Ahmed, 2013a) gives a list of questions which ask about experiences, e.g. it asks if you "Will point out when men cite men about men as a learned social habit that is diminishing", or if you "Will use words like sexism and racism even if that means being heard as the cause of bad feeling".

Shelley Tremain is a philosopher who writes on the subject of ableism in philosophy. Her blog post on citation practices (Tremain, 2018) highlights how they exclude and discriminate, both deliberately and accidentally, with the end result being that disabled philosophers, such as the author, miss out on due recognition and academic opportunities.

A third core source to which I tend to return is a report by Nathan Hudson-Sharp and Hilary Metcalf (2016), which reviews evidence of inequality for LGBTQ+ people in the UK. It's a detailed report, certainly compared to the blog posts, but the section on education (pp.11-29) is a good overview of key barriers faced by the community in the education sector. It is accessible online without payment via the UK Government website and the conclusion that "Heterosexism and heteronormativity is prevalent in educational institutions", leading to "the alienation of LGB students" (p.11) is a central point which needs addressing. It also comes from an analysis of research literature, and is published as a formal research report, which contrasts with the blog posts in terms of the presentation format used. Again, this is a deliberate strategy as it allows me to introduce the concept of reports which analyse existing literature, the lenses such reports take, who commissions them, and the research strategies they employ. The fact that this report is commissioned by the Government Equalities Office means that we can discuss how it links to

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the Government's record on equality and consider the greater policy context.

In addition to these three sources as the core of the presentation, I include others according to the particular situation. Helen Kara's blog is a further example of accessible writing from an established researcher. The post on 'Working With Indigenous Literature' (Kara, 2017) is a good introduction to challenging the assumption that the Euro-Western research tradition should be the accepted norm, but it differs from the previous blog posts I have mentioned as Kara is not writing as a member of the Indigenous community. It must therefore be introduced on that basis, acknowledging that this is an outsider's view, but that it is helpful in understanding the key issues in this area. To ensure the voices of Indigenous Peoples are included, I combine it with blogs from those perspectives, relevant to the subject area, such as the work of Puawai Cairns (2020) who writes on working in museums as an Indigenous Person. The content on both of these sites is very helpful in challenging the assumption that written traditions and forms are more 'academic' than others, such as oral histories.

A further blog post I often include is 'The Institutionalized Racism of Scholarly Publishing' by Ryan Regier (2018), which looks at the systemic racism linked to journal publication, the misplaced assumptions often attributed to open access titles as predatory journals, and the problems associated with the prioritisation of English as the language of research. Similarly issues of power and colonialism in Eurocentric reading lists are addressed by a blog post by Tin Hanane El Kadi (2019) in relation to the status of African scholars in academic publishing.

Drawing out inequalities in publishing, both generally and in academic terms, is a useful way of addressing a couple of points. Firstly, it demonstrates that there will be gaps in coverage. Secondly, it gives a pertinent introduction to addressing issues of what can be used as an 'academic' source and whether being too prescriptive in this means that students are being discouraged from addressing key issues because they are being directed to use textbooks and journal articles only. There is still an antipathy to 'online' sources in some areas, and this needs to be unpicked.

Sara Ahmed's blog posts which I have already cited, and those of Zuleyka Zevallos whose work I will expand upon later in this section, are written 'academically'. They cite influences throughout, and draw on theorists, research and experience to reach a conclusion. However, they are not

viewed as 'academic' according to marking criteria in place for many courses. They are published online and they are not a textbook or a journal article. But they are written reflectively and with reference to influences. They are written by someone who also publishes books and journal articles, and the content is not very different. What makes one 'academic' and one not? Why are we still assigning 'academic' to item types rather than content and fitness for task? What happens when the route to publishing in those 'academic' outlets is blocked to the very voices calling out the inequalities in that system? As a librarian, I believe I have a responsibility to at least point this out (at the very least), and to show that peer review does not automatically equal a 'good' source.

I support students on courses where there is a marking scheme in place which states that students must use a minimum number of 'academic' sources, and where what makes an 'academic' source is prescribed by the programme team. Usually, these are stated as textbooks and journal articles. This throws up the problem of privileging format over content. Elizabeth le Roux (2015) examined the scholarly publishing industry and uncovered practices which indicated that discrimination linked to race and gender does indeed occur, based on studies in the United States, United Kingdom and Sweden, with "unfair reviewing practices, unethical behaviour, exclusion from the 'old boys' network, and other constraints on time and research" (p.703). An issue which Ahmed raises is that of reliance on a small number of authors regarded as canon as influences in peer review, something backed up by Relebone Moletsane, Louise Haysom and Vasu Reddy (2015, p. 768) who write from a South African perspective in critiquing peer review in research journal publication:

Within much of northern scholarship there has been significant homogenisation, with the tendency to be indebted to the promotion of canonical scholar, while remaining unaware or oblivious (perhaps even ignorant) of underrepresented voices[…]knowledge production is consequently tilted in such a way that it enhances the politics of skewed citationality.

The assumptions inherent in review are further questioned by Helen Kara (2019) in her work on reviewing Indigenous literature, highlighting concerns that something regarded as common knowledge for indigenous peoples will be questioned by euro-western reviewers.

This has also been raised by sociologists such as Zuleyka Zevallos (2019), who questioned how an editorial board of a journal claiming to be a leading title on race studies can have a lack of diversity in its make up:

Any anti-racism endeavour, including a journal that functions as the beacon for ethnicity and race studies in the English language, should operate through anti-racism principles. Having five White-presenting editors and managers calls into question the leadership and anti-racism practices of the journal. The journal is replicating the racial hierarchy that keeps Black people out of academia. White people control access to scholarly publication, to the extent that uncritical, anti-Black scholarship makes it past peer review.

Further to this, there is an issue of privileging the written word to be addressed. Eamon Tewell (2019, p. 173) specifically recommends that librarians acknowledge and address that information is "not just limited to the textual or verbal but also visual, social, embodied, and often deeply personal". As Helen Kara (2019) points out, verbal evidence is often used in other contexts, such as in giving evidence in court, but it is easily dismissed in academic circumstances. This disadvantages communities where the written word is not a dominant part of their culture or life. It also means that we are discouraging students from using sources where marginalised communities may have 'published' their work, after finding blocks in the traditional methods, or not taking into account cultural and structural barriers to being able to consume information in written format, something addressed by Dave O'Brien and Kate Oakley in their study of cultural value and inequality (Oakley & O'Brien, 2017).

There is, therefore, a balance to be struck. I do not wish to disadvantage students by advising they can use resources which will not be marked as suitable by their tutors. However, maintaining this status quo results in further marginalisation. I can endeavour to work with academics on changing these requirements, but changing established procedures takes time. What I have tended to do, whilst trying to lobby for change, is to recommend that the students find sources which do fit that criteria, but point out some of the issues involved with their use. I encourage the students to supplement the resources used with other sources, and we work in partnership to employ them critically in their work.

Initiatives: workshops and research projects

The first workshop I designed linked to the issues of power and structural influence on reading came about after being asked to give input to a level 6 (final year undergraduate in England) module on a programme on Educational Development. Given that this programme itself looks at inequalities in educational systems, its link to critical information literacy work is more obvious than it may be in other subject areas. The module leader had recently taken over the course and was aware that the recommended reading was not as inclusive as it could or should be. There was no requirement to use a minimum number of official academic source types. Indeed, the nature of the programme means that other types of sources such as Government policy papers are used just as much as textbooks and journal articles. However, the content of the reading for the module was predominantly provided by white, male authors from the UK and USA. The students themselves all work in the education sector (the programme is designed to integrate with those who are in employment and wish to gain the associated degree qualification to their roles) and so we were also aware that they would have experience and valuable recommendations to make in this regard.

I documented the session itself on the blog we use to share information literacy inputs and ideas at my workplace (McCluskey Dean, 2018) and the following description is based upon the post I made there.

Workshop run for level 6 Participation and Voice module, Development of Education for Children and Young People programme

The module's aims were to:

- Critically explore values and concepts such as voice, participation, social responsibilities, agency, power, government, democracy and citizenship as the underpinnings for the active participation of children and young people and families in decision-making;
- Recognise the importance of listening to the views of children, young people and families and their rights to have a voice and to be heard in matters that have a bearing on improving their lives;
- Examine how practitioners and policymakers listen to and understand the worlds and experiences of children and young people across different services and agencies;

- Enable students to critically reflect on, and evaluate, participative practices with children, young people and families in their settings.

When I began to design the session, I thought it was a great opportunity to take this analysis of participation and voice and apply it to the design of the course they were undertaking themselves, as well as taking a critical look at curriculum design in Higher Education more generally. I didn't want to make this a one-way lecture from me, so each topic covered involved discussion with the group about their experiences. I considered it a part of my critical library pedagogy approach to encourage participation and not to have my voice dominating; it would not align with critical information literacy to conduct a session on voice and then make it all about my perspective.

I decided to take a step-by-step approach to various aspects of the Higher Education landscape which influence curriculum design, and reading lists more specifically. The ones I chose to focus on were: research conferences and the people who generally present at them; the theorists chosen for core readings on programmes; citations and references; and who works in Higher Education (and why). The key points covered therefore were,

- background theory,
- who is marginalised?
- how are they marginalised?
- specific examples.

I personalised the introduction by explaining how I had been researching inequalities as part of my investigations into information literacy in Higher Education and using the work of Elmborg (2012) as a key theory. Elmborg states that it isn't enough to explain how to find and evaluate information; that the agency of the individual researcher and their background and situation needs to be acknowledged, and that the power structures inherent in information production and use should be explored and critiqued.

I picked blog posts and articles by scholars and academics in different arenas to identify examples of how Higher Education marginalises. These are by no means exhaustive, and were used as a starting point for discussion. It was also noted that much of this discourse is emerging in blog posts and on similar forums – this allowed for a critique of the traditional publishing methods of books and journal articles in academia. I used quotes directly from these sources as I believe that the voices of the authors are important:

- Women (Ahmed, 2012, 2013b)
- People of colour (Ahmed 2012, 2013)
- Indigenous Peoples (Kara 2017)
- Disabled people (Tremain 2018)
- LGBTQI+ people (Hudson-Sharp and Metcalf 2016)

I then gave examples of how people are marginalised:

- Make-up of panels at conferences (Ahmed 2012, 2013)
- Reading lists (Ahmed 2012, 2013; Kara 2017)
- Use of citations in gaining/keeping academic jobs (Tremain 2018)
- Reference lists (Netolicky, 2018)
- Scholarly publishing and discovery (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016; Regier, 2018)

This gives just a few examples of how marginalisation takes place. There are many more in the sources I used, so I would recommend investigating them separately. Likewise, I encouraged the students to read the original works after the session, to see if they felt I had represented them fairly, or to critique them. Since the workshop first ran, there have also been more reports on diversity in publishing, especially that of Amanik Saha and Sandra van Lente (2020), which need including in future sessions. This report details clearly that there are barriers in terms of access, the narrow view of the audience for works and prejudice in views of 'quality' in that work.

I introduced the open letter written in 2017 by students at the University of Cambridge ('Decolonising the English faculty', 2017) where they detailed their needs to see the curriculum decolonised (specifically in relation to the literature course), and a response by literature academics here at York St John, outlining their approach to teaching literature in terms of decolonisation (Evans & Lawson-Welsh, 2017). Since this workshop last ran, another academic colleague, Janine Bradbury, has embarked on an initiative to go into editing herself in an effort to provide a route for "Black womxn writers" (Bradbury 2020) to showcase their work as the barriers are so great elsewhere. I have now added this to my workshop as both an example of the barriers and how Black women writers themselves are having to take on the labour of editing and publishing in trying to break the barriers down.

Noting that unpicking structural influences on reading lists is just one small part of decolonisation (see the report put together by Claire Alexander and

Jason Arday (2015) for the Runnymede Trust for a number of different voices and considerations of this), the students and I discussed a specific module on their own course that they were currently studying on global approaches to education. The reading list for this has changed enormously from the list that went through validation[4] to the one being used now[5] and we looked at how it had been developed to ensure it was not portraying global views from a very narrow perspective, and how it could evolve further. At this point I would also add in the aforementioned report by Saha and van Lente (2020) on the publishing industry.

Reflection on this workshop

Immediately after the session, I reflected that, as much as I wanted this to involve discussion with the group, simply inviting it didn't seem very effective. Next time I run this, or a similar, session, I think a structured task would help with this. It could be individual or group, and involve close analysis of a couple of reading lists, with some prompts, or the analysis of an article which claims to represent the views of a specific group, but doesn't. The tutor with whom I worked helped with the summing up of the session, and said she wanted to see critiques of the resources used in assignments—in relation to whether the voice of the group they claimed to represent was included adequately, or whether it was someone from outside of that group just claiming to know what was required. From that point of view, I think the session met its aims.

It is likely that anyone from a marginalised group would feel disinclined to speak up if they felt intimidated or have had experience of having their input ignored. I now add an anonymous online posting option in advance of such sessions, with questions linked to the content of the session, where contributions can be made. It still does not answer the problem of this being easily attributed to a member of a class, if they are in such a minority that it is obvious, and this may not be a desirable, or indeed safe, outcome for them. I am in discussion with representatives of the groups involved in the IAMplify project at my workplace (York St John University library,

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[4] https://rl.talis.com/3/yorksj/lists/D9850BFB-901E-A107-43FE-AEDF0491DCAE.html
[5] https://rl.talis.com/3/yorksj/lists/B7EFDBF3-E791-F784-A981-5BEAD0210C98.html

2019) to establish procedures to address this, and I draw upon the advice on safe spaces available, such as that offered by Lesley Nelson-Addy (Nelson-Addy et al., 2020). In the meantime, I make it clear that contributions can be kept for my eyes only if that is what is preferred, that it is not compulsory to post full stop, and we can keep to general topics of raising awareness in class.

Another issue that I may include in this session in the future, and already include in other sessions for education courses, is that of access once the students have graduated. Many of the students on these courses are studying for a professional qualification and will need access to research once they enter the workplace as a teacher or childhood/youth professional. However, their access to many of the research journals to which we subscribe will be withdrawn once they are no longer a current student, because that is the basic condition of many academic subscription licences. I am, therefore, doing them a disservice if I don't point this out and point them in the direction of Open Access sources which are accessible without an academic affiliation. In the UK, we often point students in the direction of services such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), UnPaywall and core.ac.uk, where Open Access sources can be found. Often these are not journal articles. Rather, theses, one-off research reports, conference presentations and preprints of articles then published elsewhere are more likely to be found in core.ac.uk searches. And blog posts, as already mentioned, are available to all and found readily in a normal web search.

I also endeavour to link the reading list issues to wider issues of representation in terms of the concern I have previously mentioned of children's literature. Being a librarian who works with courses where students are working towards professional education qualifications means that I have an extra opportunity to have an impact. I have taken the simple step of taking 5-10 minutes to discuss representation in our school library collection, which includes children's and young adult literature for students to use on placement or in their own families, with any group I have for workshops. I invite their input to how we add to the collection, linking to a reading list of current sources (for example, the titles we have added with a focus on LGBTQ+ issues or with LGBTQ+ characters[6]), backing it up

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[6] https://rl.talis.com/3/yorksj/lists/D72148F5-9F24-625C-F10B-9E887335B7A1.html#96042D3A-1F0F-E0B5-EDD3-6AE8E87CC25C

with research such as that from Hudson-Sharp and Metcalf (2016, p. 17), which specifically mentions a lack of LGBTQ+ representation in school libraries as having a detrimental effect on inclusion.

Other applications

My example here is centred on a set of education programmes, which lends itself to critical approaches to reading by the nature of its content and aims. However, the structural inequalities in publishing will impact on areas across Higher Education. Health is another area in which it can be explored, with reference to current news stories. There have been news stories in 2019 in the UK of the higher risk that Black people face when giving birth, possible reasons including research not taking them into consideration, plus other structural inequalities such as access to health care and their relationships with health professionals (Alvaro Alvarez, 2019; Emma Kasprzak, 2019; Vic Motune, 2019). The original report, upon which these stories are based, states that "Research is urgently needed to understand why Black women are five times more likely and Asian women twice as likely to die compared to white women." (Marian Knight et al., 2014, p. i).

As this chapter is being written we are experiencing a global pandemic and it is apparent that COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting "BAME populations in lower socio-economic groups, multi-family and multi-generational households" (Razaq et al., 2020), and that "Black males were 4.2 times more likely to die from a COVID-19 death than White males."(Public Health England, 2020, p. 40). Alongside this there is controversy about the UK Government's unwillingness to admit and act upon this evidence and link it to structural racism, highlighted on the Channel 4 news, a national network television channel in the UK (Darshna Soni, 2020). It is clearly imperative that those studying health learn lessons from this situation and put measures in place to improve it, and exploring the structural inequalities in the research available is a key way of doing this.

It is a concern that has also been taken up by two of my colleagues in Criminology. Kelly Stockdale and Rowan Sweeney tackled the issue of marginalisation by producing a matrix which allowed students to reflect upon whose voices were prominent in their course (Stockdale & Sweeney, 2019). Students were asked to recall key theorists and researchers of which they were aware, and then these were plotted on the matrix in relation to

gender and race. Overwhelmingly, students recalled white cis men, and then reflective discussion took place as a result. Students gave reflections such as:

"I'll definitely be looking more into female and more non-binary people[…]people from different ethnicities, 'cause I think that is what could make an assignment a bit more enjoyable[…]you don't actually understand until it's shown to you." (Stockdale & Sweeney, 2019, p. 95)

"It'd be nice to be able to have different people's opinions and different people's backgrounds in your essays. They might have been through[…]different things. Especially maybe talking about the topic of police or something[…]a male and female, or a male and non-binary gender would obviously have different experiences, but we mostly know just white male." (Stockdale & Sweeney, 2019, p. 95)

Given the established structural inequalities in the criminal justice system (Bryan Warde, 2013), it is imperative that this is addressed. Chris Cuneen and Simone Rowe (2014) give the example of the over-representation of indigenous peoples in the Australian criminal justice system as one which is reflective of its colonised nature and the importance of understanding that this is an ongoing political, social and economic situation which needs addressing through a change in research and practice approaches. Gabriella Beckles-Raymond (2020) asserts that the linking of British identity with whiteness leads to institutional racism and inherent anti-Blackness, and that:

"Institutional strategies require us to change the institutional and structural systems of rewards and punishments that make ways of being in the world that are constructed as white acceptable, preferable and superior and ways of being in the world that are constructed as black unacceptable, devalued and inferior. If our institutions purport to serve the public good then they cannot be predicated on whiteness/Britishness as goodness." (Beckles-Raymond, 2020, p.185)

Stockdale and Sweeney (2019, p. 85) expand up on this by asserting that it should be the purpose of Criminology research and study to seek "to understand and incite positive change to the inequalities and injustices experienced by vulnerable and marginalised social groups". They state further that the adherence to a core body of theory has resulted in "marginalisation of certain voices[…]and distorted the production of knowledge in relation to key criminological topics and issues" (2019, p.

85). It is vital that the reading set in universities is part of this needed change.

Lessons learned and ways forward

The examples I have given here, linked to my values and experiences, are specifically based upon my practice. They are presented in the context of an English university and my role in that university, and provide a snapshot of some of the ways in which I try to ensure marginalised voices are amplified, within the restrictions of working within a professional services role, alongside academic colleagues. It is not a representation of all of the work that is going on in this regard in my workplace; I have colleagues from across the institution working to similar ends and I must acknowledge how pursuing these particular approaches are made easier for me because I know it is part of a wider set of policies and initiatives. Similarly, I am aware that I am far from alone in employing such approaches in my practice as a librarian. Nevertheless, I hope that the sources I have used, and examples of how these have been employed, will provide others with ideas for their own practice, or evidence to help justify including such approaches to management in their workplaces.

With this in mind, however, I still believe that there are initiatives that librarians in any context could take forward, altered for their own specific circumstances. A key outcome of my doctoral research was the discovery that there were academics and professional staff across my university who had values and practice linked to critical information literacy (Dean 2020). Any efforts to uncover these, be it through formal research, or informal discussion, or the establishment of an online platform for the sharing of concerns and ideas, will be valuable in making connections with those who have some influence on curriculum content and delivery. The Criminology research I mention in this chapter would never have come about if I had not been able to present, with my colleagues, on critical information literacy in a university learning and teaching meeting. I would not have been invited to that meeting if the member of senior management in charge of it had not been sent information about my blog for sharing information literacy practice. Any connections made have the potential to grow and influence.

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