



IMPROVING EDUCATION THROUGH RESEARCH

Anti-racist education: Possibilities and Challenges

Date: 7 November 2024, 4:00-5:30pm.

Location: MS Teams Organisers: SERA Inclusive Education Network

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This webinar is for: practitioners, students, researchers, and other stakeholders in education.

Presentation 1: Decolonising Religious and Moral Education in Scottish Non-Denominational School

Based on a policy brief produced for the Scottish Government's Learning Analytical Services, the purpose of this presentation is to lay out the case for decolonising Religious and Moral Education (RME) offered in non-denominational schools. Scotland has a sizeable immigrant population, including people from formerly colonised parts of the world and therefore the absence of an overt decolonial and anti-racist approach in a school subject (i.e., RME) at the epicentre of colonial education, is regrettable. This necessitates a rethink on how learners (and indeed pedagogues) can be engaged in decolonial ways of thinking and knowing in challenging all forms of epistemological hegemony in the conceptualisation of the curriculum and the micro-politics of classroom discourse. As one of the eight core areas of the curriculum, RME is uniquely placed to inculcate socio-cultural/religious values and shared concerns in an increasingly diverse but religiously fractured world. The argument is that Scotland's historical connection with colonialism as part of the British empire and its own complicity in the slave trade, demands decolonial reflections and anti-racist actions that must inform how RME as a legislated subject is framed and actualised in practice.

Presenter bio:

Dr Yonah Matemba is a senior lecturer in the School of Education and Social Sciences, University of the West of Scotland. He has been a schoolteacher and teacher educator for over 30 years. He is the deputy editor for the *British Journal of Religious Education*, and responsible for Special Issues. He also sits on the editorial board of the *Curriculum Journal*. Currently, his scholarly work focuses on decolonising the school curriculum and has included keynotes, podcasts, policy briefs and research papers in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters. Between 2020 and 2024 Dr Matemba was the co-chair of the Special Interest Group (SIG) "Religion, Education and Society" of the North American based Comparative and International Education Society (CIES).

Presentation 2: Teacher Responses to Racially Motivated Bullying in Scotland

Teachers have a critical role in nurturing a safe and inclusive environment and preventing stigmatisation and oppression by intervening when a racially motivated bullying episode occurs, but also by actively developing an anti-racist climate within their school. This study investigates Scottish teachers' strategies when they are confronted with a hypothetical racially motivated bullying incident in their school. Findings demonstrate that teachers struggle to recognise racism and often reframe racist incidents through more de-politicised language and socially normative concepts of school values, kindness and respect. However, teachers' ability to recognise and respond to racism is severely constrained by the lack of clear policy frameworks, accessible training, and legislative directives. Our findings highlight the need to invest in schools, communities and young people in order to create the social conditions in which teachers' capacities to respond to racism can develop and flourish.

Presenter bio:

Elisabeth Davies is a Primary School teacher, and final year PhD student and Associate Lecturer at the School of Education and Social Sciences in the University of the West of Scotland. Her research currently focuses on understanding cultures of coping and support amongst young people who experience racist peer victimisation.

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