

## LET'S TALK ABOUT A REVISED RACE-BASED CURRICULUM

**Boyle Bill**

*Doctor of Pedagog. Sciences, Professor,*

*University of Manchester,*

*United Kingdom,*

*william.boyle1405@btinternet.com*

*https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0008-8001*

**Charles Marie**

*University of Manchester,*

*United Kingdom,*

*william.boyle1405@btinternet.com*

*https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0090-6075*

### Summary

Why is this paper needed? There are many reasons why this paper is not just needed but should be required, essential reading to create the critical consciousness (Freire 2021) and conceptual baseline for a transformative, multimodal, multiliterate, decolonized curriculum to effect change. The paper is derived from the researchers' previous work on formative pedagogical models and curriculum development and their observations, analysis, and development of race-based curriculum models (Charles 2019). The authors address the core of that process, the requirement for an evidenced presentation to policy makers of the need for a race-based curriculum and its conceptual foundation. Content change requires a paradigmatic shift in its function and worldview (Mazama, 2003), where knowledge can never be produced for the sake of it, a paradigm must activate our consciousness to be of any use to us (ibid, p.3)

**Keywords:** *race-based curriculum, decolonization of education, critical pedagogy, Afrocentric paradigm, formative assessment, inclusive education, multiculturalism, educational equity.*

### Brief introduction

This article **pursues** the objective of establishing a critical and evidence-based foundation for the development of a transformative, multimodal, multiliterate, and decolonized race-based curriculum. The **relevance of the study** is determined by the persistence of structural racism within educational systems, the continuing influence of colonial legacies on knowledge production, and the insufficiency of symbolic or episodic initiatives in addressing systemic inequalities. The **scientific novelty of the research** consists in its conceptual integration of Afrocentric paradigms, critical pedagogy, and formative assessment models, thereby advancing the discussion beyond content-based inclusion towards a paradigmatic shift in curriculum design and pedagogical practice. The **degree of scientific elaboration** is ensured through the authors' prior empirical and theoretical contributions in curriculum studies, their synthesis of interdisciplinary perspectives, and engagement with foundational works of Freire, Mazama, Guinier, and others, which together provide a robust analytical and methodological framework for policy makers, educators, and researchers.

## **The main body of the article material:**

‘Those who are racially marginalized are like the miner’s canary: their distress is the first sign of a danger that threatens us all. It is easy enough to think that when we sacrifice this canary, the only harm is to communities of colour. Yet others ignore problems that converge around racial [groups] at their own peril, for these problems are symptoms warning us that we are all at risk.’ (Guinier 2003, p.11)

Why is this paper needed? There are many reasons why this paper is not just needed but should be required, essential reading to create a conceptual baseline for a transformative, multimodal, multiliterate, decolonized curriculum to effect change. The impetus for this paper is derived from the researchers’ previous work on formative pedagogical models and curriculum development (Boyle & Charles 2013, 2016b; Charles & Boyle 2014, Charles, 2019, Charles & Boyle 2022), their observations and analysis of the current surge in interest in ‘decolonizing the curriculum’. The authors address the core of that process, which is being ignored, the need for an evidenced presentation to policy makers to address and develop a transformative, and race-based curriculum. The authors also observe the diminishing surge in interest initially generated by and emanating from the Black Lives Matter [BLM] movement<sup>1</sup>. This global response, cumulatively based on a disproportionate series of killings of Black men and women by USA and UK police authorities, and its expression in a range of actions, discourse and protests is influencing analysis and re-evaluative commentary on the themes of imperialism and decoloniality. Under a century ago, George Orwell is writing ‘he had grasped the truth about the English and their Empire. The Indian Empire is a despotism – benevolent no doubt, but still a despotism with theft as its final object’ (Orwell 1934, in Puri 2020, p. 57).

One of the prime responses was a call for a review and subsequent ‘decolonizing’ of education to enable education systems globally to inclusively empower and engage and develop Black communities. Ani (2019) perceptively states: “Education is not neutral...everything is political, the idea of the ‘universality and ‘objectivity’ of an educational process is absurd. The purpose of any educational system and process is to *support, maintain and advance the culture in and for which it was created*” (in Boman-Baruti, 2019, pp. 6-7, emphasis added). However, it is evident from the tension between factions involved that there is a danger that the window of opportunity for the ‘necessary-to-be-effective’ social policy and educational pedagogical change, created by the media’s temporary interest in race and justice, will be wasted - and inevitably the predictable and non-transformative ‘slave-narrative’ programmes of ‘Black History Month’ will resume their place in the taught curriculum. The problem is, and it has faced humanistic educators for a very long time, how will this enabling and empowering pedagogy become more than ‘a soundbite’? Before immersing ourselves in the issues, the evidence, and the discussion, it is worth understanding that the theme of and need for ‘decolonising’, not only in the UK but globally, is not a recent one, dependent upon BLM to kick-start its use or its influence upon action or inaction. A review of Hansard [the documentary record of the UK Parliament] in the post-Second World War year of 1954, evidences the then former Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party, Clement Attlee commenting in a debate on containing Communism in

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<sup>1</sup> Black Lives Matter is referenced here to cover the range of demonstrations, debate and activities that ensued following the murder of George Floyd. It is NOT used in any celebration of the BLM movement as a political body.

South East Asia, that ‘in building up the strength of the free nations of Asia against aggression...this should be free to all the peoples of Asia and should not in any way be represented as a defence of an *obsolete colonialism*’ (Hansard 1954).

Although this realization that colonialism should be universally seen as an obsolete concept might sound like a promising post-war narrative of transformation, UK readers need to be reminded that it took a full decade until 1965 for the passing of the first Race Relations Act (by Harold Wilson’s Labour government) legislation to address discrimination on grounds of race. The thrust of the 1965 Act illustrates the racial context and tensions of the period as it ‘outlawed race discrimination in public places such as hotels, pubs and theatres, and created a new criminal offence of incitement to racial hatred’ (Thomas-Symonds, 2022, p.200). This legislation was passed within a national climate of race hatred, typified by urban contexts such as Smethwick, where the visiting Malcolm X (nine days before his assassination in the USA) was abused by shouts of ‘We don’t want any more black people here’ (Thomas-Symonds, 2022, p.200). Wilson’s government followed up with a second Race Relations Act (November 1968) ‘outlawing discrimination in housing, employment, and access to public services, building on the provisions of the 1965 Act. The powers of the Race Relations Board were extended, so that it not only dealt with complaints, but could institute its own investigations’ (Thomas-Symonds 2022, p.260). This was hardly popular legislation: for one example, the high-profile Conservative member of the Cabinet, Enoch Powell, ‘spoke against the measures in his infamous speech in Birmingham on 20 April 1968. Quoting the epic poem ‘The Aeneid’, and its prophecy of wars, he predicted a race conflict: ‘As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding, I seem to see “the river Tiber foaming with much blood.”’<sup>2</sup> The ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech, as it became to be known, was a speech of hatred and division.’ (Thomas-Symonds 2022, p.260). Prefacing the traumatic years of race turmoil that would follow in the UK throughout the remainder of the century, Wilson, horrified at the racism, responded with a set-piece speech of his own in Birmingham (5 May, 1968), stating that “I am not prepared to stand aside and see this country engulfed by the racial conflict which calculated orators or ignorant prejudice can create” (Thomas-Symonds, 2022, p.260-61). In 2022, who can say that ‘calculated orators’ and/or ‘ignorant prejudice’ have gone away? Research shows that in cities such as Liverpool, Black professionals still find it immensely difficult to make progress with their careers across the range of professions: in 2016, the authors reported (in a peer-reviewed journal paper) on the unrepresentative total of 18 Black teachers across the school teaching workforce in the city (Boyle & Charles, 2016a), a recent attempt to update the representativeness was met with the astonishing response that the Liverpool City Region did not collect teacher ethnicity data<sup>3</sup> (Emma Dickenson, Liverpool City Region Education Department email date 31/10/22).

### **Discussion points**

Seminal to the early educational conceptual development of the authors and our subsequent pedagogical research and practice is the work of Paulo Freire. In his ‘Pedagogy of

<sup>2</sup> Enoch Powell had previously been a member of a UK Government mission to Jamaica to encourage Jamaicans to come to Britain to bolster the post-war need for skilled workers. Thomas-Symonds (2022, p.260).

<sup>3</sup> Emma Dickinson LCR email dated 31/10/2022: ‘Liverpool City Region does not routinely produce data in relation to any aspect of the School Workforce and is not required to annually submit such data to the Department for Education.

the Oppressed' (1970) he conceived a strategy in which education becomes the centrepiece of a process of human liberation. The strategy was based on the resistance and counterhegemonic praxis of the oppressed to overcome oppression, liberating themselves, and crucially, the oppressor as well. Freire later described this as 'political pedagogy' (Freire 2021, p. xxxiii).

This pedagogy is based on dialogue and the unity of action and reflection is the response to the brainwashing ideology by which the dominant classes manipulate the consciousness of the oppressed, forcing them to internalise their values and inculcating a feeling of inferiority and impotence.

### **How did British Education get to this?**

It is evidenced (Purri 2020) that the impact on the British psyche of having ruled so much of the world has neither faded nor has it been faced. Two examples: 'One must never forget that one is a Sahib, and that someday, when examinations are passed, one will command natives' (Kipling 1901, in Purri 2020, p.59). In '*Small Wars: Their Principles & Practice*', Colonel Charles Callwell summarizes 'expeditions against savages and semi-civilized races by disciplined soldiers ..in all parts of the world' (Callwell,1896 in Purri 2020, p.67) British primary and to some extent secondary schools in the main tend not to teach Imperial history at all, or with minimal scrutiny of the micro or granular details of the colonizing, leaving British children lacking detailed historical knowledge of their country's Imperial past. Schools largely steer clear of the subject of the Empire, 'perhaps because there is no consensus as to whether to present the facts in a positive or negative light, and because neutrality is a difficult stance to adopt, given the intense passions the subject evokes. In multicultural Britain, many families have direct family experiences of being at the receiving end of colonialism. Conversely, when Britons were polled by YouGov (2014) about whether they think of the British Empire as 'something to be proud of', 59% agreed that it was.' (InPuri 2020, p.75-76). However, what about the remaining 41% of people polled? Are they the proponents of a paradigm change echoed by Mazama (2003), as a new dawn and a new wave of thinking? In Thomas Kuhn's (1962) book: *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*; he refers to a paradigm as a dominant mode of thinking shared by a scientific community (2012). This mode of thinking is termed 'normal science', however, Kuhn's ideas challenged the taken for granted assumptions held by the practitioners of 'normal science' and proposed: "This in turn led to the idea that a new theory was not chosen to replace an old one because it was true, but more because of a *change in worldview*" (2012, p.x, original emphasis). Mazama (2003) contends that Kuhn's definition of a paradigm is important in terms of the cognitive, affective, and structural components.

This paper is being written in the aftermath of the covid 19 pandemic which [at date of writing] is still creating health, social, cultural, economic, and educational damage globally. Within that macro context, education and the subject of school closures/openings have had their own share of political, scientific, practitioner and media discussion and publicity. At this stage, there is no evidence, through either political pronouncement, research, publication nor observation, that the pause provided by the pandemic will result in any systemic, transformative education re-thinking – to be blunt, superficial phrases such as 'loss of learning time' have captured the media imagination, albeit briefly and insubstantially. The institutionalized inequity of the schooling system, its theory of social engineering that says

that there is one ‘right way’ to proceed with growing up, its <sup>4</sup>white privileging’ and ‘school as exam factory, student as data-point’ model reigns unchallenged by any desire for or understanding of the necessity of a transformational debate. There is the need for “a ferocious national debate that doesn’t quit, day after day, year after year, the kind of continuous debate that journalism finds boring’ (Gatto, 2017 p. 27) and therefore, cannot be allowed to be reduced to bland or sensational, poorly researched, politicized ‘soundbites’ to defuse, deter and delay the need and the potential for change.

As hybrid or blended learning, generally defined as a considered integration of face-to-face and online learning, has increased as an optimal or at least temporarily a necessary means of facilitating learning in global educational systems throughout the pandemic period, and subsequently beyond, its wholesale application renders reflection on its relationship with learner engagement as urgent and critical. However, any discussion of the efficacy or otherwise of a system based on blending learning or not, requires the investigation of the model’s conceptual framework and the integration and implementation of core elements, in terms of education for critical consciousness (Freire 2021), enabling pedagogy and learner accessibility (Boyle & Charles 2013; Dziubian et al. 2018). How is accurate historical evidence in teaching incorporated into the learning programmes? How does a learning programme address the affective and conative domain issues of the student? How is differentiated learning defined and accommodated within that learning programme which supports learner engagement as the route to effective learning? (Boyle & Charles 2013; Charles & Boyle 2014, 2020; Haberman 1991, 2010). This leads to the major issue of upscaling: how can the micro multitudes of classroom teachers be enabled to revisit their pedagogical training to reflect, revise and re-plan their teaching within an evidenced conceptual framework of a truly transformative ‘decolonized’ curriculum? To encapsulate the concerns shared by the authors that the prevailing system model [pre-, and most likely because of, the above lack of a transformative system debate] that it is better to ‘leave school with a tool kit of superficial jargon’ (Gatto, 2017 p.3) rather than as a self-motivated, engaged learner en route to automaticity, with empowered enthusiasms to continue learning in depth. Many <sup>5</sup> Black children experience “cultural amnesia …as a severe loss of cultural memory which allows others to supplant African identity with a self-destructive, alien identity” (Akua, 2012, p.112).

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<sup>4</sup> The term ‘white’ is a social construct- in Theodore Allen’s (1994, 2012) classic text: *The Invention of the White Race* Perry (2016) observed his scholarship: “Twenty-plus years of meticulous research and examination of 885 county-years of pattern setting in Virginia’s colonial records, he found no instance of the official use of the word ‘white’ as a token of social status prior to 1691” (p.4). ‘White’ identity had to be carefully taught, and it would be only after the passage of some six crucial decades that the word appear as a synonym for European-American (in Allen, 2012, p.X).

<sup>5</sup> The Kemites (Egyptians) had only one term to designate themselves KMT = Black. This is the strongest term existing in the *Nesut Biti*/Pharmonic tongue to indicate Blackness. This word is the etymological origin of the well-known root Kemit (Obadele Kambon, 2019). The term Black here, is used throughout the paper as a scientific term as proposed by Moore (2002): “That the physiological origin of blackness or pigmentation is a result of melanocyte functioning. Since melanin is associated with the distribution of numerous types of cells to other destination sites in the body, it is apparent that there is a critical role for the *darkness* provided by melanin (p23-24). In Barr, Saloma&Buchele’s (1983) 139-page Medical Hypothesis paper entitled: *Melanin: The Organizing Molecule*; It (blackness) functions as the major organizing molecule in living systems” (p.1).

## Global parallels

Lani Guinier's USA-based evisceration of the 'Myth of Meritocracy' (Guinier 2003) also has a seminal place in our conceptualisation of this paper. For example: 'In the name of 'merit' the university was using a selection process that guaranteed spaces to more affluent students whose parents could afford test coaching, private school, or a resource-rich environment. Test scores tended to correlate better with parental income (and even grandparents' socioeconomic status) than actual student performance' (Guinier 2003, p.68), to correlate 'If you just work hard enough you can pull yourself up by your bootstraps...it's just a matter of motivation, hard work and grit" (Godfrey et al., 2017, p.4). This assumption (that a meritocratic system) negates the historical legacies of past and present damaged histories, and by not activating a socio-cultural-historical lens educators create a hermetically sealed view of schooling. If you are inclined to believe that the system is fair, then you are maybe going to accept stereotypes about yourself more easily (Godfrey et al., 2017). The 'bootstrap' myth has been exposed by Shapiro's (2005) statement that "the outcomes of past injustices are carried forward as wealth is handed down across generations and are reinforced by ostensibly 'colour-blind' practices and policies in effect today. Yet many popular explanations for racial economic inequality overlook these deep roots, asserting that wealth disparities must solely be the result of individual life choices and personal achievements" (in Dahmer, 2017, p.2).

A myopic view of sociological structures will prevent educators from embracing a perceptive understanding of how history is always a current event (Clarke, 1993). The consequences of an education system in which teaching episodically is a major component, is the risk of developing a mindset that automatically blames the individual who is usually the 'outsider' of a culturally empowering framework. Traub et al. (2016) support this view: "we find that individual choices are not sufficient to erase centuries of accumulated wealth: structural racism trumps personal responsibility" (p.1). Indeed, Shapiro (2005) had previously commented that "The crucial role that private family wealth plays in communities and in our schools perpetuates inequality from one generation to the next. Because of these dynamics- which have virtually *nothing* to do with achievement or merit, racial inequality is increasing and will continue to increase as long as present practices remain unchallenged" (p.10, emphasis added). As Oliver and Shapiro record 'No matter how high up the mobility ladder Blacks climb, their asset accumulation remains capped at inconsequential levels, especially compared with similarly mobile whites' (2006, p.167, 168, 170).

The 'Testocracy', a term which Guinier (2003) coined to describe the development and current primacy of a 'testing industry' dominating classroom pedagogy with all its limitations (2003, p.68), functions as one of the primary gatekeepers to upward mobility (p.68). This 'testocracy' is based on (usually coached against testable items of a curriculum domain) performance measurement (usually mislabelled as 'assessment' – however, assessment is only valuable when integrated within teaching and learning as a development method, not a judgmental one: Boyle & Charles 2013, 2016) achieved through competitive success on predominantly cohort-based, chronological-age-related, standardised testing and examinations which, only inflates the positive correlation between test scores and status markers such as parental education, racial identity and geographic location (Guinier, 2003, p.68). The inevitable result of such 'data-farmed', norm-referencing systems is an undifferentiated league-table model of sorts – with the resultant 'failure labelling' of those unfortunately labelled in 'real time' to be proving the evidenced fact that humans develop

[learn] at different speeds, rates and styles (Boyle & Charles 2013, 2016). Wouldn't you expect trained teachers to accept that truism and not go along 'sheep-like' with these factory product models?

Our introduction hopefully has set the paper's context of an urgent need for a paradigm shift involving curriculum, pedagogy & decoloniality. Wherever 'curriculum' has marginally entered the debate, usually via a fleeting reference, even within the supposedly awareness-raising, 'decolonizing' context of the original Black Lives Matters [BLM] movement, the conversations remain in the 'curriculum of content' realm. 'Such a curriculum produces physical, moral, and intellectual paralysis, and no curriculum of content will be sufficient to reverse its disempowering effects. What is currently under discussion in our national hysteria about policy/media minimum competency model depiction of failing academic performance misses the point. Schools teach exactly what they are intended to teach, and they do it well: that is, how to remain in your place in the pyramid.' (Gatto, 2017, p.13; Whitehead 2021, p.97). External manifestations of this model abound in the last twenty years, for example, the USA's abortive, damaging and misnamed 'No Child Left Behind' initiative and the UK government's continuous minimum-competency, 'data-farming' style of non-differentiated, chronological-age testing, accountability-based policies. This blinkered, old-school approach was exemplified in the UK by Nick Gibb, then the government's schools minister, in the midst of the post-George Floyd murder debates, stating in July 2020 that "there were no plans to hold a review of the syllabus after 30 cross-party politicians wrote a letter demanding that black historians and leaders be asked to offer revisions to what is taught, as well as new topic ideas" (Proctor, 2020, p.1).

### **Education and human liberation**

There is one strategy in which education becomes 'the centerpiece of a process of human liberation. This process is conceived by the counterhegemonic praxis of the oppressed to overcome oppression, liberating themselves and the oppressor as well.' (Freire 2021 p.x) However, inertia or acceptance or ignorance produces too often an alternative context, that education simply 'reproduces social and cultural structures, mentalities and domination processes, while validating the control of power by elites, corporations and the like – hence helping the oppressor to sustain their model of domination' (Freire 2021, p. x) and objectification.

Secondly, but relatedly, Freire's 'banking' concept (1970) is a critique of authoritarianism in education and of an external model of alienation which obliterates the voice of the student/learner, thereby giving absolute power to the teacher. 'Banking' education and pedagogical authoritarianism undermine the possibility of dialogical democracy by encouraging student passivity. 'Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former aims to maintain the submission of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality' (1970, p. xiv).

The 'banking' model polarizes the distinction between teacher and student, reduces and then eliminates dialogue and encourages a model of student passivity. Freire's global message to the culturally and socio-economically oppressed and objectified is that this 'banking education' contrives to undermine the possibility of dialogic democracy and promote the passivity of the oppressed (Freire 2021 p. xiv).

This line of thinking is essential because education, in the twenty first century, indeed almost one quarter of the journey through that century already, is globally more centralized and politically controlled than ever. Freire himself emphasizes the danger of that alliance being too close for healthy, learner-centred, community-empowerment, educational and political action to create the meritocracy that Guinier (2003) wrote about to ever come about: 'One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions notwithstanding' (Freire 2021, p.xiv). Nino (1996) stated that democracy is a pathway to a more just society, but for Nino 'deliberative democracy is based on dialogue' (1996 p.101), therefore the notion of dialogical democracy is very similar to Freire's democratic concepts in classrooms or cultural circles at least, if not an achievable or realistic expectation in every aspect of society. (Freire,2021, p.xvii). What is interesting, no, crucial to our role as inclusive educators, is that while Freire's thinking evolved (from liberal thinker to Marxism and then to a radical social democratic model) he never separated democracy from the struggle against inequality. He always followed a class analysis and worked on expanding this perspective including race, ethnicity, gender, the environment, and the planet (Freire 2021, xviii) based on the premise of 'the development of a radical democratic citizenship education' (Schugerenky, 2011 p.45).

### **Dialogue and inclusion**

To achieve this transformational, truly inclusive education, Freire proposed a fundamental method: dialogue. Dialogue, which in its learner-teacher relationship model, is now appearing more and more as a core 'formative teaching' research and pedagogical method, (Boyle & Charles 2013). In Freire's definition dialogue was/is to be used as an intervention in the model of action research as a pedagogical practice to break down the structures of authoritarianism in the classroom, thereby promoting dialogical democracy. This insight of Freire's has had major implications on the research, literature and development of 'formative teaching and learning' in the last fifty years (Perrenoud 1998, Allal & Lopez 2005, Allal&Ducrey 2000, Boyle & Charles 2011, 2013, 2016, Alexander, 1997, 2004, 2008) as a transformative pedagogy for learner engagement, the development of 'self-regulation' as 'a priori' in the development of autonomous learners' [self-motivated, lifelong learners/citizens] empowerment and development. An important contextual dependent or variable in this book is that the pedagogical subjects [learners/students] are not homogeneous citizens but are socio-economically-culturally diverse individuals. Therefore, the subjects of education are not fixed, essential or inflexible – which in plain speak means that the teacher is/can be a student and the student is/can be a teacher (Freire 2021 xxvi; Perrenoud 1998, authors 2013). These principles are/can also be applied to inclusive education and its relationship to democratic citizenship (Morrow RA & Torres CA 2002 p.137).

Therefore, Freire's epistemological position has [at least] two major implications: firstly, critical pedagogy emerging from Freire's research contributions is concerned with how emancipatory education can validate the learners' own culture and discourse while at the same time challenging their common sense, to identify the 'salutary nucleus (Freire 2021 p.xxvii), the 'good sense' that signals the beginning of counter-hegemony (Torres 1992). However, as an educationist/lawyer, Freire recognized the reality of tensions between subjectivity and objectivity, between theory and practice, in all spheres of human behaviour and in schooling teaching and learning situations. Nor, sadly for the pre-planned packagers of

education programming, can these dichotomies and tensions be simply overcome nor captured in their entire complexities through mainstream methodologies (Freire 2021 p. xxvii, O’Cadiz & Torres 1994 p.221). Freire’s epistemology (in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 1970) defines a cosmopolitan democracy as essential for global citizenship, providing a ‘fundamental resource in rethinking not only the cognitive and gnoseological<sup>6</sup> principles but also the affective and behavioural principles for this global construction’ (Freire 2021 p. xxvii).

### **Deliberative democracy**

This is within the objective of the constitution of a citizenship model which gives priority to ‘deliberative democracy’ as a model for political participation and recognizes the imperative of understanding democratization as a process of collective learning. (Freire 2021 p. xxviii). The learning developmental benefit of Freire’s proposal for a dialogical pedagogy is that it does/will incorporate an understanding of the multidimensionality and depth of structure of critical literacy- particularly through celebrating the distinctive contributions of, and the inter-relations between, skills, dispositions and understanding in critical thinking. It is also a way of understanding the problem of ‘interests’ and the question of how to wrest away power from those ‘interests’ (Freire 2021 p. xxviii). From his research evidence/published works, Freire originated and pursued two routes of theoretical developments: ‘an evolving theory of agency and a historical, structural perspective that emphasizes the dialectics of individuals and structures in producing the material and symbolic layers of social life.’ (in Torres, 1994, p.131). Freire’s dichotomous vision of the future predicted [originally in 1970] a ‘battle’ between two dominant discourses: ‘one that seeks to recapture the heart and the imagination of enlightenment and the power of scientific research and rationality on the road to a brighter future for the great mass of people; the other an atavistic return to a past where a small global elite dominates the political, economic and cultural worlds, where propaganda, chaos and ideology govern the public sphere and where multinational corporations and the powerful elite dictate policy at the local, national and global levels’ (Torres, in Freire 2021 p. xxx). That balance is currently dangerously balanced towards option two. This paper, in an age of extremes, uncertainty and moral hazard, ‘expects educators to promote actions of real change, connecting theory, research and praxis. It is impossible to annihilate the creative, recreative and comprehensive powers of consciousness, [so] what do the dominators do? They mythologize reality. As there is no reality other than the reality of consciousness, when they mythologize it, they hinder the process of transforming reality.’ (Torres, 2005, p. 161).

### **Concluding thoughts towards a race-based curriculum**

This paper began with a global warning quotation from Lani Guinier about ignoring ‘signs of danger’. Her warning is more relevant today even than it was in 2003. This is because those racialized, historical distortions which maintain a dominant white power base of political, social, and economic empowerment to the exclusion of the non-white populations (Wilson, 1993) are still strongly perceived as not likely to affect those readers’ or their future, well-housed prospects. Yet Guinier is reminding us that ‘Those who are racially marginalized

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<sup>6</sup> The term ‘gnoseology’ has a broader connotation – close to theory of knowledge or process of knowing – than epistemology, which is more closely associated with scientific knowledge. Torres CA 2021, p.xxi, in *Education for Critical Consciousness: Paulo Freire* 2021 Bloomsbury.

are like the miner's canary: their distress is the first sign of a danger that threatens us all. It is easy enough to think that when we sacrifice this canary, the only harm is to communities of colour. Yet others ignore problems that converge around racial [groups] at their own peril, for these problems are symptoms warning us that we are all at risk.' (Guinier 2003, p.11). As one example, Oliver and Shapiro record 'No matter how high up the mobility ladder Blacks climb, their asset accumulation remains capped at inconsequential levels, especially compared with similarly mobile whites' (2006, p.167, 168).

However, Freire throughout his lifework taught us that we have to decide on which side of the fence we will stand to address those critical moments of life's challenges and major decisions. Torres, in recently published reflections on Freire's acknowledged masterpiece (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire 1970) confirms Friere's relevance to today's global educo-social context: 'In an age of extremes, uncertainty and moral hazard, we cannot remain neutral. He expects progressive educators to work in not only demystifying but also promoting actions of real change, connecting theory, research, and praxis' (Torres, 2021, p.xxx, in Freire, 2021).

It is customary and conventional in this concluding section for researchers to adopt a dominant mode of espousing their recommendations in predictably neat explanations and formulaic solutions. Within the accepted or traditional discursive method or manner, such proposals are declared as seamless insertions or injections of change indicators into the rhetoric of policy and practice. And there they remain, captured on paper with nil effect. In contrast, cultural theorist, Nicholas Mirzoeff (2017) provides a salient description in relation (albeit on a small scale) to the school effects of Reframed Curriculum Units of Change<sup>7</sup>: 'The clock of the world is showing a new time that we're struggling to understand' (p.6). Like Mirzoeff, the authors recognize that this struggle for the empowerment of Black children needs to be given new points of identification. The authors' research (Charles 2019) has evidenced that using Africana-centred approaches and critical pedagogies, while successfully modelled within a small-scale sample, is practically impossible within the current impenetrable mainstream schooling paradigm. How many more reports, surveys and statistics must be produced to repeat the tired narrative of 'deficit-thinking on black boys'? (Wright and Counsell, 2018, p. ix).

John (2006) states that all of this is known: 'Tinkering with the system, amendments to the procedures and peripheral provision (through mentoring, counselling etc, no matter how well intended) will not change things for Black pupils generally' (p.238). How many more age groups and peer groups of Black children must be given curriculum content that does not place them within accurate, historical, and positive cultural affirmation? Psychologist and historian Amos Wilson (1983/2015) provides a solution to this question: 'We cannot wait 20, or 30 years to learn basic lessons - the system is not working for black children. Words and language are the accumulation of a people, so the accumulation of experience and knowledge of black people should be improved as each generation passes through the education system. That is one of the functions of culture - to solve its problems and this is how people evolve through the workings of its culture. Why must generations of black children be sacrificed to the system in which they are expelled, suspended, and receive few qualifications?' (lecture presentation).

Therefore, this struggle that Mirzoeff (2017) alludes to, and the practical realities stated by John (2006), aligned with the cultural necessity of Wilson (1983/2015), require

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<sup>7</sup> The authors' Reframed Curriculum Units of Change have been piloted across a sample of primary age children in UK inner city context and the research published in (Charles 2019)

researchers to create, build and sustain educative spaces for Black children. This paper is framed within an Afrocentric paradigm which rests heavily on the functional aspect of Mazama (2003) and the ethical practical project of Du Bois (1903). It is imperative that our educators, teachers, and policy makers change their understandings and hence their paradigms of culture, history, and forms of knowledge. Carroll (2008) states that 'knowledge must not be produced for knowledge's sake' (p.16) and this is supported by Johnson (2013) who affirms the need for scholars, researchers, and master teachers to 'build institutions, economic, educational and political with a sense of urgency towards our cause of reconstructing education for our African youth' (p.200). Dumas (2016) raises issues that have been side-stepped or simply ignored in 'policy processes in education [which] must grapple with cultural disregard for and disgust with blackness' (p.11).

In summary, the authors' Reframed Curriculum Units of Change are based within our experience as practitioners, authors and researchers using learner-centred teaching and formative pedagogy (Boyle & Charles 2013, 2014, 2016; Charles 2019). The whole basis of the argument and evidence of this paper is that the learner is at the centre of accessible and supportive, developmental classroom teaching and learning (Boyle & Charles 2013, 2014, 2016). The definition of inclusive education can be refined down to the conceptual, methodological stance embodied in that sentence (Boyle & Charles 2013). As educators we need to pursue and 'promote actions of real change, connecting theory, research, and praxis' (Torres 2005, *ibid*) to revise this institutionalized race-based curriculum.

## ՈԱՍՏՅՈՎ ՊԱՅՄԱՆԱՎՈՐՎԱԾ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱԿԱՆ ԾՐԱԳՐԻ ՎԵՐԱՆԱՅՈՒՄ

Բոյլ Բիլ

մանկավարժական գիտությունների դոկտոր, պրոֆեսոր,

Մանչեսթերի համալսարան,

Մեծ Բրիտանիա,

*william.boyle1405@btinternet.com*

Չարլզ Մարի

Մանչեսթերի համալսարան,

Մեծ Բրիտանիա,

*william.boyle1405@btinternet.com*

### Ամփոփում

Սույն ուսումնասիրությունը կարևոր է ու կարող է դառնալ ընթերցանության նյութ՝ ձևավորելու համար քննադատական մտածողություն ու հայեցակարգային հիմք փոխակերպիչ, բազմամոդել, գրագետ, ապագաղութացված ուսումնական ծրագրի համար։ Հոդվածը հիմնված է ձևավորող մանկավարժական մոդելների ու ուսումնական ծրագրերի մշակման ոլորտում նախորդ ուսումնասիրությունների, դրանց դիտարկումների, վերլուծության ու ռասայով պայմանավորված ուսումնական ծրագրերի մոդելների մշակման վրա։ Հեղինակներն անդրադառնում են այդ գործընթացի եռությանը՝ քաղաքական գործիչներին հիմնավորված ներկայացնելու անհրաժեշտությանը՝ անդրադարձ կատարելով ռասայով պայմանավորված ուսումնական ծրագրին ու դրա հայեցակարգային հիմքի կարևորությանը։ Բովանդակային փոփոխությունը պահանջում է հարացույցային շրջադարձ իր գործառույթի ու աշխարհայացքի ներսում, որում գիտելիքը երբեք չի կարող ստեղծվել հանուն իր գոյության։ հարացույցն էլ պետք է ակտիվացնի մեր գիտակցությունը, որպեսզի օգտակար լինի մեզ համար։

**Բանալի բառեր՝** ուսուայով պայմանավորված ուսումնական ծրագիր, կրթության ավագութացում, քննադատական մանկավարժություն, աֆրոկենտրոն հարացույց, ձեռավոր գնահատում, ներառական ուսուցմամբ կրթություն, բազմամշակութայնություն, կրթական հավաքածու:

## О НЕОБХОДИМОСТИ ПЕРЕСМОТРА РАСОВО-ОРИЕНТИРОВАННОЙ УЧЕБНОЙ ПРОГРАММЫ

**Бойл Билл**

Доктор педагогических наук, профессор,

Манчестерский университет,

Великобритания

*william.boyle1405@btinternet.com*

**Чарльз Мари**

Манчестерский Университет,

Великобритания

*william.boyle1405@btinternet.com*

### Аннотация

Почему необходима эта статья? Существует множество причин, по которым эта статья не просто нужна, а должна быть обязательным и важным чтивом для формирования критического сознания (Фрейре, 2021) и концептуальной основы для трансформирующей, мультимодальной, мультиграмотной, деколонизированной учебной программы, направленной на изменения. Статья основана на предыдущей работе исследователей в области формативных педагогических моделей и разработки учебных программ, а также на их наблюдениях, анализе и разработке моделей расово-ориентированных учебных программ (Чарльз, 2019). Авторы рассматривают суть этого процесса – необходимость предоставления доказательной базы политикам о важности расово-ориентированной учебной программы и её концептуальной основы. Изменение содержания требует парадигмального сдвига в его функции и мировоззрении (Мазама, 2003), где знание никогда не может производиться ради самого знания, парадигма должна активировать наше сознание, чтобы быть для нас полезной (там же, с. 3).

**Ключевые слова:** расово-ориентированная учебная программа; деколонизация образования; критическая педагогика; афроцентристская парадигма; формирующее оценивание; инклюзивное образование; мультикультурализм; образовательное равенство.

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