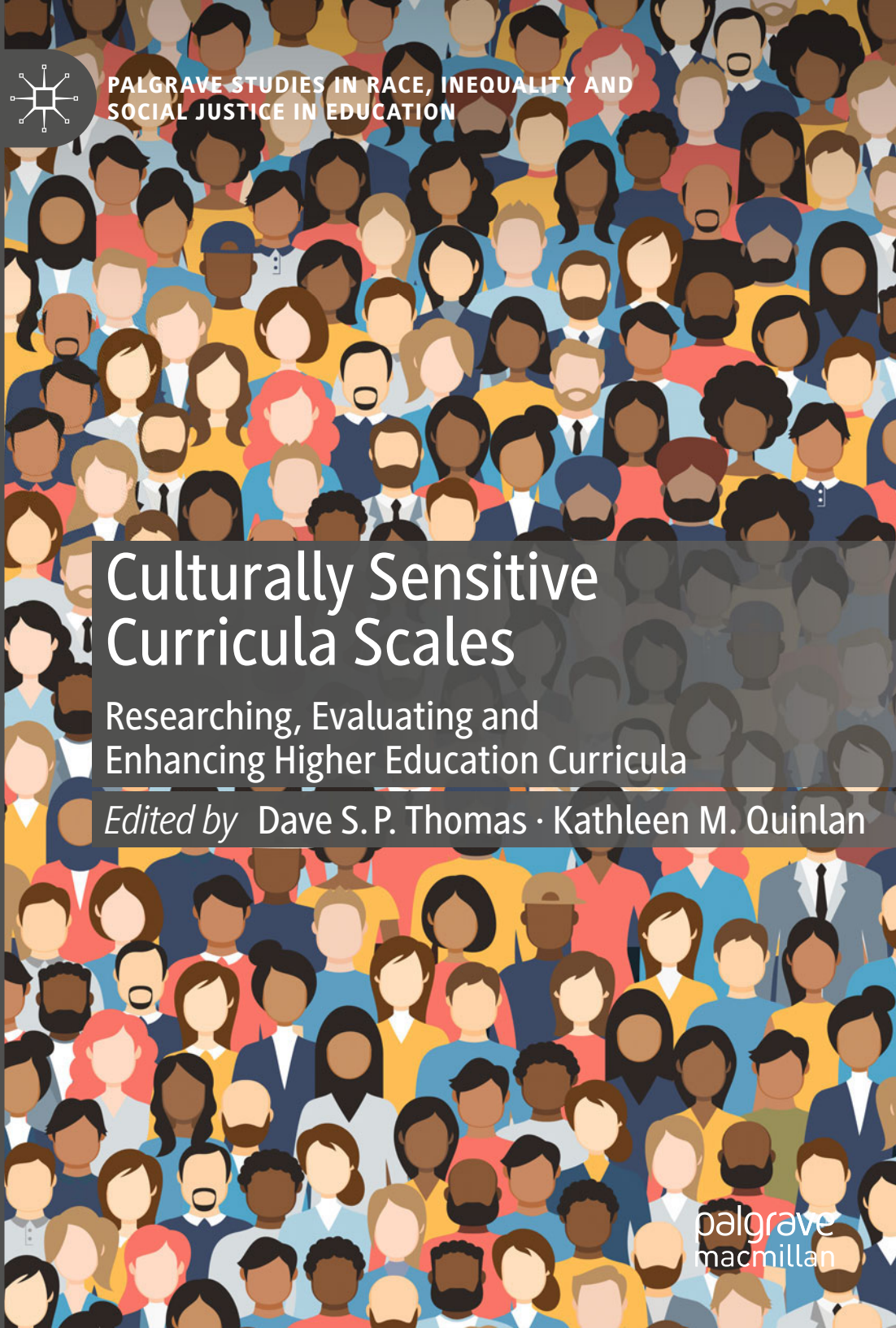
PALGRAVE STUDIES IN RACE, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION
Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales
Researching, Evaluating and Enhancing Higher Education Curricula
Edited by Dave S. P. Thomas · Kathleen M. Quinlan
palgrave macmillan

Palgrave Studies in Race, Inequality and Social Justice in Education

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This series focuses on new developments in the study of race, social justice and education. Promoting theoretically-rich works, contributions include empirical and conceptual studies that advance critical analysis whilst attempting to destabilise the institutionalised racist orthodoxy that has undermined the notion of education being a tool of social mobility. The series will consider social mobility as a form of equality narrowly defined whilst also critiquing the ideology of social mobility which essentially pits individuals against one another in a sink or swim competition, entirely ignoring the reality of deep and damaging structural inequalities. A central aim of the series will be to address important current policy issues, such as social mobility, widening participation etc., while also recognising that critical studies of race are also concerned with wider, fundamental transformations in education, knowledge and society, i.e. the dismantling of racist structures, concern with education's role in reproducing racial inequality.

Dave S. P. Thomas · Kathleen M. Quinlan
Editors

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ISSN 2524-633X ISSN 2524-6348 (electronic)
Palgrave Studies in Race, Inequality and Social Justice in Education
ISBN 978-3-031-57687-4 ISBN 978-3-031-57688-1 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-57688-1

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Cover illustration: PeterPencil/getty images

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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Foreword

In the intricate tapestry of higher education, we are continuously called upon not only to impart knowledge but also to shape a learning environment through the facilitation of knowledge that mirrors the diversity of the world we inhabit. The journey of evaluating and enhancing higher education curricula through the prism of culturally sensitive curricula scales is a profound exploration, underscoring the educators' perennial commitment to educational justice, inclusivity, equity, and a holistic educational experience.

As we stand at the nexus of tradition and progress, the imperative to re-evaluate our curricula has never been more pressing given the turbulent societal context that we currently reside in. The complexities of our globalised society demand a paradigm shift in how we conceive and deliver education. This collection serves as a comprehensive guide for educators, administrators, and institutions committed to aligning their curricula with the cultural kaleidoscope of their student body.

In our eternal pursuit of academic and pedagogical excellence, there is a recognition that true education extends beyond the boundaries of textbooks, literature, and learning spaces. The call for cultural sensitivity arises from the understanding that diversity is not a mere adornment but a fundamental aspect of human experience. It is the recognition that each student brings a unique set of perspectives, experiences, and cultural contexts to the learning environment.

The commitment made to cultural sensitivity in this pedagogically inspiring collection is not just a response to the demands of the present; it is a pledge to shape the future. By fostering an inclusive curriculum, we equip learners at various stages of the learning continuum with the tools to navigate a globalised world, where cross-cultural understanding is not just an asset but a prerequisite for meaningful societal engagement.

The process of evaluating and enhancing higher education curricula necessitates a comprehensive approach that delves into the very foundations of our educational frameworks. It starts with the definition of culturally sensitive criteria, a roadmap that guides the assessment of each facet of any existing curriculum. Such criteria should reject rigid standards opting for instead, flexible guidelines that accommodate the dynamic and ever-changing nature of cultural diversity.

Stakeholder involvement is a cornerstone of this process. Engaging students, faculty, and community members ensures that the evaluation is not an abstract exercise but a collective endeavour. The insights, experiences, and perspectives enrich the dialogue, providing a nuanced understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of existing curriculums. To enhance our curricula, we must remain committed to first mapping out and interrogating the existing landscape. Curriculum mapping involves a meticulous review of courses, materials, and teaching methodologies to identify areas where cultural sensitivity may be lacking. It is a reflective exercise that challenges us to question assumptions, biases, and omissions within our educational content.

As we navigate this terrain, we must be prepared to make conscious decisions about the voices and narratives that are amplified within our curricula. For example, whose stories are being told, and whose are being left untold? What perspectives are dominating the discourse, and which ones are marginalised to the periphery? These questions provide a compass point for navigating and guiding our journey towards a more equitable educational experience.

This collection is more than a guide; it is a call to action. It advocates for the integration of culturally sensitive curricula scales as a transformative tool for shaping and re-modelling the educational landscape. This involves not only revising learning materials and assessment strategies but fundamentally reconsidering the ethos of our educational institutions.

Collectively, we must champion professional development opportunities for academic and professional stakeholders, equipping them with the

skills and perspectives necessary to navigate the nuances of cultural sensitivity. Creating inclusive learning environments requires a commitment to ongoing dialogue, community engagement, and the acknowledgement that cultural competence is a journey, not a destination. It is imperative that we are always cognisant of the transformative power of inclusive and culturally sensitive education. By embracing culturally sensitive curricula scales, we not only enrich the educational experience for our all stakeholders but also contribute to the broader societal shift towards empathy, understanding, and unity.

This collection serves as both a monument to pedagogical advancement in the academy and an inspiration for those truly committed to the art of learning and knowledge construction. Use this offering by Thomas and Quinlan to spark meaningful conversations, catalyse purposeful changes, and pave the way for a higher education landscape that truly reflects the diversity and vibrancy of the human experience.

Cambridge, England Jason Arday

Jason Arday, Ph.D., FRSA is the 2002 Professorial Chair in the Sociology of Education at the University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education. Previously, he was Professor of Sociology of Education at the University of Glasgow in the School of Education, College of Social Sciences. He has also held the position of Associate Professor in Sociology at Durham University in the Department of Sociology and Deputy Executive Dean for People and Culture in the Faculty of Social Science and Health. He is a Visiting Professor at The Ohio State University in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, University of Glasgow in the School of Education and an Honorary Professor at Durham University in the Department of Sociology. He is a Trustee of the Runnymede Trust, the UK's leading Race Equality Thinktank and the British Sociological Association (BSA). He sits on the Centre for Labour and Social Studies (CLASS) National Advisory Panel, the NHS Race and Health Observatory Academic Reference Group and the ITV Cultural Advisory Council. His research focuses on the areas of race and higher education, intersectionality and education, mental health and education, neurodiversity and cultural studies.

Acknowledgements

This book has been a collaborative effort. As editors, we are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to this work, whether through direct collaboration, insightful discussions, inspiring work on which we have built, or day-to-day support. Your contributions have been invaluable, and any omission of names does not reflect a lack of appreciation but rather the limitations of space.

We are indebted to the Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation (NERUPI) and particularly its Chair, Annette Hayton, for organising and sponsoring the NERUPI CSCS Pilot Working Group. We are also grateful to the seven institutional members of the NERUPI Network who collaborated on the CSCS Pilot Working Group Study and to various colleagues at those institutions who approved or supported participation. This working group enabled us to refine our original CSCS tool and report and reflect on its practical application in this volume. Our work together in late 2021 and throughout 2022 underpins this book.

We are grateful to hundreds of students from across those member institutions who completed the revised CSCS survey. Without their contribution this volume would not have been possible. We offer our heartfelt thanks to the authors of this volume's chapters for their enthusiastic and thoughtful contributions on a tight timeline. We acknowledge the competing demands on their time and constraints of full workloads, which make their contributions even more precious. We also

appreciate Professor Reinhard Pekrun's invaluable expert advice on scale development and data analysis of the original CSCS.

We could not have thought of a better person to write the foreword for this volume than Dave's dear friend and colleague Professor Jason Arday. It was with him that Dave first shared his vision for this volume as a part of Jason's book series—Palgrave Studies in Race, Inequality, and Social Justice in Education. Dave wondered if Jason would have the interest or time to read what had been produced and think it worthy of publication. Without hesitation, Jason kindly asked to write the Foreword. Equally, Dr Omar Khan was the only choice to write the afterword. We thank Omar for carving out space and time in his busy schedule to read and reflect on our work and write the final words. We value his contribution greatly.

We also wish to thank the Palgrave Macmillan Editorial Team; specifically, Alice Green and Ashwini Elango. Your enthusiasm for this project and consistent support served as a source of inspiration throughout the process.

Dave writes: there are no words to say heartfelt thanks to my family for their patience and unconditional support in allowing me to pursue my interests and passions. Wife Shauna, son Malik and daughter Deja, only love can explain how you endured being a sounding board of embryonic thinking and tolerated my absence during the long office hours throughout the time of compilation, which at times felt like it took all my attention. Thanks for your understanding. Mom Merle, Andrea, Brian and Craig, you provided valuable inspiration. The strong impetus to undertake this task came from the triune god who enables all things in all circumstances, especially divine guidance in times of doubt and uncertainty.

Kathleen writes: Reinhard, thank you for your unfailing support, for space to write, and for always willingly offering seasoned advice. Julie Nathanielsz, thank you for being there, listening, and reminding me of what matters. Finally, thank you to my caring teachers, generous colleagues, and courageous students from and with whom I have learned about cultural sensitivity in education.

Typographical Note

The editors capitalise the terms 'Black' and 'White' when used in the volume to denote racial groups. We do this for two reasons. First, these groups are equal. Though some partisans choose to capitalise their own racialised group and lower-case others, we capitalise both groups to emphasise their equality. Second, races are social constructs that change names and shapes from time to time and place to place. 'Black' and 'White' are not descriptive adjectives; they are current names of (imagined) racial groups. We use scare-quotes (e.g. 'race') to indicate concepts that should not be read or used uncritically.

Praise for *Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales*

"This is a vitally important text for all HE educators and managers. Too much of the HE literature describes inequalities in learning and teaching practices. Here are the tools and examples, to be used in any discipline, to create curricula that affirms and respects the cultures, identities, and contexts of every student body. Use it."

—Pauline Kneale, *Society for Research into Higher Education, Chair, University of Plymouth, UK*

"Thomas and Quinlan ought to be congratulated for pulling this book together. This book is as important as it is timely, responding to the current wave of 'hopefulness' in UK higher education, and elsewhere, not previously seen, among educators and curriculum developers, for expert support and guidance to make curricula more reflective of learners. This book responds to 'hopefulness' and indeed provides 'hope' and direction through the Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales which establishes a clear framework for practice. All ten chapters are rich - grounded in research and designed to advance practice. Many congratulations and well done."

—Paul Miller, *Institute for Educational & Social Equity, UK*

"For the colonial westernized university, confronting racism with honesty and courage can only be the precise beginning for meaningful transformation and decolonisation. This book does exactly that. It asks us not

only to reckon with our shared complicity, but also provides curriculum tools towards diversity, belonging, equity and anti-racist education."

—Elelwani Ramugondo, *University of Cape Town, South Africa*

"The CSCS offers a great starting point to create more culturally sensitive curricula. It invites teaching staff to start the conversation with students, listening to their perspectives. In addition, the scales can also be applied to a broader context of inclusive education. The examples presented throughout the chapters inspired me to start changing the curriculum in a more culturally sensitive way."

—Mijke Hartendorp, *Saxion University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands*

"Dave S.P. Thomas and Kathleen M. Quinlan set an intention and take readers on a journey to develop more equitable and culturally informed curricula. This book is a must-read for anyone committed to educational equality and creating inclusive learning environments."

—Khalilah R. Johnson, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA*

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Fatmata K. Daramy is a Widening Participation Specialist who has contributed significantly to shaping institutional approaches to equity, diversity, and inclusion. She has been integral to the creation of inclusive and anti-racist curriculum design, and fostering a sense of belonging, at several universities. She played a pivotal role in creating and developing a

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic student Advocates Scheme, conceptualising a dynamic diversity and inclusion task force involving employers, and co-ordinating a large research project at the University of Law. She serves as the Co-chair lead of the NERUPI Student and Staff Race and Ethnic Equity working group. She actively shapes and implements the group's strategies and spearheads projects which create positive change in the sector. Currently a Doctoral Researcher at the University of Leicester, she is engaged in a research project exploring mental well-being for domicile Black, Asian, and minority ethnic students in Higher Education.

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Annette Hayton convenes NERUPI (Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions) which has over 70 members from higher and further education. She was previously Head of Widening Participation at the University of Bath and at Goldsmiths, University of London. She has many years of experience in managing activities designed to support successful progression to higher education as well as developing strategies to ensure that all students have a positive experience of university study. She is a member of ICHEM (International Centre for Higher Education Management) at the University of Bath and Innovative Practice Editor for the journal 'Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning'. Annette is a Trustee of Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership and leads on the Bath Hub for MNSP. She is interested in how educational theory, research, and evaluation can be developed and applied in practice to promote positive change within the education system, aiming to combine theory and practice in her work. She has published a number of books and articles on widening participation.

Dr Deborah Husbands, Ph.D. is a Chartered Psychologist and Reader in Race and Sociocultural Psychology at the University of Westminster. She is the Course Leader for the B.A. in Global Challenges course,

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Helen Kay, SFHEA is a Senior Lecturer in Academic Development and Inclusivity at Sheffield Hallam University. She has a breadth of experience in pedagogic development and educational change. Drawing on over thirty-five years of experience of teaching, curriculum development, course leadership, and institutional research her work supports academic and curriculum innovation and leadership. Her practice is research informed and underpinned by a wealth of experience in evaluating the implementation of educational practices and providing an understanding of how students engage with and experience teaching and learning. She has had a pivotal role in the development of equality and diversity and widening participation policy and strategy at Sheffield Hallam. She continues to lead on the development and implementation of inclusive teaching and learning policy and practice. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

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Claire Walsh, Ph.D., SFHEA is a Registered General Nurse and lecturer in healthcare education, with a specialist interest in interprofessional and simulation-based methods. Claire has worked on national projects to inform the interprofessional learning agenda in the UK context and supports the development of new education provision that addresses workforce transformation.

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