



1 doubt, but still a despotism with theft its final object' (Orwell 1934, in Puri  
2 2020, p. 57).

3 One of the prime responses was a call for a review and subsequent  
4 'decolonizing' of education to enable education systems globally to inclusively  
5 empower and engage and develop Black communities. Ani (2019) perceptively  
6 states: "Education is not neutral...everything is political, the idea of the  
7 'universality and 'objectivity' of an educational process is absurd. The purpose  
8 of any educational system and process is to *support, maintain and advance the*  
9 *culture in and for which it was created*" (in Bomani-Baruti, 2019, pp. 6-7,  
10 emphasis added). However, it is evident from the tension between factions  
11 involved that there is a danger that the window of opportunity for the  
12 'necessary-to-be-effective' social policy and educational pedagogical change,  
13 created by the media's temporary interest in race and justice, will be wasted -  
14 and inevitably the predictable and non-transformative 'slave-narrative'  
15 programmes of 'Black History Month' will resume their place in the taught  
16 curriculum. The problem is, and it has faced humanistic educators for a very  
17 long time, how will this enabling and empowering pedagogy become more  
18 than 'a soundbite'? Before immersing ourselves in the issues, the evidence, and  
19 the discussion, it is worth understanding that the theme of and need for  
20 'decolonising', not only in the UK but globally, is not a recent one, dependent  
21 upon BLM to kick-start its use or its influence upon action or inaction. A  
22 review of Hansard [the documentary record of the UK Parliament] in the post  
23 second world war year of 1954, evidences the then former Prime Minister and  
24 leader of the Labour Party, Clement Attlee commenting in a debate on  
25 containing Communism in South East Asia, that 'in building up the strength of  
26 the free nations of Asia against aggression...this should be free to all the  
27 peoples of Asia and should not in any way be represented as a defence of an  
28 *obsolete colonialism*' (Hansard 1954).

29 Although this realization that colonialism should be universally seen as an  
30 obsolete concept might sound a promising post-war narrative of  
31 transformation, UK readers need to be reminded that it took a full decade until  
32 1965 for the passing of the first Race Relations Act (by Harold Wilson's  
33 Labour government) legislation to address discrimination on grounds of race.  
34 The thrust of the 1965 Act illustrates the racial context and tensions of the  
35 period as it 'outlawed race discrimination in public places such as hotels, pubs  
36 and theatres, and created a new criminal offence of incitement to racial hatred'  
37 (Thomas-Symonds, 2022, p.200). This legislation was passed within a national  
38 climate of race hatred, typified by urban contexts such as Smethwick, where  
39 the visiting Malcolm X (nine days before his assassination in the USA) was  
40 abused by shouts of 'We don't want any more black people here' (Thomas-  
41 Symonds, 2022, p.200). Wilson's government followed up with a second Race  
42 Relations Act (November 1968) 'outlawing discrimination in housing,  
43 employment, and access to public services, building on the provisions of the  
44 1965 Act. The powers of the Race Relations Board were extended, so that it  
45 not only dealt with complaints, but could institute its own investigations'  
46 (Thomas-Symonds 2022, p.260). This was hardly popular legislation: for one

1 example, the high-profile Conservative member of the Cabinet, Enoch Powell,  
2 ‘spoke against the measures in his infamous speech in Birmingham on 20 April  
3 1968. Quoting the epic poem ‘The Aeneid’, and its prophecy of wars, he  
4 predicted a race conflict: ‘As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding, I seem  
5 to see ‘the river Tiber foaming with much blood.’<sup>2</sup>The ‘Rivers of Blood’  
6 speech, as it became to be known, was a speech of hatred and division.’  
7 (Thomas-Symonds 2022, p.260). Prefacing the traumatic years of race turmoil  
8 that would follow in the UK throughout the remainder of the century, Wilson,  
9 horrified at the racism, responded with a set-piece speech of his own in  
10 Birmingham (5 May, 1968), stating that ‘I am not prepared to stand aside and  
11 see this country engulfed by the racial conflict which calculated orators or  
12 ignorant prejudice can create’ (Thomas-Symonds, 2022, p.260-61). In 2022,  
13 who can say that ‘calculated orators’ and/or ‘ignorant prejudice’ have gone  
14 away? Research shows that in cities such as Liverpool, Black professionals still  
15 find it immensely difficult to make progress with their careers across the range  
16 of professions: in 2016, the authors reported (in a peer-reviewed journal paper)  
17 on the unrepresentative total of 18 Black teachers across the school teaching  
18 workforce in the city (Authors, 2016a), a recent attempt to update the  
19 representativeness was met with the astonishing response that the Liverpool  
20 City Region did not collect teacher ethnicity data<sup>3</sup> (Emma Dickenson,  
21 Liverpool City Region Education Department email date 31/10/22).

### 22 23 24 **Discussion Points** 25

26 Seminal to the early educational conceptual development of the authors  
27 and our subsequent pedagogical research and practice is the work of Paulo  
28 Freire. In his ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (1970) he conceived a strategy in  
29 which education becomes the centrepiece of a process of human liberation. The  
30 strategy was based on the resistance and counterhegemonic praxis of the  
31 oppressed to overcome oppression, liberating themselves, and crucially, the  
32 oppressor as well. Freire later described this as ‘political pedagogy’ (Freire  
33 2021, p. xxxiii). This pedagogy is based on dialogue and the unity of action  
34 and reflection is the response to the brainwashing ideology by which the  
35 dominant classes manipulate the consciousness of the oppressed, forcing them  
36 to internalise their values and inculcating a feeling of inferiority and  
37 impotence.  
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<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.’

## How did British Education get to this?

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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 Puri 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 Puri 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.’ (In Puri 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,

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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

1 student as data-point’ model reigns unchallenged by any desire for or  
 2 understanding of the necessity of a transformational debate. There is the need  
 3 for “a ferocious national debate that doesn’t quit, day after day, year after year,  
 4 the kind of continuous debate that journalism finds boring’ (Gatto, 2017 p. 27)  
 5 and therefore, cannot be allowed to be reduced to bland or sensational, poorly  
 6 researched, politicized ‘soundbites’ to defuse, deter and delay the need and the  
 7 potential for change.

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

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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*/Pharonic 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).

1 supplant African identity with a self-destructive, alien identity” (Akua, 2012,  
2 p.112).

### 3 4 5 **Global Parallels**

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7 Lani Guinier’s USA-based evisceration of the ‘Myth of Meritocracy’  
8 (Guinier 2003) also has a seminal place in our conceptualisation of this paper.  
9 For example: ‘In the name of ‘merit’ the university was using a selection  
10 process that guaranteed spaces to more affluent students whose parents could  
11 afford test coaching, private school, or a resource-rich environment. Test  
12 scores tended to correlate better with parental income (and even grandparents’  
13 socioeconomic status) than actual student performance’ (Guinier 2003, p.68),  
14 to correlate ‘If you just work hard enough you can pull yourself up by your  
15 bootstraps...it’s just a matter of motivation, hard work and grit” (Godfrey et al,  
16 2017, p.4). This assumption (that a meritocratic system) negates the historical  
17 legacies of past and present damaged histories, and by not activating a socio-  
18 cultural-historical lens educators create a hermetically sealed view of  
19 schooling. If you are inclined to believe that the system is fair, then you are  
20 maybe going to accept stereotypes about yourself more easily (Godfrey et al  
21 2017). The ‘bootstrap’ myth has been exposed by Shapiro’s (2005) statement  
22 that “the outcomes of past injustices are carried forward as wealth is handed  
23 down across generations and are reinforced by ostensibly ‘colour-blind’  
24 practices and policies in effect today. Yet many popular explanations for racial  
25 economic inequality overlook these deep roots, asserting that wealth disparities  
26 must solely be the result of individual life choices and personal achievements”  
27 (in Dahmer, 2017, p.2).

28 A myopic view of sociological structures will prevent educators from  
29 embracing a perceptive understanding of how history is always a current event  
30 (Clarke,1993). The consequences of an education system in which teaching  
31 episodically is a major component, is the risk of developing a mindset that  
32 automatically blames the individual who is usually the ‘outsider’ of a culturally  
33 empowering framework. Traub et al (2016) support this view: “we find that  
34 individual choices are not sufficient to erase centuries of accumulated wealth:  
35 structural racism trumps personal responsibility” (p.1). Indeed, Shapiro (2005)  
36 had previously commented that “The crucial role that private family wealth  
37 plays in communities and in our schools perpetuates inequality from one  
38 generation to the next. Because of these dynamics-which have virtually *nothing*  
39 to do with achievement or merit, racial inequality is increasing and will  
40 continue to increase as long as present practices remain unchallenged” (p.10,  
41 emphasis added). As Oliver and Shapiro record ‘No matter how high up the  
42 mobility ladder Blacks climb, their asset accumulation remains capped at  
43 inconsequential levels, especially compared with similarly mobile whites’  
44 (2006, p.167, 168, 170).

45 The ‘Testocracy’, a term which Guinier (2003) coined to describe the  
46 development and current primacy of a ‘testing industry’ dominating classroom

1 pedagogy with all its limitations (2003, p.68), functions as one of the primary  
 2 gatekeepers to upward mobility (p.68). This ‘testocracy’ is based on (usually  
 3 coached against testable items of a curriculum domain) performance  
 4 measurement (usually mislabelled as ‘assessment’ – however, assessment is  
 5 only valuable when integrated within teaching and learning as a development  
 6 method, not a judgmental one: Authors 2013, 2016) achieved through  
 7 competitive success on predominantly cohort-based, chronological-age related,  
 8 standardised testing and examinations which, only inflates the positive  
 9 correlation between test scores and status markers such as parental education,  
 10 racial identity and geographic location (Guinier, 2003, p.68). The inevitable  
 11 result of such ‘data-farmed’, norm-referencing systems is an undifferentiated  
 12 league-table model of sorts – with the resultant ‘failure labelling’ of those  
 13 unfortunate enough to be proving the evidenced fact that humans develop  
 14 [learn] at different speeds, rates, times and styles (Authors 2013, 2016).  
 15 Wouldn’t you expect trained teachers to accept that truism and not go along  
 16 ‘sheep-like’ with these factory product models?

17 Our introduction hopefully has set the paper’s context of an urgent need  
 18 for a paradigm shift involving curriculum, pedagogy & decoloniality.  
 19 Wherever ‘curriculum’ has marginally entered the debate, usually via a fleeting  
 20 reference, even within the supposedly awareness-raising, ‘decolonizing’  
 21 context of the original Black Lives Matters [BLM] movement, the  
 22 conversations remain in the ‘curriculum of content’ realm. ‘Such a curriculum  
 23 produces physical, moral, and intellectual paralysis, and no curriculum of  
 24 content will be sufficient to reverse its disempowering effects. What is  
 25 currently under discussion in our national hysteria about policy/media  
 26 minimum competency model depiction of failing academic performance misses  
 27 the point. Schools teach exactly what they are intended to teach, and they do it  
 28 well: that is, how to remain in your place in the pyramid.’ (Gatto, 2017, p.13;  
 29 Whitehead 2021, p.97). External manifestations of this model abound in the  
 30 last twenty years, for example, the USA’s abortive, damaging and misnamed  
 31 ‘No Child Left Behind’ initiative and the UK government’s continuous  
 32 minimum-competency, ‘data-farming’ style of non-differentiated, chronological-  
 33 age testing, accountability-based policies. This blinkered, old-school approach  
 34 was exemplified in the UK by Nick Gibb, then the government’s schools  
 35 minister, in the midst of the post-George Floyd murder debates, stating in July  
 36 2020 that “there were no plans to hold a review of the syllabus after 30 cross-  
 37 party politicians wrote a letter demanding that black historians and leaders be  
 38 asked to offer revisions to what is taught, as well as new topic ideas” (Proctor,  
 39 2020, p.1).

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### **Education and Human Liberation**

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44 There is one strategy in which education becomes ‘the centerpiece of a  
 45 process of human liberation. This process is conceived by the  
 46 counterhegemonic praxis of the oppressed to overcome oppression, liberating

1 themselves and the oppressor as well.’ (Freire 2021 p.x) However, inertia or  
2 acceptance or ignorance produces too often an alternative context, that  
3 education simply ‘reproduces social and cultural structures, mentalities and  
4 domination processes, while validating the control of power by elites,  
5 corporations and the like – hence helping the oppressor to sustain their model  
6 of domination’ (Freire 2021, p. x) and objectification.

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

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

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

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## 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, (authors 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, Authors 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).

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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.xxxi, in *Education for Critical Consciousness: Paulo Freire* 2021 Bloomsbury.

## **Deliberative Democracy**

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

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

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38 This paper began with a global warning quotation from Lani Guinier about  
39 ignoring ‘signs of danger’. Her warning is more relevant today even than it was  
40 in 2003. This is because those racialized, historical distortions which maintain  
41 a dominant white power base of political, social, and economic empowerment  
42 to the exclusion of the non-white populations (Wilson, 1993) are still strongly  
43 perceived as not likely to affect those readers’ or their future, well-housed  
44 prospects. Yet Guinier is reminding us that ‘Those who are racially  
45 marginalized are like the miner’s canary: their distress is the first sign of a  
46 danger that threatens us all. It is easy enough to think that when we sacrifice

1 this canary, the only harm is to communities of colour. Yet others ignore  
 2 problems that converge around racial [groups] at their own peril, for these  
 3 problems are symptoms warning us that we are all at risk.’ (Guinier 2003,  
 4 p.11). As one example, Oliver and Shapiro record ‘No matter how high up the  
 5 mobility ladder Blacks climb, their asset accumulation remains capped at  
 6 inconsequential levels, especially compared with similarly mobile whites’  
 7 (2006, p.167, 168).

8 However, Freire throughout his lifework taught us that we have to decide  
 9 on which side of the fence we will stand to address those critical moments of  
 10 life’s challenges and major decisions. Torres, in recently published reflections  
 11 on Freire’s acknowledged masterpiece (Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire  
 12 1970) confirms Friere’s relevance to today’s global educo-social context: ‘In  
 13 an age of extremes, uncertainty and moral hazard, we cannot remain neutral.  
 14 He expects progressive educators to work in not only demystifying but also  
 15 promoting actions of real change, connecting theory, research, and praxis’  
 16 (Torres, 2021, p.xxx, in Freire, 2021).

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

34 John (2006) states that all of this is known: ‘Tinkering with the system,  
 35 amendments to the procedures and peripheral provision (through mentoring,  
 36 counselling etc, no matter how well intended) will not change things for Black  
 37 pupils generally’ (p.238). How many more age groups and peer groups of  
 38 Black children must be given curriculum content that does not place them  
 39 within accurate, historical, and positive cultural affirmation? Psychologist and  
 40 historian Amos Wilson (1983/2015) provides a solution to this question: ‘We  
 41 cannot wait 20, or 30 years to learn basic lessons - the system is not working  
 42 for black children. Words and language are the accumulation of a people, so  
 43 the accumulation of experience and knowledge of black people should be  
 44 improved as each generation passes through the education system. That is one

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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 (author 2 2019)

1 of the functions of culture - to solve its problems and this is how people evolve  
 2 through the workings of its culture. Why must generations of black children be  
 3 sacrificed to the system in which they are expelled, suspended, and receive few  
 4 qualifications?’ (lecture presentation).

5 Therefore, this struggle that Mirzoeff (2017) alludes to, and the practical  
 6 realities stated by John (2006), aligned with the cultural necessity of Wilson  
 7 (1983/2015), require researchers to create, build and sustain educative spaces  
 8 for Black children. This paper is framed within an Afrocentric paradigm which  
 9 rests heavily on the functional aspect of Mazama (2003) and the ethical  
 10 practical project of Du Bois (1903). It is imperative that our educators,  
 11 teachers, and policy makers change their understandings and hence their  
 12 paradigms of culture, history, and forms of knowledge. Carroll (2008) states  
 13 that ‘knowledge must not be produced for knowledge’s sake’ (p.16) and this is  
 14 supported by Johnson (2013) who affirms the need for scholars, researchers,  
 15 and master teachers to ‘build institutions, economic, educational and political  
 16 with a sense of urgency towards our cause of reconstructing education for our  
 17 African youth’ (p.200). Dumas (2016) raises issues that have been side-stepped  
 18 or simply ignored in ‘policy processes in education [which] must grapple with  
 19 cultural disregard for and disgust with blackness’ (p.11).

20 In summary, the authors’ Reframed Curriculum Units of Change are based  
 21 within our experience as practitioners, authors and researchers using learner-  
 22 centred teaching and formative pedagogy (Authors 2013, 2014, 2016; Author  
 23 2019). The whole basis of the argument and evidence of this paper is that the  
 24 learner is at the centre of accessible and supportive, developmental classroom  
 25 teaching and learning (Authors 2013, 2014, 2016). The definition of inclusive  
 26 education can be refined down to the conceptual, methodological stance  
 27 embodied in that sentence (Authors 2013). As educators we need to pursue and  
 28 ‘promote actions of real change, connecting theory, research, and praxis’  
 29 (Torres 2005, *ibid*) to revise this institutionalized race-based curriculum.

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