

Working towards the creation of an inclusive curriculum: a staff- student partnership approach

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Background

Decolonising the Curriculum (DTC) is a movement that aims to dismantle colonial power structures within higher education, revisit and question pre-existing knowledge as universal and ultimately to create a more representative and inclusive curriculum (Pimblott, 2020).

In the last few years there is a strong necessity to re-examine what we teach and how we teach it, revisit how knowledge is generated and to create a more complete scientific perspective (Dessent et al., 2021)

Decolonising the Curriculum- Challenges

Historical- Eurocentric: Core theories and paradigms generated and developed in the west

Political and Economic: Limited cross-cultural research, often biased

Institutional: University staff predominately WEIRD



The project

Journey

Adopting an evidence-based approach to decolonizing the curriculum-
Students as co-creators of knowledge

Step 1 – Deciding approach, consider challenges

Step 2 – SACA starting on a single module

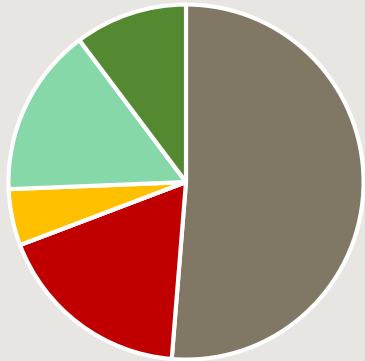
Step 3 – Broaden to existing curriculum using learning and insights
from Step 2; development of instrument to evaluate impact

Initial stage: Diversifying Developmental Psychology

- Student-led project
- Students chose to focus on the 1st year Developmental Psychology module
- Examined taught materials to identify biases in representation
- Reported results and worked on specific suggestions for each lecture

General results

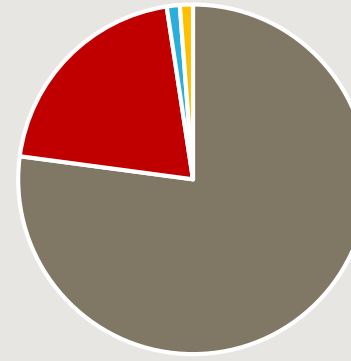
Race and gender of images in lecture slides in Developmental Module



White male
 White female
 BAME male
 BAME female
 Non-gender specific white
 Non-gender specific other

	White	BAME
Male	51%	0%
Female	18%	5%
Non gender specific	15%	10%

Race and gender of theorists in Developmental Psychology module



White male
 White female
 BAME male
 BAME female

	White	BAME
Male	77%	1%
Female	20%	1%

General results

Lecture 1= Theories of development

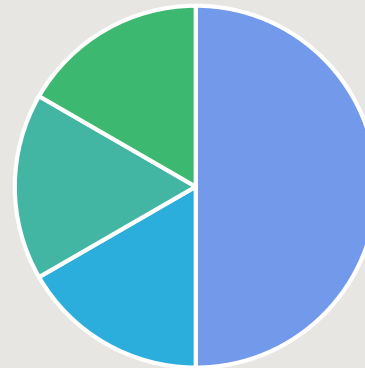
Country of Research in Lecture 1



■ USA ■ Austria

67% USA
33% European

Origins of Key Theorists in Lecture 1



■ USA ■ Austria ■ England ■ Switzerland

50% USA
50% European

Step 2

Team conducted a brief literature review per topic and suggested changes:

- In reading and lecture content (e.g. cross-cultural studies)
- Seminar and lecture activities that facilitate EDI discussion of topics

Action- Students as creators of knowledge

Previous research has shown that **active learning** approaches benefit students (Freeman et al., 2014) but even more so students from underrepresented and low socioeconomic backgrounds (Theobald et al., 2020).

Action- Students as creators of knowledge

Creation of additional activities to:

- Identify biases in theory and research
- Examine whether cross-cultural data support key theories of development
- Reflect on mechanisms involved in the generation of knowledge



Example Activities

Example Activities

Padlet (audience response tool):

1. Choose one of the theories/concepts taught in the module so far and find a cross-cultural study that examined it. Report back findings.
2. How does culture affect cognitive Development? (family, social, environmental, educational)
3. How could ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic factors influence intelligence (or indeed performance on intelligence tests)? Support with evidence

Activity Examples

Progressive Assignments: Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking in Low-Income Black Families

Author: [Name]

Abstract: This study examines the impact of progressive assignments on the reading and writing skills of students in low-income Black families. The study found that progressive assignments led to significant improvements in reading and writing skills, particularly in the areas of critical thinking and problem-solving.

Keywords: progressive assignments, reading, writing, critical thinking, low-income Black families.

How does culture affect cognitive development?

Author: [Name]

Abstract: This post explores the relationship between culture and cognitive development. It discusses how cultural factors such as family structure, social norms, and educational practices can influence a child's cognitive growth. The post highlights the importance of understanding cultural differences to support children's learning and development.

Keywords: culture, cognitive development, family factors, social factors, educational factors.

Linguistic Relativity examples

Author: [Name]

Abstract: This post provides examples of linguistic relativity, illustrating how language shapes thought and perception. It discusses the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and provides examples from various languages, such as the concept of time in different cultures and the use of color terms in different languages.


Keywords: linguistic relativity, Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language, thought, perception.

Quiz activity - Some examples

Avg. Time: 18 secs Accuracy: 33%

Read the job description below. Who do you think is most suitable for the position?

The position would suit best an autonomous and decisive person who is highly ambitious and loves a challenge.

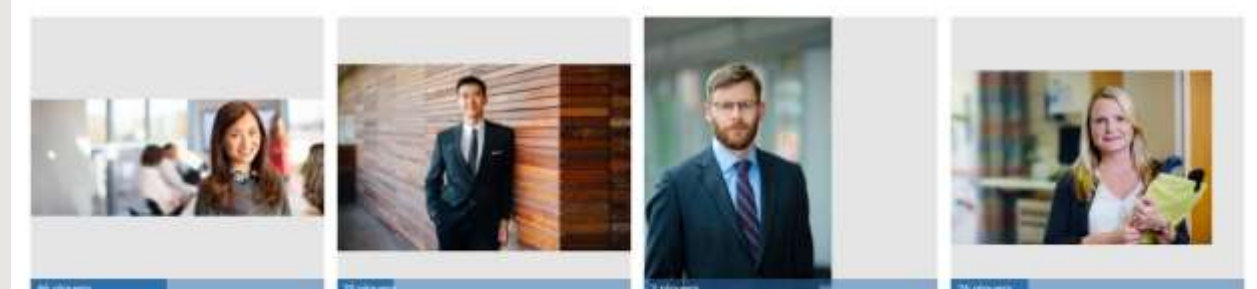


The quiz displays four candidate photos in a row. From left to right: a woman with long brown hair in a grey sweater (20 players), a man in a dark suit and tie standing against a wood-paneled wall (26 players), a man with a beard and glasses in a dark suit and tie (25 players), and a woman with blonde hair in a white top and dark jacket holding a yellow folder (11 players).

Avg. Time: 15 secs Accuracy: 94%

Read the job description below. Who do you think is most suitable for the position?

The position would suit best an honest and empathetic person who is keen to work cooperatively and who loves to connect with others.



The quiz displays four candidate photos in a row. From left to right: a woman with long brown hair in a grey sweater (46 players), a man in a dark suit and tie standing against a wood-paneled wall (19 players), a man with a beard and glasses in a dark suit and tie (2 players), and a woman with blonde hair in a white top and dark jacket holding a yellow folder (26 players).

Student attitudes and Impact evaluation

- Development of a **novel measure** that includes a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions across the following dimensions:

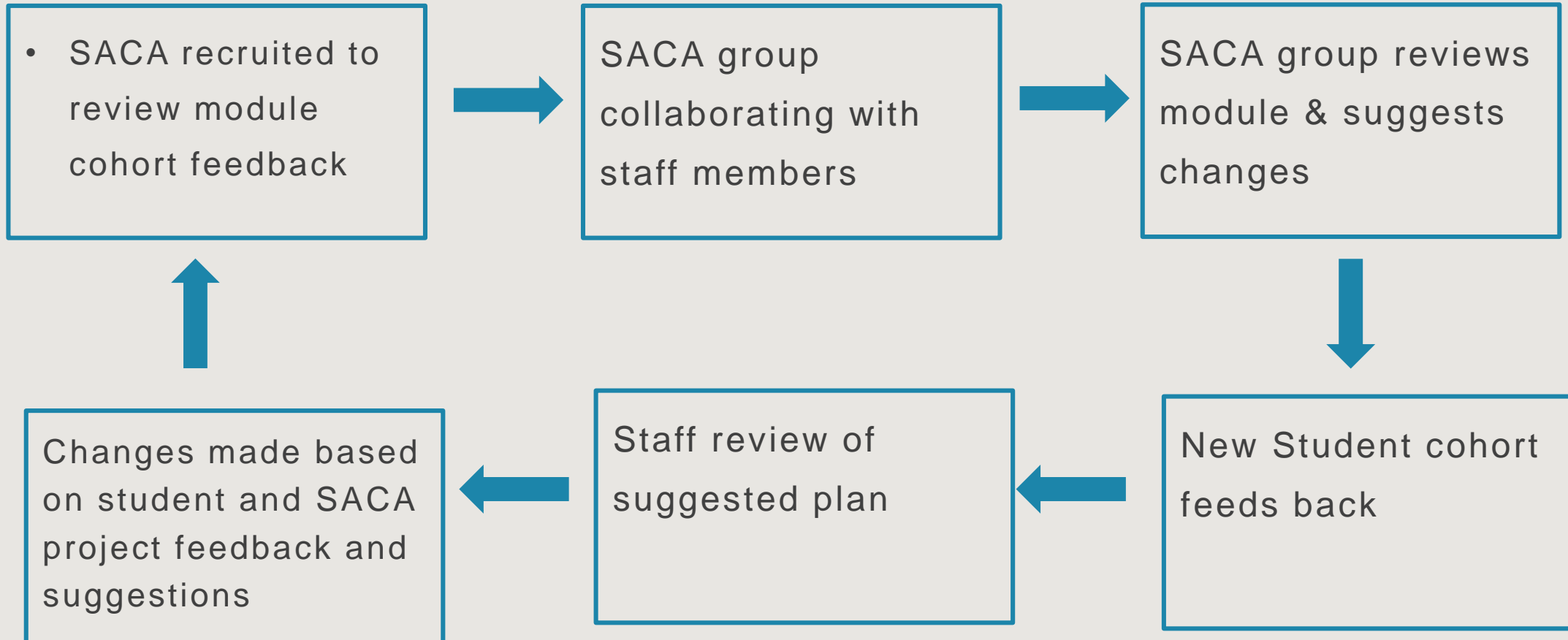
Diversity, Inclusion, Identity

- Aim is to gather student opinions related to their modules and gather recommendations and suggestions for improvement



The model

Model



Key features

- ❖ Introduction of interactive activities to evaluate and reflect content taught
- ❖ Students as knowledge generators /content creators through student led activities
- ❖ Evidence-based approach, systematic – involvement of key stakeholders

Questions?

Please get in touch if you want to find
out more or get involved
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Module structure & Content

10 one-hour lectures

10 one-hour “lecture engagement” sessions

Assessment:

Essay

MCQ Exam


- Introduce key theories of human Development (cognitive, emotional, moral etc)
- Examine the nature-nurture debate
- Present and discuss developmental disorders

Quiz activity results- Some examples


⌚ Avg. Time: 14 secs 📊 Accuracy: 95%

Read the job description below. Who do you think is most suitable for the position?


Our company is looking for an assertive and confident individual with excellent leadership skills and dominant personality




27 players



8 players



14 players




14 players


⌚ Avg. Time: 4 secs 📊 Accuracy: 93%

Read the job description below. Who do you think is most suitable for the position?


Our company is looking for a committed and considerate worker with great interpersonal and communication skills




6 players



27 players



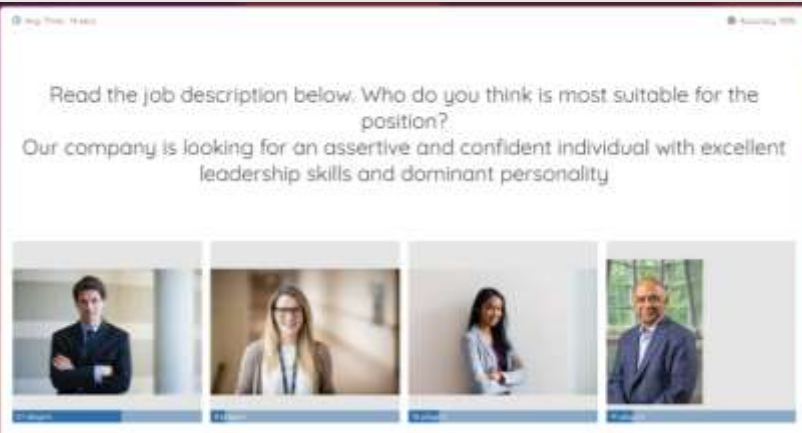
10 players



15 players

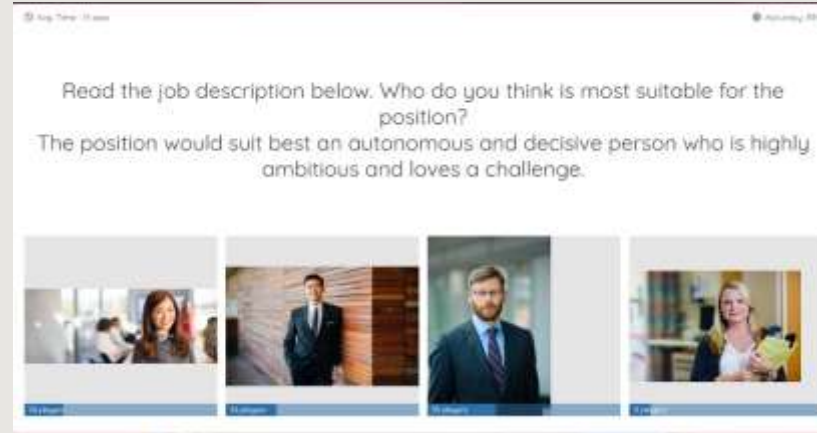
Quiz activity -Some examples

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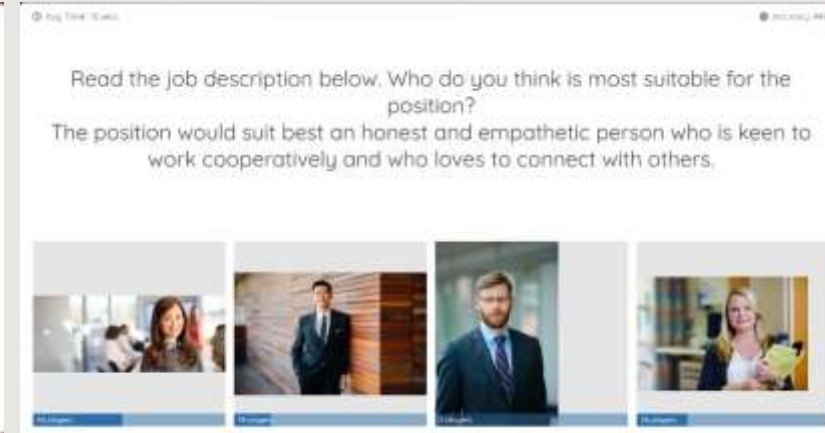
This screenshot shows a quiz interface with a white background. At the top, it asks the user to read a job description and choose the most suitable candidate. The job description is for an assertive and confident individual with excellent leadership skills. Below the text are four candidate photos in a row, each with a name label underneath: John, Sarah, Lisa, and Mark.

Read the job description below. Who do you think is most suitable for the position?
The position would suit best an autonomous and decisive person who is highly ambitious and loves a challenge.



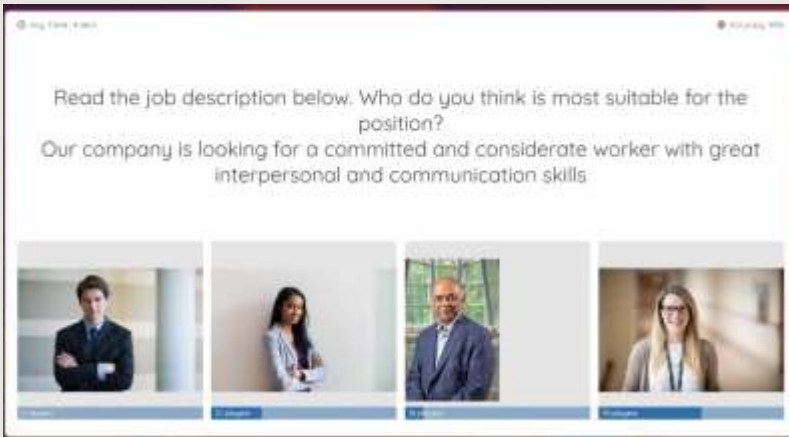
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Respondents in this quiz choose more often male candidates as the most suitable for the job when the job description matched stereotypical “masculine” characteristics like “leadership, assertive, autonomous” etc while they chose female candidates when the job description included more stereotypically “feminine” qualities such as “empathetic, cooperative, considerate” etc.

Why is this problematic? How does it relate to linguistic relativity?

Student comments

“there is acknowledgment of other **racial groups**, but in my opinion it **feels more like a bit of extra information instead an integral part of that lecture**. instead of simply stating that certain results aren't typical for all groups or social classes, there should be researche provided into why and how that is the case.”

“The majority of the Developmental psychology module is based around the work of white, male theorists from individualistic countries (**WEIRD**). Whilst the lecture on development across cultures explains why there are biases in developmental psychology and the importance of culture, they still **use research with a majority of white authors.**”

student comments

Acknowledgement of lack of diversity (bringing biases or problematic structures into focus)

“does consider culture and race when evaluating studies”

“aware of cultural biases and include this in the curriculum”

“Acknowledging for cross cultural applicability”

“Considers generalisability and impact of research on wider ethnic backgrounds and how results might vary across cultures”

Student research activities

“The Developmental Psychology model allowed me to go and actively find research from other non-western cultures in order to support/refute points in my developmental essay”

“This module referenced how different cultures may experience things differently such as stages of development, rather than just focusing on one culture or nationality.”

“Frequent discussion of different cultures and how studies can or cannot be applied to them”