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De-constructing the other: an integrated pedagogy of inclusive learning and teaching approaches in and beyond Prison

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ABSTRACT

Considerations of epistemology in teaching and integrated pedagogical approaches to teaching have long been identified as central to teaching practice (Dewey, 1997, *Experience and Education*. New York: Touchstone Publishing). More recently, these have been framed around not only anti-oppressive practice (Dominelli, 2002, *Anti-oppressive social work; theory and practice*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke), but wider considerations of power and oppression and ‘epistemic dominance’ (Andreotti, 2011, p. 4, *Actionable postcolonial theory in education*. New York: Palgrave). While they may not always be elevated theoretically or explicitly stressed as fundamental in every day teaching practice, they are evident across subjects and sectors (Andreotti, 2011, *Actionable postcolonial theory in education*. New York: Palgrave; Sin, 2014, Epistemology, sociology, and learning and teaching in physics. *Science Education*, 98, 342–365), particularly with an increasing emphasis in Higher Education on student engagement and equipping students with vital employability skills (Nygaard et al., 2013, *Student engagement: Identity, motivation and community*. Oxfordshire: Libri Publishing). This paper argues that such considerations are particularly relevant to the teaching of Social Sciences, at the heart of which lies challenging the status quo and interrogating inequalities. The example of jointly teaching university students (Outside Students) and individuals with convictions for sexual offences in a custodial setting (Inside Students) provides a platform on which to investigate the pedagogies involved in teaching Social Sciences in this setting. It considers the importance of language (Willis & Letourneau, 2018, Promoting accurate and respectful language to describe individuals and groups. *Sexual Abuse: Journal of Research and Treatment*, 30(5), 480–483) in order to assist with the de-construction of ‘the other’, promoting awareness and equality, and breaking down essentialised conceptions of ‘the other’- both for Inside and Outside students. At the heart of this is balancing and integrating knowledge and experience of all students (Harmer, 2007, *The practice of English language teaching*. Essex, UK: Paerson Longman) as integral to the learning process. The paper brings together a diversity of approaches to teaching and

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scaffolds these into an integrated pedagogical framework, applicable more universally and beyond the limited and specialised application to prison teaching (Dewey, 1997, *Experience and education*. New York: Touchstone Publishing).

Authentic education is not carried out by A for B or by A about B, but rather by A with B, mediated by the world - a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it. (Freire, 1996, p. 74)

Teaching partnerships with the prisons involving university students and people who serve a custodial sentence in the prison estate have witnessed a surge in the United Kingdom in recent years through the adaption of Inside Out and the development of Learning Together¹ as two examples of such programmes. Essentially, the Inside Out Prison Exchange Programme, originated in the late 1990s in the US, seeks to facilitate dialogue across difference – here between campus-based students and incarcerated students in a custodial setting. Core beliefs of this particular programme focus on making learning widely accessible and allow participants to experience each other as equal, often across profound social barriers, in order to generate engaged and informed discussions in a transformative learning environment around issues of crime, justice and social concerns. Similarly, ‘Learning Together’ seeks to bring together these two groups of students in critical dialogues around, for example, stigma and desistance and seeks to engage with and develop those student groups through learning in a shared environment.² While this paper will not evaluate their differences and/or similarities, at the heart of both is the bringing together of university students and people who are currently serving custodial sentences in prisons. Equally this paper does not provide a step-by-step guide on how to design such a teaching programme. In the context of this paper, however, shared values of both programmes formed some of the basis for the facilitation of the interaction between university and prison-based students on the example used here. University students were drawn from final year cohorts of Education and Criminology students, and sessions were designed around issues of ‘Access and barriers to Education’, ‘Identity Politics’, ‘Desistance and Rehabilitation, and ‘Rehabilitation and Education’ to name but a few.

The Social Science subjects here lend themselves to exploring the differences and similarities between those seemingly very different learner groups around issues of Sociology, Criminology, Education and many more. Such teaching partnerships require, from the outset, a very different approach to teaching and learning than the formal curriculum approach can traditionally offer (Chapman & Ishaq, 2013). This is not only because of the very nature of partnership work between HE and external partners in general, but also because of the specifically assumed differences in both educational levels and experiences of education of these two populations- university students and people incarcerated. While the accurate identification of the level of educational skills of people incarcerated (Inside Student) in the UK is problematic (Creese, 2016), it is evident that low literacy and numeracy levels are common, and that they are in stark contrast to the level of education of any university student (Outside Students- here on the example of students in Social Science Subjects) participating in such teaching programmes by the mere fact of entry requirements for students in the UK. The potential

differences between those two groups are further highlighted by their age and gender³, with the Social Sciences attracting predominantly female students at the average undergraduate age while the prison population consists of approximately 95% men with the highest percentage of men incarcerated being between 30 and 39 years of age (House of Commons Report, 2019). However, while neither the prison population in general, nor persons with convictions for sexual offences in particular, are homogeneous groups (Willis & Letourneau, 2018), and of course nor are the university students (see footnote 4) - from the outset of any such programme their differences appear much starker than their similarities. These, to an extent are perceived differences, rather than highly influenced assumptions of one another, which necessitate the creation of an equal and inclusive learning space even more than the traditional classroom environment would.

However, before illustrating the pedagogies involved in this particular learning project, it is important to explore some of the reasons for learning partnerships such as this one. The EACEA (2015)⁴ articulates a strong case for employability in HE and defines 'Employability: A combination of knowledge, competences and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and progress during their career' (EACEA, 2015, p. 15) and Summers, Pearson, Gough, and Siekierski (2013) explore how working in partnership with professional bodies can enhance Outside students' employability skills. It is important that the learning of these skills is approached holistically (EACEA, 2015, p. 13) and giving the students of Social Sciences subjects 'the edge' in a competitive labour market (EACEA, 2015, p. 10 & 27). To equip Outside students in this way for any future employment is not only necessary in order to provide them with transferable skills for a diversity of roles post their graduation, but also to enable them to explore some of the potentially challenging work environments that await them when having completed their Social Sciences degree. Not unlike Summers et al. (2013), the prison partnerships discussed here therefore must ensure that this experience (whether students are successful during the application process or not⁵) present real-life 'employability experiences' from interviews through to the final completion of the project, including exploring and challenging students perceptions of their self-efficacy and motivations (Hutchings, Bartholomew, & Reilly, 2013). For Inside students, exploring Social Sciences subjects such as Criminology and Sociology provide opportunities for understanding their own life histories and their offending behaviour in a wider socio-cultural, economic and political context. Farley and Pike (2016, p. 4) highlight in their research that 69% of prisoners claimed that 'education helped them to cope with prison [...] this is particularly significant for those prisoners with long sentences or mental health issues'. Further, they argue that involvement of incarcerated people in education improves their decision-making and pro-social values, and overall contributes to reducing the risk of (re) offending (Farley & Pike, 2016). A number of informal comments during the facilitation of such projects also highlighted how Inside students saw the project as an opportunity to 'practice the new me', away from the daily prison routine and repetitive interactions with other men incarcerated.

Language and inclusivity

Ainscow (1999) argues that at the centre of all education, and in particular inclusive education, should be the overcoming of barriers to participation that may be experienced by

any pupils. Key to over-coming some of the barriers described above as potentially resulting from the more visible and assumed differences between Inside and Outside students is inclusivity, and at the heart of it the language used.

Similarly to the wider prison population, to describe people with sexual convictions as 'sex offenders' does not only imply homogeneity amongst people with (sexual) convictions (Willis & Letourneau, 2018), but promotes 'misperceptions about (sexual) offending that can ultimately obstruct an individual's rehabilitation, reintegration, and desistance (Willis, Levenson, & Ward, 2010). While some authors argue that the use of such language may be justified (Willis & Letourneau, 2018), prominent and recent publications in the field of sexual offending promotes terms such as 'individuals with sexual convictions', which ultimately enable distancing the 'offence act' from the individual (Blagden, Winder, & Hames, 2016), and assisting to pave the way to rehabilitation. DiBennardo (2018) argues, on the example of media coverage of 'sex offenders', that constructions of 'sex offenders' falsely conflate a multitude of offences into 'sex offending', reproducing hetero-normative hierarchies of victimhood and gender, and, to varying extents, obstruct the right to victimhood (of victims of sexual offences), which in turn has implications on policy and rehabilitation of individuals with sexual convictions. Willis and Letourneau (2018) promote the use of person-first language to 'separate the person from the behaviour [...] is more accurate and less pejorative than terms like sex offender' (page 842). While Inside Out explicitly does not engage with prisons which house people with sexual convictions, the use of inclusive language (Broughan & Hunt, 2013) and terminology such as 'Inside Student' and 'Outside Student', at the very basic level, promote equity and inclusion and assists in de-constructing preconceptions of both people incarcerated and university students.

At the heart of inclusive learning and teaching approaches lies this principle of equity and fairness, which accounts for and values students' differences, and inclusive pedagogy embraces a range of differences and integrates those in its approach to learning (Hockings, 2010). Further, 'students value teaching that recognises their individual academic and social identities and that addresses their particular learning needs [by] creating soft collaborative spaces [...] which encourage students to articulate their thinking openly in respectful environments' (Hockings, 2010, pp. 6–7).

While creating safe and respectful environments is vital to all learning spaces, this particularly applies to prisons, which inherently are highly regulated and potentially volatile spaces. Institutional marginalisation and privilege influence the learning environment (Bhatti, 2010) and can produce barriers to authentic partnership work and have an impact on achieving equity (Hutchings et al., 2013). As discussed above, bringing together students from two potentially very different (learning) environments can create challenges in achieving both a respectful and equal learning space, in particular if the media portrayal of people with sexual convictions is heavily stereotyped (DiBennardo, 2018). This requires acute awareness of sensitive contents (Martin, 2009) and students' diversity (Vaughan & Williams, 2013), as well as ensuring all students safety, both emotionally and physically, in a potentially volatile prison environment. On the example of partnership working, Ostergren (2011) refers to the continuum of supervision in reflective practice as a key element of the student's (supervisee) journey to independence in learning. Ground rules here then provide a reference frame for the students' emotional and physical safety, a foundation for their more independent learning, setting aside traditional

students expectations (Hutchings et al., 2013) and requiring more autonomy of, and participation in their own learning than perhaps the traditional classroom setting would. Issues around inclusive language, as elaborated above, and considerations of (non) disclosure (of private and, for Inside Students, offence information) as well as personal boundaries (Hutchings et al., 2013) become key in creating an inclusive and safe environment. These ground rules include considerations of roles and responsibilities (Butcher, Davies, & Highton, 2006) beyond the traditional classroom environment and are brainstormed in separate teaching sessions with Outside and Inside Students before being negotiated between all students in the first joint session. Such negotiations should not only include considerations of inclusivity and safety in this learning environment, but may also explore potential topics and activities relevant to students' 'lives, backgrounds, and future or imaginative identities' (Hockings, 2010, p. 7) and actively involve students' learning identities and aspirations.

Anti-oppressive practice & challenging epistemic dominance

It is mainly the discipline of Social Work which has embraced discussions in relation to how it can translate practice into the pedagogy of teaching in order to prepare students for future employment, especially when working with vulnerable and marginalised groups. In those discussions, teaching and learning become tools and a means by which to challenge the status quo and, as learners, teachers and practitioners, identify, explore, and challenge inequalities. Reed and Black (2006) argue that the key to transformative learning is to interrogate and acknowledge 'our own position (as teachers, learners and educators) within the cultural-political- educational status quo' (Reed & Black, 2006, p. 36). Reflexivity in social science research has become very visible beyond ethnographic research (Stephens Griffin, 2017) and is indeed considered absolutely crucial and central to both the practice and theory of Social Sciences and, therefore, also in teaching and learning of social sciences. The setting of prison-based educational programmes with Inside and Outside students highlights some potentially stark differences in the backgrounds of learners, as discussed at the beginning of this paper, and the (visible) marginality of particularly the Inside students invite and indeed necessitate challenging and positioning of individual perceptions. Especially when such programmes take place in the context of disciplines such as Criminology, Sociology and Education, discussions that explore privilege, marginalisation, and challenge the status quo, are both inevitable and central to the learning experience.

Wilson and Beresford (2000) situate anti-oppressive practice not only in the practice of social work, but also as intrinsic to social work theory. Dominelli's (2002) discussion of anti-oppressive practice in social work in group and community settings here picks up on some of the key terms on inclusivity elaborated above and sets this discussion into the framework of anti-oppressive practice in social work:

Anti-oppressive practice addresses the whole person and enables a practitioner to relate to his or her client's social context in a way that takes account of the allocative and authoritative resources that both the practitioner and the client bring to the relationship. Thus, anti-oppressive practice takes on board personal, institutional, cultural and economic issues and examines how these impinge on an individual's behaviour and opportunities to develop their full potential. (Dominelli, 2002, p. 36)

While of course the delivery of any prison exchange programme is not framed by a practitioner-client relationship, the principles of anti-oppressive practice are strikingly similar to key aspects elaborated on the discussion of inclusive learning and teaching. Central to both is the approach of holistically understanding the background of all individuals involved and valuing their diversity away from homogenisation of isolated characteristics or subject positions, pro-actively promoting inclusivity and the knowledge of all participants in interactions, social, cultural and economic positioning of individuals, and identifying, exploring and challenging social inequality to promote change and transformation, in particular through the inclusion of marginalised groups:

Anti-oppressive practice is not a panacea for all the inegalitarian social relations that are reproduced in and through social work interventions. However, its tenets can be used to identify unjust practices [and marginalisation] in social work and provide a framework within which more egalitarian forms of client-centred practice can become the norm. (Dominelli, 2002, p. 36)

Similar to the earlier discussion in this paper about assuming homogeneity amongst both Inside and Outside students, Wilson and Beresford (2000) warn of over-simplifying service-users in anti-oppressive social work practice, and highlight the potential of anti-oppressive practice's over-claim to knowledge, which could lead to the re-production of the very social inequalities it seeks to challenge. Consequently, key in adapting principles of anti-oppressive practice into the delivery of prison exchange programmes as described above is a full awareness of traditional student-teacher relationships, their potential power dynamics and sensible approaches to boundaries and disclosure of information from both students and facilitators of the learning experience (Hutchings et al., 2013). That is not only the students' awareness of their subjective positionalities and impact on the group, its dynamics and the learning experience, but also that of the facilitators (Cowburn, 2005; Wright & Cowburn, 2011). Both anti-oppressive practice and such prison exchange programmes are concerned with 'challenging dominant cultural codes' [and] revealing their irrationality, partiality and illegitimacy (Charnley & Langley, 2007), but are clearly not independent of or isolated from wider social practices, institutions, occupational discourses (Baumgartner, 2014), and associated inequalities. This means that while both anti-oppressive practice in social work and prison exchange programmes are steps in the right direction, prisons in themselves pose many challenges to the facilitation of learning and teaching (Bhatti, 2010) in general, and of course claims to full equity are equally limited in the application of anti-oppressive practice in a system that inherently is both oppressive and punitive in its practices. While 'many groups work on the basis of submerging individual identities in order to get the work done' (Dominelli, 2002, p. 113), implementing principles and the ideological underpinnings of anti-oppression in this Prison exchange teaching utilises the individual identities, their theoretical knowledge and the lived experience of its participants.

While anti-oppressive practice may provide a frame of reference in which to allow inclusive learning and teaching, the theoretical implications of this approach reach far wider. As Popkewitz (2001, p. 241) puts it 'the challenges about knowledge are not only about academic knowledge, but about cultural norms of progress and social change that are part of the politics of contemporary life'. Here it is not only the admission of 'non-academic' but lived-experienced knowledge into the learning space, but also the

necessity to place Inside Students in the appropriate socio-cultural context. In other words, inclusive language, as one example used above, assists in both positioning individuals with convictions for sexual offences in the wider contemporary discourse of offending (and indeed sexual offending), while allowing for the heterogeneity amongst them (Willis & Letourneau, 2018). Here Inside Students' knowledge of the workings of the criminal justice system and their lived experience in this very system equip them with an insight that may not be available to Outside Students, whose knowledge is academic. The addition of the lived experience of Inside Students to the learning space enables critical dialogues in which both, and equally, the academic knowledge is 'tested' against the reality of an individual's experience and Inside Students are enabled to understand their subject positions in the wider academic discourse. This disables the reproduction of Outside Students' social advantage and challenges the dominance of understanding, perceiving and knowing the world (Spivak, 1990) through the lens of the academic discourse, while actively valuing the Inside Students' experiences.

It is exactly the space in which theoretical knowledge (often, but not exclusively, of the Outside students) and lived experience (often, but not exclusively, of the Inside students) meet, where considerations of epistemology in teaching and integrated pedagogical approaches to teaching are crucial (Dewey, 1997).

Coproduction is shorthand for the proposition that the ways in which know represent the world are inseparable from the ways in which we [...] live in it. Knowledge and its material embodiments are not at once products of social work and constitutive of forms of social life; society cannot function without knowledge any more than knowledge can exist without appropriate social supports [...]. It both embeds and is embedded in social practices, identities, norms, conventions, discourses, instruments and institutions [...]. Coproduction is symmetrical in that it calls attention to the social dimensions of cognitive commitments and understandings, while at the same time underscoring the epistemic and material correlates of social formations. (Jasanoff, 2006, pp. 2–3)

Here co-production between theoretical knowledge (for this example of Education, sociological and criminological theory) and lived experiences, not only of the criminal justice system, create the space within which pre-conceptions, marginalisation and inequalities are explored, and the identity of the 'other' (both Inside and Outside student) is de-constructed in the learning space. Depending on the profile of the organisations involved (both the prison and the HE institution), students identify not only personal overlaps in lived experiences, but also in institutional organisation, discourses, processes and aspirations. It is here where 'epistemic dominance' (Andreotti, 2011, p. 4) of academic knowledge is challenged and the equal weighing of Inside and Outside Students' knowledge 'help articulate a connection between the production of knowledge about the self and Other' and allow for 'more ethical and social relations' (Andreotti, 2011, p. 91) in an inclusive learning environment. This enables a safe space for critically exploring and discussing issues of social and criminal justice as a collective responsibility, rather than an individual responsibility that rest on the Inside Students' shoulder (Baumgartner, 2014), 'in a non-hierarchical way where knowledge is seen to be distributed and where the goal is not that of consensus, but of deeper understanding through relating to multiple [and equally weighted] perspectives' (Martin, 2012, p. 56).

While principles of anti-oppressive practice here were the initial vehicle through which to create an inclusive learning environment for all students, some of the key challenges in

implementing such a programme necessitated the exploration of more fundamental issues in learning and teaching in this environment. At the centre of this exploration are issues around the over-reliance on academic knowledge, the implicit epistemic dominance of how we teach, and indeed questions around which knowledge is valued in the learning space. This has led to placing the key arguments of this paper in a much broader context of critically-oriented pedagogical frameworks in the anti-racism and postcolonial literature. It is here where the application of such a programmes asks some challenging questions, which have a much broader application, especially in the teaching of Social Sciences.

English foreign language pedagogy

Given the specific and unique context of such programmes, it is vital to adopt the programme and each learning session to the context of a prison, and appropriate to the knowledge and (assumed lived experiences) of the students involved. The pedagogical framework for the design of the programme is highly influenced by the pedagogy of English Foreign Language (EFL) teaching (Wong, Zhang, & Hansun, 2010; Scrivener, 2005, p. 2005). While the discussion above addresses some of the more theoretical challenges, EFL pedagogies assist forming the more practical approach to teaching a programme like this. Central to the EFL approach are:

- (1) Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); an emphasis on communication as both a goal and means of learning within which learners regularly work in pairs and groups using authentic materials and the integration of existing skills from the beginning.
- (2) The Emic perspective (EP); a way of looking at social interactions from an 'insider perspective', here stepping into the shoes of participants to understand their talk and actions.
- (3) Interactional Competence (IC); using interactional resources by turn-taking or dealing with problems of comprehension.
- (4) Interactional Practices (IP); systematic verbal and non-verbal methods participants use to engage in social interaction.
- (5) Naturally Occurring Data (NOD); actual occurrence of talk not gathered by interviews, observational methods, native intuition, or experimental methodologies.

Although these elements refer to language teaching and learning, they provide a useful framework for the learning space between Inside and Outside students in prisons. While all students are provided with academic reading packs, texts for individual sessions simply provide the starting point for the students' interactive communication (CLT) and a framework in which to potentially situate these discussions. However, the emphasis of different parts of the learning sessions is on students identifying and exploring set tasks under given themes verbally and in small groups. These groups are composed of an equal number of Inside and Outside students and the seating of students is deliberately arranged in a way that Inside and Outside students are rotated (Scrivener, 2005). Both Inside and Outside students are invited to use their 'insider perspective' (EP) to explore themes and encouraged to participate equally with each group being allocated a 'moderator', who is responsible for ensuring the participation of all students (IC) as well

as the facilitators of the session rotating around the different groups, and a student to report back on the discussion to the wider group (Inside Out REF). Arranging the seating of students in this way ensures that all participants get the chance to relate the topic to their own experience and knowledge (NOD), and facilitators assist in eliciting students' knowledge in their own language (Scrivener, 2005). Similarly to EFL teaching, 'teacher talk' (TT) is kept at a minimum, as sessions encourage students to guide the discussions and learning, and 'teachers' become facilitators rather than dominating the learning space, including the discussions and group interactions within it. The underlying assumption is that all students bring equally valued and prior knowledge and experience to the learning space.

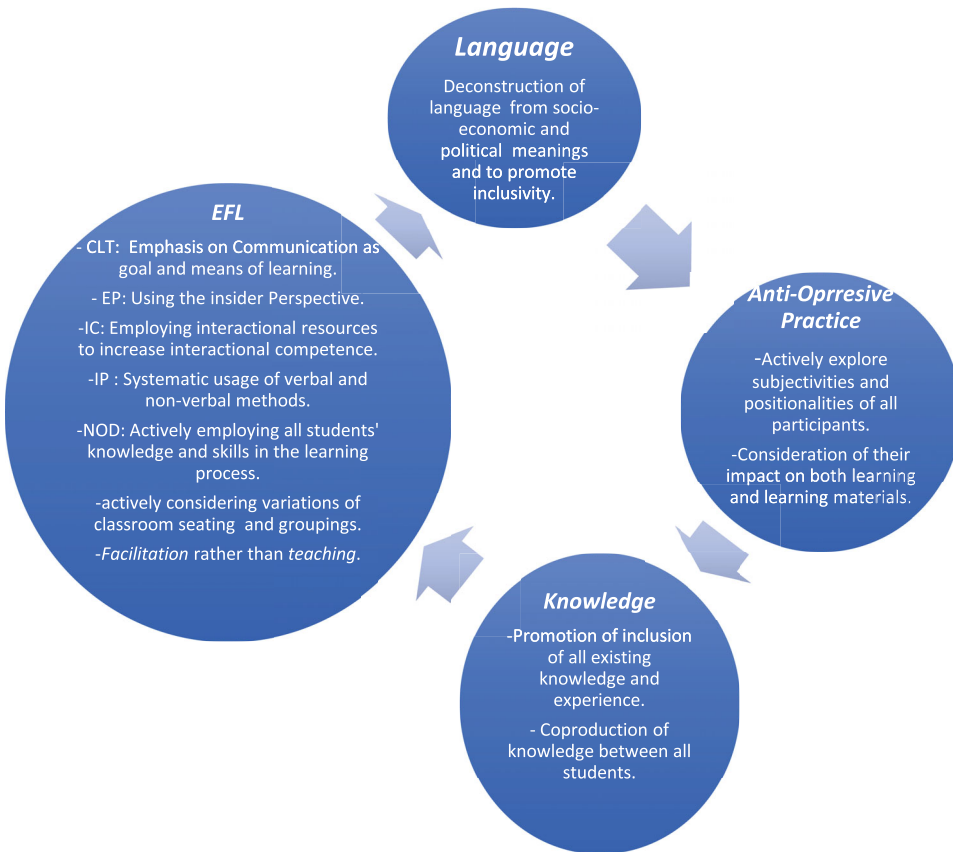
This approach embraces key elements of 'constructive alignment' (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Contrary to Berthiaume's (2009) argument for 'disciplinary specificity' teaching, the programme and teaching sessions borrow EFL teaching methods and pedagogy (Harmer, 2007; Scrivener, 2005; Tomlinson, 2003). This approach is particularly useful as in EFL teaching no specific prior knowledge is assumed or necessarily required, and sessions are designed in a way in which the materials are taught through their usage. Reading packs here provide the framework for both concepts and language used in individual discussions, to which then students can bring their own prior experience and knowledge. Trowler and Trowler (2010) argue that student engagement is extremely vital to the teaching and consequent learning process. Hence, central to designing such programmes is valuing and actively building on the different knowledge and experiences Inside and Outside students can potentially contribute to learning and teaching to enhance students' participation and identify potential issues of understanding the materials (Harmer, 2007). In this design, it is vital to acknowledge individual students' strengths as well as accommodating and balancing students' personalities, which is negotiated by the facilitators in both the composition of groups and their management (Scrivener, 2005). This includes regularly re-composing groups, so that students have the opportunity to both practice their existing and learn new skills through the minimisation of the development of set group dynamics (Scrivener, 2005; Wong et al., 2010). While the practical application of knowledge of Outside students may focus on exploring the lived experience behind their knowledge of educational and criminological theory as well as developing employability skills (Kneale, 2009), for Inside students it may be to contribute their lived experience to the learning space, as well as understanding their subjectivities and positionalities within that experience, and practising their social skills and interactions beyond the routine environment of the prison.

It is vital to understand and accommodate specific learning needs of IS (Farley & Pike, 2016), both in relation to the overall programme and the specific learning activities in individual sessions (Scrivener, 2005). This includes all students being able to contribute through either existing knowledge and/or their own personal experience. Additional considerations in relation to the specific context of the teaching need to be explored at the planning stage and may include access and timings to the learning space, the safety and security of all students, enabling 'reflective spaces' (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 2015) in and outside of learning sessions, and enabling feedback to facilitators and vice versa. Since individual sessions actively accommodate all students bringing some prior knowledge to the classroom (Biggs & Tang, 2011) and aim to involve all students, it means that teaching and facilitation methods are solely built on student-centred, problem-

based (Donnelly & Francis, 2013), and flipped classroom approaches (Bergman & Sams, 2014), similarly to key elements of EFL technique (Harmer, 2007; Scrivener, 2005).

An integrated pedagogy of inclusive learning and teaching in Social Sciences



This paper argues that considerations of epistemology (Sin, 2014) and anti-oppressive practices (Dominelli, 2002) are not only necessary, but vital in the teaching of Social Sciences. As illustrated above, it brings together a number of theories and practices that have not previously been in conversation and scaffolds those into an integrated pedagogical framework on the example of teaching Inside and Outside students in a prison environment. The paper highlights the importance of language (Willis & Letourneau, 2018) and de-constructing 'the other' (DiBennardo, 2018), which often is at the centre of investigation in Social Sciences. It aims for a deeper and more critical understanding of inequalities and challenging the status quo. Here some of the critically-oriented literature around anti-racist and postcolonial frameworks has been utilised to hit at the heart of issues around 'epistemic dominance' (Andreotti, 2011, p. 4) in teaching not only in the Western context, but also in a context in which the lived experience and the academic knowledge of all learners are integrated in the learning process. Here the space for learning is created 'in-between political communities who both benefit from [and in many cases are disadvantaged by] and are critical of ethnocentric global [and political] hegemonies and who aspire to use their privilege [and disadvantage] of social [im] mobility in the work against the grain of ethnocentrism and hegemony'(Andreotti, 2011, p. 7). This

creates a learning environment which strikes at the heart of Social Sciences, questioning and challenging the status quo and dominant knowledge within it. The paper argues that it is important to increase authentic student engagement (Trowler & Trowler, 2010) by creating inclusive (Broughan & Hunt, 2013) learning spaces, which involve students holistically through understanding the background of all individuals involved and valuing their diversity away from the homogenisation of isolated characteristics or subject positions (Dominelli, 2002). This includes valuing and integrating the knowledge and experience all students bring to the learning space (Harmer, 2007) and thereby enabling the coproduction of knowledge (Jasanoff, 2006) between groups of students who, on the example of prison partnerships, are perhaps unlikely to jointly enter a learning space together otherwise. The benefits of such Partnerships are enormous and include increasing, mainly but not exclusively, Outside students' employability (Nygaard et al., 2013) and potentially can assist with the Inside students' rehabilitation, reintegration, and desistance (Willis et al., 2010). Utilising some pedagogical and practical considerations from English Foreign Language teaching, the paper emphasises the importance of classroom management. It argues for the importance of utilising the Emic perspective in order to enable students to consider social interactions from an 'insider perspective', using interactional resources to increase their interactional competences by engaging in interactive practices on the basis of the knowledge and experience (natural occurring data) the students bring to the classroom (Scrivener, 2005; Wong et al., 2010). While the paper illustrates this framework on the example of facilitating learning within a specific partnership and in prisons, it lends itself to being employed more widely and with a diverse range of partners, particularly within the Social Sciences and third sector organisations, but also more widely to the teaching in higher education institutions more generally. The discussion around 'epistemic dominance' (Andreotti, 2011, p. 4) and challenging (ethnocentric) hegemonies of both knowledge and practice in teaching in HE are more important than ever in times when we try to find solutions to de-colonising the curriculum and actively implement anti-racist teaching.

Notes

1. For more information see: <https://www.cctl.cam.ac.uk/tlif/learning-together/details>
2. For more detail see: <https://www.cctl.cam.ac.uk/tlif/learning-together/details>
3. For more detail see: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/17-01-2019/sb252-higher-education-student-statistics/numbers>
4. Education, Audio-Visual, and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
5. Evidently in prison partnerships there are a number of hurdles to overcome when applying to such a project, including vetting etc.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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