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### Teaching (with) Sociological Imagination: Suggestions for Kindling a Hope[1]

Teaching, learning, and the very act of 'commit[ting] social science' (Auden, 2010: 182) in the current context of Higher Education, in the UK and worldwide, are perceived to have undergone a structural, cultural, institutional, and pedagogical change of seismic proportions. Such turbulence unsurprisingly distresses academics who worry about the nature, direction, and implications of such rapid transformations of the scholarly vocation; voicing concerns about the increasing 'marketisation of Higher Education' and the emergence of 'the student as consumer' (Riesman, 1980; McMillan and Cheney, 1996; Etzkowitz, 1998; Slaughter and Leslie, 2001; Fallis, 2007; Molesworth *et al*., 2011; Brown and Carasso, 2013; McGettigan, 2013). Some go as far as to discuss such developments in terms of a 'scholastic apartheid' between 'intellectual-based experience' and consumerist demands (Marinetto, 2012: 621) that 'kill[s] thinking' (Evans, 2005) and devalues education; by instilling a mentality that encourages students to *expect* an education rather than *claim* one (Rich, 1979: 231). In a somewhat less critical vein, educationalists similarly allude to a new era of 'student-focused' (Biggs and Tang, 2007; Tait, 2002) and 'outcomes-based' (Williamson, [no date]; Bourner and Flowers, 1997; Hussey and Smith, 2002) teaching and learning; urging academics to 'enhance' their practice in response to such changes (Fry *et al*., 2009) in order to satisfy the demands of Higher Education as a successful 'knowledge economy' (BIS, 2016).

At the heart of such broad-ranging controversies about the fate of Higher Education in a 21st century context, however, remains the practical issue of how to teach, learn or be scholars within an environment that discourages all the above; unless they are pursued with an instrumental mindset which evaluates *what matters* as education and scholarship in terms of *whether it counts* towards a vast array of metrics, citations, workload models, transparent costing data, research assessments, teaching quality assessments, and commercial university league tables. The remainder of this paper will explore such tensions in the hope of responding to them by motivating us to focus on what needs to change, and how much of it

[1] This paper has been accepted for publication as a book chapter in the following volume: Ehlert Maia, J. M. (ed.) *How to Teach? New Methods and Strategies for Teaching in the Social Sciences*. FGV Projetos series, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro: Brazil. The exact publication date is pending, but the book is expected to be published before Spring 2018.

we can realistically effect ourselves in and through our pedagogic ethos and practice. To achieve this, I will draw on the example of an undergraduate module on “race” and ethnicity which was explicitly conceived, designed, convened and taught to ‘incite’ the learning process like a ‘riot’ of creativity, imagination, and rigour (Lorde, 2017: 75), while also satisfying the criteria and demands of the contemporary curriculum.

**Introducing the Module: Pedagogic Principles and Rationale**

Upon “inheriting” an already existing module on ‘Race and Ethnicity in Society’, which is offered to both second and third year students as an optional module, I set out to revise and update it with a twofold aim in mind. Firstly, I was determined to introduce “race” and “ethnicity” not as abstract concepts, but as real social divisions that are experienced as such by people who are discriminated against and excluded from full participation in society. And secondly, I sought to design what C. Wright Mills (1959) famously called ‘the sociological imagination’ *into* the curriculum as a way to teach the relevant module content, as well as an opportunity for students to connect with, think about, and react to it; using their own critical and analytical faculties as developing social scientists. The rationale behind this decision was idealistic as it was pragmatic; inspired by a desire to demonstrate that belief in Higher Education as a space for thought, dialogue, and active citizenship does not militate against but can foster opportunities for educational attainment by focusing on the students’ learning and personal development, while also ensuring that they maximise their chances of achieving good grades. To foster this atmosphere of teaching and learning sociology *sociologically*, I sought to challenge the misconception that earning high grades is independent of learning (with) sociological imagination, by making the latter a precondition for the former. Without engaging deeply with the module content, therefore, students could not pursue instrumental goals without the risk of poor performance in the relevant assessments.

In striving to achieve this goal, I set out to fuse pedagogical principles with education techniques, by drawing on the philosophical work of Martha Nussbaum (2010) and recent research on Higher Education by Wald and Harland (2017). Drawing on Nussbaum’s (2010: 3-4) musings on University education, I relied on the following three goals as the ethical seedbed for my teaching practice:

(a) The ‘empowerment of the student through practices of Socratic argument’ and ‘exposure to many world cultures’

(b) The association of learning with ‘outward things’ by making students ‘conscious of their reality’ and the broader social world around them, and

(c) The preparation of learners for ‘democratic citizenship’ through the curriculum by stimulating students to ‘question, criticise, and imagine’

To apply those theoretical aims in practice, I was guided by Wald and Harland’s (2017) idea of ‘authenticity’ which encourages educators to help students see themselves as ‘authentic’ social scientists rather than mechanical “rote learners”; through teaching and learning activities that are informed by teaching innovations and case-based learning which draws on real-life scenarios (Kember and McNaught, 2007), as well as by innovations in assessment and feedback (Bryan and Clegg, 2006; Gibbs, 1999). This involves thinking about:

(a) The curriculum we teach
(b) The teaching methods and strategies we use to facilitate student learning
(c) The assessment processes we use and the methods of giving feedback
(d) The climate we create in our interactions with students, and
(e) The institutional climate, the rules, and procedures we are required to follow as Higher Education professionals

When (re)designing the module content, therefore, I strove to bring the pedagogical and the practical components together by planning the module through sketching my priorities in the form of five main questions. Starting with the conviction that thinking about “how to teach” depends on the reasons “why we teach”, I began asking the following questions:

(a) (Why) do we think that teaching matters?

(b) What is our aim?

(c) What do we teach for?

(d) What are we trying to achieve with and through our teaching?

(e) What tools do we use to do so?

I then mapped my responses to the above questions as follows:

(a) Teaching matters when it functions as a medium for creating the conditions for citizenship through *logos* (critical, analytical thinking, speech), *dialogos* (dialogue, deliberation, exchange), and attentiveness to different patterns of social interaction and what Simmel (1997) calls 'sociation' (*Vergesellschaftung*).

(b) Educate the whole person, not just the mind, and steer students to learn in order to learn, not just to cram for assessment

(c) Teaching as an education in and preparation for active, democratic citizenship

(d) Show the links between the social world we study, how we study it, and how social life is *lived* by different people in different socio-cultural and political circumstances or contexts

(e) Draw on sociology itself as an instrument for teaching with, and learning how to combine 'sensitive perception', 'adroit conceptualisation', and 'creative imagination' (Blumer, 1972) as ways of thinking about and acting towards the social world around us.

Having presented the broad principles that guided my thinking on the pedagogic orientation of this module, the following sections of this paper will focus specifically on how this was implemented in practice; through deciding and designing the relevant teaching and learning activities and forms of assessment, while also taking into consideration methods of learning support and giving feedback.

**I. Teaching the Module: Designing Teaching and Learning Activities**

In designing the teaching and learning activities for this module, I was guided by the desire to entice and engage my students' imaginations by building what Beryl Gilroy (1976: 160) called 'sensory thresholds' into the curriculum with the aim of transforming 'knowledge' into 'human understanding' (Blacking, 1977: 5). I therefore attempted to *draw up* the module content in terms of what I wanted to *draw out* of the students, by ensuring that upon completing this module they would practice attentiveness by listening to and engaging with lectures, deliver group presentations in order 'come to voice' and speak their (own) minds (hooks, 1994: 148) by and through working with their peers, as well as organising a day-long fieldtrip to two photography exhibitions that were relevant to the module content. The

overall ambition of the chosen teaching and learning activities, therefore, was to expose my students to different varieties of teaching that combined a number of different, yet intertwined, skills. The first of these was *concentration* which was developed by exercising their listening faculties by attending lectures that were delivered as lively, interactive mini-performances rather than dry educational talks; drawing on rich multimedia content which included music, photography, and film to set the theoretical content of the sociology of racism to its socio-cultural context. The second of these, was *collaboration* which was achieved by getting students to work together in groups to deliver assessed presentations thereby allowing them to hone their research, team-working, and presentation skills while also giving them space to explore their thoughts on the learning content. The third was *contextualisation* which was gained by giving my students a guided tour of two photography exhibitions that depicted different aspects of Black British culture, and aimed at encouraging them to grasp the experiential dimensions of racial discrimination as captured and depicted in photographic film[2].

In trying to bring these three elements together, I hoped to enable my students to draw on a variety of learning styles; be it verbal, visual, or aural (Dale, 1969; Brown, 2004) to make sense of the realities of racism in social life, while also ensuring that the necessary disciplinary knowledge had also been gained. I therefore attempted to embed the sociology of racism into activities that allowed my students to get a feel for what theoretical ideas gave name to and tried to describe. In doing so, I drew on the idea of what Meyer and Land (2006) call 'threshold concepts' as previously used in a UK national research project into the possible characteristics of strong teaching and learning environments in the disciplines for undergraduate education[3]. The advantage of using such a framework for guiding my teaching practice was the opportunity it afforded me to think and plan my module in terms of "crossing a threshold"; a process of gaining disciplinary knowledge by transforming my students' outlook on social issues, themes, and debates. Envisaging the module in that way, therefore, allowed me to see its design as a process that my students would need to undergo in order to arrive at a sound

[2] The two exhibitions were: 'Stan Firm Inna Inglan': Black Diaspora in London, 1960-70s' exhibition at Tate Britain, and '13 Dead and Nothing Said' at Goldsmiths College, London.

[3] The project was the ESRC-funded Enhancing Teaching-Learning Environments in Undergraduate Courses programme, which was designed to support departments involved in undergraduate teaching in thinking about new ways of encouraging high quality learning (http://www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk/)

understanding of the sociology of race and racism. By breaking the process down into ‘transformative’, ‘troublesome’, ‘irreversible’, ‘integrative’, ‘reconstitutive’, and ‘liminal’ stages, following Cousin (2006, 2008) and Land, Meyer, and Flanagan (2016), I could design my teaching by ensuring that I offered my students the space for developing their learning and knowledge on the subject by:

(a) Creating opportunities for ‘transformative’ knowledge through understanding the topic in radically new ways

(b) Allowing students to explore ‘troublesome’ features of understanding difficult sociological concepts

(c) Paving the way for durable, ‘irreversible’ insights into the life and times of racism; gained by combining thought processes that bring together different interpretations

(d) Encouraging an ‘integrative’ outlook that is ‘bounded’ with sociological ways of thinking about race, ethnicity, and racism

(e) Promoting ‘discursive’ and ‘reconstitutive’ ways of looking at social problems, and

(f) Embracing ‘liminality’ as an attitude that gives space for thinking about social problems between and across approaches rather than simply within a single perspective.

**II. Assessing Student Coursework: Deciding Forms of Assessment**

In the process of planning the overall module content, I took care to ensure that my ambition for the module would not remain a lofty, idealistic pursuit but a practicable one that would help students develop as sociology scholars and learners alike. I therefore strove to design the module content according to learning outcomes (Butcher *et al.*, 2006: 55-69; Biggs and Tang, 2007), that would be ‘achievable’ by the students, as well as deliverable and ‘assessable’ by myself and other teaching staff (Williamson [no date]: 10). Heeding Phil Race’s (2007: 85) advice that ‘nothing affects students more than assessment, yet they often claim that they are in the dark as to what goes in the mind of their assessors’, as well as putting Biggs and Tang’s (2007) idea of ‘constructive alignment’ in practice, I drew a table (see below) that attempted to demonstrate how I planned to match or align the teaching and learning activities to the assessment methods and the intended learning outcomes of the module as

indicated below. This table not only functioned as a reliable plan that I could use to see if and how the different parts of the module cohered, but was also featured in the Module Handbook to offer students a clear sense of what they will cumulatively achieve by the end of it, both as a 'process' and a 'product' of learning (Williamson [no date]: 11). This allowed both myself and my students to think about whether the assessments were fit for purpose, while also being transparent about the rationale behind the chosen assessments.

| Learning Outcomes | Description of Learning Outcomes | Teaching and Learning Activities | Assessment Methods |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Discipline-specific skills** | Understand the concepts of race and ethnicity sociologically | Lectures and Seminars | Critical Essay |
| **Cognitive abilities/skills** | Conceptualise theories on race and ethnicity<br><br>Develop own approach to such theories | Seminars | Critical Essay, Group Presentation |
| **Transferable skills** | Apply sociologically-informed approaches to race and ethnicity in everyday social life<br><br>Appreciate the importance of studying race and ethnicity sociologically | Field Trip | Group Presentation, Reflective Narrative |

An integral part of the module design, this table allowed me to think about and clearly demonstrate the role of each assessment in the overall learning process, while also illustrating its overall importance to the module's learning outcomes. Each form of assessment therefore performs a specific function but is also linked to the other two. The critical essay and the group presentations are obviously aimed at assessing my students' understanding of and thinking on key sociological perspectives on race and ethnicity; asking that they write a text as well as deliver oral presentations to demonstrate how they make sense of the relevant learning material as well as what they think and how they think about them. The reflective narrative on the other hand was offered as an opportunity for the students to think beyond the curriculum, but rather reflect on the two photography exhibitions by sharing their impressions and thoughts about: (a) what they saw, heard, noticed, (b) what they made of it,

(c) why it made them pause and think, and (d) why they thought it was important. This portfolio of two written assessments and one group presentation, was therefore introduced with a view to encourage students to engage with different material in different ways that went beyond "chalk and talk" and embraced more interactive assessment methods giving a more 'open air' feel (Malinowski, 1954: 146-7; Park in Brewer, 2000: 13) to the way that knowledge is tested, assessed, and evaluated in the context of Higher Education. Contributing to this idea of broadening the scope of the module was my decision to select the best three reflective narratives for publication at the well-known *The Sociological Imagination* blog having discussed this first with the Director of Teaching Programmes of my Department as well as with the Editor of the blog[4].

**III. Giving Feedback and Student Support: Encouraging Improvement**

Having always conceived of the relationship of teachers and students as an intricate 'dance' (Derounian, 2011) which involves many different steps, I have always remained committed to the learning and personal development of my students; by combining the 'enabling' and 'supportive' aspects of student support (Jaques, 1992), and fusing them with what Gatfield and Alpert (2002) and Gatfield (2005) call the 'pastoral' and 'contractual' supervisory styles. In my mind, this has involved caring about the welfare of my students as persons as well as supporting them as learners by helping them achieve specific goals that they have set themselves. I therefore do my best to develop or 'nurture' our relationship pedagogically (Thomas, 2012: 42; Vygotsky 1978), while also setting targets that are tailored to my students' specific learning needs and circumstances (Flecknoe, 2001; Martinez, 2001). In the wake of the 'massification' of Higher Education (Wisker *et al.,* 2008: 23); both in terms of increased student numbers as well as the greater diversity of their backgrounds, this can seem like an insurmountable challenge given that definitions of what leaning is, how learners learn, and how they can be best supported vary significantly (Brown, 2004; Butcher *et al*., 2006; Race, 2010; Gosling, 2009; Thomas, 2012; Tait, 2003; Bullock and Wikeley, 2008).

To meet this challenge, or at least acknowledge its existence in my teaching practice, I provided multiple opportunities for one-to-one meetings with my students throughout the

[4] The published Reflective Narratives, are available online and can be accessed at: http://sociologicalimagination.org/archives/19560

term, but also made full use of teaching sessions and Virtual Learning Environments (e.g. Blackboard) to maintain regular communication with my students to address and discuss matters that are related to feedback on coursework. In addition to that, I produced an illustrated forty-page Study Skills handbook which was intended as a companion to developing learning habits that would aid students to build on and further improve their academic skills. This 'Learning How to Learn Guide in Higher Education' handbook contains detailed guidance and advice on most, if not all, aspects of learning in Higher Education with sections on attending lectures and seminars, note-taking, finding information, critical reading and writing, giving oral presentations, revising for exams, preparing for dissertations, as well as offering detailed explanations of marking criteria for coursework, advice on how to get feedback, and how to take it on board.

The last three have proven extremely useful tools for helping students understand what is required and expected of them in assessed pieces of coursework, what the marking criteria used to assess their work mean, and what they can do to ensure that they have fulfilled them by following a series of ordered steps. In explaining what the marking criteria mean, I provided short, clear, specific definitions of what 'argument', 'structure', 'evidence', 'writing style' mean accompanied by tips on how to meet such criteria; followed by recommendations for further reading. To familiarise students with what the marking criteria and grade descriptors mean, I also devised a checklist with the aim of turning tedious, and often inaccessible, grade descriptors into clearly-worded questions which are organised under headings that correspond to the relevant criteria. Under 'Evidence' for instance, students find questions such as 'Are the points made supported by evidence from cited sources?', or 'Are the sources drawn on sufficient, reliable, and appropriate?'. To make the most of this resource, students are advised to read it carefully before they prepare their assignments, as well as check their assignments against this checklist after they have completed their final draft. This effectively allows students to assess their own work before it reaches the markers; thereby boosting students' confidence by helping them understand exactly what they need to work towards, while also trying their hand at, evaluating their own work in the light of the same marking criteria that the markers use.

By introducing this Study Skills handbook, I hoped to reduce the anxiety that students might feel not just in the face of competing deadlines and other pressures but also in interpreting

what we ask them to do in the assignments we require them to take. I therefore thought that it would be useful to guide them through the terminology we use in our marking criteria as well as help them meet such criteria as successfully as possible by providing a step-by-step guide that they could rely on as they engage with the task ahead. Part of my thinking also involved feedback considerations and the extent to which I could encourage students to read my feedback in the light of the criteria, while also helping them improve their work by creating a strategy for doing so. To achieve this, I designed a 'Feedback Template' with the aim of helping students take my feedback on board by asking them to insert the feedback comments under the relevant marking criteria which are organised in a table, as seen below:

| Structure | Quality of Argument | Use of Evidence | Writing style |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Weak* | *Not clearly stated* | *Inaccurate/inconsistent* | *Informal/Conversational* |
| *Confusing* | *Argument missing* | *Page/date numbers missing from citations* | *Undisciplined* |
| | *Digressions* | *Revise Bibliography* | *Clear, precise, specific* |
| | *Inconsistent* | *Follow a referencing system to the letter* | |
| | *Not sufficiently backed-up by evidence* | | |

After identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their work, students are asked to read the relevant sections and chapters from a list of resources that accompany the Feedback Template in order to seek tips, guidance, and advice on how to acquire and/or sharpen the skills that they need to improve on. Once they have finished reading and have gathered enough tips and guidance on how improve, they are asked to list the tips that they have found helpful on a new version of the table as indicated by the example below:

| Structure | Quality of Argument | Use of Evidence | Writing style |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Use headings* | *Figure it out before writing* | *Print a copy of a referencing guide and consult it each time you cite/reference* | *Read Turabian (2003) and Becker (2007)* |

| *Plan before writing* | *Stick with it throughout the essay* | | *Go to the Writing Centre* |
|---|---|---|---|

This process of breaking the feedback down, therefore, allows students to visualise the weaknesses of their work as well as respond to the markers' feedback, by making students think about as well as devise a plan of action on how to improve their essay writing skills through focusing on what aspects of their work might require more practice, in order to better meet the relevant marking criteria in future assignments. Given that some students are reluctant to meet their tutors to discuss their feedback in person, this template additionally allows anyone who is interested to use it to improve his or her performance in written coursework. The overall advantage of this way of responding to feedback positively and constructively, is that it tackles some key problems with feedback as identified by the relevant literature which highlights how often students do not understand what the feedback means thereby hindering what they can do about it to enhance their learning practice (Winstone *et al*. 2016, 2017; Beaumont *et al*. 2011; Carless *et al*. 2011; Jonsson, 2013).

**IV. Evaluating the Module: Achievements, Limitations, and Future Innovations**

Having so far discussed some practical ways in which learning activities, assessments, and feedback can be designed into the curriculum in order to bridge the gap between pedagogical ethos and teaching practice, this section will evaluate all the above by showing how the module was received by the students while also offering some self-critical reflections. Both seem important as ways of giving evidence of the relative success of such incentives, and discussing what change or innovation they might bring to current educational practices in Higher Education. This section will therefore be divided into two parts: the first part will present evidence from Module Evaluation results, while the second part will offer my own commentary on the achievements, limitations, and future innovations.

In evaluating the module's success I have looked at the numerical data and written feedback that I have received at the end of the term, as compiled by my Faculty's Curriculum and Quality Assurance Team. According to this data, the module scored 4.8 out of 5 in terms of student satisfaction, and students also achieved very good results with the average mark being 73.58% for second-year students and 77.8% for third-year students that took this

module. These results demonstrate that students enjoyed the module overall and achieved very high marks due to the choice of assignments and the learning support that was offered throughout the entire module. Students found these assessments interesting, they applied themselves, and did extremely well as a result. It is also important to note that students profited from in-class as well as one-to-one meetings which prepared them well for their coursework, especially the reflective narrative for which an entire learning session was planned soon after the field-trip.

The written comments that the students provided as part of the Module Evaluation survey also reflect the overall success of the module pointing at how they found the learning material 'different and interesting' and enjoyed how 'music and videos' were included making the content 'relevant to today's society'. They also described the teaching methods as 'very engaging'; stressing that they 'didn't just feel like the lectures were just about listening and writing things down', and praised the teaching staff for being 'passionate about their subject'. In addition to the lectures, students also liked the field trip mentioning that 'it was different to other modules' and that 'I actually felt I learned more by doing this', finding it 'particularly useful in being able to understand Black British Life'. Some students also commented on how they felt that the field trip 'aimed at genuinely informing people rather than merely to pass. My understanding of race and ethnicity was actually improved'. Students also seemed to enjoy how 'the assessment methods differ, which is beneficial and allows students who are not extremely good at academic writing to excel in other ways - this is fair'. Some stressed how giving group presentations provided them with 'a really good opportunity to review key concepts and relevant examples and issues', describing that they 'felt more confident about public speaking after giving our group presentation' while also learning how to 'enhance presentation skills by hearing the feedback'. Others also pointed out that 'the seminars were great' allowing students to 'learn something each time and it was a good way for students to interact outside their usual groups'. The students' observations on the reflective narrative were equally positive; welcoming 'the ability to be assessed through other methods apart from essays', describing it as 'a welcome challenge' that invited them to express their 'own opinions rather than just regurgitating the work of sociologists'. Last but not least, the feedback that students were given on their assignments was described as 'very detailed and helpful'.

In addition to the formal feedback discussed above, I have also received a number of e-mails from students who praised the module, and thanked me personally for offering it as an option. I am quoting one such e-mail at length below as it vividly conveys much of what has already been described in this paper.

"I finally felt that after three years of writing in a rigid way, I was able to be creative and write about real-life experiences and my personal reflection without boundaries. The module opened by eyes to racism and made me realise that even though I would've never considered myself racist, I definitely did have some internal biases. I realised that it is bizarre to differentiate people based on their skin colour because that has no effect on who they truly are! It has been crazy to learn about how race was constructed because I guess I have always just assumed whiteness as the norm.

Since your module, I have had some deep talks with my mother about race, and I cannot believe just how much white people have been brainwashed to internalize the belief that they are superior or owed privileges!! (Should probably point out that she is a foreigner and grew up in a strict/traditional white household […], and everything she knows about race is based on what she was taught at school).

Sorry, did not mean to write so much, but I don't think you realise just how eye opening this module has been for me, so well done to you, and thank you!

My university experience is coming to an end and you have taught me modules for two years now. You have answered all of my emails, always helped me with work, and reassured me every time I started to overthink my work and panic (too often) - your passion for teaching is inspiring. Once more, thanks for everything"

Upon reading such comments, it would be difficult not to feel a sense of satisfaction not only in a strict professional capacity but also in a deeper, emotional pedagogic one; especially as the sentiments echoed in this student's e-mail were what I wanted this module to achieve, not simply as a credit-bearing part of an undergraduate Sociology degree programme but as the outcome of teaching, learning, and "doing" Sociology at University. Furthermore, by

revisiting the evidence of this module's success, as hitherto discussed in this section, the idea that the instrumental and the substantive goals of tertiary education need not necessarily obscure or eclipse each other but can overlap instead, gained considerable traction in my mind. This was demonstrated in concrete terms when some innovations that were introduced in this module were embraced by colleagues across the University. One example includes the adoption of my Study Skills guide by Prof. Carol Evans, Co-director of the Centre for Higher Education at Southampton, who added it to her Evans Assessment Tool (EAT) Framework website which is aimed at transforming the role of assessment and feedback in Higher Education. Another example includes the introduction of fieldtrips as a teaching and learning activity in my Department, which subsequently led to similar field trips for Sociology, Social Policy, and Criminology students, while the use of the Reflective Narrative was used as evidence of teaching innovations within the School of Sociology Social Policy and Criminology at the University of Southampton, where I currently teach.

Looking back at what the module has achieved in terms of student satisfaction as well as sharing good practice with colleagues, it is equally important to reflect critically on the ground covered so far to justify why the innovations that were implemented were needed in the first place. Given that this module had already ran successfully for a number of years before I came to convene it, the radical overhaul that I attempted would seem unnecessary and to a certain degree it could be claimed that it was. Yet, I thought it necessary to revise and redesign it entirely, not only to experiment with teaching and learning innovations that I felt a burning desire to test in practice, but also to discuss issues pertaining to social divisions such as race and ethnicity in the aftermath of aftershocks that popular movements like #BlackLivesMatter created in the public sphere. I therefore thought that this was a unique opportunity to discuss both the long historical pedigree of racism and its persistence, not as a prolonged but passing frenzy, but as an enduring feature of contemporary social life.

To do so, I felt it necessary to (re)design the learning content in a way that would help my students engage with such a social phenomenon in an almost visceral sense; by exploring it not just through the relevant sociological literature but also through art, music, and film in order to begin to grasp just how entire societies are held in the grip of racist modes of thinking and acting, and what damage such ways of thinking and acting do. In short, the module's

aspirations created the need for satisfying them which might explain why so much emphasis was given on understanding the experiential dimension and reality of racism. I therefore sought not just to educate my students out of the widespread, banal, everyday racism that shapes what and just how much of our social world we actually see or fail to see, both willingly and unwillingly, but also help them do so by making even the most practical aspects of learning aid my students in engaging with the module content as something more than a sum of credits towards their degree.

If I were to convene this module again in the coming years, I would follow the same rationale for designing the module content and the teaching and learning activities, but would consider making some changes to the assessments by way of experimentation. Despite the success of the field trip, I would replace it with the #Everyday Racism mobile phone app which sends racist abuse to the app's user for seven days as a way of improving their understanding of racism by facing daily scenarios which illustrate how it plays out it in "real" social life. I would then ask my students to create a poster presentation that would demonstrate what they made of the experience and how they could make sense of it sociologically too. Finally, I would also organise an on-campus exhibition that would feature my students' poster presentations, allowing them to interact with visitors to explain their work further.

The challenge of proposing, experimenting with, and creating more elbow room for teaching innovations that do not abandon the critical spirit of scholarship in order to simply satisfy institutional pressures to demonstrate excellence in ways that are dictated by a dominant managerial logic is therefore real, and poses a serious threat to the integrity of scholarship and pedagogy. Yet, this managerial streak in Higher Education will not disappear if scholars bail out of the fray with a sigh of despair, nor can it be permitted to disfigure the teaching *of* as well as *with* sociological imagination. In short, some compromise is required but this need not necessarily be a Faustian bargain. The "soul" and spirit of education can remain alive even under conditions that discourage it by producing 'students [who] often do not want to learn and teachers [who] do not want to teach' (hooks, 1994: 12), provided that we 'turn the tangle straight' and apply 'vigour of thought' and 'thoughtful deed' (Du Bois, 2003: 189) to the way we design our curricula and teach our students in the manner that I have attempted with the module I have discussed in this paper. As Audre Lorde (2007: 141-2) put it: 'Militancy no

longer means guns at high noon, if it ever did. It means actively working for change, sometimes in the absence of any surety that change is coming. It means doing the unromantic and tedious work necessary to forge meaningful coalitions, and it means recognizing which coalitions are possible and which coalitions are not. […] It means fighting despair'. Instead of sinking into a quicksand of despair, therefore, the invitation that this paper wishes to extent to students and teachers of sociology, and social sciences more broadly, comes in two parts. The first involves transgressing the boundaries of what might be termed "academic capitalism" to describe a widespread institutional logic that seeks to make profit out of academics' labour and students' fees, without due regard for the parties affected; be it academics, students, scholarship, or education. The second calls for sociologists to teach (with) sociological imagination as the last-resort response to kindling a hope for teaching and learning in Higher Education as an education in as well as for citizenship. This, however, also requires teachers to compare notes and share insights into how our work ethos and practice strives to achieve that, while also inspiring our students to pursue their education as what Max Weber (1948 [1919]: 128) famously called a 'vocation'; a commitment (*Beruf*) that is animated by an ethic of conviction, or 'calling', which needs '*ira et studium*', 'passion and perspective' in one's calling, and a 'steadfastness of heart which can brave even the crumbling of all hopes'.

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