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Decolonising your bibliography workshop.

A new discussion-based workshop, 'Decolonising your Bibliography', was developed with the focus on analysing, evaluating, and thinking critically about information sources used by students in their work.

In the past few years, students across the country have been highlighting the need to critically discuss the "whiteness" of university curricula, to challenge the knowledge and understanding that are at the foundation of current teaching. The University of Sheffield is not alone in working towards decolonising the curriculum.

Our approach was one that situated the histories and knowledge that do not originate from the West in the context of imperialism, colonialism, and power, and to encourage students to consider the effect this has on knowledge production and the value placed on the information they use to inform their work.

This programme supports our Information and Digital Literacy offer (see our IDL Framework), supporting the literacy of Questioning, through enhancing critical literacy.

This workshop ran to coincide with our Black History Month exhibition in the Digital Exhibition Space of our Information Commons, and was promoted with other events taking place across the University. It supports the University's work to decolonise the curriculum and work taking place across the Library sector to decolonise information.

It provided a space for students to think and discuss these issues outside of the curriculum, and share insights into discussions that had been taking place within their discipline. The students who attended were incredibly engaged and their insights are valuable to feed into our own thinking in this area.

This workshop was a pilot and we have reflected on what we learned to feed into developing the session for us to run again in the future. We can also learn lessons for facilitating discussion-based workshops on sensitive topics in the future.

Facilitating a workshop with the aim of raising awareness, encouraging discussion, and generating questions without providing 'answers' or 'solutions' was a challenging approach, as the natural reaction of staff is to be able to facilitate the discovery of an 'answer'.

We also had to acknowledge that discovering alternative and non-traditional sources in an academic context, where judgements of quality and the expectations of some disciplines is based around peer-review and traditional academic publishing, is a challenge. The tension between working to address these issues and citing sources that academics expect to see was a frustration felt by all.

We were aware of the challenges of participating in this kind of discussion and included a discussion guidelines activity to ensure that the session and participants were respectful, supportive, and inclusive.

Allowing discussion to flow freely within a one-off session that also included a practical exercise meant that time was a challenge.

We use participatory action research methodology to work in a Plan, Act, Reflect cycle, collaboratively using reflections to continuously modify our plans. This was a pilot workshop that we

will develop for future delivery. Library staff reflected on the session, on whether the learning outcomes were met, and the engagement of the students involved.

We also conducted a feedback survey after the event and the student feedback received was positive.

This workshop went beyond a theoretical discussion about colonisation and its effects on current European culture and university curricula. Whilst the focus was on discussion and critical thinking, we did also incorporate practical activities into the session. We provided students with a series of questions to be used in analysing information sources, questions which promoted reflection, not 'answers'.

By embracing a different approach to supporting critical literacy we have enriched our library offer and will continue to reflect and build on this work. Developing our ideas through small scale activities outside, not within, the curriculum, gives us the opportunity to innovate and develop in an iterative way.