

**Repairing the Curriculum  
Annual Report and Action Plan, June 2021**

Broderick D.V. Chow, Deputy Dean (Interim)

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## Annual Report

### 1.0. Introduction:

The Repairing the Curriculum Project, instituted in June 2020, is process of transformative change in Learning and Teaching that is based in listening, reflecting, dialogue, and action. It aims to embed equity and inclusion, with a specific focus on anti-racism, in all areas of Central's teaching delivery (undergraduate, postgraduate, research degrees, and short courses and business training).

### 2.0. Overview of Work in 2020-21

2.1. *Listening:* In June 2020, as a response to Central's statement on the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd, former students, especially from Black and Global Majority backgrounds, came forward to hold the School accountable to its statements. They shared often painful and distressing stories and testimonies of their time studying at the School. To take accountability for Central's history and to challenge the systemic forms of oppression of all marginalized identities, it was important firstly to listen to these stories and testimonies. Thus, the Deputy Dean completed a report analysing all testimonies received via email and social media, as well as meetings and focus groups with Black and Global Majority alumni and current students. This analysis was shared in informal, open, and honest meetings with all academic staff during the autumn term 2020. Dialogue during these meetings focused on embedding anti-racism, inclusion and equity in each course, unit, reading list, production process.

2.2. *Reflection:* In autumn 2020 the Repairing the Curriculum working group met for a reflective workshop aimed at identifying Central's values for Inclusive Teaching (see Appendix). These were shared at an all-faculty workshop in January 2021, where course teams discussed their ideas for enhancing their inclusive teaching. Although Central has rightly been held accountable for failing to live its inclusive values, it is also true that numerous areas of practice, scholarship and research at the School have developed substantial expertise in equity and inclusion. The workshops therefore aimed at a positive sharing of knowledge outside the frameworks of individual courses. The January workshop was followed by another discursive forum on "Decentring, Decolonizing, and Repairing" led by the Deputy Dean, and a third forum on Neurodiversity in

Learning, Teaching, and Assessment, facilitated by colleagues in Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS).

- 2.3. *Dialogue and Action:* Review of courses has taken place through dialogue with course teams, the Deputy Dean, and Inclusion Specialist. Course teams have completed Inclusive Practice Plans, identifying objectives for course enhancement in the short, medium, and long term. Section 2 of this Annual Report, the Repairing the Curriculum Action Plan summarizes these objectives at School level, and by subject/course area. These summaries complement the objectives set in each academic's Inclusive Practice Plans, which will be reviewed yearly – they are not comprehensive but instead intended to give an indication of strategic focus for each area of Central's taught programmes.
- 2.4. In Term 3 2020-21, Central funded eight course-level projects to support Repairing the Curriculum objectives at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Priority was given to proposals demonstrating cross-course collaboration and benefit and/or widening/extending existing work at course level that cannot be developed at this point without further financial support.

### **3.0. Review of Actions**

- 3.1. Context: Strategic Planning  
The 2020-21 academic year has been a transitional period under the interim leadership of Professor George Caird, focused on creating a two-year Strategic Plan. As part of this strategic planning, staff and students at Central have engaged in a sustained series of "Think Tanks" on the School's identity, portfolio, and sustainability. With the appointment of Josette Bushell-Mingo as Central's Principal from August 2021, it is anticipated that the strategic plan will be implemented and reviewed as part of a long-term, five-year strategic plan, which may include structural change to how Central operates as an organization.
- 3.2. Context: Covid-19  
Covid-19 has also presented numerous challenges for Central, as it has for most other academic institutions. In particular, the January 2021 lockdown necessitated concerted time and energy from all teaching staff to replanning all essential course delivery.

- 3.3. During this transitional period, it has therefore not been appropriate to undertake substantial changes to courses, but rather to identify objectives for course development (see Action Plan).
- 3.4. However, substantial course improvement/enhancement actions have been undertaken in 2020-21, including:
- Embedding discussions of inclusion matters in course committee processes, with training for student reps;
  - Introducing new units and aspects of core curriculum for undergraduate and postgraduate acting students including diasporic accents and dialects;
  - Enhanced scrutiny of play choices for public productions to reflect lived identities of students;
  - Review of key sources and reading lists across undergraduate and postgraduate courses;
  - Commissioning new writing projects from writers from the Global Majority (MA Acting; MA Advanced Theatre Practice);
  - Creating "Safe Space" (mentoring) sessions for students from Black and Global Majority backgrounds, facilitated by course alumni (BA Musical Theatre);
  - Embedding equity and inclusion/anti-racism as a standing agenda item in all team meetings and holding away days/afternoons focusing on anti-racism in course development (BA Contemporary Performance Practice)
  - Creating a student/staff anti-racist/reparative reading group (MA ATP)
- 3.5. Investment
- Applications for Repairing the Curriculum projects were launched in April 2021 and staff were asked to submit bids based on key priority areas. Nearly all projects submitted were able to be funded. A total of £6000 has been invested in Repairing the Curriculum course-level projects, including the following:
- Engagement of an actor who is a wheelchair-user to play a principal role in the BA Acting year 3 production of *Colossal*, a play that deals with American football, race, and disability;
  - Commissioning an emerging Black playwright to develop a new text with MA ATP students;

- Engaging a consultant to begin work with course teams on a set of inclusion-focused resources for Theatre Practice;
- Expanding the postgraduate student-staff reading group, focusing specifically on themes of anti-racism and performance;
- Staff-seminars engaging with external expertise on supporting inclusive and anti-racist pedagogy;
- Working with students on a video campaign using the real-life experiences of people of the Global Majority to highlight and indicate discriminatory behaviour;
- A series of filmed workshops for students focusing on afro-textured hair and theatrical make-up for darker skin tones;
- Engaging an external consultant to provide inclusion training for all visiting lecturing staff on Short Courses and Business Training.

#### **4.0. Looking Forward**

In 2021-22 and beyond, Repairing the Curriculum will be an embedded part of Central's Learning and Teaching processes. Alongside the creation of a School-wide Equity and Inclusion Curriculum Framework which will inform course validation, review, and revalidation, External Examination, and Annual Monitoring, the actions identified during this period of Repairing the Curriculum will be implemented formally starting in the 2021-22 academic year and reviewed annually. Academic staff's personal Inclusive Practice Plans will be reviewed as part of appraisal. Central will also invest strategically in staff training and course-level projects to ensure course-level objectives are met.

## Action Plan

### Schoolwide Actions: Learning, Teaching, and Inclusion

Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate course level work on equity and inclusion by creating an Equity and Inclusion Curriculum Framework for course development and review, validation, and annual monitoring (<i>draft by Autumn 2021, to be approved by Academic Board December 2021, for full use from 2022-23</i>)</li> <li>• Consolidate work on equity and inclusion in production processes by reviewing and revising Central's artistic policy considering (but not exclusive to) play choices, casting, accessibility, and relaxed performances (<i>draft by Autumn 2021, to be approved by Academic Board December 2021, for full use from 2022-23</i>)</li> <li>• Embed discussions of equity and inclusion in student voice processes, starting with Course Committees (<i>instigated October 2020, additional measures including student surveys in Autumn 2021</i>)</li> <li>• Revise unit evaluations to include anti-racism/equity and inclusion focus (<i>to be used from Autumn 2021</i>)</li> <li>• Bring in practice-based external training on being an active bystander and challenging racism/discrimination in a classroom, studio, placement, or learning context (<i>from Autumn 2021</i>)</li> <li>• Establish full visiting lecturer and visiting professional induction with a package of mandatory training, including anti-racism, teaching and learning for neurodivergent learners, and being an active bystander (<i>Autumn 2021</i>)</li> <li>• Provide substantive and accessible resources for equity, inclusion and anti-racism through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Brightspace, including readings, videos, and training (<i>from Spring 2022</i>)</li> </ul>
Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed professional development for equity and inclusion into the Continuous Professional Development strategy for all staff who teach. Equity and inclusion to be foregrounded in the Advance HE</li> </ul>

	<p>Fellowship Programme with recognition (FHEA/SFHEA) targets agreed in appraisal processes (<i>Spring 2022</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate cycle of listening, reflection, dialogue and action by establishing a framework for periodic auditing and review of course content and reading lists (aligned harmoniously with the review and revalidation cycle) (<i>from Academic Year 2022-23</i>)</li> <li>• Establish concrete strategies for diversification of our teaching body (work underway) at all levels – permanent staff, visiting lecturers, and visiting professionals (<i>from Academic Year 2022-23</i>)</li> </ul>
<p>Long Term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all short- and medium-term goals (<i>Academic Year 2022-23</i>)</li> <li>• Invest in equity and inclusion long term through monetary resources supporting course-level and school-wide projects for enhancement and development (<i>Ongoing</i>)</li> </ul>

## **Actions and Recommendations by Subject/Course Area**

### **1.0. Introduction**

The actions and recommendations below summarize the key issues for each area and indicate actions being undertaken or key objectives identified by academic staff to address them. It is not a comprehensive list of actions identified in individual academic staff Inclusive Practice Plans but is intended as a larger Learning, Teaching, and Inclusion strategy to be reviewed periodically by Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and Academic Board.

### **2.0. Acting (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)**

- 2.1. Acting comprises the following courses: BA Acting for Stage and Screen, BA Acting Musical Theatre, BA Acting: Collaborative and Devised Theatre, MA Acting (Classical) MA Acting (Contemporary), MA Acting for Screen, MA Music Theatre.
- 2.2. Key issues for the Acting subject area are tied to the nature of the discipline, which asks students to bring their individual selves, including their unique identities to the work. This can create situations of vulnerability that can lead to microaggressions and distressing or harmful situations. Supporting each student's

individual positionality in relation to the work of acting therefore is the key concern for this area. Industry expectations (including discussions of casting and ) can also lead to harm to minoritized students. Therefore building in critical knowledge of both theatre and the industry is key in empowering and developing the resilience of acting students. Staff are undertaking to review and celebrate unique aspects of courses including exploring new models of training for Stanislavsky based naturalistic acting that considers the function of individual identity; introducing new units that consider the lived experience and positionalities of students such as diasporic accents and dialects; reviewing teaching material to give greater prominence to female-identifying, working class and Black and Global Majority writers; and celebrating non-English languages and non-classical forms of singing training as the starting point for student learning.

### 2.3. Actions, Objectives, and Recommendations

- Create shared seminar series for all Acting students on theatre histories and critical contexts including but not limited to gender and sexuality, race-conscious casting, and theatre and whiteness
- Review and units and aspects of core curriculum from an inclusive perspective and introduce new units including but not limited to diasporic accents and dialects, Black and Asian actors in period drama using ephemeral documentation for actor research, dance/movement of the diaspora, creating actor-led new writing/performance,
- Review protocols around selecting dramatic and musical material for classes
- Review casting processes – including how casting is understood by students and how the student cohort is supported in sharing ideas about casting
- Embed schoolwide anti-racism and inclusion training into pedagogical discussions on the course
- Engage core, visiting lecturer, and visiting professional team in discussions of equity and inclusion before encountering students
- Ensure community agreements are implemented and understood/embodyed in all teaching, rehearsal, and production spaces. Introduce each unit with a session that clarifies the philosophy and meaning of the work as well as setting the terms of the work, boundaries, and shared class charter
- Engage in staff development related to “brave and respectful spaces” and the power dynamics of the rehearsal room.

### **3.0. Contemporary Performance Practice (Undergraduate)**

- 3.1. Contemporary Performance Practice (CPP) comprises three degrees: BA Drama, Applied Theatre, and Education; BA Performance Arts; and BA Writing for Performance. CPP staff teach across different programmes as well as at PG level.
- 3.2. Ideas of ethical and inclusive practice are embedded in the ethos of the CPP programme and staff who teach on these programmes have developed unique expertise in this area. Because the curriculum itself opens up discussions of positionality, identity, race, gender, power, and violence, a key challenge is ensuring that students are supported and empowered in navigating uncomfortable learning. A second key challenge is addressing the worrying trend of decreasing diversity in student cohorts that has been ongoing for several years.
- 3.3. Actions, Objectives, and Recommendations
  - Review and revise student induction, especially in terms of supporting discussions around school-wide anti-racism training and its impact on Black and Global Majority students
  - Engage in staff development to develop methods and understanding to support students to sit with uncomfortable learning in ways that are supportive
  - Review and diversify reading lists, also emphasizing diversity of sources (oral histories, video, digital spaces), with the aim for 50% of core readings to be theorists/playwrights/practitioners from Black and Global Majority backgrounds
  - Establish clear protocols for engaging with Collaborative Outreach (Collout) institutions, especially when working with organizations with histories of or funding through systemic oppression
  - Review assessments across the course to support inclusive and anti-racist learning and practice
  - Revise unit evaluations to include anti-racism/equity and inclusion focus
  - Establish a “critical friend process” or peer review system to continually improve and reflect on structures of teaching and hold team members accountable to the collective goal of inclusive practice during planning
  - Address worrying trend of decreasing diversity in subsequent cohorts by planning admissions activity with current students especially those of Black and Global Majority background; working with Outreach to provide CPP focused workshops for Black and Global Majority young people

#### **4.0. Theatre Practice (Undergraduate)**

- 4.1. The BA Theatre Practice Programme comprises nine courses in Costume Construction, Design for Performance, Lighting Design, Production Lighting, Prop Making, Scenic Painting for Stage and Screen, Set Construction for Stage and Screen, Stage Management and Technical Theatre, and Theatre Sound
- 4.2. Owing to the wide range of backstage work that comprise this area, creating a shared language for inclusive practice in theatre practice and crafts requires tangible, dedicated effort. RTC investment is beginning to address this challenge by engaging external expertise to begin work with course teams on a set of inclusion-focused digital resources specific to the subject area. A large portion of the learning on BATP is driven by public productions, which are often led by visiting professionals. Non-inclusive and problematic practice in such situations can create difficulties for off-stage student practitioners just as it does actors. A key area for development will be developing staff confidence in having difficult conversations, acknowledging privilege and challenging non-inclusive behaviour in order to move forward in brave and respectful ways. Finally, recruiting a diverse cohort to all areas of BATP is a central concern.
- 4.3. Actions, Objectives, and Recommendations
  - Audit of practitioners, practice and source material incorporated into the courses and programme within the last year, including a review of the 2019-20 appraisal target to review the canon
  - Update sources with new examples from outside the existing canon, introduce a more inclusive reach of new VL or VP's to each course, to introduce new practices from outside the team's existing knowledge
  - Acknowledge fundamental teaching and learning methods driven by colonial models and guru positions, and expand those using flipped and student-centred delivery style
  - Review and revise Project Framing seminar series for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students to comprise smaller seminar groups led by BATP staff, with indicative sessions focusing on race and racism, intersectionality, gender, and ableism
  - Diversify the professional voices that students are exposed to
  - Create recruitment plan to reach students from under-represented backgrounds within the professional sector including aspirational recruitment activity aimed at 13-16 year-olds
  - Incorporate inclusion-focused digital resources into core teaching
  - Continue active participation in sector organizations aimed at promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in offstage theatre practice, such as StageSight.

- Engage in staff development including active bystander training to ensure confidence in having difficult conversations, acknowledging privilege and challenging non-inclusive behaviour in order to move forward in brave and respectful ways

## **5.0. Specialist Pedagogies (Postgraduate)**

- 5.1. Central has five MA programmes that focus on developing trainers, teachers, facilitators, and therapists: MA/MFA Actor Training and Coaching; MA Applied Theatre and PGCert Applied Theatre with Young People; MA Drama and Movement Therapy; MA/MFA Movement: Directing and Teaching; and MA/MFA Voice Studies: Teaching and Coaching.
- 5.2. The different nature of each of these courses means that it is difficult to specify common key challenges. However, all courses share in common a focus on teaching and training, with placements and attachments forming a large part of the learning. Like many MA courses they each have a small full-time team. It is therefore important to create ways to share good practice and knowledge of inclusive pedagogy across the subject area. The actions, objectives and recommendations below are ones identified by course teams with common value for all courses.
- 5.3. Actions, Objectives, and Recommendations
  - Strategize training for all visiting staff to ensure they are familiar with the
  - Review protocols around selecting texts for classes (ensuring that visiting staff are familiar with and adhere to these). For example, MAATC requests that three texts are provided for each session, one from a writer from the Global Majority, at least one by a woman, and one non-textual resource
  - Develop guidelines for inclusive practice in placement settings, which include ensuring students are supported in challenging or identifying problematic or non-inclusive practice in learning environments outside of Central
  - Continue to review core teaching material and reading lists to ensure consideration of minoritized positionalities and global perspectives in the spine of the curriculum
  - Review assessment
  - Collectively develop strategies to diversify the practitioners and professional voices students are exposed to
  - Collectively develop strategies to diversify the student population

- Engage in staff development including active bystander training to ensure confidence in having difficult conversations, acknowledging privilege and challenging non-inclusive behaviour in order to move forward in brave and respectful ways
- Collectively consider a shared approach to the use of community agreements and ensure these are understood/embodyed in all teaching and rehearsal spaces.

## **6.0. Production and Performance (Postgraduate)**

- 6.1. Included in this subject area grouping are MA/MFA Advanced Theatre Practice, MA/MFA Creative Producing, MA/MFA Scenography, and MA/MFA Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media.
- 6.2. The different nature of each of these courses, with contain multiple disciplines even within courses, means that it is difficult to specify common key challenges. However, all courses share in common a focus on student creativity and self-generated and collaborative practice. Like many MA courses they each have a small full-time team. It is therefore important to create ways to share good practice and knowledge of inclusive pedagogy across the subject area. The actions, objectives and recommendations below are ones identified by course teams with common value for all courses.
- 6.3. Actions, Objectives, and Recommendations
  - Continue to engage with industry experts in inclusive practice on core and options units
  - Create and embed critical frameworks for engaging with race, gender, class, positionality, identity, intersectionality and subjectivity – from ‘reading’ texts to ways of working with visiting professionals
  - Collaboratively establish introductory sessions to include frameworks of difference and positionality
  - Collaboratively review shared units (such as Critical Contexts and Cultural Landscapes) to reconsider overall narrative through an inclusive lens
  - Review assessment forms on the course, and consider the use of alternative assessments (such as audio forms) to be more inclusive of neurodivergent learners, particularly in relation to critical work
  - Maintain and further develop partnerships with external companies with mission statements aimed at supporting Black and Global Majority practitioners.
  - Collectively develop strategies to diversify the practitioners and professional voices students are exposed to
  - Engage in staff development including active bystander training to ensure confidence in having difficult conversations, acknowledging

privilege and challenging non-inclusive behaviour in order to move forward in brave and respectful ways.

## **7.0. Research Degrees (MPhil/PhD)**

- 7.1. Central's PhD Programme is the largest single research degrees programme in theatre and performance in Europe. Student projects span a vast range of subjects and a variety of research methods including a strong focus on practice research,
- 7.2. Although MPhil and PhD study at Central, like other institutions in the UK, comprises a self-directed research project supported by a supervisory team, the Research Degrees programme at Central has a highly structured programme of research training, research methodologies and theoretical frameworks, and career development, which take place in seminars across three terms. In addition, there are annual points of dissemination, Intersections (a student run conference) and Collisions (a student run practice research festival). Several students are studying on Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs) with a partner institution. Many students also teach as visiting lecturers. Key challenges for Research Degrees are a) ensuring students and staff are able to navigate uncomfortable learning in seminars; b) ensuring inclusive and respectful environments when working with CDA partners outside Central; c) empowering students to confidently teach in inclusive and ethical ways; d) fixing the PhD "pipeline" to increase recruitment of Black and Global Majority PhD candidates.
- 7.3. Actions, Objectives, and Recommendations
  - Engage in staff development including active bystander training to ensure confidence in having difficult conversations, acknowledging privilege and challenging non-inclusive behaviour in order to move forward in brave and respectful ways
  - Open access to such training above to PhD students to bring to their own learning environments
  - Continually review programme of PhD training from an inclusive perspective
  - Establish clear protocols for curating and programming Intersections and Collisions, especially in relation to supporting Black and Global Majority, minoritized, and precarious/adjunct scholars
  - Implement (with London Arts and Humanities Partnership) clear guidelines for CDA partners including expectations for both partner and student and ensuring an inclusive research environment
  - Continue to develop strategies for recruiting Black and Global Majority PhD candidates.

## **8.0. Short Courses**

- 8.1. Central's Short Courses are non-accredited and do not go through formal HE level assessment. Central delivers short courses in Acting, Voice, Writing, Musical Theatre, Creative Arts Supervision Training (CAST), Directing, Improvisation, as well as Business Training and a Saturday Youth Theatre.
- 8.2. The short courses area is primarily staffed by visiting lecturers, with one core staff member who manages their running and teaches across Acting Diploma, online short courses, and Performance Making Diploma. There is an additional 0.2 contracted short course lecturer and another faculty member runs the CAST Diploma. The Performance Making Diploma is delivered in collaboration with staff from Access All Areas. The key challenge, therefore is to ensure inclusivity is practiced across all courses and by the large team of VLs.
- 8.3. Actions, Objectives, and Recommendations
  - Embed reflective practice among VLs and core staff
  - Audit and review reading lists and key practitioners for online short courses and diplomas. Review lesson plans with VLs to ensure prominence for Black and Global Majority writers
  - Acquire clear, data-driven picture of diversity of staff to develop measurable improvement targets for medium and long-term planning
  - Acquire clear, data-driven picture of diversity of students on short courses to develop measurable improvement targets for long-term planning
  - Review feedback forms from an inclusion perspective as an ongoing measure to address inclusion with teaching staff yearly
  - Address diversity of visiting lecturer pool through a biannual recruitment campaign, with positive action strategies aimed to recruit more Black and Global Majority VL
  - Ensure all VLs undergo mandatory inclusion training.

## Values for Inclusive Teaching

The following list of 10 values for Inclusive Teaching are drawn from the Repairing the Curriculum Working Group meeting held in Term 1 2020-21. Members of the working group contributed to breakout discussions and a shared document, from which these values are drawn. The 10 values are in draft form, and feedback and consultation with course teams and students is welcome at this point as we work towards a strategic plan for Inclusive Learning and Teaching.

1. Inclusive teaching is about **listening**: deeply, actively, somatically
2. Inclusive teaching is **reparative**. Inclusive teaching is about **healing**: we have to heal as an institution in relation to our history; and we have to attend to the different ways learning makes students vulnerable depending on their own identities and lived experiences.
3. Inclusive teaching is **democratic, collaborative, and non-hierarchical**: we want to move away from the master-guru model to collaborative pedagogy
4. Inclusive teaching is holding a space for paying attention to and **welcoming different positionalities**: how we are positioned determines what we know/think of as true, and in the classroom students/teachers use their own positionalities to interrogate, question and learn.
5. Inclusive teaching has an **awareness of power, responsibility, and community**. We want to decentre power structures, but also pay attention to who has power in our classrooms, institutions, and industries. We want to both hold to account and celebrate choices. As teachers and students we are part of a community, which comes with attendant responsibilities.
6. Inclusive teaching is **dialogic**. Teacher and learner are mutually accountable and responsible.
7. Inclusive teaching is **open, transparent, and clear** at all levels: it starts from an agreed understanding of the terms of engagement and of learning and the protocol and parameters of the learning environment.
8. Inclusive teaching **pays attention to different forms of knowledge** and how these are valued in assessment tools/structures. It recognizes that there are historical and unspoken assumptions made about learning and intelligence based on ableist thinking.
9. Inclusive teaching is based in **continuous reflection**: on the room, on yourself, on the world around you.

10. Inclusive teaching is **sustainable**: it is about teaching and learning to envision a future for all. Inclusive teaching recognizes how our practices are connected to a wider ecosystem.