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Examining the problem of institutional racism in a UK-based university

13 February 2023, 13:00 to 14:00

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“I’m managed by a white man who's managed by a white man who's managed by a white woman who's managed by a white man”: A mixed-methods study examining the problem of institutional racism in a UK-based university

In this presentation, Denise A. Miller and Charmaine Brown will summarise the results from a study that was developed to examine the problem of institutional racism in a London-based, Post-92 higher education institution (HEI).

The study examined (1) the extent to which racism was omnipresent across all levels of the HEI, and (2) the impact on both BAME and non-BAME staff; thereby bringing to the fore diverse perceptions about the systems that reproduce and maintain racialised inequalities in HE.

The study shows that BAME staff were primarily impacted by racism, yet that it was surprising to find that the collateral consequences of racism were often equally felt by many non-BAME participants. The consequences of racism were wide-reaching and invariably relate to the significant toll racism had taken on all staff’s mental health and wellbeing. Although some participants found support and solidarity in colleagues/staff networks, the majority expressed scepticism and even cynicism about the HEI leader’s efforts to change the status-quo and genuinely address racism. Several participants contemplated leaving the HEI. The discussed findings point to HEI leaders taking responsibility for creating truly equitable, diverse and inclusive workplaces.

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Further large-scale research is needed to critically examine the practices of dominant structures in HE, and the conditions under which said structures can be made equitable. In this way the long-standing problem of racism might be better understood and addressed.

Speakers:

Dr Denise A Miller

Senior lecturer at the University of Greenwich and a child and educational psychologist in private practice, Denise currently works in early years, primary and secondary school settings, as well as further and higher education, and clinical and legal (ie expert witness and tribunal) contexts. Denise is passionate about undertaking research that involves examining marginalised educational professional's and children and young people's experiences in the education sector.

Dr Charmaine Brown

Dr Brown is an Early Career Researcher and a Senior Lecturer on the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Further Education (FE) programme in the School of Education at the University of Greenwich. She is a member of the Institute of Learning and Development (ILD), Centre for Inequalities and is currently engaged in various EDI research projects on inequalities in education.

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