



WHO AM I IN THIS SPACE?:

***APPROACHING THEMES OF EMPIRE,
MIGRATION AND BELONGING WITH
AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY***

Zaiba Patel

AIMS

- 1** **Rec 4 & 6: Support reflection on identity and power, and working with students' emotions and lived experiences**
- 2** **PR 13: Should pay attention to identities, personal, social - challenges & opportunities**
- 3** **KF6: Emotional & pastoral labour is involved, but unevenly distributed**

HOW DO TEACHERS ENGAGE WITH AND MEDIATE DECOLONIAL PRACTICES IN HISTORY EDUCATION?

Phase 1: Mapping the terrain

- 18 educators
- Range of disciplines
- Interviews, questionnaires, focus groups

Phase 2: Case studies

- Focus on history teachers
- 2 sites
- Lesson observation, history walks, interviews with staff and students

Decolonial and antiracist practices are varied:
contextual, relational, emotional, personal

WHAT SHAPES VARIED PRACTICES?

Some examples:

- Educating other members of staff - whiteness, white privilege etc.
- Running assemblies celebrating diversity in the city
- Reading antiracist and decolonial books
- Pen pal programme with another school
- Using objects, poetry, art, and music as historical sources
- Engaging students in shaping local histories

‘So the experiences that we have inform how we then become educators, you know the curriculum that we create and the lessons we create and how we educate’

-Alexa, Art Teacher

Reflect:

What experiences shape you as an educator?

TEACHER IDENTITY

- Identities as educators are **varied, contingent and ever-shifting.**
- **Values, dispositions and orientations are built on a lifetime of experiences.**
- Identities are constantly mediated and re-negotiated.



**The Dynamic Systems Model
of Role Identity | Kaplan &
Garner**

Identities are negotiated in the classroom and in the playground...

‘I was very aware of my whiteness and I was very aware that I didn't look like most of the children and I also became very aware that I didn't know enough about them, their family, where they came from, their history [...] First of all, I felt a bit intimidated.’

Kids in London learn how to be in a multicultural society because they grew up in a multicultural society and I would argue that many teenagers, white teenagers in Wembley, many not all, they're much more racially literate than most of their teachers in the sense that that is their life. The ideologies of race, they learn in school, and they dismantle them in the playground.

Some aspects of identity become more salient...

‘You're only white because there's a black person in the room [...] Before I came in, you were just Dave and now I'm in the room, you're Dave who is a white man, who is now proud of who he is and where he comes from and doesn't really care about the past because the past doesn't have anything to do with the present. But it's like all I've done is enter the room, I haven't actually done anything. But it's that having to sort of rearticulate and re-understand one's identity and humanity in the face of this sort of constant reminder of this ugly part of our history that we don't want to talk about.’

...depending on the social situation

‘whether that identity is firmed up in terms of ethnicity and it struck me, rightly or wrongly, the way in which ethnicity seems to be something that me as a white guy, don't I don't immediately think of myself as framing my identity through ethnicity, so that that was interesting.’

they shape how we show up in the classroom...

‘It's very challenging, I think as a white British person to sit and listen to this because I know I've, you know, when you said about the difficulties in actually getting people to teach this, there is all this element of fault, isn't there in anything you know and it's, you know, I felt listening to her. I felt at one point personally responsible for what had happened and felt like I needed to apologise, even though I hadn't been aware of it before and obviously wasn't around at the time.’

how we show up for our students...

‘And it was just really interesting to hear their perspective. We talked about how kids would come up to them and touch their hair and how difficult that experience was for them. I was just like, this is like, we've got to do something about this. This is basically outrageous because school is not a safe space.’

and how we show up for our colleagues...

But the way I've just explained it to you, the way I've explained it to you, as in I used the slur, didn't I?

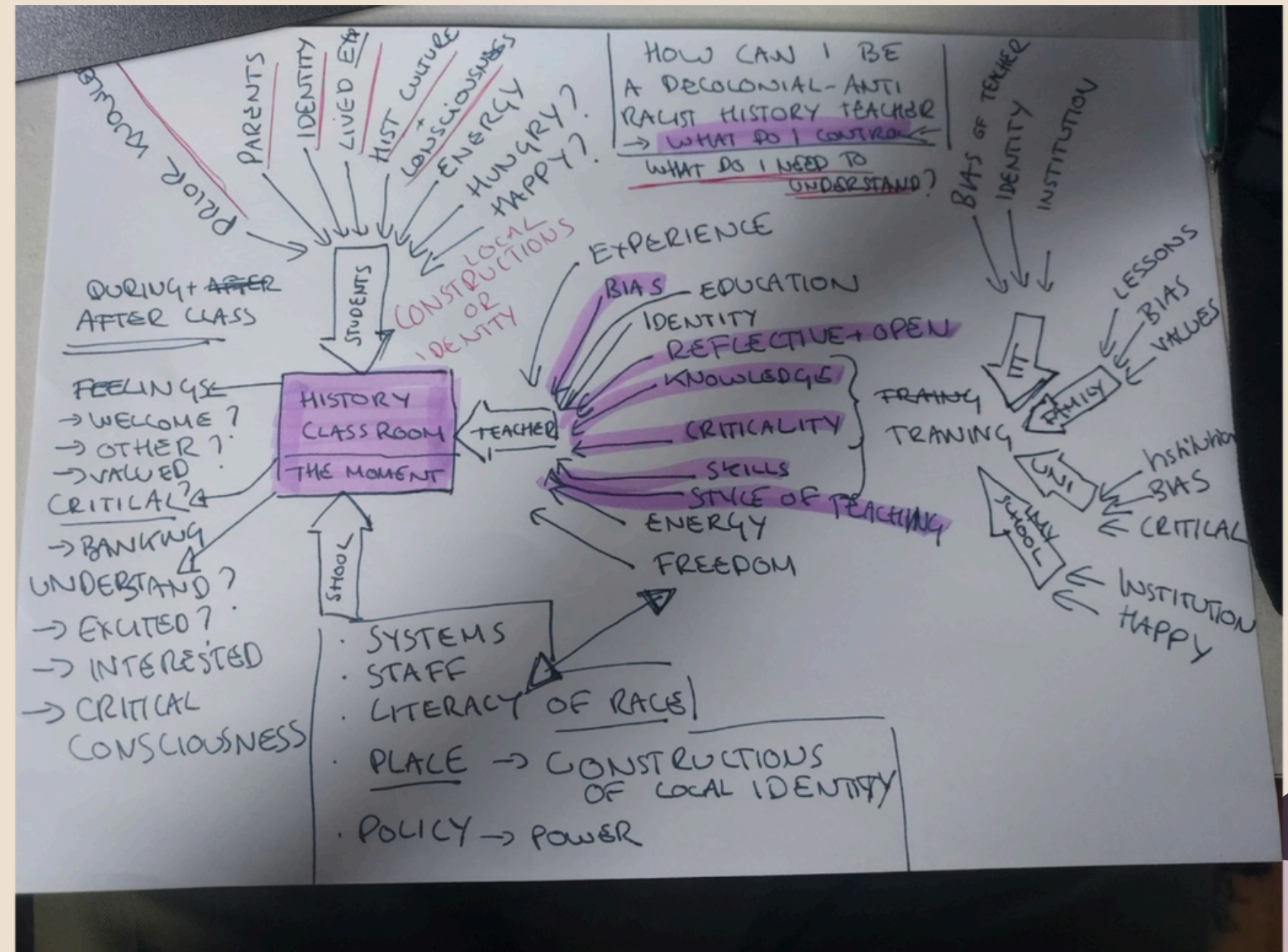
And it's not nice to have to do that, but I've use that in a meeting with my predominantly white colleagues and said, do you recognize what microaggression or racism is, or does somebody have to say this to be acknowledged as you know, you know that this is terrible behaviour.

REFLECTION ON IDENTITIES

- 1** What identities do you bring to the classroom and/or to the themes of EMB?
- 2** Which of these identities are most salient to the teaching of themes of EMB?
- 3** How do these identities shape your interactions with students and/or other staff, particularly in relation to the themes of EMB?

PLACE, EMOTION AND TEACHING EMB

- Teaching EMB can be deeply emotive
- Legacies of EMB show up in communities differently
- How are teachers negotiating this?



EMOTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

'The schooling of emotion'

Emotions and memory are politically and pedagogically intertwined. Teaching is not emotionally neutral.

'Pedagogies of emotion'

Teachers and institutions implicitly teach which emotions are legitimate in the classroom

'Emotional rules... regulate and guide emotional expression in specific situations... These rules classify certain emotions as 'legitimate' or 'appropriate' and others as 'illegitimate' or 'inappropriate'. The driving force that categorizes which emotions are appropriate... might be, for example, morality, politics, or culture.'

Zembylas et al., 2014, p.9

LEICESTER

‘We work in a predominantly white working class area, well you know Leicester, it’s [...] has a reputation and the head teacher said when she first started teaching here about 15 years ago, there was a strong kind of BNP presence in the area.

So she didn't wanna call it Black Lives Matter, she said I don't want to call it Black Lives Matter, we won't get the parents on board with that and so then I came up with, OK, what about Leicester, Leicester is very multicultural, we can celebrate the diversity of Leicester so I came up with celebrating Leicester.

And even I'm doing training this week, right, and I've been looking over and over because I know there's some stuff that don't agree with it.

I know there's some staff that have different views.

I've seen their twitters and I've seen, you know, the kind of things that come out with.

So I know that they're gonna take it in maybe a negative way, so I'm there trying to reference everything I've got you know, books here that I'm trying to reference because I know that it might be challenging, so one there is not appetite for it and secondly there might be a challenge for it as well.



A COASTAL TOWN

‘Because in [insert place name] everybody's like just a part of it, and all sorts of people had arrived here and become part of it, it feels like it's a part of us.’



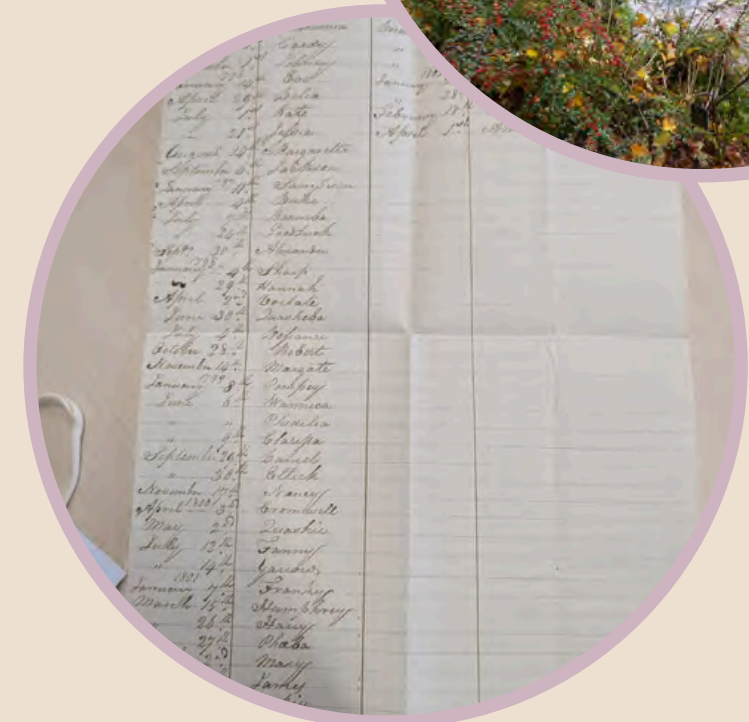
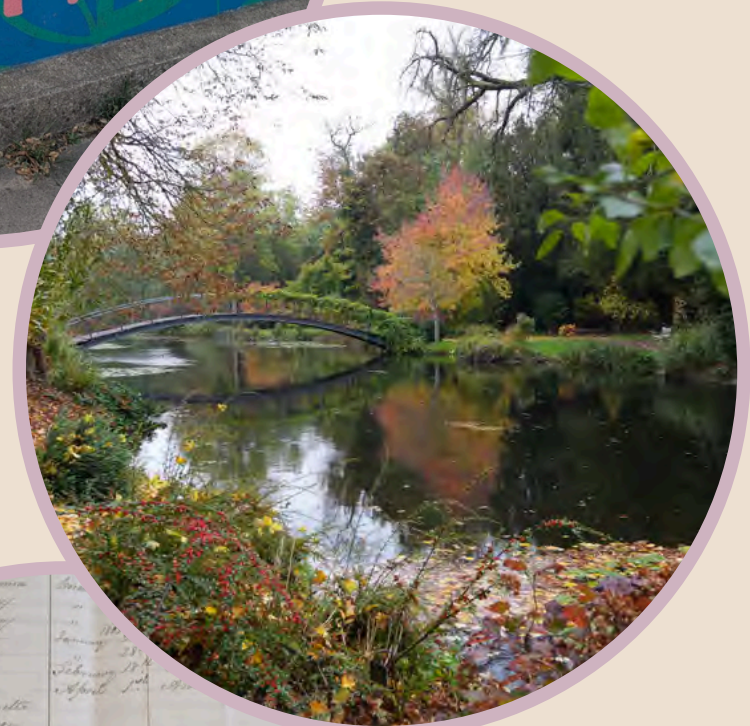
‘maybe this is a bit too wishy-washy now, but like how the tide comes in and goes and things stay the same and you just have to be resilient.’



CAMBRIDGESHIRE

It feels like a little bit off because like it was it was made through like unethical ways and it was like the way he made the money for that site is like it's like not completely mild and I would be fine with it if they like because like they keep hiding it, like show explain how the site was founded. They just like, they often skip that just so they can profit from the money venues and such.

- Oral history project
- Museum exhibition



OBJECTS

I think there's something quite sort of grounding.

Or sort of real about touching something. Real that's been part of a history because it makes you recognise that it's not just a story that that it's real and and somebody once said about the museum, that it's like the evidence of that colonial harm that's visible and tangible. I think the tangibility of museum object [...] makes them a really essential part of that story of colonial harm

Objects as they carry this kind of power. You know they have they have their past and their present and their their future use so.

So what we're trying to do is engage with that emotion, engage with all of the emotions that we encounter, not to be afraid of them, not to bury them, not to sort of sweep them under the carpet but to allow them out.

EMOTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

1

Emotional safety - strategies and protocols for dealing with difficulties, e.g. ground rules, opt-outs, grounding techniques, taking pauses, speak to pastoral and other staff, ending on hope & agency where possible

2

Don't force emotional responses from students, but create space for structured reflection, validate emotions but be curious, work in interdisciplinary ways to help with this

3

Consider, who might be bearing the brunt of the emotional burden in your setting? Whose emotions are most/least visible?

REFLECTION

1

What emotions surface in the teaching of EMB for you in your setting? Think about your own emotions, your students, your colleagues the wider community, media narratives etc.

2

What strategies might you implement in relation to emotions and the teaching of EMB?

