Relational Learning and Teaching with BME Students in Social Work Education

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Given the imperative to redress the education inequalities between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and White students, this contribution explores advances and challenges from within Social Work education (SWE) in relation to the experiences of Black social work students. Drawing on critical race theories and the concept of racial battle fatigue, it explores the impacts of race and racism on students' academic experience and wellbeing. It proposes the significance of relational wellbeing which has been a constant strand within Social Work education and comprises a valuable approach to the decolonisation process within higher education (HE). Linking this to critical pedagogy, it highlights the role of staff to build safety, confidence and trust to support students to overcome prior education experiences of under-attainment, disadvantage and social marginalisation. Despite the pervasiveness of managerialism within HE, which compromises the teacher-student relationship and emphasises measured changes in student 'outcomes', Social Work educators are invited to nurture safe and transformational learning environments.

Keywords: Social work education, BME students, critical pedagogy, relational pedagogical approaches.

Social work education and BME students

Social Work education (SWE) at universities in the UK has historically been heralded for its success in recruiting a diverse student population. Official figures show these courses are the most diverse in terms of the proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) applicants, the proportion of students aged over thirty accepted onto courses, and the ratio of disadvantaged to advantaged applicants (Samuel, 2020).

Data for 2018 indicates that overall, 34 per cent of applicants for undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, as were 36 per cent of those accepted (Skills for Care, 2019). This was up from 25 per cent for social work courses in 2011–12 and higher than the average for all HE courses in 2016–17 (27 per cent). Also, 33 per cent of undergraduate social work students and 45 percent of postgraduates enrolling in 2016–17 were aged over thirty, compared with 15 percent and 33 per cent, respectively, across undergraduate and postgraduate courses as a whole. In 2019, social work undergraduate courses had, at 21 per cent, the highest proportion of Black student applicants of any subject, whilst it also had the highest

proportion of acceptances from Black students, at 23 per cent. This compared with 9 per cent for all subjects (UCAS, 2019).

To the extent that SWE has engaged with population groups previously less able to access HE, it embodies the UK's widening participation policy agenda. This is perhaps to be expected because social work and widening participation are both rooted in core values of social justice and inclusion. Social work expertise in relation to social inclusion, empowerment, managing group dynamics and facilitating change also means that social work education is ideally situated to be a catalyst for change in relation to improving the experiences of disadvantaged groups in HE. Clearly, social work educators have a primary role in leading the field (Hanley, 2019).

Further, since the introduction of the social work degree as the minimum qualification for practice (Social Work Taskforce, 2009), graduates from social work university programmes are significantly more likely to be in employment within six months than the HE student population as a whole (Skills for Care, 2018; Skills for Care, 2019) It would seem that traditional qualifying SWE at universities in England has also managed to drive up standards within widening participation contexts. Such an achievement is recognised as being elusive elsewhere within HE (Dillon, 2007; Hanley, 2019) and suggests that social work courses contribute to ensuring the professional workforce reflects the communities that students belong to and serve. Besides, the recruitment of social work students is premised on recognition of the importance of lived experiences, not least since key social work statutory duties and requirements to work for social justice, anti-discrimination and emancipation are typically most meaningful to individuals who can relate them to their own lives (Hanley, 2019; Thompson, 2020).

Despite these advances in addressing educational inequalities for BME students, there is evidence of and official recognition that, according to Mark Trewin (in the chief social worker's office at the Department of Health and Social Care), there is still work to do and 'a long way to go – especially in eventually supporting people into leadership roles' (Hanley, 2019).

In this context, there are concerns that, instead of seeking to remove additional barriers to promote equality of outcomes in SWE, the playing field has been rendered more unequal for students on and graduates from traditional qualifying social work courses. The creation of fast-track and Masters level social work courses by providers such as Frontline and Step-Up has been largely predicated on the weak assumption that the admission of 'high calibre' students is a precursor for academic and practice capabilities required successfully to undertake the tasks and complexities of social work. Yet, BME students are less likely to be offered places on these types of courses (Maxwell *et al.,* 2016; Smith *et al.,* 2018). Compared with mainstream programmes, these coureses not only have students who are more likely to be white, younger and from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, but have percentages of students from BME backgrounds below the average for postgraduate social work courses (Hanley, 2019; Samuel, 2020).

Beyond the achievements within SWE, the data reveals ongoing challenges. Whilst the proportion of Social Work leavers identifying as BAME approximates the proportions of enrolments (Skills for Care, 2019), Black student attainment has continued to lag behind that of other students on social work courses (GSCC, 2009; Fairtlough *et al.,* 2014). They disproportionately also experience progression issues including being less likely to finish their social work degree on time due to having academic work referred, and/or owing to

interruptions in, or the termination of, practice placements (Bartoli *et al.,* 2008; GSCC, 2008; GSCC, 2009; Hussein *et al.,* 2009; Bernard *et al.,* 2011; Tedam, 2011; Fairtlough *et al.,* 2014).

The multiplicity of factors impacting BME social work students' learning experiences and outcomes require greater recognition if appropriate learning and teaching practices are to be identified to address the gap between what in the sector is now a focus on White/BAME student progress and outcomes.

Living and learning experiences of BME social work students

The gap reflects the inter-sectionality of factors of disadvantage including social and financial inequalities of poverty, disadvantaged educational backgrounds, social isolation, and caring responsibilities or paid work commitments (Fairtlough *et al.,* 2014). As with other BME students, social work students face additional challenges including barriers caused by cultural differences (Hillen and Levy, 2015; NUS/UUK, 2019). Where they have previously been educated in a different country, they may face additional barriers including literacy, especially for overseas students where English is a second language since this also impacts on progression and attainment (Rai, 2004; Dillon, 2011).

Reflecting the wider research which reveals the unchanged whiteness of curricula within the HE sector in the UK (Hillen and Levy, 2015; NUS/UUK, 2019) social work students perceive its Eurocentricism, and the related implications that European social work interventions are superior to others, as undermining students' personal and cultural experiences. This establishes non-inclusive learning environments that result in a lack of 'participatory learning spaces for students from marginalised social groups' and frustration that their courses were mostly delivered by non-BME staff who were not representative of the student body (Bernard *et al.,* 2013: 1946).

In learning experiences and outcomes of BME social work students, explanations for inequalities derive from the experiences they may share, in different degrees, with other BAME students: namely, of wider societal and institutional racism, oppression and discrimination (Hillen and Levy, 2015; NUS/UUK, 2019). Additionally, they share experiences at university and/or whilst on social work placement where the majority of staff or service users were white (Aymer and Bryan, 1996; Bartoli *et al.,* 2008; Fairtlough *et al.,* 2014). Despite the blurring of racially-defined and dichotomised boundaries (Sallah and Kennedy, 2015), understanding experiences through the lens of critical race theory (CRT) serves to foreground the racialised experiences (Brown *et al.,* 2019) and exposes racism, ethnic discrimination and oppression in all its permutations, including the insidious subtle expressions that Black, social work students and those from other ethnic groups experience (Masocha, 2015).

Despite courses being underpinned in social justice, social work students in England, as elsewhere, are not immune to manifestations of racism through microaggressions (Tedam, 2015; Brown *et al.,* 2019). Black social work students report that they feel White counterparts hold negative and pejorative views of them, enacted through 'subtle manifestations of marginalisation' in verbal and nonverbal ways.

The experience of receiving low grades is experienced as profoundly demoralising, with students understanding from their families that they have to be 'twice as good' when competing with non-BME people for employment. One student recounts:

> If you are of a minority, in order for you to achieve something that a white person achieves, you have to be twice as good, yeah, you can't just be on the same level as a white person. (UG student in social care, quoted in Bunce *et al.,* 2021:540).

The cumulative experiences of racism through institutions, policies and practices, and group and individual microaggressions can adversely impact learning experiences, academic achievement and aspirations of social work students (Bernard *et al.,* 2011; Brown *et al.,* 2019). When compounded by the vulnerability of their social work practice, 'the cumulative effects can be dire' and cause ill-health (Brown *et al.,* 2019). The concept of Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) comprises an interdisciplinary framework capturing the multi-dimensional 'psychological, physiological, and emotional/behavioural stress responses' that BME students typically experience (*ibid.*). It accounts for what has been observed across studies of BME students' narratives of experiences in social work and social care courses, whereby they feel they do not belong in higher education, experience a sense of otherness or isolation and 'feel excluded, frustrated and distressed' (Bunce *et al.,* 2021: 535–538). Yet, it is these very journeys that have imbued them with strength and determination to overcome barriers through individual and collective actions.

Understanding the racialised lived and teaching and learning experiences of Black students is key to identifying approaches which respond to their vulnerabilities, underpinning the ability of social work educators to address the unique needs of Black students and is a critical measure of their effectiveness (Brown *et al.,* 2019). Adopting CRT and RBF frameworks is important to foreground the centrality of all racisms which the prevailing emphasis in the UK HE sector on inclusive learning underplays (Masocha, 2015).

The need to understand ethnically inclusive learning spaces (Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015; Maylor, 2019) and how anti-racist learning and teaching practices can be implemented to enhance BME student attainment is particularly urgent. This is even more salient given that the Halpin Sector Report (Otobo, 2020), commissioned by Universities UK following the (BLM) protests, found that English universities responded poorly to calls for the eradication of racism.

While practical approaches are proposed to counter educational disparities and racism in social work programmes, such as inclusion of monitoring systems, training for practice educators and tutors, support for BME students and agreements between HEIs and placement providers (Fairtlough *et al.,* 2014) we explore here the potential of day-to-day micro-interactions between lecturers and students. These form an essential component of building relationships and confer a sense of belonging amongst BAME students. These dynamics can influence the 'extent to which [BME] students feel supported and encouraged in their daily interactions within their institutions and with staff members' (Mountford-Zimdars *et al.,* 2015: iii) and are linked to patterns of differences that can foster or limit the learning and attainment of BME students. They also build essential knowledge, understandings and skills that prepare students for practice.

Relationship-based social work education

Relationship-based social work practice requires working relationships that are 'founded on empathy, warmth and genuineness' (Trevithick, 2003: 164). It is crucial for 'capacity building, empowerment and developing people's potential' (Trevithick, 2003: 163). Effective social work practice requires development of understanding of methods of

intervention, 'dialectical reason', the centrality of thoughts and feelings, and emancipatory values, which include equality, social justice, empowerment, and authenticity (Thompson, 2020). It emerged with the concern that social work education placed too much emphasis on approaches which stressed the development of individuals, and needed instead to stress the 'development of the self-with-others' (Edwards and Richards, 2002).

Centrality of relationships for BME students in Social Work

Within HE, the centrality of lecturer relationships with BME social work students is salient in building confidence levels and supporting their career decision-making (Dillon, 2010). A key aspect underpinning lecturer-student relationships is 'emotional resilience' (Grant and Kinman, 2013) – a standard of proficiency for social work students and social workers stipulated by the Health and Social Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2017) for England and Wales. Fox *et al.* (2015: 1) suggest that emotional resilience 'is not a trait that people either have or do not have. [Rather] it involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed'. These writers also point out the significance of the quality of relationships for emotional resilience. These two connecting factors have particular significance for BME communities and Black social work students especially, whose history is generally symbolised by collective action and mutuality expressed through supportive relationships during times of strife – for example, slavery and European colonisation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These collective experiences demonstrate both a 'survival against the odds' and ability to 'over-come' structural inequalities (GSCC, 2009) which in addition to emotional resilience underpins individual and collective virtues such as 'strength', 'courage' and 'determination' evident amongst BME groups in contemporary British society (Aymer and Bryan, 1996; Graham, 2007; Bernard *et al.,* 2011; Dillon, 2011; Tedam, 2011) such as was expressed during BLM protests in summer 2020. This illustrates how BME emotional resilience can be forged through community connections. Emotional resilience is also gendered as observed by Graham (2002), who expounds on mutuality and community-orientated virtues with particular reference to Black women and their African-centred world, 'which hold varying expressions in Black women's consciousness' (cited in Graham, 2007: 197), with social life tending to engage collective rather than individualistic actions. Such insights are not, however, sufficiently reflected in the social work literature and learning journeys of BME social work students; instead, the deficit shadow permeates the discourse (Hillen and Levy, 2015).

'Relational wellbeing' is an umbrella concept which encompasses a range of teaching and learning approaches. Defined as 'a positive state of affairs in which personal, relational, and collective needs and aspirations of individuals and communities are fulfilled' (Prilleltensky, 2005: 54) in a range of social sites in the forms of caring, respect for diversity, reciprocity and nurturance. Relational-cultural theory forefronts relationships in examining the complexity of human relationships, from the basis of concepts of connection and disconnection. The cultural aspect brings into focus the influence of larger culture and power differentials in society on the quality of connection and the nature of relationships, and the subsequent effects on wellbeing and coexistence (Jordan, 2017).

Whilst a literature exists which explores what constitutes the virtuous teacher (Edwards and Richards, 2002; Zembylas, 2013; Warin and Gannerud, 2014), the praxis between 'virtues ethics' and the virtuous social work educator has been given less consideration. According to Palmer (1998: 1) 'we teach who we are': the sense of 'who' educators are requires reflection on contentions of love.

The resonances with critical pedagogy, including that advocated by Freire (2008: 5), are evident. He wrote that 'education is an act of love' and that 'it is impossible to teach without the courage to love'. hooks (2002: 131) also defines love 'as a combination of care, commitment, knowledges, responsibility, respect and trust. All of these factors work interdependently'. The concept of love is, however, inherently subjective and cannot be measured; it can only be given, received and experienced. On the one hand we know when we feel it in terms of the sense of warmth and well-being it gives us. Conversely, it can also cause pain and suffering. Vincent (2016: 16) describes love as an 'ethical engagement' that involves 'bringing the self into the relationship with others' and undertaking 'relational work'. She notes that love involves 'caring', which is 'both an action and outlook' (2016: 16). hooks (2002: 8) expounds the view that 'care is a dimension of love, but [argues that] simply giving care does not mean you are loving'; it must be embodied. Other virtues that make up 'the ingredients of love', include 'affection, recognition, respect, trust, commitment, honesty, and open communication' (*op. cit.*: 5).

More specifically, for the social work context, some research (Butot, 2004; Little, 2016; Vincent, 2016; White, 2016) points to the healing force of love within social work practice – vis-à-vis how it can create connections between people – and has explored key characteristics that underlie this, including relationships, the sharing and valuing of experiences and the expression of emotions such as compassion. As the study by Bunce *et al.* (2021: 539) demonstrates, many students gain a sense of secure connection with a few non-BME lecturers who extend warmth, caring, and open-mindedness, although consider such lecturers as the minority, as the following quote suggests:

> [Lecturer A] understands [our concerns], she gets it, she could relate to it. And I think we need people like that, where we think we'll feel safe, to go and talk to.

Similar reports were obtained by the first author as teaching feedback from BME students on an UG social work degree course, including the observation that:

> Teachers need to be approachable, and supportive particularly if students feel discouraged due to difficulties with work, relationships, and personal problems.
>
> (BSc. Yr. 1. student).

In this context, being a 'virtuous teacher' equates to modelling 'compassionate love' which involves being authentic: that is, honest and 'real'. Integral to being 'real' is the sharing of self (e.g. personal information/experiences) and not being frightened to show emotion and vulnerability. As such, if we are to understand Martin's description of teaching social justice as a 'pedagogy of vulnerability', the act of working for and living in social justice confers vulnerability on the practitioner (2015: 3). As hooks emphasises, it is often the teacher that should take the first risk, to link personal narrative to curriculum

content, and show how 'experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material' (1994: 21).

Beyond this being the student-focussed teaching prescribed for Social Work programmes (QAA, 2019), this represents a completely new type of relationship between teachers and students and a change in the very conceptualisation of teacher–student roles, echoing Bauman's claim that our 'liquid' times necessitate the collapse of all traditional social hierarchies (2009: 162).

It is also 'love' that is therefore an act of courage, not of fear, and entails a commitment to others (Freire, 2008) and expectation of human flourishing (Vincent, 2016). Students respond positively to this. From feedback gained by the first author from BME students to inform evidence-based teaching, they most valued lecturers being helpful, supportive, available and responsive, as the following comments illustrate: 'having time for me'; 'being available'; 'going that extra mile to support me', and 're-assessing students' needs and making time to address them'. These qualities were not only seen as vital to BME students' learning but also essential to good mental health (Arday, 2018; see also Arday *et al.,* 2021); as one student aptly pointed out: 'the more support, the less stress'.

Love in learning spaces is about wanting the best for all students and recognising that students from less privileged backgrounds especially benefit from this 'practice of love' (hooks, 2002: 12). This is a form of *'emancipatory love'* that recognises the 'place of love in any movement for social justice' and love as a 'transformative force' (hooks, 2002: xix; see also hooks, 1994), that has the potential to improve the life outcomes of BME students. Daniels (2012: 34, cited in Lanas and Zembylas, 2014) asserts that emancipatory, pedagogical love is epitomised by a 'deep commitment to protecting, caring for, and empowering students in the face of social barriers and oppressions' along with 'a political passion to inspire and support' students. Pedagogical love, therefore, epitomises social justice from the bottom-up and 'is both an intention and an action' (hooks, 2002: 5). It starts with micro-interactions, emotional dialogues, and loving actions. Pedagogical love is conveyed through non-verbal emotional expression, which includes exuding warmth through loving thoughts and eye contact, being open and compassionate in one's manner, and implicitly communicating to students' their intrinsic uniqueness, beauty and worth as human beings. This can help students to open up to each other, share their unique personal and professional stories and make broader and deeper connections to their learning. These social work values can be likened to anti-racist practice which values diversity, and treating BME students with unconditional positive regard.

The interplay between *being*, *knowing* and *becoming* results in students having a growing understanding of themselves and others (Freire, 1970). Freire expands on this idea arguing that 'both education and the investigation designed to support it must be "sympathetic" activities' that 'consist of communication and of a common experience of a reality perceived in the complexity of its constant becoming' (*op. cit.*: 89). Students can not only build more empathetic relationships with each other, but can also develop a more benevolent understanding of the complexities of humanity and the socio-economic and psychological factors that can impact people's life; as a result, they can gain an enhanced sense of humanity and compassion. Zembylas *et al.* (2014: 201) refer to these dynamics as 'critical pedagogies of emotion that engage students and educators in a critical interrogation of the intersections among power, emotion, and praxis in society and education'.

By fellow students sharing experiences, they also generate what Singh (2019) refers to as 'critical incidents'. His empirical findings reveal the power of personal testimonies of racism to transform learning experiences. This includes that of young white students: who reported the significance (on hearing these testimonies) of how it deepened their learning about and understanding of the multiple injuries generated by anti-racism. It also conforms with guidelines for learning methods of SWE education which stipulates the need for 'students to learn from each other' (QAA, 2019: 19) and nurtures the development of cultural competence (Sallah and Kennedy, 2015).

In universities the lecturer-student relationship can be visualised as a two-way process of a *'circle of love'* from lecturer to students, students to students and from students to lecturer, which can facilitate mutually-growth-fostering relationships in which all parties feel they/their contributions matter (Robb, 2006; Paul, 2014). Such a *'circle of love'* can be life-affirming and a cathartic experience for both students and lecturers. For BME students, a *'circle of love'* is salient where it provides the opportunity for racism in teaching and learning to be challenged/addressed; for educational spaces that can militate against cultural loneliness through the fostering of a sense of loving belongingness and greater educational support to be provided, to enhance degree attainment (Maylor, 2019; 2020).

Lecturers' wanting the best for students offers the potential to facilitate students' self-belief and confidence in their potential to succeed. These factors also contribute to creating supportive and enabling learning spaces which recognise the fragility of humanity, especially during times of trouble. The following feedback statement, addressed to the first author, illustrates the value one student assigns to this:

> Their support and understanding of my learning needs. The time given for listening, feedback and where necessary acting appropriately. Consultation and working collaboratively with students. Their passion and love for the subject. Their humane side. The respect given to students. (BSc. Yr. 2 student).

The quote above, in addition to focussing on virtues attributed to the virtuous lecturer, touches upon wider priorities deemed important to BME students which relate to the ethical and professional conduct of lecturers and the modelling of core social work skills: such as active listening. 'Love' features in terms of humanity; this can be associated with lecturers having unconditional positive regard for students and a concern for their well-being. It also relates to the importance of lecturers loving what they teach. A passion for subjects taught can have a 'knock on' effect by engendering an enthusiasm and love for these same subjects in students. This provides another example of the two-way process of love mentioned earlier: lecturers' passion for the subjects they teach can be a conduit for love which is then returned by students who can then be considered to have transitioned from *being*, to *becoming*, to *knowing* (Freire, 1970).

Internalising the significance of this approach, as a colleague of the authors stressed, brings the educator into ethical relations with students. By caring for each student and by asking what serves each student, the educator can discern tensions, oppressions and obstacles to the teaching and learning process. There is a role, where oppressions and obstacles are institutionally and systemically inherent, as with racism, for teaching and learning dialogues to deconstruct these (Ashley, 2021).

Lecturers with the right ethical intentions can play a fundamental role in supporting BME students to flourish through the embodiment of care and compassion, key components of love (see also Maylor, 2020). The value that students attach to lecturers' being authentic, open, warm and 'real' cannot be underestimated because it can permit the opening up of emotionally supportive and connected learning spaces that reduce anxiety, facilitate deeper learning and provide students with a sense of well-being, safety and loving belongingness. This is the essence of what effective teaching is about; as Palmer (1998: 3) states: 'good teachers join self, subject, and students in the fabric of life because they teach from an integral and undivided self; they manifest in their own lives, and evoke in their students, a capacity for connectedness'.

This relational wellbeing lens in educational settings has potential as an encompassing concept which includes a range of approaches, including the ethics of care, the mothering other and circle of love approaches which contribute to decolonising HE. They are essential if practitioners are further to avoid unwittingly disadvantaging already disadvantaged students.

Conclusion

If a primary educational outcome of social work is the adoption of its values, there is an imperative for social work educators to 'practice what they preach' (Hanley, 2019: 8). It has enormous potential to take leadership in developing optimal learning opportunities and environments to alleviate the stress that racialised experiences can have on Black students, not only for those in social work programmes. This may require educators from all ethnic backgrounds to recognise the false sense of security that inclusion in the curriculum of emancipatory and anti-oppressive theories and concepts can provide about the ways social work engages with students, colleagues and service users. Such an admission may be resisted since many academics there perceive themselves as liberal-minded and not racist (Singh, 2019).

But it is, as Tisman and Clarendon suggest, 'dangerous for social work education to be ahistorical and to not properly address the critical interactions of social work, race, and racism' and its oppressive force on individuals, families, environments and institutions (2018: 111–2). Applying a relational lens from the context of social work higher education contexts is salient in comprehending how BME students develop a sense of belonging in their learning community, experience caring and nurturing relationships that develop connections and create an awareness of potential networks of support in their social and learning communities. A recognition of the centrality of relations that link individuals, groups and communities and recognise emotions is essential if educationalists are to avoid further disadvantaging BAME students in a range of social policy programmes.

Recognition of the power of the relational approach in social work education to transform lives has the potential to play a significant role in SWE to facilitate individual and collective wellbeing and to create learning cultures and environments that prioritise inclusion, belonging, collaboration and compassion (Pée, 2018), realising the potential to reduce the gaps in educational outcomes.

This becomes more pertinent since anxieties, and physical health and economic vulnerabilities of BAME students have been exacerbated because of COVID-19 (Singh, 2020), the realities exposed by BLM (Otobo, 2020) and evidence of the barriers they face in HE regarding accessing culturally-appropriate services, such as cultural understanding,

communication issues, and clarity about where and how to seek help (Arday, 2018). There is an urgent need for pedagogical practices (and indeed educational systems) that respond to the changing needs of individuals and societies. The ability to acknowledge and respond to issues of race and racism is an essential component.

Moreover, the intercultural work that takes place within social work learning spaces, alongside embedded virtues, can help students from diverse ethnic backgrounds relate to each other, understand each other better, and grow and change together through day-to-day encounters that in other contexts have been described as mutual and reciprocal in nature (Berry, 2011). These emotional connections can facilitate the conditions for both students and lecturers to *be*, *become*, *belong* and be *beloved* and for emotional connections to be forged between BAME and White students which also allows them to focus on essential aspects of humanity rather than the differences between them. These dynamics create the conditions for an ethics of care for all students to realise their potential, whilst also being able to show their vulnerabilities within safe, connected learning spaces (hooks, 2002).

Adopting this approach puts the responsibility firmly in the hands, hearts and minds of educators who typically bear the micro-consequences and workload intensifications of audit and measurement linked to the managerialism and marketisation of HE (Erickson *et al.*, 2020). The resulting impacts on professional identity – where educators increasingly recognise themselves, in the words of Ball (2012), 'as calculable rather than memorable' – have consequences on pedagogical relationships: they erode academic professionalism and identity. Yet, new forms of professionalism are also possible; and there can also be a significant contribution in adopting critical/humanist discourses and practices that position the work of academics as socially, emotionally and morally meaningful. As Dillon (2007) and Ball (2012) remind us, this addresses dissonance and role conflict.

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