



Challenges and opportunities for decolonising the curriculum at Imperial and the role of the library as a 'neutral' space

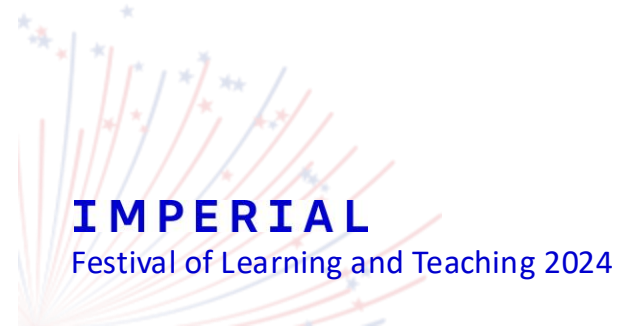
The use of the LEGO® Serious Play® method to facilitate focus groups comprised of library staff

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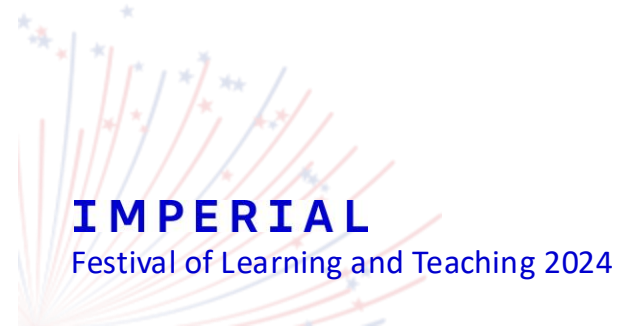
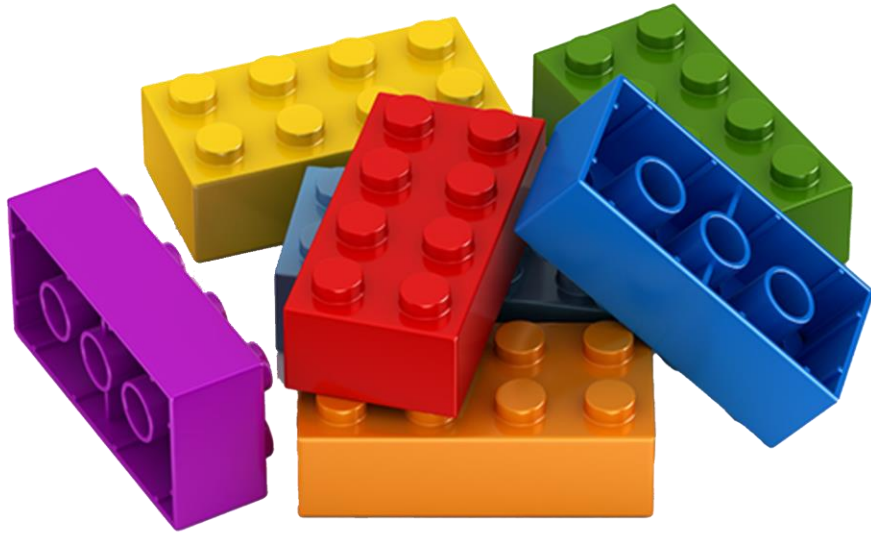
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## What this talk is about

- Research questions and choice of method
- Literature review
- The Lego Serious Play method
- Preliminary findings



# MEd research question topics

- Diversifying and decolonising the curriculum at Imperial
- The role of the library in decolonising the curriculum



# Literature review

## What is Critical About Critical Librarianship?

Emily Drabinski, *CUNY Graduate Center*

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### Document Type

Article

### Publication Date

4-2019

### Abstract

Library work structures intellectual worlds as library workers collect, organize, make accessible, and preserve materials for use. This work is not neutral. Libraries, like all institutions, are produced in and through systems marked by racism, patriarchy, and capitalist modes of production. Critical librarianship offers a framework for thinking about our work that asks how library structures came to be and what ideologies underpin them. Viewing librarianship through this frame allows us to imagine new and better worlds on our way to making them.

## The Myth of Library Neutrality

Author(s): Candise Branum (see profile)

Date: 2008

Group(s): Library & Information Science

Subject(s): Library science, Information science

Item Type: Article

Tag(s): Library and information science

Permanent URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6JP2R>

Abstract: Librarians have been publicly voicing dissent towards neutrality since at least the 1980s, when a number of radical librarians coming out of the climate of social upheaval in the 1960s-1970s began to call for a re-examination of the idea of library neutrality (Dick 220). Individuals on the margins have been writing on this topic for decades, but there is still a rift between librarians who desire a distant and professional objectivity and post-modern librarians who hope to bring an ethical edge to librarianship. In looking at the

*Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*

Vol. 4, No. 1, 2015, pp. 21-40

## Mapping interpretations of decolonization in the context of higher education

Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti

*University of British Columbia*



DECOLONIZING  
HEALTHCARE  
INNOVATION  
LOW-COST SOLUTIONS FROM  
LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

MATTHEW HARRIS



The Journal of Academic Librarianship 42 (2016) 411–422

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The Journal of Academic Librarianship

## Social Capital as Operative in Liaison Librarianship: Librarian Participants' Experiences of Faculty Engagement as Academic Library Liaisons

Tim Schlak

Robert Morris University, 6001 University Boulevard, Moon Township, PA 15108, USA

### ARTICLE INFO

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the foundational concepts of social capital as operative in liaison librarianship. Librarian participants were interviewed and asked a series of open-ended questions aimed at soliciting relational aspects in question, including motivations to engage, trust, trustworthiness, shared norms, influence, and network growth. The focus of the analysis is the interviewee's perspective about their own personal interaction with faculty as well as their reflections on their

**RLUK** Research Libraries UK

Developing inclusive collections:  
understanding current practices and  
needs of RLUK research libraries

Christina Kamposiori  
Executive Programme Officer, RLUK

# Documentary analysis – Russell Group



## Decolonising the curriculum

### Decolonisation groups

Small pockets of lively activity are happening across the collegiate University, filled with students and staff alike invested in creating lasting change to the curriculum at Cambridge. The Curriculum Reform will allow better integration of authors from the Global South across different curricula, not as token authors but as required reading. The reforms are also looking at creating standalone courses that detail issues from the Global South as well as those from the Global North. For more on the various efforts across the University toward creating changes in the curriculum see the links below.



University  
of Exeter

Decolonising  
our  
Curriculum

[Transforming Education](#) / [Learning Reimagined](#) / [Case studies](#)



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

Decolonise, Demilitarise and Democratise QUB

Do you support the proposal to Decolonise, Demilitarise and Democratise Queen's University Belfast?



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

## Teaching Matters blog

*Promoting, discussing and celebrating teaching at The University of Edinburgh*

7TH APRIL 2022

The 'Decolonising the Curriculum' Hub



UNIVERSITY OF  
LIVERPOOL

## Decolonising the Curriculum Toolkit

Joanna Cheetham, Rob Lindsay & Dr Sam Saunders

Drawing on the SOAS Decolonising Learning & Teaching Toolkit and work by University of Liverpool students and staff, this toolkit offers a reflective self-evaluation tool complemented by a growing collection of highly practical resources to help you decolonise your curriculum.



College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

**Decolonising Cardiff University? Analysing colonial and postcolonial institutional geographies, relations, practices and legacies**

## Focus groups

The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® method (LSP) is a facilitated thinking, communication and problem solving technique for use with organisations, teams and individuals. It draws on extensive research from the fields of business, organisational development, psychology and learning, and is based on the concept of “hand knowledge.”



What is the  
Lego© Serious  
Play© method?



## International Journal of Research & Method in Education

ISSN: 1743-727X (Print) 1743-7288 (Online) Journal homepage: [www.tandfonline.com/journals/cwse20](http://www.tandfonline.com/journals/cwse20)

# Everybody's monkey is important: LEGO® Serious Play® as a methodology for enabling equality of voice within diverse groups

Sean McCusker

**To cite this article:** Sean McCusker (2020) Everybody's monkey is important: LEGO® Serious Play® as a methodology for enabling equality of voice within diverse groups, *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 43:2, 146-162, DOI: [10.1080/1743727X.2019.1621831](https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2019.1621831)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2019.1621831>





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# Focus groups participants: Librarians and Library Managers

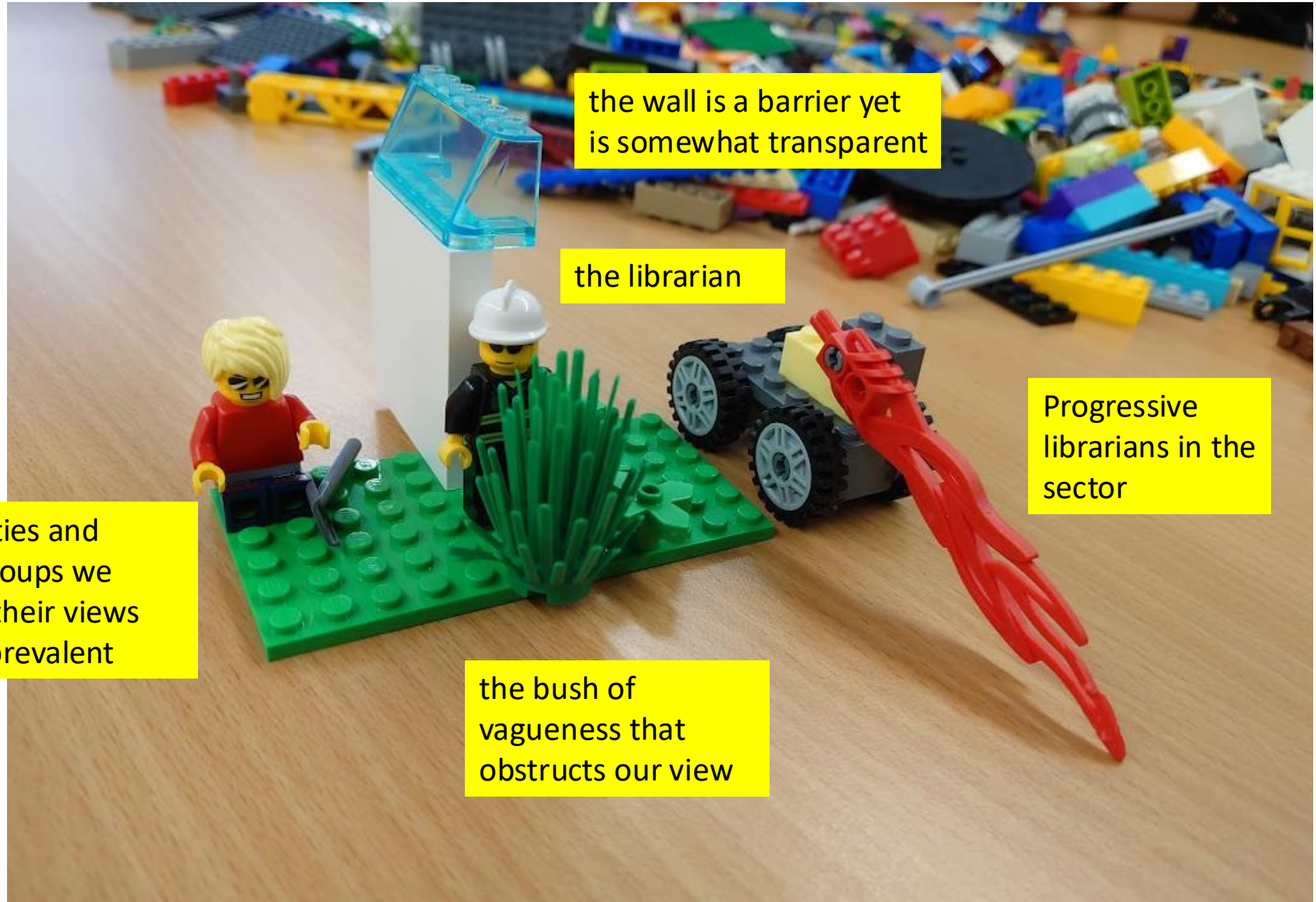
Focus group build questions:

- Is the work that we do in the library neutral or is it biased?
- What are the power structures that influence the work we do in the library?
- Show a strategy you would use to decolonise the curriculum.



# Build 1. Is the work that we do in the library neutral or is it biased?

*"We can only do so much as a library. There is power we don't have." L1*



the wall is a barrier yet is somewhat transparent

the librarian

Progressive librarians in the sector

The faculties and college groups we support, their views become prevalent

the bush of vagueness that obstructs our view

Model by participant L1

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## Build 2. Power structures in place that influence the work we do at Imperial Library



Model by participant M4

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# Build 3. Show a strategy you would use to decolonise the curriculum.

To pull in people who are facing outwards

To foster collaboration and dialogue

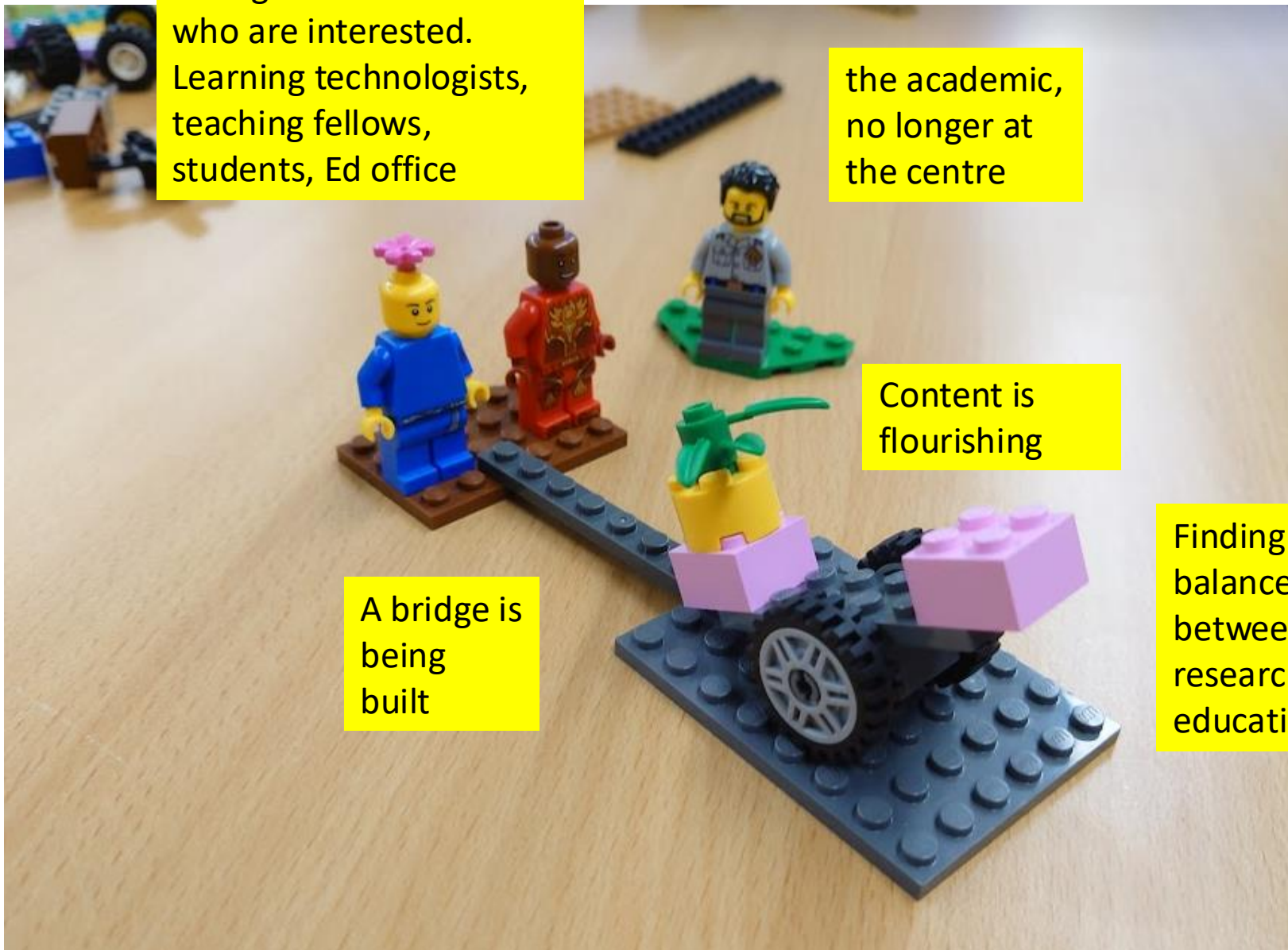
Dialogue with others who are interested. Learning technologists, teaching fellows, students, Ed office

the academic, no longer at the centre

Content is flourishing

A bridge is being built

Finding a balance between research and education

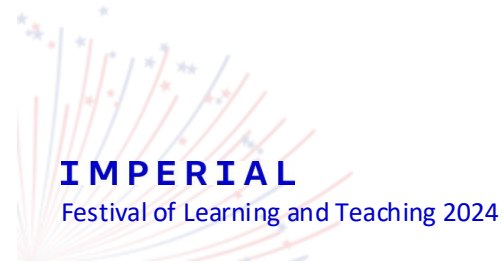


Model by participant M3

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# Preliminary themes from focus groups



- **What is the problem?** How to define this and articulate the benefits
- **Influence and hierarchies** – wider society, STEM, Russell Group, academics
- **Publishing** industry, money, capitalism, Elsevier, business models
- Is **neutrality** desirable?
- **Students** are important yet they are apolitical
- Our own **development** and learning
- **Collaboration** in and out of library
  - Talk to and engage with more people
  - **Central position of library** as an advantage



# Liaison Librarian voices

“It would be nice if I could use examples that incorporated other perspectives and countries. It’s actually quite difficult because...**a lot of the databases we purchase are from North America.**” L2

“All these people representing different parts of the college are reaching to [College] leadership to say, look what we’ve done...Look, this is what we can achieve, **we need to have a higher policy to make sure we continue to have a momentum.**” L1

# Head of Library Teams' voices

**“There’s often a view that we shouldn’t interfere with academic decisions.** Which I think takes our agency and intelligence, our own expertise on what is knowledge... and gives too much power to the academic.” M3

**“Our student body is fairly apolitical...** They’re certainly not a radical bunch as student bodies go. You barely ever see student protests here. How do we catalyse a movement to decolonise the curriculum? M4





## Conclusion

