

Chapter 9

The Strategic Address of Marginalisation in Higher Education: Pedagogical Approaches to the Integration of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

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ABSTRACT

Pedagogical creativity is an opportunity to innovate, create agency, and raise awareness of critical commentary on issues that are often regarded as being central to the concepts of social justice and identity within the context of transformative learning. This is particularly true in relation to marginalized individuals and collective groups, distinguished from their peers by fundamental differences in cultural heritage, race, or religious belief. This chapter provides an insight into the theoretical and practical basis of gamification and its usefulness in explicating the meaning that others ascribe to their individual experiences of the world and how they interpret them. Gamification is posited as a means of facilitating freedom of expression for individuals and collective communities, for whom voicing personal beliefs and standpoints has been a barrier for rationale debate on issues of oppression and the advocacy of agency in practice.

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INTRODUCTION

‘The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals.’

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968)

The resonance of Martin Luther King Jr’s words is as strong in the 21st Century as it was during those preceding it, which were characterised by a paradigm shift in advocating equal civil rights across the globe (King et al, 1992). Education remains the fundamental mechanism of positive change, not only for those for whom prejudice is a lived reality but for those who perpetuate hatred and division across global societies (Bhopal and Pitkin, 2020). Creating agency and a means of articulating critical commentary on lives lived, remains central to the process of culture change from one in which people have lived in oppression, remained unheard amongst educational arenas and consequently been denied the agency they ought to have as integral members of global, national and regional communities (Hoffman et al, 2016). Whilst time is inevitably one of the barriers to the commonplace use of gamification in Higher Education practice, its impact at the front line of working with students is pivotal in advocating equity, justice and an authentic approach to the support of others (Sánchez-Mena and Martí-Parreño, 2016). Gamification as a process provides an opportunity to acknowledge and raise awareness of the meaning of lives lived, regardless of background, culture, ethnicity or difference. To harness this and use it to drive positive change has the potential to transform education but most importantly to transform the lives of a generation in terms of re-framing social justice and advocacy for unheard voices. In relation to the social justice and cultural reformation that characterise educational provider approaches to the address of issues raised because of the global black lives matter initiatives ongoing across the world this is significant. It represents a once in a generation opportunity to ensure that approaches to changing cultural sensitivity, levels of inclusion, choice and agency move beyond tokenism to be a tangible reality. This chapter describes a previously published educational research project, within which the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® method was used as a means of an experimental intervention to increase the agency and capacity of international postgraduate students.

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