



The ARAEA checklists

*The Anti-Racist Art Education Action (ARAEA) checklists aim to support art educators in becoming and being actively anti-racist. Authored by the NSEAD's ARAEA Group, we call on art educators to critically review and revise their art, craft and design curriculums, publications and resources. Here, ARAEA members **Marlene Wylie**, vice president of NSEAD; **Clare Stanhope**, art lead at Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich and PhD researcher; and **Sophie Leach**, AD editor, share ARAEA's aims, and explain why the anti-racist checklists are needed and how they can be used*



A call to action

Marlene Wylie

The daughter of Jamaican parents from the Windrush era, I have been a member of NSEAD for almost 25 years and have served two terms as vice president. This term has proven to be highly significant and deeply personal. Through my lived experience, I speak to this critical issue of anti-racism with an authentic and profoundly reflective voice.



Reflections of my seven-year-old self (in 1974), through to where I am now in 2021, have left me marvelling, and at times feeling deeply distressed, at my journey as an artist, designer and educator. My ongoing reflections have left me with complete conviction that we have to support one another in understanding where we are in terms of our racial literacy and that there is much work to do.

'To be true to this, as a woman of colour and vice president, I join with my colleagues in our call to action for all art educators to be actively anti-racist and challenge the current colonial and Euro-centric educational landscape'

Racism is real. I believe it is experienced in every school, academy, college and university in this country. The blatant killing of George Floyd is the physical manifestation of why we need to be deeply immersed in reflection and introspection on race and identity. Finding myself as often the only person of colour around the table has been my experience for most of my creative life. I have come to the realisation that I am where I am as a result of a variety of complex navigations – the ARAEA anti-racist checklists will help to illuminate these.

The NSEAD mission since 1888 has been to improve art, craft and design education for everyone. To be true to this, as a woman of colour and as vice president, I join with my colleagues in our call to action for all art educators to be actively anti-racist and challenge the current colonial and Euro-centric educational landscape.

Our members asked for ways to understand better and recognise what racism looks like in our subject. Our checklists are just the start of this vital work.

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Anti-racist actions

Sophie Leach and the ARAEA Group

When you were at school, did your curriculum include artists, makers and designers from a range of ethnically diverse communities? Did the art resources and publications used help you to discuss, question and explore historical and contemporary issues around race and ethnic identities?

Fast forward to today. And, whilst we know there are schools, colleges and galleries that are diversifying their curriculums and resources, if today, young people were asked the same questions, how many would agree that their art curriculum does include global majority artists, makers and designers?

It is the hope of ARAEA that our subject-specific checklists can help every educator to better recognise the limits of our own education, question colonial narratives of the past and, in turn, our own unconscious bias. We hope the checklists will enable more art educators to be actively anti-racist and to begin the journey of decolonising art, craft and design education.

ARAEA was set up in July 2020 in direct response to the killing of George Floyd. Our aims are clear. As a learned society, we have a duty to educate ourselves, keep learning and be part of real change. We are aware that we need to do more, to challenge racism and recognise what it looks like in art, craft and design.

The group's members are art educators, representing all phases. Every member of ARAEA collaborated in the writing of the checklists, with Marlene Wylie, Paul Brennan, Clare Stanhope and myself as advisors and editors. A combination of time, expertise and live voice have made this work possible.

ARAEA's call to action:

- Global majority artists, designers and makers are significantly under-represented in the creative industries. They are also likely to encounter racism. This indicates that both the actions and in-actions inherent within the creative industries and the education system to date are institutionally racist.
- Art and art education have a unique power to help us understand and challenge racism – they help us to question and understand, with humility, what it means to be an anti-racist human. But we must also recognise the ways in which art, craft and design, and we as educators, can perpetuate racism.
- We are asking for everyone who engages in our subject to use our checklists, in the hope that the injustices brought about through racism can be removed.

Subject to funding, our next ambition is to share peer-reviewed, anti-racist resources and research, publish case studies, and hold training, events and anti-racist open spaces.

And, every year, on the 25 May, marking the day George Floyd was killed, we will hold ourselves accountable, and ask what has been achieved and what further anti-racist actions are needed.

Before then, we will keep challenging the all-too-often inequitable landscape of art education. It is our hope that all art educators will use the checklists to kick start anti-racist conversations, for self review and to re-position and further diversify our curriculums and resources. Let us hope that in the future, every child in every classroom, gallery and museum can be seen and be heard, and that all children can put their hands up and know that they belong.

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The ARAEA Checklists – bit.ly/3whFchN

The image shows three pages of the ARAEA Anti-Racist Art Education checklists. The pages are titled 'Colonial Legacy', 'Intersectionality', and 'Context & Terminology'. Each page contains key questions and examples for reflection. The 'Colonial Legacy' page asks about curriculum planning, knowledge of artists, and representation. The 'Intersectionality' page asks about the inclusion of global majority artists and the representation of race and ethnicity. The 'Context & Terminology' page asks about the use of terms like 'race', 'ethnicity', and 'culture'.

An anti-racist 'pedagogy of hope' Clare Stanhope

Although the term 'checklist' is used, they are very much positioned as a tool with which to open-up conversations and support a questioning of current resources, publications and curriculums. Their underlying ethos is inspired by the educational theorist bell hooks and her articulation of a 'pedagogy of hope'. The resources acknowledge that to be actively anti-racist 'at times we will stumble, but when we do, we will acknowledge our mistakes and we will make repair' (2003).

The checklists are not a 'to-do' list and are not linear. What the starting point is for one educator, department, publication or school will be different from another. The checklists are not conclusive. When actively engaged with, the checklists will uncover further questions, questions that explore the intersections of our identities, including race, sexuality, gender, ability/disability and religion – they may also lead to deeper investigations into our own unconscious bias. Wherever they lead, the hope is that they trigger new opportunities for learning but also, critically, unlearning.

The philosophy is embedded in the resource itself. Just as art, craft and design education evolves, as NSEAD evolves, as we as practitioners evolve, so too will the checklists. They are not conclusive. They will also be under constant review by the ARAEA – indeed, you will see the version or number will change as the resources are updated.

The *Publications & Resources* and the *School Resource Checklist* have a maximum of ten questions, either to start the process or to feed into a practice already on this journey. All the checklists generally revolve around four key

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questions that hopefully lead into a critical engagement with the resource being scrutinised. They cover 'who' is given space, 'what' is included and 'how' terminology is used and framed.

The Curriculum Checklist offers a much deeper engagement, and is the most extensive of the resources, again supporting critical discussion through various lines of enquiry. This resource is categorised under six main headings: Diversity and Belonging, Cultural Capital and Criticality, Colonial Legacy, Context and Terminology; Intersectionality and Unconscious bias. These then break down into further questions that seek, through specific examples, to interrogate more explicitly the contents of our curriculums. What this checklist hopefully acknowledges is that the journey into diversifying or decolonising a curriculum is not a quick process. It is also a process that can be uncomfortable.

As a subject, and perhaps even more importantly as an education system as a whole, we do not readily confront the colonial narratives that are imbued in our history and subsequently our curriculums. This legacy not only exists in culturally diverse settings but as the ARAEA state: 'Every white child in the UK

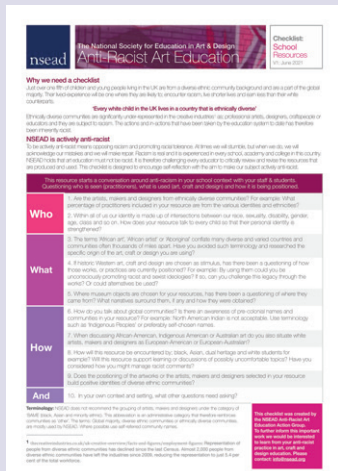
lives in a country that is ethnically diverse' and every corner of the land we live in has benefited from the profits of past colonial endeavours.

This history is very much present in contemporary society. It is embedded in our streets and buildings, and in our statues. It is implicit in our museums and galleries, and has settled within our curriculums. Without engaging with this history, it stifles not only our students from global majorities but also our LGBTQ+ students, our disabled students and our gender-fluid students. It stifles white European students as it removes their agency in understanding and dealing with a racist and sexist past. It also stifles us as educators. If, like me, you have been educated through the systems in which you now teach, even starting to see and notice the unconscious biases in our resources or curriculums can be a slow process, but once started it can also be overwhelming.

It is also liberating. This is a journey fraught with inconsistencies and injustices that constantly raises questions of our own knowledge base. I am still very much in this process. I have felt anger, bewilderment and also excitement on this journey and these resources seek to support all of these encounters. Speaking from experience, it is making that first step, asking that first question that really starts a journey that is not only absolutely imperative, but it is also an exciting opportunity.

By asking just one of these questions, 'a pedagogy of hope' can support deeper questioning of the learning that we provide and that we ourselves inspire. Share them in your settings and use them in your department meetings. It is only through constant questioning, feedback and collaboration that art education can truly begin to become actively anti-racist. ■

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Hands Up (left) was made by young artists aged 14–17 at Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich in South East London, led by Clare Stanhope. It is a collective representation of being seen and of belonging, an expression of diversity and especially the diversity of learning communities. Thank you to the young artists who made this work and who so generously allowed us to use it to support the dissemination of the ARAEA resources.