

Let's Talk about Race: Exploring race, culture and identity through literature

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HOW?

The power of narrative



“Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.”

— Chimamanda Adichie

Structure

- Summary of Aims and Outcomes for the Kingston University Reading Group (2016-)
- Impact Assessment
- Taster
- Q&A



How did it start?

- ❖ **Models of Good Practice & Key Drivers**
- ❖ **Collaborative in Approach & Practice**
- ❖ **Address concerns that 'race talk has potential to open a can of worms'. (Sue, 2013)**
- ❖ **Transformative power of shared reading and discussion**



KURG:
SHARED READING IN PRACTICE

Group Reading in Action & Impact

- ❖ **Reading Group Dynamic:**
Role of facilitator &
importance of practicing self
care
- ❖ **Texts; Participants & Session
Dynamics:**
- ❖ **Feedback:** ‘real buzz’;
‘embraces diversity’;
‘welcoming’; ‘non-
judgemental’; ‘I found a space
where I felt comfortable
talking about race’; ‘fun’



What do we read?.



Where to now and Where next?

- Enhancing cultural competency as part of our REC Action Plan & Inclusive Curriculum
- KU Cultural Diversity Week; International Women's Day; Black History Celebrations
- KU Big Read
- National and International Conferences
- HEI workshops
- Outreach and Civic Engagement Work
- Annual Reading Symposium

Reading in Lockdowns 2020-21?



KURG in Lockdown & well being

‘KURG has been invaluable to me during the Covid period in helping me plan and structure my time and have regular routines. ... reading helps me escape into a world beyond these four walls! ... We all have quite different “takes” on our reading. It is great too to meet new people!’ (anon., March 2021)

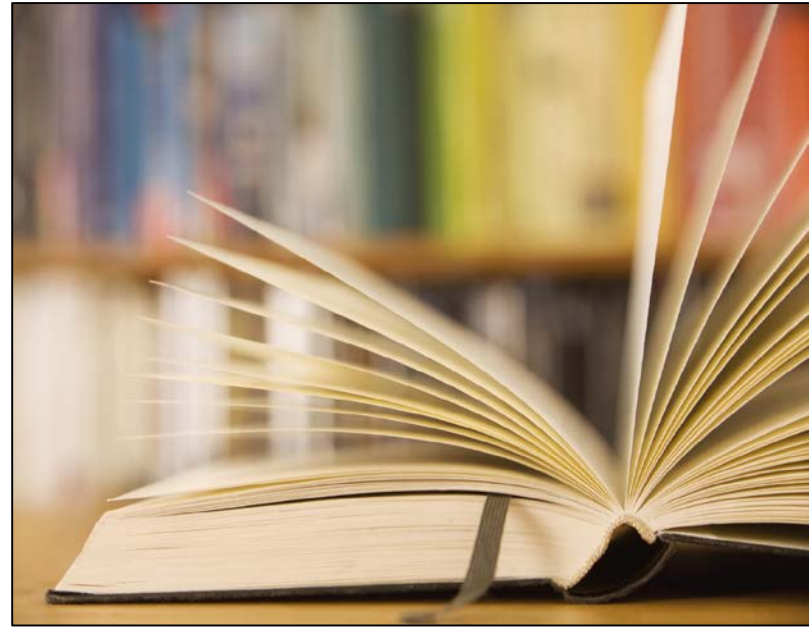
“I joined the reading group as soon as I started working at Kingston University as a way to meet my colleagues and make some new friends. One month later we were in lockdown and the reading group went online. Our monthly virtual meetings have truly been an anchor for my mental health and the support and kindness I have received from group members has been invaluable. ‘!’ (anon., March 2021)



**FANCY A
TASTER?**

Your Reading Group Session

1. We will listen to an [audio](#) version of Jackie Kay reading 'In My Country'. While she is reading, I will also show a copy of the poem
2. While you are listening, please think about one 'thing' that you think is important to you in the poem. We will share these after listening to the poem



JACKIE KAY, 'IN MY COUNTRY' (1993)

WALKING BY THE WATERS
DOWN WHERE AN HONEST RIVER
SHAKES HANDS WITH THE SEA,
A WOMAN PASSED ROUND ME
IN A SLOW WATCHFUL CIRCLE,
AS IF I WERE A SUPERSTITION;
OR THE WORST DREGS OF HER IMAGINATION,
SO WHEN SHE FINALLY SPOKE
HER WORDS SPLICED INTO BARS
OF AN OLD WHEEL. A SEGMENT OF AIR.
WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?
'HERE' I SAID, 'HERE. THESE PARTS'

A person is holding a large, ornate gold frame containing an oval portrait of a woman. The woman has light-colored, curly hair and is wearing a white, ruffled dress. The background is a dark, classical wall with intricate carvings, including a central relief of a figure and several smaller, shell-like motifs. The person holding the frame is partially visible on the left and right sides.

'What was I but Factory'

The Value of 'shared reading' and Discussion: Recognizing & Celebrating Cultural Diversity

It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.

(Audre Lorde, (1934-1992), Caribbean-American writer, radical feminist, and civil rights activist.)

Thank you. Any Questions?

For further information please contact:

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Suggestions for further reading

‘Closing the attainment gap for students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds through institutional change’, **Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning**, 20, 1, Jan 2018, 79-101.

Gay, G, (2002) ‘Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching’, **Journal of Teacher Education**, 53, pp.106-116.

Morris, W. (2016) ‘The Big Read: how shared reading transforms lives’, **CILIP Update**, November, pp. 32 – 34.

Sue, D.W. (2013) ‘Race Talk: The Pathology of Racial Dialogues’, **American Psychologist** , 68, 8:663-672

'Tate, S A. & Bagguley, P., (2017) ‘Building the Anti-Racist University: Next Steps’, **Race, Ethnicity and Education**, 20, pp.289-299:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1260227> (Accessed 28 January 2018)

Warikoo, N., K., (2016) **The Diversity Bargain: And Other Dilemmas of Race, Admissions, and Meritocracy at Elite Universities** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).