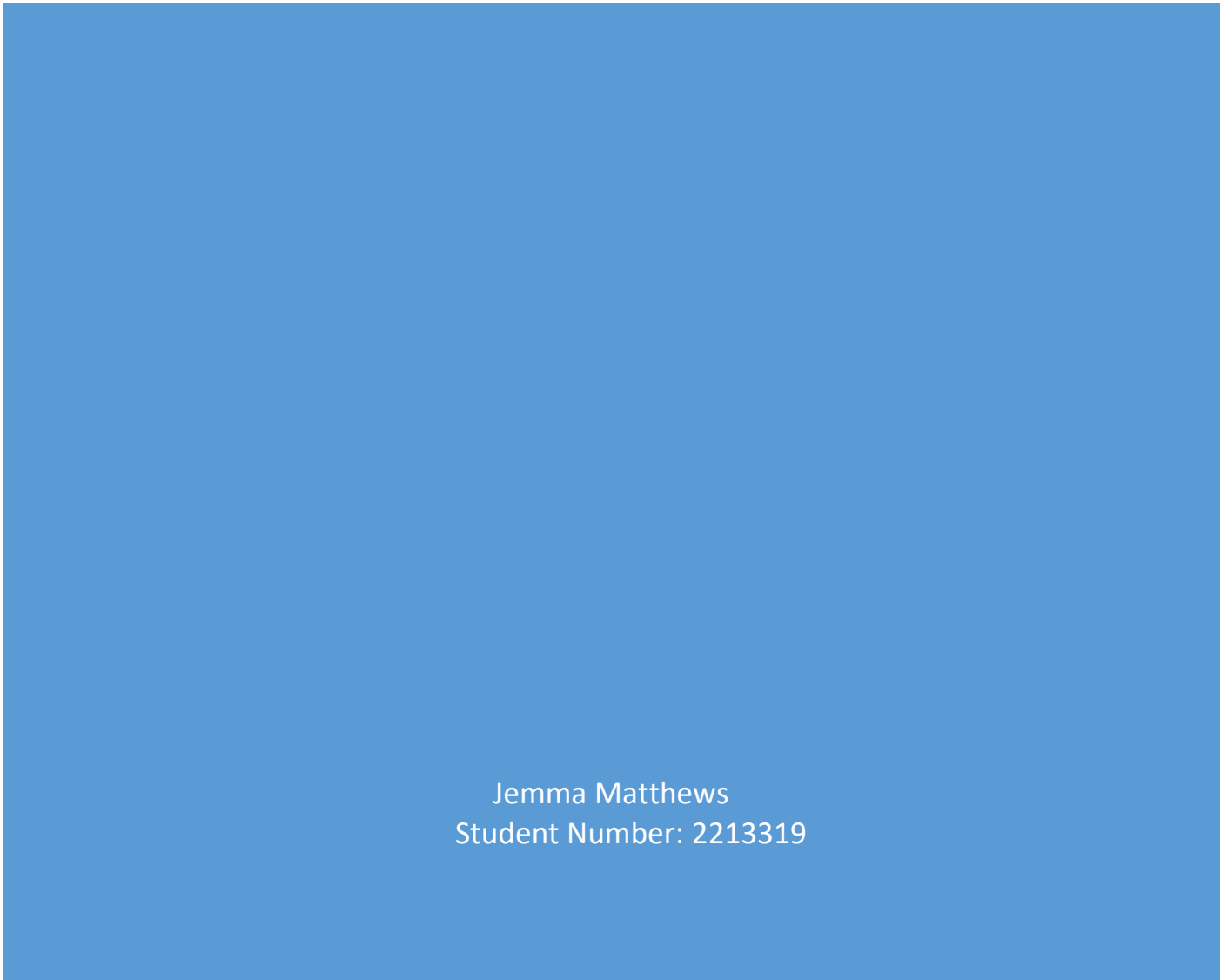




CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES: MAKING A DIFFERENCE (ECGE4006P/C) Inclusive Education (Foundation Degree)



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Racism...



... it's still here.

Yes, it is still here. We have developed so much over the last century. Technology has advanced and is no longer a mere research tool, but can now allow people to travel, shop, study and so much more. Cars are now able to run on electricity, decreasing the need for fossil fuels. Women are able to vote and be career driven, and no longer expected to be a dutiful stay-at-home parent. Yes, many things have changed but some people's hateful views remain the same.

"Racism can be most simply understood as someone behaving differently to another person based on the colour of their skin or culture.

Some people are picked on because they look different or speak a different language"
(BBC,2020).

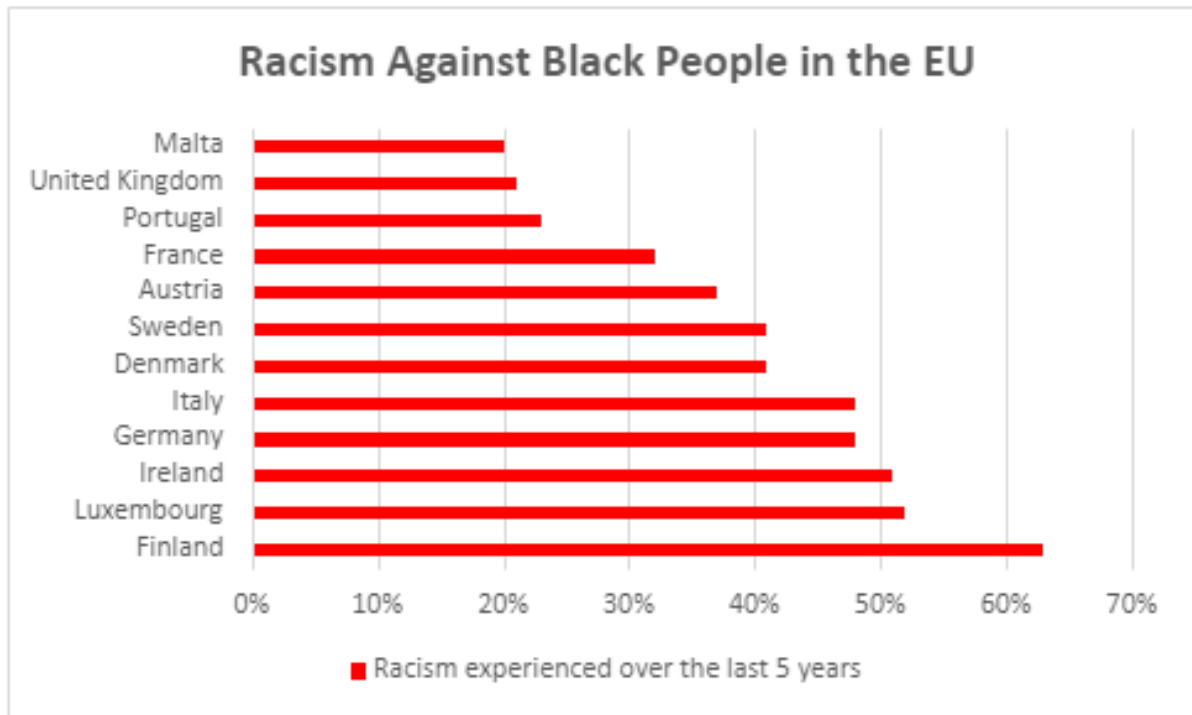
The colour of one's skin is something nobody can either choose or control, just as people are born with blonde hair or brown eyes. And yet, people are ostracised. Racism has been seen throughout the world's history, being utilised as a weapon to encourage hatred and fear, which in times led to conflict and war (Shah, 2010).

Through the years...

Racism has caused devastation throughout history, with countless lives being lost as a result. The Civil Rights Movement (1954) was successful in raising awareness and bring people attention to the discrimination and segregation black Americans were facing during the time. It also saw the rise of prominent figures of black history, such as Martin Luther King Jr and Rosa Parks.

The Civil Rights movement broke the racial segregation that was ingrained in America and achieved critical equal rights legislation. Many believed this would be the start of a new lives for black people. However, systematic racism was still heavily ingrained in many elements of society and still is to this day, and it is not only affecting the United States of America.

Around the globe...



A study was conducted which found that black people residing in the European Union (EU) were experiencing entrenched prejudice and exclusion (McCarthy,2018).

This graph shows us that racism is still seen in the majority of the countries in the EU, which is undoubtedly shocking given the changes in views and legislation we have seen within modern society. This is supported by the tragic death of George Floyd in 2020 because of police brutality. This saw a notable rise in the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM), which was founded in 2013 to fight racism and anti-black violence (Brittanica,2023). This solidifies the fact that racism is still very much present today.

It's not just black and white...

Racism is not only a major issue for black people, but for other ethnic minorities too. The Muslim community has become targeted over recent years, becoming the focus of discrimination and even attacks. They have also fallen victims to police violence which has resulted in protests as well as street fights and riots (Calhoun and Modood, 2005). Countries such as Great Britain are becoming more culturally diverse, which many applaud and embrace. However, this cannot be said for everyone.

In the wake of Coronavirus pandemic, with people from Asian descent being targets of derogatory language and violence. This was further fuelled by the people in power, with the then United States President Donald Trump labelling it “the Chinese virus” (Human Rights Watch, 2020). This is a very recent example of how racial hatred and prejudice is still very much prevalent and is manifesting in many ways, with current affairs being contorted to seem like racial issues.

All these examples just show how hateful and dangerous humanity can truly be. Racism evokes fear and hatred throughout nations, and has led to heartbreak, conflict and countless deaths throughout history. It is also finding its way into integral parts of society, such as policing and sport. It was not very long ago that three black footballers were racially targeted for missing penalties. Imagine the influence and impact this would have on a young person. A young black boy who wishes to be a footballer. Is this really the society you would wish your children to grow up in? There are many issues within the world that may well be alleviated by end of racism.

People working together in unison can only do good.

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Uniting the Human Race: What do we need to succeed?



It is everywhere.

A colossal task it seems. How would we unite humanity? A good starting point of this would be racism, which has divided us for centuries. The optimistic among us can see the achievability in this prospect, and if we were able to utilize certain skills, we would be on step closer to eradicating racism. It is commonly thought that racism is seen through overt individual actions, but it is also existing within organizations, systems and cultures. This demonstrates just how racism is embedded into the reality of everyday life (Cuncic, 2022). It has never been more imperative that we band together in order to expunge racism, for a more peaceful, kinder and united future. But what skills would we need?

You may be guilty

It is important to not only utilize skills but also avoid certain unhelpful thinking patterns that have systematically found their way into society. This itself is an integral skill. One of these ill-natured patterns is implicit bias. Implicit biases are unconscious notions and attitudes that manifest in the workplace, schooling, healthcare and the criminal justice system. It is also known as implicit social cognition or unconscious bias, and can be based on gender, race or sexuality (Ruhl, 2023). This is harmful and can often go unchallenged given its nature of being undeliberate, so it is important to hold accountability and realise the wrongdoings.

The fact is ingrained into pivotal parts of our communities makes this issue even more pressing. We place a lot of trust into our healthcare systems, yet studies have found that implicit bias can sway treatment decisions, which may invoke fear among ethnic minorities when accessing health care. So how can we avoid implicit bias? You could try being empathic, focusing on people individuality, and reflecting on potential biases you may have. It would also be advantageous to increase your exposure to other racial backgrounds, to develop more of an understanding of different cultures (Cherry, 2023). The most important thing is to recognise when you may be displaying sign of being implicitly bias and working to improve your outlook.

Be critical in your thinking.

Another effective skill that may be utilised against racism is critical thinking. Critical thinking allows you to analyse information, create opinions and formulate your own beliefs.

“Critical thinking is important for making judgments about sources of information and forming your own arguments. It emphasizes a rational, objective, and self-aware approach that can help you to identify credible sources and strengthen your conclusions” (Ryan, 2022).

You may be thinking “But how can I apply this to racial issues”. Well, this can help regarding what you may see in the media. We know by now that the media can often be full of misinformation and “fake news”, and it is up to us to decipher what is real and what we take from it. The news covers a lot of negative issues from around the globe, and these sources of news can indeed be biased. Social media is a considerable contributor to hoaxes, false claims and fabricated news and conspiracies, with primary examples being Facebook and Twitter. This

means that any person with access to social media or the internet can potentially be a consumer or distributor of fake news (Machethe & Turpin, 2022). This can be particularly harmful regarding racism, as it can spread negative and hateful information, especially from biased and prejudice authors. This is why it is so important to think critically. To be able to judge and analyse the articles you read and to put more beliefs into your own mind as opposed to the writing of others will aid in stopping hateful and discriminative ideologies from spreading.

The take-away.

To conclude, if every individual were to apply these skills, we would be one step closer to eradicating the hate and disinformation surrounding racism as well as other forms of discrimination. The importance of these skills has never been more prevalent, with the rise of the Black Lives Matter Movement and the hateful language and misinformation spread by the former President of the United States, Donald Trump. So, what are you waiting for? Study these skills. Harness these skills. Try and make this world a more peaceful place.

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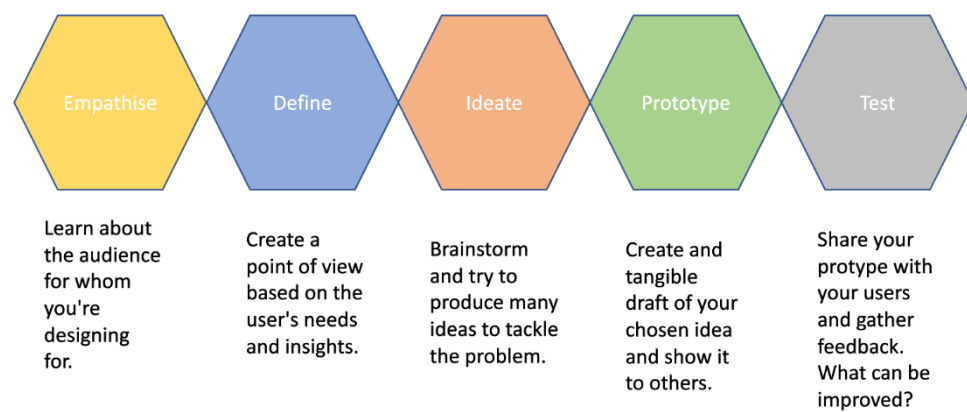
Design Thinking: What are the pros and cons?



What is it?

You may be wondering what design thinking is and you may already be utilizing this great skill within your career or homelife in some way. Design thinking is a non-linear process that teams use to understand users, challenge assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions. These solutions can then be prototyped and tested (Interaction Design Foundation, 2023). You could be doing milder forms of design thinking in your daily life, assessing problems and finding solutions to them. However, in the design community, it is an integral tool, which allows innovators to understand the problem through extensive research and surveying to create an innovative and inventive solution. This way of design thinking can be used to tackle far larger problems which can change the lives of

many, such as poverty or racism as well as other contemporary challenges is education. It is important to be thorough when it comes to design thinking, and a visual aid was created to help those remember and follow the essential steps when creating their resolutions.



(Elon University, 2023).

The Pros

There are many positives that stem from design thinking, as it is a formidable skill to have. Firstly, it allows you fully understand the extent of a problem and how it affects others. Those who do not practice design thinking falsely believe they completely understand a situation, but only do so by relating this back to their own experiences. The problems themselves tend to be much broader, more nuanced and different than what people initially assume (Linke, 2017). When dealing with contemporary challenges in education, such as poverty, it is important to empathise and understand the children that are suffering from poverty. It is also important to consider how this may affect their education and school life and ask yourself: what can you do in school to help this child?

Another great thing about design thinking is it creates resilience. You may think you have created a great solution to a problem, but after feedback from others find there is room for improvement. Rather than feeling disheartened with the feeling of “failure”, work to improve your initial idea. Design

thinking is all about favouring action over inaction and embracing experimentation and just learn through trial-and-error (Panke, 2019). This is particularly salient when it comes to tackling challenges in education, with the contemporary challenges being so non-linear. It will take a few trials and practice runs before you achieve your desired outcome.

The Cons

You may be thinking design thinking is revolutionary and can change the way issues are dealt with within society and particularly education, which it could be. It does however have some shortcomings that should be considered when utilising design thinking. One of these limitations is that it takes a while. The interactions with users do take a lot of time, due to the depth and detail one would go into. The more time and resources spent then the better the later outcome. If one were to conduct a light interview process, it could take up to a week to complete, whereas full user research could take up to 3 weeks or even longer with extensive planning (Tsoi, 2021). This just shows the dedication and time one must give when partaking in design thinking, and the more time dedicated to the process, the greater the result. Contemporary challenges do require a large amount of time, as it is important to grasp the important issues. This may be difficult to manage when dealing with education, as the education sector is forever a busy one, with many struggling to find enough free time they would need to fulfil the necessary criteria.

Should Design Thinking be used in Education?

To conclude, design thinking could be very advantageous in the educational setting when dealing with key issues. When utilised in the correct way, it can aid in the formation and design of innovative ideas. It allows developers to gain more insight into the needs and requirements of the users, which can then be applied to their concept. Like most ideas, it does have its drawbacks and can be rather time consuming and requires persistence. Despite this, it undoubtedly is a beneficial skill.

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