

ET ~ thinking afresh?

The Elephant Times is about reflecting on issues, sharing ideas and thinking about the implications for teaching.



The murder of George Floyd and the world wide response of Black Lives Matter highlighted key issues of justice, equality and racism. This has been a theme for this ET magazine.

The **Windrush** scandal has come to symbolise the injustice of the government's "hostile environment" approach. It, along with much recent political debate, related for example to Brexit, has legitimised negative assertions and may even, as the new head of Runnymede Trust suggests, lead to a [white nationalist agenda](#).

We do not know if this will turn out to be the case but there are clearly those that have spoken out against the idea of even addressing the cause that BLM highlights. It has to be worth discussing. The lack of consensus adds to that need.

The government's cautionary, arguably negative, guidance warning about bias relating to BLM makes such a conversation more necessary but also more challenging. Why is there doubt that teachers will approach this professionally?

Robin Richardson [\[ET 2-28\]](#) helps us take stock of 2020. There are many opportunities but the question is - which way will things will go? Will BLM stimulate a new approach enabling us all to take stock or will it soon be forgotten?

2020 has given us much to think about afresh and hopefully the impetus to do so. We have had a very clear reminder that **we live in a global context** and that **uncertainty is a key concept**. The complexity of this has implications for how schools respond to what is going on in the world, the needs of learners, and approaches to learning.

Tide~ does not offer any simple answers but it does recognise the value of creating 'space' for teachers to engage with this complexity - and to make it more accessible to learners.

There are questions to follow up, e.g:

Can we build a positive disposition to division?

Rohini Corfield [\[p14\]](#) proposes a network conversation to explore Elif Shafak's book '**How to stay sane in an age of division**'

Are there ways to use the artefacts of history to engage with the issues?

This was Andrew Simons' question as he reminded us that we already knew about the significance of slavery to Birmingham, yet there is a lack of popular awareness. [\[ET 1-26\]](#)

What stimulus is needed to open up debate?

For us, this Banksy painting of a vigil candle and his statement were challenging. It got us thinking about different perspectives. Do we need a collection of stimulus images?

Should these debates be seen in the context of assumptions about education itself?

A number of articles feature this e.g: Mick Waters [\[ET 2-20\]](#) - "a curriculum that educates"; Jo Fairclough - [\[p18\]](#); "students leading their learning"; and Chris Durbin - "models for global citizenship" [\[ET 2-18\]](#)

The new **Tide~ Hub** seeks to facilitate creative opportunities to engage with such ideas.

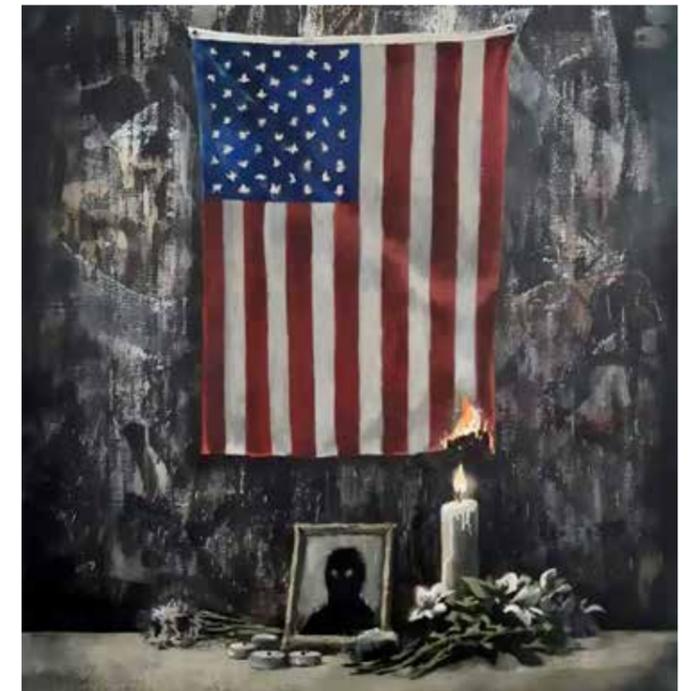
For example ...

Birmingham will be the host to the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

"There is an opportunity to use the interest this will generate to stimulate learning about the Commonwealth. For example about its complex and contested history and the issues, such as climate change, that face member countries now."

The Tide~ Hub is working on plans to enable teacher creativity in Summer 2021, with a view to producing an ET Publication in the Autumn to support work in schools in the build up to the Games.

[Please register your interest](#)



At first I thought I should just shut up and listen to black people about this issue.

But why would I do that?
It's not their problem. It's mine.

People of colour are being failed by the system. The white system. Like a broken pipe flooding the apartment of the people living downstairs. This faulty system is making their life a misery, but it's not their job to fix it. They can't - no-one will let them in the apartment upstairs.

This is a white problem. And if white people don't fix it, someone will have to come upstairs and kick the door in.

