



## Resisting ideological echo chambers: if we are all critical pedagogues, how will we know we are doing LD well?

**Steven White**

University of Southampton, UK

### **Abstract**

At the launch of *How to be a Learning Developer in higher education* (Syska and Buckley, 2024), a common thread emerged during contributor presentations: the need to develop a shared critical approach to position ourselves effectively within higher education. This approach would identify and implement strategies to resist the challenges of neoliberalism, working towards social justice for our students, using critical pedagogy. These themes are relatively common in the LD literature, and the ALDinHE value of ‘embracing [...] critical pedagogy’ accompanies the manifesto statement that ‘neutrality is not an option’ (ALDinHE, 2023, n.p.). These terms carry political connotations and implications for LD practice. Together, these factors suggest a move to develop a ‘signature’ critical LD pedagogy, underpinned by an explicitly ideological vision. Under these circumstances, we risk constructing ‘a bounded, enclosed media space that has the potential to both magnify the messages delivered within it and insulate them from rebuttal’ (Jamieson and Capella, 2008, p.76) — in short, an echo chamber. This raises some important questions:

- Given the explicitly political nature of critical pedagogy, in recruitment of new LD colleagues, should we test for and limit entry to our critical pedagogy club to those with ‘acceptable’ political views?
- Critical pedagogy is sceptical of dominant narratives. How will we prevent critical pedagogy from becoming the dominant narrative in our community?
- What if we are wrong? Even if our diagnosis of the challenges we face is correct, how will we test our solutions in the absence of robust challenges from alternative perspectives?

**Keywords:** critical pedagogy; neoliberalism; social justice; echo chamber.

## Community response

### Part one: initial responses

This mini keynote, followed by three round table discussions, provoked a mix of heated and quiet conversations that clearly got everyone thinking deeply and interrogating their own theoretical approaches and practice. Attendees gained valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in LD, with a particular focus on the need for a shared critical approach to address neoliberal pressures in higher education. The discussions highlighted the importance of integrating social justice through critical pedagogy, while raising thought-provoking questions about the potential risks of creating an echo chamber in which diverse perspectives might be overlooked.

**Figure 1. A screenshot of a slide from White's keynote.**



The event encouraged participants to consider how they can ensure that their commitment to critical pedagogy remains open to constructive critique and diverse viewpoints, thereby enriching their practice and avoiding the pitfalls of dogmatism. As one of the participants reflected on the climate of these conversations:

I only came to one of the discussions, but I had a feeling that there was a great sense of anticipation around the provocative questions asked by the presenter. A seed of doubt in critical LD had been planted through his brief exposé and in the subsequent discussion the participants seemed to vacillate between defending it and considering alternative approaches.

This particular Learning Developer seemed to agree with the presenter that critical pedagogies should not necessarily be accepted uncritically:

One problem with promoting and practising critical pedagogy in LD work is that it has the potential to further unsettle the already unsettled students. Critical pedagogy cranks things up a notch, encouraging asking difficult questions and challenging the status quo. It is all good and we know that these skills are necessary to be a critical thinker, but when our students lack the foundations in various literacies, can we skip developing those more basic skills and go straight to higher level thinking? There are some doubts regarding how well this will serve our students.

There also seemed to be a bit of confusion among the participants around what critical LD really is and how we define or practise it:

How much of it do we merely pay lip service to anyway? How much of it is potentially out of apathy around our daily jobs that often do not give us opportunities for advancement or any progression paths? Could some of it be a response to our own frustrations about existing in the third space that allows us to see the power structures that limit us but not have real opportunities to challenge them? I know these are all provocative questions, but if we are going to be honest and authentic in our critical approaches, then we have to be able to ask them and take a hard look in the mirror. This is where the presenter's final question becomes particularly poignant: What if we are wrong? Indeed. Keeping the conversation around the guiding pedagogies of LD open is crucial.

### **Part two: Gordon Asher's reflection in the second stage of responses**

In the spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding, but also asserting the need to keep challenging ourselves and each other, Gordon Asher offered the following reflection:

The below comments speak to both Steve's initial mini-keynote and the group discussion of that in which I participated, and his related session (at which some of the same issues were discussed), as well as the comments from Steve and others above.

Firstly, I want to thank Steve for raising some really important issues for, and a specific challenge to, LD in general and to critically oriented LDs in particular (indeed, the conversations he sparked have continued both online and in person since the conference). Secondly, I should be clear and explicit (thus practising what I preach, as such) that I would self-identify as a critical-pedagogue/popular educator as a meta-identity (across and throughout my life), within which I also self-identify as a critical LD. Thirdly, it seems worth saying, given the range of critical pedagogies and critical pedagogues out there — that there are indeed some takes, as to critical pedagogy (singular), to which aspects of the critique made by Steve

apply. Here I am arguing, alongside a wide range of other critical pedagogues, for the acknowledgement of critical pedagogies (plural), and a position that does not hold that there is only one alternative to capitalism.

### **ALDinHE's commitment to critical pedagogy and ALDinHE's values more broadly**

After some reflection, I have realised that there is a central underlying issue that provides a foundation for much of Steve's critique, and that helps to explain some of the resistances this received from myself and others on the day. This relates to the main, recent, change to ALDinHE values from the original value — as co-produced at a previous ALDCon, 'Making HE inclusive *through emancipatory practice, partnership working and collaboration*' (my italics) — to the changed value, as written by the Steering Group in November 2023, 'Embracing and respecting diverse learners *through critical pedagogy and practice*'. I think Steve and others have, quite understandably ('[i]f we are all critical pedagogues'), assumed that this means LD is actually widely populated by critical pedagogues and LD practice broadly informed by critical pedagogy, in the present ('if only' I hear a voice in my head saying) — which is very far from being the case, both as to where LD/LDs stand, and even more so, the extent to which such is actually reflected in our day-to-day work and practice (given the limitations and pressures of the neoliberal university).

As such, I suspect that some of the initial discussions and disagreement were created by this misunderstanding. I think the value should very much be read as an aspiration, rather than a statement of our contemporary ALDinHE realities. That said, if it does represent our desirable ALDinHE future, I assume Steve would make many of the same points, if somewhat differently phrased.

### **What critical pedagogy is and is not — values, processes, and objectives/visions**

It seems really important to note that critical pedagogy is not a method, nor a mere methodological approach — as relevant to the formal education system. It is an orientation, not just to education but to life. Being a critical pedagogue is not part-time, or only relevant in 'work' contexts. As such, another misunderstanding would seem to be that critical pedagogy is a hat that we can choose to put on and take off, applying its values, processes, and objectives only some of the time and/or only in certain spaces/context.

Critical pedagogy is not merely an educational concept — theory, practice, or orientation. Rather, it views all in life as pedagogical: all practices and relations (inter-subjectivities), all institutions and cultures are pedagogical in nature (Amsler, 2015; Giroux, 2015; 2020, Asher, 2022; Darder et al., 2024). It is a way of being and becoming in and with the world and those in it (both human and non-human), throughout and across our lives. Being a critical pedagogue concerns fundamentally who/what I am and how I try to act and relate in the world; it is a praxis of and for life (a lived and embodied daily politics).

## What does the 'critical' in critical pedagogy mean?

Steve said 'Critical pedagogy (irritatingly, to me at least) claims the term "critical" as its own territory, but uses a very particular interpretation of this idea'. I am intrigued by this comment: what is this 'very particular interpretation of this idea' as compared to which other interpretation(s) of 'this idea', and how and where does critical pedagogy claim this 'as its own territory'?

I can only think of two common interpretations, at least in HE contexts: firstly, that associated with general notions as to critical thinking and the development of a questioning approach for the purposes of learning, assessment, and employability, et cetera. This interpretation has an increasingly greater emphasis on the need for students to demonstrate criticality in their writing and wider work as they progress through higher education, especially at PG level (Asher, 2015). Secondly, the wide use of 'critical' across academia in the context that we are discussing, as relating to the critical paradigm (Asher, 2015; 2018): critical Psychology; critical History; critical Sociology; critical Legal Studies; critical Geography; critical Philosophy; critical social policy; critical discourse analysis; critical ethnography; critical dialogue etc., as well as critical pedagogy and my own attempt to propose a conception of critical academic literacies (CAL) (Asher, 2022; 2023a; Asher et al., 2024), and critical theory as relevant to them all (Brookfield, 2005). For further examples, see the *London Conference and Journal for Critical Thought* (<https://www.londoncritical.co.uk/>).

'By critical stance we mean those academic fields (including social justice, critical pedagogy, multicultural education, anti-racist, postcolonial, and feminist approaches) that operate from the perspective that knowledge is socially constructed and that education is a political project embedded within a network of social institutions that reproduce inequality' (DiAngelo and Sensoy, 2014, p.1).

Critical pedagogy challenges the status quo by exposing the realities of historical and contemporary struggles over power, values, identities, and competing visions of the present and future. In doing so it makes what might otherwise be different or implicit assumptions explicit — and it is clear about its own axioms and premises, its basic foundational values and virtues, its prefigurative and democratic processes, and its intended aims or objectives. As such, it is explicitly, honestly, openly, and transparently political. The same, I would suggest, cannot be said of capitalist pedagogies.

If the claims being made by Steve and others are that eco-social justice can be achieved through either neoliberalism or a reformed liberal/social democratic capitalism (if such were possible, given present realities and trajectories), I would expect to see evidence of such both historically and in the present, and clear arguments being made that these are indeed workable and feasible alternative paths towards eco-social justice, yet these seem to be absent.

## Academic Literacies

Critical pedagogy(ies) shares with academic literacies a critique and rejection of deficit/banking and socialisation models of education/learning and teaching (and deficit thinking and narrativising/discourse, as dominant across society, more

broadly). They also share the embodying of alternatives focused on agential learning, empowerment, and emancipation, and thus education to transform ourselves and society/the world, with concerns for equity, democracy, and eco-social justice at its heart (NB: not 'social justice for our students', but for students, ourselves, and all across society). A positionality committed to the opening up, rather than the shutting down (as the present higher education system does) criticality and creativity, social agency and imagination, and thus alternatives (Asher, 2023b). I am wondering, are the critiques being made here, by Steve and others, equally held to apply to academic literacies?

## Conclusion

I very much hope we create the opportunities to continue these important conversations at some point in the not-too-distant future. For the moment, I will link to one piece written very much in response to our immediate contemporary contexts (though US-centric), by Henry Giroux, 'The necessity of critical pedagogy in dark times': [https://www.uncommonthought.com/mtblog/archives/2024/09/22/the-necessity-of-critical-pedagogy-in-dark-times.php?feed\\_id=14721&unique\\_id=66f1120cdf28b](https://www.uncommonthought.com/mtblog/archives/2024/09/22/the-necessity-of-critical-pedagogy-in-dark-times.php?feed_id=14721&unique_id=66f1120cdf28b).

In terms of a really accessible introduction to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (widely regarded as a foundational work of the field of critical pedagogy), I can only so recommend my mate Antonia Darder's very recent (second edition) book *The student guide to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

## Next steps and additional questions

This is a conversation that promises not only to be continued but also to invigorate the LD community in their search for best practice. There are multiple questions that can be asked in order to keep that conversation productive:

- How can we ensure that our commitment to critical pedagogy does not become a form of dogma that stifles diverse perspectives?
- In what ways might the promotion of critical pedagogy in LD potentially alienate or exclude certain students or colleagues? How can we balance the adoption of critical pedagogy with the need to address students' foundational skills and immediate academic needs?
- What mechanisms can be put in place to regularly evaluate and potentially revise our theoretical approaches in Learning Development? How can we create spaces for robust debate and challenge within the field, even when discussing core principles like critical pedagogy?



- What alternative theoretical frameworks or approaches might complement or challenge critical pedagogy in Learning Development, and how might these be integrated into our practice?

## ***Author's reflection***

### **Part one: reflection on the session and anonymous community responses**

After reflecting on my session at ALDCon24, I was disappointed with myself that I had failed to keep the conversation focused around the three main questions I had formulated. Of course, conversations and the flow of discussions are unpredictable, especially on subjects about which people feel strongly. The point was not the merits or otherwise of critical pedagogy (CP), but rather that holding this as our singular association value related to teaching and learning may have downsides. As such, I am grateful that some of the comments above highlight what was the core focus of my session. Critical pedagogy (CP) takes a very particular and explicitly political view of LD, education, and the wider world in which it sits. This is fine, but it seems clear to me that this CP worldview or our own individual and potentially clumsy interpretations of it could be wrong.

Any approach to LD requires critical thinking, but the 'critical' part is subject to challenge by our own biases. Critical pedagogy (irritatingly, to me at least) claims the term 'critical' as its own territory but uses a very particular interpretation of this idea. I am aware that the need for reflexivity and 'immanent critique' is often mentioned in relation to enacting CP, but I am really not convinced that CP approaches minimise the common cognitive biases and distortions that affect us all (Stapleton, 2019). In fact, I think the determinedly ideological approach of CPs make us very prone to things like confirmation bias, which 'tend[s] to give a lot of weight to beliefs that are consistent with [our] overall worldview and to discount those that are contradictory' (Markman, 2021, n.p.). Furthermore, this bias operates in a context of the human tendency toward 'selective exposure, the idea that people purposefully select information matching their viewpoints' (Stroud, 2010, p.556). Instances where people confuse correlation with causation are also, I think, likely in 'critical' assessments of current educational challenges.

These concerns speak to those of one commenter above. What role, for example, might personal or professional frustrations have in influencing our analyses and the critical (and

potentially leading) questions we might ask students to consider when attempting a critical LD approach ('Trust me on my analysis of the neo-liberal world order — I am a Learning Developer! Oh yes, and your essay looks fine by the way')? If we make CP the 'signature pedagogy' of Learning Development, then I am concerned that our conversations could develop into exactly the 'dominant narrative' against which CP warns — at least within the LD community. This could create a further and powerful in-group bias. This is an important issue for any credible academic discipline. In Psychology, for example, researchers 'have demonstrated the value of diversity — particularly diversity of viewpoints — for enhancing creativity, discovery, and problem solving' (Duarte et al., 2015, p.1).

My motivation for opening discussion on this topic is ultimately to enhance Learning Development practice, so thanks to everyone who joined the discussion. I hope the session provided food for thought. I feel encouraged that after the session a colleague shared a Call for Papers from *Teaching in Higher Education: Critical Perspectives*. This journal usually only accepts contributions which take their definition of a critical perspective on HE. However, as part of this call, the journal recognised 'the need for a multipolar worldview to enhance critical engagements about critique in higher education' (Luckett and Bhatt, 2024, n.p.). The editors of this special issue recognise that 'despite its pervasiveness in higher education discourse, the meanings of the concept [critical perspectives — which includes critical pedagogy in the journal's own definition] remain vague and implicit and often decontextualized' (see Luckett and Bhatt, 2024, n.p.). Hopefully further discussions in our community can contribute to the need identified in the journal.

### **Part two: response to Gordon Asher's comments**

The second part of this section is a response to Gordon's thorough and thoughtful critique of my reflection above, which was received in the second phase of community responses. Gordon wonders whether some of the disagreement in my session was down to an assumption on my part that LD is 'widely populated' by critical pedagogues and therefore that CP is widely practised in LD. To clarify, I did not assume this. My point was that I do not think ALDinHE should set CP as *the* guiding 'way' of LD via our association values — whether now or in the future. I do not think that we should stipulate any particular 'way of being and becoming in and with the world'. Any 'way' could be wrong and I do not want to



shut down other avenues of thinking and practising. Similarly, I do not want to shut down CP.

Gordon does a better job than me in elaborating the possible interpretations of the word 'critical' to help interrogate my annoyance with CP over what I see as its appropriation of the term. To clarify my position: I think CP wrangles deeply with the social and political questions of 'struggles over power, values, identities, and competing visions of the present and future' as he sets out. However, this *socially focused* strength has a potential downside in a loss of focus on the psychological and *cognitive* aspects of learning and thinking more broadly. This potentially leaves CP practitioners particularly vulnerable to the various psychological and cognitive biases common to all humans (see my comments above about confirmation bias and the very casual conflation of correlation with causation I have detected in numerous CP-oriented discussions I have encountered). I simply do not think CP is as critical as it thinks it is, or at least it can certainly be wielded uncritically. Either way, that is one reason I do not want it as our official association value.

I have other concerns about critical approaches, including the way I think they (do not) deal with questions of knowledge in education as a result of the radical version of social constructivism on which they rely. That, however, goes beyond the aim of my mini keynote, so I will not get into it here. Watch this or similar spaces.

Gordon sets achieving 'eco-social justice' as the benchmark by which to evaluate alternative approaches to CP. However, I am not sure this would ever be achievable, as those with differing orientations (i.e. those unpersuaded by CP) are very likely to have different interpretations of what constitutes 'justice'. This is again my point — if CP becomes the official ALDinHE party line (of the five values it is the only one that mentions pedagogy), what do we do with those LDs who have different views of what 'critical' thinking looks like, or what 'justice' is, or how we achieve it? What if we think you (CPs) are doing it wrong? Do I have to return my ALDinHE blazer badge and tie set?

**Figure 2. ALDinHE prototype blazer badge and tie set (source: eBay item).**



I will admit that my reference above to the ‘party line’ is a bit rhetorical, but I will explain my concern with a nod to the historical and institutional development of critical approaches. Gordon refers directly to ‘critical theory as relevant to [...] all’ critical approaches, including CP. I have recently been reading about the history and development of critical theory within the Frankfurt School (Institute for Social Research). This includes Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, who laid some of the foundations for future critical approaches. These thinkers set out key concepts in their agenda: achieving ‘freedom’ (and resisting ‘unfreedom’), ‘emancipation’, and ‘self-determination’ (How, 2003, p.6) through questioning and critique. So far so good.

I then read that as director of the Institute, ‘Horkheimer, as Grúnberg [his predecessor] had done before him, believed in the *dictatorship* of the director’ [my italics] (Held, 1980, p.32). This claim, apparently supported in institutional documentation and the letters of Horkheimer’s contemporaries, struck me as so eye-wateringly contradictory that I nearly immanently critiqued myself. Of course, this may have been more a human failing than one of principle. But does it not seem odd that we are being prescriptive about our ALDinHE-endorsed CP approach to teaching and learning because, as CPs, we are *against* being prescriptive?

This contradiction resurfaces in CP’s claims to represent an emancipatory, equality-based approach. Biesta, for example, has noted that in contrast to the CP ethos, ‘Freire himself operates as a [conventional, normative] teacher, not only by telling (other) teachers what

they should and should not do, but also by expressing strong claims about the allegedly true nature of human beings' (Biesta, 2017, p.59). I am not asking CP to be perfect, but if it stands as our *only* teaching/learning-related value, where is the home for those LDs who are sceptical of 'critical' colleagues' accounts of something as fundamental yet elusive as human nature?

Gordon advocates for a positionality 'committed to the opening up, rather than the shutting down (as [he claims] the present higher education system does) criticality and creativity [...] and thus alternatives'. Me too. The call for 'a multipolar worldview' (Luckett and Bhatt, 2024, n.p.) in the special edition of *Teaching in Higher Education: Critical Perspectives I* think aligns with my position. And they are firmly on team CP!

I will end with a restatement of my underlying question, which I do not think Gordon addressed in his response: are we really so confident as an association that we have found a self-checking 'way of thinking and being and becoming' which is so bulletproof and hermetically sealed as to need no external critique? Are we, as an association, willing to *dictate*, Horkheimer-style, that this perspective is the only one worth *valuing* in our approach to teaching and learning? I am not. I agree with Gordon that CP might be necessary for our times, but I just do not think that it is sufficient. So, can I stay in the LD club, or should I get my coat (blazer)?

### ***A self-promoting afterword***

Gordon presciently wonders whether my and others' concerns about CP might also apply to academic literacies (AL). They certainly do — see Issue 31 of *JLDHE*, in which Sunny Dhillon and I confide that 'We need to talk about AL', and ask 'is academic literacies designing the pedagogy out of LD?' (White and Dhillon, 2024).

### ***Acknowledgements***

Thank you to all the contributors who shared their reflections and enriched our insight into this conference presentation and its impact on the audience. Special thanks go to Gordon Asher for his insightful contribution.

The authors and contributors did not use generative AI technologies in the creation of this manuscript.

## References

ALDinHE (2023) *About ALDinHE*. Available at: <https://aldinhe.ac.uk/about-aldinhe/>

(Accessed: 12 January 2024).

Amsler, S. (2015) *The education of radical democracy*. London: Routledge.

Asher, G. (2015) 'Criticality in postgraduate research and writing', in E. Ryan and T. Walsh (eds.) *Writing your thesis: a guide for postgraduate students*. Maynooth: MACE

Press. Available at:

[https://www.academia.edu/50595237/Criticality\\_in\\_Postgraduate\\_Research\\_and\\_Writing\\_Critical\\_thinking\\_critical\\_reading\\_and\\_critical\\_writing](https://www.academia.edu/50595237/Criticality_in_Postgraduate_Research_and_Writing_Critical_thinking_critical_reading_and_critical_writing) (Accessed: 23

September 2024).

Asher, G. (2018) 'Critical dialogues for learning and technology — in, against and beyond the neoliberal university', *Uncommon Thought*, 4 December. Available at:

<https://www.uncommonthought.com/mtblog/archives/2018/12/01/critical-dialogues-for-learning-and-technology-in-against-and-beyond-the-neoliberal-university.php>

(Accessed: 23 September 2024).

Asher, G. (2022) 'Working in, against, and beyond the neoliberal university: critical academic literacies as a critical pedagogical response to the crisis of the university', in G. Asher, S. Cowden, S. Housee and A. Maisuria (eds.) *Critical pedagogy and emancipation: a festschrift in memory of Joyce Canaan*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Asher, G. (2023a) 'Learning development in, against, and beyond the neoliberal university: critical learning development and critical academic literacies', in A. Syska and C. Buckley (eds.) *How to be a Learning Developer in higher education: critical perspectives, community and practice*. London: Routledge.

- Asher, G. (2023b) 'Collaboration in, against, and beyond the neoliberal, neocolonial, pandemic university', in S. Abeggelen, T. Burns and S. Sinfield (eds.) *Collaboration in higher education: a new ecology of practice*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Asher, G., Buckley, C. and Syska, A. (2024) 'In, against, and beyond the neoliberal university', *The Learning Development Project* [podcast]. Available at: <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/ldproject/episodes/Gordon-Asher-in--against-and-beyond-the-neoliberal-university-e2nfsak> (Accessed: 23 September 2023).
- Biesta, G. (2017) 'Don't be fooled by ignorant schoolmasters: on the role of the teacher in emancipatory education', *Policy Futures in Education*, 15, pp.52–73. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210316681202>
- Brookfield, S. (2005) *The power of critical theory for adult learning and teaching*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Darder, A. (2015) *Freire and education*. New York: Routledge.
- Darder, A. (2024) *The student guide to Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Darder, A., Hernandez, K., Lam, K.D. and Baltodano, M. (eds.) (2024) *The critical pedagogy reader*. London: Routledge.
- Di Angelo, R. and Sensoy, O. (2014) 'Leaning in: a student's guide to engaging constructively with social justice content', *Radical Pedagogy*, 11(1). Available at: <https://ccej-sfu.ca/research/leaning-in-a-students-guide-to-engaging-constructively-with-social-justice-content/> (Accessed: 24 September 2024).
- Duarte, J.L., Crawford, J.T., Stern, C., Haidt, J., Jussim, L. and Tetlock, P.E. (2015) 'Political diversity will improve social psychological science', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 38, pp.1–13. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X14000430>
- Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury.

- Giroux, H. (2015) 'Higher education and the politics of disruption', *Truthout*, 17 March. Available at: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/29693-higher-education-and-the-politics-of-disruption> (Accessed: 25 September 2021).
- Giroux, H. (2020) *On critical pedagogy*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Giroux, H. (2024) 'The necessity of critical pedagogy in dark times', *Uncommon Thought*, 22 September. Available at: <https://www.uncommonthought.com/mtblog/archives/2024/09/22/the-necessity-of-critical-pedagogy-in-dark-times.php> (Accessed: 24 September 2024).
- Haidt, J. (2022) 'Why the past 10 years of American life have been uniquely stupid', *The Atlantic*, 11 April. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/05/social-media-democracy-trust-babel/629369/> (Accessed: 5 May 2024).
- Held, D. (1980) *Introduction to critical theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- How, A. (2003) *Critical theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jamieson, K.H. and Cappella, J.N. (2008) *Echo chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the conservative media establishment*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kincheloe, J.L., McLaren, P. and Steinberg, S.R. (2011) 'Critical pedagogy and qualitative research', in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. 4th edn. London: SAGE, pp.235–260.
- Lockett, K. and Bhatt, I. (2024) 'Getting critical about critique in higher education: provocations on the meanings of "Critical Perspectives"', *Teaching in Higher Education: Critical Perspectives*, 29(6), pp.1690–1703. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2024.2335223>



- Markman, A. (2021) 'Changing your mind about something as important as vaccination isn't a sign of weakness — being open to new information is the smart way to make choices', *The Conversation*, 23 September. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/changing-your-mind-about-something-as-important-as-vaccination-isnt-a-sign-of-weakness-being-open-to-new-information-is-the-smart-way-to-make-choices-167856> (Accessed: 15 July 2024).
- Stapleton, P. (2019) 'Avoiding cognitive biases: promoting good decision making in research methods courses', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 24(4), pp.578–586. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2018.1557137>
- Stroud, N.J. (2010) 'Polarization and partisan selective exposure', *Journal of Communication*, 60, pp.556–576. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01497.x>
- Syska, A. and Buckley, C. (eds.) (2024) *How to be a Learning Developer in higher education: critical perspectives, community and practice*. London: Routledge.
- White, S. and Dhillon, S. (2024) 'We need to talk about AL: has academic literacies designed the pedagogy out of learning development?' *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, 31. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.47408/jldhe.vi31.1267>

### **Author details**

Steven White is a Senior Teaching Fellow in Education Development at the University of Southampton. He has an interest in contrasting perspectives on learning and teaching. His other research interests include third-space perspectives on HE, digital and media literacy, and teaching/learning critical thinking.

## ***Licence***

©2024 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education (JLDHE) is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by the Association for Learning Development in Higher Education (ALDinHE).