

WHITE PEOPLE NEED TO **DO** THE
WORK **(NOT LEAD IT)**

“In a racist society, it is not enough to be nonracist—we must be anti-racist.”

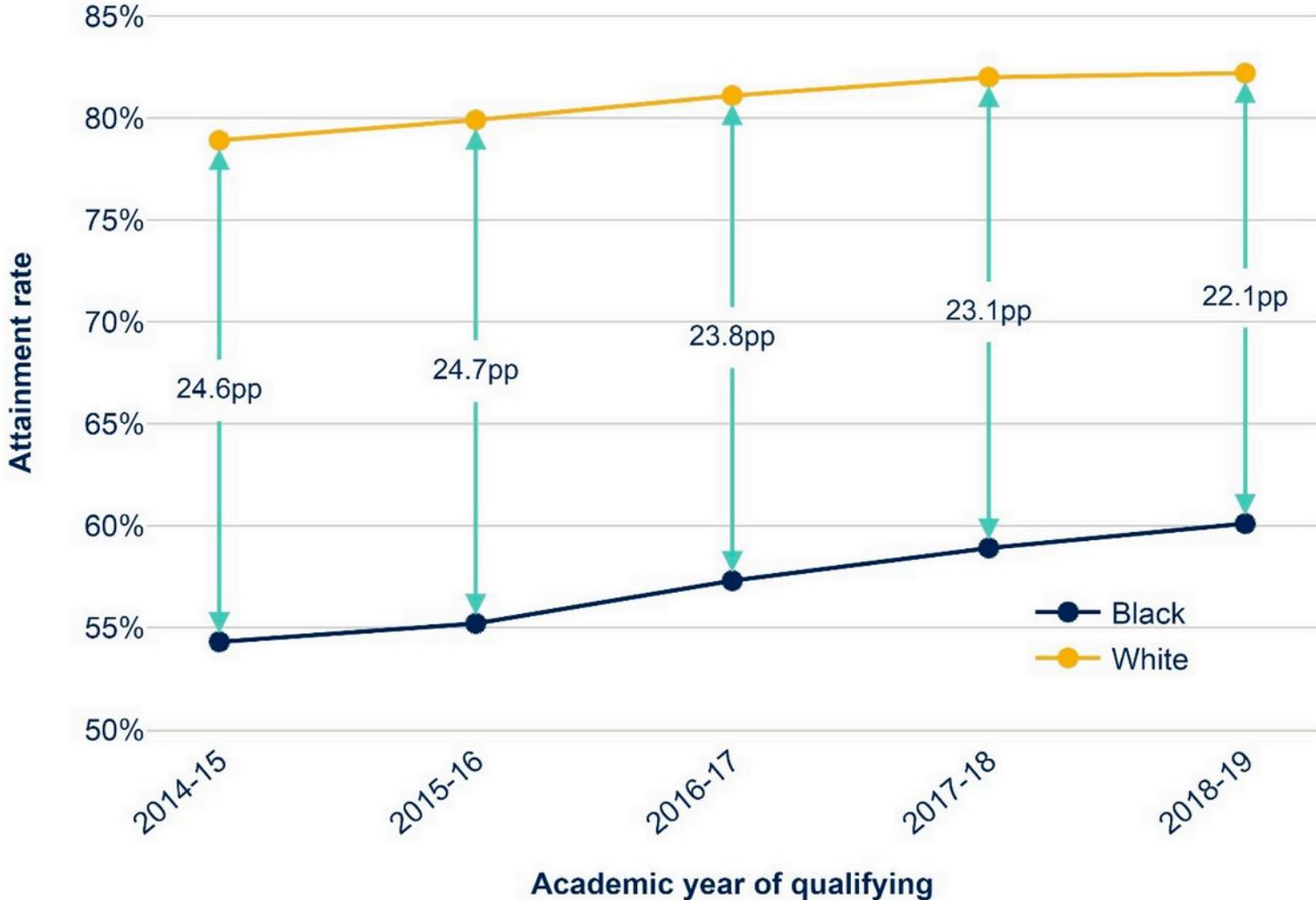
– Angela Davis, Oakland 1979

“How do we differentiate between ‘non-racist’ and ‘anti-racist?’” I asked the room. “There’s a big difference between the passive work of simply not being racist and the active work of dismantling systems of oppression that is being anti-racist.”

- Jenn Jackson (<https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/white-people-invest-in-anti-racism>)

**BUT
WHAT ABOUT
CLASS**

Sector-level time series of gaps in attainment rates between white and black students



Attainment differentials are complex at all levels of education. In schools, a number of BAME groups attain at a higher level than White British pupils and are more likely to go to university. However, for others, such as Black Caribbean children, attainment is consistently lower than for White British children, regardless of economic disadvantage (Cabinet Office, 2017).

**IT'S NOT
OUR PLACE**

“...this tokenization results in the shouldering of invisible and emotional labors that burden us further; we operate at a deficit working under these conditions, as this toll then affects the -isms we experience while embodying our intersecting identities in the workplace.”

Brown, Jennifer and Sofia Leung. "Authenticity vs. Professionalism: Being True to Ourselves at Work – Jennifer Brown and Sofia Leung." Pushing the Margins: Women of Color and Intersectionality in LIS, edited by Rose L. Chou and Annie Pho, Library Juice Press, 2018: 329-347.

“I said that both races, as human beings, had the obligation, the responsibility, of helping to correct America’s human problem”

- Malcolm X

X, M., & Haley, A. (2013). *The autobiography of Malcolm X*. Harmondsworth, Middx: Penguin Books.

THE WHITE KNIGHT

“I tell sincere white people, ‘Work in conjunction with us - each of us working among our own kind.’ Let sincere white individuals find all other white people they can who feel as they do - and let them form their own all-white groups, to work trying to convert other white people who are thinking and acting so racist. Let sincere whites go and teach non-violence to white people!”

X, M., & Haley, A. (2013). *The autobiography of Malcolm X*. Harmondsworth, Middx: Penguin Books.

**“TELL ME WHAT
BOOKS TO ADD”**



Sonia Gupta @soniagupta504 · Jun 5

Noticed a lot of talk about white people asking to be educated rather than quietly doing the research themselves and listening.

It's a power play. When a person asks a question, that person is asking because *they* want to know. Not because the asked necessarily wants to tell.



IAmDamion 
@themorganrpt

Replying to [@soniagupta504](#)

I refuse to educate white people about racism. If they're really serious about being on the right side of history, do the knowledge yourself. People learned how to build houses from scratch by watching YouTube videos. If that can happen then yeah they can do their own research.

6:41 PM · Jun 5, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

“The risk of taking on this work is burnout; it’s having to work alongside white folks who want you to educate them constantly, so that they can do the work alongside you using only half as much effort.”

Brown, Jennifer and Sofia Leung. "Authenticity vs. Professionalism: Being True to Ourselves at Work – Jennifer Brown and Sofia Leung." *Pushing the Margins: Women of Color and Intersectionality in LIS*, edited by Rose L. Chou and Annie Pho, Library Juice Press, 2018: 329-347.

**WHITE PEOPLE WILL
ONLY GET IT WRONG**

“...frankly, it should always be uncomfortable because it's a constant negotiation and attempted reconciliation between the benefits we receive from a white supremacist system and the knowledge that those benefits are doled out unfairly and discriminatorily. That fact should never sit well with us. For too many, it does.”

Kevin Allread https://www.huffpost.com/entry/lady-gaga-the-problems-with-non-racist-white_b_59960aeee4b033e0fbdec279

And if you're doing this work so you can sleep better at night, I'd ask that you remove yourself from this fight. You're not ready; if you were, you'd be sleeping worse. Isolating yourself from the parts of white supremacy that make you feel "icky," surrounding yourself with like-minded white people, and blocking your racist Facebook friends is primarily done to ensure your own comfort. What I'm asking is that you make yourselves uncomfortable at every opportunity. Because unlike your discomfort, mine is not optional.

**WORKING WITH THE
INSTITUTION IS IMPOSSIBLE
BECAUSE THE WORK WILL BE
NEUTRALISED**

Decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frame works, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks. The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonization is yet another form of settler appropriation. When we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym.

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1). <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630/15554>

"In some cases, the word "diversity" is already exercised within how organizations are marketed. One practitioner says of her institution, "Diversity is part of its ethos; it would even market itself that way." Another practitioner describes her university as one that "tends to pride itself on its equity credentials." However, she also suggests that "sometimes they are not acted on as well as they should be." Having diversity or equality credentials does not necessarily mean you do anything."

Ahmed, Sara. *On Being Included : Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, Duke University Press, 2012.

Advice for being an ally

Dr Muna Abdi shares some of the ways you can show up and stand up as an ally. Follow her on Twitter @Muna_Abdi_PhD

1 Own your privilege

Recognise the power, privilege and resources you have and think about how you can use it to support the work of those who are 'othered'.

2 Talk about the uncomfortable

And that sometimes means talking about how you are complicit in an oppressive system. Don't talk about other people's trauma, you cannot know it... but you can talk about the effects of a system.

3 Be strategic in your activism

Being an ally is more than just joining protests and marches... it is using your institutional power to change structures and systems. If you are in a position to do so, do so. Actions Speak Louder

4 Figure out WHERE and HOW you can do the most good

Everyone can do something. Whether it is pushing out messages on Twitter and on Facebook or meeting with institutional leads to push for change. The cacophony of all of us doing work together will lead to systemic change.

5 Start where you are

Take concrete steps- small ones, like steps on a ladder. Ask people what they need....Stand/sit with those who've been doing the work longer than you... Listen...Ask more questions...then talk.

6 Ask yourself: what do I want the future to look like?

We need to spend more time thinking/ talking about potential solutions.

7 Do your research

You can't be an effective ally if you don't know what the issues are. And you can't help deconstruct systems without first understanding how they were built. Read. Listen. Read. Listen. Read.

8 Resist the white saviour complex

Your role is not to "fix" communities of colour. It is not your job to swoop down and take action on their behalf without knowing what the community needs to begin with. It might be easy to succumb to the desire to do things that seem good for others because they make you feel good, but it's important to resist that urge and re-examine how to help.

9 Start with your own circle

Call out friends and family on their racism and microaggressions, even (especially) when it's uncomfortable. They'll likely be more open to listening to you, and it will give you the opportunity to effect real change.

10 Be brave

These things are not always comfortable. But commit to pushing past the point of comfort to take effective and impactful action to change things...even if that action is messy or risks the loss of your own privileged/powerful status.

Abdi, M. (2019) Advice for being an ally. BAMEed. Retrieved from: https://www.bameednetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/advice-5c-20for_38970569.pdf

"We have suffered transgenerational trauma and this is the result of it. This is a very raw and visceral moment for the Black Diaspora. It's important to highlight a lot of the people in the video taking down the statue were white, in an act of solidarity, as it's not a black people problem, it's a human problem. This is the new normal we are setting coming out of lockdown and statue of a slave trader doesn't align anymore." - Keziah Wenham-Kenyon

"The past few weeks have been a really big emotional strain and to be a part of the same space as people who feel the same as I do has been significant. This (the pandemic) is a very significant moment for the world, however the idea that blackness isn't seen or treated as equal in our society is something that surpasses that. I want people to understand the significance of this movement - it overshadows the pandemic. This is something that has gone on for hundreds of years and we're still at a point where we have to shout and scream to say that we are equal." - Sophia Harari

Elmi, O. (2020, June 8). 'Why Colston's statue had to come down'. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-52965803>