



The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub

TEACHING THROUGH CONNECTION

A Toolkit for Strengthening Faculty-Student
Relationships



What This Toolkit Offers



This toolkit is designed to provide valuable resources and strategies to enhance your relationships with students and improve educational outcomes. Here's what it offers:

Action Steps for Enriching Relationships

You'll find practical action steps that you can take to foster and deepen your relationships with students. These steps are crafted to help you create a more engaging and supportive learning environment.

Guiding Approach from Diverse Voices

Our approach is rooted in the diverse voices of students, faculty, and community partners. By integrating these perspectives, the toolkit offers a holistic understanding that can guide your interactions and strategies effectively.

Curated Resources for Deeper Learning

The toolkit includes curated resources aimed at supporting deeper learning. You'll find practical steps that illustrate how to apply these concepts in real-world classroom settings.

Checklists and Reflection Tools

To help you implement these strategies, the toolkit provides checklists and reflection tools. These are designed to guide your actions before, during, and after class, ensuring that you can effectively put these strategies into practice and reflect on their impact.

By using this toolkit, educators can foster an inclusive and dynamic learning experience that benefits both students and instructors alike.

Contents

III. About the HUB	VI. Anti-Colonial Approach	X. Reflection Practice	XIII. Comprehensive Support Services
IV. Glossary	VII. Faculty Identified Barriers	XI. Reflection Checklist	XIV. Join the Movement
V. Traditional Model	VIII. Action Plan for Faculty	XII. Selected Resources	

ABOUT THE DECOLONIAL HUB

The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub is a federally registered non-profit organization dedicated to transforming higher education. Our mission is to incorporate teaching and learning practices that empower marginalized students and enhance educational experiences for everyone. By drawing from decolonial and anti-colonial frameworks, we produce pedagogical tools informed by insights from cross-disciplinary educators, students, and community members.

Our Approach

At the Decolonial Hub, we prioritize the voices of students, elder oral histories, community knowledge, and the lived experiences of those most impacted by social inequalities. This approach ensures that our tools and resources are deeply rooted in the realities and needs of the communities we serve.

Collaborative Efforts

We bring together our team, faculty, students, and communities to identify gaps in education and collaboratively create solutions. This inclusive dialogue is at the heart of our toolkit development process, centring community knowledge as the foundation for reimagining higher education.

The HUB Toolkit Design

Our toolkits are distinctive because they are crafted from community insights collected during our events and workshops. We believe in going directly to the source to define the problem and support the solutions. By integrating community insights with evidence-based learning and teaching tools, we create resources that advance ethical and inclusive education.



For more information about our initiatives and resources, visit us at thedpphub.com.

Decolonial and Decolonizing

Decolonial Pedagogy

This term is defined in various ways. At the HUB, we interpret it as an ongoing process to transform educational approaches that address colonial patterns while also reimagining futures that are plural, accessible, inclusive, multilingual, diverse, collaborative, global, and connected to the land. We propel decolonial pedagogy as global education – privileging the people from lands that have been colonized by euro-western settlements and knowledge systems: Indigenous and marginalized, Black-African, Global South.

Decolonizing is not a metaphor

At the HUB, we believe that decolonization is not a metaphor. Any efforts to disrupt colonialism and neo-colonialism must address their embeddedness in structures, knowledge, and culture. Our commitment to decolonizing knowledge and praxis in higher education is to promote sustainable action and transform the livelihoods of disenfranchised and marginalized communities.

Key Aspects of Decolonial Practices:

- **Political Activism:** Engaging in movements and actions that challenge colonial authority and advocate for the rights of colonized peoples.
- **Promotion of Sovereignty and Land Back:** Supporting the right of Indigenous and marginalized communities to self-govern, maintain cultural autonomy, and reclaim land through Land Back movements.
- **Cultural Revitalization:** Encouraging the revival and celebration of Indigenous and marginalized languages, traditions, and customs.
- **Reclaiming Global Indigenous and Marginalized Knowledges:** Valuing and integrating Indigenous and marginalized ways of knowing and learning into educational systems and other societal structures.

Anticolonial

An anticolonial approach to curricula is one path to decolonizing knowledge. It refers to challenging and dismantling colonial ideologies and practices that have historically oppressed and marginalized Indigenous and other colonized communities. This involves rediscovering and valuing Indigenous and marginalized knowledge systems, cultural practices, and worldviews, while also addressing the ongoing impacts of colonialism in contemporary society.

In educational settings, anti-colonial efforts focus on revising curricula to include diverse perspectives, particularly those of marginalized groups, and fostering environments where all voices are heard and respected.

- **Inclusivity in Education:** Ensuring that educational content and methods reflect the diversity of student experiences and perspectives.
- **Challenging Power Dynamics:** Addressing and reshaping the power imbalances that have persisted due to colonial histories and practices.
- **Critiquing Colonial Narratives:** Analyzing and contesting the historical and contemporary narratives that justify or perpetuate colonial control.
- **Solidarity and Allyship:** Building alliances among various oppressed groups to resist colonial oppression and promote justice collectively.

By understanding and applying decolonial and anti-colonial principles, individuals and institutions can work towards creating more equitable and inclusive societies. These concepts are essential in transforming educational practices and fostering environments where all voices are valued and empowered.



A Western & Eurocentric Critique

THE TRADITIONAL MODEL

The Traditional Model in Higher Education

In many educational settings, the traditional model of teaching and learning has faced criticism for its limited scope and exclusionary practices. This model frequently centers on Western, Eurocentric perspectives, which can marginalize diverse voices and experiences.

Exclusionary of Student Voices

The traditional model often sidelines the identities and knowledge systems of many students. By focusing predominantly on Western perspectives, education tends to narrow worldviews and limit critical engagement. This approach can dismiss other valid ways of knowing, leaving students feeling unrepresented and disengaged from their studies.

Embedded Faculty Biases

In this model, faculty are the sole authority, with little room for students to influence or question the learning process. This hierarchical structure can silence diverse perspectives and overlook the lived experiences and knowledge that students bring to the table. Consequently, students may become disinterested in their learning, feeling that their voices are neither heard nor valued.

Lack of Awareness in Faculty

Faculty within conventional educational frameworks may often be unaware of how factors such as race, gender, class, and ability influence their positionality. This lack of a critical perspective can result in the reproduction of biases in the classroom, perpetuating unequal power dynamics and obstructing equitable learning opportunities.

“ I have found courses to be too focused on Western, Imperial, and white histories. Courses that fall outside of Western thought are normally cramped into a single category and not placed at the same level of importance

— Student, DPP Hub Event

”

ANTI-COLONIAL APPROACH

Empowering Education through Anti-Colonial Practices

The anti-colonial approach serves as an essential framework for challenging colonial power and influence. In educational settings, these principles play a crucial role in creating environments where every voice is valued and empowered, thereby ensuring an inclusive and vibrant learning experience. This approach is instrumental in creating empathetic, empowered students who are well-prepared to lead the next generation, fostering a sense of understanding and advocacy for diverse perspectives.

The Importance of Plural Knowledge in Education

The anti-colonial approach emphasizes the significance of plural knowledge by integrating diverse knowledge systems and lived experiences. It ensures that students feel represented and valued within their learning environment. By moving beyond Eurocentric frameworks, classrooms can encourage critical engagement and provide a platform for knowledge that resonates with community realities and global perspectives.

Collaborative Learning Partnerships

A fundamental aspect of the anti-colonial method is co-created learning. This process entails Faculty and students working together to steer the learning experience through dialogue, collaboration, and shared reflection. By prioritizing student voices and their lived experiences in knowledge creation and classroom activities, education transforms into a more inclusive and dynamic endeavour.

Reflective Practice and Self-Awareness

Critical self-reflection is vital for educators working within this framework. Faculty members are encouraged to examine how their positionality and personal experiences shape their teaching methods and biases. By engaging in a thoughtful examination of race, gender, class, and ability, Educators can cultivate a self-aware pedagogy that enhances relationships, fosters trust, and boosts student engagement and ethical learning.

“ My question, as a professor, is how to create a dialogue with students, knowing the privilege that I am always in, and how to create a culture of trust in courses with over a hundred students? What kind of logistics go into that? ”

— Faculty, DPP Hub Event

FACULTY-IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

Key Barriers to Adopting Anti-Colonial Approaches

The HUB Faculty members worldwide have pinpointed four critical barriers to implementing anti-colonial educational practices.

Time & Labour

- Adopting new approaches is time-consuming.
- Extra effort is needed to read unfamiliar material.
- Redesigning courses that have been taught for years is required.
- Many faculty members feel unprepared.
- There is a fear of making mistakes.
- Concerns exist about a lack of the necessary expertise.

Straying Off Topic

- Linking discussions to students' real-life experiences can divert from course goals.
- Some faculty focus on established theories and texts to maintain control and reduce conflicts.
- Faculty may avoid topics outside the syllabus due to limited expertise.
- Adhering to assessment criteria can deter broader discussions.

Upholding Objectivity

- Faculty frequently view themselves as impartial conveyors of information.
- There is a concern among educators that recognizing individual differences might lead to bias.
- Many believe it is safer to maintain an "objective" stance in their teaching approach.
- The focus often remains solely on delivering information rather than engaging with diverse perspectives.

Institutional Constraints

- Departmental constraints can limit teaching methods.
- Standardized curricula restrict faculty's ability to innovate.
- Accreditation requirements discourage experimentation.
- The polarizing political climate complicates innovation, as faculty may fear backlash.
- Structural pressures reduce flexibility for adopting anti-colonial approaches.

4-KEY STEPS

ACTION PLAN FOR FACULTY



Implementing Anti-Colonial Practices: A Guide for Faculty

Adopting anti-colonial practices in educational settings requires intentional effort and commitment. Here are four key steps faculty can take to implement these practices effectively, even within the constraints they face:

1. Engage in Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is a foundational step for faculty aiming to implement anti-colonial practices. It involves a deep examination of personal biases, privileges, and the ways these may influence teaching methods and interactions with students.

How to Reflect:

- Set aside regular time for reflection, once a month, to journal or think critically about your teaching practices.
- Engage with diverse literature and resources that challenge your perspectives and expand your understanding of anti-colonial frameworks.
- Participate in workshops or discussion groups focused on cultural sensitivity and awareness.
- You can connect with faculty from various departments, backgrounds and research areas to broaden your understanding and offer fresh perspectives.

2. Value and Integrate Student Knowledge

Recognizing and integrating the diverse knowledge that students bring to the classroom is crucial.

This step involves creating spaces where students feel valued and their contributions are welcomed.

How to Integrate:

- Encourage students to share their cultural backgrounds and experiences as part of classroom discussions and assignments.
- Design curricula that incorporate diverse perspectives, particularly those of marginalized groups.
- Utilize project-based learning that allows students to draw on their personal and community experiences.
- Encourage students to serve as presenters by sharing their personal experiences to enrich course topics and materials.

3. Build Trust with Students

Trust is essential for fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Building trust requires transparency, respect, and genuine engagement with students.

How to Build Trust:

- Maintain open lines of communication by being approachable and available for student consultations.
- Demonstrate empathy and understanding towards students' personal and academic challenges.
- Involve students in decision-making processes related to their learning experiences to show that their opinions are valued.
- Establish rules and expectations that reflect an awareness of your marginalized students, ensuring that all individuals feel valued and respected.

4. Provide Mentorship

Mentorship can significantly impact students, offering guidance and support that goes beyond academic instruction. Faculty can empower students by serving as mentors who encourage their development and exploration of knowledge.

How to Mentor:

- Establish regular one-on-one or small group sessions where students can discuss their academic and career goals.
- Connect students with additional resources and opportunities, such as internships, research projects, or community engagement activities, to further support their learning and development.
- Actively listen to students' aspirations and challenges, providing constructive feedback and encouragement.
- Actively reach out to less active students, particularly from marginalized groups, by initiating one-on-one conversations and offering mentorship to support their engagement and confidence in the classroom.

By focusing on these steps, faculty can begin to dismantle colonial structures in education and create a more equitable and inclusive environment that celebrates and empowers all students.

REFLECTION PRACTICE

Reflection Practice: A Cycle of Questions to Align Your Teaching with Equity and Care

Reflection is a vital practice for educators striving to create equitable and caring learning environments. By engaging in thoughtful reflection before, during, and after class, faculty can align their teaching with decolonial principles and ensure that every student feels valued and heard.

This reflective cycle is designed to help educators prepare with intention, remain responsive, and learn continuously from each teaching experience.

Before Class

1. How am I preparing to include diverse voices and perspectives in today's lesson?

Consider the materials and narratives you plan to present. Are they inclusive and representative of multiple cultures and viewpoints? Aim to incorporate a variety of sources that reflect the rich tapestry of your students' backgrounds.

2. What assumptions about my students might I need to set aside before I begin teaching?

Reflect on any preconceived notions you may have about your students' abilities, interests, or backgrounds. Approach each class with an open mind, ready to engage with your students as individuals with unique experiences and potential.

During Class

1. Am I creating space for students to speak and be heard without interruption or judgment?

Foster an environment of respect and openness where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. Allow for pauses and listen actively, encouraging dialogue that values every contribution.

2. How am I responding to power dynamics or inequities that arise in real time?

Stay alert to the dynamics within the classroom, addressing any imbalances or biases that may emerge. Be prepared to adapt your approach to ensure equity and inclusivity, promoting a learning space where all students feel empowered.

After Class

1. What did I learn from my students' contributions that can shape my next class?

Reflect on the insights and perspectives shared by your students. Consider how their contributions can inform and enhance your future lessons, creating a more responsive and engaging curriculum.

2. Did my teaching choices today strengthen or weaken trust with students?

Evaluate the impact of your teaching decisions on the relationship you have with your students. Consider how you can build stronger connections and trust through your actions and interactions in subsequent classes.

REFLECTION CHECKLIST

Faculty Reflection Checklist for Equitable and Caring Teaching

Reflective practice is essential for educators aiming to foster inclusive and equitable learning environments. This checklist is designed to guide faculty through a cycle of reflection before, during, and after class, ensuring that teaching practices align with decolonial principles and support all students.

Before Class

- ☐ **Diverse Perspectives:** Have I included materials and narratives that reflect a range of cultures and viewpoints?
- ☐ **Assumptions:** Am I aware of any assumptions or biases I may have about my students, and how might I set them aside?
- ☐ **Lesson Relevance:** How can I make the lesson content relevant to my students' lived experiences and backgrounds?
- ☐ **Preparedness for Adaptation:** Am I ready to adapt my lesson plan if unexpected issues or opportunities for deeper engagement arise?

During Class

- ☐ **Student Engagement:** Am I actively encouraging all students to participate and share their perspectives?
- ☐ **Power Dynamics:** How am I addressing and managing any power imbalances or inequities that emerge during class discussions?
- ☐ **Responsive Teaching:** Am I responsive to students' needs and feedback, adjusting my approach when necessary?
- ☐ **Environment of Respect:** Is the classroom environment one where students feel safe to express themselves without fear of judgment?

After Class

- ☐ **Student Contributions:** What new insights have I gained from my students, and how can I incorporate these into future lessons?
- ☐ **Teaching Impact:** Reflect on which teaching choices strengthened or weakened trust between me and the students.
- ☐ **Continuous Improvement:** What areas of my teaching practice could benefit from improvement based on today's experience?
- ☐ **Feedback and Growth:** Have I sought feedback from students to understand their experiences and perceptions of the class?

SELECTED RESOURCES

Fostering Inclusive Learning: A Community-Driven Resource Guide

This section offers a curated list of materials to help educators, students, and institutions promote inclusive learning. Further resources are available on our website. While we value evidence-based resources, we prioritize community involvement. These resources do not tell the whole story; much of our work is derived from interactions with seasoned educators, students, staff, and community members. We encourage active reading and community participation to enhance one's understanding and contribute to a more equitable educational landscape.

Related Readings on Decolonizing the Classroom

R. A. D'Souza and M., Pal. (2018). Encountering the post-colonial in academia. *Journal Organizational Ethnography* 7(3):361-372.

Sathorar, H., and D., Geduld. (2018). Towards Decolonising Teacher Education: Re-imagining the Relationship between Theory and Praxis". *South African Journal of Education* 38(4):1-13.

Freire, Paulo. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd. (Chapter 1: pp. 43-60).

M., Thembeke and L., Dreyer. (2018). Establishing Inclusive Schools: Teachers Perceptions of Inclusive Education Teams. *South African Journal of Education* 38(4):1-11.

Sathorar, H., and D., Geduld. (2018). Towards Decolonising Teacher Education: Re-imagining the Relationship between Theory and Praxis". *South African Journal of Education* 38(4):1-13.

De Lissoy, Noah. (2010). Decolonial Pedagogy and the Ethics of the Global. *Discourse Studies in the Cultural Politics Education* 31(3):279-293.

Ermine, Willie. (2007). The Ethical Space of Engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal* 6(1):193-203.

Land, Clare. (2015). *Decolonizing Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (chapter 1 pp. 2-9 & chapter 4 pp. 1-15).

Kluttz, Jenalee. (2019). Unsettling Allyship, Unlearning and Learning Towards Decolonising Solidarity. *Studies in the Education of Adults* 52(1):1-19.

Sium, Amam. (2012). Towards the Tangible Unknown: Decolonization and the Indigenous Future. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1(1):1-13.

Mendieta, Eduardo. (2020). Toward a Decolonial Feminist Imaginary: Decolonizing Futurity. *Critical Philosophy of Race*, 8(1-2):237-264.

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Cultivating Anti-Colonial Practices in Education: A Collaborative Approach

Bringing anti-colonial practices into educational environments requires a thoughtful synthesis of strategies and approaches, while also understanding the structural barriers that exist. This process is ongoing and not the responsibility of one person alone. By weaving together self-reflection, valuing student knowledge, building trust, and providing mentorship, educators can create transformative spaces that honour diverse perspectives and empower all learners. The Hub, comprised of educators and scholars who understand these challenges, is well-versed and able to support faculty in reaching their goals. This holistic approach not only challenges colonial legacies but also fosters a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

The HUB: Workshops, Consultations, and Support

The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub offers a comprehensive suite of services to assist educational institutions in implementing anti-colonial approaches and addressing structural barriers. Our offerings include:

1. Workshops

We provide interactive workshops designed to introduce and deepen understanding of anti-colonial practices. These workshops cover topics such as decolonizing curricula, fostering inclusive classrooms, and understanding the impact of colonial histories on contemporary education.

2. Consultations

Our expert team offers personalized consultations to help institutions and educators navigate the unique challenges they face in adopting anti-colonial strategies. We work collaboratively to develop tailored action plans that align with your institution's goals and values.

3. Ongoing Support

Implementing anti-colonial practices is an ongoing journey. We provide continuous support through follow-up sessions, resource sharing, and feedback mechanisms to ensure sustainable change and growth within your institution.

Joining the Movement for Inclusive Education



Global Community Engagement

The HUB is proud to host a vibrant global community of faculty, administrators, and students who engage in ongoing dialogues about anti-colonial approaches in education. This community serves as a platform for sharing experiences, insights, and strategies, fostering a collaborative environment where participants can learn from each other and contribute to a collective movement toward more equitable educational practices.

Join Our Community

By joining our global community, you will have access to regular discussions, webinars, and networking opportunities with like-minded individuals dedicated to transforming education. Our community is a space for growth, learning, and advocacy, where diverse voices are celebrated and empowered.

Contact Us

For more information about our workshops, consultations, support services, or to become part of our global community, please reach out to us. We are here to assist you in your journey towards implementing anti-colonial practices and creating inclusive educational environments.

Email: support@thedpphub.com

Website: thedpphub.com/support

Together, we can reimagine education and create a future where all voices are heard and valued.

Thank you

We are deeply grateful for your commitment to fostering more inclusive and equitable educational environments. By engaging with this toolkit, you are taking meaningful steps toward transforming the classroom experience for all students. Your dedication to adopting anti-colonial practices and valuing diverse perspectives is genuinely inspiring.

Stay Connected. We invite you to stay connected with us and follow our journey as we continue to develop resources and strategies to support educators like you. Here are some ways to keep in touch:

- **Follow Us on Social Media:** Stay updated on our latest workshops, resources, and events by following us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn
- **Join Our Newsletter:** Sign up for our newsletter to receive regular updates, insights, and stories from our community.
- **Donate:** Consider donating to support our ongoing efforts in creating equitable educational resources. Your contributions also fund experiential learning programs for students and provide support to those who are marginalized.
- **Volunteer:** Join our team of dedicated volunteers and contribute your time and skills to make a meaningful difference.
- **Mentor Students:** Share your expertise and experience by mentoring students and helping them navigate their educational journeys.

Important Links

Disclaimer: Please read our disclaimer for important information regarding the use of this toolkit and our resources <https://www.thedpphub.com/disclaimer>.

Together, let's create educational spaces where every voice is heard, valued, and empowered. Thank you for being a part of this transformative journey.

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