

Call for Papers Invitation

For the upcoming DECUS
Conference - Rooting Secondary
Education: Decolonial Practices
Addressing (Neo)colonial Realities

Conference Invitation

The Decolonizing Curriculum in Secondary School (DECUS) Conference cordially welcomes educators, researchers, students, and community organizers from around the globe to share their classroom and school experiences, with the aim of fostering meaningful, systemic changes in secondary education amid a polarizing world.

This gathering highlights how colonialism—the historical control of territories—and coloniality (Quijano, 1992)—the ongoing power dynamics rooted in colonialism—continue to shape education. As (neo)colonial realities evolve yet remain deeply embedded, secondary education requires more than new theories alone. The conference advocates local praxis to pursue structural reforms. We believe inspired educators are committed to supporting current and future generations in understanding, navigating, and challenging the Western colonial system that alienates people from each other and from nature. Promoting these connections is essential to addressing the multiple crises we face. Recognizing these challenges, the conference aims to create spaces for dialogue and exchange, including discussions of failures.

Honoring the Messiness of Practice: Welcoming Learning from Failure

We welcome contributions that explore how colonial and neo-colonial realities continue to shape secondary education and how these realities can be challenged through everyday educational practice. In particular, we encourage submissions grounded in the lived realities of schools and classrooms, including:

- curriculum development,
- teaching and learning practices,
- institutional barriers,
- pedagogical tensions,
- community engagement,
- policy implementation,
- lessons learned from failure,
- and attempts to create more inclusive and socially just educational environments.



We believe that by sharing our collective failures, false starts, and strategic compromises, we can build a more realistic and honest archive of decolonial practices. Key reflection questions include:

- What challenges does secondary education face today, and how are we addressing them?
- What structural barriers do teachers and institutions encounter when implementing these changes?
- What lessons from these practices can drive transformation?

Conference Axes

This conference seeks proposals that aim to unlearn, deconstruct, and challenge the everyday realities of modern schooling by actively delinking from Eurocentric frameworks along the diverse axes of the colonial matrix.

Abstracts on and beyond the following axes are welcome (you can select more than one):

- **Coloniality of Power** (Quijano, 2000): Reconfiguring institutional hierarchies, grading policies, state standards, and disciplinary authority.
- **Coloniality of Knowledge** (Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2000, 2011): Validating non-Eurocentric epistemologies, local histories, and indigenous sciences as rigorous curriculum standards.
- **Coloniality of Being** (Fanon, 1968; Wynter, 2003; Maldonado-Torres, 2007): Affirming the humanity, languages, and lived realities of marginalized students in hostile school climates.
- **Coloniality of the Mind** (Jalal al-e Ahmad, 1962; Fanon, 1968; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2003; Maldonado-Torres, 2007): Undoing the psychological internalization of inferiority and Eurocentric superiority by unlearning Euro-normative standards of success, intelligence, and professionalism within secondary schools.
- **Coloniality of Gender** (Wynter, 2003; Lugones, 2007): Dismantling colonial and patriarchal gender binaries and restoring diverse community-based understandings of gender and sexuality.
- **Coloniality of Nature** (Alimonda, 2019; Mancilla-Quinones, 2024): Shifting the curriculum from exploitative, anthropocentric views of environmental education toward ecological reciprocity.



- **Coloniality of Spirit** (Maldonado-Torres, 2008, 2017; Vizcaino, 2021; Ofosu-Asare, 2026): Understanding the pervasive legacies of the “civilizing” missions and creating space for local cosmologies, ancestral knowledges, spiritual diversity, and holistic well-being within classrooms without commodification of sacred rituals.
- **Digital Coloniality** (Arnold, 2005; Oyedemi, 2021; Toussaint, 2025): Confronting algorithmic bias, Eurocentric data infrastructures, and technological surveillance within modern educational tools.

Interactive Session Formats

To align with our decolonial practice, the international DECUS Conference aims to move beyond conventional, hierarchical lecture formats. Instead, it encourages participants to engage in performative, collaborative, and interactive workshops. Applicants may choose one of the following formats:

- **The "Kitchen Table" Dialogue (60 Mins)**: A circular, non-hierarchical discussion focused on relational knowledge. Presenters introduce a systemic issue, leaving empty chairs for audience members to rotate in and out of the active conversation.
- **Curriculum Mini-Hackathon / Living Lab (Max 90 mins)**: A hands-on working session. Presenters bring an existing colonial curriculum element (e.g., a standard syllabus or lesson plan) and lead the room in a collaborative, practical redesign.
- **Case-Based "Friction" Circle (Max 60 mins)**: An honest analysis of a specific institutional failure or roadblock. Presenters detail a real-world attempt at decolonial reform that faced structural pushback, inviting the room to co-strategize navigating that reality.
- **Creative and Embodied Workshops (Max 90 mins)**: Explore diverse ways of knowing. Presenters go beyond verbal and intellectual engagement, encouraging participants to use artistic forms such as theater, music, poetry, spoken word, storytelling, or mapping exercises as pedagogical tools.
- **Pedagogical Maker Space (Asynchronous Exhibition)**: A station-based interactive display. Presenters showcase physical artifacts of their practice (e.g., student zines, localized maps, alternative rubrics) for 1-on-1 engagement.
- **Student-led initiatives (Max 90 mins)**: Open space sessions where students can propose and develop their own decolonial agenda.



Proposal Requirements

Submissions must contain the following components:

- **Title:** Maximum 15 words.
- **Abstract** (Max 300 words): Must explicitly state the axis of the colonial matrix addressed, the practical reality, and any institutional failure or challenge you intend to unpack.
- **Interactive Session Format** (Max 150 words): Presenters can select from the suggested formats or suggest their own.
- **Contributor Bio(s):** Maximum 100 words per presenter.

Note: We will accept abstracts in English, Spanish, French, and Italian. These languages were selected based on the organizing team's proficiency.

How Your Proposal Will Be Evaluated

The DECUS review committee evaluates all submissions using a transparent 20-point rubric:

- **Educational Reality (5 Points):** Does your proposal address the actual, daily conditions of secondary schools (grading, lesson plans, policies), or does it stay lost in abstract theory?
- **Decolonial Alignment (5 Points):** Do you explicitly name and target specific axes of the colonial matrix, or are you using "decolonization" as a vague buzzword?
- **Interactivity (5 Points):** Does your session plan reject traditional, passive PowerPoint lectures in favor of active, collective engagement?
- **Reflexive Honesty (5 Points):** Do you embrace the messy reality of this work by sharing institutional frictions, roadblocks, or lessons learned from failure?



Important Dates & Deadlines

- November 30, 2026: Abstract Submission Deadline
- January 15, 2027: Abstract Review Feedback & Acceptance Confirmation
- February 15, 2027: Deadline for Registration Submission
- March 1, 2027: Deadline for submitting extended abstracts for inclusion in the conference proceedings.
- April 5 – 7, 2027: DECUS Conference Dates

Participation Modality

Only In-Person: Due to the sessions' interactive format.

There is no registration fee; however, collaborative work is encouraged. Presenters may also apply to chair the sessions.

Language Inclusion: We invite participants and presenters to promote multilingual sessions by using the language skills present in the room.

Convenors and Co-organisers

- QUEST
- VUB
- Euroclio
- Liceo Statale Angela Veronese
- Virgo Spaietiae Instituut
- 1st Geniko Lykeio Amaliadas

Contact Details

- Email address: decus@quest-eu.org
- Website: <https://decus.info>