

Engaging & (Un)learning

Toolkit



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WHAT IS DECUS?

Decolonizing Curriculum in Secondary School - DECUS- is an Erasmus+ project that seeks to empower secondary school teachers in Belgium, Italy and Greece in employing decolonial methodologies in their practice and classrooms.

DECUS project stands on the recognition that schools are not neutral spaces: but places where knowledge is transmitted, power is reproduced and identities are shaped.

Decolonizing curriculums refers to the multilayered process of recognizing and dismantling power dynamics and knowledge paradigms that perpetuate racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies in educational systems. It entails rectifying historical and present power imbalances (dominations) and their social ramifications (discriminations) in the teaching and learning processes, challenging the assumptions of Western, Eurocentric knowledge hegemony and superiority.

DECUS invites secondary school teachers to question, unlearn and reimagine educational futures and engage in a process of transformation. The goal is not to replace one story with another, but to expand teachers and learners awareness of colonial legacies and support them with tools to analyse, understand and implemented decolonial practices in today's interconnected world.





Partnership

DECUS partnership is composed by different actors and expertises - secondary schools, universities and civil society organizations. The collaboration between different educational stakeholders offers a space for collective inquiry, reflection, and creative experimentation. The partnership countries - Greece, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands - share an intricate history of colonialism and a need for new educational models that account for the challenges and opportunities of today's societies.

Schools



University and NGOs



To learn more about us you can visit our website





DISCLAIMER

This toolkit emerges from a collective process of unlearning and re-imagining education. It acknowledges that conversations about coloniality, power, and curriculum are not neutral, nor easy. Engaging meaningfully with these themes may bring discomfort, uncertainty or resistance, in ourselves and in the spaces we facilitate.

This discomfort is not a sign of failure, but a reminder that decolonial work is deeply personal, relational, and situated. It asks us to confront long-standing structures, privileges and narratives, including our own assumptions.

The project Decolonial Futures offers a framework for engaging with Decolonial processes, through the metaphor of the “Broccoli seeds” agreement.

Broccoli Seeds & Candies

In a world where education and knowledge increasingly operate like fast-food commodities (packed, consumed and discarded), people often look for quick and convenient solutions that are practical and pleasurable: the metaphor describes these as “candies”.

Opposite to candies we have “Broccoli Seeds”: small and perhaps not glamorous beginning, that require soil, continuous care and patience to attend a possible harvest.



The Broccoli Seeds agreement

The broccoli seeds agreement pertains new ways of relating, to ourself, to eachother and to knowledge, entering this process with openness and humility.



[Learn More about it here : Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures](#)

I UNDERSTAND THAT:

-  The DECUS project may not have any immediate practical application in my context and that is ok.
-  I do not have to agree with anything presented, but I am happy to see what happens.
-  I may feel uncomfortable, confused and frustrated through this process and I take responsibility for observing and learning from my conscious and unconscious responses/resistances.
-  It is up to me to decide when to push myself further and when to stop and reflect/observe.

The reflections, tools and activities offered here are invitations, not prescriptions. They are meant to support ongoing, context-specific journeys, always in dialogue with the communities , histories, and lived realities that shape our educational environments and realities.

Please approach this work with openness, care, humility, and accountability: to yourself, to your students, and to the wider communities.



ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit serves as a companion for educators interested in decolonizing secondary school curricula. Rather than offering a checklist or a complete “solution”, it provides frameworks, questions and practices intended to spark critical reflection and inspire action within your context. Decolonizing education is not a task to complete, it is a continuous evolving practices rooted in listening, curiosity and collective responsibility.

You may use this toolkit:

- * As a starting point for reflection
- * As a resource to deepen ongoing efforts in your school
- * As inspiration to design your own locally grounded practice

We invite you to move through this document slowly, relationally, and critically. Notice what resonates, what challenges you, and what invites further exploration. Adapt, translate, transform, and add to these ideas based on your students, your community, your histories, and your commitments.

This toolkit is a living resource. It does not offer closure, it opens space!

You can find this toolkit in EN, NL, FR, EL, IT in our website in this link.



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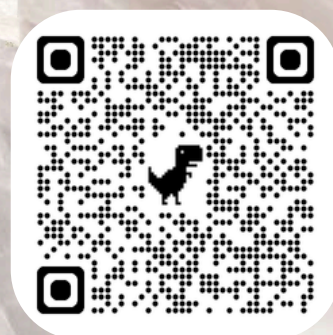




CHAPTER 1.

UNVEILING COLONIALITY: THE COLONIAL MATRIX AS A TOOL

You can explore the training
connected to this chapter by
scanning or clicking the QR





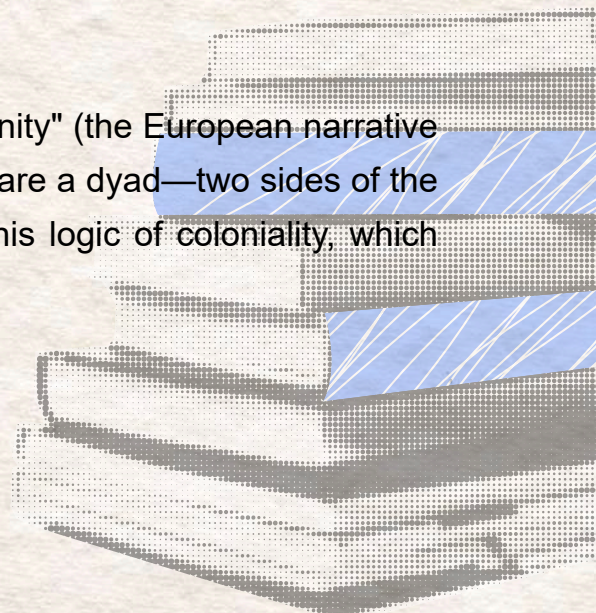
UNVEILING COLONIALITY: THE COLONIAL MATRIX AS A TOOL

To engage in decolonial work, we must first move beyond the common understanding of "colonialism" as a completed historical event. The critical distinction, as articulated by decolonial theorists, is between the act of colonialism and the enduring logic of coloniality.

- Colonialism (The Act): This refers to the historical period of direct political, economic, and military control by one nation over another.
- Coloniality (The Enduring Logic): This is the "living legacy of colonialism". It refers to the "long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism" and continue to define culture, labor, and knowledge production long after the end of direct administration.

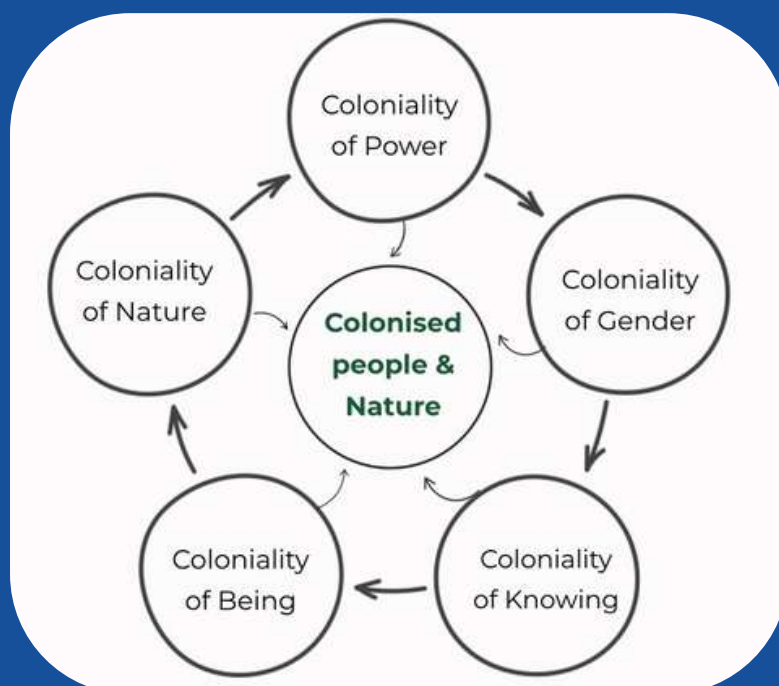
As theorist Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) clarifies, "coloniality survives colonialism." It is "maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples". We are not addressing a historical artifact; we are addressing the invisible, "naturalized" operating system of the present.

The central argument of this framework is that "Modernity" (the European narrative of progress, reason, and civilization) and "Coloniality" are a dyad—two sides of the same coin. The "hidden agenda of modernity" was this logic of coloniality, which established a global "colonial matrix of power".



Tool 1

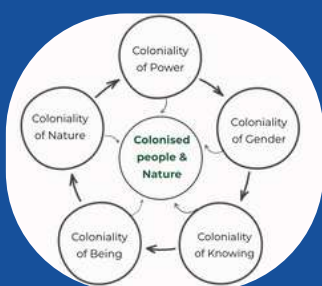
The COLONIALITY Matrix of Power





Tool 1

The COLONIALITY Matrix of Power



01 Summary

The Coloniality Matrix of Power is a diagnostic tool, primarily developed by decolonial thinkers like Aníbal Quijano, to make the "hidden agenda of modernity" visible. It identifies not one, but several interconnected axes through which the logic of coloniality operates. It moves us from analyzing colonialism as a past event to seeing coloniality as the "naturalized" operating system of the present. This framework provides the necessary categories for the deep, reflective work of analyzing how our own curriculums may, often invisibly, reproduce these long-standing patterns of power.

02 Purpose

- * To make invisible, long-standing patterns of colonial power visible in our classrooms.
- * To provide a concrete framework for interrogating the logic underpinning the materials we use and the way we teach them.
- * To move beyond a simple "good/bad content" checklist and toward a deep, diagnostic process.
- * To connect different forms of oppression (racial, gendered, environmental, etc.) as part of one interconnected system.

03 How the Tool Works

A Guide for Curricular Reflection
This is not a checklist for finding "good" or "bad" content. It is a reflective guide. Use the guiding questions below to interrogate the logic underpinning any curriculum.

04 Guiding document for each axis



05 Potential Risks

- * **Risk of Overwhelm:** Seeing coloniality everywhere can be paralyzing. Remember this is a diagnostic tool, not a purity test. The goal is awareness and incremental change, not immediate perfection.
- * **Risk of Reductionism:** Avoid using the matrix to "flatten" complex works. A text can both reproduce coloniality in one axis and challenge it in another. The goal is to hold this complexity.
- * **Feelings of Guilt:** This tool may surface uncomfortable truths. The goal is to move past individual guilt and toward "collective accountability and action"

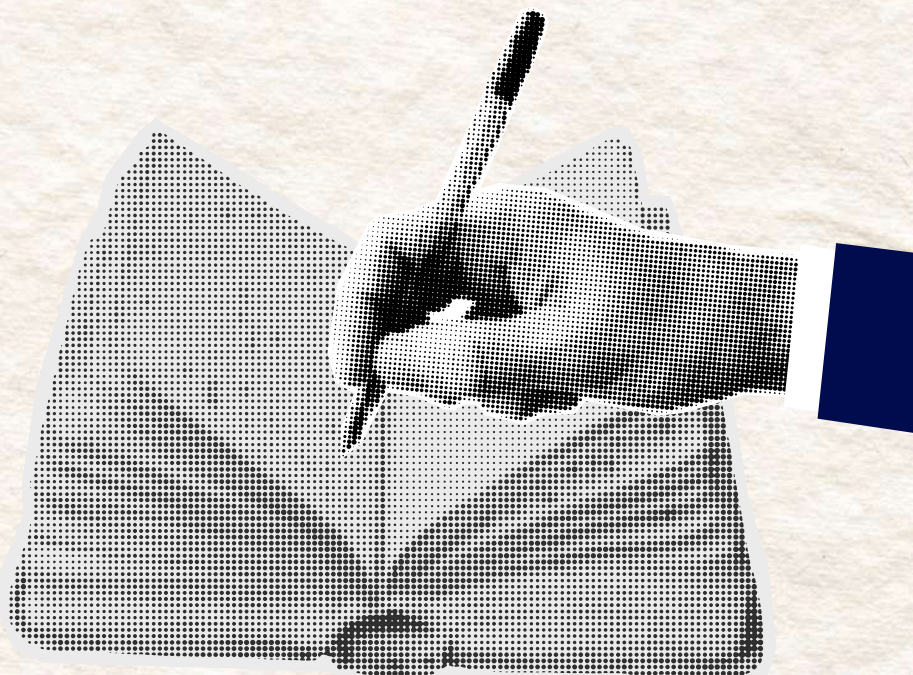
06 Adaptation Possibilities

- * For Lesson Planning: Use the "Curriculum Analysis" worksheet before you teach a unit or a lesson to identify blind spots and proactively add counter-narratives.
- * For Students: Simplify the axes (e.g., Power = Who's in charge?, Knowing = Whose story is told?, Being = Who's treated as fully human?). Use it to analyze fairy tales, movies, or advertisements.

07 Key terms and Concepts

- * **Colonialism:** A political, economic, social, and cultural system imposed by a dominant country through the colonization of its territory to exploit its wealth.
- * **Settler Colonialism:** Avoid using the matrix to "flatten" complex works. A text can both reproduce coloniality in one axis and challenge it in another. The goal is to hold this complexity.
- * **Neo-colonialism:** A variant of colonialism which does not rely on physical force. Rather, it uses cultural and market influences to enforce integration into a core imperialist economy.
- * **Neo-colonialism:** A variant of colonialism which does not rely on physical force. Rather, it uses cultural and market influences to enforce integration into a core imperialist economy.
- * **Modernity / Coloniality Dyad:** The concept that coloniality is a global pattern of capitalist power... and modernity corresponds to the Western model of civilization... they are intimately linked, and the hidden agenda of modernity is coloniality.
- * **Decolonial Theory:** Emerged 90s from Latin American thinkers... based on the idea that decolonization of the 19th century was incomplete... and that modernity and coloniality are intimately linked.

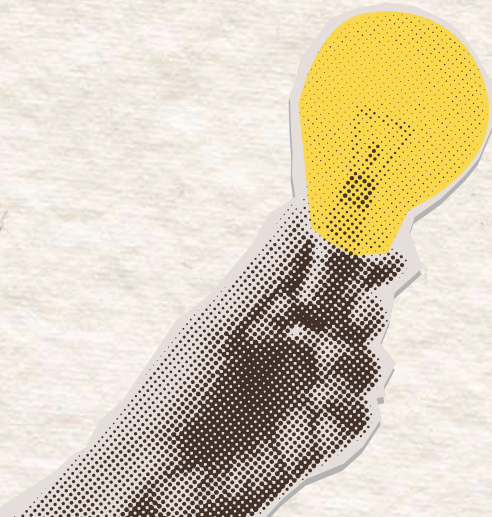




CHAPTER 2.

REFLEXIVITY

You can explore the training connected to this chapter here.



REFLEXIVITY

True decolonial action is not achieved through simple implementation of learned practices alone. This toolkit supplies a variety of practices for you to choose from, however for them to be effective as well as relevant for your context, it requires ongoing critical reflection at individual as well as collective levels. Practicing reflexivity supports educators in recognizing how colonial beliefs, values and practices may unconsciously shape their work, even when they seek to challenge them. It allows us to think critically through a decolonial lens, making sure that even well-intentioned decolonial action is not accidentally reproducing dominant, eurocentric norms.

There are different dimensions to reflexivity, moving from self-reflexivity to collective reflexivity. Self-reflexivity involves a continual practice of critically examining one's own assumptions, values and feelings, as well as their dominant ways of thinking. It examines an individual's positioning in relation to others as well as overarching systems of power, recognizing the power that is being held over us, as well as the power we hold of others. However, individual reflexivity alone is not enough to truly examine our decolonial practices and how they influence our

immediate context. By practicing collective reflexivity, the reflective practice can be extended by inviting multiple perspectives into the process, using stories and experiences of others as mirrors that reflect unseen patterns and norms of ours.



It opens space to challenge deeply embedded academic practices, inviting multiple perspectives to analyze them from different viewpoints and shaping a more comprehensive and nuanced approach, informed by voices that might be overheard in a traditional setting.

In a concrete educational context, collective reflexivity allows for interdisciplinary as well as, at its highest level, transdisciplinary thinking and approaches, building bridges between singular knowledge domains. Creating space for transdisciplinary reflexivity allows for teachers to co-reflect as well as co-create with students and communities, focusing on their practices, identities and systems. It is not just about content but also about purpose and power, helping to recognize complexity and resisting binary thinking, allowing for more nuanced ways of knowing and being.

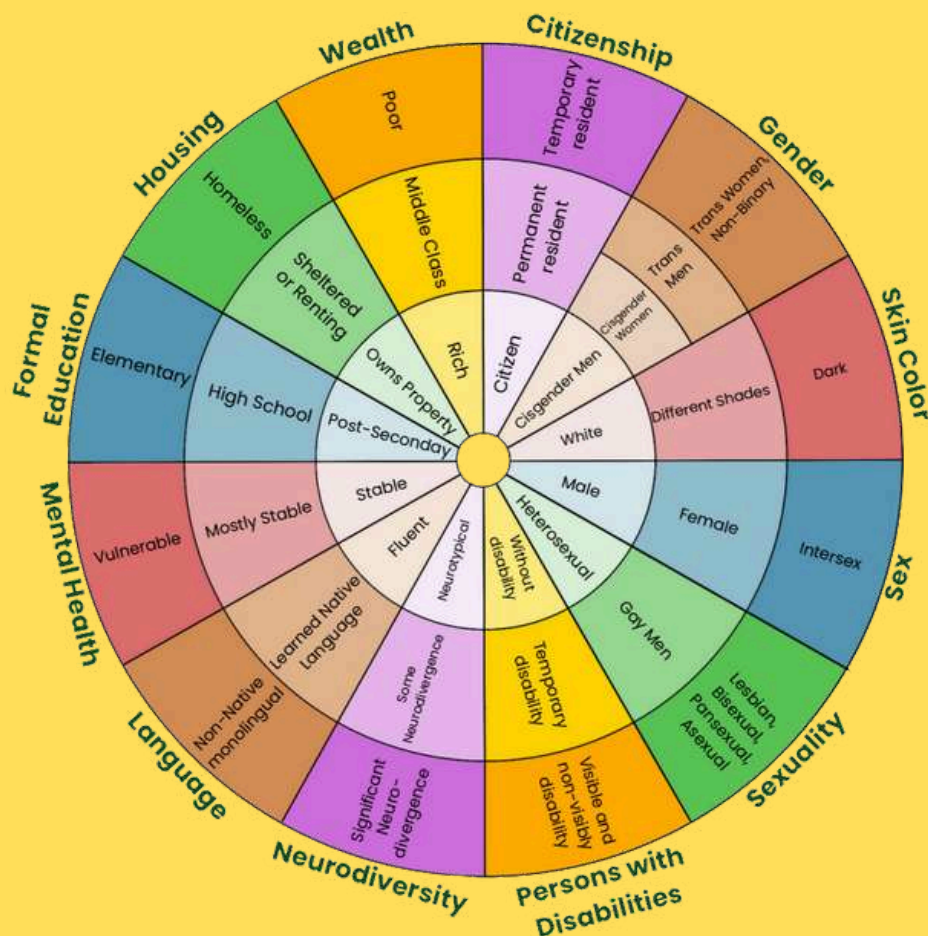


This section of the toolkit offers a range of tools to help educators, facilitators and learners to engage in multi-faceted and context-informed reflexivity. The tools described make space for dissonance as well as vulnerability and creativity, essential aspects of decolonial thinking and oftentimes overlooked in an educational context. The goal is to move away from reflection as confession and towards collective accountability and action.

Tool 2

THE WHEEL

of Privilege and Power



Tool 2

THE WHEEL

of Privilege and Power



01 Summary

The Wheel of Privilege and Power is a reflective activity designed to help individuals explore their positionality and social identities and how these relate to structures of privilege and power. Based on the visual representation of identity categories, participants identify where they personally “sit” on each location of the wheel: closer to the center (signifying more social power) or further outward (less social power).

This tool encourages participants to recognize that their experiences and engagement with the world are shaped by overlapping identities and social location, and that their positionality is not fixed, with categories constantly shifting depending on the context.

02 Purpose

- * Recognize how their intersecting identities affect the way they experience the world
- * Understand that positionality is dynamic and relational, rather than static
- * Move beyond personal awareness to question how their positions influence teaching, curriculum design, policy, or interpersonal relationships
- * Shift from “I am...” to “How can we...?” encouraging collective responsibility and systemic thinking rather than isolated self-disclosure by highlighting the context which shapes their positionality

03 Potential Risks

TAs with any introspective activity, this tool should be used with care, with the facilitator utilizing non-judgmental language, establishing a safe space and encouraging self-compassion to avoid the following risks:

- **Performative risk:** It can become a mere exercise in self-presentation rather than a step toward reflective systemic change
- **Centering the individual:** There is a danger that reflection stops at “self-awareness” without considering collective action or institutional dynamics
- **Category limits:** Participants may reduce identity to fixed categories, rather than recognizing their complexity and fluidity





04 Adaptation Possibilities

This tool can be adapted to a variety of contexts, serving more as an initial inspiration than a set resource. Categories can be added or removed, based on the context it is used in.

- * **Schools & classrooms:** Adjust categories to be age-appropriate and invite guided discussion, not just individual work
- * **Teacher training:** Use as part of a module on inclusive pedagogy or decolonizing curriculum
- * **Online:** Use interactive whiteboards or editable PDFs; follow with small-group breakout discussions for collective reflection

05 How the Tool Works



- * Provide each participant with a copy of the wheel (printed or digital).
- * Ask them to mark or highlight the identity categories that reflect their lived experience
- * Encourage them to notice where they are closer to the center (privilege) and where they are further out (marginalization)
- * Invite individual reflection followed by collective discussion in pairs or small groups

The Wheel of Privilege and Power Empty template



The Wheel of Privilege and Power Filled template





Tool 3

BUS

Methodology



BUS Methodology



01 Summary

"The Bus" is a reflective tool designed to help individuals explore the different internalized voices, values, and perspectives that influence their reactions in challenging or emotionally charged situations. Participants imagine themselves as a bus with many "passengers" on board, each passenger representing different parts of themselves shaped by experiences, identities, and social norms (can be used as a follow up activity to the "Wheel of Positionality").

The key question is: **Who is driving your bus?** In other words, which internal voice or perspective is guiding your actions or reactions in a given moment?

This activity helps participants recognize that their responses are not always fully conscious or value-neutral, but are in fact shaped by internalized power dynamics, learned behaviors, and social conditioning. By identifying which "passenger" is in the driver's seat, participants begin to build critical self-awareness and emotional literacy, which are two essential capacities in decolonial education practices.

02 Purpose

- * Help participants unpack their internalized narratives and how they affect their reaction to given situations
- * Foster emotional and reflective awareness, especially in uncomfortable or unfamiliar situations
- * Acknowledge how power and privilege are not only external, but also internalized, supporting decolonial learning by encouraging educators and learners to pause and interrogate the impulse behind the reaction, not just the surface-level response.

03 Potential Risks



- * **Emotional vulnerability:** The exercise can bring up discomfort or even shame. Without a supportive group culture, participants may shut down or become defensive
- * **Over-identification:** Participants might view certain "passengers" as bad or wrong, instead of recognizing them as learned parts of self-shaped by context and experience
- * **Over-simplification:** Participants may reduce complex reactions to single "passenger" identities, with it being important to acknowledge that multiple identities may be relevant at the same time

05 Instructions

- * Present participants with the metaphor: You are a bus. You have many passengers inside you, each shaped by your upbringing, cultural norms, fears, roles, and experiences.
- * Provide a prompt or scenario (see potential examples above).
- * Ask: "Who is driving your bus in this moment?"
- * Participants write, draw, or name the "passenger" who took the wheel in their reaction.
- * Encourage silent reflection followed by small-group or plenary discussion.



06

**Blog with further info
regarding The Bus
Methodology**



07

Bus Template



Tool 4

WHITE

Supremacy Culture (WSC) Characteristics





Tool 4

WHITE Supremacy Culture (WSC) Characteristics



01 Summary

This activity supports participants in identifying and challenging the ways white supremacy culture (WSC) manifests in their classrooms, institutions, and ways of being. Based on the framework developed by Tema Okun, WSC is understood not simply as overt racism, but as a set of deeply internalized cultural norms, such as individualism, either/or thinking, paternalism, and the belief in only one right way, which sustain systems of dominance and exclusion.

The tool encourages participants to critically name, reinterpret, and creatively reframe these characteristics based on their own contexts. Through group dialogue, flashcard creation and reflection, participants generate their own language for how WSC shows up in their practice and begin imagining concrete alternatives and personal commitments to challenge it.

02 Purpose

- * To get an understanding of how colonial structures live on within us
- * To examine how our ways of being often draw on colonial ways of thinking / resonating / making sense of the world
- * To understand how we can behave differently and act in other ways
- * To identify specific ways in which participants can challenge WSC

03 Potential Risks

- * **Over-simplification:** The concept of WSC may be reduced to a list of behaviors, rather than understood as a system of cultural norms rooted in colonial histories.
- * **Over-intellectualization:** Participants may stay at a conceptual level and avoid personal engagement or discomfort.
- * **Defensiveness or resistance:** Naming WSC can provoke defensiveness, especially among those unfamiliar with the concept.





04 Adaptation Possibilities

There are many possibilities to adapt this tool, you can find some examples below:

- * Including characteristics most relevant to your context
- * Encouraging participants to rename characteristics using their own language and lived experience
- * Adding movement-based or artistic representations to the flashcards for multimodal engagement



05 Instructions

- * **Introduction to WSC.** Using the work of Tema Okun, the concept of white supremacy is introduced to the participants. Different characteristics from her framework will be represented as examples (chosen in accordance to the context of the participants). Participants are invited to connect these characteristics to their own work or context in plenary
- * **Group Reflection & Naming.** In groups, participants try identify other characteristics of WSC from their own educational contexts, deciding on what to name them and detailing how they take shape in their context
- * **Flashcard Creation.** Groups create flashcards for each characteristic they've identified:
 - Name of characteristic
 - Description/definition
 - A symbol or visual element representing it
- * **Group Presentations.** Each group presents their characteristics to the plenary
- * **Clustering.** As a collective, participants group similar or overlapping characteristics together. They give each cluster a title and briefly discuss where the connection lies
- * **Challenging the Characteristics.** Back in groups, the participants pick one characteristic and reflect on potential ways to challenge it/reframe it, focusing on who needs to be involved and what a concrete change would look like

**Temo Okun
Website**



**White Fragility
Resource Library**

For more information on the topic you can check out this external resource library curated by Dr. Robin DiAngelo



Tool 5

DECONSTRUCTING

Dominant Discourse



Tool 5

DECONSTRUCTING

Dominant Discourse



01 Purpose

- * To get an understanding of how words are never neutral
- * To raise awareness of how the construction of a text means a lot to how we understand its message
- * To learn basic tools to engage critically with the text (text, pictures, video, etc.)
- * To understand how texts convey power dynamics and how to challenge these
- * To challenge colonial and Eurocentric discourses and narratives



02 Summary

Deconstructing Dominant Discourse is an entry point into Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a method for examining how language, visuals, and other communicative practices shape our understanding of the world. CDA helps participants recognize that texts are never neutral: they reflect and reproduce power relations, ideologies, and cultural assumptions. In the context of decolonial education, CDA is a powerful tool to identify and challenge dominant discourses that support and emphasize colonial and Eurocentric ways of knowing, being, and understanding.

This tool invites participants to investigate how everyday materials and narratives they are surrounded by on a daily basis construct meaning. They are guided to uncover whose voices are amplified or silenced, how power is enforced and visually or textually emphasized, and how alternative narratives might emerge. Importantly, this practice does not seek to "add in" marginalized perspectives as an afterthought, but to critically examine and reimagine the dominant narratives themselves.

03 Potential Risks

To avoid the following risks, rigorous scaffolding needs to be provided during the implementation of this tool, encouraging participants to not only focus on critique but ultimately reimagining discourse.

- **Quick Fix:** Participants might be tempted to find a quick fix for dominant discourse present in their educational discourse, disregarding the underlying narratives
- **Reinforcing "either/or" beliefs:** If framed poorly, the tool may imply a set choice between "Western" and "Other" knowledge instead of encouraging pluralistic approaches of knowledge expression
- **Over-emphasis on critique without re-imagination:** Focusing only on analysing and critiquing discourse without exploring alternative narratives



04 Adaptation Possibilities

Dominant discourse can be addressed in a multitude of contexts, with some examples found below:

- * Different types of materials (e.g. school textbooks, worksheets, lesson plans, classroom visuals, institutional policies, media)
- * Locally relevant or participant-submitted examples of discourse
- * Public discourse (e.g. newspaper articles, school websites, museum exhibits) as source material

05 How this tool could be applied

Deconstructing dominant discourse as a tool is widely applicable, however here is one way to use the tool in a concrete activity or reflective setting. This example is meant to inspire potential application, you can adapt it to your context by adding or disregarding the suggestions made in this section as you see fit.

Using a short set of guiding questions (such as: Whose voice is centered? What is taken for granted? What is made invisible?), participants engage in a critical analysis of a piece of educational material, such as a textbook image, school policy, or video clip.

In small groups, they:

- Identify the dominant discourse present in the material
- Reflect on how power, knowledge, and identity are constructed through it
- Name a similar dominant narrative from their own context
- Reframe this narrative, imagining what a more just or pluralistic version might look like

Here, the activity would end with a short group dialogue, surfacing shared patterns, tensions, and possible actions that can be undertaken by the participants, as well as reflecting collectively on perceived or unnoticed misconceptions.





Tool 6

HARVARD

Implicit Association Test (IAT)





04 Adaptation Possibilities

The IAT can be adapted to various learning environments and facilitation needs. It is important to focus on the context in which the tool is being used, making wise choices on which test to conduct with your participants or which test applies to your own personal context. Examples can include:

- * Teacher training programs: Use the Gender-Career or Race IAT to help educators reflect on how bias may affect expectations of students.
- * Diversity and inclusion workshops: Start with individual IATs, followed by group discussions on how implicit bias shows up in workplace or classroom policies.
- * Cross-cultural exchange settings: Use the Nationality or Religion IATs to open discussion on global bias and cultural assumptions.

05 Instructions

- * Visit the website: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- * Choose a test from the list (e.g., Race IAT, Skin Tone IAT, Gender-Career IAT).

Implicit
Harvard
website





Tool 7

MAPPING

Hierarchies, Accountabilities & Alliances



MAPPING

Hierarchies, Accountabilities & Alliances



01 Summary

This tool, consisting of 3 interconnected mapping activities, moves participants through a series of reflective visualization exercises focusing on their perceived hierarchies, accountabilities, as well as aspired alliances they want to create in their professional context.

The core focus throughout this activity is a shift of narratives, moving from “me” (hierarchies and where they see themselves within) to “them” (accountabilities, who they have to be accountable to and who they want to be accountable to) to “us” (alliances they want to create to help them practice decolonial methods in their curriculum). Participants are encouraged to move beyond them as an individual within their classroom, focusing on their place within the systemic powers of their educational context.

The method draws from decolonial pedagogy and the colonality of power/knowledge, encouraging participants not only to discuss structures but to visually address and challenge them. Through perception, mapping, and group dialogue, participants externalize complex dynamics and identify real pathways for shifting practice.

02 Purpose

- * Surfacing systemic power structures in educational contexts
- * Shifting from individual self-awareness to relational and collective accountability
- * Revealing tensions between formal authority and ethical responsibility
- * Envisioning realistic, solidarity-based alliances that support decolonial change

03 Potential Risks

To avoid the following potential risks, facilitators should create and ensure a safe space. Supporting emerging tension as valid and valuable for reflective practice. Make the context and goal of this activity clear, framing it as a concrete planning tool for the future (alliances mapping).

- * **Misunderstanding hierarchy:** Participants may focus only on formal roles and miss informal power structures
- * **Over-idealized/unrealistic alliances:** There's a risk of naming allies without considering real barriers or misalignments in values
- * **Tokenism:** If not well-facilitated, the activity may result in performative commitments rather than sustainable action



04 Adaptation Possibilities

This tool can be applied in many different contexts and in relation to different environments. The different aspects and how the tool is being used, can be modified as well, with some examples found below:

- * **Creative Modifications:** Invite participants to express their maps use drawing, collage, symbols, performance or movement to represent power, constraint, and possibility.
- * **Digital Mapping:** For online sessions, use collaborative whiteboards or visual mapping tools like Jamboard, or Canva
- * **Thematic Prompts:** Contextualize the maps with issue-specific prompts (e.g., curriculum change, inclusion policies, language practices)

05 Instructions

* Hierarchy Mapping

- Participants identify key actors who influence curriculum and who hold power in their educational setting using reflective prompts (see handouts)
- Based on this they draw a hierarchy map based on their educational setting, symbolizing where the power flows from and power relationships
- They locate themselves on the map and note formal vs. informal influence

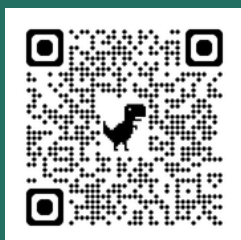
* Accountability Mapping

- Based on the findings from the hierarchy maps, participants reflect who they are accountable to in their educational setting, utilizing reflective prompt (see handouts)
- Participants place themselves at the center and map who they are accountable to
- Opportunity to compare maps with the hierarchy to spot tensions or blind spots

* Alliances Mapping

- Participants brainstorm, using the given prompts(see handouts), to whom they want to form concrete alliances to in an effort to support them in the implementation of decolonial action in their educational setting.
- They create a visual map of realistic alliances, drawing on previous maps to identify actors who could support decolonial shifts.
- They discuss what each ally brings, how to approach them, and possible strategies.
- Presentations allow for peer feedback and strategy sharing.

Hierarchy Mapping



Accountability Mapping



Alliances Mapping





Tool 8

THEATRE of the Oppressed





Tool 8

THEATRE of the Oppressed



01 Summary

The Theatre of the Oppressed methodology (developed by Augusto Boal) is a participatory theatre method where real-life challenges are staged as short scenes and collectively interrupted, and reimagined by the audience, which represents the target group affected by the issue being portrayed. In this methodology, participants act out moments of tension, conflict, or injustice, inviting others to pause the scene, step in, and experiment with alternative actions or implementing their own experiences.

This tool transforms passive reflection into embodied, collaborative problem-solving, making invisible power dynamics visible, not just on an intellectual level, but also a physical and emotional one. Drawing upon the audience real experiences and creating space for them to be included and examined by the collective creates a space that moves beyond personal awareness toward shared inquiry, critical observation and mutual transformation.

02 Purpose

- * Making power relations visible through embodied, affective experience
- * Practicing intervention by trying out different ways of responding to injustice in a supportive environment
- * Shifting from internal reflection ("What would I do?") to shared experimentation ("What could we do together?")

03 Potential Risks

To avoid the following risks, it is highly important for the facilitator to establish a comfortable, non-judgmental space, emphasizing an experimental and inquisitive attitude.

- * **Emotional intensity:** The method can bring up vulnerable or triggering memories, psychological safety must be prioritized
- * **Centering dominant voices:** Without careful facilitation, more confident participants may dominate interventions
- * **Simplification:** Risk of presenting "quick fixes for complex systemic issues"



04 Adaptation Possibilities

More of a methodology than a tool, the Theater of the oppressed can be used in many different context and in combination with different activities and even other tools, as well as a standalone. Here are some examples:

- * Education settings: Re-enact moments from classrooms, staff meetings, or curriculum decision-making spaces
- * Societal Setting: Focus on exclusion, microaggressions, peer conflict, or rules that reinforce norms
- * Training spaces: Can be used as a creative tool to visualize discussions and and problem statements

05 Instructions

* Create the Scene

- Participants choose a real situation of tension, injustice, or conflict relating to their own personal context and reality
- They develop a short sketch that shows the problem without resolving it

* First Round: Performance

- The group performs the scene for and audience to observe

* Second Round: Interventions

- The scene is repeated. The audience may interrupt the scene, step into a role, and try a new response, actively changing the play
- Interventions are based on the experiences and experiences of the audience, they need to be relevant to the context of the play

* Collective Reflection

- Afterward, the group reflects:
 - What power dynamics were revealed?
 - What did the interventions change — or not change?
 - How does this map onto real-life constraints and issues?

If you want to
expand on the
tool





Tool 9

RADICAL

Reflexivity Mapping Tool



Tool 8

RADICAL**Reflexivity
Mapping Tool****01 Summary**

The Radical Reflexivity Mapping Tool is a meta-reflection activity that supports participants in analyzing how they typically engage in reflective practice. Instead of focusing on a specific event, this tool based on the framework of Cunliffe et al. (2020) invites reflection on their general habits of reflexivity, with the goal of surfacing which forms, levels, and dimensions are present or underused in their practice.

The matrix maps reflexivity across three levels:

- * **Individual:** Self-reflection and introspection
- * **Group:** Collective or dialogic reflection with others
- * **Whole:** Systemic or positional reflection that considers one's place within broader structures of power, environment, or positionality

And three modes of knowing:

- * **Formal:** Theoretical or conceptual reflection
- * **Experiential:** Reflection grounded in lived experience or real-world practice
- * **Sensible/Sensitive:** Embodied, emotional, artistic, or silent reflection

Participants are encouraged to fill in each cell with examples of how they typically reflect within that category. Entries may overlap across cells, making it clear that reflection is not a strict and defined concept but can span over multiple dimensions to get the full picture. Some cells may remain empty with the goal being not to achieve just balance but to rather build awareness of where one's reflexive energy is concentrated and where new modes might be explored.

02 Purpose

- * Exploring how they engage in self, group, and systemic reflection
- * Recognizing the dominance of certain ways of knowing
- * Designing or adapting reflective practices that embrace complexity and decenter dominant ways of knowing



03 Potential Risks

- * **Superficial completion:** Without facilitation, participants may fill in the matrix quickly without deep engagement
- * **Avoidance of the body:** Participants may resist the sensible/sensitive column, especially if they are unfamiliar with arts-based or somatic methods
- * **Overemphasis on balance:** The goal isn't to fill every box evenly, but to build awareness and intentionality around where reflection happens and what's missing

04 Adaptation Possibilities

- * **Teacher training:** The tool can offer a comprehensive and pluriversal approach to reflection in an educational setting
- * **Curriculum design:** It can be used as a guide to create more holistic and multimodal learning environments, allowing for different levels of reflection to be included
- * **Self-assessment:** Individuals track their own reflective tendencies and explore new approaches that could provide them more nuance in their reflective practice

05 Instructions

- * **Fill the grid:** Participants fill in the grid, adding concrete examples of reflective practice or tools into each box, with the possibility of them spanning multiple dimensions.

They reflect on how and where their current or recent reflective practices sit:
 - Which cells are most active?
 - Which are underused or unfamiliar?
- * **Prompt Discussion:** Use guiding questions such as:
 - Where do you feel most comfortable reflecting? Where do you feel resistant?
 - What types of knowing are most valued in your institution and why?
 - How might you intentionally engage and include another mode or level next time?
- * **Applying Insights:**
 - Ask participants to adapt a current practice/tool they use to intentionally engage a different dimension in the matrix as well
 - Encourage collaborative planning to co-create a reflexive practice that spans multiple dimensions, creating a more nuanced reflective practice

06 Radical Reflexivity Matrix





CHAPTER 3.

HOW TO BUILD OTHER WAYS OF DOING - RELATIONAL CONTENT

You can explore the training connected to this chapter here.





HOW TO BUILD OTHER WAYS OF DOING - RELATIONAL CONTENT

Curriculum content is never neutral. It reflects and reproduces power structures, hierarchies, and worldviews that have historically defined what counts as knowledge. To build other ways of doing, we must reimagine content as relational, meaning that is shared through dialogue, accountability and care.



This section invites educators to critically analyze what is taught, how it is framed and whose perspectives it centers. It encourages asking deeper questions: What was the context of the time? Why were people doing what they were doing? What were the consequences and who benefited from them? By stepping back to see the larger picture, we can begin to recognize how histories of domination, exclusion, and privilege have shaped the knowledge we now take for granted.

Through this lens, educators are encouraged to be critical of the information in front of them not to discard it, but to understand its genealogy and its effects. Moreover, this section offers tools to co-create curriculum content with students, moving from transmission to transformation: from teaching about knowledge to building it together, through dialogue, curiosity, and collective reflection.



Tool 10

APPLYING

a Decolonial Lens to Curriculum Content





APPLYING

a Decolonial Lens to Curriculum Content



01 Summary

Inspired by Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, this tool transforms traditional teaching into dialogical exploration. Rather than delivering facts, teachers and students identify generative problems rooted in lived realities and unpack how knowledge, power, and history intersect within them. Through "codification" (representing an issue through stories, visuals, or examples) participants collectively decode the meanings, contradictions, and possibilities for change embedded in everyday situations.

02 Purpose

- * To make visible how colonial patterns of power shape curriculum choices and representations.
- * To support educators in reframing lessons so they foster plural, situated, and relational knowledges.
- * To shift the teacher's role from transmitter of fixed content to facilitator of collective inquiry.

03 Instructions

- * Choose a lesson plan, textbook, chapter or classroom activity
- * [Analyze it using the reflective questions here.](#)
- * Identify where hierarchies or exclusions are reinforced.
- * Reimagine or add alternative materials (voices, sources, or media) that open space for multiple perspectives.

04 Potential Risks

- * Checklist mentality: Treating the axes as boxes to tick rather than entry points for reflection.
- * Overwhelm: Seeing coloniality "everywhere" may feel paralyzing; emphasize incremental change.
- * Guilt focus: The aim is awareness and collective accountability, not individual guilt.

05 Adaptation Tip:

- * Teacher reflection tool: Use before or after each unit to assess representational balance.
- * Cross-subject bridge: Have different departments analyze the same topic through their disciplinary lens to reveal interconnections.
- * Student co-analysis: Simplify the axes for younger learners (e.g., "Who is in charge?", "Whose story is told?").



Tool 11

EDUCATOR'S Journey Map





Tool 11

EDUCATOR'S Journey Map



01 Summary

The Educator's Journey Map is a reflective and creative activity that invites educators to visualize their personal and professional paths: how their experiences, encounters, and positionalities have shaped the way they teach and relate to knowledge. It transforms the abstract idea of "critical consciousness" into a visible, embodied narrative, helping participants trace turning points, ruptures, silences, and moments of awareness in their journey toward (or through) decoloniality.

02 Purpose

- * To make visible the experiences, values, and encounters that have influenced one's approach to teaching and learning.
- * To explore how personal histories, privileges, and positionalities shape curriculum decisions and relationships in the classroom.
- * To build empathy and collective understanding by sharing stories of becoming an educator.
- * To encourage awareness that decolonial work is a journey without a final destination, a continuous movement of learning, unlearning, and transformation.

03 Instructions

- * Give each participant a blank sheet of paper (A3 recommended).
- * Invite them to draw their "educational river" or "path" tracing their journey as educators, from early experiences with learning to their current teaching practice.
- * Include moments of flow, stillness, turbulence, or transformation.
- * Add symbols, words, or images representing key moments (mentors, challenges, encounters, contradictions).
- * After mapping, ask participants to reflect on questions such as:
 - What moments shaped my understanding of education?
 - When did I first encounter questions of race, privilege, or inequality?
 - What silences or absences do I notice in my journey?
- * In small groups, participants can share parts of their maps (only what they feel comfortable sharing) and notice resonances and differences



04 Potential Adaptations

- * For teacher trainings: Use at the beginning of a decolonial education module to surface participants' starting points and expectations.
- * For schools: Combine with student mapping, allowing teachers and students to compare how they experience "learning journeys."
- * Online adaptation: Use digital whiteboards or mapping tools (Padlet, Miro) for collective visual sharing.
- * Creative adaptation: Invite participants to use collage, movement, or storytelling instead of drawing.



Tool 12

CO-CREATION Lab





01 Summary

The Co-Creation Lab is a participatory method that transforms the classroom into a collective design space where teachers and students build curriculum content together.

It challenges the “teacher-as-expert” model by redistributing authority and valuing students’ lived experiences, languages, and knowledges as legitimate sources for learning.

Through open dialogue, shared inquiry, and negotiation, participants collectively define what is worth learning, how to learn it, and how to assess it, shifting from education as transmission to education as transformation.

02 Purpose

- * To democratize curriculum design by integrating students as co-authors of learning.
- * To build trust, mutual accountability, and collective ownership of classroom knowledge.
- * To surface and challenge power dynamics embedded in content selection and teaching methods.
- * To cultivate agency, critical thinking, and belonging through collaborative decision-making.

03 Instructions

- * **Present the Frame, Not the Picture:** Begin by transparently sharing the non-negotiables (curriculum standards, competencies, institutional limits). Clarify what can be co-constructed and what must remain fixed.
- * **Generate Questions Together:** Invite students to brainstorm questions, themes, and curiosities related to the topic. Encourage:
 - What stories are missing?
 - What connects this topic to our realities?
 - Whose perspectives do we want to include?
- * **Map Shared Inquiry Paths:** Organize ideas into a co-created visual map of possible directions. Identify overlaps and priorities, leaving visible the multiplicity of voices and approaches.
- * **Co-Design Learning Materials and Activities:** Decide together which sources, media, or community voices to include. Let students take the lead in finding and bringing in resources that matter to them.
- * **Co-Create Assessment Criteria:** In dialogue, define what meaningful learning outcomes look like and how they can be demonstrated: written work, art, community projects, oral presentations, etc.
- * **Close with reflection:** How did it feel to share power? What did we learn about collaboration and responsibility?





CHAPTER 4.

HOW TO BUILD OTHER WAYS OF DOING - RELATIONAL PEDAGOGY

You can explore the training connected to this chapter here.



HOW TO BUILD OTHER WAYS OF DOING - RELATIONAL PEDAGOGY

This section of the toolkit moves beyond an exclusive focus on *what* is taught (content) to critically examine the "**pedagogical practices, syllabus design, and assessment**" that structure the learning environment. This is an invitation to reimagine your teaching as a relational, inclusive, and decolonial practice.

Decolonial work requires us to recognize and dismantle power dynamics in education. A key target of this critique is the "banking model of education" a "colonial logic" that positions the teacher as the sole "expert" and students as "passive recipients" of "Western, Eurocentric knowledge".

Relational Pedagogy directly challenges this model. It seeks to dismantle power dynamics by reframing the educator's role "from teacher-as-expert to teacher-as-facilitator". The goal is to transform the classroom into a "horizontal", "reflexive space", and "collaborative space", enabling "Dialogical Education" and "co-creation".

This section aims to equip educators with tools, methods, and reflective practices necessary to align their teaching with decolonial thinking.





The tools presented here are invitations, not prescriptions; they are a starting point for reflection and inspiration to design your own locally grounded practice. They offer several pathways to experiment with alternative pedagogical models, including:

- UDL as a Decolonial Framework
- Dialogical Education & Co-Creation
- Problem-Posing Education
- Project-Based Learning
- Place-Based Learning

These frameworks are provided to help build classrooms where "learners' lived realities and agency shape the direction of the classroom". This toolkit "does not offer closure, it opens space!".





Tool 13

UDL

as a Decolonial Framework





Tool 13

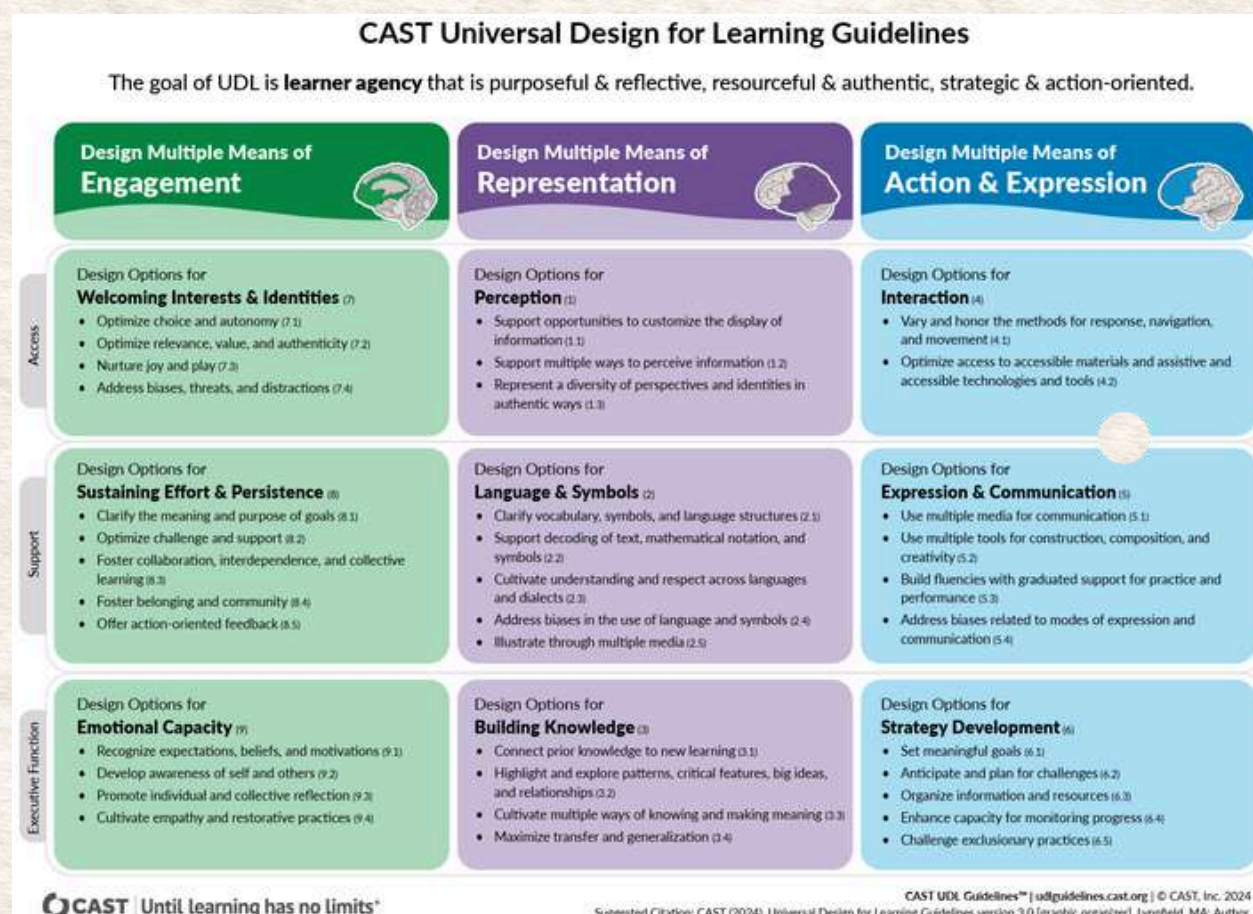
UDL as a Decolonial Framework



Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework centered on designing educational environments that are inclusive by default. Its core premise is a mindset shift: it locates barriers to learning within the environment's design, not within the learner. Instead of asking, "Who needs support?" the UDL practitioner asks, "What in our design needs to change so everyone can thrive?"

While UDL provides a powerful mechanism for expanding access, a decolonial approach compels us to move beyond access and critically examine the power dynamics embedded in the curriculum itself.

A decolonial application of UDL does not just offer more "ways in" to the existing curriculum; it actively questions the legitimacy of that curriculum's "Western, Eurocentric knowledge hegemony". It extends the three core UDL principles to dismantle, not just accommodate, these structures.

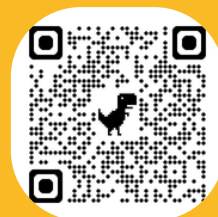




UDL
GUIDELINES



UDL
PRESENTATION



FRAMING UDL CRITICALLY: THREE GUIDING QUESTIONS

Before we can use UDL as a decolonial tool, we must first re-frame its core principles through a lens of justice and power. We can start by asking three critical questions.

01 On Engagement & Collective Agency

A standard view of the UDL principle of Engagement focuses on motivating individuals. A decolonial lens shifts this focus from individual motivation to designing for a purposeful, just, and learning-driven community.

- *The Critical Shift: We move from engagement as motivation → to engagement as co-creation of meaning.
- *The Guiding Question: "How does this design build a culture where students find personal meaning, work toward shared goals, and see themselves as capable co-creators of knowledge?"

BEYOND MULTIPLE MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT

Multiple means of engagement → Connect to students' diverse lived realities (relationality).

Reflective Question: How do classroom power dynamics affect who feels invited to participate and who stays silent? How could I design entry points that welcome more students in?



- * **Conventional UDL:** This principle focuses on learner motivation, suggesting educators foster engagement through relevance, autonomy, and collaboration. This supports affective access.
- * **Decolonial Extension:** This approach critiques the idea of "engagement" as a tool to motivate students to assimilate into a predetermined, "one-size-fits-all" curriculum. It instead reframes engagement as the "co-creation of meaning". This requires shifting from motivating students to "co-creating purpose and ownership", grounding learning in students' "identities, cultures, and community contexts" and inviting them to shape the learning process itself.
- * **Key Idea:** Shift from engagement as motivation to engagement as co-creation of meaning.
- * **In Practice:** Shifting Ownership

This involves designing learning that is relational and responsive:

Focus Area	Core Idea	How It Can Look in Practice
Co-design learning	Students and teachers collaborate to shape topics, resources, or assessments.	Learners suggest inquiry themes, co-create rubrics, or choose how to present understanding.
Authentic & local relevance	Learning connects to students' identities, cultures, and community contexts.	Classroom projects draw on local stories, cultural examples, or real-world challenges.
Reflective & dialogic practice	Engagement develops through continuous dialogue and joint reflection.	Regular reflection circles or feedback journals make students "co-owners of progress".



02 On Representation & Pluriversal Epistemologies

A standard view of the UDL principle of Representation focuses on offering "multiple means" of information, often meaning different formats (e.g., text, video, audio) of the same content. A decolonial lens challenges this by questioning the content itself.

- * The Critical Shift: We move from "how we show knowledge" to "whose knowledge we show."
- * The Guiding Question: "Whose worldviews are represented? Are we just offering multiple ways to absorb a dominant narrative, or are we fundamentally challenging the narrative itself?"

BEYOND MULTIPLE MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT

Multiple means of representation → Connect to students' diverse lived realities (relationality).

Reflective Question: Whose knowledge is being legitimised in my lesson, and how does presenting knowledge through multiple perspectives and media shift students' understanding of what counts as "truth"?

- * **Conventional UDL:** This principle focuses on the modalities of information, urging educators to present content through multiple formats like text, audio, and visuals. This improves perceptual access.
- * **Decolonial Extension:** This approach interrogates whose knowledge is being represented, regardless of the format. Offering a podcast, a video, and a textbook that all reinforce the same Eurocentric narrative is not decolonial practice. The decolonial imperative is to challenge the "Coloniality of Knowing" by asking: Whose worldviews and knowledge systems are represented? This moves the goal from "many media, same message" to "many media, many worldviews", fostering a plural, situated, and dialogic understanding of knowledge.
- * **Key Idea:** Representation means whose knowledge we show, not just how we show it.
- * **In Practice:** Shifting from Access to Plurality



The goal is to move from "Many media, same message" to "Many media, many worldviews," where knowledge becomes "plural, situated, and dialogic".

	Same Story (One Worldview)	Different Stories (Many Worldviews)
Same Format	One medium, one worldview. Knowledge appears fixed.	Same medium, new voices. Perspectives are added but within the same frame.
Different Formats	Many media, same message. Access improves, but meaning stays narrow.	Many media, many worldviews. Knowledge becomes plural, situated, and dialogic.

03 On Action & Expression & Epistemic Authority

A standard view of the UDL principle of Action & Expression focuses on learning preferences and offering choice. A decolonial lens reframes this as a question of power: whose ways of knowing and communicating are considered valid?

- * The Critical Shift: We move from expression as performance → to expression as empowerment.
- * The Guiding Question: "How does this assessment actively value different ways of knowing? Does it allow students to demonstrate mastery using their cultural strengths, lived experience, and unique voice, or does it simply reward the ability to replicate a pre-approved form of knowledge?"

BEYOND MULTIPLE MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT

Multiple means of action & expression → Decentre Eurocentric assessment forms, value alternative demonstrations of learning.



Reflective Question: How can I broaden assessment so that students' diverse skills and cultural ways of expressing knowledge are recognized as valid?

* **Conventional UDL:** This principle focuses on learner output, offering choice in how students demonstrate understanding (e.g., essays, presentations, digital projects). This supports strategic access.

* **Decolonial Extension:** This approach challenges the "Coloniality of Being" by questioning which forms of expression are valued and recognized as legitimate evidence of learning. It critiques the hierarchy that privileges standardized tests or formal academic essays over communal-based projects, oral traditions, or artistic expression. The goal shifts from expression as performance for institutional validation to expression as empowerment and the affirmation of students' full identities.

* **In Practice:** Decolonising Assessment



Decolonising assessment is a core strategy for this tool. It means "questioning whose knowledge, values, and voices define success" and implementing approaches that "recognise diverse ways of knowing, doing, and being".

This involves reframing assessment around four key relationships:

* **Strategy 1: Assessment as Relationship and Recognition**

- **Shift From:** A transactional grade.
- **Shift To:** A "conversation about growth" cantered on care, respect, and mutual accountability.
- **Example:** A student reflects with the teacher on what they learned, what challenged them, and how they would approach future learning.

* **Strategy 2: Assessment as Diverse Expression**

- **Shift From:** A "single, standardised format".
- **Shift To:** A "spectrum of valid evidence" that centres diverse voices and forms of expression.
- **Example:** Students choose how to demonstrate learning (essays, podcasts, visual artefacts, projects) using shared assessment criteria.



* Strategy 3: Assessment as Meaning-Making

- **Shift From:** "Abstract academic exercises".
- **Shift To:** "Meaningful, contextualised tasks" that centre relevance and personal connection.
- **Example:** Students apply a concept to explore how it operates in their own school, community, or culture.

* Strategy 4: Assessment as a Collaborative Process

- **Shift From:** Assessment of learning (a final judgment).
- **Shift To:** Assessment for and as learning (an ongoing process), centering student voice and co-creation.
- **Example:** Students and teacher "collaboratively develop the success criteria" for a project.

Photovoice Activity

Photovoice is an activity that connects classroom topics with everyday experiences and embodies all four assessment strategies:

1. Capture: Students take photos or draw images, connecting learning to their lived experience. (Meaning-Making)
2. Reflect: They provide a written or spoken explanation, building critical awareness. (Relationship & Recognition)
3. Share: They present their images in a gallery or slide deck, promoting dialogue. (Diverse Expression)
4. Discuss: The class explores the ideas together, fostering collaboration⁴⁶. (Collaborative Process)



Photovoice is a tool that allows people to identify local issues and problems and work for solutions, and communicate these through images and photos. It is a participatory action research where participants reflect and document on community needs visually, promote dialogue, and reach policymakers toward village improvement.



Reference: Camille A. Sutton-Brown (2014) Photovoice: A Methodological Guide, *Photography and Culture*, 7:2, 169-185



Tool 14

PROBLEM-POSING

Education & The "Codification" Method



Tool 14

PROBLEM-POSING

Education & The "Codification" Method



01 Summary

This tool uses symbolic representations ("codifications") to spark a collective, critical discussion ("decodification") about a real-world problem. Instead of a teacher presenting "answers," the group and facilitator co-investigate a problem that is relevant to their lives, connecting their reflection to action (which Freire called Praxis).

02 Purpose

The goal is to build critical consciousness and connect reflection to action.

- * For Analyzing Problems: It helps a group move from seeing a problem as a simple "symptom" to seeing the "structures" that cause it.
- * For Co-Learning: It breaks the "banking" model by positioning the teacher as a "co-learner" and "facilitator".
- * For Agency: It empowers participants by validating their lived experiences as the starting point for critical analysis and positions them as "agents" of their own learning, not "objects".

03 How Can this pedagogical tool be applied?

- * Start from Lived Experience: Identify a "generative theme" or problem from the group's reality (e.g., "assessment feels like a cage," "we feel silenced in meetings").
- * Find or Create a "Codification": Select a story, image, dataset, or skit that symbolically represents this problem.
- * Present the "Code": Share the codification with the group.
- * Begin "Decodification" (Dialogue & Inquiry): Use guiding questions to analyze the code. Ask participants to connect it to their own lives. (e.g., "What do you notice? What's the problem here?" "Who has power in this story?" "How does this relate to our own situation?") .
- * Connect to Concepts (Praxis): As the discussion unfolds, bring in theoretical concepts (like the Coloniality Matrix) as tools to help the group understand the problem more deeply.
- * Plan Action: The discussion should ideally lead to: "What's next? What can we do?".

04 Example in Action: "The Parrot's Training"

"The Parrot's Training" allegory is a perfect "codification" for the problem of coloniality in education.

- * **The Codification:** The story of the parrot in the cage.
- * **The Decodification (Guiding Questions):** The goal isn't to fill every box evenly, but to build awareness and intentionality around where reflection happens and what's missing.
 - **The Cage:** "What cages... constrain voices...?" This links to the Coloniality of Power.
 - **The Trainer:** "Who is the 'trainer'...? ...dictating what counts as valid knowledge?" This links to the Coloniality of Knowing.
 - **The Parrot:** "In what ways are you... a 'parrot'...? ...a reduction of learners to something less than human?" This links to the Coloniality of Being.
- * **The Key Instruction:** The facilitator's most important role is to "resist the impulse to fix, and instead dwell with the trouble". This prevents a rush to easy answers and forces deeper reflection.

Parrot Story



05 Potential Risks

- * **Steering:** The teacher as facilitator might steer the group toward a single "right" political answer, which undermines the genuine dialogue.
- * **Just a "Vent Session":** Without a clear connection to Praxis (action), the discussion can remain a "complaint session." The facilitator must always gently guide the group toward "What's next?"

06 Adaptation Possibilities

- * **Create Your Own:** Use a photo of the school, a page from a textbook, a school rule, or a recent news article as your "codification."
- * **Student-Led:** Ask learners to create their own codifications (skits, drawings, poems) that represent the "cages" they experience. This is a powerful step toward Praxis.



Tool 15

PROBLEM-POSING

and Project-Based Learning



Tool 15

PROBLEM-POSING

and Project-Based Learning

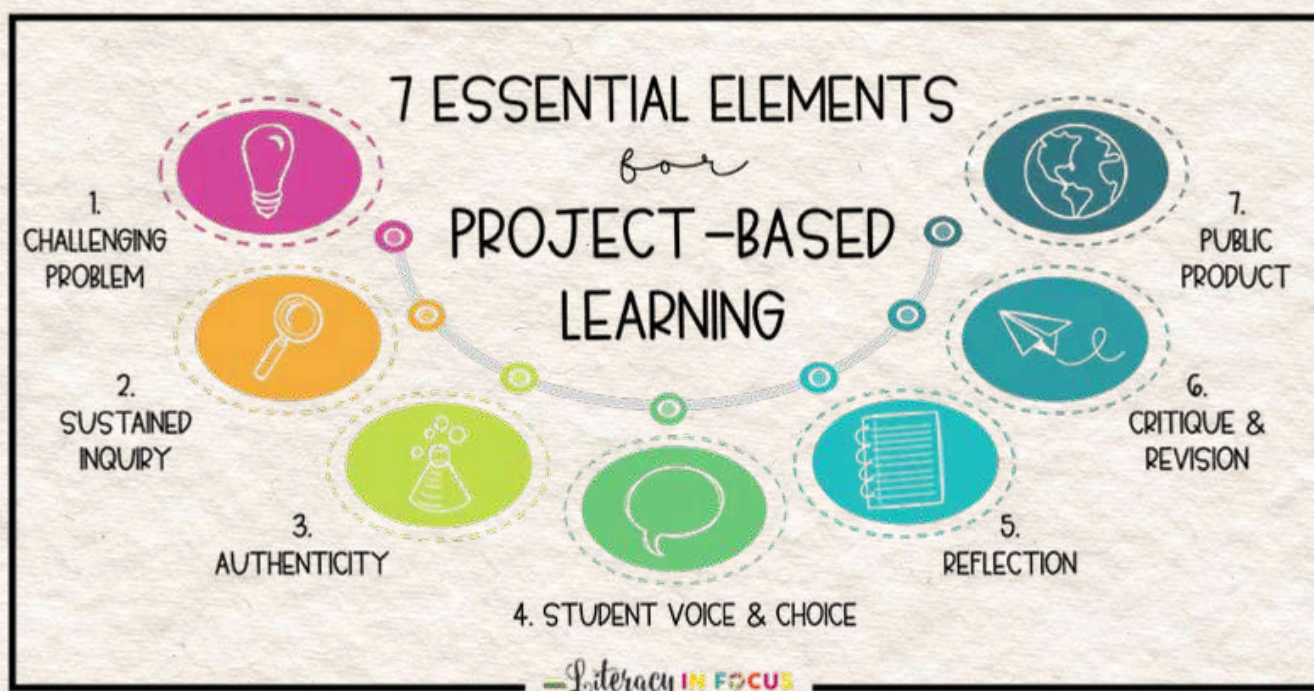


01 Summary

This approach directly challenges the "banking model of education". Instead of passively receiving information, it "encourages students to generate their own questions and problems to explore". Project-Based Learning provides the structure for students to investigate these "real-world problems" through a sustained process of inquiry, creation, and "reflecting".

02 Purpose

- * To "develop critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to find solutions to real-world problems".
- * To shift the "active creation of knowledge" to students, repositioning them as agents of their own learning.
- * To move beyond "abstract academic exercises" and connect learning to meaningful, "real-world" scenarios.
- * To provide a clear, cyclical structure for managing complex, student-led inquiry .



03 How it works

This methodology follows a general cycle, but it is driven by the "Problem-Posing" ethos at every stage.

- * **Launch: The Problem-Posing "Codification":** The facilitator introduces a "real-world scenario", such as a "local environmental issue", a complex text, or a social challenge. This is the "generative theme." story of the parrot in the cage.
- * **Generate Questions (Problem-Posing):** Instead of providing answers, the facilitator guides students to "generate their own questions and problems related to the topic"
 - *Example Prompts:* "What are the main causes...?" "What are some potential solutions...?" "Whose perspective is missing?" "What power dynamics are at play here?"
- * **Planning:** Students, with facilitator support, design a plan to answer their own questions. What do we need to know? What do we need to do? Who do we need to talk to?
- * **Making:** Students actively execute their plan through conducting research, creating prototypes, interviewing community members, or producing media.
- * **Feedback:** This is a continuous loop, not a single step. Students give and receive feedback from peers and the facilitator, refining their work.
- * **Presenting:** Students share their findings and "potential solutions" with a relevant audience, which could be the class, another school, or the community.
- * **Reflecting:** The group reflects on the process: What did we learn? What new questions do we have? How did our thinking change? This "self-assessment and reflection" is critical.

PBL "levers"





04 Adaptation Possibilities

- * **Unit Launcher:** Use a "Problem-Posing" session to launch any new unit. Spend one class period letting students "generate their own questions" and post them on the wall. These questions become the guiding inquiry for the unit.
- * **Interdisciplinary Adaptation:** Collaborate with teachers and students from other subjects to investigate one "real-world scenario" from multiple angles, "making bridges between different subjects".

05 Potential Risks

- * **Risk of Performative Projects without Critical Problem-Posing:** There is a significant risk that the "Project-Based" component will be disconnected from a critical pedagogical foundation. In this scenario, the project can devolve into a superficial, "abstract academic exercise" or a *performative* task that is simply appended *after* the "real" learning (delivered via the "banking model") has already occurred. This reinforces "assessment of learning (a final judgment)" rather than "assessment as learning".
- * **Mitigation: Center "Problem-Posing" as the Engine of Inquiry:** The "Problem-Posing" component, which "emphasizes the active creation of knowledge by students", must initiate and drive the entire process. The project is the "meaningful, contextualised task"; it is not a summative follow-up. This ensures the focus remains on developing "critical thinking" and exploring "real-world problems", rather than simply producing a final product for a grade.
- * **Risk of Unmanageable Scope:** Students may "generate... questions" that are too broad or unanswerable.
 - Mitigation: The "PLANNING" stage is crucial. The facilitator's role is not to limit questions but to help students scope their inquiry into something achievable.
- * **Risk of Assessing the Product over Process:** The focus can easily shift to the final "PRESENTING" stage, reinforcing a single, "right" outcome.
 - Mitigation: The "PLANNING" stage is crucial. The facilitator's role is not to limit questions but to help students scope their inquiry into something achievable.

**Project-
Based
Learning
(Explained
in 4
Minutes)**



**Learn more
about PBL**



Tool 16

PLACE-BASED

Learning (Adaptive & Relational)





Tool 16

PLACE-BASED

Learning (Adaptive & Relational)



01 Summary

Instead of relying on standardized, "out of the canon" examples, Place-Based Learning directly connects the curriculum to the tangible, local context of the students. It validates "Intergenerational Learning" and "Traditional Knowledge" as crucial sources of knowing, integrating them with "Innovative Learning" practices. It reframes the "learner's environment" as a co-teacher, not just a backdrop.

02 Purpose

- * To make learning relevant, situated, and responsive to the "learner's environment".
- * To "challenge the assumptions of Western, Eurocentric knowledge hegemony" by valuing local and "Traditional Knowledge".
- * To empower "Students" as active agents and knowledge producers capable of fostering "Community Change".
- * To validate "Intergenerational Learning" by connecting students with their community members as experts.

03 Distinction: Place-Based vs. Land-Based Pedagogy

It is important to distinguish between these two related terms:

- * **Place-Based Learning:** Centers learning on the learner's local environment, culture, and community in a specific "Geographical Location". It is about connecting to a place.
- * **Land-Based Pedagogy:** This is a more specific, decolonial, and often Indigenous-rooted framework. It centers the Land (with a capital 'L') as the first teacher, a living, relational system of knowledge, spirit, and "Traditional Knowledge" in itself. It is a direct challenge to the colonial "Coloniality of Nature" (the separation of human and nature) and its extractive logics.

While Place-Based Learning uses the environment, Land-Based Pedagogy learns from and with the Land as a relative and teacher.

04 How it can be applied

- * **Start with the "Co-Creation Lab" Prompt:** Ask the core question: "How can you make your lesson centre on the learner's environment?"..
- * **Identify a Curriculum Theme:** Start with a standard curriculum topic (e.g., environmental science, local history, literature, "power dynamics").
- * **Map the "Geographical Location":** With students, brainstorm where this topic "lives" in their neighborhood. (e.g., A monument? A river? A street name? A community garden? A local shop?).
- * **Engage the Place (Data Gathering):** Students go into the environment to gather knowledge. This could involve:
 - Interviewing community members ("Intergenerational Learning").
 - Analyzing local narratives, murals, or monuments (critiquing the "Coloniality of Power").
 - Gathering scientific data (e.g., testing water quality).
- * **Connect Knowledge (Sense-Making):** Students bring their findings back to the classroom. The facilitator helps them connect the "Traditional Knowledge" and lived experiences they found with the academic concepts from the curriculum.
- * **Propose "Community Change":** The project concludes not just with a presentation about the community, but with a real-world proposal, action, or contribution for the community.

05 Adaptation Possibilities

- * Students analyze local street names or monuments, researching the "Intergenerational Learning" and hidden histories (whose stories are told vs. untold) in their "Geographical Location". They could then propose a new monument or a "counter-narrative" tour.
- * Students investigate a local "real-world scenario" , such as a local "environmental issue". They gather data from the "Geographical Location" and present their "potential solutions" as a "Community Change" proposal to a local council.
- * Students use their full linguistic repertoires to interview family members ("Intergenerational Learning") about their "Geographical Location" , creating a "bilingual poem" or multilingual map of community stories.

06 Example from DECUS in Venice



07 How it can be applied

- * **Risk of Superficiality (A "Glorified Field Trip"):** The activity can become a simple "field trip" rather than a deep, critical engagement.
 - **Mitigation:** Ensure the "Problem-Posing" element is strong. The engagement must be critical, asking *why* the place is the way it is (e.g., "What power dynamics... shape this space?").
- * **Risk of Reinforcing Dominant Narratives:** Students might only "see" the official, "Eurocentric" story of a place.
 - **Mitigation:** Actively seek counter-narratives. Ask: "Whose story is not visible here?" This requires seeking "Intergenerational Learning" from marginalized community members, not just official sources.
- * **Risk of Extractivism:** Students might "take" stories or data from a community without giving back. This is a colonial practice.
 - **Mitigation:** The project must be reciprocal. The goal of "Community Change" is essential. Ensure the final product is shared with and for the community, not just graded by the teacher.

08 Example on introduction to Place-Based Learning





CHAPTER 5.

BUILDING BRIDGES: INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY AS DECOLONIAL PRACTICE





BUILDING BRIDGES: INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY AS DECOLONIAL PRACTICE ALLIANCES (TEACHER-TO-TEACHER)

Why this is essential for decolonial work: The "coloniality of knowing" has historically operated by fragmenting knowledge. It built rigid, artificial walls between disciplines, separating, for example, Biology from Art, or Mathematics from Social Sciences. This "naturalized" a "Western, Eurocentric knowledge hegemony" by presenting its categories as universal and complete, while devaluing "sensible/sensitive", "intergenerational", and "traditional" ways of knowing.

A decolonial practice, therefore, is an intentional practice of "making bridges between different subjects". This work moves from "individual work" to "alliance work", advancing through two levels:

- * **Interdisciplinarity:** This is the practice of "collective reflexivity" between educators from different disciplines. It is a "group" level collaboration to find common ground and challenge the "cages" of our subjects.
- * **Transdisciplinarity:** This is the "max level being the transdisciplinary approach". This moves to a "whole" or "systemic" level where educators "co-reflect as well as co-create with students and communities".

Interdisciplinary Alliances (Teacher-to-Teacher)

Strategy A: The Asynchronous Alliance Map

This strategy uses the "Alliances Mapping" tool as an asynchronous, dialogic space.

You can use a shared digital space (e.g., Padlet, shared document) or physical space. An educator posts a "generative theme" or "Problem-Posing" question from their curriculum, inviting connection.





- **Example (History & Biology):**

- A History teacher posts: "Unit Theme: The Industrial Revolution. Key Concepts: 'Progress,' 'Labor,' 'Exploitation'."
- A Biology teacher sees this "on their own time" and adds a comment: "Connection: We are teaching 'Ecosystems.' We can link this to the 'exploitation' of natural resources and the 'Coloniality of Nature.' I can share one article on this."

This builds bridges between different subjects" and fosters "collective reflexivity" without requiring a simultaneous meeting.

Strategy B: Sequential Lesson Bridges

This strategy uses sequential, rather than simultaneous, teaching to build connections.

- Two educators or more, identified via "Alliance Mapping," agree to teach on a shared theme in their curricula sequentially, intentionally referencing one another's subject.
- **Example (Biology & History):**
 - A Biology teacher launches a unit on taxonomy and the scientific methods used to classify and order the natural world.
 - The following week, a History teacher, having planned this, launches a unit on the "Coloniality of Power". They present historical documents showing how colonial-era theorists used this *same* 'scientific' logic of classification to create and "naturalize" racial and gender "hierarchies".
 - The "Problem-Posing" prompt for students is: "How was the 'neutral' scientific logic we learned in Biology *used* in History to justify power imbalances? What does this tell us about how 'Western, Eurocentric knowledge' can be applied?"

This strategy invites transdisciplinary thinking by positioning students as the interdisciplinary link. It builds bridges between different subjects and empowers students to "develop a critical consciousness" of how knowledge systems can be used to uphold power.



Strategy C: The Shared "Generative Theme"

This strategy requires minimal joint planning but creates powerful "transdisciplinary" connections for students.

How it can be applied: Two or more educators agree on a single, broad "generative theme" or "Problem-Posing" question for one week. Each teacher introduces this theme through the lens of their *own* subject, using their *own* content.

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Example (Biology & History/Social Sciences):

- The shared theme is "Fitness, Competition, and Hierarchy."
- A Biology teacher ("STEM") "launches" a unit on Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection, explaining the biological concept of "fitness" as *successful adaptation to a specific environment*.
- In the same week, a History or Social Sciences teacher ("Social Sciences & Humanities") "launches" a "Problem-Posing" discussion on Social Darwinism. They explore how Darwin's *scientific* concepts were appropriated and fundamentally distorted to create and "naturalize" social and "racial hierarchies". This misapplication was used to justify colonialism, "geo-political hierarchies", and "Western, Eurocentric knowledge hegemony" by arguing that certain nations or races were 'naturally' more "fit" to rule.
- Students are then invited to "make bridges" with a "reflective question": "We defined biological 'fitness' as *adaptation*. How was this scientific *idea* distorted by Social Darwinists to mean 'superiority'? How was this 'scientific' logic used to justify 'hierarchies' and colonial 'dominations'?"

This transdisciplinary thinking by making bridges between different subjects. It provides a concrete example of how a "neutral" "STEM" concept was used by colonial "power" structures to build the "Coloniality of Being" (i.e., defining "hierarchies" of humanity) and justify "historical and present power imbalances".



Transdisciplinary Alliances (A Further Step in Decolonial Practice)

"This represents a further step in decolonial practice, moving beyond "group" collaboration to a "whole" or "systemic" level of co-creation. This strategy embeds "co-creation with students and communities" into the "Alliances Mapping" process itself.

This work intentionally seeks to break down the "wall" between the school and the "real-world". This separation is a colonial legacy, designed to uphold "Western, Eurocentric knowledge hegemony" by framing the school as the only site of valid knowledge. Decolonial theory argues that coloniality is "maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, and in cultural patterns".

Breaking down this wall is a decolonial act because it:

- Challenges the institution's monopoly on "legitimate knowledge".
- Validates "lived realities", "Intergenerational Learning" and "Traditional Knowledge" as essential forms of knowing, directly countering the "Coloniality of Knowing".
- Reconnects learning to "Community Change" and "collective accountability", moving beyond "abstract academic exercises" to "real-world" "Praxis".

How it can be applied: Two or more educators agree on a single, broad "generative theme" or "Problem-Posing" question for one week. Each teacher introduces this theme through the lens of their *own* subject, using their *own* content.

Strategy A: Students as Co-Creators

This strategy uses the "Dialogical Education & Co-Creation" tool to empower students as active alliance-builders and "co-constructors of content".

• Action 1 (Low Barrier): Co-Creating the Resource List

- **How it can be applied:** The teacher presents the unit's "generative theme" (e.g., "Revolution" in a **History** class). As a formal assignment, students are tasked to become "Student Allies" and find one "out of the canon" resource that connects to this theme.



- **Examples of Resources:** This could be "Poems" from that culture, family stories ("Intergenerational Learning"), "real-world" news articles from a non-European perspective, or a "Photovoice" image they take in their community.

This allows space for diverse expression" and "challenges the assumptions of Western, Eurocentric knowledge hegemony" by critically expanding the "canon" with student-validated knowledge.

• Action 2: The "Inquiry Theme" Co-Design

- **How it can be applied:** The teacher presents the "non-negotiable" curriculum standard (e.g., "Ecosystems" in **Biology**). Using a "Problem-Posing" framework, the *students* "generate their own questions" that will guide the unit.
- **Example Student Questions:** "Who gets to decide what a 'healthy' ecosystem is?" "How does the 'Coloniality of Nature' show up in our local park?" "What 'Traditional Knowledge' about our 'Geographical Location' is ignored by the city?"

This allows a shift in ownership" and "co-creates purpose" with students, making the learning "situated" and directly relevant to their "learner's environment"

Action 3: The "Transdisciplinary Student Alliance"

- **How it can be applied:** The teacher explicitly asks students to be the "bridge" between two subjects. The assignment *requires* them to apply a specific concept they are learning in another class.
- **Example (History & Economics):**
 - A History teacher "launches" a unit on migration.
 - The "Problem-Posing" prompt is: "This is not just a 'History' topic. Where else does this live in your lives? In which of your other classes does this appear?"
 - Students (now "Student Allies") identify links: "In Economics, we discuss labor markets." "In Language Arts, we are reading migrant and diaspora narratives".
 - The project requires them to "co-construct content" by integrating "real-world" data from Economics with the "identity expression" from Language arts





Risks in "Co-Creation with Students"

- **Risk: Reproducing Dominant Norms and Hierarchies** In a "dialogical" or "co-creation" setting, "more confident or privileged voices may dominate". This can lead to "accidentally 'reproducing dominant, eurocentric norms'", silencing the very students whose "lived realities" we seek to centre. Students accustomed to the "banking model" may also be resistant or unsure how to participate.
- **Mitigation: Structured Facilitation and "Collective Reflexivity"** The facilitator's role is to *guide* this process, not to control it.
 - **Use structured dialogue:** Employ "small groups", "Reflective questions", or asynchronous digital tools *before* a plenary discussion. This ensures all students are "invited to 'participate more in co-constructing content'".

Practice "Collective Reflexivity": Regularly "pause" and ask the group: "Whose perspective have we not heard yet?" "How are our own 'assumptions'" shaping this conversation?

Strategy B: Community as Co-Teachers (Place-Based Alliances)

This strategy uses "Place-Based Learning" to form "realistic alliances" with the community, positioning them as "key actors" and producers of knowledge.

Action 1: "Community as Knowledge"

- **How it Can Be Applied:** Instead of sending students out to "study" the community, this action tasks students with *finding* and *engaging* with knowledge produced by their community. This is a "low-barrier" first step to "building alliances".
- **Examples:** Students can search and "co-construct content" from "real-world" sources like:
 - An article from a local community newspaper.
 - "Poems" or public art by a local artist.
 - A blog post or social media page from a community activist group.
 - An online "Photovoice" gallery *already created* by a local organization.

This challenges the colonial matrix by validating local, community-generated knowledge "lived realities" as a "legitimate" academic text. It "invites transdisciplinary thinking" by positioning the community as "key actors" and *authors* of knowledge, not "objects" to be "studied".



Action 2: Intergenerational Interviews

- **How it Can Be Applied:** The teacher and students co-design "Reflective questions" for an interview. Students then engage "Intergenerational Learning" by interviewing family or community members about a historical event, "Traditional Knowledge" (e.g., related to local ecology), or their "lived realities".
- **Example (Translanguaging):** This strategy sanctions a space for translanguaging. Students can conduct the interview in their native language and present their findings in a "bilingual poem" or presentation, validating translanguaging and their full linguistic ability.

This directly challenges the coloniality matrix by centering "Intergenerational" and non-written knowledge as a "legitimate" academic source.

Action 3: The "Community Co-Creation Panel"

- **How it Can Be Applied:** Using the "Alliances Mapping", the teacher *and students* identify "key actors" from the community (e.g., local artists, elders, activists) to form a "Community Alliance." This alliance is invited to "co-reflect as well as co-create" the unit's "Problem-Posing" question *and* its "Community Change" project *before the unit begins*.
- **Example (Biology, Economics & Community Partners):**
 - **Problem-Posing:** A unit on food security in the "Geographical Location".
 - **Alliance:** Biology teacher (soil science) + Economics teacher (food deserts).
 - **Student Alliance:** Students "generate their own questions" about their "learning environment".
 - **Community Alliance:** Students and teachers partner with a local community garden, "Intergenerational" experts (elders, farmers), and local shop owners.
 - **The Project:** The "transdisciplinary" project is not an "abstract academic exercise." It is a "Community Change" proposal, a presentation *for* the community partners, or a "co-created" guide to local food resources.

This is the furthest step toward "collective accountability" allows space for diverse expression" and co-creates purpose" by "building a bridge between individual work and alliance work" with the community itself.





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Author: DECUS Consortium

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