

DECOLONISING CURRICULUM KNOWLEDGE:

National and
International perspectives
and approaches to
teaching and learning.

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Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge

- How is this being interpreted across higher education and teachers' professional practice in the UK?
- What does it look like to educate through a decolonised framework of knowledge?
- How is this term situated and understood socially and historically as driving action for change across global educational contexts?

The decolonizing the curriculum campaign

For example, the ‘Why isn’t my professor Black?’ debates in the UK (UCL, 2014), the ‘Rhodes Must Fall Campaign’ in the UK and South Africa (see Kwoba et al., 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018), the ‘Stop calling me Murzyn’ campaign in Poland (see Kubicka, 2021) and across the western world, the huge wave of Black Lives Matters anti-racism protests in 2020 during worldwide COVID-19 (see Dancy et al., 2018; Moncrieffe et. al, 2020b).

Why Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge?

In its broadest sense, the objective of decolonisation work in education is to expose and to disrupt the ongoing processes of colonialism, identified by the uncritical cultural reproduction of Eurocentric curriculum knowledge and discourses (Bhambra et al., 2018; Moncrieffe, 2020a; Moncrieffe et al., 2020a).

Academic achievement differentials

The academic achievement differentials between Black and White university students gave fuel to the decolonising the curriculum campaign. Loke (2020) discusses the size of this gap as ‘fairly consistent since the first Advance HE statistical report was published in 2003/04’. Adding: ‘if the current rate of progress continues, it will not close until the academic year 2085-86’ (Loke, 2020 in Bunce et. al, 2021). This posed a clear and stark warning for the need to address racial inequalities in higher education.

Universities perpetuating systemic racism

The decolonising the curriculum campaign in higher education can be sourced to the historic, socio-political, and institutional racism in the sector, and this was acknowledged in *The Guardian* by Professor David Richardson, chair of Universities UK's advisory group where he said:

There is a lot of evidence that points towards universities perpetuating systemic racism, being institutionally racist and I have acknowledged that on behalf of the sector (Richardson in Mohdin, 2021).

Decolonising activism and praxis across the sector

Moncrieffe et al. (2019a, b), Moncrieffe (2020b) and Moncrieffe (2021) presented a decolonising the curriculum campaign as ‘teaching and learning about race equality’, and through ‘transnational perspectives’ (Moncrieffe et al, 2020) across higher education prior to, during and after the huge wave of Black Lives Matters anti-racism protests across the UK and USA in 2020. Before this, Bhambra et al. (2018) produced a significant volume sharing the work of decolonial educationalists that sought to question the epistemological authority assigned uniquely to the Western university as the privileged site of knowledge production.

Intersection of university and schools

Le Grange (2022) has recently provided a useful range of decolonial studies in education and gives the view that tackling decolonisation and anti-racism at the intersection of university and schools is the where the struggle should be contested.

Teacher education has its possibilities and challenges for creating critical curriculum thinkers for the decolonising of Eurocentric curriculum knowledge (Moncrieffe & Harris, 2020).

The complicity of educational ideas and schools with colonial projects

Educational ideas and schools have been a core element of colonial projects around the world, having been used as an instrument of epistemic oppression and injustice (de Sousa Santos, 2018)

Critical thinking about the school history curriculum

I was interested in knowing how I could transform my classroom teaching and young people's learning on race-equality; cultural diversity and cultural differences through history, and in relation to recommendations from Macpherson (1999).

As a result of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, Macpherson (1999) recommended antiracist education to combat institutional racism. This in effect a need to **decolonise curriculum knowledge**.

Examining the Primary school history curriculum aims and contents

There is no explicit unit of study in the aims or contents of the Key Stage 2 primary school history curriculum that speaks directly to teachers developing pupils learning about 'nation building' and 'national identity' through the lives and experiences of non-White settlers on the British Isles over the ages in representing the narrative of MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN.

"This is an important book at a time when colleagues across education are scrutinising their work, seeking to increase diversity and to build a balanced equitable learning experience for all... I recommend this book to all those training to teach and to those keen to revisit their predisposed assumptions about what should be taught in the primary history curriculum."

—**Dame Alison Peacock**, Chief Executive, The Chartered College of Teaching, UK

"This book is a timely, and above all, practical guide to the transformation of Britain's primary school history curriculum. It will be an invaluable tool for teachers and trainers as well as a map for future debates over the importance of history in the making of national identity."

—**Professor Paul Gilroy**, Institute of Advanced Studies, University College London, UK

This book calls for a reconceptualisation and decolonisation of the Key Stage 2 national history curriculum. The author applies a range of theories in his research with White-British primary school teachers to show how decolonising the history curriculum can generate new knowledge for all, in the face of imposed Eurocentric starting points for teaching and learning in history and dominant white-cultural attitudes in primary school education. Through both narrative and biographical methodologies, the author presents how teaching and learning Black-British history in schools can be achieved, and centres his Black-British identity and minority-ethnic group experience alongside the immigrant Black-Jamaican perspective of his mother to support a framework of critical thinking of curriculum decolonisation. This book illustrates the potential of transformative thinking and action that can be employed as social justice for minority-ethnic group children who are marginalized in their educational development and learning by the dominant discourses of British history, nation building and national identity.

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Decolonising the History Curriculum
Marlon Lee Moncrieffe

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Decolonising the History Curriculum Euro-centrism and Primary Schooling

Marlon Lee Moncrieffe

<https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9783030579449>

Teaching history as transformative Critical Multicultural Education

Teaching history as transformative critical multicultural education changes the basic assumptions of the existing curriculum, and aims to help students understand concepts and issues from different ethnic and cultural perspectives ... to become aware that knowledge is not culture-free but rather constructed through the perspectives of those who have power.

In the transformative approach, students learn the dominant narratives but also alternative narratives. In the end it is hoped that teachers will be able to think critically about whose narratives are used and the consequences of this. Changing the basic assumptions of the existing curriculum.

Example for the book: Research with White British trainee-teachers

I worked with twenty-one White British trainee teachers. I asked them: **What does British history mean to you?**

Unsurprising headline:

White-British teachers reproduce White British histories in their thinking about approaches to teaching and learning British history (Moncrieffe, 2020).



Centring the 'Black' British voice in teaching and learning

An aim of my research was to lead with the Black British voice as a critical multicultural education starting point for thinking about the story of ethnic diversity in British people and their cross-cultural encounters over the ages 20th century cross-cultural encounters in juxtaposition with 8th century cross-cultural encounters between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings

I wanted to see if the oral testimonies given by 20th century African Caribbean people could support the white British trainee-teachers in dismantling their embedded Anglocentric thoughts about teaching British history in the primary school classroom.



HEADLINE: *‘We are going to need to have multicultural perspectives within the curriculum.’*

Catherine: On page 4 line 35 where the child says “stood up for their rights”, that’s a kind of freedom of speech.

Anne: **Yeah, that’s Britishness.** Because it’s about being able to do that; being able to express what you want and protest without having any backlash from the government which I don’t know is always 100% true. But that to me is what is all about living in a country where you should be allowed to say what you want.

Catherine: **So maybe... Equality. Yeah maybe the equality side of it.** Like: “Why just us?” Like: “Why not that person as well?”

Anne: Yes. You could say that is a protest because you’re being discriminated against and you’re protesting against.

Catherine: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah and I think like if we are going to be talking about ‘tolerance’ and ‘equality’, if we are going to be teaching those British values, then we are going to need to have multicultural perspectives within the curriculum.

*Preparing teachers as ‘critical curriculum thinkers’
(Moncrieffe & Harris, 2020)*

1. Teachers and trainees must be empowered to engage in questions and debate the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of curriculum implementation in their teaching and learning (Harris, 2020; Moncrieffe, 2020; Moncrieffe & Harris, 2020).
2. A revised and improved school national history giving equal focus to broader stories of peoples who by our various passages have come to the British Isles over the ages.

Sources of decolonial perspectives

While the field of ‘decolonial studies’ seems to have entered the debates in the mainstream Global North academia more recently, it has been part of Indigenous and Global South scholarship for decades.

A proliferation of decolonial perspectives for education over the years arrived from Latin America, Southern Africa, and other African historical contexts drawing from a variety works from seminal and key Global South decolonial academic theorists including for example: Fanon (1967), Freire, (1970), N’gugi Wa Thiong’o (1986, 1998), Spivak (1999), Maldonado-Torres (2007), Mignolo (2009) Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, 2018).



Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge

International Perspectives
and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Edited by
Marlon Lee Moncrieffe



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It is a fusion of these international perspectives that this book applies as a conceptual framework in examination of decolonial work in education and curriculum knowledge, giving international insight and understanding from a unique range of historical, social, political, cultural and educational contexts including: The UK, Nepal, South Africa, Namibia, Australia, Colombia, Canada, Thailand, Mauritius, Poland, Russia, Norway, and The Netherlands. This book gives access to knowing decolonial voices from across the world, and fantastically unique possibilities for comparative education.



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- This book was devised with many aims in mind including:
- *To share research that centres on youth imaginations, their voices and their activism.*
- *To advance notions of transformative critical multicultural education.*
- *To examine and critique Eurocentric power and influences on Global South developments in education, and on arts and humanities curriculum making*
- A broad range of research methods and approaches to data collection framed by decolonial theory are applied across the chapters of this book. These include:
 - *Using arts-based methodologies with children and young people at the forefront of knowledge creation.*
 - *Discourse analysis of social studies curricula and history curricula.*
 - *Qualitative research, including interviews with teachers, researchers, academic colleagues.*
 - *Narrative reflective writing fused with theory for advanced meaning making.*

Centring Indigenous voice as the knowledge

Kustatscher et al. (2022)

Decolonising Participatory Methods with Children and Young People in International Research Collaborations: Reflections from a Participatory Arts-Based Project with Afrocolombian and Indigenous Young People in Colombia.

Nghikefelwa et al. (2022)

Creating and Curating: Three Voices from Namibia, Australia and the UK on Decolonising the Literary-Related Doctorate.

Asserting/Reasserting Identity

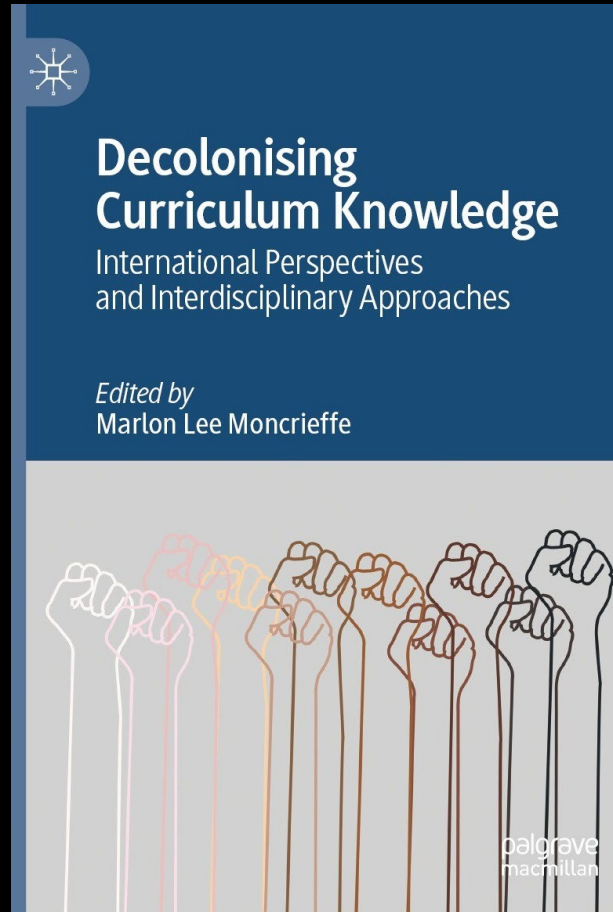
Nasibullov & Kopylova (2022)

Decolonising the Curriculum in
Hybrid Spaces: Muslim Schooling
in Russia

Charles (2022)

Developing a Reframed Curriculum
for the UK: Who Were the Ancient
Britons?

Ongoing challenges



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