

Decolonising the Curriculum - What does it mean to you?

Podcast Transcript

Monica Chavez: Hello, this is Monica from the Centre for Innovation in Education. October is Black History Month so the Centre for Innovation Education has prepared a lovely podcast for you. From the student perspective – “What decolonizing the curriculum is and what it means?” So, if you would like to have a say in this course, very special cause at the University of Liverpool we are working towards the race Equality Charter. So, it will be great to know what does the colonizing the curriculum mean to you. Thank you. Coming to the United Kingdom to study has been Amara’s long-time dream and will eventually be a life changing experience. She is from Lagos, the largest city in Nigeria and will start her degree at the University of Liverpool in October 2020. Amara arrives at the University of Liverpool during an exciting time of change, the promise of our institution to create agents for change in a connected world is what has attracted Amara to this University. A few months into her program she faces challenges with research skills and becomes aware that there is an under representation of the contribution of diverse researchers from other parts of the world.

She suffers academic inadequacy. She embarks on rigorous research to complete assignments and meet deadlines and what she wants to present herself as a competent student by evaluating and selecting the right kind of academic sources to including her work. She also wants to cite the work of Nigerian researchers publishing in national academic journals and who

she regards us worthy of being cited. Her supervisor disagrees and corrects her approach for searching and selecting sources.

These are not relevant. He says they're not published in good journals. But she understands the importance of retrieving information from top journals, which coincidentally were all in English and their editors and authors were based in Anglophone universities from the global north. She can't understand why the contributions of researchers from the periphery of academia are not being acknowledged in the global landscape of academic publications. Could Amara's academic inadequacy be put to an end by you learning design?

Decolonise your syllabus by including global and local perspectives, for example, conduct a profiling exercise of editorial boards and writers from periphery and central countries, such as Northern Europe, Canada, and Australia. Encourage a critical conversation so that student's ethnicity and their cultural and linguistic capabilities are more present in the research process. Your learning design should include students' ethnic, linguistic, and cultural background and encourage both the use of national research papers published in peer review journals from diverse countries and authors, and international research papers published in English from the global south.

The Centre for Innovation in Education celebrates BAME people during Black History Month and beyond by creating an interactive podcast that aims to gather the collective voices on the definition of decolonizing the curriculum.

MC: You can record a short message of one minute to answer the question what does decolonizing the curriculum mean to you?

Joseph Savirimuthu: Decolonizing the curriculum means putting in place a process that has three aspects.

MC: This is Joseph Savirimuthu from law.

JS: One. A structure that embraces, or should I say a structure that widens the definition of experts and authoritative sources.

Two, it involves the production and dissemination knowledge that we regard as comprising the core of legal education and its place in society.

Three, I think it also involves process where we reflect on the assumptions we make about our experiences as well as practices in shaping the curriculum and social culture within our institution. So diversity becomes a very important issue.

Andrea Newhouse: Decolonizing the curriculum to me means having affair account of the histories of my region and its historical impact on the world.

MC: This is Andrea Newhouse from Liverpool Clinical Trial Centre.

AN: Having an inclusive historical education in light of the diversity of the world and our knowledge of different cultures now kill him to me means moving forward by actually learning from lessons in the past, leveraging historical research to make positive motions for the future.

Diana Jeater: I'm Diana Jeater and I'm an historian of Africa, so obviously decolonizing the curriculum is very important to me.

MC: Dr. Diana Jeater from history.

DJ: For me, decolonizing the curriculum doesn't only mean having a lot more African authors as authorities on the regions and topics in Africa that we're studying, although of course that's a start that we acknowledge that

Africans might themselves be experts on their own countries up. But it also means being open to other ways of thinking. Getting beyond European ways of thinking, and we don't really know where that would take us until we start being open to it in the first place.

So once we allow more African modes of thought, we may find that we want to conceptualize the pasta differently and bring in other ways of thinking about what the motives of history and that includes moving away from using English as the only language to thinking.

Diana Powell: What decolonizing the curriculum means to me is opening it up to new voices.

MC: Dr. Diana Powell, founder of Wirral, Unplugged.

DP: This is including people who have not been as widely represented before hearing new ideas and new concepts, and I think all of this leads to opportunities for innovation for understanding as well As for real learning to take place where things are made more accessible through a wider range of representation.

MC: Thank you for helping advance racial equality. You can make this a wider initiative by sharing this podcast with colleagues and friends.

We look forward to hearing from you.