

Decolonising curriculum in formal education – what, why, how and for whom?

Educational thought in formal education has been dominated by western ideas on education, teaching and learning at all levels in education systems in the world in the last two centuries. The rise of the university and the consequent development of formal programmes of learning saw the genesis of curriculum and the idea of learning programmes soon trickled down to other levels of education that developed such as schooling and vocational education. These ideas about education were soon exported from Western Europe to all corners of the globe by processes of colonisation, annexation and oppression.

This discipline / subject based model of education based on selected formal curriculum knowledge soon became the dominant discourse in education and this has seemingly endured the test of time. Subsequent developments and shifts which were largely variations on the original theme, were adopted and adapted almost universally. Globalisation, mass media and the internet further entrenched western ideas on education and curriculum in powerful ways in the late 20th and 21st centuries. Many refer to these processes as neo-colonisation as the ideas largely filtered through the same conduits of the original colonisers. Most recently neo-liberal models of education management and organisation have become the global norm further entrenching the dominant model and suppressing local cultural traditions, knowledges and contextualised ideas about what knowledge is important to learn.

Fighting academic repression and “colonial” education is a cutting-edge investigation of the alarming state of education today. This seminar serves to challenge the global dominant discourses and forces that threaten liberatory critical approaches to education locally and globally. The clarion call for “decolonisation of the curriculum” is taken up and expressed as *what is* decolonisation, *why* the need to decolonise, *how* might we proceed in our endeavours and *in whose interest* are these processes pursued in curriculum. A series of papers will be presented which will be followed by comments from a discussant.