

Decolonising the Curriculum

A Praxis Framework for South African Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The decolonisation of higher education curricula remains a pressing but complex imperative in the post-apartheid context, often characterised by theoretical debate but insufficient practical guidance for implementation. This paper develops and proposes a praxis framework to guide the systematic decolonisation of curricula within South African higher education, moving beyond critique towards actionable, context-sensitive strategies. The framework was constructed through a critical synthesis of decolonial theory and an analysis of documented institutional interventions, evaluated against principles of pedagogical transformation and epistemic justice. Analysis revealed that successful interventions were those that centrally integrated indigenous knowledge systems as co-equal to Western canons, with a key theme being the re-centring of lived experience and local languages in pedagogical practice. A significant proportion of ad-hoc initiatives failed due to a lack of structural support. Decolonisation requires a deliberate, structured praxis that simultaneously addresses content, pedagogy, and institutional culture; the proposed framework offers a coherent pathway for such transformative work. Institutions should adopt holistic frameworks that mandate curriculum audits, support staff development in decolonial pedagogies, and create mechanisms for ongoing community engagement in curriculum design. curriculum transformation, decolonial praxis, higher education, epistemic justice, pedagogical framework This paper provides a novel, integrative praxis framework that operationalises decolonial theory into a structured process for curriculum redesign, offering a needed tool for systemic change.

Keywords: *decolonising the curriculum, higher education transformation, Global South, praxis framework, South African higher education, curriculum reform, postcolonial pedagogy*

Article Highlights

- Integrates indigenous knowledge systems as co-equal to Western canons
- Re-centres lived experience and local languages in pedagogical practice
- Moves beyond critique toward actionable, context-sensitive strategies
- Addresses structural barriers that undermine ad-hoc initiatives

Framework Implementation

Mandates curriculum audits, staff development in decolonial pedagogies, and ongoing community engagement in curriculum design.

This paper provides a novel, integrative praxis framework for systemic curriculum transformation.

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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