Decolonising the Curriculum: an introduction to debates and strategies

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#RhodesMustFall in UCT and Oxford, 2015
Some ‘recent’ (1980s) roots of the decolonisation movement, and Afrocentricity as an example of understanding epistemicide

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVtR71DMpk0
Schools

THE STEPHEN LAWRENCE INQUIRY
REPORT OF AN INQUIRY
BY SIR WILLIAM MACPHERSON OF CLUNY
ADvised BY
TOM COOK, THE RIGHT REVEREND DR JOHN SENTAMU, DR RICHARD STONE

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Command of Her Majesty.

February 1999

CONNECTIONS
HARINGEY
LOCAL-NATIONAL-WORLD
LINKS
by Sylvia L. Collicott

ILEA
Inner London Education Authority

Educational Opportunities For All?

The Report of the Committee reviewing provision to meet special educational needs
Decolonising asks that we look at ontologies (belonging); epistemologies (knowing); methodologies (doing);

Decolonisation resitutes colonialism and empire as key shaping forces (of our world);

Decolonisation, here, is not a metaphor for other university activities – diversity, etc. (Tuck & Yang, 2012): it has a context in real histories of resistance to colonisation and its undoing.
1. The university ‘project’ – is not separate from other imperialist projects;

2. Universities – historically and maybe still - where colonialism and colonial knowledge is created, ‘institutionalised’ and spread;

3. **Discussion point/health warning:** Is decolonising becoming the new black for some academics? [Sista Resista, 2018]
Why is my professor still not black?

Winston Morgan explores what his career might reveal about the position of ethnic minority academics

March 14, 2016

By Winston Morgan

British Science Week is a good time to try to find out who the black leaders of British science in 2016 are. It is also the second anniversary of the groundbreaking meeting at University College London asking the question: "Why isn't my professor black?"

There are 8,300 professors of science, engineering and technology (SET) in the UK, and only 35 are black; a closer look will show that the majority of black professors did not go to school in the UK.
Student voice (at UCL):
http://www.dtmh.ucl.ac.uk/videos/curriculum-white/

WHOSE VOICE IS MISSING? AND HOW DO WE INCLUDE THOSE VOICES?

DECOLONISE EDUCATION
#RHODS MUST FALL!
Selected findings and debating points

- Discrimination in staffing: under representation, bias, harassment
- Enhancement of training
- Improved data collection
- Increased understanding and use of positive action
- Curriculum and research
- Widen taught history curriculum
SNAPSHOT IN 2013: PERCENTAGE OF HISTORY RESEARCHED IN HIGHER EDUCATION COMPARED WITH WORLD POPULATION. MAP FROM ‘IT'S A SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL: THE WIDER WORLD IN HISTORIANS' PERIPHERAL VISION, PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY’, THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
Luke Clossey and Nicholas Guyatt, May 1, 2013
Examples of Local Practice at UH, by colleagues past and present:

- **NOT more of the same re-badged:** Britain in Africa
- In 2017, Adam Crymble’s students worked together to identify 517 trial accounts out of 100,000+ which contained references to people of African descent.
- Theo Gilbert: Compassion Focused Pedagogy.
- Chris Lloyd: a myriad of changes, including select bibliographies for students.
Some Discussion/Take-Away Questions

- Consider: to what extent is decolonising the curriculum, with its links to equity and social justice, more than just a set of pedagogic ideas, but a movement which educators are/should be/might be *morally obliged* to embrace.

- Teaching and Learning: taking theory into practice locally – what are the best ways and places to start in your own practice?

- Departmental/institutional/student discussions: what strategies can be used to develop a shared understanding of people’s views (through what might be, for some, uncomfortable conversations)?
Some introductory reading on decolonising the curriculum


- ‘Dismantling the Master’s House’, UCL website incorporating the student voice, with useful sections such as ‘why isn’t my professor black?’ and ‘why is my curriculum white’. Available at: http://www.dtmh.ucl.ac.uk/

