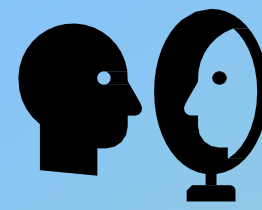
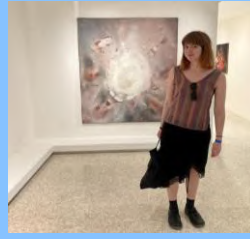
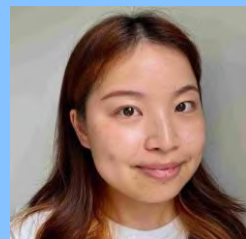
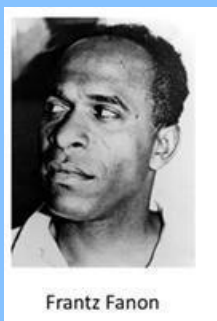


Lessons Learned from the Student-Staff Partnership Process of Decolonising a Psychology Course

De Amicis, L., Vincent, M., Wen, S., Thompson, H., Chang, H.C.



WHY TO DECOLONISE PSYCHOLOGY OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES?

DECOLONISATION can be intended ‘as deliberately seeking authentic representation within the experiences of formerly colonised people in order to disrupt the colonial realities that continue to occur’ Matahela & Hildergard van Rensburg, 2023, as reported in Roberts, 2024, p.197). Successful decolonisation needs a deep transformation of the staff, structures, and processes within institutions.

Psychology as a discipline and the area of Psychology of ‘Individual Differences’ has historically excluded knowledge originating from the Global South and marginalized and/or discriminated groups (Phiri, Sajid, and Delanerolle, 2023, Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022).

A **decolonial perspective** aims to:

1. respond to the needs of our students to feel included and represented, strongly engaging with their studies and feeling part of our University communities
2. prepare students to become psychologists who work meaningfully with diverse populations worldwide, developing and/or strengthening intellectual and cultural humility, integrity, and intercultural sensitivity to build cohesive and supportive societies
3. include different thinking models and systems which prioritise students and staff, and their personal and social, mental and physical wellbeing, using participatory pedagogical approaches with equalitarian status/roles
4. contribute to students’ personal development skills, in which ‘unlearning’ and ‘relearning’ are perceived as an essential part of critical and self-reflection thinking and individual and societal growth

A STUDENT-STAFF PARTNERSHIP PROJECT TO UNLEARN AND RE-LEARN

SSPS (Student- staff partnership schemes) specifically target co-creation partnership work between students and academic staff to work together in ways that reflect the commitments in the UofG’s L&T Strategy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

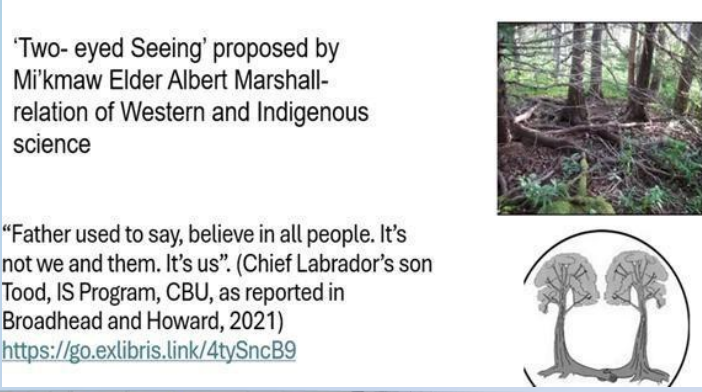
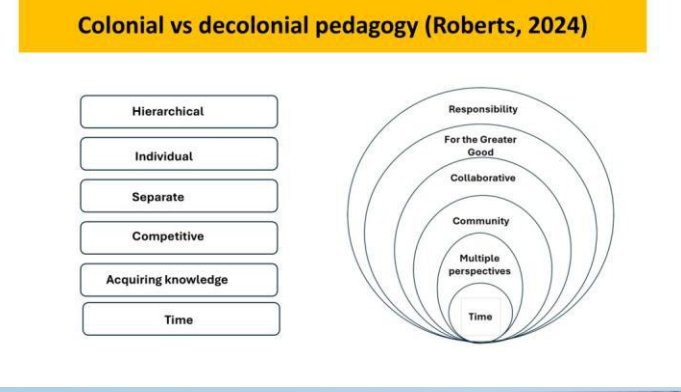
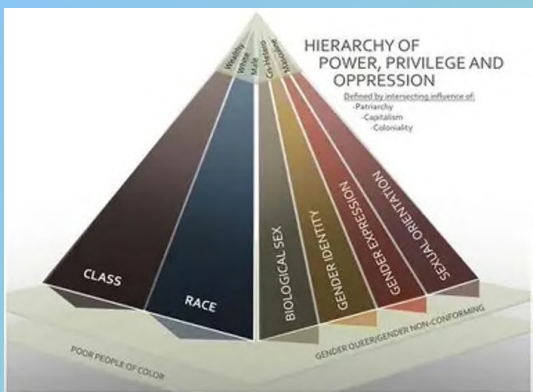
- Work of scholars and other SSPS projects focused on decolonisation of psychology and education (Adams et al, 2017; Roberts, 2024)
- Reflections from previous work on decolonisation (e.g., self-decolonisation toolkit)

PROCESS

- Mapping ID (2024-25) & Rapid literature review
- Sharing 'decolonising' tasks on lectures and seminars, assessment, reading lists, online activities

Data collection:

- Interviews to students- year 2024-25 (round 1)
- Interviews to students – year 2025-26 and academics (round 2)



FINDINGS AND DECOLONISED RESOURCES

THEMES:

- Meaning of decolonisation
- Pros of decolonisation
- Cons of decolonisation
- Positive examples
- Suggested improvements

LECTURES & READING LISTS

- Including prominent scholars and perspectives from different cultures
- Focus on different cultures (avoiding spotlight)

ASSESSMENT

- Importance of positionality and different types of privilege
- Participatory approach with target populations

SEMINARS

- Co-creation, with time and space dilated
- Focus on everyday issues experienced by international and local students

MEASUREMENT

- Valuing both quantitative and qualitative approaches
- Emphasis on intercultural sensitivity and cultural humility using evaluation tools

STRENGTHS:

Partner students:

- course was **deconstructed** and examined through a **critical lens** rather than an add-on, making emerge content and voice diversity.
- helped us understand that **psychological knowledge is shaped by context, power, and history.**
- further self-reflection and critical thinking about one own’s **continuous learning as psychologist.**
- realisation of importance of decolonisation in **applied settings.**

Staff:

- **Partnership:**
 - student partners developed a better understanding of decoloniality and confidence on decolonisation.
 - co-creation as a fundamental principle of course design (learning *The Islamic Freud's* book, *The Queer Collective* podcasts, and the movie *Kim Ji- young, Born 1982* and successful environmental campaign in India)
 - cross-disciplinary
- **Institutional support:** L&T Strategy, SSPS scheme, DtC CoP.

CHALLENGES:

Partner students:

- **Low confidence on knowledge of theoretical frameworks from Western and non-Western contexts.**
- Considering **students’ discomfort** and requires careful facilitation and supportive learning environments.
- **Assessment expectations and accreditation structures** can also limit how far critical or alternative approaches are taken up.

Staff:

- **Time and space constraints.**
- **Scarce confidence** from staff who need time to access and learn about non-Western knowledge.
- Decolonising a course is **more than adding new knowledge**, and it requires a fundamental reconceptualization of topics .
- Decolonisation is an **ongoing process.**

CONCLUSIONS

- Students and staff emphasised the importance of decolonising and realised the value of including students’ decolonial input, considering their learning experiences, in the content and pedagogy of the ID course
- Our team and the students in our courses encouraged expanding the decolonial approach to different courses and having discussions with professional bodies (e.g., British Psychological Society, BPS) for changes of the curriculum in this direction
- Our team also acknowledged the importance of collaborating with international colleagues and partners, from different disciplines, and using resources which can make decolonisation less ‘threatening’ (movies?)
- We concluded that decolonisation of academia requires constant exploration, re-learning our subjects, via co-creation of our courses with our international students

REFERENCES

- Adams, G., Gómez Ordóñez, L., Kurtis, T., Molina, L. E., & Dobles, I. (2017). Notes on decolonizing psychology: From one special issue to another. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 47(4), 531-541.
- Phiri, P., Sajid, S., & Delanerolle, G. (2023). Decolonising the psychology curriculum: A perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1193241.
- Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective. (2022). Psychology as a site for decolonial analysis. *Journal of Social Issues*, 78(2), 255-277.
- Roberts, C. (2024). *Re-storying Education: Decolonizing your practice using a critical lens*. Page Two.