

DECOLONIZE
EDUCATION

DECOLONIZING
THE
CURRICULUM

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Community Dialogue Series

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DECOLONIZATION

- Decolonization is the process of identifying, confronting and dismantling colonial power structures to actively prioritize historically marginalized members and groups of society; specifically, recentering Black, Indigenous and People Of Color (BIPOC) land, life, tradition and history. (WPU Council for Equity and Justice)

DECOLONIZING CURRICULUM

- Decolonizing **curriculum** is the process of identifying, confronting and dismantling **colonial education structures** to actively prioritize **the experiences and narratives** of historically marginalized members and groups of society; specifically, recentering Black, Indigenous and People Of Color (BIPOC) land, life, tradition and history.

SCHOOLING AND COLONIZATION

- Schools have historically been used for assimilation and colonization of the mind, heart and spirit.
- Ideologies of colonization are perpetuated through institutional structures, power relations and curriculum.
- Reflection and action are vital for restructuring the system.

The master's tools will
never dismantle the
master's house. They
may allow us
temporarily to beat him
at his own game, but
they will never allow us
to bring about genuine
change.

Audre Lorde

WWW.STOREMYPIC.COM

A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS...

• Students

- African American – 18.6%
- Asian – 8.0%
- Hispanic (all races) – 33.8%
- Multi-Racial – 2.9%
- Native American – 0.1%
- Non-resident alien – 1.4%
- Other/unknown – 1.3%
- White – 33.9%

• Full-Time Faculty

- African American – 9.6%
- Asian – 19.8%
- Hispanic (all races) – 6.5%
- Multi-Racial – 0.8%
- Non-resident alien – 0.8%
- Other/unknown – 0.8%
- White – 61.5%

• Adjunct Faculty

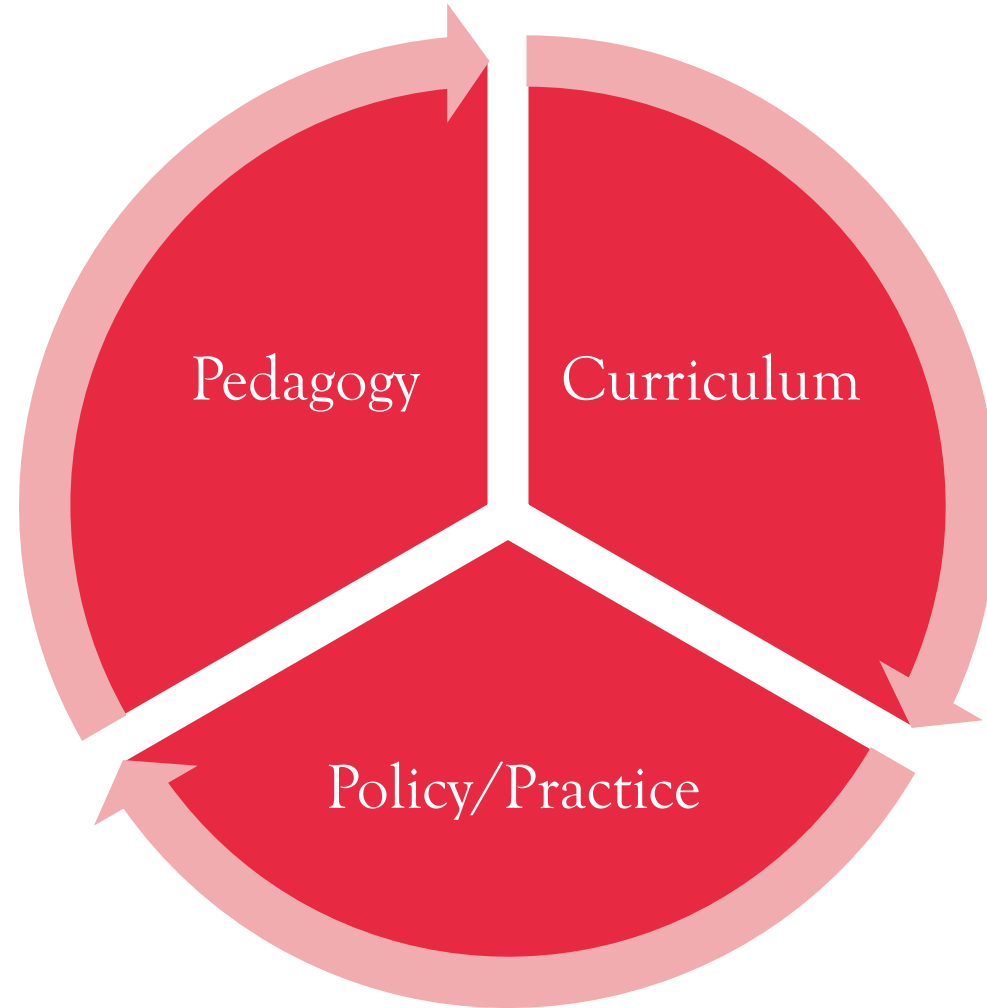
- African American – 8.8%
- Asian – 9.5%
- Hispanic (all races) – 6.7%
- Multi-Racial – 0.7%
- Native American – 0.2%
- Non-resident Alien – 0.2%
- Other/unknown – 5.8%
- White – 68.1%

BREAKOUT GROUPS

What does it mean to have a faculty body that does not reflect the demographic characteristics of our students?

How does this affect teaching and learning at WPU?

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?



An educator in a
system of oppression
is either a
revolutionary or an
oppressor.

Lerone Bennett, Jr.

DECOLONIZING PEDAGOGY

- Decolonization must happen first with the educator.
- Role of self-reflection
 - What colonial beliefs do I hold?
 - Where do I know from? (Zuroski, 2020)
 - How can I decolonize my approach to teaching?
 - In what ways do my course policies reinforce colonial practices and assumptions?

DECOLONIZING PEDAGOGY

- How does the way I teach—and what I teach— impact students' thinking?
- How can my pedagogy be a source of liberation for students?

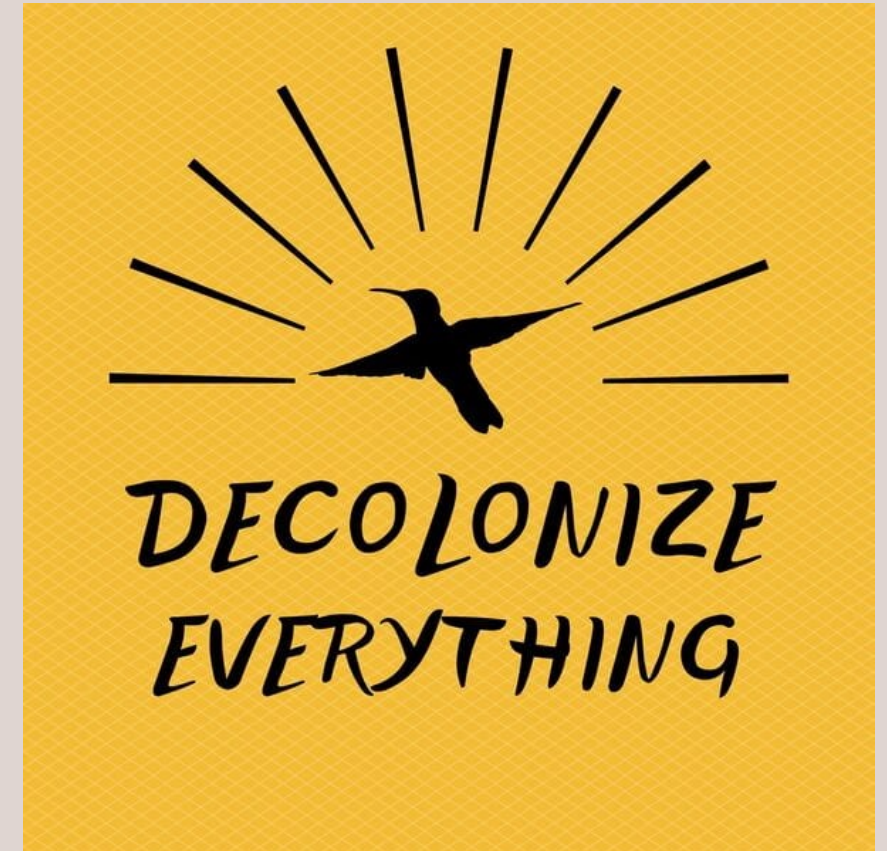
“Decolonizing pedagogy requires that we critically wonder about knowledge and how we approach knowledge in ways that reinforce the ‘monolithic, monocultural, mono-epistemological academic traditions’ (Biermann, 2011, p.386) in higher education space.” (Franklin-Phipps, 2020)

COLONIZED CURRICULUM

- Curriculum is not objective as it reproduces the hierarchal and social position that maintains white privilege (Yosso, 2002)
- A colonized curriculum impacts students' outlook on the world and how they perceive themselves in relation to others in this world (Leslie, et al., 2021)

DECOLONIZING CURRICULUM

- Discipline/Field
 - Questioning “the canon”
 - Who decides what the canon is?
 - What alternative canons exist?
 - Whose narratives are centered? Whose should be?
 - Rethinking language and terminology
- Department/Major
 - Rethinking the norm
 - Why are our majors set up as they are?
 - Whose narratives are centered?
 - Whose narratives should be centered?
 - Who is teaching our courses?



BREAKOUT GROUPS



What is the canon in your field?

Who are the major thinkers/theorists in my field?

Whose voices and experiences are positioned as the norm?



DECOLONIZING CURRICULUM

- “Ask yourself how many times now and in previous years learning sources have derived directly from western hegemony?” (@ravideepkaur, IG)
- The goal is to provide students with “diverse academic learning environments, curricula and approaches to research within which Indigenous [BIPOC] cultures, histories, and knowledge are embedded.” (Univ. of Toronto)

LEVELS OF DECOLONIZING (HILL, 2021)

Level 1: Contributions Approach

- Heroes, holidays, cultural elements, and doesn't do anything else. No changes.

Level 2: Additive Approach

- Add content, concepts, themes, and perspectives when there are holes. Doesn't challenge the canon or dominant norms. Safe heroes.

Level 3: Transformative Approach

- Changing curriculum so students can see concepts, events, issues, from the perspectives of others. Encourages critical thinking from different perspectives.

Level 4: Social Action Approach

- Students make decisions on important issues and do some community activism.

DECOLONIZING POLICY/PRACTICE

- Identifying ways in which the university/college/department structurally reproduce colonial hierarchies; confronting, challenging and rejecting the status quo; and putting alternatives into practice for the benefit of our academic integrity and our social viability.
 - What colonized policies and practices exist in your college?
 - How do these policies shape the student body?
 - How do these policies put up and/or maintain roadblocks for BIPOC students?
 - How do curriculum committees support or discourage the creation of courses that are decolonial in nature?
 - Revising course/program proposal forms and processes

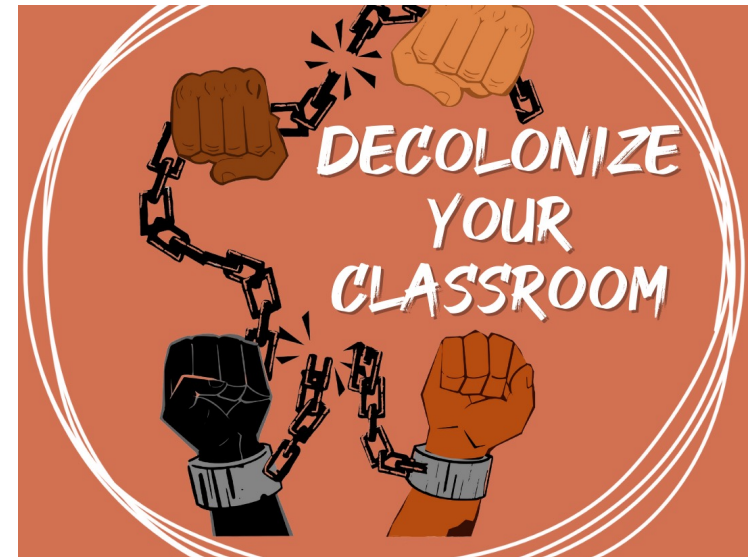
BREAKOUT GROUPS



*How does classroom culture
inadvertently reflect and reinforce
colonial values and practices?*

CLASSROOM AS COLONIAL SPACE

- What does power look like in your classroom?
- How do you define success?
- What are your expectations for your students?
- What do the seating arrangements look like?
- Do students collaborate and engage in interactive learning structures?
- Do students have a voice and do they have a say in their learning?
- Are you the sole or loudest voice in the classroom?
- Do you use deficit-based language or hold assimilationist beliefs?
- Do you engage in power struggles with students?



(Kawi, 2020)

“

**THE CLASSROOM REMAINS
THE MOST RADICAL
SPACE OF POSSIBILITY IN
THE ACADEMY.**

- bell hooks

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