

Toward a Decolonizing Pedagogy: Module 2

Guide Overview

Purpose

This Guide gives instructors background information about the colonial nature of university curriculum along with practical tools to support instructors in moving toward a decolonizing pedagogy.

About the Creator

Candace Brunette-Debassige is a Mushkego Cree iskwew from Peetabeck (Treaty 9 Territory) with Cree and French ancestry. Brunette-Debassige is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Western University located on lands of the Anishnabek, Haudenosaunee and Lenapewuk Peoples in London Ontario Canada. Currently, Brunette-Debassige serves as a university-wide Teaching Fellow in Indigenous Learning at Western. Her scholarly work and professional practices center on advancing the liberatory struggles of Indigenous Peoples in educational settings. Her current research agenda is located in the areas of Indigenous and decolonial approaches to curriculum, educational change, leadership and policy. Her scholarly work embodies a deep commitment to advancing Indigenous theorizing, Indigenous methodologies in research, and Indigenous pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning.

Duration

Total viewing time of all video—approx. 41 min., plus reading and reflection work.

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Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this online learning module, instructors will:

- Understand how colonial power operationalizes itself at multiple levels of the higher education system including the curriculum and cultural interface in the classroom.
- Appreciate the powerful role that instructors play in decolonizing the university and curriculum.
- Be introduced to a 4-part model that can help instructors individually begin to move toward decolonizing their pedagogy by: (a) increasing their decolonial consciousness; (b) reflecting on their complex positionalities; (c) critically examining their pedagogies; and (d) engaging in ongoing learning and unlearning.

Pre-Reflection Questions

- What has inspired you to explore decolonizing your teaching and learning?
- What is your understanding of decolonizing pedagogies?
- What is your motivation in moving toward decolonizing your pedagogy? How do you philosophically and practically define decolonizing curriculum?
- Where do you believe you are in your journey of decolonizing your pedagogical practice?

Required Readings

1. Shahjahan, Estera, A. L., Surla, K. L., & Edwards, K. T. (2021). "Decolonizing" curriculum and pedagogy: A comparative review across disciplines and global higher education contexts. *Review of Educational Research* 92(1), 73-113. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543211042423>
2. Zinga, & Styres, S. (2019). Decolonizing curriculum: Student resistances to anti-oppressive pedagogy. *Power and Education*, 11(1), 30–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1757743818810565>

Required Video

Brunette-Debassige, C. (2022). *Toward a decolonizing pedagogy - module 2* [Digital curriculum module]. In *The Indigenous teaching and learning series*. Western University. <https://youtu.be/kCmmRUhZL1s>

SECTIONS AND QUESTIONS IN THE VIDEO:

Stop & Reflect/Ask Yourself at 05:32 min

- What are our epistemological assumptions about knowledge, teaching and learning?
- Who has knowledge?
- Are academics the sole authorities and experts of knowledge?
- Who can share different knowledge?
- How can we share diverse knowledges respectfully and ethically?
- What limits do we have in the process of teaching?

HOW MY STORY IN EDUCATION SHAPED MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY, 06:00 MIN.

4-PART APPROACH TO PERSONAL DECOLONIAL TRANSFORMATION, 15:56 MIN.

4-Part Model: Increase decolonial consciousness, 16:45 min.

Stop & Reflect at 22:49 min

- What relevant Indigenous and decolonial scholarship exists inside and outside my field?
- What Indigenous and decolonial scholarship could I bring into my courses? What courses, where would it fit and how would I frame it?
- If I am unfamiliar with Indigenous and decolonial scholarship, where are some next steps to search out and learn more?
- If I bring Indigenous and decolonial scholarly perspectives, what tensions might emerge with student dynamics, understandings, application, in assignments and in classroom discussions?
- Have some students ever challenged my previous attempts, and if so, what strategies do I have to facilitate respectful critical dialogue?

4-Part Model: Reflect on our complex positionality, 23:37 min.

Relational questions at 26:28 min

- Who are you?
- Who is your family?
- Where are you coming from?
- Where are your homelands?

Relational questions for instructors at 27:17 min

- Who are we in relation to Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island?

- What are our relationships to settler colonialism and the Indigenous land that we live and work?
- What is the relationship to Indigenous knowledges, Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous perspectives we teach about?

4-Part Model: Examine our pedagogy, 29:04 MIN.

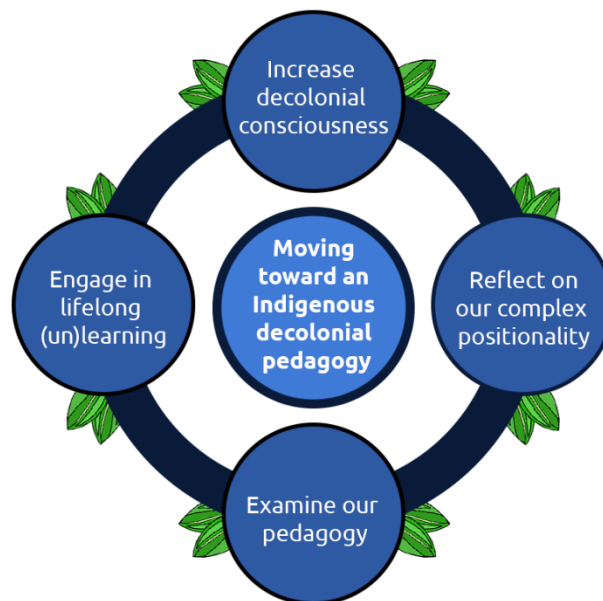
4-Part Model: Engage in lifelong (un)learning, 35:14 MIN.

CONCLUSION, 37:04 MIN.

Post Video and Reading Reflection Questions

- What new insights have emerged for you after watching the video and reading the articles?
- Based on your new understandings, what areas of the 4-part model would you focus on in the process of decolonizing your pedagogy?

4-PART MODEL REFLECTION QUESTIONS



Part 1 –Increase your Decolonial Consciousness

Increasing decolonial consciousness in our teaching involves actively educating ourselves about a diversity of critical and Indigenous epistemological perspectives in curriculum and research. It involves teaching about diverse perspectives which critique the matrix of colonial power and the

dominant position of Euro-Western and colonial knowledges. It involves proactively making space for decolonial and Indigenous epistemologies to emerge in our teaching and learning.

Self-reflection questions:

- What Euro-Western colonial biases historically exist and persist in my discipline and field of study?
- What decolonial critiques and debates have emerged in my disciplinary field? What are their scholarly contributions, strengths and limitations?
- Where do I situate my scholarly work in the range of epistemological debates in my field?
- How are the range of Indigenous and decolonial scholars epistemologically distinct from each other and Euro-Western theories and knowledges?
- What is the difference between decolonial and Indigenous epistemologies?

Part 2 - Reflecting on your Complex Positionality

Taking the time to reflect critically on our personal and disciplinary position in relation to settler colonialism and Indigenous Peoples and knowledges is a crucial aspect of advancing a decolonial pedagogy. As part of a critically reflective praxis, we must assess our comfort levels and readiness to decolonize our thinking and teaching. We must take stock of our complex social positionalities—of how differences in social positions shape our own access and power in society. We must recognize our existing relationships to knowledges and research, and be clear about our understandings, abilities, limitations and experiences teaching Indigenous and decolonial epistemologies.

Self-reflection questions:

- What is my complex intersectional positionality in relation to interlocking systems of power (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, age, religion)? In particular, what is my relationship to settler colonialism and the local and broader Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island and other places around the world? Note: You may use the flower power template in Appendix A to examine your own social positions and use the tool to work with students to examine their social positions.

- Where is my university located geographically, politically, and relationally to local Indigenous Nations?
- What limitations do I have in my positionality, knowledge, training, and experiences in relation to decolonial and Indigenous perspectives?
- What is my motivation to decolonize my pedagogy?

Part 3 - Critically Examining your Pedagogy

Pedagogy is a multifaceted concept that brings together theory and practice. In academic contexts, instructors' pedagogical choices are shaped by various factors—their philosophies (epistemologies) around knowledge and learning, the norms of their disciplinary fields, academic structures including learning spaces and policies, and the cultural norms of the institution and instructors themselves. Decolonizing our pedagogy involves reflecting critically on these complex interrelated factors and shifting practices that may be oppressive and marginalizing to particular individuals and groups particularly Indigenous groups within colonial contexts.

Self-reflection questions:

- What is my teaching philosophy and how do decolonial and Indigenous theories guide my pedagogical choices?
- What has been my experience teaching about colonization and Indigenous Peoples and perspectives—concerning Turtle Island or on a global scale?
- What successes and challenges have I encountered in teaching Indigenous and decolonizing materials in my classes?
- How can I facilitate “ethical space of engagement” (Ermine, 2001) across epistemological differences in my teaching?
- What decolonial and Indigenous perspectives do I include in my teaching (through readings, videos, guest speakers, field trips etc.)?
- Do I include in my teaching a diversity of Indigenous perspectives?
- Do I proactively embed local Indigenous perspectives?
- Where do I place Indigenous and decolonial scholarship in my course (throughout, one week, at the end) or do I do it at all?
- What discomforts emerge for me when thinking about decolonizing my teaching?

- Beyond the content that I teach, how do my ways of teaching (e.g., instructional strategies) engage a diversity of modes of learning and shift dominant tendencies toward didactic authoritarian teaching methods?
- How do I locate myself in relation to learners and the topics I teach? Do I see myself as a lifelong learner?
- How do I prepare and lay out my classroom space to facilitate open engagement and dialogue?
- How do I take up relational approaches to teaching that support a community of learners, relationships between me and my students, and relationships across students?
- How do assignments move students toward decolonial praxis and unsettling settler colonial thinking and logics?
- What assessment and evaluation methods do I privilege in my teaching? What are the power dynamics? Can students self-evaluate and when do I seek their input on my own teaching?
- How do I support dialogue and deep listening in my classroom and for myself as an educator?
- When tensions, contrasting views, and critical incidents inevitably occur, how can I acknowledge emotions, support deeper understandings, facilitate debrief, and help nurture respectful dialogue and deep learning?

Part 4- Ongoing Learning and Unlearning

As educators, we must take seriously our responsibilities toward lifelong learning and unlearning colonial thinking in ourselves and in our teaching practices by continuously reflecting on teaching pedagogy. We must create cyclical, self-directed development plans that start with holistic self-reflection and move toward meaningful action that strives to shift our pedagogy toward a decolonizing pedagogy.

Self-reflection questions:

- How am I challenging myself to grow and change toward integrating decolonizing principles in my teaching practice?
- What are some goals that will lead me toward deeper integration of the four principles outlined here?

- What are my areas of strength?
- What areas can I attend to for development?
- What pedagogical areas do I still need to develop, and where can I go to gain deeper insight?
- Where and how can I seek feedback on my teaching (e.g., peer reviews: formative/summative, from colleagues/critical friends, students, participate in communities of practice)?

Further Readings

1. Battiste, M. (1998). Enabling the autumn seed: Toward a decolonized approach to Aboriginal knowledge, language, and education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 22(1), 16-27.
2. Battiste, M., Bell, L., & Findlay, M. (2002). Decolonizing education in Canadian universities: An interdisciplinary, international, Indigenous research project. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 26(2), 82–95.
3. Battiste, M. & Youngblood Henderson, J. (2009). Naturalizing Indigenous Knowledge in Eurocentric education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 32(1), 5–18.
4. Battiste, M. (2018). Reconciling Indigenous Knowledge in education: Promises, possibilities, and imperatives. In M. Spooner & J. McNinch (Eds.), *Dissident knowledge in higher education* (pp. 123-148). University of Regina Press.
5. Elwood J., Andreotti, V., & Stein, S. (2019). *Toward braiding*.
<https://decolonialfutures.net/towardsbraiding/>
6. Ermine, W. (1995). Aboriginal epistemology. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 101-112). UBC Press.
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9. McFarlane, & Schabus, N. (Eds.). (2017). *Whose land is it anyway? A manual for decolonization*. Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC.
<https://fpse.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Decolonization%20Handbook.pdf>
10. Robinson, I.M, & Tompkins, J.M. (2019). Disrupting the colonial agenda within graduate teacher education. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 65(2), 110-128.
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<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2012.733688>

12. Santiago-Ortiz, A. (2019). From critical to decolonizing service-learning: Limits and possibilities of social justice-based approaches to community service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 25(1), 43–54. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mjcsloa.3239521.0025.104>
13. Smith, G. H., & Smith, L. T. (2018). Doing Indigenous work: Decolonizing and transforming the academy. In E. A. McKinley, & L.T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of indigenous education* (pp. 1–27). Springer.
14. Stein, S., Ahenakew, C., Jimmy, E., Andreotti, V., Valley, W., Amsler, S., Calhoun, B., & Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective. (2021, March). Developing stamina for decolonizing higher education: A workbook for non-Indigenous people (Version 2.2). Higher Education (HE) Otherwise.
<https://higheredotherwise.net/developing-stamina-for-decolonizing-higher-education-a-workbook-for-non-indigenous-people/>

Other Resources

Curriculum

1. Brunette, C. & Richmond, C. (2018). *Guide for working with Indigenous students*. Western University. <https://teaching.uwo.ca/pdf/teaching/Guide-for-Working-with-Indigenous-Students.pdf>
2. Centennial College. (n.d.). Indian Residential School System: Introduction to the Indian Residential School System. In *Our stories: First Peoples in Canada*.
<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/indigstudies/chapter/chapter-1/>
3. University of British Columbia. (n.d.). *What I learned in class today: Aboriginal issues in the classroom*. <https://intheclass.arts.ubc.ca/>
4. University of British Columbia. (n.d.). Classroom Climate. https://wiki.ubc.ca/Classroom_Climate
5. Wilson, K., & Hodgson, C. (2018). Pulling together: Foundations guide. In *Pulling together: A guide for Indigenization of post-secondary institutions. A professional learning series*. BCcampus.
<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfoundations/>

Glossary

Settler colonialism

Settler colonialism is a structure not an event (Wolfe, 1999) structured by the nation state that appropriates Indigenous lands and serves to erase and displace Indigenous peoples and nationhood, and

replace it with a dominant national identity, invasive society and national sovereignty. In doing so, settler colonialism has served to undermine Indigenous sovereignty and their self-determining authority over their lands, lives and futures.

REFERENCES:

1. Wolfe, P. (2006) Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387-409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>

Decolonization

Pauline Wakeham (2020) defines decolonization as involving “the confronting and unsettling [of] the impact of colonial histories, ideologies, experiences, and legacies on disciplines, archives, canons, curricula, methodologies, and pedagogies, as well as on structures of governance, institutional design, and cultures, symbols, and ceremonies. Decolonization is a necessary and ongoing process of unlearning, uncovering, and transforming legacies of colonialism, as well as utilizing the educational and knowledge systems available to relearn and rebuild the social, cultural, and linguistic foundations that were lost, or eroded through colonialism. Decolonization also requires making space, balancing, generating, and enabling diverse knowledge systems to thrive in the academy as well as in and through educational and knowledge transmitting places for Indigenous Peoples, the formerly colonized or continuing colonized nations, peoples, and cultural knowledge systems (Smith et al., 2021, p.6-7)”

REFERENCES:

- Smith, M. S., Golfman, N., Battiste, M., Dolmage, J., Glanfield, F., Malacrida, C., & Villeneuve, A. J. (2021, March 8). *Igniting change: Final report and recommendations*. Congress Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization, Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Appendix A

Flower Power Activity

OVERALL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Review the intersectional flower power model and the various petal areas. Notice that the core of the flower power model outlines different social locations within systems of power in society, and the outer petals recognize dominant social positions for each (e.g. under race as a social position, white race is recognized as the dominant position).
- Each learner is then independently invited to note their different locations for each petal. (e.g., under gender one might recognize that they are cisgender woman).
- Once each learner has noted their various self-locations, they are instructed to colour in the petals that are in alignment with dominant social locations (e.g., A cisgender male might fully colour in the gender petal to recognize their social power. Whereas, a cisgender woman, might partially colour in the gender petal). The purpose of colouring in is to illustrate the social power and privilege that one is afforded.
- It is important to note that this activity can be challenging for some learners. Our social locations are complex and sometimes changing over our lifetime. There are also sometimes facets of our social locations that we are private. Therefore, it is helpful to demonstrate respect for the learner in sharing what they are comfortable with.

THINK – INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What do you appreciate most about your social locations?
- Are there aspects of your social locations that are private?
- How many petals are dominant compared to those that are not?

PAIR - SHARE WITH ELBOW PARTNER

- Are there areas of your social location that you haven't always been aware of?
- Are you upfront with your social locations and privileges, why and why not?

SHARE –DISCUSS AS A WHOLE GROUP

- How do you think your social locations/identity could impact your teaching? How so?

