

Why decolonising the South African university curriculum will fail

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Abstract

This paper sets out to explore how academics can become agents of meaningful educational change and social cohesion, by implementing a Pedagogy of Compassion. The education triad comprises the teacher, the learner and the content (curriculum), which unfolds within historical, political, social and educational contexts. Changing one aspect of this triad – the curriculum- without due consideration to the others, will not effect the desired change. In the context of the university, the demographics of the learner has radically changed and a massive drive to decolonise the curriculum has been initiated, but little if any attention has been given to academics who deliver the curriculum. I argue that the Achilles' heel in the decolonisation of the curriculum project of South African universities is the academic.

Keywords: Academic; curriculum; decolonisation; educational change; Pedagogy of Compassion; teacher beliefs

Introduction and Background Context

Getting a degree here (referring to a former white University) is a form of mental slavery and colonization. We can no longer breathe! We want to breathe! We must exorcise the colonial ghost from the curriculum. We want relevant knowledge, we want to study African history; we want to reclaim our black history (Lukett, 2016:416).

The statue of Cecil John Rhodes was the catalyst that sparked the #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall protest actions and provided the impetus for the call for decolonisation and structural change at South African universities. The state of inertia at many South African universities was jerked into urgent action by these protests actions. Universities were set abuzz with conversations, meetings and debates about decolonising the curriculum in an attempt to appease and meet the demands of students. However, this was a reactive response to the demands of students and an attempt to diffuse the impending threat posed by these

protests. It did not stem from an innate desire or will of the university - if it did it would not have occurred more than two decades after the advent of democracy in South Africa- and it was a sudden decision requiring immediate action. An explosion of re-curriculating activities thundered across campuses. Various committees such as the ‘Curriculum Transformation Committee’, a university based initiative, were established to operationalize this response. Lecturers were instructed to re-visit, re-look and revise their study guides and course materials and to indicate their attempts at ‘decolonising the curriculum’. Amidst the flurry of all these activities the key agent of curriculum delivery namely, the academic was overlooked. The education triad comprises the teacher, the learner and the content (curriculum), which unfolds within historical, political, social and educational contexts. Changing one aspect of this triad without due consideration to the others, will not effect the desired change. Changing the curriculum alone will not work. In the context of the university, the demographics of the learner has radically changed and a massive drive to decolonise the curriculum has been initiated, but little if any attention has been given to academics who deliver the curriculum. A challenge raised by students during the protest actions was the many curricula are ‘taught in oppressive classrooms by academics who are demeaning, unprofessional and use their power in ways that discriminate unfairly against students’ (Shay, 2016:3). Academics are not merely conduits of the curriculum. They are complex beings constituted amongst other things of an identity, value systems, beliefs and lived experiences all of which inform their practice within particular contexts. Accordingly, this study asks how academics become agents of meaningful educational change and social cohesion.

Exploring the terrain

Understanding decolonisation and decoloniality

In order to understand what the concepts decolonisation and decoloniality entail, an understanding of the concept of colonialism, especially in the South African context, is necessary. South Africa was officially colonised in 1652. Apart from the European colonisation being executed from the south of the continent, South Africa also experienced migration and invasion of people groups from the north. The two European countries who occupied the land were the Netherlands (1652-1795 and 1803-1806) and Great Britain (1795-1803 and 1806-1961). In 1910, South Africa became a Union with its own white people government. However, the country was still regarded as a colony of Britain until 1961. After

the Second World War, in 1948, the National Party won the elections in South Africa, marking the beginning of white Afrikaner rule in the country under the supervision of Britain. The year 1961, when South Africa became a republic, witnessed the introduction of more than three decades of white Afrikaner supremacy over black people in the country, independent of Britain (Heldring & Robinson, 2012). The colonisation process of South Africa can thus be divided into three categories, namely an 'unofficial colonisation', two 'official colonisations' and lastly an 'internal colonisation' of the country by the white Afrikaners, which ended in 1994 with the advent of democracy in South Africa (Oliver & Oliver, 2017).

Odora-hoppers (2001:74) equates colonialism with 'symbolic castration', through which everything African and indigenous was given a negative ontological and cognitive status. The intentional disassociation of the language of conceptualisation, thinking, formal education and mental development, from the language of daily interaction in the home and community was a key element of colonialism (Ngugi wa Thiong, 1998:103). Le Grange (2016:4) postulates that 'first generation colonialism was the conquering of the physical spaces and bodies of the colonised, and that second generation colonialism was the colonisation of the mind through disciplines such as education, science, economics and law.' Decolonisation will thus entail a response to both first and second generation colonialism.

A review of the literature reveals the layered and complex nature of the concept of decolonisation. Lockett (2016) argues for the interrogation of the status quo; an interrogation of the relationship between the *curriculum and power*. Questions such as what counts and knowledge and who decides what knowledge is valid, need to be posed. Mbembe (2015) sees *demythologising* at the centre of decolonisation and calls for demythologising whiteness, decolonising buildings and public spaces, decolonising the curriculum and decolonising systems of management. Escobar (2007) stresses the importance of lifting out subaltern voices and advocates a logic of *diversality* that states we are equal before we are different. Grosfuguel (2007, 219) argued that decolonisation was not simply the removal of a colonial administration and government but it has more to do with what he termed a '*colonial power matrix*'. He claims that we have made a paradigm shift from 'global colonialism' to one of 'global coloniality'. 'Coloniality is a global power structure that continues to reproduce Eurocentrism in society and in the academe long after the dismantling of the physical empire'

(Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016:34). It is this coloniality that provided the impetus for students' call for decolonising the university and decolonising the curriculum.

Understanding educational changeⁱ

The literature reveals some distinctive characteristics of the concept of educational change. Change is a complex process that happens within an organisational ecology (Hargreaves, 2000; Hopkins, 2000) is difficult to achieve (Fullan, 2000; Sarason, 1996) operates on three levels namely, symbolic, linear, and appropriation (Fullan, 1991, 2003) and is often an expression of political symbolism (Goodson, 2001). Changing the ways in which teachers teach or students learn and changing the curriculum without also changing the teachers, the classroom, the school, and the community, might not achieve the desired outcomes.

Educational change mandates what changes to implement and how to implement them. These aspects interact and shape each other (Fullan, 2001). Given the plethora of meanings and characteristics of the concept of educational change, how then does one go about implementing educational change? Fullan (1998) argues that understanding a problem and identifying the changes needed to correct them are entirely separate steps from knowing how to bring these changes about. He (2001:38) claims that the implementation of educational change involves "change in practice" along three dimensions for it to have a chance of affecting an outcome: (1) the possible use of new or revised material, including instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies; (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches; and (3) the possible alteration of beliefs such as the pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying new policies or programmes. Several authors (Ball & Cohen, 1999; National Research Council, 1999; McLaughlin & Mitra, 2000; Sheehy, 1981; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999) support Fullan's claim about the alteration of beliefs and argue that changes in belief and understanding are the foundation of achieving lasting reform because they are based on fundamental changes in conception, which, in turn, relate to skills and materials. The challenge that arises is in how teachers negotiate the relationship between new reform efforts and the subjective realities embedded in their individual and organisational contexts and their personal histories. How these subjective realities are addressed is crucial for whether potential changes become meaningful at the level of individual use and effectiveness (Fullan, 2001).

Understanding the role of teacher beliefs in the diverse classroom

Teacher beliefs play a pivotal role in the diverse classroom. Beliefs may influence how teachers teach (Kauchak & Burbank, 2003; Wilson & Cooney, 2003; Kagan, 1992; Nesper, 1987) and understand diversity (Reinke & Moseley, 2002; Sleeter 1992). Not only are teachers' beliefs context-specific (Ambrose et.al, 2004) but they also influence the implementation of multicultural education (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Pohan, 1996; Goodwin 1997). Teachers' beliefs have an influence on their perceptions and ultimately, their behaviour (Corbett & Wilson, 2002). Consequently, teacher beliefs are a significant factor in how they respond to diversity in the classroom (Reinke & Moseley, 2002).

Learning to teach diverse students requires that teachers examine their beliefs about teaching and explore the effectiveness of their practices in accommodating the various cultures, lifestyles, and learning styles of their students (Cabello & Burstein, 1995: 285).

The socialization process of teachers through means such as their own schooling experiences, observed classroom practices, family and community responses to diversity, results in the development of individual belief systems. These belief structures help to organize and accept or reject new incoming information (Walsh & Charalambides 1990). As a result, teaching practices are overwhelmingly based on the teacher's background and experiences (Baca & Cervantes, 1989). Spradley and McCurdy (1984:2-3) further explain the role of beliefs regarding diversity,

We tend to think that the norms we follow represent the 'natural' way human beings do things. Those who behave otherwise are judged morally wrong. This viewpoint is ethnocentric, which means that people think their own culture represents the best, or at least the most appropriate way for human beings to live.

Beliefs unlike knowledge tend to be resistant to change (Schraw & Olafson. 2002). Knowledge may vary according to additional information and diverse expectations. Beliefs, on the other hand, tend to maintain their suppositions unless there is a 'conversion' or 'gestalt shift' (Nesper, 1987). Garibaldi (1992) suggests that, in contemporary society, teachers' beliefs about diversity have been influenced by information, which reinforces stereotypes rather than disarms them.

With the increasing number of students from diverse cultures entering universities, the demands for a community of teachers who can communicate with students from different cultural backgrounds has increased (Banks & Banks, 2001). These cultural backgrounds provide a

frame of reference that defines one's heritage, values and social traditions. Aikenhead (1996) argues that teachers may assume the culture and values of familiar subcultures in which they grow up, but they must often cross cultural borders into new subcultures to be successful participants in different environments. Crossing cultural borders requires renegotiations of beliefs and ideas as teachers understand and assimilate the values and beliefs within different subcultures (Aikenhead, 1996). The ability of teachers to understand their own belief systems as well as the value systems of their learners may affect how successful they are in responding to diversity in the classroom.

How do academics become agents of educational change and social cohesion?

The Achilles' heel in the decolonisation of the curriculum project of universities is the academic. Decolonisation of the curriculum requires much more than just changing the curriculum. How things are taught and academics' attitudes, perceptions and beliefs in this process are pivotal to the decolonisation project. Decolonisation is more than just a "choice of materials" (Wa Thiong'o). The attitude and disposition to materials used in the curriculum is critical. Many academics still assume that Western knowledge systems "constitute the only basis for higher forms of thinking" (DoE, 2008). This form of knowledge -and therefore authority - is passed on to African students 'as unquestionable truth and of inscrutable value' (Jansen, 1998:109). The pertinent question is whether academics, after more than two decades of democracy in South Africa, are ready to 'decolonise their minds' (Wa Thiong'o) and their ingrained belief and value systems. Are they ready to unlearn, re-learn and fundamentally transform as individuals and academics? Are they literate about the historical injustices and diverse intellectual debates within their disciplines? Only in this way will attitudes, beliefs, values, dispositions and worldviews get learned, unlearned, re-learned, re-formed, deconstructed and reconstructed, and subsequently influence curriculum delivery.

Fullan (2000: 224) identified two dimensions of capacity for change. One of which is what individuals can do to develop their effectiveness as change agents, despite the system, and the other is how systems need to be transformed. The decolonisation of the curriculum project of universities has focussed on the latter. This paper is an attempt to address the former namely how academics can become agents of meaningful educational change and social cohesion. The praxis of academics should create conditions that democratise learning spaces. It makes room for both individual and group identities within the teaching and learning context. This

creates shared and negotiated understandings and practices while knowledge is being generated and disseminated. The ‘desired change’ will be one that moves from first order changes (i.e. changes in the demographics of students, posters on the walls of the school) to second order changes (i.e. changes in curriculum, changes in staffing, and changes in the visible symbols associated with the dominant racial culture and history of the university); interrogates the quality of contact between diverse groups; addresses issues of power and belonging and dismantles colonised structures and practices within the Higher Education institutions. One way of doing this is by implementing a Pedagogy of Compassion (Vandeyar & Swart, 2016; 2018).d

Instead of arriving at a single truth to inform pedagogy, we should rather work towards a ‘fusion of horizons’ (Elliot 2005) through a form of consensus-making in order to bring together different views and notions of worthwhile change. Pedagogy of compassion brings together the attributes that define a progressive teacher and a transformative intellectual (Freire 1998) and the three elements of post-conflict pedagogy (Jansen 2009). Teachers need to assume the role of transformative intellectuals, rather than be alienated by the current educational dispensation, if they want to cause meaningful educational change. Freire emphasised the attributes required of the teacher as a transformative intellectual to facilitate learning successfully, namely, humility, lovingness, courage, tolerance, decisiveness, security, patience and the joy of living (Freire 1998, 40–42). These indispensable qualities are not ranked according to importance, as all are necessary. However, I will argue that lovingness, a passion for learners, an ‘epistemology of compassion’ (Vandeyar 2013) and the act of teaching and learning are required if the teacher wishes actively to involve learners in the learning process and to foster social cohesion. Social cohesion refers to a cohesive society that works toward the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility (Organisation of Economic and Cooperative Development [OECD], 2011). Learning is not only about the content but is also foremost about the relationship that is forged between the learner, the teacher and the learning experience. In order to understand the role of the teacher as a ‘transformative intellectual’ one has to understand the constraints and possibilities of the curriculum and to begin to analyse and evaluate the space available for the teacher to be a transformative intellectual (Fien 1993, 17; Giroux 1983). Freire (1970, 84) proposes that for teachers ‘looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future’. The new

teacher thus envisaged needs not only to be able to raise the critical consciousness of learners but to adopt an ‘epistemology of compassion’ (Vandeyar, 2016) in order to enable learners to become active critical citizens, imbued with a sense of common humanity and compassion. Taking on the role of transformative intellectuals may challenge the very premise of teachers’ identities and practices, but by empowering the learner to exert influence on their world, the teacher is in turn also changed and empowered. Pedagogy of compassion builds on the work of Jansen (2009) and Freire (1998) and proposes the following tenets:

Dismantling polarised thinking and questioning one’s ingrained belief system

Educational settings are almost genetically stereotyped (Keet, Zinn & Porteurs 2009, 110). Educational spaces, in South Africa, are stereotyped according to racial or genetic compositions. For this reason, Jansen (2009, 153) calls for the disruption of knowledge so that all South Africans can confront each other with their respective memories of trauma, tragedies and triumph in the classroom. According to Jansen (2009) polite silences and hidden resentments should be exposed, indirect knowledge should be made explicit and its potential and real harm discussed openly. Dialogue between ‘opposing parties’ should be encouraged as conflict not only promotes engagement but also harbours the inherent potential to dismantle polarised thinking. We (Vandeyar & Swart, 2018) extend on this by arguing that it goes beyond just unsettling or dismantling polarised thinking, to questioning one’s ingrained belief system.

Changing mind-sets: compassionately engaging with diversity in educational spaces

Jansen (2009, 154) claims that pedagogic dissonance happens when one’s stereotypes are shattered. This does not happen overnight. ‘One incident of pedagogic dissonance does not of course lead to personal change, but it can begin to erode sure knowledge’ (Jansen 2009, 154). Linked to the notion of pedagogic dissonance as argued by Jansen, is the work of Zembylas (2010) which emphasises the proactive and transformative potential of discomfort. Zembylas (2010, 703) argues that teachers experience immense discomfort when having to confront diversity and multiculturalism. Drawing on Foucault (1994) who introduced an ethic of discomfort, he claims,

An ethic of discomfort, therefore, invites teachers and students to critique their deeply held assumptions about themselves and others by positioning themselves as witnesses (as opposed to spectators) to social injustices and structurally-limiting practices such that they see and act as ambiguous

rather than dualistic subjects (e.g. ‘us’ and ‘them’). (Boler & Zembylas 2003)

Freire (1992, 95) claims that teachers should have a critical democratic outlook on the prescribed content and never allow themselves to succumb to the naïve temptation to look on content as something magical. If teachers treat content as neutral, thereby ignoring what Jansen calls pedagogic dissonance, then the content has power and the teacher can only deposit it in learners and it loses its power to effect the desired change. All of the above plays out in educational spaces which according to Postma (2016: 5)

...are political spaces of a particular kind. They are spaces of reflection, of relative safety and reduced risks, courage is not assumed, but fostered; opportunities are provided to experiment with new beginnings and imaginations and to develop judgement; forgiveness could be cultivated and hope fostered.

‘Fusing different horizons’ or views namely, ‘pedagogic dissonance’ (Jansen, 2009); ‘ethic of discomfort’ (Foucault, 1994; Zembylas,...); critical democratic outlook and ‘knowledge of living experience’ (Freire, 1992, Freire 1992, 57) and ‘educational spaces’ (Postma, 2016), we (Vandeyar & Swart, 2018) propose proactive commitment to compassionately engaging with diversity in educational spaces. Educational spaces have to be opened up to the multiplicity of student voices. Compassionately responding to student voices entails not only warmth and care but also a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.

Instilling hope and sustainable peace

‘A post-conflict pedagogy is founded on hope’ (Jansen 2009, 154). Freire (1992, 77) claims that there is no change without a dream and there is no dream without hope. The hope that Jansen and Freire refer to is achievable in praxis. It is insufficient to just pronounce hope, it should be acted upon. There is no room for utopia in post-conflict pedagogy. In a post-conflict society the former oppressor and the oppressed do not get caught up in a blaming game. Jansen (2009, 154) refers to post-conflict pedagogy as follows: ‘This kind of critical pedagogy recognizes the power and the pain at play in school and society, and their effects on young people, and then asks “how things could be better”. Similarly, Freire argues that as an individual and as a class, the oppressor can neither liberate nor be liberated. This is why, through self-liberation, in and through the needed just struggle, the oppressed, as an individual and as a class, liberates the oppressor, by the simple act of forbidding him or her to

keep on oppressing. ‘The liberation of individuals acquires profound meaning only when the transformation of society is achieved’ (Freire 1992, 85). We (Vandeyar & Swart, 2018) argue that such transformation not only instils hope but also holds the promise for sustainable peace.

Conclusion

Universities have done very little since 1994 to open up ‘to different bodies and traditions of knowledge and knowledge - making in new and exploratory ways’. Epistemological transformation was supposed to entail a ‘reorientation away from the colonial and apartheid knowledge system, in which the curriculum was used as a tool for exclusion, to a democratic curriculum that is inclusive of all human thought (DoE 2008:89). Most South African universities have developed new policies and frameworks that address equality, equity, transformation and change. However, institutional cultures and epistemological traditions have not considerably changed. The recent initiative of decolonising the curriculum sparked by the 2015-2016 protests marks the first attempt at addressing a change in epistemological traditions.

Letsekha (2013:9) argues that the Higher Education system requires a ‘fundamental overhaul of the whole epistemological model underlying the current educational system. Behari-Leak, Masehela, Marhaya, Tjabane and Merckel, (2017) alert us to the fact that decolonisation cannot occur within colonised structures and they call for a decolonisation of colonial structures and practices in for example, the manner in which meetings are conducted at universities. Mbembe (2015) calls for demythologising whiteness, decolonising buildings and public spaces, decolonising the curriculum and decolonising systems of management. For Ramoupi (2014:271) the higher education curriculum has to be decolonised so that it is not disconnected from African realities, including the lived experiences of the majority of black South Africans. While debates about decolonising Higher Education swirl around issues of the curriculum, colonial structures and epistemological models, the emphasis of this paper has been on the agents who implement the curriculum, namely the academic.

South African universities, like most universities in the world, comprise of a diverse group of academics. These academics hail from different historical, ancestral, geographical, political, social and educational milieus; all of which inform and influence their teaching philosophy and practice. Hence, responses to the call for decolonisation of the South

African university curriculum will by the very nature of this diversity evoke different reactions. In addition, each teaching context is different and this in itself poses various challenges. Given the changing South African higher education context academics can no longer adopt a 'business-as-usual' attitude; they need to change. Academic identities are complex and they are variously willing and able to transform in the ways suggested, given the opportunity to unlearn, re-learn and fundamentally transform as individuals and academics. Such opportunities could be dictated by the complex and diverse context of each university and may take the form of departmental efforts, university efforts or staff professional development initiatives. However, I believe to effect the desired, meaningful and sustainable educational change, a university-wide initiative should be the chosen approach.

Strategies for changing beliefs and values are necessarily difficult because beliefs and values tend to be resistant to change (Schraw & Olafson, 2002) are ingrained and run as deep as 'knowledge in the blood' (Jansen, 2009). Beliefs also tend to maintain their suppositions unless there is a 'conversion' a 'gestalt shift' (Nespor, 1987). Conventional training opportunities in the form of the lecture mode, namely defining certain terms such as discrimination and prejudice, for example, will not achieve sustainable change. The most effective way is through experiential learning that fosters an ethic of discomfort (Zembylas, 2010) and pedagogic dissonance (Jansen, 2009) in educational spaces. Such learning will create opportunities for diverse groups of academics to walk in the shoes of another and to experience discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes first-hand. Educational spaces should allow for a multiplicity of voices and encourage dialogue between 'opposing parties'.

Some practical ways of doing this could be the following: First, to conduct workshops where for instance some white academics whose origins are from the countries of the coloniser are exposed to educational experiences that are only based on the culture of the colonised. This group of academics can thus get first-hand experience of what it feels to be in an educational space that totally ignores their culture, language and traditions. Second, to showcase good practice that draws on evidence-based research on pedagogies in working with diverse students who were marginalized by systemic inequalities based on race, ethnicity and language (Gay, 2015; Paris, 2012; Valdes, 1996; Paris & Ball, 2008). Various terms have been produced to describe classroom practices that use the language

and culture of students to teach them part of the ‘acceptable curricular cannon’ (Alim, 2007:27). Terms such as ‘culturally compatible pedagogy’ (Jordan, 1984), ‘culturally congruent pedagogy’ (Au & Kawakami, 1994), ‘culturally appropriate pedagogy’ (Nguayena, Terlouw, & Pilota, 2006), ‘culturally relevant pedagogy’ (Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1995), ‘culturally responsive pedagogy’ (Gay, 2000; 2015) and more recently ‘culturally sustaining pedagogy’ (Paris & Alim, 2017; Winn, 2011; Kinloch, 2010) and socioculturally responsive education (Lee & Quijada Cerecer, 2010).

Culturally relevant pedagogy seeks to provide pedagogical and curricular interventions and innovations that would move teaching and learning away from the deficit approach or a ‘culture of poverty’ where the home cultures and communities of marginalised students were bankrupt of any languages or cultural practices of value in schools and society (Labov, 1972) to embrace an asset-based approach and ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll & Gonzalez, 1994). Proponents of ‘culturally sustaining pedagogy’ (Paris, 2012; Winn, 2011; Kinloch, 2010) argue that our pedagogies need to be more than responsive or relevant to the cultural experiences of students. It requires that our pedagogies support students in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities – in both the traditional and evolving ways they are lived and used - while at the same time offering access to dominant cultural competence. Socioculturally responsive education includes pedagogy that utilizes students’ lived experiences, home-based knowledge and local environment to inform curriculum and relationships with students (Belgarde, Mitchell & Moquino-Arquero, 2002; Lee & Quijada Cerecer, 2010). Proponents of socioculturally responsive education have shifted the paradigm from a focus on culture to one that is all-encompassing in recognising the breadth of students’ lived experiences. They argue that the lives of students are inclusive of all social and cultural influences and experiences, such as mainstream media, family income and occupations, economic development, place of residence and peer influences and recognize the diversity of experiences of students that are not only culturally defined (Lee, 2011). Recognition is given to the importance of all communities in the world thereby validating the cultural identities of individual students. According to this framework, teaching is more than being sensitive and aware of a student’s cultural background. It is about recognizing how cultures are contextually based and necessitates academics become culturally competent in order to meaningfully and appropriately incorporate students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds into their teaching. This incorporation thereby validates students’ home-based knowledge and experiences and

allows them to participate in constructing what counts as knowledge in their classrooms (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

Irrespective of the term used, the basic tenet among all these schools of thought is that academics need to implement sound, research-based strategies that recognize the needs, strengths, and experiences of students from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Academics need to know how to fully engage their students by focusing on creating transformative educational experiences and critical consciousness among their students. Critical consciousness is an awareness and knowledge of one's self within the realm of a critical understanding of the nature and causes of surrounding social and political conditions. Enabling critical consciousness allows students to become aware of social justice, race and equity issues in all that they learn about in school. It also enables students to become critical thinkers and make connections to learning in more compelling and meaningful ways (Marinez, 2009).

New policies and curricula may be in place, but the will to implement these policies and curricula is largely lacking. The 'colonial ghost of the curriculum' will only be exorcised if all the components of the education triad work in concert with each other. Any attempt at decolonising the curriculum on its own will be futile and at most superficial and cosmetic in nature. The academic as the agent of curriculum delivery is key in the decolonisation project.

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