

## Chapter 8

# Decolonising Teacher Education Curriculum in South Africa: The Realities and Challenges in Higher Education

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### Abstract

In South Africa's context, the curriculum is critical to teacher education for the preparation of pre-service teachers who will be change agents in the country's education sector. There is a growing demand for the decolonising of the teacher education curriculum, as a paradigm shift from a Eurocentric-dominated curriculum which spans from the apartheid era to the present democratic period in South African society. As posited by various extant studies, education had been used as a tool for the segregation and oppression of black people during the apartheid era in South Africa. Studies affirm that institutional structures, curricula, and instructional delivery approaches in the present democratic South African society continue to disadvantage black students due to the education system's Eurocentric framework. Hence, the call for decolonising higher education gained prominence after a series of student protests in 2015 to 2016, which led to the wanton destruction of properties as well as the loss of lives. One of the demands of the protesting students was the decolonisation of higher education to address the social inequality that disadvantages many black students. The students condemned various learning contents or curricula that are largely Western-influenced. Using a

discursive approach, this discourse examines the decolonising of the teacher education curriculum in South Africa's HEIs, to provide deeper insights into the realities and challenges of decolonising the teacher education curriculum in a bid to add to the discourse on decolonisation of higher education. The chapter will examine the teacher education curriculum within a post-colonial context as it exists in South Africa. Utilising Jansen's (2017) conceptions of decolonising higher education for a true reflection of social justice in the teacher education discourse framework, the social tensions, prevailing challenges, and diverse complexities that envelope South Africa's teacher education curriculum will be explored. South Africa's HEIs are faced with different problems that are driven by Western cultures and practices, which call for recognition of diverse indigenous knowledge systems, indigenous languages, and African philosophy that exist in South Africa to be contextualised into the teacher education curriculum. Strategies for decolonising teacher education with South African knowledge and experiences will be proffered.

**Keywords:** *teacher education, curriculum, Eurocentric, decolonising, indigenous, social inequality*

### Introduction

Learning continues to be challenging for students in various developing African countries where quality education is challenged with diverse impediments. Various extant studies argue for several factors that can enhance quality education, including indigenisation (Horsthemke, 2017), Africanisation, and decolonisation of the curriculum. South Africa's post-apartheid transformations aimed at promoting social justice, equity, and inclusivity in education. However, HEIs have continued to be Eurocentric and Western-knowledge-dominated (Heleta, 2016; Ajani, 2019; Makombe, 2021). Learning experiences in these HEIs have not only been Accordingly, Lebeloane (2017) reports that the student movements in various learning institutions have continued to resist or register their disagreement through protests

at various times. However, clamour for the decolonisation of higher education was ignited by the #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, and a host of other student protests that rocked South Africa's universities in 2015 to 2016. Thus, decolonising the curriculum for the HEIs rethinks or reshapes learning experiences for tomorrow, with a shift from Eurocentric-driven experiences for the students. Meanwhile, teacher education is significant in driving decolonisation in South Africa's education system as a whole, as well as in teacher education, language policies, curriculum, and others.

Every nation's development is influenced by the quality of the education system that is offered to its citizens (Ajani, 2019). This implies that the empowerment of citizens for responsiveness and career-building is motivated by acquired skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes. Hence, the quest for decolonisation has been on the increase to transform the education system. Higher education provides spaces for the development of minds for diverse careers, with teacher education significantly the bedrock anchoring the whole nation's education system. The need for students to become lifelong learners has never been this essential, particularly in the field of teacher education. Lumadi (2021) asserts that education remains the key driver of socio-economic advancement and development to any nation. Therefore, decolonising the teacher education curriculum can be seen as a significant enhancement to teacher education, as a necessary transformation to the education system. This is critical to pre-service teachers' competencies adjusting to the prevailing changing knowledge society and new demands in the education system. In South Africa, teacher education is critical to teaching and learning in various educational institutions, where learners need to take responsibility for their learning and relate to the realities of their environment. We live in a dynamic world where appropriate learning is needed to relate and fit appropriately to the changing situations.

According to Sathorar and Geduld (2018:1), "*We live in a dynamic world, characterized by major economic, technological and social change*", hence it is critical that teacher education

is embedded in a dynamic and critical approach, that can create counterhegemonic intellectual spaces, which adopt new worldviews that can enhance students' ability to embrace change of praxis. The transition of South Africa from apartheid to a democratic republic in 1994 came with much enthusiasm that massive transformation will be witnessed in all sectors, especially in the education field. However, the existing curriculum in South Africa has remained colonial and apartheid-like in nature, not only stereotyping students but its dominance makes it impossible for students to face realities in their environments (Mahabeer, 2020). Maistry (2021) submits that the current higher education curriculum is still largely reflecting the colonial and apartheid worldviews, which shifts away from African realities. Hence, theorising learning contents for pre-service teachers becomes critically inevitable, to prepare them as social change agents who can meaningfully impact and make learners responsive to the realities of their environments.

Jansen (2017) argues that the lived experiences of the majority of South Africans do not relate to the realities of their prevailing challenges. Learning experiences should be designed to relate and respond to dynamic life situations of students, to make them relevant and as social change agents. *"Most universities follow the hegemonic 'Eurocentric epistemic canon', that 'attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production'"* (Mbembe 2015:32). Hence, such a curriculum phantom on what Mbembe (2015) describes as 'Eurocentric episteme canon' does not develop students' critical and analytical skills to understand the prevailing challenges that exist in their realities, as well as move the country forward. Jansen (2017) asserts that since the democratic transition, South African universities have failed to adequately open students' horizons about transformative learning experiences.

Teacher education is designed to produce quality teachers, who can impart appropriate knowledge and skills into learners. Various student protests rocked South Africa's universities from 2015 to 2016, with agitation for the decolonisation of higher education (Mamdani, 1998; Pillay,

2015; Heleta, 2016; Le Grange, 2016). The agitation for the decolonisation of higher education has strengthened the call to address the students' demands, as well as restructure higher education for realities that exist in South Africa. Conferences and other academic engagements were organised to advance the concept of decolonisation by different stakeholders, however, the actualisation of decolonisation in higher education remains a complicated task. This indicates efforts made in proffering solutions through decolonisation. Thus, this chapter further advances the call for decolonisation in higher education, but with the teacher education curriculum as a focal point for a paradigm shift from a Eurocentric curriculum, which can portray the realities of transformed post-apartheid South Africa. This chapter explains decolonising teacher education as a complicated concept, as well as Africanisation and indigenisation as concepts of ideal curriculum based on Jansen's conceptions of decolonisation. The remaining part of the chapter is split into the conceptualisation of terms, theorising curriculum cum teacher education in South Africa, why decolonisation is a complicated concept, the decolonising curriculum in higher education, the realities in South Africa's higher education spaces, why Africanisation in teacher education, the ideal teacher education curriculum, and a conclusion.

### **Conceptualisation of Terms**

Decolonisation and Africanisation entail the quest or practice of previously marginalised people, schools, and universities under apartheid or colonisation, choosing to recognise and embrace their own cultures, and run based on their values that are reflective of African culture, as opposed to Eurocentric models (Adefila *et al.*, 2022; Du Plessis, 2021). Similarly, *"Africanisation of curricula implies that education and training, as well as praxis, be informed by the reality of the South African context, the viewpoints of the people of South Africa, and their descriptions of what is needed to build a just society"* (van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2017, p. 1). In the context of this study, decolonisation and Africanisation are used to mean the quest

for the infusion of indigenous values into the curriculum of institutions of learning.

### **Theorising Curriculum Cum Teacher Education in South Africa**

According to Fomunyam (2014), curriculum theorising entails the process of proffering solutions to complex challenges experienced in the school system and beyond. This is attributed to the failure and inability to design one unified theory capable of accommodating all schooling dimensions and learning activities (Fomunyam, 2014; Maistry, 2020). Decker (2002) had earlier stated that failure to design a universally acceptable and applicable curriculum capable of serving as a guide for curriculum theorists, teachers, and learners has led to frustration. Fomunyam (2014) states that it has made curriculum theorising more suitable and in high demand, especially considering the sensitivity of emerging patterns and complications in the lives of learners within and outside the school. Thus, the postulation of Marsh and Willis (2007) on curriculum theorising is of relevance. According to Fomunyam and Khoza (2021), curriculum theorising is a practice that involves people in three precise activities which are: be sensitive to new trends in education in general and school experience in particular; identify similar trends and issues; and relate the trends to the teaching context of the individuals. Hence, in the context of South African teacher education, which is the focus of this study, the following are paramount:

1. The curriculum designers are to be sensitive to the new trends in education in general and school experiences in particular.
2. Identify similar possibly adaptable trends and issues of teacher education. This could be useful following benchmarking.
3. Relate the trends to the teaching context of the individuals: the teachers and learners inclusive.

The South African educational system has given considerable priority to the issue of curriculum responsiveness (Fomunyam & Khoza, 2021). This is due to the negative impacts on the student, teacher, and society at large when the curriculum is unable to adapt economically, disciplinarily, pedagogically, or culturally. South African higher education institutions encounter a wide range of difficulties.

Numerous alternatives, such as decolonising the curriculum, have been proposed in an effort to improve curricular responsiveness (Fomunyam & Teferra, 2017). This chapter promotes curriculum deconstruction to increase its local, regional, national and global relevance. Theorising teacher education curriculum is a complicated process that situates and identifies appropriate learning content, methods and knowledge-building for pre-service teachers, according to the realities of their diverse classroom contexts in South Africa.

### **Why Decolonisation is a Complicated Concept**

Several scholars have described decolonisation in different ways, as influenced by their schools of thought. The diverse descriptions or definitions of decolonisation argue that it is a complicated concept that is influenced by various institutional structures in South Africa. The concept is interpreted diversely to signify its prominence in South Africa's education system. Knowledge production in an African context is the focus of decolonisation in higher education, where students' minds should be decolonised (Fanon, 2008). Fanon (2008) continues that the tenets of decolonisation should focus on African communities, recognising their indigenous life, beliefs, and epistemology. Seemingly, Matola *et al.* (2019) posit that decolonisation as a new praxis aims at sustaining African development. This indicates that Eurocentric practices have and continue to influence indigenous practices, even via the curriculum. Diverse indigenous knowledge systems can enhance students' production of new knowledge and skills, which can be applied to the realities of their environments.

Matola *et al.* (2019) further avow that decolonisation can proffer significant solutions to knit education with the host community. Thus, policies on decolonisation are envisaged to promote appropriate knowledge for better lives for students. The policies are expected to be designed to recognise the indigenous knowledge systems capable of assisting students' knowledge constructions.

Mbembe (2015) asserts that decolonisation in South Africa's higher education is to shift away from Eurocentric knowledge that harbours apartheid (decolonisation of knowledge), while Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) describes decolonisation as a process where learning experiences are restructured for students to unlearn to re-learn. Africa should be made the epistemic base for legitimate African views to understand the global world around them. Le Grange (2016), however, argues for a decolonised curriculum that can reflect indigenous knowledge in South Africa's higher education.

Some scholars consider decolonisation synonymous with Africanisation to integrate cultural beliefs, norms, and practices into formal education (Matola *et al.*, 2019). These scholars agree that African knowledge is critical to students and can be used to project Western education in African patterns. Furthermore, instead of decolonisation, some scholars opt for decoloniality and glocalisation (Bok-rae, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Ajani, 2019). Glocalisation is a concept that defines the mixture or integration of indigenous knowledge systems with Western counterparts, to arrive at new knowledge that can be applied to diverse contexts (Ajani, 2019). Conversely, glocalisation is therefore an integration of globalisation and localisation. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) describes decoloniality as the process of condemning colonial power disguised as apartheid, modernity, globalisation, and modernity, while glocalisation of the curriculum will adopt global standards that can address local community needs. Thus, glocalisation can be attained if the curriculum is designed and implemented to empower students to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills that relate to their immediate communities. Conversely, the attainment of various concepts

like ‘decoloniality’, ‘Africanisation’, ‘glocalisation’, and ‘decolonisation’ in the curriculum is subject to design and implementation.

The decolonising of the teacher education curriculum is to contextualise learning experiences to suit realities, diverse situations, and connect contextual learning contents and globally sensitive contexts. The domination of teacher education curriculum by Eurocentric knowledge provides students with limited-perspective worldviews. Hence, the structure of the teacher education curriculum calls for the decolonisation of learning experiences that can give dynamic knowledge and skills to students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with multi-faceted knowledge necessary for diverse situations.

### **Decolonising Curriculum in Higher Education**

According to Le Grange (2017, p. 190), the curriculum is best described as “*the collective story we tell our children about our past, our present, and our future.*” The curriculum is well-planned and well-taught to attain explicit, hidden, and null learning experiences in learners (Pinar, 2012). According to Le Grange (2016), learning experiences entail content, readings, presentations, assessments, and resources that are subject to decolonisation (Lebeloane, 2017). The ‘hidden’ aspects of the curriculum are what learners are not formally taught. In the case of colonisation, this includes the values and cultural traits of the colonisers, which can indoctrinate students and encourage actions of submissiveness (Lebeloane, 2017; Fomunyam, 2019). Smith and Smith (2018) assert that South Africa’s higher education curriculum is Eurocentric and is pedagogically colonised and complex, which requires the integration of students’ indigenous knowledge systems and languages. In Lockett *et al.*’s (2019) view, ‘whiteness’ as experienced by black students, features in the implicit or hidden curriculum and it influences the expected learning contents and assessments.

Grosfoguel (2019) agrees that higher education curriculum is Eurocentric-dominated both in contents and

pedagogies. Santos (2014, p. 92) describes the resultant Eurocentric curriculum in higher education as *an epistemic idea*. Badat (2008), as well as the Department of Higher Education and Training (2015) posit that lingering social inequalities are institutionally influenced. Hence, decolonising teacher education curriculum in higher education is significant to effect social change in education (Lebeloane, 2017). The social change addresses diverse socio-inequalities, racial marginalisation, and social injustices that frame South Africa's higher education (Mbembe, 2015; Heleta 2016). This implies that a decolonised teacher education curriculum, as highlighted by Lebeloane (2017), restructures the curriculum with learning experiences that are situated in equity, dignity, and social justice to give students critical reasoning and a life view different from the present Eurocentric South African HEIs. Andreotti, Ahenakew, and Cooper (2011) argue that decolonising the curriculum is not an attempt to replace one knowledge system with another, but to integrate necessary indigenous knowledge to strengthen the curriculum for realities. This is re-contextualisation, which is the appropriation of some discourses by others for the purpose of knowledge transmission and acquisition.

The curriculum as intellectual space is to engage students with past social inequalities and social injustices, addressing all these through the integration of 'cross-pollination' of ideas from indigenous knowledge systems to renegotiate Westernised and Eurocentric knowledge systems with indigenous values, thus leading to a refined, accommodating, and new curriculum (Andreotti *et al.*, 2011; Mbembe, 2015; Mahabeer, 2018). It is interpreted that the decolonised curriculum is not to discard Western theories or practices, but to recognise and make Africa the centre of learning experiences in higher education (Smith & Smith, 2018). Le Grange (2016) admits the '4Rs' from Chilisa's (2012) theory as key components of decolonisation: *reciprocal application, respectful representation, relational accountability, and rights and regulations*. **Reciprocal application** of the curriculum is an intellectual space that emphasises the need

for appropriate knowledge to benefit the immediate students' communities; **respectful representation** is the ability of the curriculum to recognise indigenous voices; **relational accountability** of the curriculum is to ensure the linkage of all the learning contents and accountability of the curriculum to all relations; while **rights and regulations** as a matter of ethics ensures the acknowledgment of a decolonised curriculum that incorporates indigenous knowledge appropriately (Le Grange, 2016).

The basis for decolonising teacher education curriculum is to ensure curriculum as an intellectual space, where students can critically think to construct knowledge, rather than rote learning Eurocentric knowledge, which students do not critique. In this way, it is "*a shift away from the 'I' towards 'we,' 'the active force of currere' constructed on the principles of Ubuntu (I am because we are) by the people, for the people*" (Le Grange, 2016, p. 9). Thus, the decolonising of teacher education curriculum can be seen as a process of integrating indigenous knowledge with Western knowledge to promote interculturality. Smith and Smith (2018) assert that curriculum as an intellectual space in higher education extricates indigenous knowledge from diverse political, intellectual, and social worldviews to restructure Western-dominated curriculum, through a self-reflective design or approach. Hence, responding to the 'epistemic violence' that rocked higher institutions, Chilisa (2012) argues for decolonised higher education through a self-reflective approach to (de)construct knowledge that addresses diverse contexts in South Africa's teacher education. This is further argued by Gamedze and Gamedze (2015), to embrace a self-reflective approach that will engage students in the critical challenge of Eurocentric-dominated knowledge in the decolonising curriculum. Similarly, Sayed *et al.* (2017) view a self-reflective approach as being capable of making students critical in knowledge constructs. Thus, the quest for in-depth knowledge to critique knowledge that enables students' appraisal of the imperial model marginalising spaces and to explore knowledge that accommodates students' indigenous knowledge systems is the

decolonisation of curriculum (Chilisa, 2012). This implies the need and reason for the demand for the decolonisation of the curriculum, especially in the South African context. Similarly, Smith (1999) calls for the provision of diverse opportunities that make students in higher education institutions critically reflect, reflectively deconstruct, and reconstruct different epistemological distortions of their lived experiences. Decolonising curriculum in the South African higher education landscape is a process that is complex (Webbstock, 2017). Care should therefore be taken to take account of this complexity in explaining the decisions that underlie the teacher education curriculum. Jansen (2017) argues for decolonisation in higher education with six conceptions, harmonising different curriculum scholars' perspectives to advance decolonisation in South Africa's higher education. The conceptions acknowledge realities that exist in South Africa's higher education contexts. These realities show the intricacies, complications, and situational analysis of positions in higher education.

### **The Realities in South Africa's Higher Education**

Colonised knowledge and institutional structures continue to rock colonised people's higher education in many countries, with policies to entrench imperialism and white supremacy. The traditional school curricula which teach indigenous values, knowledge, and beliefs can critically engage Eurocentric knowledge to decolonise the curriculum, thereby recognising indigenous knowledge systems and dignity (Grande, 2004).

Eurocentric knowledge has continued to frame South Africa's higher education institutions as denigration and annihilation of diverse indigenous knowledge and epistemologies, with colonised people regurgitating the epistemologies of the white supremacists (Lebeloane, 2017; Le Grange, 2016). The idea of coloniality is demarcated into three ideas: 'coloniality of power,' 'coloniality of knowledge' and 'coloniality of being' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Coloniality in higher education has led to the relegation of 'other forms of knowing' (Maldonado-Torres

2007). Hence, decoloniality is to denunciate the coloniality of 'power,' 'knowledge,' and 'being', to reconstruct the intellectual and production of knowledge in teacher education (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

The 'coloniality of power' is the reproduction of social, economic, and educational imbalances that linger on in post-apartheid South Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). "*This idea dares us to think about social change in a 'non-reductionist' manner*" (Grosfoguel, 2019, p. 13). The 'coloniality of power' focuses on the interplay that exists between domination and power, while the idea of 'coloniality of knowledge' is the influence colonisation has on different aspects of knowledge production; however, the idea of 'coloniality of being' significantly refers to the lived experiences of the colonised and its influence on their languages (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Decolonisation is a complicated concept that is contested, expressed, or interpreted differently by different scholars. Decolonising teacher education is critically challenging the Eurocentric curriculum, which limits students with opportunities to challenge, engage, and construct knowledge critically (Le Grange, 2016). The decolonisation of teacher education, though complicated, is long overdue in South Africa, where higher education institutions are grounded in Westernised influences that have remained unchallenged (Pinar, 2012; Le Grange, 2016). Thus, post-Apartheid South Africa desires a decolonised teacher education curriculum that can situate Western epistemologies in African contexts. Hence, this study advances the calls for the pragmatic transformation of teacher education curriculum to enhance the classroom practices of pre-service teachers. Fanon (2008) avows that recognition of indigenous people in their education is essential to their 'being'. Supremacy and inferiority are common indicators amongst races in South Africa, despite political independence; with decolonisation, the psychological consequences of the Eurocentric can be addressed. Thus, can the integration of Africanisation in

teacher education curriculum enhance knowledge production in higher education?

### **Why Africanisation in Teacher Education?**

Decolonisation of teacher education is not a condemnation of Western epistemologies whole or partial; it is a call to accommodate the local knowledge of the indigenous people to present a balanced and globalised knowledge for pre-service teachers. Various scholars have faulted the Eurocentric knowledge on which South African teacher education anchors. Hence, decolonising teacher education curriculum is to integrate Western knowledge with Africanisation where necessary concepts of indigenisation are integrated for a desirable decolonised curriculum (Horsthemke, 2017). Horsthemke (2017) continues that Africanisation alone cannot transmit African knowledge in diverse South African contexts. This explains why decolonising teacher education curriculum does not amount to rejection or condemnation of Western knowledge or structures, but accommodation of African philosophy into the higher education system. Furthermore, Horsthemke (2017) agrees that it is necessary to integrate nationalism, conventionalism, as well as African cultural values, into learning experiences to project global discourses of socio-cultural, economic, and political integrations.

Significantly, Africanisation and decolonisation differ in contexts and indicate different concepts (Mbembe, 2015; Mamdani, 2016). Though some scholars describe Africanisation as a rejection of Eurocentric knowledge, its culture, and political doctrines in entirety, other groups of scholars opine that it is recognition and integration of African contexts in the forms of skills, knowledge, and ideas to reflect postcolonialism (Horsthemke, 2017; Heleta, 2016). Seemingly, Africanisation is a wider and deeper philosophical worldview that reflects indigenous people's knowledge and socio-cultural capital that need to be incorporated into teaching and learning within higher education spaces, free from absolute

Eurocentric contexts (Jansen, 2017). Thus, the Africanisation of teacher education curriculum is to restructure the curriculum with indigenisation, and decolonise the African scholars from Eurocentric-dominated higher education.

Indigenisation and Africanisation's focus on teacher education curriculum is to identify and integrate key concepts of African philosophy into classroom teaching and learning for pre-service teachers; to familiarise them with the realities. Hence, indigenisation and Africanisation in decolonising teacher education curriculum enhances core values to be promoted for better societies. Indigenisation and Africanisation are drivers of *Ubuntu*, communism, and humanism. Diverse South African societies require a culture of interrelationships amongst community members for interdependence. *Ubuntu*, a key factor in communism, encourages pre-service teachers' teamwork rather than an individual working alone. Thus, indigenisation and Africanisation give prominent recognition to human service, cultural education, socio-economic education, as well as intellectual education in the context of South Africa.

Conversely, the inclusion of Africanisation enables African perspectives where pre-service teachers can see themselves in relationships with the global world. Therefore, Africanisation ensures the projection of an ideal teacher education curriculum that is capable of placing Africa at the centre of learning experiences. Thus, decolonising the teacher education curriculum is not really an endpoint, but the process of a new beginning for an ideal new curriculum that does not reject Western streams, but provides ideal learning content.

### **The Ideal Teacher Education Curriculum**

The question remains: what is or should be the ideal teacher education curriculum, especially in the South African context?, which is the focus of this study. There are different reasons why ideal teacher education is required. For instance, South Africa is framed by many major landmark changes that cut across socio-economic, technological, and political spaces,

which require pre-service teachers' intellectual engagements to relate to hegemonic intellectual spaces as social change agent teachers (Sathorar & Geduld, 2018). “[D]ecolonisation [which] according to Sayed et al (2017) is characterised as a ‘process of expanding imaginations’ (p. 61) provides a way of enabling teacher education to prepare students for new world views”. This process involves rethinking and re-imagining learning contents or experiences that count as rigorous, relevant, and critical scholarship for more inclusive teacher education. Diouf and Mamdani (1994), as well as Tilley (2011), contend that it is important for South African students to develop their own capacity to theorise their own conditions or situations. Mafeje (1971) sees this as students’ paying careful empirical attention to their diverse lived realities. Expanding intellectual spaces in South African HEIs for broader engagement with decolonisation enables students in HEIs to acquire intellectual horizons that accommodate diverse isolated and neglected contexts (Mamdani, 1998; Wa Thiong’o, 2005; Mama, 2015; Mbembe, 2015; Diagne, & Adjemian, 2016). Additionally, Leibowitz (2012) posits that the transformative responsibilities of teacher education in South Africa include the promotion of the public good through students’ moral and ethical dispositions. Becker, De Wet, and Van Vollenhoven (2015) argue that education content should be transformative and caring, premised on freedom, dignity, and equality. Post-apartheid higher education in South Africa requires transformation to broaden the curriculum and create diverse social spaces in the South African context. Thus, it can be deduced from the foregoing that the ideal curriculum for teacher education will be capable of expanding intellectual spaces through decolonisation. The topical issues then become: how can such intellectual spaces be expanded through decolonisation? How can the curriculum of teacher education be successfully decolonised? Hence the reason for the next section, which presents the conception(s) of decolonisation in HEIs towards achieving the ideal teacher education curriculum following the steps presented by Jansen (2017).

This chapter adopts Jansen's (2017) six different conceptions of decolonisation in higher education as a conceptual framework for decolonising curriculum. The conceptions provide an understanding that can guide decolonising teacher education curriculum, to attain more inclusive teacher education in South Africa. Jansen's (2017) six conceptions of decolonisation in HEIs is as presented and explained below, especially in the context of this study.

***Decolonising curriculum as the additive-inclusive knowledge***

Oelofsen (2015) argues that there is a need for humanising pedagogy in higher education curricula to decolonise the African mind, by incorporating African concepts in various HEIs. Meanwhile, Adefila *et al.* (2022) posit that in a diverse country like South Africa, the teaching profession is quite challenging and demanding as teachers need to teach in multicultural and complicated classrooms. For instance, South Africa is multilingual and the adoption of all 11 official languages as languages of instruction in HEIs poses a challenge to the accommodation of indigenous languages in educational institutions. Also, institutional structures in most HEIs are rigidly structured in Western designs that exclude or do not recognise African contexts (Sayed *et al.*, 2017). Hence, additive-inclusive knowledge, which is social justice-driven, is what students should be exposed to in teacher education. Additive-inclusive knowledge aims at recognising and accommodating African indigenous knowledge in the curricula content, by using the curricula content-driven additive approach to decolonising teacher education. Jansen (2017) calls for additive-inclusive knowledge that will fuse the existing Western knowledge that dominates teacher education curriculum with African knowledge together as knowledge canons for the institutions. Thus, Sayed *et al.* (2017) aver that various existing modules or courses need to be revised to accommodate new contents that recognise appropriate African knowledge that can address the realities that exist in additive-inclusive knowledge for pre-service teachers. The new additive-inclusive knowledge provides students with varied

opportunities to critique, and not just to receive, learning experiences. The foregoing implies that to ensure additive-inclusive knowledge through decolonisation in South Africa, the incorporation of African concepts, cultures, and values, amongst others, is to be ensured in HEIs through the provision made available by the curriculum of teacher education. This implies the need to revise different existing modules to ensure that they accommodate new, relevant content capable of promoting additive-inclusive knowledge for pre-service teachers. In this regard, pre-service teachers can be taught how and allowed to infuse African (South African) related content into the curriculum without restructuring it.

### ***Decolonising curriculum as the decentring of European knowledge***

Sayed *et al.* (2017) argue that realigning the curriculum in African contexts with the integration of African ideals, values, knowledge, and achievements alongside the European worldview would better prepare students for the realities of their own living contexts. This is viewed as a transformation of the curriculum through Africanisation. By placing African knowledge in the centre, pre-service teachers would acquire inclusive teacher education that incorporates the diversity that exists. Pre-service teaching programmes need to engage students with a decolonised curriculum to enable them to have a better understanding of their origins, societies, history, ambitions, achievements, and future (Jansen, 2017). Studies conclude that the content of various modules or learning activities in teacher education is centred on Western knowledge and calls for decentring the curriculum to reflect the students' environmental context (Fomunyam 2014; McKaiser 2016; Le Grange, 2017; Heleta, 2016). This concurs with Feris (2017), who asserts that decolonising the curriculum in higher education means challenging the Eurocentric epistemologies that South Africa's higher education offers to students, which does not acknowledge social justice. In Lebeloane's (2017) view, the internalisation of indigenous experiences is critical to students' engagement in

universities as well as outside the context of the universities. This implies that the need for South African HEIs to question Eurocentric epistemologies offered to students would be paramount. This is envisaged to enable South African HEIs to cater for the immediate need of society. By so doing, it is African knowledge that is bound to be promoted, possibly alongside relevant Eurocentric practices. This implies the case of glocalisation, which is used to mean using a global standard to proffer solution(s) to local challenges.

***Decolonising curriculum as a critical engagement with settled knowledge***

According to Jansen (2017), the settled knowledge (or the resident curriculum) needs to be critiqued through critical engagement, asking questions such as these: “*Where did this knowledge come from? In whose interest does this knowledge persist? What does it include and leave out? What are its authoritative claims? What are the underlying assumptions and silences that govern such knowledge?*” (Jansen, 2017, p. 161). In the context of South Africa, the teacher education curriculum should be designed to critically engage students in knowledge construction, using a variety of approaches they consider sufficiently diverse and beneficial to knowledge constructs in learning experiences and processes. The students’ ability to critique knowledge through diverse processes could ascertain and eliminate things about the past that they do not like. This introduces an element of social justice into learning, creating opportunities for them to become critical thinkers and also agents of change. As Le Grange (2017) points out, critical involvement with a curriculum of this kind is a means of ultimately transforming students. By implication, the teacher education curriculum is expected to enable the students to view the same set of problems with new lenses, making use of new theories, methods, and perspectives. Hence, critical engagement with settled knowledge is popular in promoting the philosophy of the people in the students (Le Grange, 2017). Meanwhile, according to Chilisa (2012) and Luckett (2016), critical engagement with settled knowledge in the

present teacher education curriculum seems to be lacking. Le Grange *et al.* (2020) hold the view that the curriculum tends to make provision for students to continuously regurgitate colonial ideologies which do not foster more inclusive teacher education. Ngugi (2005) calls this regurgitation epistemicide. Jansen's (2017) concern is that a Eurocentric knowledge base does not allow students to express their own concerns and views from their own references. Thus, the South African teacher education curriculum is expected to be designed to allow students to express their own concerns and views from their own references. This is expected to promote, amongst others, indigenous cultural values, knowledge, and easy comprehension, since students would not be taught in the abstract. Thus, students are to be exposed to an open mind towards learning and to be able to question all forms of knowledge in order to learn.

### ***Decolonising curriculum as encounters with entangled knowledges***

According to Jansen (2017), the decolonising curriculum ensures the recognition and accommodation of local knowledge. HEIs are the citadels of learning where learning experiences are expected to be diversely situated within entangled knowledge and should provide students with the necessary spaces and approaches to encounter such. It is important to recognise that humans have varied knowledge according to their existence, which is crucial to how and what they acquire as additional knowledge. According to Mbembe (2015), Heleta (2016), and CHE (2017), learning experiences from the Eurocentric knowledge remain entangled unless students have encounters that enable them to understand the entangled knowledges, overtly and covertly providing students with content knowledge that is rigidly constructed in the mould of colonial education. Jansen (2017) advocates for a break with the curricula in HEIs that do not provide students with the opportunities to challenge entangled knowledges. Thus, Jansen (2017) calls for a curriculum that is based on social justice to provide learning experiences that have more

impact(s) on the students. Thus, it is important in present post-apartheid South Africa for pre-service teachers to be exposed to the curriculum that will prepare them for the diverse social spaces that exist in the country through their engagement with the same entangled knowledges in order to attain more inclusive teacher education, thereby promoting social justice.

### ***Decolonising curriculum to repatriate occupied knowledge***

The curriculum is a series of potential experiences given to students to model their thinking and action (Fomunyam, 2014). It is perceived that “*Western, colonial, and Eurocentric knowledge is normative and universal; contrary to the Indigenous local knowledge*” (Mahabeer, 2018, p. 10). Hence, the call to decolonise curriculum is gaining prominence because the components of the present curriculum comprise Westernised and Eurocentric knowledge, which influences the minds of the students in teacher education. Jansen (2017) argues that curriculum can be decolonised to repatriate the colonised minds of the pre-service teachers from wholly Western knowledge into more decolonised intellectual spaces, where indigenous peoples’ voices are recognised for social justice. According to him, this reparative approach necessitates the calls for the additive-inclusive decolonised curriculum model in pursuit of more inclusive education for diverse students. The additive-inclusive approach to decolonising curriculum is described as “*a kind of inclusion in a form of enclosure, dangerous in how it domesticates decolonisation*” (Jansen, 2017, p. 163). Chilisa (2012) posits that the present HEIs in South Africa are characterised by the implementation of colonised systems, which include the curricula. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) further explains that decolonisation not only entails pushing back the physical process but also dismantles all epistemic projects, which need to put the students on the right track to knowing that what colonialism has imposed on them is epistemicide. Thus, the need to revisit the curriculum of South African teacher education is pivotal.

***Africanisation of Western knowledge to decolonise the curriculum***

According to Jansen (2017), rather than making Africa the centre of the curriculum in teacher education, the Pan-African scholars are advocating for a shift from Western knowledge, ideals, and achievements to a total African context. This is seen as Africanising the teacher education curriculum. Not only the curriculum is to be decolonised as an Africanised curriculum, but also the pedagogies and textbooks to be composed by African authors, to reflect true social justice and for more inclusive teacher education. Mbembe (2015) interprets decolonising curriculum as a process of making the curriculum wholly African-based. Considering the works of Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, Kwame Nkrumah, and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, it seems that deeper insights can be drawn from using African knowledge to frame Western knowledge, in the process of decolonising teacher education curriculum. In contrast, Le Grange (2016) argues that decolonising the curriculum for teacher education means reviewing Western knowledge from African perspectives, which does not translate into destroying Western knowledge but decentring it to accommodate indigenous knowledge. Hence, the call for decolonising teacher education in South Africa continues to gather momentum, as there is an urgent need for pre-service teachers to be engaged with learning experiences that relate to their own environmental context. Insights into decolonising teacher education curriculum have been drawn from extant literature to strengthen the discourse on the phenomenon while Jansen's (2017) conceptions explicitly provide an argument for re-imagining a teacher education curriculum that promotes social justice. This suggests that the conceptions are indicative of the need for the content of teacher education to engage pre-service teachers in critical engagement with learning experiences based on settled knowledge. Thus, a decolonised curriculum is envisaged to be capable of helping students to address diverse contexts in South African realities. The pre-service teachers' encounter with various entangled knowledges provides them with opportunities to repatriate occupied knowledge and to shift from Eurocentric-dominated

knowledge. Thus, decolonising teacher education for pre-service teachers promotes the Africanisation of existing Western knowledge. Sayed *et al.* (2017) warn, however, that decolonisation of the teacher education curriculum is a complicated and multi-layered process, where lecturers' diverse understanding, intellectual backgrounds, different institutional contexts as well as their approaches to their students are key factors in the decolonising of the curriculum. Drawing attention to another aspect, Mamdani (2007) emphasises that decolonisation of higher education is necessary to explore discourses that have been kept silent in teacher education programmes. This shows that an attempt at the decolonisation of the curriculum of teacher education in South Africa may be complex, based on different personal and institutional factors. However, the need for such remains crucial. In this regard, students should be made to appreciate themselves and their values as Africans.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The roles of teachers in every society, inclusive of South Africa, remain crucial as they influence the level of societal growth and development. Meanwhile, the impact(s) of the roles of teachers are hampered due to various challenges such as policies, and lack of infrastructure, amongst others. In the context of this study, it was realised that existing South African educational policies, which are Eurocentric, tend to influence the learning abilities of students, and students during their 2015 to 2016 student movement protests that rocked South Africa's universities, called for the decolonisation of higher education, as part of their demand. This is an envisaged attempt to give indigenous people voices in their learning experiences. Hence, this study adds to the discourse on decolonising teacher education curriculum to make pre-service teachers relevant at grassroots levels, where their cultural beliefs, indigenous attitudes, and global perspectives of balanced classroom practices are taken care of in a dynamic curriculum context. This is expected to help the pre-service teachers to identify who they are and what is

applicable to them in their diverse multicultural contexts in post-apartheid South Africa, before transferring knowledge to their students. Meanwhile, the long-dominant influence of coloniality on HEIs and the need for decolonised minds are necessary to help proffer solutions to lingering challenges. It is established that decolonising teacher education curriculum is deeply rooted in complexities, and critical engagements are the keys to integrating African contexts into Western Eurocentric worldviews. This will enable pre-service teachers to demonstrate proactiveness and enthusiasm. This discursive chapter opens up further research for a pragmatic review of teacher education curriculum for a well-contextualised transformation. Hence, teacher education curriculum should embrace a customised disciplinary approach, to cater for all diversities in realities. Subsequent to the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Since students require knowledge that is appropriate to their societal needs, and decolonising teacher education curriculum will provide pre-service teachers a training platform to engage with the challenges and problems of learners, the need to revise the curriculum for teacher education becomes important.
- Different perspectives exist on the concept of decolonisation amongst various stakeholders of HEIs in South Africa. Their perspectives influence their stand on how pre-service teachers should be appropriately trained as social change agents who can appreciate South African diversities. Hence, relevant platforms should be made available to sensitise people about the notion of decolonisation in this regard.
- Academics should be professionally developed to be able to transform their classroom practices while infusing and promoting indigenous values. Thus, periodic training, such as how to ensure the smooth inclusion of African content without distorting or restructuring the curriculum, is of the essence.
- Policies on HEIs in South Africa should be designed to provide clear directions for recognition of African contexts,

and at the same time accommodate and promote African philosophy or indigenous knowledge systems within the teacher education curriculum.

- Glocalisation, as against globalisation, should be promoted. Glocalisation in this sense means allowing for local needs to be met using global standards, where necessary.

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