




Editorial Foreword

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The question of how Africa is taught, both within the continent and beyond, has never been a neutral one. How Africa is framed, interpreted, and conveyed in classrooms and lecture halls is deeply entangled with centuries of colonialism, epistemic domination, and structural inequalities in global knowledge production. Yet, they are equally interwoven with the powerful agency of African thinkers, educators, students, and communities who continue to resist, reimagine, and reclaim pedagogical spaces. This book, *How We Teach Africa Matters*, makes an invaluable intervention into this enduring debate. What distinguishes this collection is not only its intellectual richness but also its methodological courage. Rather than offering a singular ‘solution’ to the long history of academic imperialism, it brings together diverse voices, case studies, and pedagogical experiments that reveal how layered, contested, and creative the teaching of Africa has become. The volume reminds us that education is not simply about the transfer of information – it is about shaping epistemic frames, constructing identities, and enabling or constraining futures.

Part I of the book foregrounds what many African scholars, activists, and students have long recognised: the persistence of Western-centric legacies in higher education. These chapters trace the ways in which Eurocentric frameworks continue to shape curricula, methods, and institutional power, from development studies in the United Kingdom and Ethiopia, to broader questions of academic imperialism in Africa’s development trajectory. By situating Africa-China scholarship within this debate, the section also points to the global entanglements of knowledge production, demonstrating



that questions of pedagogy are inseparable from shifting geopolitical orders.

The reader is reminded here that Western legacies are not relics of a past colonial era, but active forces structuring how Africa is represented in classrooms today. The insights offered push us to ask: whose knowledge counts, and on what terms? And perhaps more urgently: what are the consequences for African students, scholars, and societies when education reproduces distorted, incomplete, or reductive understandings of the continent?

Part II takes us into the heart of pedagogical practice. The contributions here grapple directly with some of the most pernicious misconceptions of Africa, chief among them the 'Africa is a country' trope, and reveal innovative ways educators are resisting these simplifications. From roleplays and world-building exercises to engaging students as country specialists, the chapters demonstrate how classrooms can become sites of critical inquiry rather than passive absorption.

Equally powerful is the section's emphasis on Indigenous and community-based knowledge systems. The chapter on Elders Critical Teachings (ElderCrits) reframes elders not as romanticised figures of tradition, but as epistemic authorities with vital roles to play in de/anti-colonial turns in education. This epistemic gift is a reminder that Indigenous ways of knowing are not supplementary to Western epistemologies. Instead, they are foundational to rethinking what education means in African contexts.

In these contributions, we see not only critique but also pedagogy in action: strategies for breaking silences, shifting power, and enabling students to imagine Africa differently.

Part III moves the conversation outward, to the structures that regulate and enable pedagogy at the national, institutional, and publishing levels. Here we find a striking diversity of contexts, from Brazil's teaching of African history under Law 10.639/03, to Lusophone Africans dismantling lusotropicalist discourses, to the transformation promised by African-centred publishing. These chapters underscore that teaching Africa is

not merely a classroom matter but a political one: regulated by states, mediated through publishing industries, and framed by global hierarchies of knowledge. Two themes stand out. First, the importance of publishing, both as a tool of liberation and as a contested terrain. Transforming education requires not only new pedagogies but also new infrastructures for producing and disseminating African-centred scholarship. Second, the reminder that philosophies such as Ubuntu are not abstract ideals but living frameworks for pedagogy and community development. The chapters on Ubuntu and the transformative role of African teachers in global classrooms bring the collection full circle, emphasising humanisation, relationality, and empowerment as pedagogical foundations.

This book arrives at a critical juncture. Across the globe, debates over decolonising education have gained urgency, from Rhodes Must Fall in South Africa, to calls to diversify curricula in Europe and North America. Yet too often these debates remain superficial, reduced to token inclusion or rhetorical gestures. What *How We Teach Africa Matters* offers is both depth and specificity: it shows concretely how colonial legacies manifest in teaching, and equally, how they can be undone through active, engaged, and contextually grounded pedagogies.

At the same time, the collection transcends binaries. It does not pit Africa against the West in simplistic opposition, nor does it present Indigenous knowledge as a romantic panacea. Rather, it models a critical pluralism that recognises complexity: Africa as plural, knowledge as contested, pedagogy as practice and politics. This refusal of reductionism is itself a powerful pedagogical act.

The implications of this work extend beyond the classroom. To teach Africa differently is to enable students to imagine Africa differently and to see its peoples not as objects of study but as producers of knowledge, not as recipients of development but as active shapers of global futures. In this sense, the project of teaching Africa is inseparable from broader struggles for justice, dignity, and epistemic freedom. Educators, policymakers, and students alike will find in these

pages both critique and inspiration. The critique is necessary: a clear-eyed acknowledgement of how far we still must go to dismantle entrenched hierarchies in knowledge production. But the inspiration is equally vital: a recognition of the creativity, resilience, and transformative potential of African pedagogies, philosophies, and educators.

A foreword cannot do justice to the range and richness of contributions gathered here. What can be said with confidence, however, is that this book represents a significant step forward in the global conversation about decolonising knowledge and rethinking education. It demands that we pause, reflect, and act on the urgent truth that how we teach Africa matters. To the reader: approach these chapters with openness and humility. Allow yourself to be unsettled by the critiques, challenged by the methodologies, and inspired by the pedagogical innovations. Most of all, recognise that the project of reimagining education is ongoing and that each of us, in our classrooms, research, and engagements, carries responsibility for how Africa is taught, known, and lived. This book does not give us all the answers. Instead, it offers something more profound: the tools, insights, and courage to ask better questions, to teach more responsibly, and to learn in ways that honour Africa's multiplicities and futures.