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Decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy: Pedagogical considerations for the Irish context

Dr Dylan Scanlon
& Dr Rob Lowney

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

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www.dcu.ie/teu
teaching.enhancement@dcu.ie

About the authors



Dr Dylan Scanlon
dylan.scanlon@deakin.edu.au

Dylan is a teacher educator / senior lecturer in the School of Education at Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. Dylan's research interests include (physical education) teacher education, policy, social justice, teaching personal and social responsibility, and figurational sociology.

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8774-0532



Dr Rob Lowney SCMALT SFHEA SFSEDA
rob.lowney@dcu.ie

Rob is Senior Learning Technologist in the Teaching Enhancement Unit at Dublin City University (DCU), Ireland. In his practice he supports those who teach to develop their teaching excellence, and his research interests include staff-student partnerships, assessment, digital learning and critical digital literacies.

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8866-4367

Authors' note

The authors have arrived at this literature scoping review through their shared interests in social justice, universal design for learning, staff-student partnership, and emancipatory pedagogies in education. They position themselves within an interpretivist paradigm, believing that "reality is individually constructed" (Scotland, 2012, p.11) and through interpretivist research "hidden social forces and structures" (Scotland, 2012, p.12) can be brought into consciousness. As Irish people, they live with Ireland's entangled legacy of colonialism, which scholars note is not a neat binary of 'coloniser and colonised' (Nic Dháibhéid, et al., 2022). Consequently, "Ireland is a complicated place to begin 'decolonising' anything" (Khoo, 2024a, p.79). Moreover, as white, cisgendered, able-bodied men they recognise much of the impact of colonialism on communities and identities around the world will be beyond their full understanding. This literature scoping review represents the start of a journey for the authors in listening to and learning more from those who do not see themselves fully represented in our higher education curricula and to those in other parts of world who are undergoing decolonisation movements in education. It is by no means a complete work. Just as decolonising the curriculum is an ongoing process (Sohdi, 2025), so is the learning of the authors. They welcome feedback, dialogue and commentary on this work, with the shared aim of advancing decolonisation of curricula in Ireland.

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Dylan would also like to add: I acknowledge the Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which I live, learn, play, and work. In solidarity with First Nations peoples, whose languages are being / have been erased as a result of colonisation, I would all like to do this acknowledge of Country in Irish: Aithním muintir Wadawurrung agus Wurundjeri mar Chaomhnóirí Traidisiúnta na tíre ar a bhfuil cónaí orm, a fhoghlaimím, a shúgradh agus a n-oibrím.

Table of contents

Context to this work *1*

Introduction *3*

Decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy *5*

Methods *7*

Phase One: Identifying relevant sources **7**

Eligibility criteria 7

Database searches 8

Screening 8

Phase Two: Charting the sources **8**

Data charting and analysis 8

Findings *10*

Phase Three: Findings from the charting of sources **10**

National context of research 10

Participants 10

Discipline 10

Pedagogical approaches and practices 11

Data collection methods 16

Outcome or impact of the pedagogical practice 16

Implications for policy and/or practice in higher education 17

Discussion and pedagogical considerations *19*

References *22*

Context to this work

In recent years, Ireland has experienced great social change. Once portrayed as a poor, conservative, majority Catholic country, Ireland is now a multicultural society (The Economist, 2019; Micalizzi, 2023). These social changes have accelerated since the economic boom of the 1990s, and with the deepening economic and political connections Ireland has made with European countries and countries around the world. Many people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds have made Ireland their home, and these 'new Irish' communities have enriched the country.

In Ireland's most recent census, 77% of respondents identified their ethnicity as White - Irish, whilst the remaining 23% identified as Any Other White (10%), Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi (2%) and Black or Black – Irish (1%). 12% were non-Irish citizens (CSO, 2022). Irish Travellers – an indigenous ethnic minority group – made up 6%.

As society becomes more diverse, so too do the learners in our education systems, which has implications for how curricula are designed and delivered. Ireland's higher education system is closely aligned with the British model – a result of colonialism – and often adopts white, Eurocentric views on knowledge and knowing. Decolonisation of the curriculum can help to decentre these views, making space for indigenous Irish and non-Western forms of knowledge (Lynam et al, 2025).

Students' sense of belonging is a key factor in their success in their studies (O'Farrell, 2019), and a meaningfully decolonised curriculum can help students feel like they belong, as they are represented in the curriculum they are pursuing (Ahmed-Landeryou, 2023).

Alongside the grassroots swell in calls for decolonising curricula, policy initiatives in Ireland have sought to identify and work against inequality and foster diversity in the higher education sector. In 2023, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) launched the *Anti-Racism Principles for Higher Education,* which 20 higher education institutions (HEI) signed and endorsed (Higher Education Authority, 2023). Although these principles do not explicitly name decolonising of the curriculum, they do commit institutions to highlighting structural inequalities past and present, encouraging dialogue on equality, and more.

‘Inclusive’ is one of the five core values of Dublin City University (DCU) (2023) and in light of this, as well as the development of the national anti-racism principles, internal quality improvement funding was made available for projects under the theme of ‘Fostering Global Engagement’ in 2025 (Dublin City University, 2026).

A team in the university’s Teaching Enhancement Unit was successful in receiving funding to initiate work on diversifying and decolonising the curriculum in DCU. Among the project aims were to scope the literature around current decolonisation practices, develop an interactive toolkit for staff to help them diversify and decolonise their curriculum, and support ongoing dialogue and engagement with staff and students.

This literature scoping review is one of the project’s outputs; spearheaded by the lead author, Dr Dylan Scanlon from Deakin University. All project outputs and ongoing work and resources around decolonising the curriculum will be captured on the DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit website.

Introduction

Internationally, there have been efforts to 'decolonise the curriculum and pedagogy' in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Research in this space has mapped the processes involved and / or advocated for more meaningful, relevant, and worthwhile approaches for such, for example, in the United Kingdom (e.g., Begum & Saini, 2019), Australia (e.g., Hughes and Fricker, 2024), South Africa (e.g., Le Grange, 2016), and more recently, Ireland (e.g., Eve, 2025). Shahjahan et al. (2022) suggest how two interrelated processes have heightened this call for decolonising curriculum and pedagogy in HEIs. First, many disciplines, for example, social sciences and education, have called for decolonising processes to take place; and second, student movements, academic advocacy, and policy initiatives regarding decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy have grown over the last two decades (Shahjahan et al., 2022). Kalbarczyk et al. (2023, p.5-6) suggest 'some faculty may be peripherally interested in incorporating decolonizing principles into their pedagogy and content but do not know how, or even where to start (Perkins et al., 2023)'. It is this gap – in the literature and in practice – which this scoping review looks to address, i.e., the pedagogical practices associated with decolonising the curriculum.

Ireland is a very unique context for decolonising the curriculum and we look encouragingly to authors exploring what decolonising means in the Irish context (i.e., Eve, 2025). Eve (2025) elegantly captures this:

> Ireland poses a unique context for this discussion; it sustains a dynamic and ambiguous relation to coloniality. Historically, Ireland has been both colonised and coloniser: subject to brutal repression and racialisation, yet mobile within and occasionally *for* empire. The postcolonial Irish state, meanwhile, has emphasised a white, settled, Catholic Irish identity, often negating the presence of Travellers and Irish people of colour. Ireland may now hold a 'semi-peripheral' position, but education… has been shaped by Global North, white perspectives (Khoo, 2024b), particularly since the neoliberal turn of Irish higher education. The 'decolonial' term pulls at these sensitive dynamics, not least given the Northern counties are, some argue, still colonised.

Rather than focusing on further conceptualising what decolonising means in the Irish context (and we encourage readers to turn to Eve's (2025) work), this review shifts the focus to the 'how' – the pedagogical practices

associated with decolonising the curriculum. The intent of this review is to construct considerations for practice for Irish HEI staff to encourage engagement in decolonising their curriculum and pedagogy. Inspired by Eve (2025, p.4), we draw on their understanding of decoloniality in Ireland: ‘addressing the legacies of Anglo colonisation and epistemic erasure while dismantling dominant conceptions of white settled Irishness, emphasising minoritised voices, and interrogating racism and the colonial practices of the Irish within empire’. With this conceptualisation in mind, we were guided by the following questions in such exploration: (i) What is the extent, nature, and range of decolonising pedagogical practices in research within higher education between 2015 and 2025?; and (ii) What are the key pedagogical considerations for best practice in decolonising the curriculum?. We begin by briefly exploring decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy, before moving onto the methodology of this scoping review.

Decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy

Fricker's (2024, p.170) work educates us on how, in this case, Australia's (and arguably all colonised countries) education system is a colonial construction and that 'pedagogical approaches used in these classrooms prioritised specific rote ways of learning and a 'one-size-fits-all' approach'. This can also be said of HEIs and decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy can be ways to disrupt this colonial way of teaching and learning in HEIs. The locality and contextual factors of the HEI should determine what decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy entails. For example, in South Africa, following the #FeesMustFall student protests, there were governmental directives for the 'Africanisation of universities' (Le Grange, 2016). The decolonisation of curriculum and pedagogy processes cannot be 'abstract universal' (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p.108). Shahjahan et al.'s (2022) review of literature, which explored conceptualisations of decolonising in the context of curriculum and pedagogy in HEIs, found that decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy – what it means to do so, how it is enacted, and actualisation and challenges – varies from context to context (including educators, students, discipline and field, programmes, HEIs, national context). The authors found three (interrelated) meanings to decolonisation: '(a) recognizing constraints, (b) disrupting, and (c) making room for alternatives' (p.85). With regards to how decolonising was actualised, the authors categorised this in four ways:

> 'First, decolonizing was actualised by regularly critiquing and probing the positionality of knowledge in educational spaces. Second, decolonising entailed constructing an inclusive curriculum beyond dominant knowledge systems. Third, decolonising environments fostered relational teaching and learning. Finally, connecting higher education institutions, community, and sociopolitical movements was a critical area of actualising decolonisation inside/outside higher education' (p.86).

As this current review is specifically interested in pedagogical practices, we zoom in on the third category here. Shahjahan et al. (2022) discuss how decolonising environments fostered relational teaching and learning in two ways throughout the reviewed literature. First, the co-construction of knowledge between educator and students was emphasised. Active learning pedagogies and critical reflexivity were pedagogical practices identified to counteract the 'banking model' of education (Freire, 1970). Second, the use of cultural and spiritual pedagogical practices, for

example, Indigenous pedagogies and embodied learning practices, allowed for different and multiple forms of knowledge making. With this in mind, Le Grange (2016) also reminds us how the process of decolonising the curriculum does not equate to disregarding Western knowledge but rather decentring it. Drawing on Giroux (2011) and Battiste (2000), Hughes and Fricker (2024, p.1911) argue that 'decolonisation requires a consciousness that considers the process, as well as consciousness that seeks to transform reality and provoke social change'.

There have been calls for 'browning' the curriculum and pedagogy (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernàndez, 2013). Browning involves highlighting the dominance of whiteness and the strong influence of colonisation in the curriculum and on pedagogy and 'in making whiteness visible, disrupt it, centre brown content, knowledge, and pedagogical processes within the classroom' (Brigden et al., 2020, p.131). When we zoom in on particular Indigenous pedagogies, these can be ways to trouble traditional Western ways of teaching, e.g., the banking model (Freire, 1970), and ways to brown the curriculum and pedagogies. For example, in Australia, the '8 Ways of Learning' is an Aboriginal pedagogical framework, developed by Dr Tyson Yunkaporta (Yunkaporta, 2009). This framework consists of eight ways of Aboriginal learning which include: community links, land links, learning maps, story sharing, deconstruct reconstruct, non-verbal, non-linear, and symbols and images. Each of these ways encourage a way of teaching. For example, in 'story sharing', it is suggested to embrace yarning circles (Brigden et al., 2020). Yarning circles may look different through implementation – by who (non-Indigenous or Indigenous peoples) and for what (reflection, social purposes, etc.) – but have common elements: (i) yarning circles operate in a circle so that participants can see and communicate with each other; (ii) an object which allows the holder to speak; and (iii) focus questions which are used to explore certain topics (Brigden et al., 2020). Yarning circles 'support building respectful relationships through respectful, harmonious, creative, and collaborative ways of communicating. They foster accountability and provide a safe place to be heard and to respond, and promote learner interactions, as well as supporting community engagement' (Brigden et al., 2020, p.133). This slow pedagogy (Brigden et al., 2020) can counteract the fast-paced, neoliberal processes which has engulfed the HEI system and can challenge hierarchical structures in HEIs. Brigden and colleagues (2020) – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics – use yarning circles in their practices as part of browning the pedagogy and by doing so, disrupt whiteness in HEIs. We now move onto explain our methodology – a scoping review – and the processes involved.

Methods

A scoping review was deemed appropriate for this research as we aimed to: (i) chart the research rather than assess quality of the research; (ii) map the extent, nature, and range of the research; and (iii) identify decolonising pedagogical practices to make recommendations for future practice (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters et al., 2015). This scoping review was guided by our two research questions:

1. What is the extent, nature, and range of decolonising pedagogical practices in research within higher education between 2015 and 2025?
2. What are the key pedagogical considerations for best practice in decolonising the curriculum?

We followed a three-phase approach to the scoping review which will now be outlined.

Phase One: Identifying relevant sources

Eligibility criteria

Our search dates range was from 2015 to 2025 as we were looking for an understanding of recent research. English was chosen as the inclusion language given this is the language of the authorship team (a consequence of colonisation in Ireland). We recognise that this is a limitation and gives weight to the influence of colonisation with regards to prioritising the hegemonic language of English. In terms of publication type, we limited our search to journal articles with full text available on empirical studies. This excluded conference abstracts, dissertations, and systematic reviews. This was done for two reasons: (i) to limit the scope and size of the results for manageability purposes; and (ii) given the purpose of this review was to explore pedagogical practices and identify considerations for practice, empirical evidence on such pedagogical interventions on decolonising work was prioritised to map what worked and did not work in the context of teaching. We defined empirical studies as research whereby a research design is described and findings are reported.

In terms of literature focus, our inclusion criteria denoted the central use of the concept ‘decolonising’ or ‘decolonisation’. This was explicit given we cannot assume certain pedagogical approaches as decolonising practices unless explicitly stated as decolonising practices. For example, some authors may use another preferred term (e.g., social justice) but not explicitly state that the pedagogy/practice was decolonising practices and as such, while the pedagogy may have the central tenets of decolonising pedagogies, we cannot assume the authors considered this as such. We also had an explicit focus on ‘pedagogy’ as the aim of the research was to build considerations for pedagogical practice. Finally, we focused on the higher education space and excluded all other education spaces (e.g., primary and secondary education).

Database searches

The following databases were selected through consultation with an academic librarian: Web of Science and EBSCOhost (Education Source; and ERIC). The search string was: (decoloniz* OR decolonis*) AND (curriculum AND pedagogy) AND higher education. This was searched in ‘topic’ (i.e., title/abstract) with the applied limiters of ‘English’, ‘Full-Text’, ‘Journal Articles’, and year range (2015-2025). This resulted in EBSCOhost: 51 and Web of Science: 104. Total search results: 155. There were 31 duplicates, so the final search result was: 124.

Screening

Included articles were uploaded to an online review software programme: Rayyan. The first phase of the screening process involved the two authors reviewing the abstracts of the 124 articles in line with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This phase resulted in 51 excluded and 73 papers included. The second phase of this screening process was a full-text review by the two authors to ensure inclusion criteria were met. The two authors met to discuss any ‘maybes’ or disagreements on certain inclusion criteria. These were fully resolved in these meetings. This resulted in 28 included articles.

Phase Two: Charting the sources

Data charting and analysis

A data extraction spreadsheet was used for the data charting phase. The data charting categories included: Aim / research question (which gave us

insight into trends in research purpose); Participants (which gave us insight into who the pedagogical practice was enacted by and for who); Discipline (which gave us insights into discipline trends); Pedagogical practice (which gave us insight into how pedagogical practices were operationalised); How the impact of the pedagogical practice was assessed/measured (which gave us insight into how the empirical research was conducted); Outcome or impact of the pedagogical practice (which gave us insight into how effective the pedagogical practice was); and Implications/considerations for future practice (which gave us insight into recommendations for practice as a result of the empirical research). Basic quantitative descriptive analysis (i.e., frequency counts) and qualitative content analysis were conducted on the above data charting categories.

Findings

Phase Three: Findings from the charting of sources

National context of research

Out of the 28 included articles, there were seven different countries and two international contexts (i.e., research articles that operated across multiple countries). These countries included: South Africa (n=10), United Kingdom (n=8), United States of America (USA; n=2) Canada (n=3), Aotearoa/New Zealand (n=1), India (n=1), Ireland (n=1), USA and Nepal (n=1), and Southern and Eastern Africa (n=1).

Participants

We defined the participants of the studies as the populations in which the data was collected from. These populations included: teaching staff who included lecturers, tutors, programme leads, etc. (n=16, e.g., Nisa-Waller & Piercy, 2024), students, which included student assignments (n=8, e.g., Jaber, Stirbys, & Saint-Cyr, 2024), and both teachers and students (n=4, e.g., De Costa et al., 2024).

Discipline

We grouped the 28 included articles into discipline areas. This resulted in 12 discipline areas:

- Social Sciences: 9 articles, e.g., social work (Rasool & Harms-Smith, 2021)
- Interdisciplinary Sciences: 5 articles (i.e., Social Sciences and Humanities: n=2; Social Sciences and Health Sciences: n=1; Education, Social Sciences and Health Sciences: n=1)
- Education: 4 articles, e.g., Motala, Sayed, & de Kock (2021)
- Higher Education: 2 articles, e.g., Tamimi et al. (2024)
- Health Sciences: 2 articles, e.g., nursing (Matahela & van Rensburg, 2023)
- Library and Information Science: 1 article (Marsh, 2022)

- Performing Arts: 1 article (Kaktikar, 2020)
- Business: 1 article (Pelzer et al., 2023)
- Applied Linguistics: 1 article (Bakogiannis & Papavasiliou, 2025)
- Natural Science: 1 article (Debassige et al., 2022)
- Further Education and Training: 1 article (Waghid & Hibbertimagemaqui, 2018)
- Transdisciplinary Science: 1 article (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2024)

Pedagogical approaches and practices

The 28 articles were analysed for pedagogical approaches and pedagogical practices. Pedagogical approaches were defined as theoretical models which philosophically position particular instructions, for example, critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970). Pedagogical practices are the instructions – the 'how', the application of the selected approach through instructional strategies in the classroom, e.g., a practice aligned with critical pedagogy would be problem-posing whereby the teacher presents a problem derived from the students' own lived experience and through dialogue co-constructs the 'answer'.

Table 1 captures the pedagogical approaches, the definition, and aligned pedagogical practices of the 28 included articles. Readers are encouraged to explore the reference aligned with the pedagogical approach and/or practice for more information on how it is enacted. It is also important to note how these pedagogical practices and approaches support decolonisation work, but this is not a checklist and should not be used in performative ways. Decolonisation work is much more than pedagogy – we return to this point later on in this scoping review.

Pedagogical approach	Definition	Pedagogical practices
Indigenous pedagogy (Jaber et al., 2024)	Integrating Indigenous / First Nations knowledge systems and 'ways of knowing' into teaching	- Class openings (e.g., acknowledge of Country) - Sharing / Yarning circles - Asset mapping - Wampum Belt Reflection - Slam book - Values and capacity tree (Jaber et al., 2024; Jarvis & de Jager, 2024)
Humanising pedagogy / Intersectionality pedagogy (Debassige et al., 2022; Itwaru, 2024)	Viewing students as multi-dimensional human beings with intersecting identities and lived experiences (Del Carmen Salazar, 2013)	- Pedagogic acts of care, cultivating belongingness, and prioritising mattering (Debassige et al., 2022; Motala et al., 2021; Nisa-Waller & Piercy, 2024) - Relational approaches (Debassige et al., 2022; Nisa-Waller & Piercy, 2024) - Practicing vulnerability in teaching (Nisa-Waller & Piercy, 2024)

Decoloniality / decolonial pedagogies / diverse perspectives (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025; Eve, 2025; Jodamus et al., 2023; Laing, 2021; Tamimi et al., 2024; Wilson, 2024)	Actively challenging colonial legacies, racism, and Eurocentric norms of knowledge production and power	- Diverse authorship / reading lists (Adewumi et al., 2022; Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025; Marsh, 2022; Murdoch & McGuire, 2022; Tamimi et al., 2024) -Decolonised assessment (marking criteria that reflected contribution from a greater range of thinkers) (Laing, 2021) - Programmatic approaches (Laing, 2021) - Trans-pedagogy: trans-disciplinarity, transgressiveness, and transformation (Jodamus et al., 2023)
Anti-oppressive / Anti-racist pedagogies (Debassige et al., 2022; Tamimi et al., 2024)	A commitment to dismantling systemic hierarchies and ensuring the curriculum reflects diverse global perspectives rather than just the Global North	- Unpacking utterances (everyday negative stereotyping language) and optics (visibility of difference races in teaching resources) (Itwaru, 2024) - Problem-based learning (Debassige et al., 2022)
Reflexive pedagogy (Itwaru, 2024; Laing, 2021; Matahela & van	Encouraging both teacher and student to reflect on their own	- Social identity wheel (Debassige et al., 2022)

Rensburg, 2023; Tamimi et al., 2024)	positionalities, biases, values, and beliefs	- Questioning teaching and learning strategies (Matahela & van Rensburg, 2023) - Self-awareness activities in the context of coloniality of the institution (Matahela & van Rensburg, 2023) - Journalling about critical incidents (Matahela & van Rensburg, 2023) - Identity exploration activities (Nisa-Waller & Piercy, 2024)
Translanguaging / Bilingual and Multilingual pedagogy (Hurst & Mona, 2017)	Moving away from a 'monolingual mindset' (English-only) to allow students to use their multiple home languages as a resource for learning	- Multilingual dialogue (De Costa et al., 2024; Motala et al., 2021) - Support students' home languages in learning and assessment (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025) - Multilingual peer mentors, bilingual glossaries and resources (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025)
Co-creation / Democratisation (Debassige et al., 2022; Itwaru, 2024; Jodamus et al., 2023; Kaktikar, 2020; Laing,	Reducing the power gap between teacher and student by involving students in designing the	- Student-centred approaches (e.g., group interdependence) (Itwaru, 2024)

2021; Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2024; O'Neill, 2025; Tamimi et al., 2024; Wilson, 2024)	curriculum and assessment	- Students as partners in assessment (Debassige et al., 2022; Wilson, 2024)
Emancipatory pedagogy (Hayes et al., 2024)	Designed to help students identify, resist, and transform the social, political, and economic conditions that oppress them (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994)	Defamiliarisation (Waghid & Hibbertimagemaqui, 2018)
Culturally responsive pedagogies (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025; Maluleka, 2020)	Using / responding students' cultures to make learning more effective and meaningful – a focus on 'how' teachers teach, not just 'what' teachers teach – build on academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995)	- Culturally diverse case studies - Engaging students in sharing their cultural backgrounds - Using examples and resources from students' cultures to cultivate belonging and inclusion (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025)
Multimodal pedagogy (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025; Jodamus et al., 2023)	Recognises that 'meaning-making' occurs beyond the sole use of written word and includes multiple modes to helps students learn and express (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001)	- Gallery walks, group discussions, live interviews, videos, short films (e.g., Jodamus et al 2023) - Creative pedagogies and assessments (Laing, 2021)

		- Teaching in conversation (O'Neill, 2025)

Table 1: Pedagogical approaches and pedagogical practices

Data collection methods

The 28 included articles used a range of different data collection methods. These included:

- Mixed methods (e.g., course reading list review, interviews with staff, and focus groups with students [Adewumi et al., 2022], interviews and participants diaries [O'Neill, 2025], or personal reflections, module outline and course evaluations, classroom engagement, and student essays [Jodamus et al., 2023]): 10 articles
- Interviews (i.e., individual and / or focus group interviews): 6
- Self-study research (including action research, autoethnography, critical autoethnography, narrative inquiry): 5
- Reflection (e.g., on vignettes [Jarvis & de Jager, 2024] or on co-constructed mind maps with students [Laing, 2021]): 3
- Surveys: 2
- Student assignments: 1
- Content analysis: 1

Outcome or impact of the pedagogical practice

15 of the included 28 articles explicitly discussed the outcome or impact of the pedagogical practice. These were grouped into four themes:

1. Increased feelings of belongingness: The articles alluded to how the decolonisation pedagogical practice produced elevated feelings of belongingness for the students as they reported feeling more connected to their learning, their peers, and the larger community (Jaber et al., 2024; Motala et al., 2021). Enacting decolonisation pedagogical practices encouraged reflective listening and reflective

witnessing (Jarvis & de Jager, 2024) and led to an increase in cultural humility (Jaber et al., 2024). For example, the practice of translanguaging promoted inclusivity in the classroom and created socially just learning experiences (Hurst & Mona, 2017). There was an emphasis throughout these included articles on the value of pedagogies of relationality and transitionality (Marsh, 2022).

2. Increased engagement: Connected to the above point, pedagogies of decolonisation in the included articles resulted in increased engagement for the students. Articles emphasised the relationship of increased student engagement to the rebalancing of power between students and teacher as co-creation of knowledge blossomed (Itwaru, 2024; Motala et al., 2021).

3. Building critical perspectives and fostering critical consciousness: The included articles found how the pedagogical practices of decolonisation encouraged students to lean into critical perspectives and fostered varying levels of critical consciousness (Debassige et al., 2021; Murdoch & McGuire, 2022; Jarvis & de Jager, 2024; Jodamus et al., 2023; Waghid & Hibbertimagemaqui, 2018). For example, having difficult conversations with students led to the challenging of pre-existing, deeply rooted beliefs and values on an individual level and a structural level (Murdoch & McGuire, 2022)

4. Diverse materials enhanced students' understanding of colonisation and Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing (Murdoch & McGuire, 2022).

Implications for policy and/or practice in higher education

17 of the included 28 articles explicitly stated implications for policy and/or practice/pedagogy in higher education. At an institutional policy level, there were three main policy recommendations to move beyond performative actions. These included:

1. Recruitment policies should target under-representation of diverse staff (including postgraduates and early career academics) so that staff reflects the student population. Alongside this, decolonising work should be rewarded through tenure and promotion decisions (Adewumi et al., 2022; Pelzer et al., 2023).

2. Institutions should have mandatory curriculum requirements on Indigenous / decolonial modules so that this learning and teaching does not occur in one (sometimes, elective) module. This should be supported by funding and resource allocation in which staff can access to (re)learn and redesign curricula for their teaching and learning (Kalbarczyk et al., 2023).

3. Institutions should stay true to their internationalisation commitments and strongly encourage global collaboration through Global North-Global South partnerships (De Costa et al., 2024).

At a classroom / educator level, the implications for pedagogical practice revolved around four points:

1. Treating students-as-partners in the teaching and learning process. The articles emphasised the need to engage in co-production of knowledge rather than one-directional (teacher to student). This was encouraged in all aspects of the teaching and learning process from co-constructing the curriculum to learning experiences to the assessments and rubrics (Motala et al., 2021).

2. Educators and students need to engage in critical reflexivity. Educators should engage in critical reflection on their role in decolonising the curriculum and on their own practices which may be informed by hegemonic Western practices (Jaber et al., 2024; Laing, 2021). Alongside students, positionalities need to be unpacked which may shed light on certain deeply held beliefs and values (Murdoch & McGuire, 2022).

3. A focus on relational pedagogies including talking circles, story-telling, and relationship-building learning experiences (Jarvis & de Jager, 2024). Vulnerability in teaching and learning was also advocated for (Jodamus et al., 2023).

4. Defamiliarisation was a practice encouraged to allow students examine societal structures through a lens that reveals their colonial roots (Waghid & Hibbertimagemaqui, 2018).

Discussion and pedagogical considerations

This scoping review set out to explore the extent and range of pedagogical practices associated with decolonising the curriculum and to construct pedagogical considerations for decolonising practice for Irish HEI educators. With the above findings in mind, we now outline four discussion points focusing on pedagogical considerations.

First, we agree with Kalbarczyk et al. (2023) who suggest that HEI staff may be interested in decolonising their curriculum and pedagogy but are unsure where to start and how to do so. Outlined in Table 1, this scoping review mapped 10 broad pedagogical approaches and aligned pedagogical practices with each pedagogical approach. Unpacking Table 1, we can categorise each pedagogical approach into Shahjahan et al.'s (2022) two categories of how decolonising pedagogies fosters relational teaching and learning: (i) Co-construction of knowledge between educator and student, e.g., co-creation / democratisation (Debassige et al., 2022; Itwaru, 2024; Jodamus et al., 2023; Kaktikar, 2020; Laing, 2021; Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2024; O'Neill, 2025; Tamimi et al., 2024; Wilson, 2024), humanising pedagogy / intersectionality pedagogy (Debassige et al., 2022; Itwaru, 2024), anti-oppressive / anti-racist pedagogies (Debassige et al., 2022; Tamimi et al., 2024), and reflexive pedagogy (Itwaru, 2024; Laing, 2021; Matahela & van Rensburg, 2023; Tamimi et al., 2024); and (ii) The use of cultural and spiritual pedagogies, e.g., Indigenous pedagogy (Jaber et al., 2024), decoloniality / decolonial pedagogies / diverse perspectives (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025; Eve, 2025; Jodamus et al., 2023; Laing, 2021; Tamimi et al., 2024; Wilson, 2024), translanguaging / bilingual and multilingual pedagogy (Hurst & Mona, 2017), emancipatory pedagogy (Hayes et al., 2024), culturally responsive pedagogies (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025; Maluleka, 2020), and multimodal pedagogy (Bakogiannis & Papavasilio, 2025; Jodamus et al., 2023).

From Table 1, educators could, for example, adopt a humanising pedagogy. Freire (1970, p.51) believed that a humanising pedagogy 'ceases to be an instrument by which teachers can manipulate students but rather expresses the consciousness of the students themselves'. Cleououlou et al. (2022) adopted a humanising pedagogy on their teacher education programme in a HEI. Influenced by Del Carmen Salazar's (2013) principles of a humanising pedagogy, the authors constructed three pillars to their programme: collaborative practices, critical reflection, and a caring community. This humanising core resulted in a programme which fostered connection, inclusion and belonging for students and staff.

Zooming in on the pedagogical practices associated with a humanising pedagogy in Table 1, educators could choose any of these, for example, practicing vulnerability in teaching (Nisa-Waller-Piercy, 2024). Baker et al. (In Review), whose research explored teacher educators in HEIs conceptualisations of vulnerability, discussed the potential benefits in embracing vulnerability in practice. Educators who enact vulnerability (which is rooted in authenticity, empathy, and openness) can create courageous spaces for staff and students to deeply engage in teaching and learning. This requires continuous self-reflection and positionality exploration (which are pedagogical practices suggested under the pedagogical approach of 'reflexive pedagogy' in Table 1 – demonstrating the interconnectedness of these pedagogical approaches and practices). We encourage the reader to engage in curiosity with Table 1; choose a pedagogical approach which is meaningful to their teaching context and explore the associated pedagogical practices.

Second, the included articles, and broader literature, emphasise the importance of understanding positionality of the enacting educator. The starting point of the decolonising journey needs to be an inward journey – unpacking the educator's positionality. Ambrossi (2024, p.423) suggests that engaging in critical reflection on ourselves may 'unsettle us (hurt us even)… but it may unveil the gaze of the empire within us, at the personal level… forcing us to look at ourselves and our practice anew; untaming our ways of knowing, that we may gain genuinely new perspectives'. We again point to Table 1 and under 'reflexive pedagogy', to suggested pedagogical practices such as identity exploration activities (Nisa-Waller & Piercy, 2024) and social identity wheel activities (Debassige et al., 2022). The reader may engage in such critical reflection through these activities to become unsettled in their ways of knowing and being in the context of decolonisation. Informed by previous research of HEI educators engaging in this work (e.g., Scanlon et al., 2024), we believe conducting this exploration collaboratively through a community of learners may enhance such learning about oneself and do so in a more safe and supported manner. We also strongly suggest that leadership in HEIs need to provide time and space (which is recognised in staff's work allocation models) to conduct such important work.

Third, the importance of relational pedagogies and co-creation of knowledge, through possible students-as-partners approaches, is emphasised throughout the included literature in implicit and explicit ways. At the core of decolonising pedagogies is 'recognizing and transforming how power plays out in classroom learning and in society at large' (English

& Heilbronn, 2024, p.159). The pedagogical practices under the 'co-creation / democratisation' pedagogical approach in Table 1 could be ways to transform power balances in the classroom. The impact of these pedagogical practices is captured in the findings of this paper and evidence is provided on their impact on increased student engagement as a result of teacher and student being co-constructors of knowledge (Itwaru, 2024) and fostering critical perspectives and critical consciousness (Debassige et al., 2022). Building on the implications for practice in the findings section of this paper, we are encouraging educators to treat students-as-partners in the teaching and learning process. Research (e.g., Ní Bheoláin et al., 2020) continually demonstrates the benefits of adopting these processes for teacher and student.

Returning to the Irish context, Eve's (2025) work highlights the uniqueness of this context for decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy. While the intention of this scoping review was to shift the focus to the 'how', i.e., the pedagogical approaches and practices associated with decolonising the curriculum, we emphasise the need to invest energies into further understanding what decolonising means in the Irish context. It is crucial to position this with regards to Ireland's past (Anglo/Irish), present (Settled/Travelling Communities), and future ('new Irish' communities) as Ireland becomes increasingly diverse in its population. We call for more research in this space; we call for educators, policy makers, senior management, and HEIs to take action in this space; and we call on the reader to begin engaging in their own process(es) of decolonisation. With that in mind, we strongly emphasise that decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy is not 'just' a change of pedagogy, it is a journey(ies) of unpacking, challenging, discomfort, reflection, and action (amongst other processes). Decolonisation is also not a destination; it requires continuous learning, critical self-reflection, and advocacy. It requires institutional system change (as outlined in the implications for policy in higher education in the findings of this paper) and personal change. As Le Grange (2016, p.6) reminds us, 'there are no simple answers to the decolonisation of the curriculum and therefore the process should be embarked upon thoughtfully but also be open to experimentations from which much could be learned'. With this in mind, we invite the reader – the educators and the students – to experiment with some of the decolonising pedagogies and practices identified in this scoping review. We encourage the reader to be curious, show respect, advocate, and continue to listen and learn with and from others while operating in continuous praxis of decolonisation.

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Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University