Tackling coloniality and re-storying EdTech

Making your offering inclusive and socially just

Re-imagining Education conference

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Why we are here: Scene setting

Facilitated by Nariman (5 min)

Agenda

1. ⭐*Why we are here*: Scene setting	Nariman	5 min
2. What does decolonising EdTech mean?	Taskeen	10 min
3. ⭐*Reflection*: Reflecting on injustices in EdTech projects	Taskeen	8 min
4. Pitfalls in EdTech designs and implementations	Nariman	10 min
5. ⭐*Breakout Groups*: How can we avoid reproducing injustices in EdTech?	Nariman	20 min
6. ⭐*Sharing*: Sharing our EdTech designs	Nariman	5 min
7. Wrap up	Taskeen	2 min

⭐ = *Activity*

⭐Ice breaker: Setting the scene

What is one inspiring Edtech product that you experienced? What was inspiring about it?

Type your answers in the chat box
or raise your hand to share verbally!

What does decolonising EdTech mean?

Presentation by Taskeen (10 min)

South Africa

Photo by Finding Dan | Dan Grinwis on Unsplash

Also South Africa

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CORONAVIRUS

Teachers trying to catch up, 'ticking boxes', overloading learners

Bongekile Macupe 2 Aug 2020

A classroom being decontaminated. File Picture: Themba Hadebe AP

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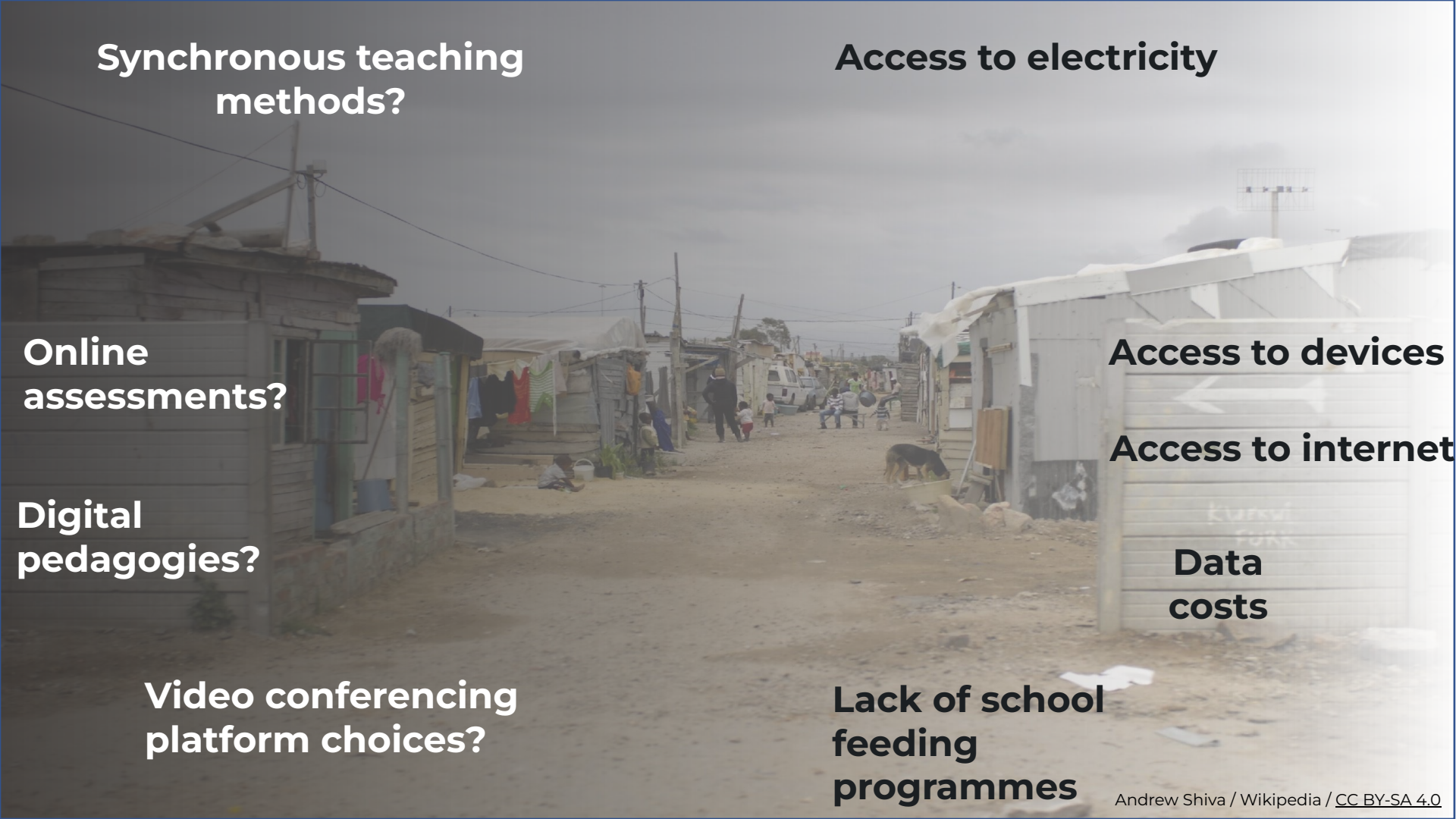
MEDIA STATEMENT: NO! TO JUST OPENING SCHOOLS. YES! TO OPENING SCHOOLS JUSTLY.

Join C19 PEOPLE'S COALITION

By Ryan Posted June 12, 2020 In C19PC Statements, Media Alert

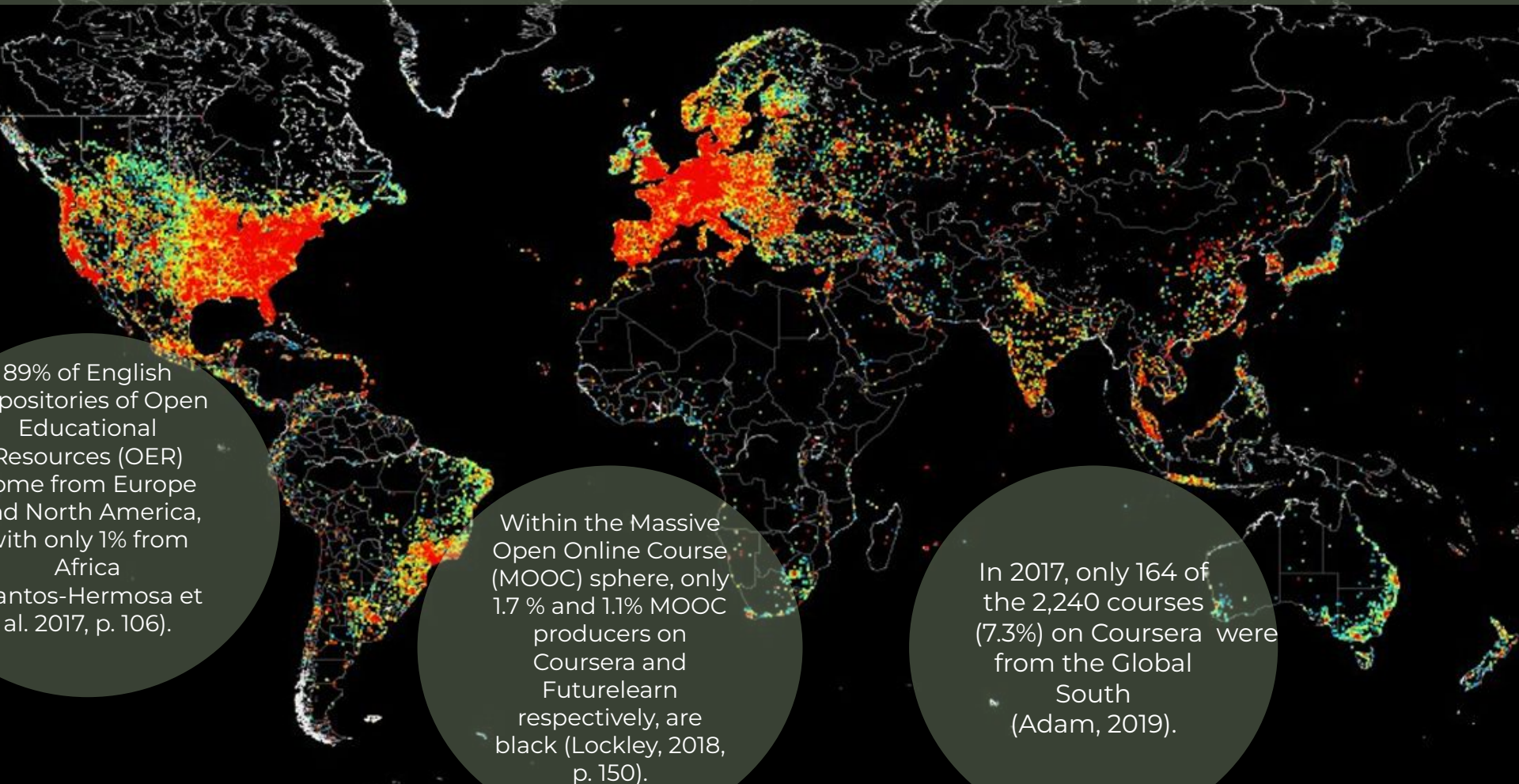
Get updates

Open or closed, South African schools need radical social change



Andrew Shiva / Wikipedia / CC BY-SA 4.0

mbalances in Open Education/MOOC production



89% of English positories of Open Educational Resources (OER) ome from Europe d North America, ith only 1% from Africa antos-Hermosa et al. 2017, p. 106).

Within the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) sphere, only 1.7 % and 1.1% MOOC producers on Coursera and Futurelearn respectively, are black (Lockley, 2018, p. 150).

In 2017, only 164 of the 2,240 courses (7.3%) on Coursera were from the Global South (Adam, 2019).

Coloniality and Decoloniality

“Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to **long-standing patterns of power** that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that **define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production** well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained **alive in books**, in the **criteria for academic performance**, in **cultural patterns**, in **common sense**, in the **self-image** of peoples, in **aspirations** of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience.”
(Maldonado-Torres, 2016)

Decoloniality involves “the dismantling of **relations of power** and **conceptions of knowledge** that foment the reproduction of **racial, gender**, and **geo-political hierarchies** that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world.” (Maldonado-Torres 2016:440)

Decolonising education

Reclaiming identities, languages, cultures, heritages and lost humanities

Going beyond ‘diversity’ and ‘transformation’ to truly dismantle of power and privilege in education

Problematising the ‘Eurocentric prisms’ through which discourse is framed

Create spaces deals with the emotional harm that schooling can cause to the oppressed through the negation and ‘amputation’ of parts of themselves

Create spaces where a plurality of voices, experiences, histories, epistemologies, and knowledges can be legitimised, claimed, and celebrated

Forefront educational approaches that awaken minds, promote critical consciousness and critical reflexivity

Dei and Simmons (2010), Makgoba and Seepe (2004), Fanon (1961), Freire (1970), Adam (2019)

Multiple meanings of decoloniality

Africanisation

- This is a **replacement** of European knowledges by local, indigenous knowledges.
- This stance allows for marginalised knowledges to be reclaimed but runs the risk of nativism or the co-option of local knowledges for political and national agendas.

Afrocentrism

- This decentres European knowledges and **recentres** local/indigenous knowledges.
- The process carries the risk of romanticising local and indigenous knowledges as infallible, when (as with all knowledges) marginalised knowledges are also fallible and open to deliberation.

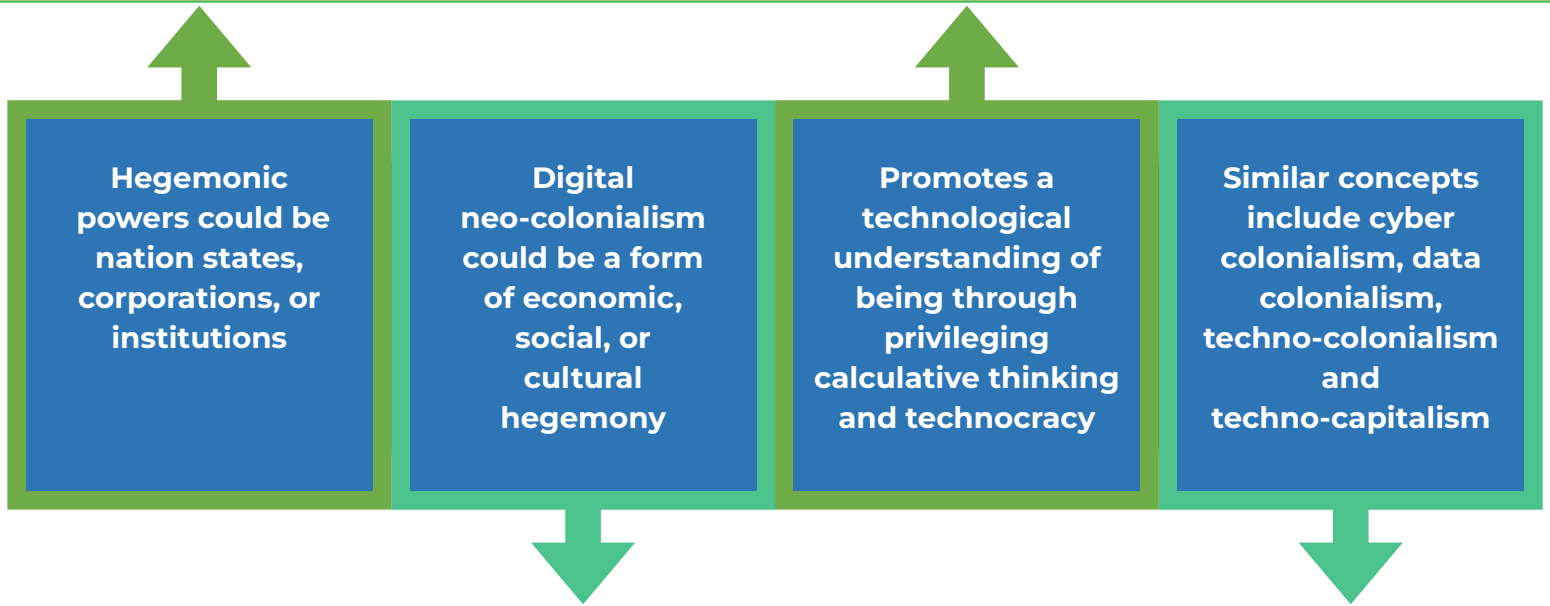
Knowledge as entanglement

- This argues that knowledges are **entangled** and inseparable in a way that is not regional, but rather travelling across space, and evolving with time, thus no one region is the sole authority.
- The risk is that knowledges of the victors will feature more than marginalised knowledges.

Categories developed from Jansen (2017) and explanations built from Mamdani (2016), Hodgkinson-Williams and Trotter (2018), and Adam (2019)

Digital neo-colonialism

"The use of information technology and the internet by hegemonic powers as a means of **indirect control** or **influence over** a **marginalised group** or country" (Adam 2019).



Colonial elements in EdTech

Globalising education	EdTech platforms that position themselves as global or universal but promote dominant knowledges (mostly White, Western-centric), values, norms, beliefs, and languages to the detriment of those from marginal, non-dominant, local and indigenous groups.
Western epistemological and pedagogical underpinnings	Promote rationalistic, secular, universal, objectivist, modernist, written, behaviourist, and individualistic ways of being and marginalise spiritual, ancestral, oral, subjective, critical, and communitarian ways of being.
Dominant languages	Dominant languages used to achieve product scaling, that lead to the loss of the conceptual frameworks used by minority languages.
“Core-to-periphery” implementation	Products can promote a predominantly one-way transmission of standardised knowledge from Western countries to a diverse, complex pool of ‘awaiting’ participants globally.
Colonial logic and bias in algorithms	Technical designs that overlook who creates EdTech products, who it is designed for, and the embeddedness of colonial logics within the design
Adverse incorporation	Young learners’ thoughts and experiences are tracked and monitored, giving them a lifelong digital footprint. They do not realise what they are signing up for.

Dimensions of Human Injustice

Social Justice Frameworks:

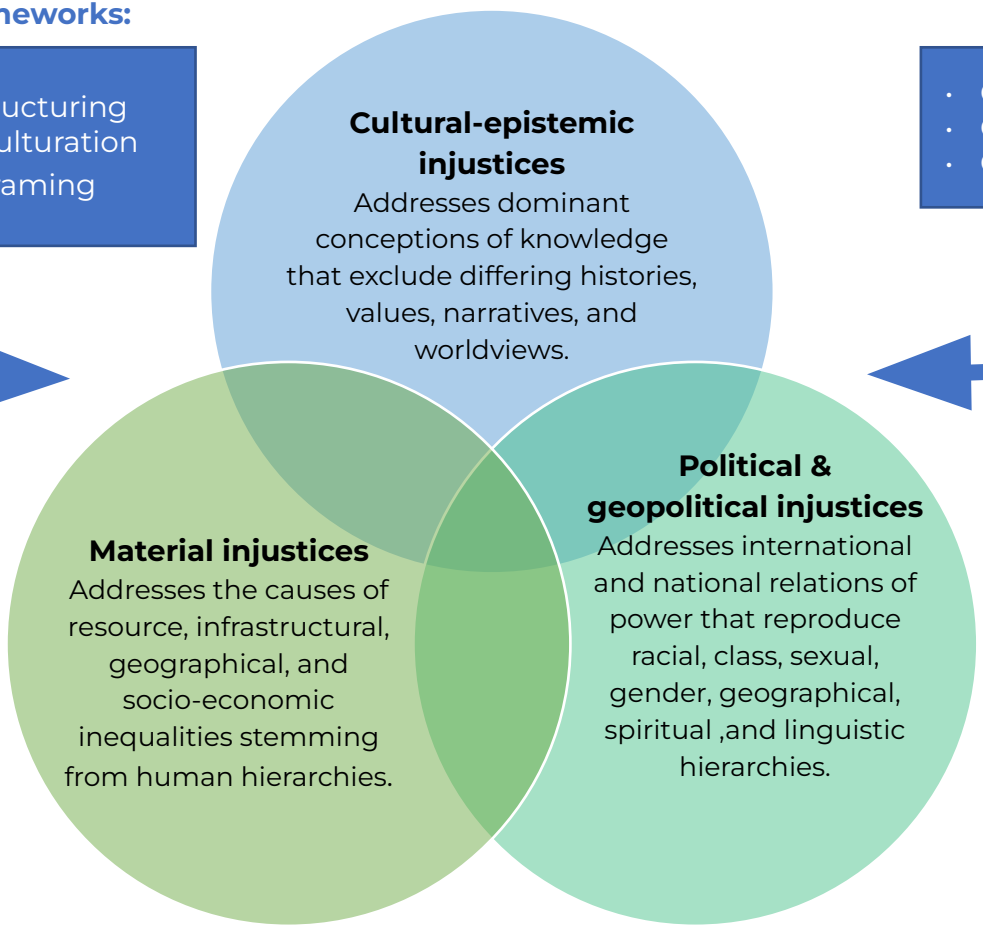
- Redistribution/Restructuring
- Recognition/Re-acculturation
- Representation/Reframing

Social Justice lens built from the works of Rawls (1971), Fraser (2005), Young (1997), Lambert (2018), Luckett & Shay (2017), Hodgkinson-Williams, and Trotter (2018).

Decoloniality:

- Coloniality of being
- Coloniality of knowledge
- Coloniality of power

Decolonial lens built from the works of Maldonado-Torres (2016), Grosfoguel (2007), and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015).



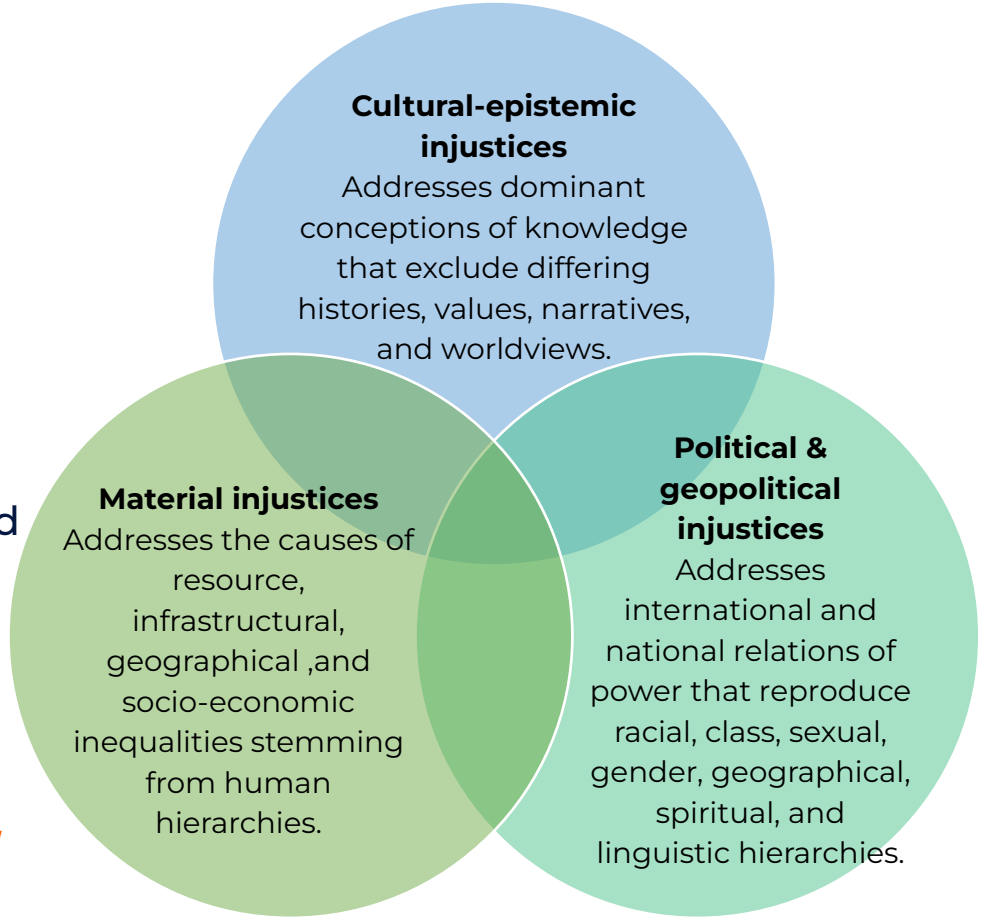
Reflection: Injustices in our EdTech projects

Facilitated by Taskeen (8 min)

⭐Reflection

What material, political, and epistemic (knowledge-based) injustices have you experienced using EdTech?

Type your answers in the chat box or raise your hand to share verbally!



Pitfalls in EdTech designs and implementations

Presentation by Nariman (10 min)

5 Pitfalls in EdTech designs

How can EdTech designs, products, and implementations assist in replicating features of colonial power and extraction?

Coloniality in assumptions and worldviews

1. **“Technology is the key to fixing the broken education system.”**
2. **“Journeying through a learning pathway to a predetermined goal addresses educational needs.”**

Coloniality in design processes

3. **EdTech designers are often a homogenous group catering to diverse students.**
4. **Algorithms can be biased with hidden logic.**

Coloniality through extractive processes

5. **Opting out of data collection is often a false choice.**

1 Technology is the key to fixing the broken education system

Assumption:

By **investing in more hardware and software,** we can rescue education from crises.

Pitfall:

Without addressing historical and present-day **systemic injustices** that limit education systems from functioning better, **EdTech solutions will only be a sticking plaster.**

Consequence:

‘Shiny’ EdTech solutions take away focus and funding from addressing **underlying inequalities in education.**

Does an educational offering assume the main barrier to improving education is lack of device penetration?

2 Journeying through a learning pathway to a predetermined goal addresses educational needs

Assumption:

Using theories of **behaviourism (i.e. rewarding correct performance)**, learning outcomes will improve, addressing students' educational needs.

Pitfall:

EdTech offerings often **do not develop critical thinking, analytical skills, social learning, socio-emotional skills** that are needed for holistic development.

Consequence:

Behaviourism promotes **conformity** to the status quo and overlooks that **education is inherently political**.

What pedagogical underpinnings are embedded in an educational offering centered around Edtech?

Different digital pedagogies

Instructivist Approaches	• This teacher-centred approach uses a **unidirectional approach** to deliver content and information to students. • This would be done through live or recorded lectures.
Cognitive Constructivist Approaches	• Students independently **construct their own knowledge** through activities and reflection and are actively involved in their learning and meaning-making process. • This **inquiry-based learning** can be done through provocations and scenario-based learning.
Social Constructivist Approaches	• Meaning is constructed through **interaction with others and the environment**. This participant-centred approach emphasises **social learning, experience-sharing, and collaboration**. • This can be achieved through breakout sessions, group projects, or peer assessments.
Socratic Approaches	• Learning is acquired through an **exchange of ideas and viewpoints.** Participants are not dictated the truth/answer nor expected to unquestioningly embrace their teacher's understanding. • This is done through discussion, debate, and role-play.
Liberationist Approaches	• This approach builds a **critical consciousness** to transform relations of power which are oppressive. This approach **empowers students** to become **teachers of their teachers** through a dialogical and reflective process. This can be done through reflection exercises, storytelling, and student-led teaching.
Connectivist Approaches	• Connectivist approaches aim to utilise **social networking technologies** and view the participant as part of **a chaotic, complex, and distributed network**. • This can be done through social media platforms, blogs, exchange programmes, etc.

3 EdTech designers are often a homogenous group catering to diverse students

Pitfall:

Personnel who **create EdTech designs** and who **curate the content** are often a **homogenous group of experts** trained in the same worldviews (often regardless of their country of origin), belonging, and working out of, institutions wedded to niche bits of knowledge that are **Western-centric**.

Consequence:

The users of EdTech offerings are often underrepresented in the creator group, particularly in conceptualising, design, and development stages.

Do designers or implementers engage the users in product conceptualisation, design ,and development (i.e. beyond product user-testing)?

4 Algorithms can be biased with hidden logic

Pitfall:

- EdTech products often use **proprietary software** and/or algorithms, so key stakeholders who deliver and experience these products **do not get to see how the software learns and adapts.**
- AI algorithms depending on data sets can **exhibit bias** and **perpetuate stereotypes**. Developers may not even understand the **'black box'** decisions taken by AI algorithms.

Consequence:

The limited rights and agency given by EdTech companies to implementers and actual users of EdTech (students, teachers, parents) replicates colonial relationships of subservience and control over knowledge.

Are learning materials, platform design, and algorithms made open in a way that is accessible and understandable to the end-user?

5 Opting out of data collection is often a false choice

Pitfall:

To access EdTech products, students may have to allow **their personal data to be used** by the software in line with the creator's own policies, which are often not up for negotiation by the student.

Consequence:

Lack of alternative and high-quality systems of education for marginalised learners means that opting **out of data collection is a false choice.** Learners thus 'sell' their data to access education.

What user data is captured and used in in an EdTech offering? Can users opt out of data collection and still benefit from the platform?

Breakout Session: Developing guidelines on addressing injustice in EdTech Designs

Facilitated by Nariman (20 min)

⭐Break out sessions

- You will have 10 minutes in the breakout room
- Use Jamboard here: https://jamboard.google.com/d/1O8M7VjU4cTWGbDOoA16W6UoXsdoLlXmRCantWpVWiQ8/edit?usp=sharing
- Choose a type of EdTech to reimagine and redesign from a decolonial lens such as learning management systems (e.g, Moodle), MOOCs (e.g., Coursera), online conferences (e.g, this Reimagine education conference), online proctoring (e.g., ProctorU) or learning apps
- Each of the following slides has 1 main question prompt
- You do not have to answer every question. You are welcome to share what is relevant to you
- The general guideline is to spend 6 minutes on every slide. However, feel what your group needs too
- Please assign a notetaker who takes notes of main discussion points.
- Please share your personal experiences. This is an invitation to hold a brave space
- Please choose a presenter to share back in plenary 1 min highlights and guidelines from your conversation.

Reimagining EdTech Values

Coloniality in assumptions and worldviews

Think about the coloniality in assumptions and worldviews embedded in this type of EdTech product? How would you redesign this EdTech to address this?

Reimagining EdTech Design

Coloniality in design processes

Think about the learning design team and technical teams designing the EdTech. Who is involved and who makes decisions? How would you ensure that biases are addressed in the design process?

Reimagining EdTech Use

Coloniality in implementation processes

EdTech can be used in multiple ways. How would you implement this EdTech in your context to ensure that it creates space to tackle injustice, deal with emotional harm, include pluralistic views, and awaken critical consciousness?

Feedback:
Sharing our guidelines

Facilitated by Nariman (5 min)

Resources

Presented by Taskeen **(2 min)**

Resources

Blogs:

- Blog 1: Decolonising EdTech: A resource list for tackling coloniality and digital neocolonialism in EdTech
- Blog 2: Decolonising Open Educational Resources (OER): Why the focus on ‘open’ and ‘access’ is not enough for the EdTech revolution
- Blog 3: Reading Audrey Watters: A reflection on personalised learning via education technology through a decolonial lens

Zotero library:

- View the Decolonising EdTech Zotero community library
- Join the Decolonising EdTech Zotero community library

Other resources:

- Recorded Webinar to Emerge Africa: Decolonising Learning Design
- MYFest slide deck: Decolonising OER - Ethics, Equity, Epistemology and Power
- Conceptual Frameworks for Decolonising EdTech

Thank you!
Want to connect with us?

@Opendeved

@GlobalEdTechHub

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