

Interrogating and Innovating Comparative and International Education Research

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Enacting a decolonial praxis in teacher professional development

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In this talk, I will reflect on my experience of enacting a decolonial praxis in the context of teacher professional development in Pakistan. I outline some of the pedagogical (re)encounters that I created to re-claim local knowledge ecologies.

A critical assumption that informs my paper is that classic colonial relations have transmuted into relations of exploitation and dominance that unfold through the global division of labor, including the labor of knowledge production, accumulation of capital, and imposition of racial-ethnic hierarchies. In this context, knowledge ecologies of the global South are marked as inferior and irrelevant.

It is against this background that participants and staff desired to learn ‘American’ teaching practices and curricular models, often equating ‘American’ to *jadid* (modern) and *nae* (new). Re-orienting vantage points and desires entailed, first, examining the present moment of coloniality, which also entailed acknowledging internalized ‘extraversion’ or West-ward orientation; second, an active re-engagement with local landscapes, intellectual productions, and teacher selves, including a critique of hegemonic relations of domination; and finally, becoming *hunarmand* (skillful) in taking up, twisting, and molding dominant pedagogical models towards anti- and de-colonial ends.

In concluding the talk with reflections on the difficulties of undertaking projects is the project of decolonization. In particular, I have been reflecting on the privilege that was afforded to me by the community-based organization to design a program that contested the status quo. This project was not tied to any donor funding; thus, we had significant leeway in designing the project. However, since then I have wondered about the scope of decolonial praxis in teacher professional development projects. What might such efforts look like when sponsored by international organizations that partake in the reproduction of networks of privilege?

I envision that efforts towards decolonization may have to be located within spaces where either an authorizing environment already exists (as in my case) or be taken up as a form of ‘hacking’ (Anderotti et al, 2015) or a ‘tactic’ (De Certeau, 2006).

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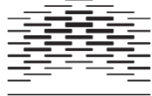


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