



Reframing Power: Foucault's Perspective on Colonial Education, Resistance, and Transformation

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ABSTRACT

Michel Foucault's theory of power offers a discerning framework for comprehending the impact of colonialism on educational systems. Michel Foucault's theories of biopower, governmentality, and power/knowledge demonstrate that colonial education functioned not just as a means of cultural hegemony but also as an integral component of a wider system of power dynamics that influenced the formation of identities among colonized communities. These systems enforced and incorporated colonized peoples into Western standards, methodically excluding local knowledge. Decolonizing education entails a rigorous examination and modification of curriculum to include a wide range of perspectives and address past injustices. Foucault's concept of power/knowledge emphasizes the significance of education in upholding power hierarchies while simultaneously presenting the possibility of opposition. Through the incorporation of disadvantaged knowledge systems, educators have the ability to question the prevailing influence of Western paradigms and advance inclusivity by incorporating disadvantaged knowledge systems. Furthermore, the process of decolonization necessitates the reformation of institutions, the resolution of systemic inequalities, and the cultivation of nurturing environments. Educational institutions should actively contribute to societal transformation by advocating for fairness and impartiality. Foucault's analysis of power highlights its allencompassing presence and underscores the imperative of ongoing efforts to destroy oppressive systems, thereby fostering a fairer and more just society.

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INTRODUCTION

When analysed using Michel Foucault's theory of power, colonialism presents itself as a complex philosophical dilemma and a necessary social policy (Deacon, 2006; Deere, 2019). Foucault's work, while predominantly focused on Europe, offers a conceptual structure for comprehending the power dynamics that played a crucial role in colonial endeavours (Wallenstein, 2013). The concepts of biopower and governmentality, as articulated by Foucault (2008) and Stein & Andreotti (2017), are highly pertinent

for examining the mechanisms through which colonial powers exerted dominance over colonised societies.

Foucault's concept of power is not concentrated in one place, but rather spread out among different institutions and practices, creating a "microphysics of power" that is present throughout society (Foucault, 1995; Deere, 2019). This perspective sheds light on the fact that colonial educational systems were not just instruments of cultural imposition, but were also part of a wider system of power dynamics that

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aimed to influence and regulate the identities of colonised individuals (Deacon, 2006; Patel, 2014). The imposition of Western educational ideals during colonialism can be understood as an exertion of biopower, wherein the colonisers aimed to control and govern the lives of the colonised populations by assimilating them into Western standards and suppressing indigenous knowledge systems (Mignolo, 2011; Foucault, 1975-1976/2003).

The colonial educational frameworks were intentionally created to promote the agendas of the colonial powers, frequently disregarding and undermining local identities and knowledge systems (Foucault, 1977-1978/2007; Deere, 2019). This is consistent with Foucault's concept of disciplinary power, which suggests that education is used to standardise and regulate populations by instilling particular behaviours and thought patterns (Foucault, 1975-1976/2003; Wallenstein, 2013). The curricula prioritised Western narratives, disregarding the varied experiences and histories of colonised societies. This reflects the power-knowledge relationship that Foucault discusses (Foucault, 1995; Deacon, 2006).

In order to confront and overcome the lasting effects of colonialism, it is necessary to dismantle the educational curricula that still bear the imprint of colonial influences (Stein, 2020; Deere, 2019). This entails a meticulous analysis and adjustment of educational material to incorporate a diverse range of viewpoints and knowledge frameworks (Foucault, 1995; Patel, 2014). The objective of decolonisation initiatives is to confront the hegemony of Western narratives by incorporating the histories, cultures, and contributions of marginalised communities (Mignolo, 2011; Stein & Andreotti, 2017). This process also necessitates a reassessment of pedagogical approaches to encourage critical thinking and active involvement with various viewpoints, cultivating an educational setting that appreciates diversity and inclusiveness (Deacon. 2006; Deere, 2019).

Challenging the long-lasting impacts of colonialism in education is a multifaceted task that requires questioning established systems of

power and promoting societal change (Foucault, 2008; Wallenstein, 2013). The resistance can be observed in grassroots movements, academic scholarship, and policy advocacy, all working towards empowering marginalised communities and amplifying their voices (Patel, 2014; Mignolo, 2011). By utilising postcolonial and anticolonial theories, educators and activists can formulate tactics to challenge oppressive educational methods and foster substantial transformation (Stein, 2020; Deere, 2019).

In light of this context, colonialism has had a profound influence on educational settings across the globe, reinforcing inequalities and marginalising non-Western knowledge systems (Foucault, 2008; Wallenstein, 2013). Foucault's theories offer a valuable perspective for comprehending these dynamics and devising approaches to establish educational systems that are more inclusive and equitable (Deacon, 2006; Deere, 2019). The exploration, titled "Reframing Power: Foucault's Perspective on Colonial Education, Resistance, and Transformation," aims to tackle these challenges by analysing the complex connection between colonial legacies and current educational methods. Its ultimate goal is to suggest ways to bring about transformation and inclusivity. (Stein & Andreotti, 2017; Patel, 2014).

Colonial Education's Legacy: Foucault's Power Dynamics and Historical Context

Foucault's theory of power provides a compelling framework for analysing the lasting influence of colonial education systems on present-day global education. Understanding the structure and control of colonial educational systems requires an appreciation of his ideas on power, knowledge, and discourse. These systems served not only as educational tools, but also as political and ideological instruments, with the purpose of upholding colonial control by advancing Western values and suppressing indigenous cultures and knowledge systems.

The Theory of Power in Education by Foucault

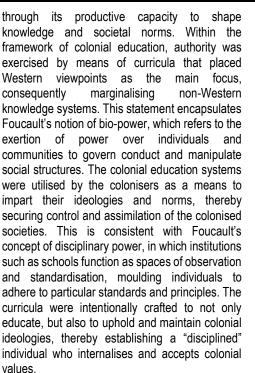
Foucault's theory asserts that power operates not only through repression, but also

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Process of decolonisation and acts of resistance against colonial powers

Foucault's ideas offer a conceptual structure for comprehending opposition to the enduring effects of colonialism in the field of education. He underscores the fact that power is invariably met with opposition, which can take on diverse manifestations, including grassroots movements, protests, and academic scholarship. The objective of these endeavours is to confront and undermine oppressive educational methods and facilitate substantial changes. Decolonisation of education entails the meticulous examination and alteration of curricula to incorporate a wide range of perspectives and knowledge systems. This process is crucial for dismantling the entrenched colonial power dynamics within educational systems. By integrating indigenous knowledge and epistemologies, educators can establish a more comprehensive and equitable educational setting, which questions the hegemony of Western scientific paradigms. Organisational metamorphosis

Foucault's analysis of institutional power implies that the process of decolonising education necessitates both modifications to the curriculum and a complete overhaul of the institutions themselves. This entails evaluating educational frameworks, policies, and practices in order to tackle systemic inequalities and foster fairness and inclusiveness. Institutions have the ability to stimulate social change by tackling the underlying factors that contribute to inequality and promoting fairer educational systems. It is essential to transform educational institutions in order to establish environments that foster diverse voices and perspectives, ultimately resulting in a fair and equitable society.

To summarise, Foucault's theory of power offers valuable insights into the lasting impact of colonialism on education systems worldwide. Through a comprehensive grasp of the historical circumstances and the distribution of power, educators and policymakers can collaborate to establish educational systems that are truly inclusive and capable of bringing about significant change, thereby promoting a fairer and more equitable society. The enduring impact of colonial education highlights the necessity for ongoing introspection and effort to dismantle oppressive systems and foster a more comprehensive and fairer educational environment.

Decolonising Curriculum: Foucault's Power Dynamics in Educational Paradigm

Decolonising the curriculum is an essential initiative in contemporary education aimed at dismantling the longstanding dominance of Western narratives and epistemologies (Sabaratnam, 2019; Seckinelgin, 2022). This process involves a thorough re-evaluation and transformation of educational content to include diverse perspectives and knowledge systems, thereby challenging the hegemony of Westerncentric education (Mbembe, 2016; Le Grange, 2016). The goal is to create educational programs that are inclusive and reflective of the histories, cultures, and contributions of marginalized communities, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment among all students (Hlatshwayo,

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Shawa, & Nxumalo, 2020; Waghid & Hibbert, 2018). This endeavour not only requires the inclusion of varied content but also necessitates a shift in pedagogical approaches to encourage critical thinking and active engagement with diverse perspectives (Gandolfini, 2021; Lumadi, 2021).

Foucault's Theory of Power in Decolonisation

Michel Foucault's theory of power offers a critical lens through which to understand the dynamics involved in decolonising the curriculum (Foucault, 1977; Gore, 1995). Foucault conceptualized power as pervasive and relational, functioning through discourse and knowledge rather than being merely repressive or held by a specific group (Rabinow, 1984; Smart, 2013). In the context of curriculum decolonisation, power is evident in how knowledge is constructed, legitimized, and disseminated within educational systems (Nemorin, 2017; Shepard, 2001).

Power Dynamics in Knowledge Production

Foucault's concept of power/knowledge posits that knowledge is not neutral but is produced within power relations that determine what is considered legitimate (Megill, 1992; Mockler, 2005). Decolonising the curriculum involves challenging these power dynamics by recognizing and valuing the epistemic contributions of marginalized groups (Mbembe, 2016; Wa Thiong'o, 1994).

Challenges in Decolonising the Curriculum

One of the significant challenges in decolonising the curriculum is the deeply ingrained Eurocentric mindset within educational systems (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Padayachee, Matimolane, & Ganas, 2018). Despite calls for change, there is often resistance to fully embracing decolonisation due to the persistent influence of European hegemony (Joseph, 2009; Oelofsen, 2015).

Transformative Approaches

Decolonising the curriculum requires a profound transformation in how knowledge is understood and imparted (Banks, 2020; Jacobi, 2011). This involves challenging established narratives and recognizing the importance of diverse perspectives across all fields of study, including mathematics and the sciences (Tanswell & Rittberg, 2020; Shahjahan et al., 2022).

Institutional and Structural Changes

Implementing a decolonised curriculum necessitates addressing structural and institutional barriers (Tolman & Lee, 2013; Johnson-Bailey & Lee, 2005). Efforts to decolonise higher education institutions have underscored the need to integrate an anti-racist agenda into their core visions (Icaza & Olivia, 2019; Motta, 2019).

In conclusion, decolonising the curriculum is not merely an intellectual pursuit but a moral and ethical imperative (Dei & Cacciavillani, 2021; Enslin & Hedge, 2021). It aims to rectify past injustices and create educational systems that are equitable and unbiased (Kumalo, 2021; Moosavi, 2022). This process requires a commitment to political transformation and a willingness to engage with a broad spectrum of viewpoints (de Jong, Icaza, & Olivia, 2019; Lumadi, 2021).

Subverting Dominance: Foucault's Power Dynamics in Resistance and Social Change

Michel Foucault's theory of power provides a profound framework for understanding the complexities of resistance and social change, particularly in the context of colonial legacies in education (Legg, 2007; McNay, 2013). Foucault's conceptualization of power diverges from traditional views of power as a hierarchical, topdown force (Foucault, 1975). Instead, he presents power as a pervasive network of relationships that operate at all levels of society (Foucault, 1980a). This perspective is especially pertinent when examining the enduring effects of colonialism in educational systems, as it highlights the subtle and diffuse nature of power that can perpetuate colonial ideologies even after formal colonial rule has ended (Jackson, 2003; Chakravartty & Ferreira da Silva, 2012).

Foucault's analysis of power is deeply embedded in the mechanisms and institutions

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through which it is exercised, including education (Foucault, 1975; Anil, 2023). He identifies several techniques of power, such as surveillance, normalization, and regulation, which are prevalent in educational settings (Foucault, 1979). These techniques serve to maintain control and reinforce existing hierarchies, often marginalizing certain groups and perpetuating colonial legacies (Ramhurry, 2022). In the context of postcolonial education, Foucault's ideas suggest that power is not simply imposed from above but is embedded within the very structures and practices of educational institutions (Foucault, 1980b). This understanding challenges educators and activists to critically examine and disrupt these power dynamics to foster more equitable educational environments (Rose, 2022).

One of Foucault's key assertions is that where there is power, there is always the possibility of resistance (Foucault, 1984). This resistance is not merely oppositional but can be transformative. offering opportunities to reconfigure power relations and challenge oppressive systems (Bandeen, 2009). In education, this involves questioning established norms and practices that perpetuate colonial ideologies and working towards more inclusive and empowering pedagogies (Perlego, 2023). By incorporating Foucault's insights, educators and activists can develop strategies that not only resist but also transform educational systems. This includes promoting critical thinking, encouraging diverse perspectives, and creating spaces for marginalized voices to be heard (Foucault, 1980a). Such efforts are crucial in dismantling the colonial legacies that continue to shape educational practices and policies (Chakravartty & Ferreira da Silva, 2012).

Empowerment is a key aspect of resistance in Foucault's framework. Education can be a powerful tool for empowering marginalized communities by providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to challenge systemic inequalities (Ramhurry, 2022). This involves ensuring equitable access to education and creating opportunities for marginalized groups to participate fully in educational processes (Rose, 2022). Initiatives such as scholarships, vocational training, and mentorship programs can help bridge the gap between marginalized communities and mainstream society, fostering a sense of agency and control over their own lives (Bandeen, 2009). By empowering individuals, these efforts contribute to broader societal transformation, challenging the power structures that sustain colonial legacies (Jackson, 2003).

Foucault's theory of power provides a nuanced understanding of how colonial legacies persist in educational systems and offers a framework for resistance and transformation (McNay, 2013). By recognizing the pervasive nature of power and the potential for resistance, educators and activists can work towards creating more just and equitable educational environments (Anil, 2023). This involves not only challenging existing power structures but also empowering marginalized communities to actively participate in shaping their educational experiences (Ramhurry, 2022).

Foucault's approach to power transcends traditional political struggles and sees power as an everyday, socialized, and embodied phenomenon (Foucault, 1980b). This understanding is crucial for recognizing how norms can become so embedded that they are beyond perception, leading individuals to discipline themselves without any overt coercion from others (Foucault, 1979). Contrary to many interpretations, Foucault believed in the possibilities for action and resistance (Foucault, 1984). He emphasized the importance of recognizing and questioning socialized norms and constraints (Foucault, 1980a). To challenge power is not about seeking some absolute truth, but about detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony within which it operates (Foucault, 1980b). Discourse, therefore, becomes a site of both power and resistance, with the potential to evade, subvert, or contest strategies of power (Rose, 2022).

In conclusion, Foucault's theory of power and resistance offers a valuable lens for examining the dynamics of dominance and subversion in educational contexts (Perlego, 2023). By understanding power as a network of relations and recognizing the inherent potential for

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resistance, educators and activists can develop strategies to challenge and transform oppressive systems, ultimately contributing to social change and the empowerment of marginalized communities (Chakravartty & Ferreira da Silva, 2012).

Decolonizing Power: Foucault's Influence on Indigenous Knowledge and Epistemological Frameworks

The concept of decolonizing knowledge involves a critical examination and reformation of Western-centric knowledge systems, aiming to recognize and legitimize alternative epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies (Levin, 2022; Tuck & Yang, 2012). This intellectual endeavour seeks to "disinfect" academic activities from colonial, political, economic, social, and cultural influences, promoting a more objective pursuit of knowledge and truth (The Conversation. 2017). Michel Foucault's theory of power provides a valuable framework for understanding the intricate relationship between knowledge and power structures, which is crucial in the context of decolonization (Foucault, 1972; Legg, 2007).

Foucault's work suggests that knowledge is not merely a tool for understanding the world but is deeply intertwined with power, shaping and being shaped by societal structures and institutions (Foucault, 1972; Legg, 2007). In the context of decolonization, incorporating Indigenous knowledge challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies, which have historically marginalized alternative ways of knowing (Mawere et al., 2022; Legg, 2007). Foucault's concept of epistemic violence-the silencing or devaluation of certain knowledge systemsresonates with the critique of Western scientific often exclude models that Indigenous perspectives (Levin, 2022; The Conversation, 2017). By integrating Indigenous knowledge, educational systems can disrupt these power dynamics, fostering a more inclusive and equitable approach to knowledge production and dissemination (Begum & Saini, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Indigenous knowledge systems, characterized by their holistic and interconnected

nature. offer alternative frameworks that emphasize the interdependence of all living beings and the environment (Mawere et al., 2022; Legg, 2007). This aligns with Foucault's idea of bio-power, where power is exercised over life through the regulation and normalization of knowledge (Foucault, 1972; Levin, 2022). By valuing Indigenous epistemologies, educational institutions can resist the homogenizing tendencies of Western knowledge systems and promote a diversity of perspectives that enrich the learning environment (Begum & Saini, 2019; Mawere et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Foucault's notion of governmentality-the way in which the state exercises control over the population through the regulation of knowledge-can be applied to understand the transformative potential of integrating Indigenous knowledge (Foucault, 1972; Levin, 2022). This process involves collaborating with Indigenous communities, respecting their autonomy, and ensuring that curricula reflect their values and traditions (Begum & Saini, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Such efforts can help dismantle the colonial legacy embedded in educational practices and support the development of a more just and inclusive educational ethos (The Conversation, 2017; Mawere et al., 2022).

Global Power Dynamics: Foucault's Theories Shaping Future Directions and Perspectives

Decolonizing education is an intricate and multifaceted global initiative that demands international cooperation and dialogue. Michel Foucault's theory of power offers a critical lens through which to understand this endeavour, as it challenges the entrenched power dynamics that have historically shaped educational systems (Foucault, 1977). Foucault's work provides a framework for examining how power operates within educational institutions and how it can be reconfigured to promote inclusivity and equity (Gore, 1995; Le Grange, 2016). Foucault's concept of power diverges from traditional views by emphasizing its relational, rather than hierarchical, nature. He posits that power is not merely repressive but also productive, shaping

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knowledge and subjectivities within educational contexts (Foucault, 1980). This perspective is crucial for understanding the complexities of decolonizina education. which involves dismantling colonial legacies that manifest differently across regions (Hlatshwayo, Shawa, & Nxumalo, 2020). For example, South Africa's approach to decolonizing education includes integrating indigenous cultures and languages while acknowledging historical injustices (Le Grange, 2016). Similarly, countries like India and Tanzania are revisiting their educational systems to better reflect local contexts and histories (Enslin & Hedge, 2023).

International Cooperation and Exchange of Ideas

Adopting a global perspective is essential for decolonizing education. International collaboration can help dismantle power structures by sharing diverse experiences and strategies (CCUNESCO, 2024). Foucault's idea of power as a network of relations suggests that power is omnipresent and operates at the most micro levels of social relations (Foucault, 1977). This implies that decolonizing education requires a collective effort to challenge and transform these pervasive power dynamics. By engaging in dialogue and exchanging ideas, countries can learn from each other's successes and challenges in creating more inclusive educational environments (Jae, 2023).

Decolonizing Curriculum and Pedagogy

A significant aspect of decolonizing education is re-evaluating curricula and pedagogical methods to include a broader range of perspectives and knowledge systems. Foucault's critique of traditional educational practices highlights the need to challenge dominant Western narratives and integrate marginalized voices (Foucault, 1977). This involves not just adding diverse content but fundamentally transforming how knowledge is produced and valued (Lindsay, 2023). By incorporating indigenous knowledge systems, educators can create curricula that reflect the diverse experiences of all students, fostering a more inclusive educational environment (CCUNESCO, 2024).

Institutional Transformation

Decolonizing education necessitates significant changes in the structure, policies, and practices of educational institutions. Foucault's analysis of power relations within institutions provides a lens to critically examine and address systemic disparities (Foucault, 1980). This transformation involves increasing diversity among faculty and leadership, creating inclusive environments for marginalized students, and building partnerships with local communities (Enslin & Hedge, 2023). By questioning and established disrupting power structures. institutions can become agents of social change, promoting a wide range of knowledge systems and fostering equity and justice (Le Grange, 2016).

Obstacles and Possibilities

Despite growing support for decolonizing education, significant obstacles remain, such as persistent power imbalances in global education partnerships (Jae, 2023). Foucault's insights into power dynamics emphasize the importance of continuous selfevaluation and scrutiny of the motivations behind educational initiatives (Foucault, 1980). Addressing these challenges requires examining the exclusive language used in educational discourse, challenging the lack of diversity in development methodologies, and addressing the unequal distribution of power in global collaborations (Lindsay, 2023).

Prospects for the Future

To ensure a positive future, it is essential to support educational systems that are fair, inclusive, and capable of effecting meaningful change. Foucault's work encourages ongoing dialogue and collaboration across borders to address the historical impacts of colonialism and promote diverse knowledge systems (Foucault, 1977). By actively engaging with these issues, educators, scholars, and activists can work together to create educational systems that are

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genuinely inclusive, laying the foundation for a more equitable and just society (CCUNESCO, 2024). As the decolonization movement gains momentum, it is crucial to remain vigilant and continuously challenge the power structures that perpetuate inequality and marginalization in education (Hlatshwayo, Shawa, & Nxumalo, 2020). In conclusion, Foucault's theories provide a valuable framework for understanding and addressing the power dynamics inherent in educational systems. By applying these insights to the decolonization of education, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable global educational landscape (Foucault, 1980).

Conclusion

Michel Foucault's theory of power provides a profound framework for understanding and addressing the enduring impacts of colonialism on educational systems worldwide (Woermann, 2012). His conceptualization of power as pervasive and relational, rather than merely hierarchical, offers critical insights into how colonial legacies continue to shape educational practices and policies (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Foucault's ideas about biopower and governmentality illuminate how colonial powers historically exercised control over colonized populations through educational systems, embedding Western narratives and marginalizing indigenous knowledge (Legg, 2007; Stoler, 1995). These systems were not just educational tools but were deeply political and ideological, designed to maintain colonial dominance by normalizing Western values and alternative epistemologies suppressing (Grosfoguel, 2007; Foucault, 1972).

The process of decolonizing education involves a comprehensive re-evaluation of curricula and pedagogical methods to include diverse perspectives and knowledge systems (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). This endeavour is not merely an intellectual pursuit, but a moral and ethical imperative aimed at rectifying past injustices and creating educational environments that are equitable and inclusive (Mayo, 2000; Fendler, 1998). Foucault's notion of power/knowledge is particularly relevant here, as it emphasizes the role of knowledge production in maintaining power structures and the potential for knowledge to be a site of resistance (Foucault, 1986; Peters, 2004). By integrating indigenous and marginalized knowledge systems, educators can challenge the dominance of Western scientific models and foster a more inclusive and representative educational environment (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Woermann, 2012).

Furthermore. Foucault's theory underscores the importance of institutional decolonizing transformation in education (Foucault, 1977). This involves not only curricular changes but also addressing systemic disparities and promoting equity and inclusivity within educational institutions (Baker & Heyning, 2004). By diversifying faculty and leadership, creating supportive environments for marginalized students, and building collaborative relationships with local communities. educational institutions can act as catalysts for social change (Maldonado-Torres, 2011; Legg. 2007). Foucault's insights into the pervasive nature of power highlight the need for continuous reflection and action to dismantle oppressive structures and promote a more just and equitable educational landscape (Gore, 1998; Woermann, 2012).

Ultimately, Foucault's theories offer a valuable lens for examining the dynamics of dominance and subversion in educational contexts (Stoler, 1995). By recognizing the complex interplay between power and resistance, educators and activists can develop strategies to challenge and transform oppressive systems, contributing to social change and the empowerment of marginalized communities (Brennan, 2006; Foucault, 1971). As the decolonization movement gains momentum, it is crucial to remain vigilant and continuously challenge the power structures that perpetuate inequality and marginalization in education (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Grosfoguel, 2007). Through ongoing dialogue and collaboration, we can work towards creating educational systems that are genuinely inclusive, laying the foundation for a more equitable and just society (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Woermann, 2012).

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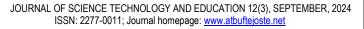
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