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Theological Decolonization and Training Local Translators

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Abstract: Over the past several years in the United States, one paradigm-shifting theme in Christian higher education has been decolonization, the decentering of white, Western scholarship when it comes to theology and biblical interpretation. Concurrently, in SIL there has been a push toward localization, adopting the perspectives and structures that will allow people in a regional context to function in locally viable ways instead of foreign ones. Although the intent of localization is to reshape numerous areas of operation and organizational culture, when it comes to the area of training, sometimes the default focus has been on getting more "locals" to hold the microphone in training contexts, but not necessarily on evaluating the recommended teaching methods, the content that is considered standard, or the resources recommended to partners. This article summarizes some of the important insights from emerging key voices speaking to the issue of decolonizing theological training in the American seminary context. Reflecting and retooling existing local translator training in light of these insights would further the goals of localization, indigenized translations, and appropriately contextualized Scripture engagement.

1 Introduction

In Evangelical spaces, one of the recurring themes that has accompanied the conversation around racial justice for minorities in the United States has been the call to "decolonize" theological education. For a certain segment of the Western church, the idea of decolonization can sometimes be fraught with political connotations and engender fear of a dangerous liberal infiltration that will lead to abandoning biblical truth. But when given a fair hearing, the heart of

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what minoritized Christians are actually advocating is very much in line with the goals of promoting flourishing in communities, and very much in line with the goal of localizing missions organizations and moving away from foreign modes of thinking and operating. Many of those who are involved in minority language Scripture translation efforts serve in communities who have suffered humiliation and harm under colonial systems, and many workers who come from Western, euro-centric cultures unknowingly perpetuate those systems in subtle ways worth examining.[1]

A major paradigm shift that will likely affect the functioning and mission of the American church for decades to come is the shift from Western, predominantly white, predominantly Reformed Protestant methods and material for teaching Bible interpretation and Christian doctrine, to a more inclusive, diverse, and more broadly representative ideal. This shift is already affecting Christian higher education, seminary training, and training for cross-cultural mission workers in the West, as it becomes more and more recognized that the Christian center of gravity is now in the global south.[2] We are being asked, as Mitzi J. Smith, the first African-American woman to earn a PhD in New Testament from Harvard puts it, to "move in the direction of a decentered introduction to the NT that privileges many voices, concerns and scholarship of minoritized communities" (Smith et al. 2018:vii).

In his proposal of a framework for theological education that deals with the realities of diversity and plurality in a connected and globalized world, Seed (2021) traces the development of the idea of contextualization and its influence on Evangelical missions. He notes that the current Evangelical understanding of contextualization includes not just a "translational" element of assimilating the gospel into the life of the people in a specific cultural context, but also a counter-cultural "critical" element, which both affirms and challenges the historic context (116–117). Calls to decolonize could be seen as a part of this accepted Evangelical challenge to appropriately contextualize theological education by critically assessing the ways colonial Christianity, colonial languages, and imposed Western educational values and methods have shaped the cognitive environments and social contexts in which the word of God currently must be contextualized. Valuable insights from the recently renewed call to decolonize theological education could inform the way Bible translation organizations go about training local translation workers to exegete Scripture, so that they can

[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Bible Translation Conference, Dallas, TX, 15 October 2021.

[2] See for example the impact of missiologist and historian Andrew Walls on Christian higher education (Weber 2021).

produce well-contextualized translations that are not as hindered by arbitrary Western cultural norms and values.

For example, in the summer of 2021 InterVarsity published the *First Nations Version New Testament*, an English version that attempts to capture speech and thought patterns familiar to North American Indigenous communities. The dedication of the *First Nations Version* reads:

> We pray the *First Nations Version* will bring healing to those who have suffered under the dominance of colonial governments who, with the help of churches and missionary organizations, often took our land, our languages, our cultures, and even our children. As our Tribal Nations work hard to reclaim what has been stolen, it is our hope that the colonial language that was forced upon us can now serve our people in a good way, by presenting Creator Sets Free (Jesus) in a more culturally relevant context (Rain Ministries 2021).

In speaking of this new version, project leader Terry Wildman told *Christianity Today*, "We believe it's very important that the Gospel be kind of decolonized and told in a Native way, but being accurate to the meaning of the original language and understanding that it's a different culture" (Miller 2021).

What does that mean? First, for those who are not as familiar with the conversation, I would like to clarify what is often meant by decolonization and summarize valuable takeaways that can be applied to the work of equipping and assisting local Bible translators. Second, I would like to propose three areas of examination and reflection for evaluating exegetical workshops or other Bible translation training that organizations are providing their local partners: Who teaches? How do we teach? What do we teach? Should anyone feel inspired to take up the challenge of retooling an existing training event in their context, the appendix offers a set of reflection questions that could guide an evaluation process.

2 Applicable principles of decolonization

Roman Catholic New Testament scholar Fernando Segovia has published a series of essays under the title *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins*,[3] in which he argues that the history of biblical interpretation before postmodernism focused on methods of determining the "correct" or "objective" meaning of the text. Although these methods were often presented as a form of scientific inquiry, Segovia claims this was a guise for centering white, Western, male perspectives and using those perspectives as tools of hegemony. He argued that

[3] Segovia 2000.

multiple voices from diverse perspectives interacting with the Bible and dialoguing about the methods we use to study the text, the interpretations we accept as correct, and the people we hold up as experts in the discipline of biblical studies was a needed corrective. His focus was on reforming pedagogy, since theological training and education is the area that this hegemony is most powerfully manifest and maintained.

Two decades of conversation about the various ways culture impacts the interpretation, translation, and reading of the Bible have followed. Minority scholars and ministers are still on the margins in many ways and are still imploring the Western church to take seriously the necessity of decentering white, Western methods, interpretations, and experiences.[4] This call has increased in volume as various crises and significant cultural moments have brought ongoing racial divisions and inequities in the United States and other countries with colonial histories into sharper focus.

Like many other broad concepts in sociology and education, terms are used and applied in different ways by different practitioners, and some of the perspectives on what constitutes decolonized biblical studies are likely to make Evangelicals very skeptical and nervous.[5] In light of this potential for misunderstanding, it would be helpful to summarize the specific recommendations in view here for teaching theology and biblical exegesis and translation. Evangelicals could generally embrace these recommendations without compromising any of their core faith commitments about the authority

[4] For an overview of the history of calls to decolonize pedagogy and theological education in Latin America, see Hinze (2016). The decolonization process is described as teaching how to unlearn coloniality. "This pedagogy confronts destructive patterns of thought, feeling, decision-making, and acting that leave their marks on the psyche and the body. Decolonizing is deeply personal, but it is also always geographical and as such cultural, economic, social, and political....[U]nlearning coloniality entails decolonizing epistemology—the very conditions of how we think about ourselves, the world, and God. To accomplish this requires epistemological disobedience—that is, challenging the colonial matrix of knowledge and power, and the ways this matrix (mis)shapes one's ways of understanding one's self, others, and the basic conditions for thinking and acting" (2016:48–49).

[5] For example, many decolonized readings of texts are based on principles of critical theory and assume that implicit power dynamics behind the text of the Bible itself must be identified and deconstructed as part of the hermeneutical process. Many Evangelicals would not find these interpretation methods consistent with their ideas of what it means to have a "high view of Scripture." In this article, I am arguing for applying principles of decolonization to the pedagogy involved in theological training and the methods and expertise recommended in exegetical training, which is a different task.

and sufficiency of Scripture. These principles are encouraged at Evangelical institutions of higher learning and have been themes repeated over and over again in the past year by minority Christian leaders asking for change in this area.

- Diversify the "canon" of recommended texts, commentaries, and exegetical resources and make sure experts come from a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds, life experiences, cultures, and Christian traditions.
- Analyze the ways pedagogy privileges some backgrounds, cultures, or experiences over others and work to mitigate the ways students are expected to conform to dominant cultural norms in the ways they learn, express themselves, and demonstrate mastery.
- Involve learners more equitably in selecting content and curriculum, in validating the expertise of authorities, in setting goals and objectives, and in creating knowledge.
- Recognize the inherent power dynamics in teacher/student or expert/novice interactions, especially when teachers and experts belong to a privileged culture, gender, or language group.
- Incorporate awareness that colonization, poverty, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination and oppression experienced by marginalized people cause lasting psychological trauma. Effective exegetical training must be "trauma-informed" to deal sensitively with learners who have been victimized by these systems.

3 Who teaches? Reflecting on diversity of instructors

As foreign translation organizations have emphasized efforts to "localize" their organizational presence in the countries in which they operate, there has been progress in many places toward more inclusive and diverse teaching staff for workshops and other training events. In SIL Mexico for example, a variety of workshops that in the past were taught in English by Western, ex-patriate instructors are now taught in Spanish by Mexican, Latin American, and Indigenous instructors.

However, it is important to ask if these changes in teaching personnel have created organic changes in teaching methods and content. If organizations have simply trained a more diverse-looking group to do the same things the white Western teachers did, using the same Western resources, and teaching according to the same Western learning preferences, then the result falls short of truly decolonized local ownership.

Even with local instructors doing the training, there are most likely still racial or ethnic hierarchies in place, depending on the history of the country. As

Smith puts it, "Often race, ethnicity, and gender are not just the elephant in the room; it built the room" (Smith et al. 2018:3). If we are trading a North American or European colonizer power dynamic for a more local flavor of colonizer power dynamic, that is not decolonization. For example, Mexico is a colonized country and the Indigenous partners we train are members of racialized minority groups. It is not sufficient to pay attention only to racial power dynamics between white North American and European translation workers and their Mexican or Latin American colleagues, because Mexico and other countries of Latin America have their own colonial pasts that influence the context. Instructors need to understand how racial or ethnic oppression and privilege work in the national context they work in, not just how they work in their various countries of origin or on international teams.

It is also important to understand the dynamics of tokenism in the training context and proactively work against it. In Latin America, it might be true that Indigenous groups under Spanish colonizing culture have some similar experiences and traumas. It might be true that Hispanic members have some similar experiences navigating imported Anglo-American norms in an organizational culture. But Indigenous cultures and languages are diverse and so are the cultures and colonial histories of Latin American countries. In attempts to promote diversity on teaching staff, it is necessary to guard against majority culture members' tendency to flatten the unique cultural perspectives of a people group into a generically representative Mexican Indigenous or Latin American perspective.

4 How do we teach? Reflecting on decentering Western methods

If more diverse teaching staff does not significantly change how material is taught, then there is more decolonizing work to do. One kind of training offered by SIL Mexico is focused on mastering information and developing skills that are considered important so that translators will understand and interpret Scripture well before they attempt translation. For example, there are workshops that teach about the cultural background of Israel, as well as the translation of key biblical terms, specific biblical genres like poetry, and certain NT books that are challenging. Aspects of culture affect the approach to presenting new information and teaching new skills. In SIL Mexico, many of the workshops have been designed in ways that privilege Western teaching and learning preferences, and they need to be evaluated for the ways they impose these preferences as normative and correct in disadvantaging colonial ways.

Most cross-cultural workers have been trained in cross-cultural competence and communication, and many of them apply this awareness to their

personal interactions in the communities where they work and in their personal cross-cultural relationships. But they are sometimes not as cognizant of the Western biases in their teaching, and they are not as knowledgeable about how people prefer to learn in the cultural contexts where they work. It can often be the case that local partners are trained by Westerners to teach in ways that minimize and devalue their preferred ways of teaching, learning, and demonstrating mastery.

Three decades ago, cross-cultural education specialists Earle and Dorothy Bowen noted, "In most parts of the world colonized by Europeans, the assumption made by colonizers was that there had been no educational system in place until they came. Therefore, they imposed their style of education on the people and ignored the existing educational system" (Bowen and Bowen 1991:204). Education specialists and learners who are minorities in a Western culture dominant educational setting have noted many ways that Western teaching norms fail to prioritize the learning preferences of Indigenous or other non-Western learners. Areas that can be problematic involve what aspects of teaching and learning are centered and elevated and what aspects are undervalued or excluded.

For example, it is widely noted that Western teaching styles tend to elevate the abstract over the concrete or embodied,[6] inductive learning over deductive learning, print modes over oral modes, expertise in disembodied texts over expertise in role models, verbal explanations and notetaking over modeling or demonstration, individual work and accountability over group work and accountability, competition over cooperation, and the use of direct vs. indirect communication. Not all of these values will be a good match for a specific non-Western learning context.[7]

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[6] Minority theologians point out that much of the Western theological endeavor has been defining and debating abstract ideas, and this is what those in that tradition tend to focus on when they read and apply Scripture. Cherokee missiologist Randy Woodley cautions against interpreting Scripture through lenses of Platonic dualism inherited from the Greeks, a worldview that "absolutizes the realm of the abstract and reduces the importance of the concrete, disengaging them from one another" (Woodley 2019). At times Western missionaries have been quick to label Indigenous attempts at cultural contextualization of the Bible's message syncretistic, all the while failing to acknowledge the degree to which cultural syncretism has shaped their own theological ideas, biblical interpretations, and ethics.

[7] These priorities are typical of the Western "banking education" model that has been imposed through colonial education systems around the world. The need to address these differences has been noted by development workers approaching training from the

Western-style courses tend to arrange teaching schedules around compartmentalized sessions focusing on decontextualized abstract subjects, and during these sessions, we frequently switch learning tasks to prevent boredom. Many non-Western cultures prefer holistic or integrated tasks applied to more concrete problems, where extended periods of time are devoted to the task before moving on to something different.[8]

Instructors should be informed about ways colonial school systems may have inflicted racial trauma on Indigenous people groups by using education as a means of forced assimilation into a dominant culture or language. Many minority language speakers have experienced devastating attempts in classroom settings to eradicate their language and culture, and when the training we offer closely replicates these kinds of classroom settings, it can be psychologically triggering.

Additionally, perceived power dynamics or cultural power distance mismatches may have a powerful effect on the learning environment. The ways teachers provide evaluation and feedback, and the ways students are asked for evaluation and feedback should take into consideration the cultural dynamics of saving face and politeness strategies. An important part of course planning and preparation is incorporating feedback from students and learning from each training session how to improve. When instructors seek feedback on their courses or training, they should make sure that they are providing decolonized channels of feedback. Individually written, anonymous course evaluation forms or surveys privilege many Western values and preferences and might not be the best way to get honest constructive feedback. They also tend to impose pre-determined categories of what should be evaluated and the standards that should be used. It might be the case that learners would prefer oral debriefing sessions with a neutral intermediary who will communicate the feedback to instructors at a later time. Or learners might prefer ways to provide spontaneous, relational feedback throughout the course instead of cumulative evaluation at the end. Some learners might prefer communicating with the other learners and sending a spokesperson who then delivers a group consensus to the instructors. Instructors should reflect on whether the ways they are asking for and giving feedback are appropriately sensitive to what is considered shameful and honorable or disrespectful and polite in the context.

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theoretical framework of educators such as Paulo Freire (e.g., Participatory Methods) and Jane Vella (e.g., Learning that Lasts).

[8] For an example of application of non-Western learning preferences to course design, see Schwab (2018).

5 What do we teach? Reflecting on decentering Western materials

If a banquet is a metaphor for theology resources offered to learners, for a long time whatever white, Western, Enlightenment-influenced males brought to the table has been associated with the main course. Students have been taught to view these resources as the "meat and potatoes," the nutritious and hearty part of the meal that will promote intellectual growth and health. Instead of viewing the biblical scholarship done from Eastern, African, Hispanic, Caribbean, or Indigenous perspectives, or from a woman's perspective as an additional dish for the main course, (perhaps mole and tortillas instead of meat and potatoes), these offerings have often been treated as a sauce or spice that brings additional flavor to the white, male, Enlightenment fare. In some cases, these resources from other perspectives have not been viewed as real food, but rather an indulgent dessert that could finish off an already satisfying meal. Or they have been treated like exotic and somewhat disgusting dishes meant to be sampled and pushed away. Perhaps some of the feminist scholarship and liberation theology was deemed so unhealthy and unpalatable, it got scraped into the garbage before anyone got to the table. Decolonization is a plea to put all the scholarship out on the same table as essential to the banquet.

When examining training, instructors must look at where they get the content they decide people need to master in order to be considered qualified and competent, and they should ask which experts are informing this content. If the instructors are only consulting exegetical resources and commentaries written by Westerners, centering that content to the exclusion of other perspectives would be considered a form of theological colonialism. Similarly, if the only resources held out to learners as expert, reliable, and trusted are written by white Westerners, it communicates a hierarchy that devalues and diminishes other perspectives.[9]

[9] Gaddis (2016) examines how consultants handled translation controversies over the translation of *oinos* in a Nigerian context. Chapter 5 "Cultural Imperialism and the Controversy over Cana" deals with subtle forms of cultural imperialism, something that occurs when it is expected that Western cultural assumptions will dominate or have a privileged influence on debated translation decisions. Although his case study involved the process of giving consultant feedback on completed translations, the tendency to subtly pressure learners toward conventional Western theological assumptions and interpretive choices can affect every level of translation training. Because it is a form of implicit bias to assume that Western interpretations are "naturally" more correct or rational, rooting that out and addressing the unfair hierarchies it imposes requires intentional reflection.

Trauma awareness is another important area of consideration when reflecting on how learners are taught to interpret and interact with biblical texts. Being trauma-informed in the context of exegetical training means being aware of ways specific biblical texts have been used in a particular social or cultural context to justify the domination of one group over another. For example, New Testament scholar Esau McCaulley (2020:71) discusses how the exegesis of Romans 13:1–7 about submitting to governing authorities must be approached sensitively in communities who have suffered under unjust policing or have used civil disobedience to protest racial injustice. In communities where biblical texts have been used to justify or rationalize the abuse or subjugation of women, those texts must be approached in a trauma-informed way. In communities who have experienced forced displacement at the hands of colonizers, Old Testament texts about Israelite conquest must be handled in a trauma-informed way.

If a colonial language and colonial religious settings have been part of formative experiences in the lives of translators, then key terms lists in the colonial language might bring up baggage that needs to be unpacked before translators can recommend how to best render those terms in their other languages. As theologian Willie James Jennings explains, "Indeed, it is as though Christianity, wherever it went in the modern colonies, inverted its sense of hospitality. It claimed to be the host, the owner of the spaces it entered, and demanded native people enter its cultural logics, its ways of being in the world and its conceptualities" (Tisby 2021:9). For example, if the colonial language word for 'sin' has been used in a translator's background to discourage morally neutral Indigenous cultural practices or Indigenous language use, or has been used to engender race-based shame, then instructors need to be aware of this racial trauma and help translators process it.[10]

This area of trauma awareness is an area that Bible translation organizations need to pay more attention to in order to truly promote holistic flourishing in communities in response to Scripture engagement initiatives. If instructors are insensitive to or unaware of the ways Scripture and Christian terminology or concepts have been used by colonizing or dominating cultural power brokers, they will not be as effective at helping local translators contextualize them well in local languages so they can be used in healing and empowering ways instead. Michael Anderson uses the helpful metaphor of treaty and land to describe how Western missionaries and Bible scholars have often entered Indigenous contexts with an attitude of ownership concerning the biblical text and its interpretation. He advocates an "Aware-Settler" hermeneutic that is always analyzing the ways that Western Bible scholarship and interpretations have failed to "share the land" of the Bible with colonized

[10] Thank you to *FNV* translator Terry Wildman for this insightful observation.

cultures, and the damage that this has already caused and needs to be reckoned with in Indigenous Christian contexts. By first recognizing "the impropriety of Settler academics' and Settler religious institutions' claims to ownership of these texts," it is possible to recognize "the sovereignty of the different groups that 'live' on the Land of the texts" (Anderson 2019:61).

Decolonization of content also means placing more emphasis on the role local partners have in arriving at the biblical interpretations that are considered authoritative. Translators come with expertise in their language, cultural frames of reference, and community norms. They bring experience and wisdom from their experience with God, their service to the church, and their own spiritual maturity which produces wisdom, discernment, and character. Decolonized training seeks out opportunities to acknowledge, validate, and showcase the expertise local translators bring to the table, instead of simply pointing to the expertise and authority of outsiders. Instructors and course designers should ask how local pastoral wisdom, local experiences, and local expertise are informing not just the translation process, but also the exegetical process and the process of evaluating competing interpretations.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this introduction to exploring how the idea of decolonization can be practically applied to Bible translation training is intended to invite conversation about how to evaluate the ways Western values and perspectives are imposed on non-Western colleagues and collaborators. The goal is not only to remove roadblocks to truly local expressions of Bible translation organizations and truly indigenous translated scriptures. It is also about decentering Western methods and material in order to make space for the whole church to hear from and edify the whole church.

Returning to the *First Nations Version* mentioned above, translator Terry Wildman described the response to his decolonized translation from English-speaking communities around the world in an interview with *Faithfully Magazine*.

> And so it's really been amazing. We've had people from Ireland and Great Britain that have told us they love it. We've had Asian people tell us they love it, and use it, and read it. So we believe it's going to go to a lot of non-Native people, and we think that as we look at other Indigenous cultures, this may be a tool, a way to help them connect. So we see this as not only a gift to our Native people, but a gift from our Native people to other cultures and people, and to the dominant culture (Upshaw 2021).

This is the goal of the whole decolonization endeavor. It is about making space for the gifts that would bless the whole church if there was a more intentional effort to remove barriers that colonial attitudes and the centering of white Western perspectives and preferences have put in the way. Then the church could sit together at a more delicious, more bountiful, and more satisfying banquet.

Appendix

The following questions can be used as a tool for reflection on how current training events might need to be retooled to move in the direction of decolonization.

Reflection questions for evaluating Bible translation training events

Teachers and learners

What proportion of the teaching staff are teaching cross-culturally?

How do expectations about power distance between students and teachers or experts and novices in the cultural context affect the training event and have these expectations been adequately taken into consideration?

Is there an added layer of increased or decreased power differential for some staff because of differences between them and the typical student (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, economic status, education level)? How are these power differentials mediated at the training event?

Are there context-specific ethnic tensions or colonial histories that potentially affect the way teaching staff interacts with students or the way students perceive the teaching staff?

What proportion of the staff are "local"?

How does the diversity of the teaching staff compare to the demographics of a typical cohort of learners?

How much latitude do local teachers have to select or modify the content, schedule, teaching methods, or forms of evaluation?

What proportion of students are learning in a language that is not their preferred language for learning? What accommodations are made to mediate the difficulties this might present?

Are learners able to process their learning and work on instructional tasks with others who speak their preferred learning language?

Are learners able to process their learning and work on instructional tasks with others who share their cultural frames of reference?

What is done to ensure students in a significant minority group (e.g., because of gender, socio-economic status, marital status, age, race/culture/ethnicity,

education level, faith background, or language proficiency) are meaningfully included and respected?

What kind of trauma is typical in the background of students (e.g., child abuse, gender-based violence or discrimination, racialization and racism, displacement, religious persecution, language-based discrimination, food insecurity, natural disasters, war, corrupt policing/justice system)?

Is the teaching staff sufficiently educated on relevant history and current events in their teaching context to be aware of content or expectations that students with trauma may be sensitive to?

What kinds of classroom situations or interpersonal interactions typically make a student feel ashamed or anxious, and what efforts are taken to avoid or mitigate these situations?

Are student achievements validated in a way that confers honor in their context?

Authority and expertise

What resources are instructors using to inform the content of the training event?

- What proportion of these resources are authored or presented by non-Westerners?
- What proportion have been translated from a different language or cultural context?
- What proportion of these resources are authored or presented by people who share the typical student's cultural frames of reference?
- What proportion of these resources are authored or presented by people who are representative of various student's faith backgrounds (e.g., Pentecostal/charismatic, Muslim background believer, Roman Catholic)?
- What proportion of these resources are authored or presented by people who speak the typical student's language?

What resources are students specifically directed to interact with or consult for answers?

- What proportion of these resources are authored or presented by non-Westerners?
- What proportion are translated from a different language or cultural context?
- What proportion of these resources are authored or presented by people who share the typical student's cultural frames of reference?

What proportion of these resources are authored or presented by people who speak the typical student's language?

If students differ from the majority of people held up in the course as experts (either the instructors or resource providers) are they introduced to any experts who represent their perspective (culture/ethnicity, faith tradition) or have similar life experiences?

In what ways does this course acknowledge, validate, or showcase the expertise students bring?

Are there ways in which local lifestyles or life experiences would be perceived as abnormal, substandard, or disadvantaged by the experts held up as role models?

Training methods

Think about the following aspects of learning and whether this element dominates the training event, whether the aspect is balanced with other aspects, or whether the aspect is rare or missing. Then evaluate whether the aspects that are dominating make sense given what is known about power dynamics, student backgrounds, and student learning preferences. If aspects are rare or missing, evaluate whether incorporating them into the training event might be more beneficial to students. If student preferences in these areas are not known, how could evaluations be designed to get informative feedback?

Students spend time working alone.

Students are coached by a mentor or more experienced peer.

Students read texts or interpret print material (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, slides).

Students spend time listening to experts present content.

Students spend time listening to experts evaluate students' contributions or performance.

Students spend time listening to other students.

Students are accountable for individual work.

Students are accountable for group work.

Students speak for themselves as an individual.

Students speak through a designated spokesperson.

Students are asked to perform spontaneously during the course session without preparation or practice.

Students are asked to present something they have prepared or practiced outside of the course session.

Students observe an expert model doing something they will be asked to do.

Students copy or mimic an expert model.
Students provide feedback to their peers.
Students provide feedback to the instructors.
Students create content or make decisions that shape the instruction.
Students learn general definitions, principles, or procedures and then are expected to apply them to specific examples, problems, or tasks.
Students are given examples, scenarios, or role plays and asked to derive general principles, problem-solving skills, or procedures from them.
Learning begins with looking at a whole and proceeds to break the whole into component parts.
Learning begins with looking at component parts and builds up to understanding a whole.
Students interact with abstract concepts or ideas.
Students interact with concrete examples, stories, and scenarios.
The course schedule compartmentalizes discrete topics or subjects into short sessions.
The course schedule allows for extended time working on holistic tasks that integrate multiple topics or subjects in an applied way.
The training event closely replicates a classroom experience in a colonialist school setting.
Activities foster a competitive environment between students.
Activities foster a cooperative environment between students.

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