

How to decolonize your classroom

Key points:

- South Africa is one of many countries that has previously been colonized.
- To this day, South Africa has a highly controlled curriculum (ATP + workbooks) where the usual mode of instruction is lecturing.
- Imagine a train. Learners are on the train. When a learner gets off the train (falls behind, doesn't understand the content), the train keeps moving, and the learner can't get back on the train even if they want to. We call this the curriculum train.
- Therefore, the problem with the curriculum train is that it requires teachers to keep teaching new material even if the approaching ("slow") learners are falling behind. If a learner falls behind, they may never catch up. The system is designed to continue educating the strong learners only.
- The problem with lecturing is that it creates opposition with the learners. The strong learners try to prove you wrong while the approaching learners disengage.
- Assuming the South African government continues to enforce the curriculum train, these problems will probably continue to exist.
- However, there are two things you can do to decolonize your classroom and help *all* the learners, not just the strong ones.
 - Apply what you learned from the other audio workshops. Make a class routine. Teach literacy effectively and in a fun way. Make your lessons engaging and cognitively challenging. Turn your learners into learning machines. Become a facilitator of fun instead of an authoritarian lecturer.
 - The foundation to being successful with most of this is to develop relationships with your learners. Spend time with them during break. Ask them questions to get to know them. Share personal things about yourself so they can get to know you. Show them you are a real person who cares about them, and don't be afraid to smile.