



Name

Decolonising OT epistemology: Is it needed and how should it be done?

Dr Fasloen Adams
University of Witwatersrand
Johannesburg, South Africa

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG





Why decolonised OT education for Africa?

OT epistemology is based on/ situated in Western worldview

Influences all OT curricula including in the global South

Influences textbooks and journal articles





Why decolonised OT education for Africa?

Knowledge is never neutral.

Can continue inequalities in many ways...

Knowledge might not be inline with African realities. "Real world relevance".





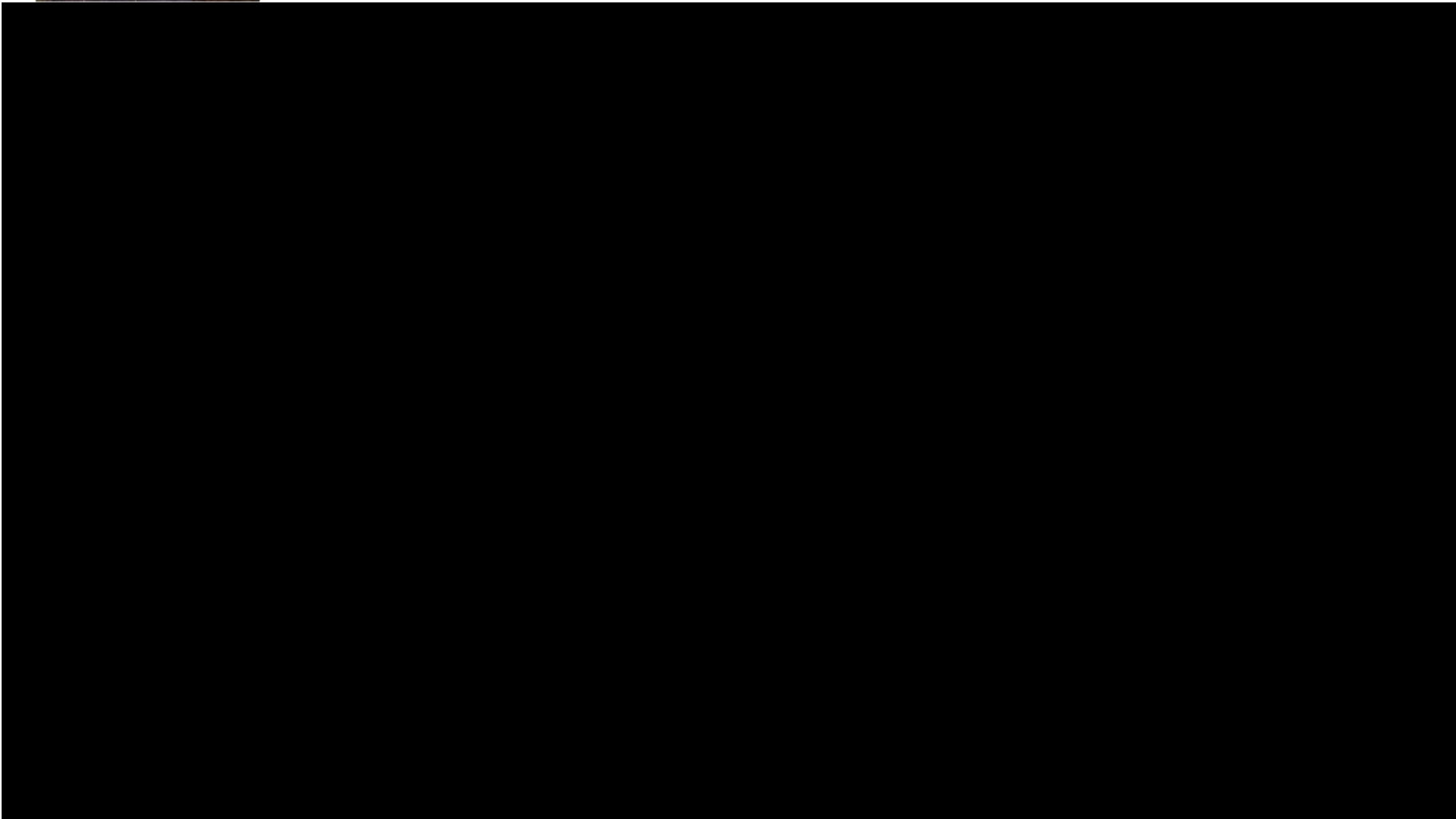
Why decolonised OT education for Africa?

- “So eventually our personal knowledge became eroded and replaced by a knowledge made in a foreign land, and was the main way we knew how to practice as a profession in SA. Eventually, we left ourselves outside the doors of our classrooms as we were fed a diet of colonial professional knowledge.” (Pillay and Kathard: 2015: 197)





What is decolonised education?





What is decolonised education?

- **Exploring and development of indigenous knowledge.**
- **Decolonisation through Africanising and contextualising.**
- **Emancipation: Respecting the African voice.**





Decolonisation of curricula: How should it be done?

Various suggestions including....

- Steps: rediscovery and recovery; mourning; dreaming; commitment and action.” (Poka Laenui, Chilisa 2012)
- Elements: deconstruction and reconstruction; self-determination and social justice; ethics, language, internationalisation of Indigenous experiences, history and critique. (Smith 1999)





Completing the story...A regional approach

- Coordination of research...collaborative research.
- Decide on the topic under collective investigation
- Focus U/G and P/G research





Rediscover and reconstruct African specific epistemology: Some questions to consider:

In general:

1. What terminology are we adopting?
2. Translatability of excising terminology to local context?
3. How do we interrogate the local relevance of existing knowledge?
4. Are we exploring the critical questions relevant to the context?





Rediscover and reconstruct African specific epistemology: Some questions to consider:

In research:

1. What language are we using?
2. Who should do the research?
3. What type of research should we do?
4. What research tools should we use to gather the information? A translated tool?
5. How do we ensure relevance to our students/ context and clients?





- Bell R. 2002. Understanding African philosophy: A cross-cultural approach to classic and contemporary issues. New York: Routledge.
- Guajardo, A.; Kronenberg, F. and Ramugondo, E. 2015. Southern occupational therapies: Emerging identities, epistemologies and practices. South African Journal of Occupational Therapy. 45(1): 3-10.
- Le Grange, L., 2016, Decolonising the university curriculum, South African Journal of Higher Education 30(2), 1-12.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1981. Decolonising the mind. Curry, J (edt). Harare. Zimbabwe Publishing House.
- Pillay, M. and Kathard, H. 2015. Decolonising health professional's education. African Journal of Rhetoric. ISSN 1988-2054. 7: 193-227.
- Smith, L.T., 1999, Decolonising methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples, Zed Books Ltd, London.

Video 1: What is decolonised education?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQYxNB-L32o>

