

# Decolonizing the curriculum and equitable open knowledge: affordances of localized open educational resources



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# Theme of the Open Access Week

- According to the 2018 Open Access Week Advisory Committee the theme for the 2018 International Open Access Week is “**designing equitable foundations for open knowledge.**”

(Shockey, 2018)



[openaccessweek.org](http://openaccessweek.org)

# Aim

- The aim of this presentation is to determine the affordances of **localized open educational resources** in terms of **decolonizing the curriculum** and **equitable open knowledge**.

de- (move  
away)

colonization  
>colonize >  
colony

colony > L.  
colōnia >  
colōnus  
(farmer)

colōnus > colō  
(cultivate) >  
Proto-Indo-  
European  
\*k<sup>w</sup>elh (to turn)

curriculum  
(course) > currō  
(to run or move  
quickly).

Proto-Italic  
\*korzō > Proto-  
Indo-European  
\*kers- (to run)



# Decolonizing the curriculum

- Definition
  - Wolfenden *et al.* (2018:62): “Incorporating **local knowledges** and **locally-relevant materials**; removing or restructuring **colonial legacies** in education structures and materials”.
  - Mggwashu (2018): “foregrounds **African identities** and world views”.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Africa\\_\(satellite\\_image\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Africa_(satellite_image).jpg)

# Decolonizing the curriculum

- According to Le Grange (2016:5) “decolonisation is not an event but a **process** and it is not necessarily easy to achieve”.
- Le Grange (2016:6) suggests that decolonization “involves a process of change that does not necessarily involve destroying Western knowledge but in decentring it or perhaps deterritorialising it (making it something other than what it is)”.

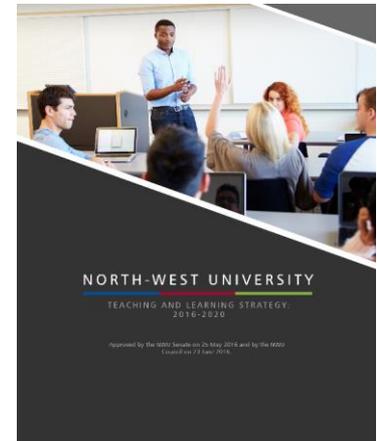
# Wider context

- #FeesMustFall
- Digital divide
  - Lesame (2005:3)

“The term ‘digital divide’ refers to the **gap** between the access of individuals, households, organisations, countries and regions at different socio-economic levels to ICTs and Internet usage. Thus, the digital divide not only refers to the gap between the affluent, urban ‘haves’ and the impoverished, rural ‘have-nots’, but also to the digital and ICT chasm between the African continent and the developed world”.
  - In South Africa, the digital divide – in terms of experience and access to technology – is very complex with great differences in **wealth** and **access** to technology, often aligned with **historical** differences in terms of racial backgrounds (Hoadley, 2017)

# NWU & Decolonizing the curriculum

- NWU Teaching & Learning Strategy 2016-2020:
  - North-West University will engage in a systematic process of **curriculum transformation** and renewal in order to equip its graduates to address the challenges of twenty-first century society.
  - Curricula [should] provide an orientation to various paradigms of thought and explanatory systems including, where appropriate, **indigenous knowledge systems**, so that NWU students and graduates are introduced to different intellectual traditions, and are able to substantiate their worldview and the principles that inform their conduct,



# Open access > OER

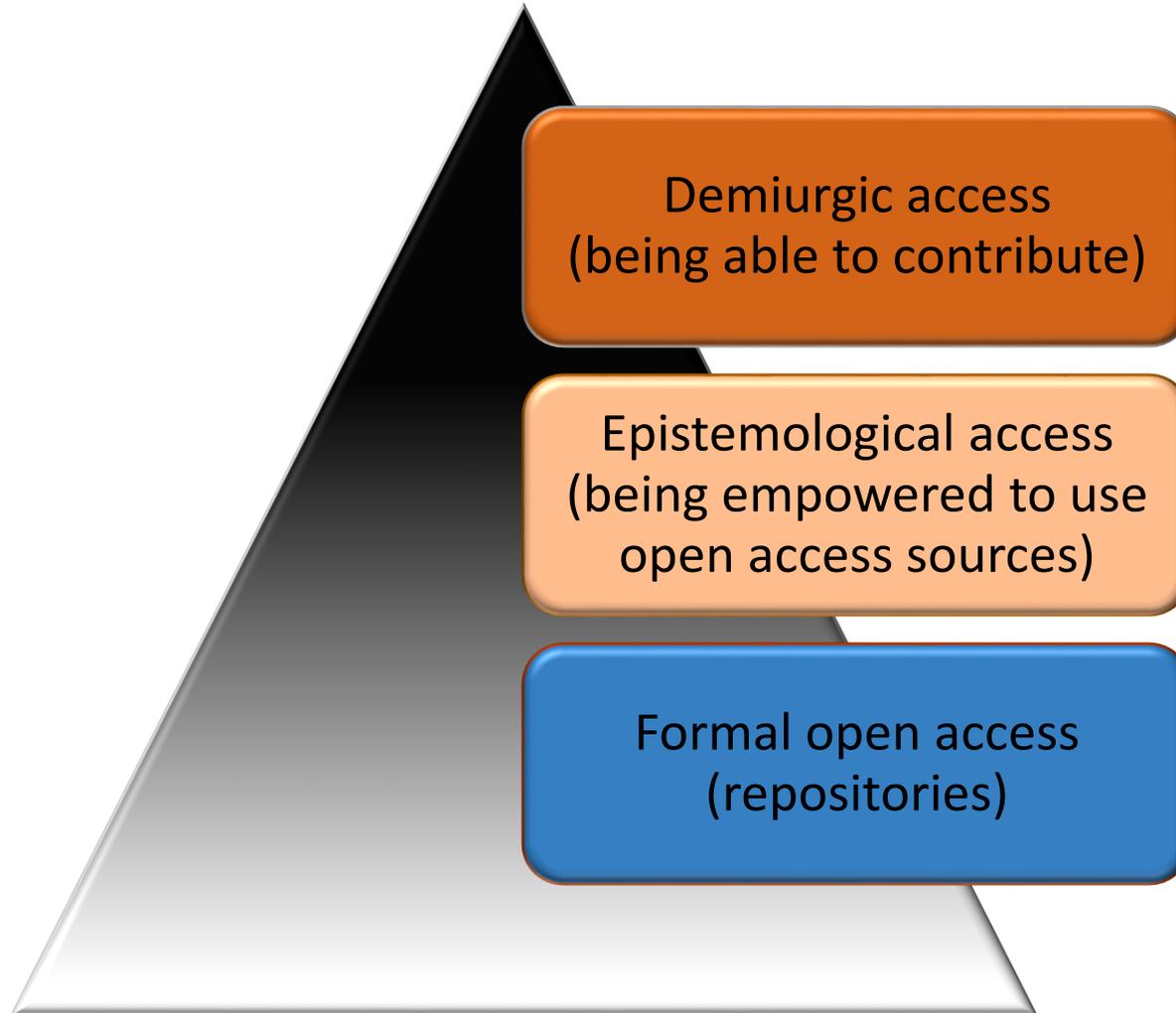
- Open access to information is described as "the free, immediate, online access to the results of scholarly research, and the right to use and re-use those results as you need" (Open Access Week, 2018).



# (Open) access

- Morrow (2007:2) defines **formal access**, in an educational context, as “access to the institutions of learning, and it depends on factors such as admission rules, personal finances, and so on” while **epistemological access** “is access to knowledge” and that teaching “is the practice of enabling epistemological access”.

# Levels of open access



# Demiurgic access

- From dēmiourgós: “worker for the common good/ people”) > δῆμιος (dēmios) + ἔργον (érgon).
- Open access does not only imply the use of open sources but also a responsibility to produce open content.



# Open access > OER

- Peters *et al.* (2012:viii): **open education** refers to the openness of learning content, the means (such as software) through which content can be transmitted as well as implementation (through publication and licenses).
- Butcher (2015:6) states that despite the fact that **open educational resources (OER)** support **open learning** and **open education**, these concepts are not exactly the same.
- The focus with OER are on the resources themselves.

# Licencing implications

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# OER & Decolonizing the curriculum

- Spiegel *et al.* (2017:271) emphasize the importance of decolonization “in online distance learning programmes, where some e-learning modalities **echo** and **re-entrench** globalised inequities and Eurocentric learning”.
- Online programmes can also “offer potentially **unique avenues** for certain anti-colonial approaches, creating new possibilities for participation and for challenging the status quo, including new ways of confronting the dynamics of ‘imperialist amnesia’ in present-day global development cultures” (Spiegel *et al.*, 2017:271)

# OER & Decolonizing the curriculum

- Chase *et al.* (2010) found success with a blended learning approach in accommodating indigenous knowledge (and learning approaches) in the Australian context.
- They found that “[t]he design of the online and face-to-face components resonates with the oral traditions of Aboriginal students and instructors” (Chase *et al.*, 2010:26).



# OER & Decolonizing the curriculum

- Smith's (1999) **elements** of decolonization:
  - **Deconstruction and reconstruction** > retelling through adapting OER;
  - **Self-determination and social justice** > providing legitimacy for embedded local knowledge through online collaboration;
  - **Ethics** > protection of indigenous knowledge systems through inclusion in online repositories;
  - **Language** > localizing OER in indigenous languages;
  - **Internationalization of indigenous experiences** > using/reusing/contributing to international OER;
  - **History** > recovering history, culture and languages of colonized people and embedding this in the curriculum;
  - **Critique** > critical appraisal.

(Cf. Le Grange, 2016:3)

# OER & Decolonizing the curriculum

- Arinto et al. (2017:8) note:
  - “As many OER are adapted from existing teaching and learning materials and contain specific **sociocultural examples**, users in developing contexts can experience dissatisfaction with topics, assumptions or illustrative examples designed for more developed or more resourced contexts.”
  - “**Language** is also a key issue. Because the majority of currently available OER are in **English** (Krelja Kurelovic, 2016), speakers of less-used languages run the risk of being ‘linguistically and culturally marginalized’.”

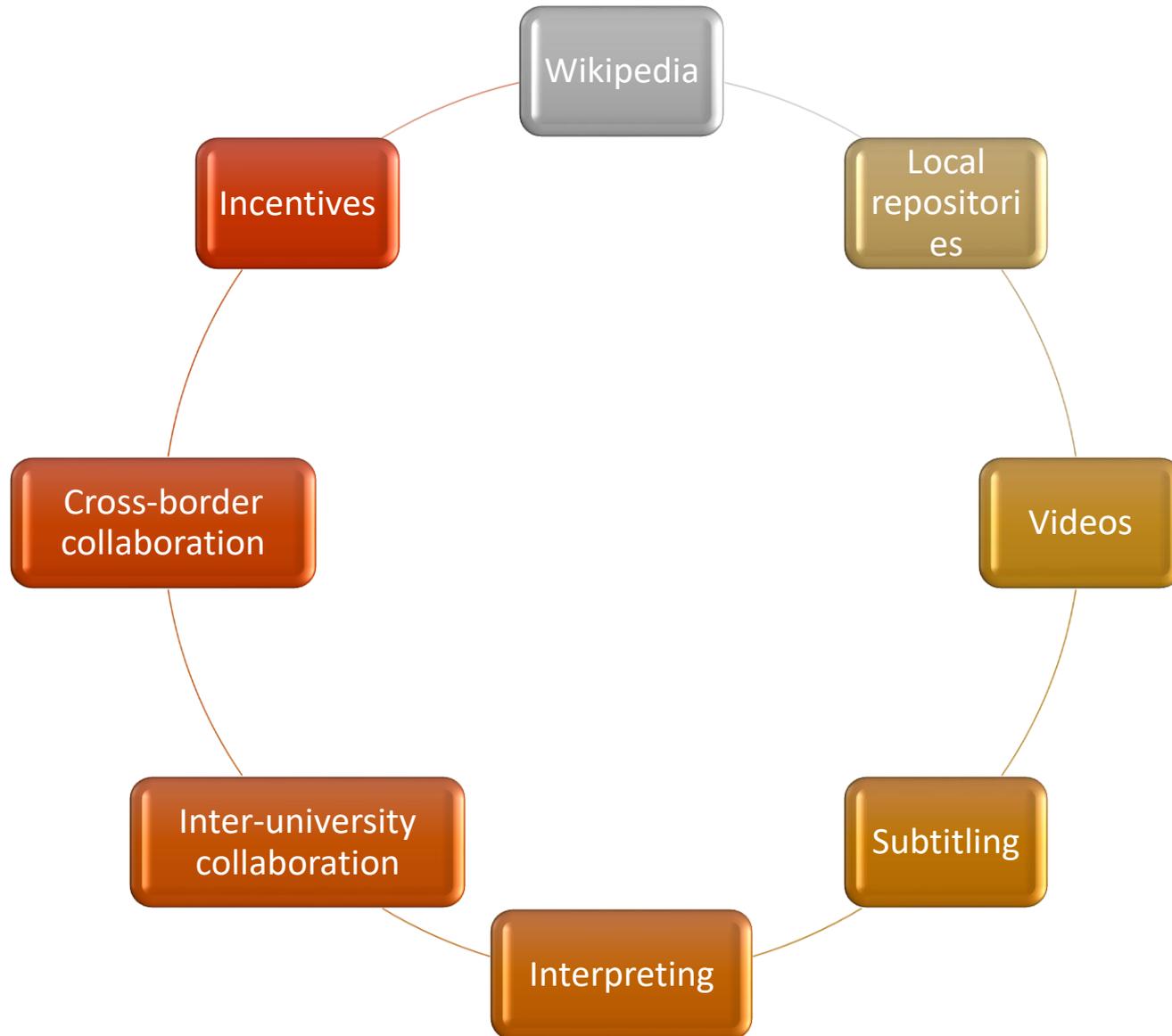
# Disruption and caution

- “**Decolonization never goes unnoticed**, for it focuses on and fundamentally alters being, and transforms the spectator crushed to a nonessential state into a privileged actor, captured in a virtually grandiose fashion by the spotlight of History” (Fanon, 2004:2).
- Spiegel *et al.* (2017:272) request “vigilance about **technological optimism** to meaningfully address power imbalances in understandings of development”.
- Arinto *et al.* (2017:10) note that “access to OER without the **support structures** and cultural practices that promote its use, is insufficient”

# Practical implications

- In March 2018 the NWU's Senate approved an OER Declaration committing the institution to the promotion, implementation, creation, reuse, revision, remixing, redistribution and retention of Open Educational Resources (OER) within an Open Licensing framework.
- From the outset in **using/reusing/revising** OER decolonizing the curriculum should be considered.
- **Discipline-specific** initiatives should be supported.
- **Localization** in terms of **content** and **language** use should be accommodated.

# Practical implications



# Questions and discussion

Presentation available at: <http://www.jako.nom.za/oaw2-2018.pdf>

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**Thank you – Ke a leboha - Dankie**



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