

**THE PERSISTENCE OF COLONIALITY IN BRAZILIAN EDUCATION: A
DECOLONIAL CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL EPISTEMOLOGIES**

***A PERSISTÊNCIA DA COLONIALIDADE NA EDUCAÇÃO BRASILEIRA: UMA
CRÍTICA DECOLONIAL ÀS EPISTEMOLOGIAS DA ESCOLA CONTEMPORÂNEA***

***LA PERSISTENCIA DE LA COLONIALIDAD EN LA EDUCACIÓN BRASILEÑA: UNA
CRÍTICA DECOLONIAL DE LAS EPISTEMOLOGÍAS DE LA ESCOLARIZACIÓN
CONTEMPORÁNEA***



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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes how coloniality continues to structure the epistemologies of Brazilian education and to discuss the possibilities opened up by decolonial critique for curricular and pedagogical reconstruction. It is a qualitative, critical-interpretive bibliographic study, organized through a dialogue between decolonial thought, Black thought, critical pedagogies, and studies published between 2022 and 2026. The analysis argues that coloniality is not merely a legacy of colonialism but an active rationality within curriculum selection, teacher training, assessment, and institutional organization. Recent research on Laws No. 10.639/2003 and No. 11.645/2008 demonstrates that their implementation remains frequently episodic, dependent on individual initiatives, and fraught with religious, political, and institutional resistance. The article advocates for the category of colonial pedagogical rationality to interpret the interplay between epistemicide, whiteness, school normalization, and cognitive inequality. It concludes that decolonial education requires permanent institutional policies, anti-racist teacher training, and openness to Black, Indigenous, African-diasporic, and popular epistemologies.

KEYWORDS: Coloniality. Brazilian education. Decolonial critique. Epistemicide. Anti-racist education.

RESUMO: O artigo objetiva analisar como a colonialidade continua estruturando as epistemologias da educação brasileira e discutir as possibilidades abertas pela crítica decolonial para a reconstrução curricular e pedagógica. Trata-se de pesquisa bibliográfica, qualitativa e de caráter crítico-interpretativo, organizada mediante interlocução entre pensamento decolonial, pensamento negro, pedagogias críticas e estudos publicados entre 2022 e 2026. A análise sustenta que a colonialidade não constitui herança do colonialismo, mas racionalidade ativa na seleção curricular, na formação docente, na avaliação e na organização institucional. Pesquisas recentes sobre as Leis nº 10.639/2003 e nº 11.645/2008 demonstram que sua aplicação ainda é frequentemente episódica, dependente de iniciativas individuais e tensionada por resistências religiosas, políticas e institucionais. Defende-se a categoria racionalidade pedagógica colonial para interpretar a articulação entre epistemicídio, branquitude, normalização escolar e desigualdade cognitiva. Conclui-se que uma educação decolonial requer políticas institucionais permanentes, formação docente antirracista e abertura efetiva a epistemologias negras, indígenas, afro-diaspóricas e populares.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Colonialidade. Educação brasileira. Crítica decolonial. Epistemicídio. Educação antirracista.

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza cómo la colonialidad sigue estructurando las epistemologías de la educación brasileña y explora las posibilidades de la crítica decolonial para la reconstrucción curricular y pedagógica. Es una investigación bibliográfica, cualitativa y crítico-interpretativa, organizada entre el pensamiento decolonial, el pensamiento negro, las pedagogías críticas y estudios publicados entre 2022 y 2026. El análisis sostiene que la colonialidad no es solo un legado del colonialismo, sino una racionalidad activa en la selección curricular, formación docente, evaluación y organización institucional. Investigaciones recientes sobre las Leyes n.º 10.639/2003 y n.º 11.645/2008 demuestran que su aplicación es episódica, dependiente de iniciativas y condicionada por resistencias religiosas, políticas e institucionales. Se defiende la categoría de racionalidad pedagógica colonial para interpretar la articulación entre epistemicidio, blanquitud, normalización escolar y desigualdad cognitiva. Se concluye que una educación decolonial requiere políticas institucionales permanentes, formación docente antirracista y apertura efectiva a las epistemologías negras, indígenas, afrodiaspóricas y populares.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Colonialidad. Educación brasileña. Crítica decolonial. Epistemicidio. Educación antirracista.

Introduction

Brazilian education occupies a contradictory position in democratic formation. While it expands access to systematized knowledge and can create conditions for social participation, schools remain permeated by hierarchies that determine which forms of knowledge will be recognized, which memories will be taught, and which subjects will be authorized to speak. The problem is not limited to the absence of diversity in bibliographic lists. It reaches the very architecture that converts certain cultural repertoires into universal knowledge and reduces others to testimony, tradition, or local curiosity.

The enactment of Law No. 10,639/2003 and its expansion through Law No. 11,645/2008 produced an important shift by making the teaching of Afro-Brazilian, African, and Indigenous History and Culture mandatory. The National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations deepened this commitment by linking schooling to the fight against racism and to recognition of Black participation in the formation of the country (Brasil, 2004). The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) affirms respect for human rights and appreciation of the diversity of individuals, groups, identities, cultures, and forms of knowledge as formative principles (Brasil, 2018).

Normative recognition, however, does not eliminate the distance between prescription and implementation. Vasconcelos and Alves (2024) found, in Elementary Education, that the content required by the two laws appeared superficially and was concentrated around commemorative dates. Their study reveals that the formal presence of the theme in the pedagogical project does not ensure curricular continuity, historical depth, or adequate preparation for teaching. The result is a controlled inclusion, tolerated as an event but rarely incorporated as a permanent axis for interpreting Brazil.

In a survey conducted with teachers between 2023 and 2024, Menezes and Pio (2025) identified insufficient materials, limited specific training, and weak institutional support. The authors also recorded resistance related to religious beliefs within the school community. This finding is decisive because it shows that curricular disputes do not occur only between competing contents. They involve regimes of legitimacy that allow the historical study of African, Afro-Brazilian, and Indigenous peoples to be confused with proselytism or moral threat. In this scenario, pedagogical action prescribed by law may become subject to family, administrative, and political surveillance.

Schools do not merely receive inequalities constituted outside them. When examining everyday institutional mechanisms, Menezes and Pio (2025, p. 2, our translation) state that

“inequalities are also produced within these institutions.” This formulation prevents educational racism from being treated as an external factor or occasional deviation. The selection of references, differentiated expectations of students, the distribution of authority, and institutional tolerance of silencing also produce inequality.

The distance between normative recognition and its pedagogical realization requires educational inequality to be understood beyond its immediate effects. As Quijano (2000) demonstrates, the racial classification produced in the colonial process did not disappear with the formal constitution of independent states, because it remained inscribed in relations of power, labor, and knowledge. In education, this continuity becomes perceptible when a particular historical experience silently assumes the status of universality, while Black, Indigenous, and Latin American epistemologies must repeatedly justify their presence in curricula.

The problem also reaches processes of subjectivation. Colonial violence does not operate only through material exclusion, since Fanon (2008) demonstrates its capacity to interfere with language, recognition, and the constitution of the subject itself. When the school institution naturalizes white and European standards of humanity, intelligence, culture, and knowledge, its action goes beyond curricular transmission and participates in producing the ways in which students learn to perceive themselves and others.

Within this structure, intellectual erasure cannot be understood as a simple bibliographic absence. Carneiro (2005) conceptualizes epistemicide as part of a process that disqualifies Black cognitive capacities and intellectual production, interfering with the very conditions under which Black subjects are recognized as producers of knowledge. The later elaboration of the raciality dispositif broadens this critique by revealing the historical constitution of relations that produce Black people as racialized difference while preserving white positions as the unnamed reference of universality (Carneiro, 2023).

This institutional invisibility is also sustained by mechanisms that preserve whiteness. Bento (2022) demonstrates that privileges can be reproduced through pacts of silence, protection, and maintenance of historically occupied positions. Applied to education, this interpretation makes it possible to question situations in which diversity is formally valued without transforming curricula, criteria of excellence, intellectual references, or decision-making structures.

The critique of coloniality, therefore, does not end with expanding bibliographic lists. In advocating an education committed to freedom and participation, hooks (2013) questions

forms of pedagogical authority that silence experiences and delegitimize subjects. This perspective is relevant to the present study because it shifts decolonial critique toward the very organization of educational relations, allowing us to ask not only which forms of knowledge enter the school, but who has the authority to produce, teach, and legitimize them.

Against this background, the following research question is formulated: in what ways does coloniality continue to structure the epistemologies of contemporary Brazilian schools, and what shifts does decolonial critique offer for confronting its curricular, formative, and institutional effects? Based on this problem, the article aims to analyze how coloniality continues to structure the epistemologies of Brazilian education and to discuss the possibilities opened by decolonial critique for curricular and pedagogical reconstruction.

We argue that Eurocentric curricula constitute only the most visible dimension of a colonial pedagogical rationality, understood in this study as an articulated set of criteria, practices, and dispositifs that hierarchize forms of knowledge, distribute epistemic authority, regulate presences, and participate in the production of cognitive inequalities. The proposal of this category constitutes the article's central analytical contribution and will guide the interpretation of the selected literature.

Methodology

This study is characterized as bibliographic research with a qualitative, critical-interpretive approach, developed through systematized procedures for searching, selecting, organizing, and interpreting the literature. The literature review was treated as a research method rather than merely a stage of theoretical grounding, because it makes it possible to critically organize dispersed works, recognize continuities, divergences, and gaps, and construct an interpretive synthesis guided by the research problem. Snyder (2019) emphasizes that the rigor of a review depends on making explicit its design, the procedures used to locate the literature, the selection criteria, and the strategy used for synthesis.

The study is not characterized as a systematic review. Its purpose is not to quantitatively exhaust all available production or measure effects, but to construct a critical interpretation of a heterogeneous theoretical and educational field. To ensure transparency and currency in the bibliographic process, the search was updated in August 2026 through SciELO, the CAPES Journals Portal, and ERIC, combined with the identification of works directly related to the

problem under investigation. The descriptors “coloniality,” “decoloniality,” “decolonial education,” “anti-racist education,” “ethnic-racial relations,” “epistemicide,” “whiteness,” “curriculum,” “teacher education,” and “education” were used separately or in combination. In the international literature, the corresponding terms “coloniality,” “decoloniality,” “decolonial education,” “antiracist education,” “curriculum,” and “teacher education” were used. The recent database search confirms the presence of current scholarship on decolonial education, ethnic-racial relations, and teacher education in these indexes.

The contemporary time frame comprised works published between 2022 and 2026. Articles with full text available in Portuguese, English, or Spanish and substantively related to coloniality, education for ethnic-racial relations, curriculum, epistemicide, whiteness, teacher education, childhood, language education, decolonial practices, or educational technologies were included. Duplicate records, works without an effective connection to education, and publications in which the terms decoloniality or coloniality appeared only incidentally, without participating in the theoretical or analytical construction of the study, were excluded.

The time frame was not applied to works considered foundational to the conceptual architecture of the research. Works published before 2022 remained in the corpus when indispensable to understanding the categories of coloniality, racialization, epistemicide, whiteness, subjectivation, and critical pedagogy. This decision made it possible to articulate classic scholarship in the field with recent educational research, avoiding both bibliographic presentism and a review based exclusively on established references.

After selection, the works were read in full and organized in an analytical matrix comprising authorship, year of publication, object investigated, educational context, methodological approach, categories mobilized, main findings, and contributions to the research question. The analysis was guided by the movements of understanding, interpretation, and contextualization characteristic of qualitative inquiry. In addressing the inseparable relationship between knowledge production and methodological process, Minayo (2012, p. 622) states that “doing science means working simultaneously with theory, method, and techniques.” This orientation supported a reading in which bibliographic evidence was interpreted in relation to the contexts and theoretical categories of the study, rather than used merely as confirmatory examples of a previously established thesis.

Comparative reading made it possible to organize the corpus into four analytical clusters: modernity and epistemological universalization; curriculum, epistemicide, and the production of subjectivities; coloniality, neoliberalism, and contemporary technologies of

educational governance; and possibilities for the decolonial reconstruction of educational epistemologies. These clusters were not defined as fixed classifications, but as interpretive axes constructed from recurrence, complementarity, and tensions found in the literature. Minayo (2012) argues that qualitative analysis must produce a theorized, contextualized, concise, and coherent narrative, a principle that guided the transition from describing the works to the critical interpretation presented in the following sections.

Because this is exclusively bibliographic research based on scientific publications and publicly accessible documents, with no direct participation of human beings or use of identifiable personal information, no empirical data were produced with participants.

The invention of universality: modernity and coloniality as an epistemological project

The modern narrative commonly presents reason, science, and progress as internal achievements of Europe. This self-description conceals the fact that colonial expansion supplied material resources, human classifications, and objects of knowledge indispensable to the constitution of modernity. Coloniality therefore does not appear after modernity; it constitutes its historical condition and its systematically concealed face.

Quijano's (2000) formulation allows us to understand that race was converted into a technology of global classification. The attribution of capacities, places of labor, and forms of authority to racialized groups produced a division that also reached reason. The colonizer occupied not only the position of ruler; he presented himself as the universal subject of knowledge, transforming the colonized into an object to be described, corrected, or civilized.

This asymmetry persists when universities and schools take European theories as general thought and classify African, Indigenous, or African-diasporic production as specific knowledge. Mignolo (2017) calls the unequal distribution of epistemic authority the geopolitics of knowledge. The problem is not the European origin of a work, but the operation that erases its location and converts it into a neutral measure for evaluating all other experiences.

Walsh (2009) insists that critical interculturality cannot be reduced to harmonious coexistence among cultures. Without confronting the structures that produce inequality, diversity becomes an administrative language. Schools may celebrate cultural manifestations while leaving intact the criteria that define science, excellence, and rationality. For this reason,

a multicultural policy without redistribution of epistemic authority risks managing differences rather than transforming relations.

Recent scholarship confirms the need for this shift. In mapping decolonial thought in childhood studies, Soares, Sarmiento, and Tomás (2024) identified an expanding field, but also conceptual tensions and sometimes generic uses of decoloniality. The finding suggests that the growing circulation of decolonial vocabulary does not, by itself, guarantee changes in the ways children and childhoods are researched. It is possible to name coloniality while continuing to speak on behalf of the subjects being studied.

Kuhn, Callai, and Toso (2024) discuss early childhood education from a decolonial perspective and show that the universal image of the child tends to erase historical, territorial, and cultural differences. Modern childhood was constructed through parameters that transform certain trajectories into expected development and others into deviation. This critique directly reaches teacher education because it problematizes pedagogical models that assess plural experiences through a single line of normality.

Curricular universality is also challenged by situated investigations. Santos (2024), in discussing a decolonial approach to Geography teaching, demonstrates that textbooks can be interrogated through the silences they produce and the relations they naturalize. The procedure does not consist in discarding the material, but in turning it into an object of critical reading by comparing narratives, scales, and places of enunciation.

In language education, Mota-Pereira (2024) articulates decolonial education and Black and Indigenous literature to question the centrality of canonical repertoires. The presence of these literatures does not merely fulfill a representational function. It changes the problems that can be formulated, the experiences that are recognized, and the very conception of the language being taught. When the curriculum opens itself to other forms of production, the subject imagined as the legitimate reader also changes.

A rigorous decolonial critique, however, cannot replace one universality with another. Thus, Almeida (2025), when examining the challenges of a decolonial epistemology in Physical Education, warns against simplifying oppositions that treat all Western production as homogeneous and all subalternized knowledge as automatically emancipatory. The challenge is historical and political: to analyze the power effects of each formation of knowledge while avoiding epistemological purities.

The plurality defended by decoloniality requires criteria of dialogue, responsibility, and verifiability. It is not a matter of placing science and opinion on the same level, but of

recognizing that science is a situated social practice subject to conflicts and exclusions. Epistemological openness increases critical demands because it requires making explicit the assumptions, contexts, and consequences of what is taught.

The BNCC itself provides a productive tension. The document states that History should treat Indigenous and African peoples as agents and recognize other frames of reference for knowledge production. It states that “the inclusion of mandatory themes defined by current legislation [...] must go beyond the purely rhetorical dimension” (Brasil, 2018, p. 400, our translation).

The passage is relevant because it acknowledges that the mere nominal presence of themes does not guarantee curricular transformation. The question is how these peoples are presented: as passive antecedents of the nation, victims without agency, or producers of history, philosophy, technology, and ways of life. The distance between this guidance and the practices observed by Vasconcelos and Alves (2024) reveals that inclusive rhetoric can coexist with a curricular structure resistant to the redistribution of authority.

The invention of universality thus produces a decisive asymmetry for education. A particular historical tradition acquires the status of the school’s neutral language, while Black, Indigenous, African-diasporic, and Latin American knowledge enters the curriculum under the permanent mark of difference. Decolonial critique does not require removing the Western tradition from school, but removing its privilege of presenting itself as knowledge without historical location. This change shifts the discussion to the institutional architecture itself, which defines who can produce theory and which subjects remain converted into objects of knowledge.

The colonial architecture of Brazilian schools: curriculum, epistemicide, and the production of subjectivities

School coloniality is manifested not only in the selection of content. It is present in the distribution of time, the organization of space, assessment criteria, and expectations directed at students. Modern schools classify, compare, and produce trajectories. When these procedures are articulated with race, territory, and class, institutional neutrality becomes a language that conceals inequalities produced in everyday life.

School organization also participates in this production of differences through practices that classify times, spaces, bodies, and performances. In analyzing the functioning of

disciplinary institutions, Foucault (1987) demonstrates that schools do not merely repress conduct, but produce subjects through surveillance, examination, and normalization. Decolonial critique, however, requires racializing this interpretation. Bodies subjected to discipline do not occupy historically equivalent positions; therefore, Brazilian school experience must also be examined through the relations among race, class, territory, and social legitimacy.

For Fanon (2008), the colonized subject is led to look at the self through categories that render it inferior. This process offers a key for interpreting school experiences in which mastery of the standard language, bodily aesthetics, or cultural repertoire is converted into markers of intelligence. Violence appears when approximation to the dominant standard is presented as a requirement for recognition.

Carneiro (2005) broadens this discussion by showing that epistemicide compromises both the circulation of Black knowledge and the recognition of Black people as knowing subjects. Bibliographic exclusion is one dimension of the problem, but not the only one. Low teacher expectations, suspicion regarding authorship, and the absence of Black intellectual references also teach who may occupy the place of researcher, writer, or theorist.

The category of the raciality dispositif, revisited by Carneiro (2023), makes it possible to understand that these practices need not be coordinated by an explicit intention. They form a network of discourses, values, and institutions that produces Black people as the Other and preserves white people as unmarked subjects. Schools participate in this dispositif when they treat white history as national history and Black history as thematic content.

The reproduction of these hierarchies does not necessarily depend on explicit manifestations of racism. In investigating whiteness, Bento (2022) reveals mechanisms for preserving privileges sustained by silences, institutional alliances, and the naturalization of historically favored positions. In schools, this dynamic becomes perceptible when anti-racist education remains assigned to individually committed teachers, while planning, training, budgets, and institutional assessment preserve white references as the non-racialized parameter of normality.

The institutional fragility of this policy appears empirically in the research by Menezes and Pio (2025). The study found that implementation of Laws No. 10,639/2003 and No. 11,645/2008 remains conditioned by pedagogical resources, teacher education, and management support. When these conditions are not institutionalized, the approach tends to become episodic. The result shifts responsibility away from an exclusively individual level and

shows that teaching ethnic-racial relations also depends on the priorities established by the school organization itself.

Nascimento, Simões, and Rodrigues (2025) reached a similar conclusion in a meta-synthesis of 17 theses and dissertations. Structural racism and epistemicide appear in the studies analyzed as factors that weaken curriculum, teacher education, and teaching materials. The persistence of the same obstacles after two decades of legislation indicates that the problem is not temporary lack of knowledge, but resistance from a school organization that still operates according to colonial priorities.

In Early Childhood Education, Alves, Santos, and Teixeira (2022) observed limits in the implementation of Law No. 10,639/2003 based on teachers' perceptions. The discussion is especially important because Black children encounter aesthetic, linguistic, and cultural hierarchies very early. The absence of pedagogical intervention does not produce neutrality; it allows stereotypes already present in society to organize play, affections, and expectations.

Gonzalez (2020) helps break with the conception that Black culture appears in schools merely as a complementary contribution. Amefricanity places Black and Indigenous experiences at the center of the continent's social formation. This perspective changes the school narrative because it questions the image of an essentially European Brazil to which other peoples merely added cultural elements.

In a similar direction, Gomes (2017) understands the Black movement as an educator and producer of political, identity-based, and emancipatory knowledge. Schools are not the only institutions that educate, nor do universities hold exclusive authority over theoretical production. Recognizing social movements as producers of knowledge shifts the vertical relationship in which academia researches groups and returns explanations about them.

hooks (2013), in turn, proposes an engaged pedagogy that recognizes voice, experience, and presence. The author does not reduce teaching to the expression of individual opinions; she calls for a practice in which theory can be related to concrete living conditions. This gesture is decolonial because it breaks the separation between the universal subject of knowledge and the bodies that learn.

Kilomba (2019) shows that everyday racism also operates through interruption, discrediting, and the framing of Black speech. In school spaces, silencing does not occur only when someone is forbidden to speak. It manifests when Black experience is accepted only as emotional testimony, while theoretical interpretation remains reserved for the white canon.

Intersectionality, as discussed by Akotirene (2019), prevents these inequalities from being analyzed along a single axis. Black girls, Black students with disabilities, quilombola subjects, and sexual dissidents experience specific combinations of control and invisibility. A decolonial critique that treats the Black subject as a homogeneous category may reproduce erasures of gender, territory, disability, and sexuality.

For this reason, we propose the category colonial pedagogical rationality. It designates the set of practices and criteria that produces the superiority of certain epistemologies without needing to state it openly. This rationality operates when a school includes the racial theme but keeps Black authors outside theory; when it celebrates diversity but punishes dissident languages and aesthetics; when it proclaims equality but distributes expectations in racialized ways.

Colonial pedagogical rationality also organizes teacher education. Ferreira and Senra (2024), when analyzing curricula of teacher education programs in Natural Sciences and Mathematics, revealed limitations in the treatment of ethnic-racial issues. The absence or marginality of this content prepares professionals who enter schools without a repertoire for confronting situations of racism and without recognizing the racialization of scientific knowledge itself.

Teacher education adds another dimension to the problem. Luz (2023) identifies relationships between teachers' racial profile and education for ethnic-racial relations, but this finding cannot support a racial outsourcing of pedagogical commitment. Greater engagement by Black teachers with the theme does not exempt white professionals or educational institutions from responsibility. When anti-racism is treated as the specialty of those directly affected by racism, the white position remains protected as supposedly neutral.

A decolonial school therefore requires more than commemorative projects. It requires reviewing bibliographies, assessment criteria, protocols for confronting racism, continuing education, and community participation. The issue is not to add diversity to an intact structure, but to alter the relations that define who teaches, who learns, and what can be recognized as knowledge.

Coloniality, neoliberalism, and contemporary technologies of educational governance

Coloniality did not remain identical to colonial administration. It is reconfigured in articulation with contemporary rationalities. Neoliberalism expands competition, measurement, and individual accountability, transforming historical inequalities into apparently personal outcomes. In education, this process shifts the debate on justice toward the language of performance.

Foucault (2008) demonstrated that neoliberalism constitutes a form of government that extends competitive logic beyond the market. Individuals are called upon to manage themselves as capital. In schools, students and teachers come to be assessed through indicators, targets, and evidence of productivity, while the historical conditions of learning are treated as secondary variables.

This reorganization is not limited to the introduction of business techniques into schools. Dardot and Laval (2016) understand neoliberalism as a rationality that extends competition and entrepreneurial logic to different dimensions of social life. In education, this process favors permanent comparison among institutions, professionals, and students, assigning centrality to measurable outcomes and potentially reducing the complexity of education to what can be converted into performance.

Performativity is a particularly important expression of this process. Ball (2005) uses the concept to analyze regimes in which professional value increasingly depends on indicators, comparisons, and demonstrations of productivity. A decolonial reading introduces another question into this discussion: which forms of knowledge lose legitimacy when quality and success are defined by universal parameters of measurement? Territorial knowledge, community experiences, and relational learning may become peripheral precisely because they resist immediate translation into indicators.

The BNCC participates in a similar tension. The document contains democratic principles and explicit references to diversity, but its transformation into rigid matrices, standardized materials, and centralized assessments may reduce curricular autonomy. The critique does not require rejecting a common base. It requires preventing the common from being confused with homogeneity and competencies from becoming instruments of territorial erasure.

The expansion of digital platforms adds another layer to the problem. Educational systems have begun to record access time, responses, trajectories, and behavioral patterns.

Zuboff (2021) analyzes the conversion of experience into data as a foundation of surveillance capitalism. In schools, data collection may support pedagogical decisions, but it may also concentrate power in companies that define infrastructures, categories, and learning models.

A decolonial critique of technologies asks who produces the systems being used, which languages and cultures guide their databases, and which groups bear the consequences of classification errors. Artificial intelligence tools trained predominantly on content from the Global North may reproduce stereotypes and render local repertoires invisible. Innovation is not neutral when the conditions of development, ownership, and governance are concentrated.

Kivistö-de Souza (2025), in discussing social justice and decoloniality in English-language teacher education, proposes attitudes of epistemic disobedience and attention to places of speaking and listening. Her contribution helps us understand technology use as a curricular decision. Using a platform or generative model entails selecting regimes of language and knowledge, even when that selection remains hidden by the interface.

Transforming this rationality likewise demands another conception of teacher education. Medeiros (2025) discusses decolonial paths capable of bringing teacher education, pedagogical practice, and the questioning of epistemic hierarchies closer together. From this perspective, decoloniality is not produced through isolated training actions, but through experiences that enable teachers to interrogate their repertoires, the places assigned to different forms of knowledge, and the relations established among university, school, and educational subjects.

The achievement society described by Han (2017) helps us understand the internalization of pressure. Students are encouraged to transform every experience into a competence and every difficulty into a failure of personal management. When this logic affects historically vulnerable populations, meritocracy converts structural inequality into individual blame.

Algorithmic coloniality does not replace earlier forms of exclusion. It can intensify them by presenting automated decisions as objective. A school committed to cognitive justice must demand transparency, data protection, bias assessment, and public participation in the adoption of technologies. Pedagogical debate cannot be reduced to tool efficiency; it must include sovereignty, rights, and epistemological plurality.

Thus, neoliberalism and digitalization update colonial pedagogical rationality by universalizing models of performance and infrastructure. The decolonial response does not consist in rejecting all assessment or technology, but in subjecting both to democratic control

and criteria of social justice. The central question remains: who defines the problem, who produces the solution, and which forms of knowledge are excluded in the process?

Assim, neoliberalismo e digitalização atualizam a racionalidade pedagógica colonial ao universalizar modelos de desempenho e infraestrutura. A resposta decolonial não consiste em recusar toda avaliação ou tecnologia, mas em submeter ambas a controle democrático e a critérios de justiça social. A pergunta central permanece: quem define o problema, quem produz a solução e quais conhecimentos são excluídos nesse processo?

Toward a decolonial critique of educational epistemologies

A consequential decolonial critique must go beyond denunciation. Its horizon is to transform the conditions of knowledge production. This requires recognizing that democratizing access to school does not guarantee cognitive justice when the criteria of legitimacy remain concentrated.

Walsh (2009) proposes critical interculturality as a practice constructed amid conflict. Unlike a policy of tolerance, it seeks to alter structures and relations. In the curriculum, this means working with African, Afro-Brazilian, and Indigenous knowledge as theoretical and historical production, rather than merely as cultural expressions celebrated on specific occasions.

According to Gomes (2017), the Black movement has produced knowledge capable of transforming educational policies and academic categories. This production teaches that decolonization will not be granted exclusively by institutions. It results from struggles that compel schools, universities, and the state to review their modes of operation.

In light of this, Krenak (2019) questions the idea of humanity separated from nature, exposing the limits of development as a universal narrative. His contribution broadens curricular critique because it places the very purpose of education under debate. Educating people to compete in a devastated world does not constitute emancipation. Schools need to participate in creating other relationships among life, territory, and knowledge.

The redistribution of epistemic authority already finds concrete experiences in educational institutions. Rose (2024) analyzes the presence of the knowledge and practices of the people of *axé* at the university and shows how institutional openness can change not only the content studied, but also the subjects recognized as producers and transmitters of

knowledge. The power of an experience of this nature lies precisely in not reducing traditional knowledge to an illustration of theories previously legitimized by academia.

In Youth and Adult Education, Guedes and Souza (2025) analyze a pedagogical practice based on reading Indigenous-authored literature developed in secondary-level EJA classes. The experience articulates reading, authorship, and anti-racist education, demonstrating that decoloniality can acquire material form in pedagogical planning and in the selection of texts. The study is particularly relevant because it shifts Indigenous production away from the condition of peripheral content and recognizes it as constitutive of students' literary and historical education.

In language education practices, Silvestre *et al.* (2025) discuss university-school relations and criticize dichotomies that maintain the university as a producer of theory and the school as a place of application. Decolonial teacher education must recognize basic-education teachers as researchers and co-authors of pedagogical knowledge.

Anti-racist education also depends on institutional continuity. Menezes and Pio (2025) show that teachers recognize the importance of the laws but face limitations in instruments and support. The policy needs to be incorporated into the pedagogical project, the training calendar, the budget, and institutional assessment. Without this, it remains vulnerable to changes in management and community pressure.

This transformation must also reach fields that often remain distant from racial discussions. Ferreira and Senra (2024), when analyzing curricula of teacher education programs in Natural Sciences and Mathematics, identify limitations in incorporating ethnic-racial issues. The problem demonstrates that anti-racist education cannot remain confined to the Humanities, because the history of science itself requires problematizing the processes of racialization, hierarchization, and exclusion that have marked its constitution.

A decolonial curricular practice can be guided by five commitments. The first is permanence, replacing episodic projects with actions throughout the year. The second is centrality, treating Black and Indigenous knowledge as constitutive of the curriculum. The third is authorship, recognizing intellectuals, communities, and movements as theoretical producers. The fourth is participation, involving students and territories in curriculum development. The fifth is accountability, creating institutional mechanisms for confronting racism and silencing.

These commitments do not eliminate conflict. On the contrary, they make visible disputes that neutrality had concealed. Decolonial critique does not promise a school without

disagreements, but a school capable of addressing differences without reproducing hierarchies of humanity.

Cognitive justice also demands academic rigor. Valuing subalternized knowledge does not authorize superficial appropriation, folklorization, or decorative use of Black authors. Works must be read, concepts situated, and internal disagreements recognized. Black thought does not constitute a homogeneous bloc, just as decoloniality does not offer a single method.

The category colonial pedagogical rationality seeks to contribute to this effort by shifting analysis from isolated content to institutional relations. Its usefulness will depend on empirical research that investigates curriculum, assessment, teacher education, technologies, and student experiences as an open category, so that it can be subjected to critique and verification in different contexts.

A decolonial education, therefore, is not achieved merely by selecting new readings. It requires a change in the relationship with knowledge: from ownership to dialogue, from tutelage to participation, and from abstract universality to situated responsibility.

Final considerations

The analysis developed here allows us to answer the question guiding this study by affirming that coloniality continues to structure the epistemologies of Brazilian education not only through the preservation of Eurocentric content, but through an institutional rationality that unequally distributes authority, recognition, and legitimacy among forms of knowledge and subjects. The distance observed between normative advances in education for ethnic-racial relations and their everyday realization demonstrates that curricular transformation does not depend exclusively on the formal inclusion of new content.

The studies examined show that implementation of Laws No. 10,639/2003 and No. 11,645/2008 still faces difficulties related to teacher education, availability of materials, management support, and continuity of pedagogical actions. The recurrence of these obstacles prevents them from being interpreted as isolated occurrences. They reveal an institutional dimension of educational inequality in which certain epistemologies continue to occupy central positions while others depend on specific initiatives to gain visibility.

The original contribution of this study lies in proposing the category colonial pedagogical rationality. The category seeks to interpret coloniality beyond the presence or

absence of content by articulating knowledge selection, distribution of epistemic authority, epistemicide, institutional whiteness, normalization of subjectivities, and contemporary forms of educational governance. Its purpose is not to offer a definitive classification, but to provide an analytical tool capable of interrogating what apparent school neutrality tends to render invisible.

This reading also makes it possible to understand that transformations associated with neoliberalism, performativity, and digitalization do not replace earlier colonial structures. They may reorganize them through new criteria of classification, measurement, and production of normality. Indicators, assessments, and technologies have important pedagogical possibilities, but they need to be subjected to critique when they convert particular models of learning, performance, and knowledge into universal references.

From this perspective, decolonizing education does not mean replacing one canon with another or rejecting knowledge produced within the Western tradition. It means removing every tradition from a position of unquestioned universality and recognizing Black intellectuals, Indigenous peoples, social movements, and communities as producers of theory, history, science, and pedagogy. Anti-racist education thus ceases to represent a complementary theme and becomes a question concerning the democracy of knowledge itself.

The main limitation of this research lies in its bibliographic nature. The category colonial pedagogical rationality needs to be confronted with empirical situations capable of testing its scope and limits. Future research may investigate it in curricula, textbooks, assessment processes, teacher education, digital platforms, school relations, and management practices. Longitudinal studies on the implementation of Laws No. 10,639/2003 and No. 11,645/2008 may also identify the conditions that allow individual experiences to be transformed into permanent institutional policies.

Decolonial critique retains its power precisely when it remains subject to self-criticism. Its growing presence in educational vocabulary does not guarantee the transformation of practices. Decolonizing knowledge requires conceptual rigor, responsibility toward sources, and effective change in the relations that define who may speak, teach, research, and produce theory. It is through this shift that epistemological plurality ceases to represent a concession to difference and becomes a condition for genuinely democratic education.

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