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# Reclaiming Knowledge

Student-Led Approaches to  
Decolonising Education

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# Pop Quiz

How much do you know?

1. What is the largest human-made structure in the history of the Earth?
2. What popular drink can be linked to the treatment of malaria?
  - a) Vodka & soda
  - b) Gin & tonic
  - c) Rum & coke
  - d) Whisky & lemonade
3. What particular type of kitchen cutlery or item had a significant impact on Chinese history?



With a circumference of about 16.8km , the Benin Wall built in 1010 AD is known to have been the largest man-made structure in West Africa, located in Old Benin Kingdom.

Benin City was one of the first cities to have a semblance of street lighting. Huge metal lamps, many feet high, were built and placed around the city, especially near the king's palace. Fuelled by palm oil, their burning wicks were lit at night to provide illumination for traffic to and from the palace.

The Walls were ravaged by the British in 1897 in the "Punitive Expedition" led by Rear-Admiral Harry Rawson in retaliation for the so-called "Benin Massacre" (a surprise attack on British forces attempting to capture Benin City.)



When Winston Churchill attributed it with saving “more Englishmen’s lives, and minds, than all the doctors in the Empire,” he wasn’t referring to a military tactic or peace treaty. Instead, his accolades were reserved for the gin and tonic.

The foundation of traditional tonic water, quinine, is a bitter tasting alkaloid that is derived from the bark of several species of the genus *Cinchona*.

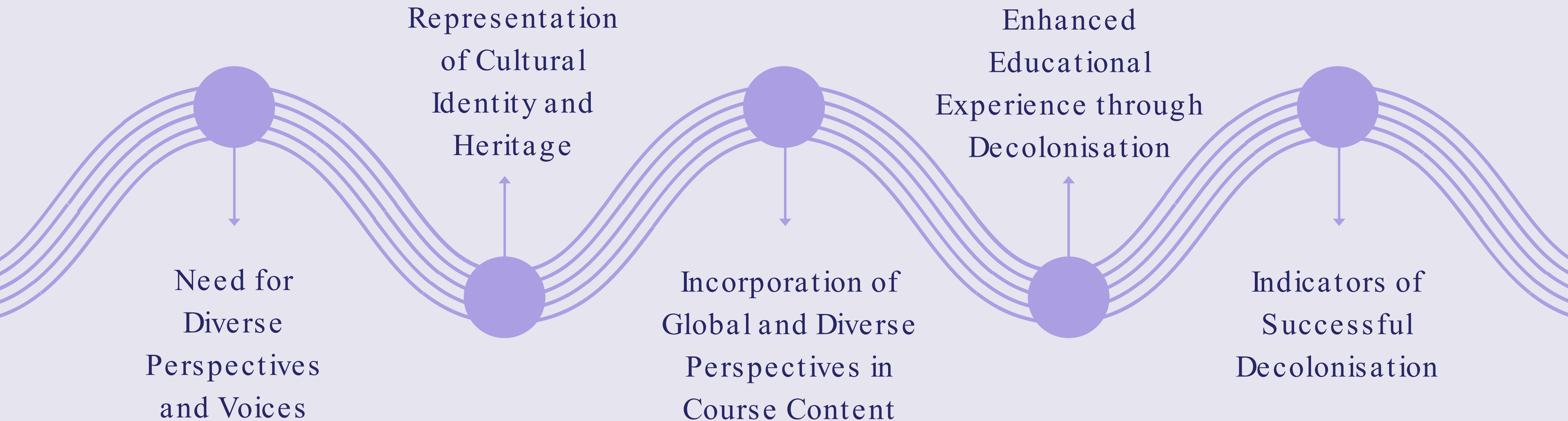
In 1820, two French pharmacologists--Pierre Joseph Pelletier and Joseph Caventou--isolated quinine, and later established a factory in Paris for its production. A purified version was also created for usage instead of the bark.

Since the lowered mortality rate from malaria enabled Europeans to live in areas where the disease was prevalent, quinine has been seen as a tool of nineteenth century colonialism that was critical for empire expansion throughout Asia and Africa.



# Student Voice

Themes from initial research

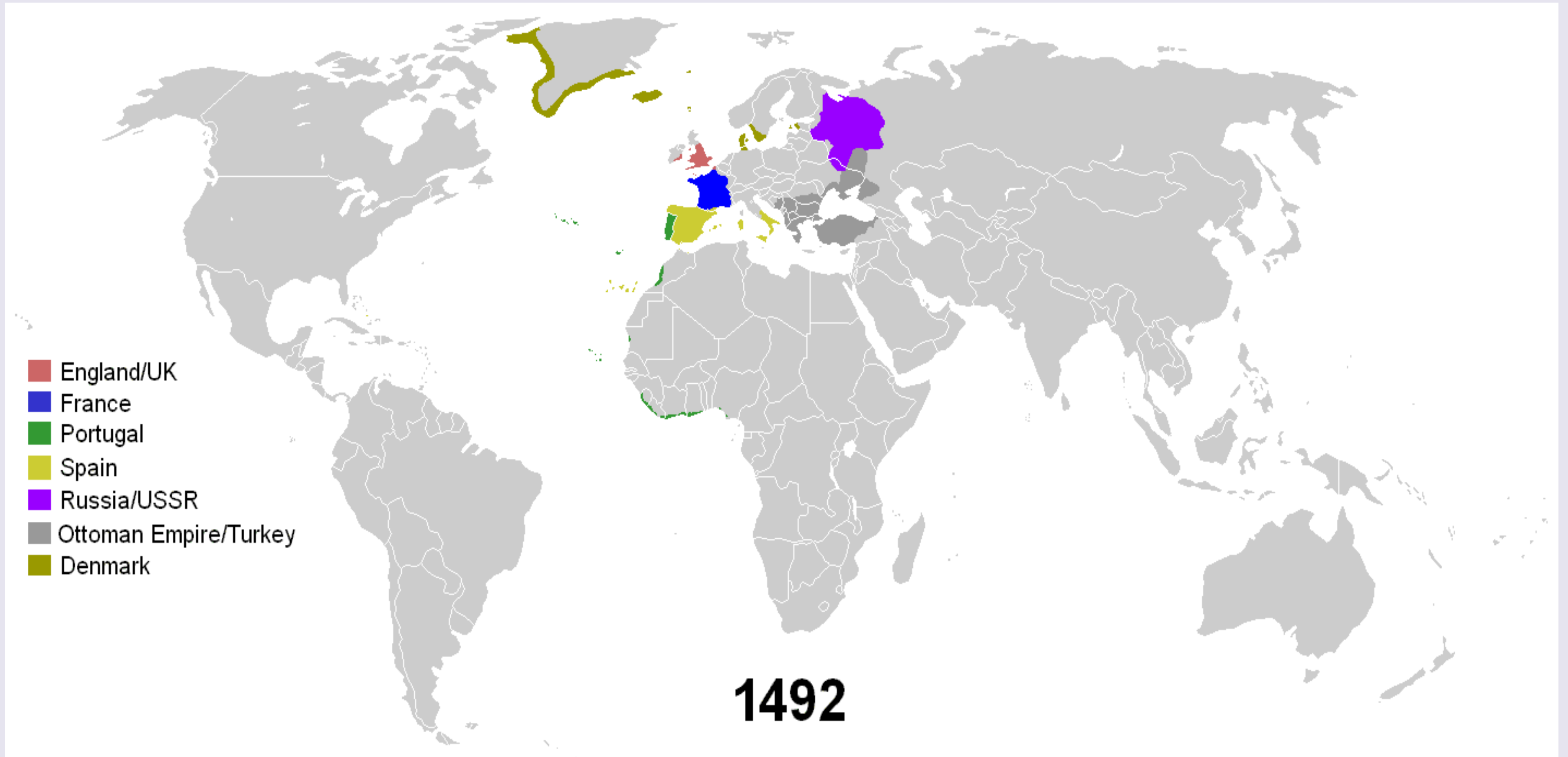


# Monocultures of University

## Learning for the elite

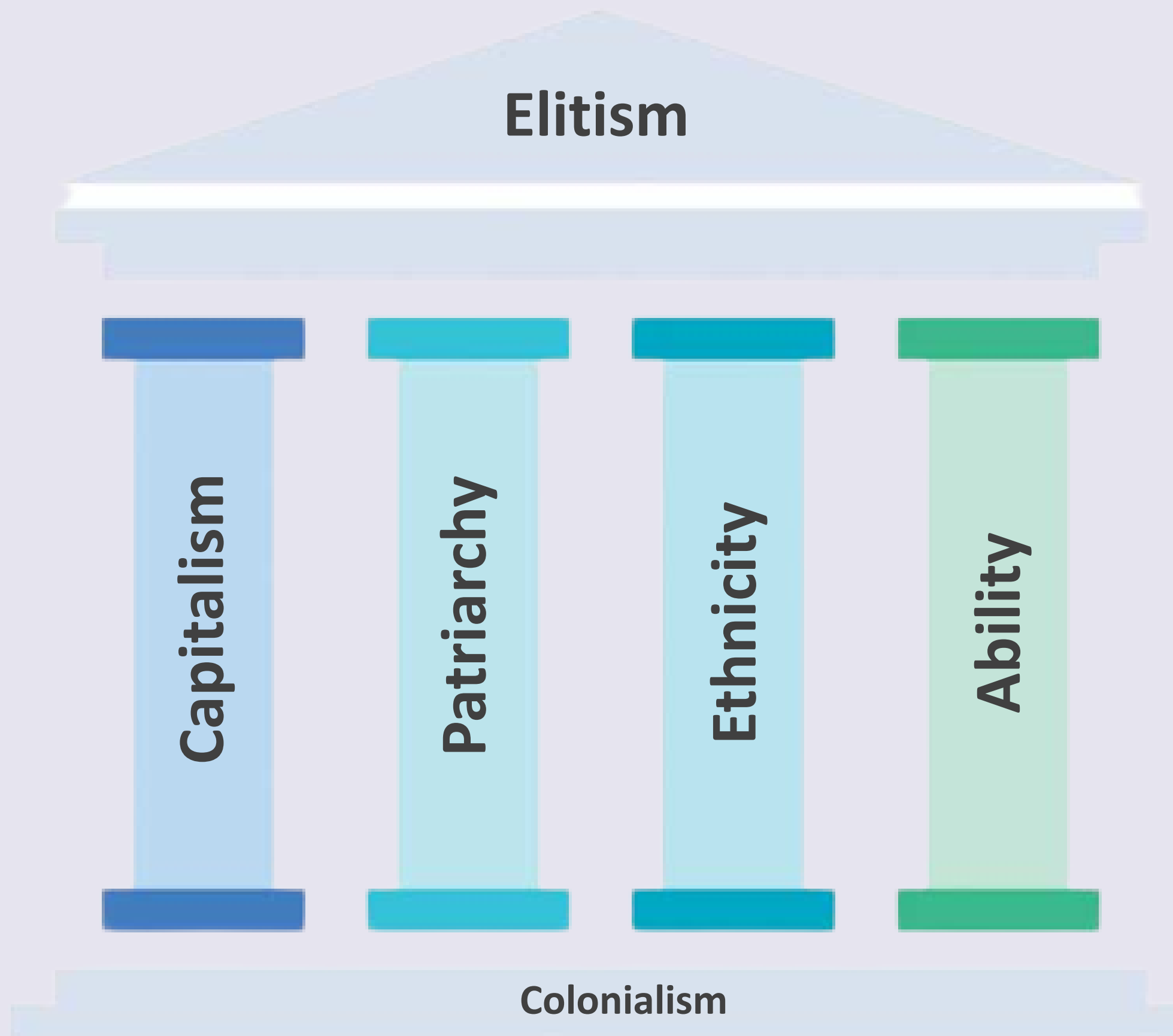
Metropolitan universities, in the case of the European metropolis, were exclusively concentrated on the knowledge of the winners – the eurocentric knowledge, or epistemology of the north. This knowledge was based on five main monocultures. That is to say, exclusive conceptions of the world, that were taught at University:

- Knowledge
- Differences
- Linear time
- Scale
- Productivity



- England/UK
- France
- Portugal
- Spain
- Russia/USSR
- Ottoman Empire/Turkey
- Denmark

**1492**



Draw the diagram and identify where:

You are on the pillars  
Your students are on the pillars

If you are higher on the pillar than your students, this would be your privilege

Differences in your space on the pillars are where you can support by providing the space for marginalised voices

# Decolonisation Across the Ages

A need, not a want

Mid 20th  
Century

Global  
decolonisation  
movements begin

1960s -  
1970s

Heightened anti-  
colonial movements;  
demands for  
curriculum reform in  
higher education.

1980s -  
1990s

Expansion of  
multicultural  
education; rise of  
indigenous  
knowledge systems.

2000s -  
2020s

Emergence of critical  
race theory and  
postcolonial studies;  
global initiatives for  
decolonising  
education.

# Learner Generated Content

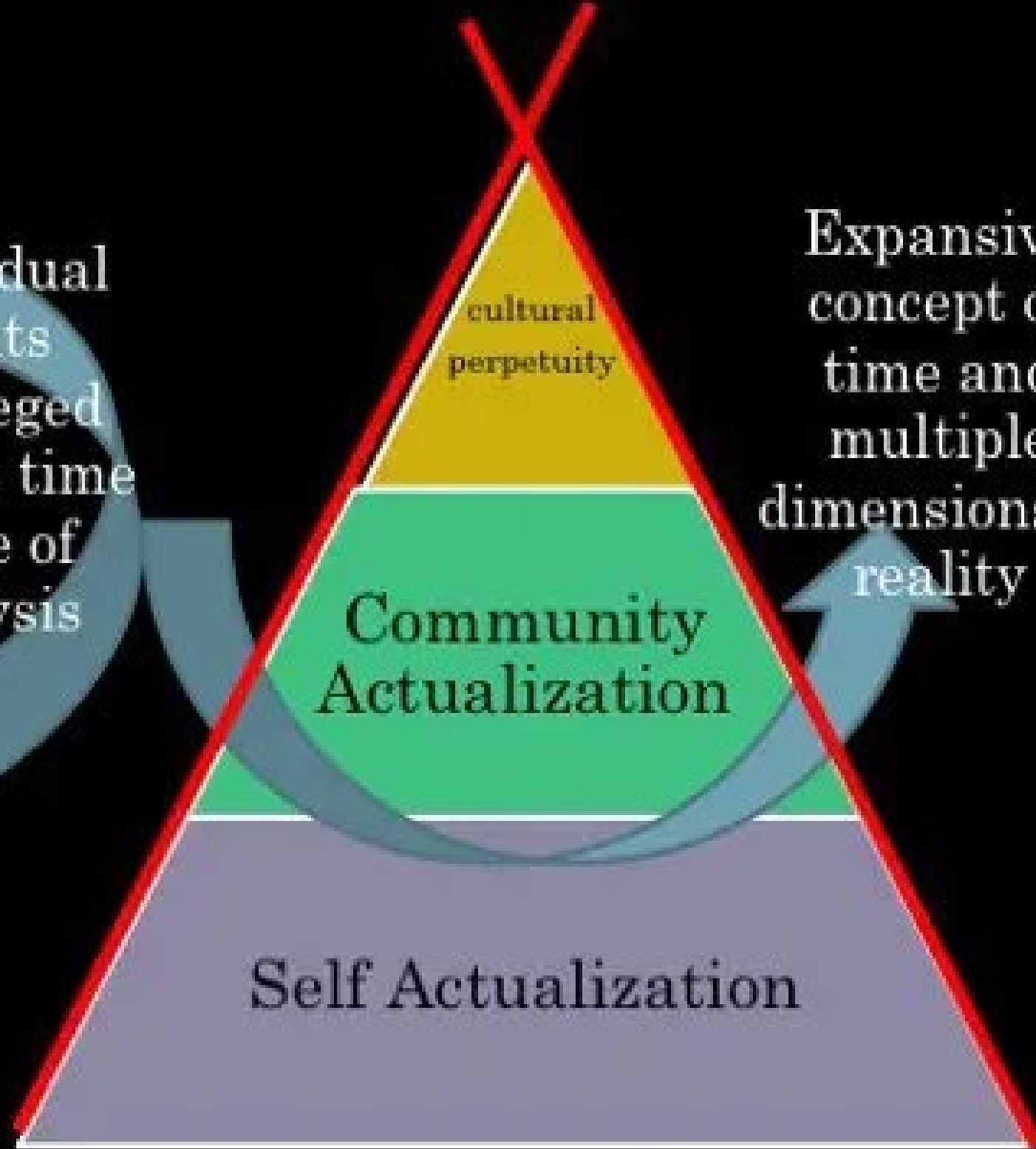
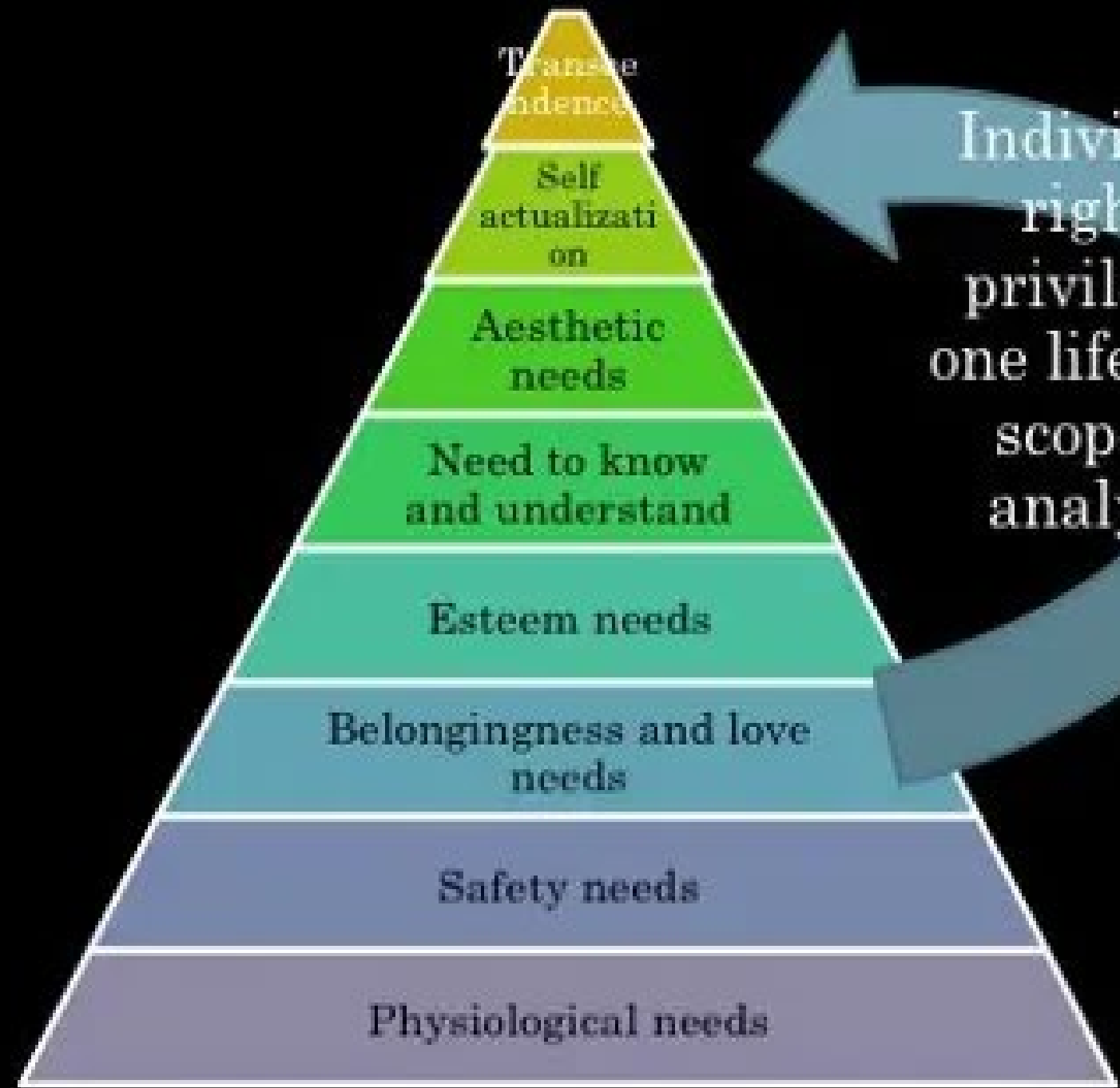
*Authentic voices in practice*

Think of learner-generated content as a symphony orchestra. Each student is an instrumentalist, bringing their own flair and voice to the ensemble. When students engage in creating content, whether through research, multimedia projects, or reflective essays, they contribute to a harmonious whole where every note, like every student's perspective, is essential to the overall composition. This collaborative approach not only enhances learning but also empowers students to take ownership of their educational journey.



# Western Perspective

# First Nations Perspective



Individual rights privileged  
one life time  
scope of analysis

Expansive concept of time and multiple dimensions of reality

Huitt, 2004; Blackstock, 2008; Wadsworth,



**Democracy**



**Rule  
of Law**



**Individual  
Liberty**



**Respect &  
Tolerance**

**Aatsimoyihkaan (Prayer)**

**Kimmapiiyitsinni (Kindness/ Compassion)**

**Innakotsiysinni (Respect for Others)**

**Ihpiopotsp (Purpose for Being There)**

**Niitsitapiysinni (To be Blackfoot)**

**Aksitoiyipaitapiysiini (Being able to take on tasks independently)**

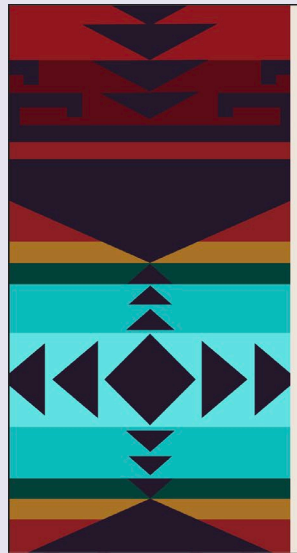
**Isspommaanitapiysinni (Being helpful to others)**

**Ao'ahkannaistokawa (Everything comes in pairs)**

**Ihkanaitapstsiwa (Everything that is given to a person to do what they want with)**

**Kakyosin (Be aware of your environment, be observant)**

**Pommotsiysinni (To transfer something to other)**



# Aksitoiyipaitapiysiini

*Being able to take on tasks independently.*

## How does it link to the classroom?

- It encourages learners to set goals for themselves and to follow them through.
- The value encourages learning by mistakes and relates to Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2006).
- I feel that it promotes a lot of independent learning, which requires a lot of self motivation.



## How does this value link to my learners?

- Many students rely on their parents/carers to do a lot for them, I am trying to help them take responsibility when and where appropriate (I teach independent living skills).
- Due to the nature of my students, some require a lot of repetition in order to fully understand a concept.
- My learners are SEN, many require 1:1 support when completing work, therefore there are aspects of this value that aren't fully possible. I can't tell my young people that I can't help them and that they must stand on their own two feet.. But I can try my best to help them gain confidence and I can take little steps back over time to increase their independence and their own problem solving.



## Innakotsiysinni (Respect for Others)


- Everyone is born deserving respect from all
- Respect can be maintained or lost
- Respect for others is all encompassing, not just about other people
- High value placed on diversity and respecting that everyone is different
- Innakotsiysinni (Respect for Others) & Kimmapiyitsinni (Kindness/Compassion) are "two of the most essential values of interacting with others"
- Both words end in 'sinni' which means 'way of life' – what we call 'core values' today.

## Respect for others and the classroom


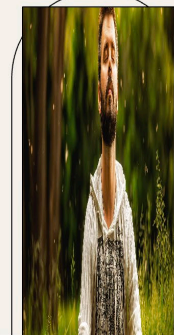
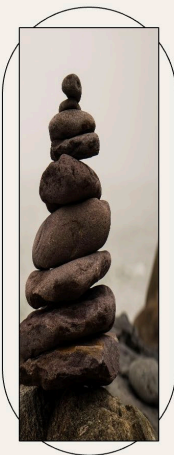
- Setting out our classroom culture has a direct connection to respect
- Respecting the individual and their achievements - "there should be no differentiation between an A and a B mark, this takes away from the meaningful learning journey"
- Creates a classroom where learners understand and respect their own expectations
- Innakotsiysinni is an all encompassing respect – we should embrace all teaching practices (for best practice) not just our current westernised viewpoint
- Demonstrating the kind of respect we want so as to give students a starting point

## Respect for others and the learner

- Mutual respect between learner and teacher is fundamental to our pedagogy
- Mutual respect enables an "exchange of ideas" or shared meanings.
- When each individual feels respected, the collective is stronger
- Enables building of strong relationships
- Hoisington states "Students should have a place within the classroom where they feel levelled in power- there is no reason to have any sort of power struggle because we all have a space in which we are respected"



## MY UNDERSTANDING OF KAKYOSIN

KAKYOSIN \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 2023

## WHAT'S THE IMPACT (SO WHAT?)

### The teacher

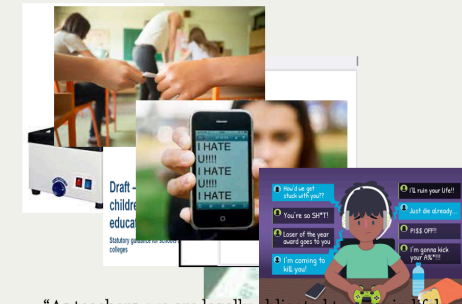
As trainers, teachers, and educators we must be observant in all aspects Of our role.

We need to keep up to date with new methods of teaching, new terminology, and new legislation.

Be willing to adapt, Change and flex to the new generation That comes through our classroom.

We need to be ever vigilant to the new ways in which our young people can come to harm and risk in a fast-moving and evolving world.

“As teachers, we are legally obligated to remain lifelong learners and be cognizant of various pedagogical practices that best suit our students’ needs”.





Presentation title \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 20XX

## WHAT'S THE IMPACT (SO WHAT?)

### The student

the impact on the learner is that they are more grounded in their Environment and an ability to see and feel the changes around them to be Able to find alternative meanings to the world they live in and to have Better methods to solve problems and see value in the "now".

"I wonder how my classroom could look if I challenge my students to find new ways of doing "old" things- challenging them to step beyond the expected results or processes"

Presentation title \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 20XX

# Fostering Inclusive Environments

Making students feel they belong

Creating a truly inclusive educational environment through student-led approaches is pivotal in decolonising education. By prioritising learner voices and experiences, educators can cultivate spaces that honour native and authentic perspectives and challenge traditional narratives. This fosters an atmosphere where all students feel valued and empowered to contribute meaningfully to the learning process.



Year	Legislation or policy	Notes
1845	Lunacy Act	No distinction between learning disability and mental illness
1886	Idiots Act	First time legislation dealt with educational needs. Made a distinction between lunatics and idiots/imbeciles
1890	Lunacy Act	Muddled the waters; no distinction between learning disability and mental illness
1908	Royal Commission for Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded (Report)	Also, the publication of Tredgold's <i>Mental Deficiency</i> , as a key reference text, used in nurse training for next 50 years. Labels of 'mental defective' and 'mental deficiency' were common place
1913	Mental Deficiency Act	Made it possible to institutionalise women with illegitimate children
1914	Elementary Education Act	Empowered school authorities to make appropriate provision for "defective children"
1927	Mental Deficiency (Amendment) Act	Replaced the term 'moral defective' with 'moral imbecile'. Could be as a result of illness or disease and not just from birth. In 1929, the Wood Report was published. 1930-40s saw Campaign for Voluntary Sterilisation; Eugenics Movement at its height
1944	Education Act Disabled Persons' Employment Act	'ineducable' label, introduced disabilities. In 1946 the Nat (NAPBC, which later became
1948	NHS began	NHS took over hospital services. In 1953 nearly hal

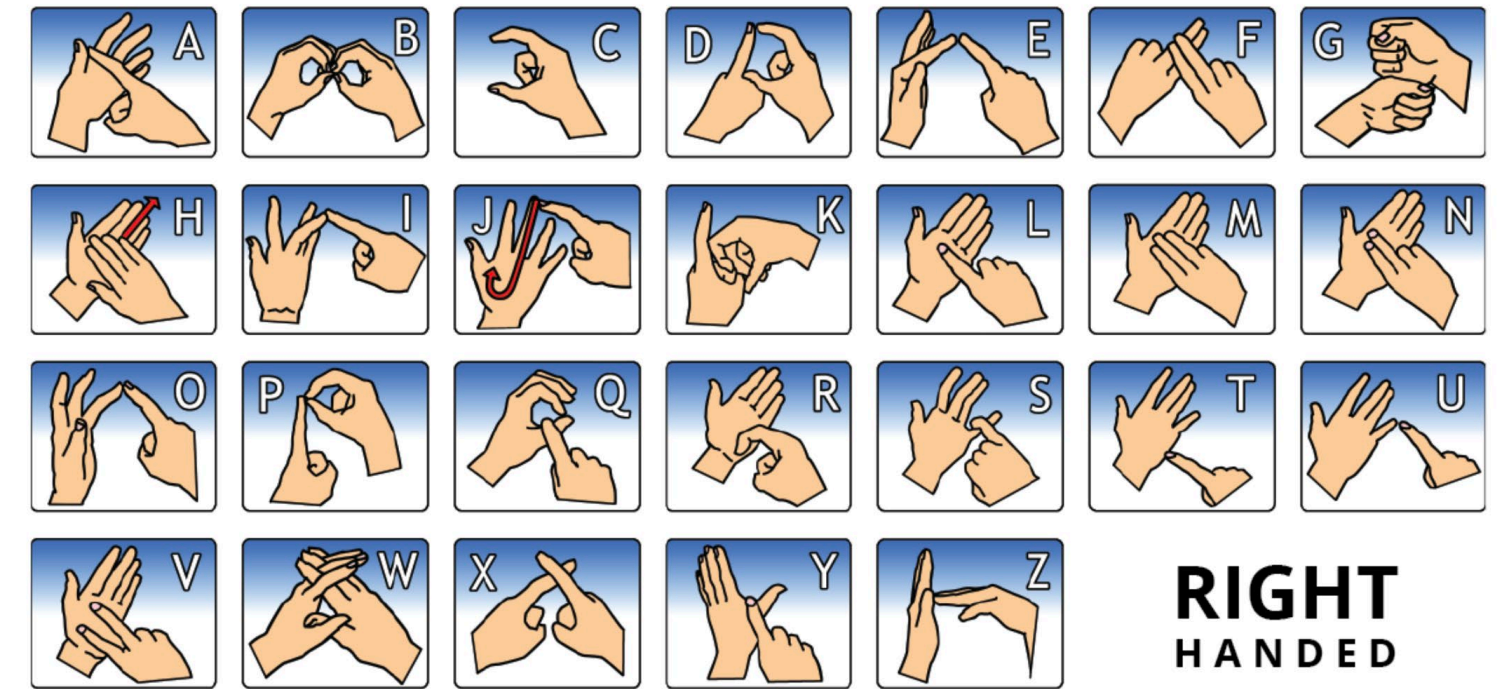
Year	Legislation or policy	Notes
1959	Mental Health Act (England and Wales; 1960 Scotland)	'Community care' - patients admitted voluntarily unless a danger to self or others ('sectioned'). Terms 'subnormal' and 'severely subnormal' used in this Act; 'backward' became common
1970	Education (Handicapped Children) Act Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act	Made education universal. 1970 also saw the Local Authority Social Services Act - social services department to assume responsibility for H&W services. 1971 White Paper Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped advocated care in the community. Late 60s to early 80s saw major hostel building.
1981	Education Act (influenced by the radical recommendations of the Warnock Report, 1978)	Children should be educated in mainstream schools/classes where possible; WR introduced 'statementing' to entitle children to special education support and popularised the term 'special educational needs' (SEN). Also this year a successful campaign for the right for people with learning difficulties to vote in General Elections (1982 in Scotland)
1988	Disabled Persons (services Consultations and Representation) Act	1988 Education Act saw the introduction of competition between schools driven by measures of attainment and new incentives for schools (tension between excellence and inclusion?)
1990	National Health Service and Community Care Act	At this time, the ideal model became the mixed economy of care: state, voluntary organisations, private sector and family. The Department of Health's official term in the 90s was 'people with learning disabilities'
1995	Disability Discrimination Act	See also 1994 Salamanca Statement - inclusion and 'education for all'

Year	Legislation or policy	Notes
2001	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)	Made educational discrimination unlawful. Established that SEN will be met by mainstream schools unless parents decide otherwise, or that it interferes with the education of other pupils.
2005	2005 Mental Capacity Act	People with learning disabilities have the right to make their own decisions if they have the capacity to do so.

#### National developments and policies

2001	White Paper <i>Valuing People</i>	Revised Code of Practice (DfES); emphasis on consultation with parents. Principles of rights, independence, choice and inclusion.
2007	UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities	UK a signatory to this, which commits states to uphold human rights for disabled people.
2007	Putting People First	Department of Health's commitment to making individual budgets a choice for anyone receiving social care
2008	Department of Health Report	<i>Healthcare for All: The Independent Inquiry into Access to Healthcare for People with Learning Disabilities</i> . Emphasises need for urgent change to improve inadequate NHS care
2012	<i>Death by Indifference: 74 Deaths and counting</i>	5 years after Mencap's initial Report, highlights continuing critical inequalities in NHS health care for people with learning difficulties

## BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE - FINGERSPELLING



## BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE - GREETINGS



# Empowering Advocacy

One step at a time

## Designing Collaborative Projects

Promotes teamwork, critical thinking, and in-depth exploration of complex issues. Allows students to take ownership of their learning and contribute their unique insights to the broader academic discourse.

## Facilitating Student-Led Learning

Enhances leadership skills, public speaking abilities, and confidence. Encourages active participation and engagement among students, fostering a collaborative learning environment where everyone's expertise is valued.

## Platforms for Publications or Presentations

Encourages academic writing and presentation skills. Provides students with a sense of achievement and recognition for their scholarly contributions. Promotes accountability and pride in their work while fostering a culture of intellectual exchange and debate.



Srinivasa Ramanujan  
Maths



Walter Tull  
History



Mary Seacole  
Health & Nursing



John Archer  
Politics



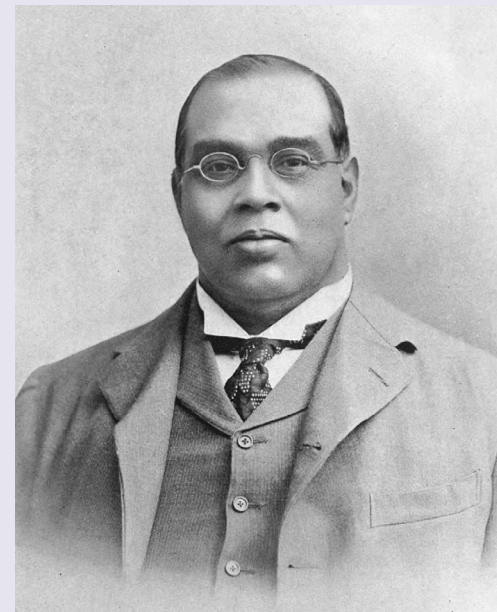
Dr Harold Moody  
Social Reform



Shen Fu-Tsung  
Languages



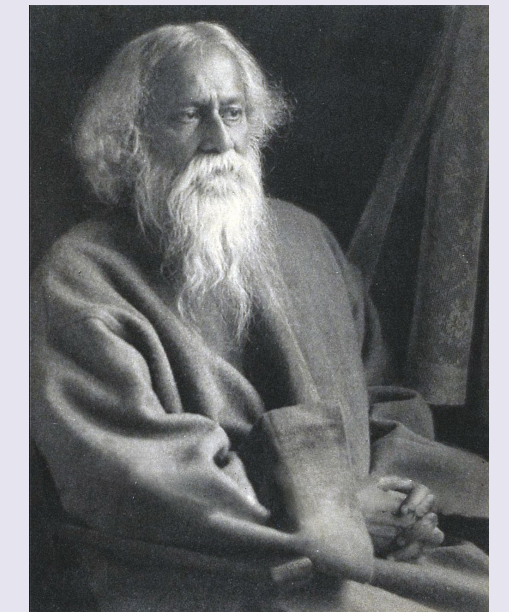
Frederick Akbar Mahomed  
Medicine



Romesh Chunder Dutt  
Economy



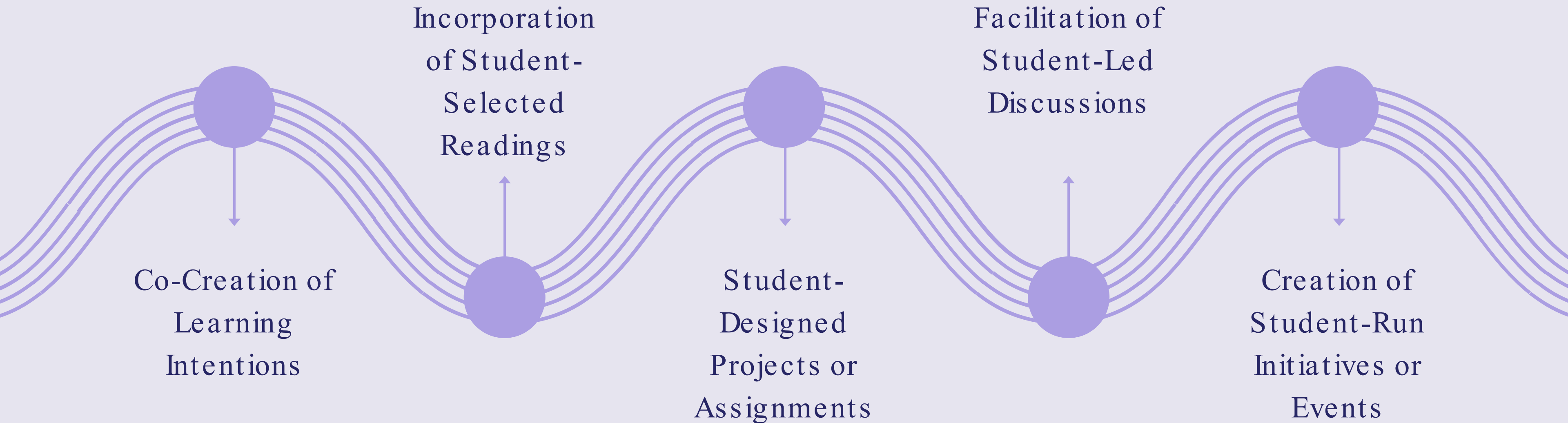
Wu Ting-fang  
Law



Rabindranath Tagore  
Literature

# A Roadmap of Approaches

Collaboration is key



# 25%

Only a fifth of UK universities say they are 'decolonising' curriculum  
Just 24 out of 128 asked about reforms to address colonial legacy are  
committed to idea (2020)

1. Empower students through active participation.
2. Foster inclusivity by amplifying diverse voices.
3. Enhance learning outcomes with learner-generated content.

# Thank you very much!

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