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Lessons from Sámi indigenous pedagogy to non-indigenous higher education settings

Short description / Abstract:

In recent years, there has been increasing critical awareness of the colonial nature of knowledge production and teaching practices in the UK higher education setting, with higher education institutions taking various initiatives to ‘decolonise’ their curricula. However, little attention has been given to indigenous pedagogical thought and practice. My research aims to address this, by learning from Sámi indigenous pedagogy researchers and practitioners, and identifying transferable practices to non-indigenous higher education settings. My initial dialogues with a Sámi pedagogical researcher have taught me the centrality of a relational outlook to indigenous pedagogy, and how this is expressed through the practice of storytelling. This is highly applicable to the UK higher education sector, with large proportions of international students from formerly colonised/semi-colonised countries. Encouraging them to share their stories facilitates building relations with their peers and teachers, and counteracts Western-centric epistemic imperialism by affirming their lived experiences situated understandings as valid knowledge in the academic context. This is an insight derived directly from Sámi indigenous pedagogical thought and practice. I aim to deepen my understanding of it by making contacts and building partnerships with Sámi and other indigenous pedagogical researchers at this conference.