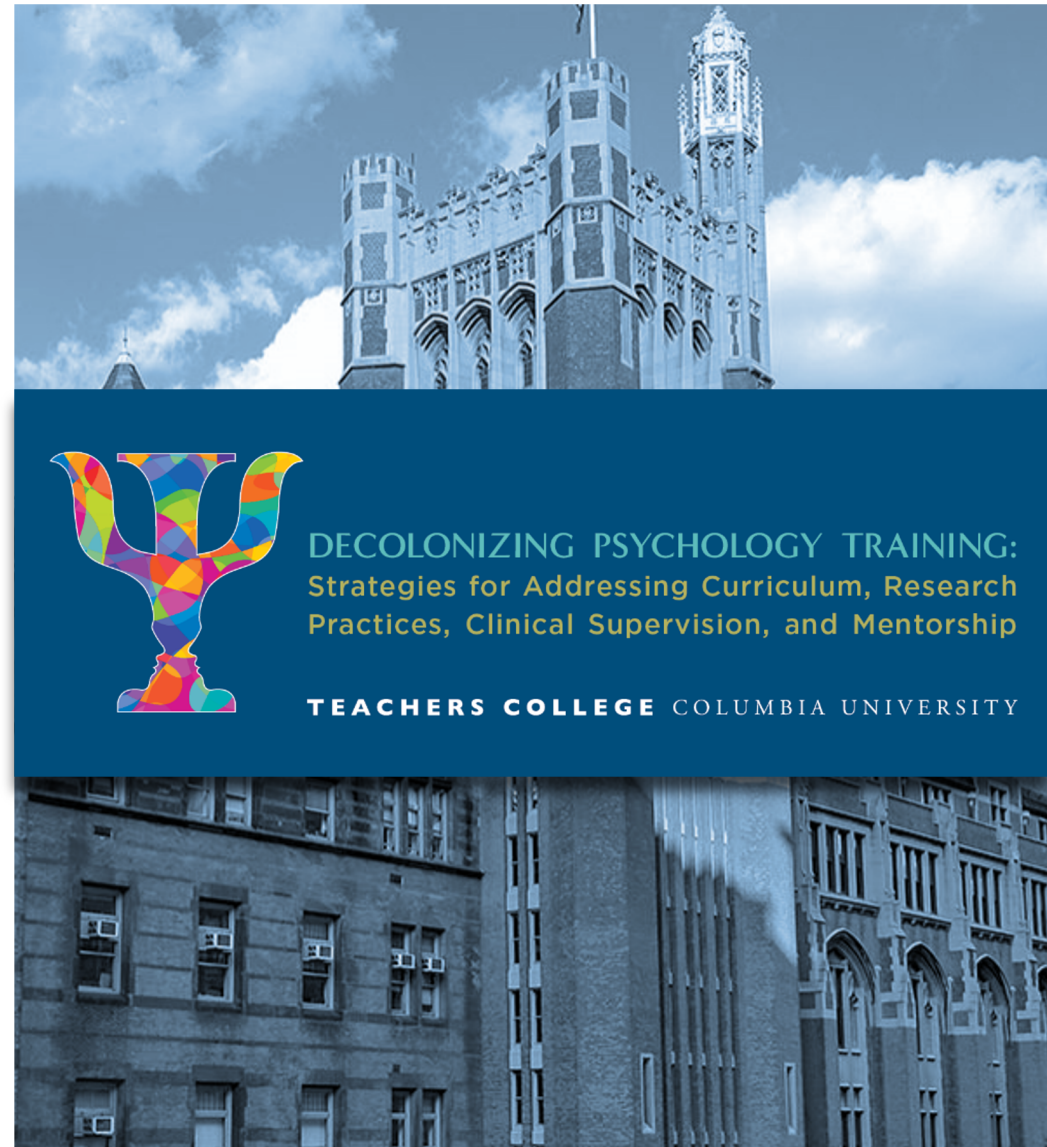


# Decolonizing the Psychology Curriculum

---

Jasmine Mena, Ph.D





DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

*Mal de ojo*

*Altar*

bowl of water

*Agua de Florida AND agua bendita*

deceased family member was near?

**Rituals**

---



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

*Psychology is how I became  
“civilized.”*



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## My Moral Codes Meet Psychology

---

My home moral codes valued experiential knowledge, collectivism, family-orientation, and a pro-people attitude

Psychology's moral code is consistent with positivism, individualism, US-centrism, and capitalism

My bridge: multiculturalism, intersectionality, and social justice



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Questions & Assumptions

---

1. **What constitutes life quality and wellbeing?**
2. **What detracts from life quality and wellbeing?**
3. **How can we improve life quality and wellbeing for all people, especially for historically marginalized people?**
4. **Can psychology help to improve life quality and wellbeing?**
5. **How do social, economic, and political contexts interface with psychology and life quality and wellbeing?**



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Questions & Assumptions

---

### My recommended approach:

1. Does not fetishize the search for pathology
2. Acknowledges differences by centering the lived experiences of historically marginalized people
3. Understands the influence of social, economic, and political circumstances



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

*Is psychology willing to take a stand? One that breaks from neutrality?*



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

# The Psychology Curriculum

---

## Can the psychology curriculum be decolonized?

If so, how? By illuminating euro-centric and hegemonic values.

1. **Colonization:** to create a colony in or on (a place); to take control of (an area) and send people to live there.
2. **Decolonization:** to free from colonial status.
3. **Hegemony:** the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group.





DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Decolonizing Psychology

---

1. The quest for objectivity
2. The search for psychological universals
3. A preference for individualistic explanations
4. Decontextualized interpretations and rigid application of methods
5. An (un)conscious comfort or sympathy for White supremacy
6. Calls for decolonization, equity, diversity, and inclusion in psychology



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Pedagogy Tip #1

---

### **It starts with your own intentions and study.**

1. Need to clarify your personal mission as it relates to education.
2. To what end are you enacting your role?
3. What is your mission as an educator?
4. How do the following steps show up or how can they show up in your course content or pedagogy?



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

# Framework

---

**CONFRONT**

**COMMIT**

**CAUTION**



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Framework

---

### CONFRONT

1. The Quest for Objectivity
2. The Obsession with Psychological Universals
3. The Preference for Individualistic Explanations

### COMMIT

4. Decontextualized interpretations and rigid application of methods
5. An (un)conscious comfort or sympathy for White supremacy

### CAUTION

6. Calls for decolonization, equity, diversity, and inclusion in psychology



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

1. **The Quest for Objectivity**
2. **The Obsession with Psychological Universals**
3. **The Preference for Individualistic Explanations**

**CONFRONT**

---



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

<b>Social &amp; Political Issues</b>	<b>Psychological Explanations</b>
Subjugation of Women	Hysteria
Racial Discrimination	Lack of Intelligence
Same Sex Attraction	Mental Illness
Families of non-Western Cultures	“Enmeshed”
Child Poverty & Academic Achievement	Self-regulation, Self-efficacy, Self-esteem
Marginalization	Psychotherapy & Self-care

(Thrift and Sugarman, 2019)



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Pedagogy Tip #2

---

### **Make your paradigms explicit.**

1. Review the sources you use in your courses and identify the likely primary paradigms.
2. Review your own publications and review your discussion sections to ascertain your assumptions based on how you explain your findings.
3. Be transparent with students about these assumptions and invite them to begin to read closely.



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

COMMIT

---

4. Decontextualized interpretations and rigid application of methods
5. An (un)conscious comfort or sympathy for White supremacy

*“ . . . the phenomenon of turning away from living thought, which engages reality and recognises its own limitations, to a deontologised or absolute conception of disciplinary life. The discipline becomes, in solipsistic fashion, the world. And in that world, the main concern is the proper administering of its rules, regulations, or, as Fanon [1967] argued, (self-devouring) methods” (Gordon, 2014)*





DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Pedagogy Tip #3

---

### **Focus on issues over psychology subareas.**

1. Roberts and Rizzo (2020) invite us to focus on conceptual problems; hub of knowledge instead of a solipsistic view from psychology.
2. Increasing awareness is not pessimistic or fatalistic; it is imperative if we are to break through passivity. Ignorance demands NO action.



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

4. Decontextualized interpretations and rigid application of methods
5. An (un)conscious comfort or sympathy for White supremacy

**COMMIT**

---

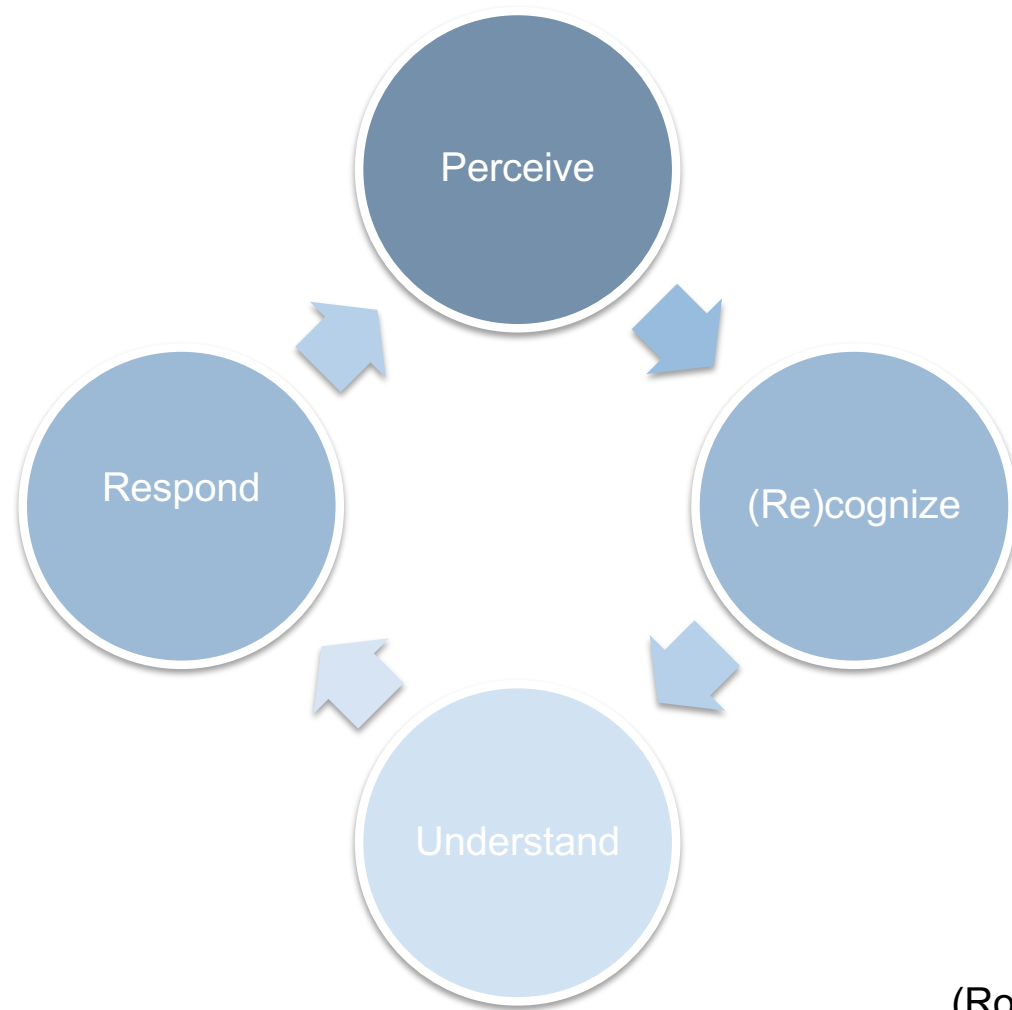


DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Consciousness in Action

---



(Rosado, 2007)



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Pedagogy Tip #4

---

### **Teach students the steps in Consciousness-in-Action, after you understand them.**

1. **Assign readings that complement your psychology topics, but are outside of it.**
2. **Engage students in the act of seeing a problem from different perspectives (e.g., individual, social, community, society, globally) and consider what happens to our understanding of a perspective is left out.**



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## 6. Calls for decolonization, equity, diversity, and inclusion in psychology

*“To reopen the future of our planet to all who inhabit it, we will have to learn how to share it again amongst the humans, but also between the humans and the non-humans” (Mbembe, 2016).*

**CAUTION**

---



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Pedagogy Tip #5

---

### **Incorporate inclusive practices AND call out oppression**

1. Raise awareness of structural violence and create brave spaces.
2. Assess student sense of belonging and offer identity safe cues that signal to students that you welcome them.
3. Encourage students to select project topics that interest THEM.
4. Consider alternative approaches to grading such as ungrading or labor-based grading.



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Pedagogy Tip #6

---

### **Embrace difficult dialogues and interpersonal challenges.**

1. Complete the Syllabus Challenge (Case), Classroom norms including, Discuss rules of discourse.
2. Build in opportunities for peer interactions.
3. If the dialogue turns difficult, observe the process out loud, put the discussion “on pause” until the next class.



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## Selected Resources

- Key Terms in the Presentation
- Suggested Readings
- Curriculum Mapping

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1g6B4ivjSrB3-CWPdqAI9lCzpjY4lJ8aws0iodKBjY/edit>

# Curriculum Mapping

---





DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

# *Closing Comments*

*(personal photos removed by presenter)*



DECOLONIZING PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING:  
Strategies for Addressing Curriculum, Research  
Practices, Clinical Supervision, and Mentorship

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

*Thank you*

[j.mena@bucknell.edu](mailto:j.mena@bucknell.edu)