

Embracing Plural Curricula Amid Neoliberalism in Contemporary Universities in Africa: Asante's Afrocentric Idea Revisited

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Abstract

This paper focuses on how Asante's idea of Afrocentricity could assist in the understanding of the main challenges and opportunities associated with curricula in Africa's post-colonial universities. In terms of methodology, the paper constitutes a conceptual treatise that draws from previous empirical research that focused on Afrocentricity and a plural programme – the extended curriculum programme within a university context where neoliberalism remains dominant. In this regard, the paper combines an extensive review of empirical cases and the authors' experiences of the extended curriculum programmes in diverse South African universities. Literature was reviewed from a wide range of sources that included Afrocentricity and curriculum transformation through plurality at individual and institutional pedagogic levels. The paper explores the complex nature of pedagogic transformation mainly due to the persistence

of Western ideals under a resurgent neoliberal philosophy that shapes practices in contemporary university spaces. The paper thus highlights how Afrocentricity transcends simplistic notions of intellectual discussions as it highlights serious and practical realities that shape the identities, ideals, aspirations, and values of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the process, ways in which pedagogic educational aspirations of the students could be redefined through an Afrocentric approach together with constraints are discussed. The individualist-oriented complications posed by neoliberal ideals that tend to contradict and, in some instances, hinder the Afrocentric core principle of inclusivity have left African universities at a crossroads with little to show in terms of progress in the transformation agenda. The paper concludes that Afrocentricity and its basis in cultural reconfiguration aims to ensure that people recognise their agency and affirm

their identity and ability to draw from their existing agency to holistically transform the various aspects of their lives by overcoming the socio-economic and intellectual constraints.

Keywords: Afrocentricity, Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECPs), Neoliberalism, Plurality, Post-colonial University.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the contributions of Asante's ideas of Afrocentricity as part of the decolonial struggles towards repositioning African voices in contemporary historical narratives. This follows concerns that the lasting impact of colonialism could have impacted efforts to enhance agency among Africans to free themselves from some of the negative influences of the colonial past where African ways of knowing were questioned and mainly sidelined despite their provenance. The paper focuses on the complex nature of pedagogic transformation amid the persistence of Western principles where scholarship and other practices across universities in Africa tend to be inevitably shaped by neoliberalism. Of importance in the arguments shaping this paper is the view that Afrocentricity transcends simplistic notions of intellectual discussions as it highlights stern and practical realities that shape the identities, ideals, aspirations, and values of Africans.

Experiences of students from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly those in the extended curriculum programmes (ECPs) are used to understand the challenges and possibilities of drawing from Afrocentricity to recentre pedagogies from which lessons could be drawn to aid the transformation of higher education in Africa. The reason why the paper has chosen to focus on the ECP mainly relates to the structure of the programme as representing plurality as opposed to the homogenising curricula. The latter features the post-apartheid curricular structuring in which physical and epistemological access and pedagogical practices and policies are mainly drawn from neoliberal-inclined principles. This has meant that injustices that characterise the social, economic, political, educational and other institutions have become deeply entrenched within the higher education system and institutions thus negatively affecting individuals and groups from

disadvantaged backgrounds while favouring those from advantaged backgrounds. The ECPs have thus been driven by principles of innovative and responsive teaching anchored upon a philosophy of plurality at the curriculum level (Fomunyam & Teferra 2017). In addition, the ECPs' holistic approach to student support in which academic and lifestyle management skills are integrated makes them stand out as essential, particularly in a decolonising context seeking to affirm pedagogic practices founded upon firm Afrocentric principles. While challenges of under-theorisation and reluctance in the uptake of research on the programme by staff have been explicitly reported by McKenna (2014) and Boughey (2014), this paper seeks to explore the broader neoliberal influences on the post-apartheid university curricula particularly the continued precarity that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have continued to experience.

This paper is written within a context where concerns have been raised by decolonial scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017; 2021) whose view on what he calls an "unfolding Euro-modernity" alludes to the deeply entrenched colonial legacy among academics cannot be ignored. Of importance is the view that to free Africa from the clutches of colonial power, culture and knowledge matrices that still define Africa as highlighted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), there is a need for universities in Africa and South Africa in particular to embrace locally derived and contextual relevant epistemologies that are acceptable (Eybers 2019). The paper's context also draws from the challenges that have characterised the post-colonial African university that Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2013) outline, particularly the historically changing roles of universities and realignment of their roles to the market. Equally, drawing from Gwaravanda (2019) and Gwaravanda and Ndofirepi (2021) who present an important critique of the Eurocentric pitfalls in the practice of African philosophy predominantly in African universities, the paper grapples with challenges affecting South Africa's university curricula, especially within a context dominated by neoliberalism in which exclusion tends to produce curricula that are exclusionary of students' philosophical and cultural underpinnings. Specific reference is made to students from poorer backgrounds. The curricula are not only alienating

many students but are culturally hegemonic with the potential to disrupt the academic project for all students (Eybers 2019). This thus represents a decolonial approach to issues in which ways of disrupting the current Eurocentric-linked curricula are explored particularly from an Afrocentric perspective. It is envisaged that academics can explore a social realist ontology when formulating Afrocentric curricula that can enhance epistemic inclusivity as noted by Mignolo (2009) – plurality at the individual cultural level, plurality at the institutional cultural level, and plurality at the academic and pedagogic levels.

The paper is based on a conceptual review of empirical cases and the authors' experiences of the ECPs in diverse South African universities. Literature was reviewed from a wide range of sources that included Afrocentricity and curriculum transformation through plurality at individual and institutional levels. The key question upon which this work is foregrounded is: How could Afrocentricity assist in understanding plurality associated with the ECPs in South African universities?

Extended Curriculum Programmes as Pedagogic Alternatives – A Contextual Overview

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) introduced ECPs in the early 2000s as part of equity-related strategies aimed at dealing with access and success challenges particularly targeting students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds (DHET, 2019). The ECPs have emerged as essential interventions because of a low graduation rate that saw 36.9% of students surveyed between 2009 and 2015 completing their three-year programmes at the end of the fourth or fifth year (DHET 2020). While ECPs have had their fair share of challenges, especially the criticism that the throughput rates have not been as high as anticipated, success rates have remained encouraging. Considering the low graduate rates and throughput in three-year programmes, the focus of the ECPs becomes essential in ensuring broadening access to students who although meeting the university entry due to their disadvantaged backgrounds would not have made it to university because of multiple disadvantages they face. In addition, the ECPs tend to embrace a

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decolonial approach that aligns with Afrocentrism especially where the targeted support to these students in the form of financial and other resources is concerned. The programme thus stands out as an important policy instrument that if implemented accordingly can deal with both access and success of students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who usually find the university environment alienating (Nyoni 2022). The support mechanisms found particularly in the foundation phase of ECPs remain a valuable mechanism towards enhancing the success of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, thus posing as an important instrument when discussions on an Afrocentric approach are pursued. Equally, the support in ECPs has resulted in the establishment of 'family bonds' among students, thus enhancing their integration into the university environment culture. The ECPs can generally be viewed as a mechanism aimed at disrupting some regular programme tendencies that hinder epistemic access, especially considering the emergence of the #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, Black Student Movement, #OpenStellenboschCollective

and more recently the #Asinamali protests (Hlatshwayo 2022). These protests are key as they highlighted the slow pace of transformation at the pedagogic and curriculum levels – the ECPs and the support associated with them have come in handy to provide an alternative.

An Overview of the Problem

The problem being pursued in this paper is founded upon the broader context of decolonisation of the curricula and other educational pedagogies experienced in Africa's universities. Most challenges facing African institutions, be it at economic, sociocultural, religious and of late technological levels, can be explained within the context of the colonial experiences and post-colonial redress efforts. These painstakingly slow-paced changes point to the complexity of reaffirming and dislodging the deeply entrenched colonial legacy responsible for perpetuating injustices, particularly among previously disadvantaged groups. Giroux (2014) argues that neoliberalism and its influences on the curricula and pedagogic institutional practices have since the 1980s been at the centre of some of the challenges that continue to affect students and universities. Fataar (2023) describes the situation as having universities turned from 'public goods' into 'private goods' as individualism, marketisation and managerialism set in. Giroux (2014) and Fataar (2023) concluded that the setting of managerialism and marketisation has fuelled severe competition that favours students or institutions from more privileged backgrounds at the expense of the disadvantaged.

The problem can further be expanded by adopting the views of Fataar (2023) who indicates that the African university system remains the least developed. Despite the significant growth in student enrolment, no appropriate support is provided to the university system. Other scholars have gone further by outright dismissing post-colonial Africa's higher education as unsuitable for its context (Rufai, Adedeji & Musa 2021). Such a situation then passes on the financial and other support mechanisms to students and their families as explained by Masutha and Motala (2023) and it is mainly students from working-class families who suffer the most, most of whom are disadvantaged. Of importance in the foregoing argument is the view proffered by Fataar (2023) who highlights how

the structural adjustment programme-related pressures of the 1980s manifested in challenges within the areas of gender, ethnicity, class, status and physical location of universities. It is within this context that the paper refers to the ECP in an attempt to explore the possibilities of implementing a flexible, plural curriculum with broader student support and sensitivity to students' backgrounds as opposed to the rigid mainstream programmes that have a one-size-fits-all tendency derived from neoliberal influences. The paper thus explores ways in which the ECP could be understood from an Afrocentric lens, particularly concerning the cultural plurality associated with it.

Conceptualising Afrocentricity

Asante (1999: viii) states that Afrocentricity constitutes a fundamental necessity for African liberation at diverse levels and these include the psychological, social, cultural and economic aspects. Asante further asserts that Afrocentricity involves the relocation and repositioning of the African into a space of agency in which African voices can be heard as opposed to occupying a spectator role. Just like *ubuntu* and its conceptions of humanity, Afrocentricity can be viewed as an important theoretical philosophy that can be used to empower Africans. Asante views Afrocentricity as a philosophical theory just as in the structure of a curriculum. This means that the philosophy acts as an important block in efforts aimed at creating a common black consciousness underpinned by meaningful identity, political strength and the political will for effecting the requisite social and economic transformation of Africans and other formerly oppressed groups such as African Americans. Afrocentricity is thus an empowerment counter-hegemonic philosophy that seeks to question epistemological conceptions that tend to be founded upon European cultural realities. Exploring issues from an Afrocentric lens can thus be equated to Kaupapa Māori struggles for recognition and emancipation in New Zealand highlighted by Nyoni (2023) especially considering the integration of philosophical and practical action in challenging the hegemonic dominance of the mainstream curriculum and its entrenchment to western epistemologies. In the process, it is envisaged that such an epistemological approach could assist in shifting, constructing, critiquing and

challenging knowledge production founded upon a European cultural construct to embrace one that is positioned within an African cultural construct.

Whatever disagreements might exist in the conceptualisation of Afrocentricity, in arguments pursued in this paper, it remains essential to see it as an educational, philosophical and theoretical approach that can be used in educational and societal settings to achieve African people's empowerment. The Afrocentric idea is premised upon a recognition of the challenges that have underscored African ideas especially how they have been marginalised or subverted despite their richness. Of importance in the Afrocentric approach is a combination of defensive and redemptionist strategies that seek to relocate and reposition Africans within a space where their agency is embraced and enhanced to ensure that their voices are heard (Asante 2017). The paper equally draws from other decolonial approaches that seek to combine theory and practical actions to deal with the sidelining and misrepresentation of African voices in their historical and current experiences.

Exploring the Concept of Neoliberalism and its Influences on the Post-Colonial African University

Neoliberalism has been broadly explained and has a wide range of features that include a free-market system where competition is mainly at the individual level and the exchange of goods and services is done privately with the involved individuals' property and other rights guaranteed however, critics have argued that the system is devoid of equity (Vlasov 2021). On a similar note, Badat (2023) argues that theoretically, neoliberalism represents political economic practices in which human wellbeing would mainly be advanced through freeing individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills. This is meant to operate within an institutional framework featuring free markets and free trade underpinned by property rights. In the process, the state is expected to play a role in creating and preserving an institutional framework meant to support the practices, including legislative and repressive mechanisms for ensuring that property rights are secured and markets function properly.

Pennington et al. (2017) argue that neoliberalism relates to a market-based view of citizenship

that stands in contrast to a rights-based view of social service provision in areas of the economy, healthcare, education and welfare provision in particular. According to Vlasov (2021), some of the features of neoliberalism include having persons who are rational self-seeking individuals, free-market efficiency mechanisms for resource and opportunity allocations, a commitment to free trade and a laissez-faire setting. This is mainly because the services are seen as private instead of a public good. In relating neoliberalism to a university context, Pennington et al. (2017) highlight the challenges of fee increases, student debt and outsourcing as traceable to the neo-liberalisation of higher education institutions. It is from this angle that neoliberalism has often been criticised for creating a situation devoid of accountability for private power. In addition, neoliberal politics such as deregulation, privatisation, suppression of trade unions, outsourcing and competition in public services broadly adopted across the globe since the 1980s are mainly responsible for deeper inequality and perpetuating poverty.

The entrenchment of culturally hegemonic curricula shows the influences of neoliberalism on post-colonial university systems not just in South Africa, as reported by Eybers (2019). For instance, the former vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Mamokgethi Phakeng, lamented how 'black pain' is still being experienced by black students who do not even have first-hand information about apartheid (Etheridge 2018). Of importance in this argument is that issues that students must deal with transcend their class and racial profiling –even though in terms of class it is mainly those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds who bear the brunt of a flawed post-colonial curricula configuration whose neoliberal influence has resulted in the reproduction of the past injustices. It might sound strange to suggest that in many instances, this reproduction of past injustices by the post-colonial university curricula is overt considering the context of a dominant neoliberal culture that has little or no sympathy for previously disadvantaged students.

Cultural Underpinnings of Afrocentric-Oriented Teaching Pedagogies

There is no doubt that culture plays an essential role in shaping successful and intellectually em-

powering pedagogies that might be relevant to the African university context. It is through conscious engagements on power relations and ensuring that positions of resistance holistically form part of the core philosophies of identity and indigeneity that defines what has come to be termed 'culturally relevant teaching'. As argued by Chiramba and Motala (2023), emphasis ought to be on a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically in which cultural referents are used to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.

With the Afrocentric idea being underpinned by a conscious understanding of individuals' historical and current experiences of marginalisation that ought to propel them towards resistance, the significance of embracing a culturally relevant pedagogy remains essential. This is critical especially if academic success is to be championed within the current university settings across Africa, particularly in South Africa, where there is the continued dominance of neoliberalism in defining university practices and processes that influence students' academic success. Placing students' background experiences at the centre of their learning, particularly when it comes to students in extended programmes, ought not to provoke sentiments of negative perceptions about their preparedness but rather it should inspire the teaching pedagogies of academics or those providing requisite support. It is, therefore, through various traits such as knowledge of individual circumstances, self-respect and resilience, coupled with an edge to succeed, that students who mostly come from disadvantaged backgrounds consciously draw from and use as some agency to navigate the challenges encountered within the university environment and ultimately succeed.

In elaborating the nature of pedagogic practices founded upon Afrocentric ideas, especially in pursuit of students' academic success, culturally relevant teaching remains essential. As argued by Chiramba and Motala (2023), this implies teaching in which academics engage in student-centric practices that aim at ensuring that their academic needs are met to gain quality intellectual capabilities and attain academic success as opposed to non-comprehensive strategies. The latter have come to define current university teaching pedagogies and heavily draw from the dominant neoliberal

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ideals where students' socio-inequalities are noted but rarely adequately factored into institutional planning and academic practices. Such strategies can therefore not be relied upon for dealing with the socio-economic and academic precarities that define the experiences of students in African universities especially those from poorer backgrounds.

While the paper does not directly deal with the issues around neoliberalism, it is imperative to draw from Badat (2023), who in presenting four effects of neoliberalism highlighted the willing or imposed neoliberal thinking and ideas and how a culture of materialism has been rampantly introduced into the higher education system. Of importance in his views are the impacts of globalisation and the dominance of neoliberalism within the universities in Africa and how these have combined to define the unprecedented crises confronting universities and academics. The culture of materialism following the entry of private players in higher education is the resultant transformation of the higher education space in which Badat (2023: 16) borrows a concept of "Narcissist hedonism" from (Nayyar, 2008: 5) in which the culture of neoliberalism is blamed for displacing "a reasonable utilitarianism" that characterises universities in Africa. It can therefore be argued that suggestions on the need for culturally relevant teaching as part of an

Afrocentric linked pedagogic transformation are cognisant of the deeply entrenched neoliberal-driven pedagogies that universities and academics as well as middle-class students that could stand in the way of the necessary transformation. It follows that reorienting pedagogies to embrace culturally relevant teaching must not be isolated from the broader efforts aimed at extricating other institutions within the political, economic, social and of late technological spheres where the dominance of neoliberalism has posed the greatest challenge. An acknowledgement of such challenges does not however render the task of creating pedagogies informed by the Afrocentric ideas insurmountable. The message of hope is well spelt out by Woldegiorgis (2023), who argues that despite the raging debate on the extent to which African higher education systems have lived up to African societal expectations in terms of executing their role and functions, societies have prided themselves on the high-level expertise that exhibits knowledge and how such knowledge has been used to support change. In essence, he further adds that higher education institutions have been driven to negotiate changes within the complex socio-economic and political contexts.

The Afrocentric Philosophical Influences on African University Curriculum

The development of South Africa's higher education, in particular, at the curriculum level since 2015 and the emergent #feesMustFall protests have been defined by practices that have represented a rejection of what could be viewed as Eurocentric principles (Eybers 2019). Questions have thus arisen on the implementation of mainstream curricula that embrace democratisation and justice. In this regard, a democratised and just educational space has been found to be quite important. In a similar line of argument supporting the democratisation of South Africa's higher educational settings, some scholars have advocated a need for students to develop skills in literacy and numeracy while also expanding their technological, social and political abilities as part of ensuring that participation is within a democratic space (Chiramba & Motala 2023). It has been noted that the mainstream curricula that have formed part of South Africa's higher education system have allegedly marginalised students particularly as the interaction with course content, expert voices and

teaching methods has remained isolated from their lived realities (Shizha 2013). It is therefore important to note that any curriculum that lacks consciousness of one's lived realities can by no means form part of emancipatory curricula especially as it would be lacking standards that can model it along Afrocentric ideas. These Eurocentric curricula and their rigidity have failed to enhance plurality in knowledge production across South Africa's higher education system since the dawn of democracy. This has resulted in epistemic hegemony, something that requires critical attention.

A shift away from Eurocentric curricula to embrace Afrocentric curricula underpinned by a decolonial path in which Afrocentric curricula are used as enablers for redressing epistemic injustices associated with Eurocentric curricula. The redressive process through embracing Afrocentric curricula involves dealing with the epistemic hegemony and arrogance associated with mainstream curricula that are founded upon a Eurocentric philosophy. Equally, some of the epistemic silences associated with African universities especially the risk of implementing ethnocentric curricula highlighted by Young, Haffejee and Corsun (2017) can be dealt with by implementing flexible curricula that are conscious of and value the local context. What could also be of importance is the need to ensure that students' experiences within and outside the university are explored with the idea of understanding their influence on the learning environment. An educational approach, particularly at the curriculum level that puts students' cultures and experiences at the centre becomes important in creating an inclusive learning environment – something Asante (1991; 1999) emphasises as the centrality of the African person in the curriculum and classroom setting. It, therefore, becomes important to ensure that Afrocentric entrenched epistemic processes that embrace a holistic view at theoretical and practical levels are used not only for ensuring the adoption of fluid curricula and pedagogic processes in African universities but also for ensuring that African issues are explained from a local context and solutions are relevant for Africa.

It can thus be argued that 'real empowerment' at the curriculum level can mainly be understood by how the students concerned are able to acknowledge being part of the curriculum while equally seeing

their reflection in the curriculum taught (Eybers 2019). Since teaching is mainly construed as a communication process, it can be argued that the academic literacy, lifestyle management and critical thinking associated with the foundation components in ECPs are at the fore of addressing historical intellectual gaps – connecting students with their cultural backgrounds and traditions while ensuring that they understand challenges faced from familiar life and pedagogical practices. It is through such an approach that students can easily comprehend the institutional culture and deal with complex academic and related obligations found in educational spaces.

Homogeneous and Plural Modes of Curricula Implementation Amid Extended Curriculum Practices

The adoption of ECPs in South African institutions has been founded upon an agenda of broadening epistemological access to qualifying students who due to other circumstances such as their socio-economic backgrounds would not gain university admission despite meeting minimum entry requirements. According to the Department of Higher Education (2020), ECPs focus on students who meet the requirements for university entry but due to previous educational and socio-economic disadvantages tend to be in a precarious position that could impede their academic success. In essence, such students would have accessed schooling that is inadequate to prepare them for university. This argument needs to be taken further to explore how the educational gaps that students from poorer backgrounds experience at high school that put them in a precarious position at university ought to be laid squarely at the broader post-colonial education system whose dominant neoliberal values continue to perpetuate the precarity of disadvantaged groups. It can thus be argued that the government's approach towards introducing the ECPs can be viewed as a noble idea for disrupting homogenous neoliberal entrenched curricula that have defined South Africa's post-apartheid universities. Beyond such a disruption, efforts have thus been commendable towards embracing plural modes of curricula implementation as shown by the four models underpinning the ECPs and the flexibility that is contained in their design and implementation.

Looking into the realities, particularly when it comes to a lack of interest in understanding and embracing ECPs coupled with negative attitudes associated with academics in mainstream programmes, one cannot help but point the finger at the structural faults that the post-colonial university system has produced. This sad situation is what the authors call 'academic imperialism'. This 'academic imperialistic' situation which has remained concealed by the skewed neoliberal value-dominated post-colonial university is responsible for the under-theorisation argued by McKenna (2014) and Boughey (2014). This paper thus argues that while under-theorisation of the programme and reluctance in the uptake of research by staff, most of whom are casual, are undoubtedly issues as reported by Fomunyam and Teferra (2017), it is important to locate the problem within the broader structurally skewed post-colonial university setting that is still reeling under the clutches of neoliberalism. It is thus important to highlight that to deal with the epistemological and pedagogic injustices that continue to affect students from disadvantaged backgrounds besides those in ECPs, it remains imperative to confront the structural faults posed by the neoliberal value dominance at institutional and broader systemic levels.

It must be emphasised that curricula that are suitable for African universities could address the multiple and complex pedagogic and epistemic challenges in such a way that students' culture and identity are consciously embraced. In addition, it is important to ensure that students are not just able to be conscious of who they are but equally hold awareness of the suitable ways in which they can express themselves at pedagogic and epistemic levels. It is this manner of expression that scholars such as Maina and Maringe (2020) and Chiramba, Banda and Mwebesa (2021) have positioned as an essential foundation of epistemic justice in which student voices ought to be at the core of any just teaching and learning processes. Scholars have also referred to the process of creating a just epistemic and pedagogic educational environment as the demarginalisation of the history, culture, and agency of Africans (Angu 2018; Kumalo 2018; Nyoka 2013). It is therefore important that students' belonging, and agency are reflected in the curricula.

Conclusion – Towards an Afrocentric Curricula

It needs to be emphasised that coming up with an inclusive curriculum within a space dominated by neoliberalism might prove to be challenging. Although the implementation of the ECPs may also have its challenges, when it comes to a flexible curriculum that can cater for the needs of students from poorer backgrounds, there is a chance that the programmes can provide an alternative to the mainstream curriculum that is usually criticised for being rigid and influenced by Eurocentric values. The Eurocentric values are mainly underscored by the neoliberal ideas and practices that dominate post-colonial African universities. An inclusive Afrocentric curriculum that could go beyond what the ECP in its current form can offer, is therefore one that is capable of deconstructing hegemonic practices within a curriculum. Such a deconstruction effort ought to be done to ensure that students are assisted to consciously develop an inspiring identity in which they are able to express and assert themselves in ways that can promote their academic advancement. The best way to create a curriculum that is founded on Afrocentric values is thus to have a multipronged holistic approach to curriculum formulation in which diverse academic literacy and lifestyle management are infused, since empowering learning can be drawn from pedagogic practices that transcend the classroom and university settings.

It is also important that in implementing an Afrocentric curriculum, African academics play a central role not only in developing scholarship knowledge but also in ensuring that different types of knowledge are used in building an Afrocentric curriculum. While the dominance of neoliberalism within post-colonial African universities has meant that those who control the political and economic resources shape ideas including setting the curriculum agenda, it is important to note that the flexibility of the ECPs allows students to draw from their agency to enhance their life and academic skills thus in the process broadening their prospects for academic success. It is these initiatives associated with the ECPs that set them apart from what critics call a rigid mainstream curriculum. This further calls for academics and other disciplinary experts to be empowered to embrace the agency

of marginalised individuals and groups in their pedagogies and other academic practices. It is through enhancing student agency, especially for those from marginalised backgrounds, that South Africa's university curricula can rid itself of culturally hegemonic curricula and embrace inclusivity while also presenting decolonised curricula founded upon Afrocentric values.

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