

## Reading summary

**Zembylas, M. (2023). The decolonisation of humanising pedagogies in higher education: Implications for culturally responsive pedagogies. In L.-I. Rigney (Ed.), *Global perspectives and new challenges in culturally responsive pedagogies: Super-diversity and teaching practice* (pp. 36-49). Routledge.**

This chapter brings into conversation theoretical concepts offered by decolonial theories with a form of critical pedagogies that has been referred to as ‘humanising pedagogy’. Humanising pedagogy has its roots in Freire’s notion of humanisation and focuses on the pursuit of one’s full humanity. Culturally responsive pedagogy is theorised as a form of humanising pedagogy in the sense that it pays attention to the contextual and situational experience of the student as a human being and recognises that pedagogy is intimately linked to power, politics, history, and culture. The questions that drive Zembylas’ analysis are: What are the links between humanisation and decolonisation in higher education and what does this mean for pedagogical theory and praxis? In particular, how would culturally responsive pedagogies benefit from a combined theorisation of humanising *and* decolonising pedagogies?

Zembylas argues that humanising pedagogy, and, therefore, culturally responsive pedagogy, can benefit considerably by looking more closely into insights from decolonial thinking. In particular, he suggests that providing pedagogical spaces of decolonial praxis in higher education makes more visible the cultures and histories of marginalised peoples in (post)colonial settings, while enabling educators and students to transform their relationship to colonial/colonised modes of signification and relationality. An important part of developing a *decolonising* culturally responsive pedagogy is taking into consideration how humanness and coloniality are manifested in different socio-historical settings. In this sense, Zembylas argues that a decolonising lens in conceptualising culturally responsive pedagogy renews pedagogical questions around the teaching of diverse students and shows that the modern colonial stabilisation of knowledge about who we are as human cannot function independently from decolonisation efforts in higher education.

Taking decolonial thinking seriously, according to Zembylas, creates openings for further theorising of culturally responsive pedagogy to continue ongoing attempts that challenge and transform the coloniality of academic institutions, disciplines, and structures. The insights outlined in this chapter help raise further questions about whether, how, and why culturally responsive pedagogies, policies, practices, programmes, curricula, and theories in higher education truly empower diverse students and promote epistemic justice.

### **Take-home messages:**

**The entanglement of humanising pedagogy and CRP:** There are certain theoretical and political advantages from theorising culturally responsive pedagogy as a form of humanising pedagogy.

**Links between humanisation and decolonisation in higher education:** Culturally responsive pedagogies benefit from a combined theorisation of humanising *and* decolonising pedagogies.

**New openings:** Taking decolonial thinking seriously creates openings for further theorising of culturally responsive pedagogy to continue ongoing attempts that challenge and transform the coloniality of academic institutions, disciplines, and structures.

**Intellectual and political task:** An important intellectual and political task is to continue re-theorising culturally relevant pedagogy in light of the conceptualisation of humanising pedagogy as decolonising pedagogy.