

**THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION JOURNAL:
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES**

**GLOBAL 21ST CENTURY PROFESSIONALS: DEVELOPING
CAPABILITY TO WORK WITH INDIGENOUS AND OTHER
TRADITIONALLY-ORIENTED PEOPLES**

THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION JOURNAL: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

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Editorial

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International agreement on the framework for protecting the rights of Indigenous populations within nation states has occurred alongside unprecedented levels of globalisation of other previously nation-based activities such as economic and social provision and planning. As the idea of the postcolonial democratic state emerges, this collection undertakes an international and comparative examination of the role of higher education in educating globally aware professionals who are able to work effectively and in cultural safety with Indigenous Peoples.

This is an academic conversation that is intergenerational. These 15 papers span 40 years of thinking. We are humbled to be able to include essays by Professor Konai Thaman and Professor Koji Maeda (with Dr Kaori Okano), both of whom have provided sustained leadership and wisdom in this conversation since the mid-1970s. We are also very pleased to include contributions from early career academics, Anderson, Atkinson, Duthie, and Moore in whose capable hands we will be able to pass on this conversation for safe-keeping into the future.

The big question all of these essays address is how, under the condition of globalisation, it is possible to rethink the colonial project in higher education in postcolonial democratic states in ways that take into account the Indigenous human rights agenda. Universities are increasingly being expected by professional accrediting bodies to educate graduates to be able to work effectively with Indigenous populations, whether in Japan, Canada, the Pacific, Australia, or Africa. As this collection attests, everyone is having a similar conversation everywhere. We asked this collection of writers to examine how they, as academics, are starting to interrogate old colonial university work, and shifting it into the twenty-first century language of Indigenous rights, Indigenous academic presence in universities, and how they are developing graduate attributes that they see as important for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike to develop during their university studies.

One thing that is immediately apparent in reading this collection of essays is that the academic work undertaken by these authors is also about their personal interface with the issues presented. Everybody writing here is touched in some way by the question of how they work to develop their students to have a consciousness of Indigenous lifeways and rights. Every author spoke of their professional struggles in terms of their

teaching practice and teaching their respective universities what it means to them as individuals.

Another pattern to emerge across these essays is the responses that universities are having, ranging from those universities that are engaging in activities that then enable them to access national or international monies where the engagement is seen to be a simple box ticking exercise to those universities that are moving into the postcolonial democratic space and trying to work out what it means to reconcile the past and work with Indigenous Peoples, to employ Indigenous experts in the academy, to proactively bring Indigenous lifeways and knowledge into academia, and to ensure that non-Indigenous graduates are able to demonstrate skills and knowledge appropriate to the requirements of their profession in this globally, interconnected world. We see these papers as representing some of the opportunities enabled by the latter approach.

In this collection, we acknowledge the rights of the world's Indigenous Peoples and their sui generis rights and are providing witness that we are listening, are working collaboratively, Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics together, trying to redefine what living in democratic postcolonial states means for the planet. What we love about this collection is that each paper starts its discussion from very specific locations and yet the similarity in the struggles to include Indigenous bodies, Indigenous people, into universities, to get Indigenous perspectives into curriculum, to rethink pedagogical approaches, and even assessment tasks, by the conclusion demands attention because of the commonality of experiences of the author academics in this globally-encompassing conversation.

We felt in reading these papers that all the authors bring a sense of responsibility about the education of globally competent professionals who can work properly with Indigenous populations. The first papers by Ma Rhea, Kaya and Seleti, Maeda and Okano, Goerke and Kickett, and Nabobo-Baba, tackle broad questions of the transformation of universities as institutions of higher learning. Opening with Ma Rhea's paper, she examines the nexus between Indigenous rights, the modern university, and graduate attributes and theorises the potential of the university in postcolonial democracies to address Indigenous rights in its professional education programs. She posits the postcolonial professional as one who has been educated about internationally recognised human rights and economic justice mechanisms, provisions and frameworks within a supportive university policy environment that has focussed both academic work and the formulation of graduate attributes in order that new professionals, emerging from the modern university, will have the skills and knowledge to proactively contribute to the engagement of the professions within postcolonial states.

Kaya and Seleti argue that higher education in South Africa is too academic and distant from the developmental challenges of African local communities. They argue that the integration of African Indigenous knowledge systems (AIKS) into the higher educational system could improve its relevance. They argue that this requires

an African Indigenous theoretical framework of knowledge to guide the integration process, alongside clarification of the relevance of African Indigenous languages in knowledge production and strong institutional support for sustainable integration.

Maeda and Okano's paper examines a Japanese example of collaboration between a university, an Indigenous community, and a private sector company to promote Ainu participation in higher education, drawing on a case study. Their study suggests that "the two-way learning" approach used in this work signifies a challenge to the conventional approach to Ainu education, which has long centred on the majority *wajin* providing unidirectional assistance to the Ainu in order to help them achieve the national educational benchmarks. They found that the "mutual learning" approach (*sodateai* in Japanese, *urespa* in the Ainu language) taken stresses a nurturing environment in which both Ainu and non-Ainu students feel included.

Goerke and Kickett's paper examines the use of the concept of Indigenous Cultural Competency in the Australian higher education environment. They argue that the optimum way for graduates to attain attributes connected to Australian Indigenous cultural competence is for them to be in a learning environment where staff they encounter also exhibit these attributes. They find that to achieve success in this sphere, an alignment between key policies and plans, staff professional development, and curriculum design is essential.

Nabobo-Baba's essay reflects on work that has set itself the task of rethinking Pacific higher education through embedding Indigenous graduate attributes into teacher education courses, and in leadership training of young and emerging young Pacific leaders and in communities, working to ensure that aspects of Indigenous peoples' cultures, worldviews, life values, and philosophies inform the work of educators.

Of pivotal importance in this conversation, the development of students in order for them to graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to become a member of their chosen profession is of central concern to university academics. The provision of services to Indigenous populations within formally colonised nations is now receiving more focus because of international agreements such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and as these essays attest, some academics have been undertaking this work over many years, engaging future professionals such as teachers, social workers, and lawyers to support them to do this work well. The following papers bring the focus of this conversation inside universities, into specific disciplines, discussing what approaches academics are taking to meet some of the needs of their graduates in the Indigenous domain.

Thaman's paper focuses specifically on how to develop quality teachers that can properly educate children of Pacific Island cultures. She argues that cultural competence is an important graduate attribute for those who plan to teach Indigenous students particularly those in Pacific Island Countries, a region that is arguably one of the most culturally diverse on earth and where Indigenous people are usually majority populations. Her work spanning 40 years has found that there is conflict between the

expectations of Pacific Indigenous cultures and those of schooling and that teachers in Pacific schools face the difficult task of mediating the interface between the different cultural systems of meanings and values that continue to exist in schools. She discusses the tensions in teachers' professional roles that demand that they interact with students as well as their parents, and where there are conflicts in the classrooms many of which are communicated to teachers indirectly by the behaviour of their students as they move between their home cultures and that of the school. Pre-service teachers, she observes, need to understand and continually re-think their role and theorise their own education in order to find ways of integrating the different cultures, which have contributed to their own development. For Pacific education systems the role of teachers in revitalising learning cannot be overemphasised. She finds that this has serious implications for the institutions that train teachers.

Likewise, in Canada, Kitchen, Hodson, and Raynor examine teacher education and its capacity to address the needs of Canada's Indigenous populations. They particularly study a community-based, Indigenous teacher education program in Northwestern Ontario in Canada. This program, the result of a partnership between the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council and Brock University, was designed to prepare Nishnawbe to teach through a Two Worlds Orientation: unique Indigenous understandings combined with Western educational principles.

The collection contains a number of papers from Australia that focus on these issues. As the paper by Burns identifies, the Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review, 2008) and the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (Behrendt Review, 2012) recognised the need for tertiary institutions to incorporate Indigenous knowledges into curriculum to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians and to increase the cultural competency of all students. These reviews recommended that higher education providers ensure that the institutional culture, the cultural competence of staff and the nature of the curriculum supports the participation of Indigenous students, and that Indigenous knowledge be embedded into curriculum so that all students have an understanding of Indigenous culture. It is within this context that closer examination of a number of academic disciplines is undertaken in the following papers.

Anderson and Atkinson also examine pre-service teacher education, from the perspective of them teaching in a mainstream, university teacher education program in Australia. This paper is a self-reflective piece of work where they discuss the importance of having the framework of graduate attributes relating to Indigenous Education, put forward by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), in order for them to teach non-Indigenous future teachers how to teach effectively to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. They discuss the education aspirations of Indigenous Peoples and how they are working with predominantly non-Indigenous pre-service teachers to develop their skills and knowledge.

Burnett, Lampert, and Crilly bring the focus to the use of the technique of guided narrative reflection as a strategy used with high-achieving non-Indigenous pre-service teachers in Australia on teaching practicum. They suggest that reflections (and subsequent dialogue) can provide opportunities for non-Indigenous pre-service teachers to re-think their beliefs and actions in ways that may interrupt and change the types of professional practices that have caused educational disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the past.

Moore brings the focus to the Australian classroom investigating the attitudes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students', non-Indigenous teachers', non-Indigenous principals', and Indigenous Teaching Assistants' attitudes towards Reconciliation. The essay focuses on the importance of the contribution of the two Indigenous Teaching Assistants and offers insights into their pedagogical approaches and how these can inform teacher professional development in the future.

The essay by Bartleet and Carfoot focuses attention on the role of service learning in the university context as a method of integrating the development of knowledge about Indigenous lifeways with the professional development of music students, fostering meaningful collaborations between universities and Indigenous communities. Their paper argues that these partnerships can both assist communities with activities such as cultural maintenance, and provide students with intercultural experiences that have the potential to transform their understandings of Indigenous culture.

The essay by Heckenberg and Gunstone reflects on their experiences of teaching Indigenous Australian Studies. The significant majority of students undertaking this subject are non-Indigenous students who are studying the subject as an elective rather than as part of an Indigenous Studies course. They discuss their experiences and reflections in teaching this subject, including their teaching philosophies and approaches, the various successes and challenges that they have encountered, and their views of the usefulness and potential of this subject in preparing students to genuinely work and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

The paper by Duthie, King, and Mays examines another university discipline that leads to a professional qualification – social work. They argue that social work practice with Aboriginal peoples and communities requires knowledge of operational communication skills and practice methods. In addition, there is also a need for practitioners to be aware of the history surrounding white engagement with Aboriginal communities and their cultures. Indeed, the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) acknowledges the importance of social workers practising cultural safety. Engendering knowledge of cultural safety for social work students is the opportunity to listen and talk with Aboriginal people who have experienced the destructive impacts of colonisation and the subsequent disruption to family and community. This article discusses the use of field experiences as an educational method aimed at increasing student awareness of contemporary Aboriginal issues and how to practice effectively and within a culturally safe manner.

The final discipline-based paper by Burns shifts the discussion to the professional preparation of lawyers. She demonstrates that while cultural competency has been recognised as an essential element of professional practice in health services internationally, and legal practice in the United States, very little work has been done to promote the cultural competency of legal professionals in the Australian context. Her paper discusses a pilot cultural competency professional development program for legal academics at an Australian university, which highlighted the need to interrogate legal disciplinary knowledge and the assumptions of 'law' in order to foster culturally competent legal professionals.

The concluding paper by McLaughlin brings together the ideas, experiences, and collective wisdom found in the preceding essays in order to move the conversation beyond the box ticking regimes that have so often been undertaken by universities as they cling to the colonial past into a consideration of the moral practice of academic work. McLaughlin encourages us to explore the reception of Indigenous perspectives and knowledges in university curriculum and the role of university educators to demonstrate cultural competency through their teaching and learning practices. Drawing on tenets of critical race theory, Indigenous standpoints and critical pedagogies, her paper argues that Indigenous knowledges in university curricula and pedagogy should not subscribe to the luxury of independence of scholarship from politics and activism, but rather that to critique existing knowledge and create space to legitimise politics in the intellectual realm (Dei, 2008) should be the work of an academic working in this field. Interrogating the experiences of non-Indigenous educators involved in this highly contested epistemological space (Nakata, 2002), the paper concludes by proposing a political and moral commitment by educators, when critical scholarship becomes praxis.

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