

**Re-placing Oceania Roots in our Teacher Education Programmes:
a critical appraisal of the roles of indigenous educational ideas¹**

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The majority of our teacher education programmes in Oceania are based largely on western models. However, teachers who graduate from these training institutions inevitably find themselves teaching in situations where indigenous forms and notions of education exist. Moreover, these teachers were products of primary and secondary education systems that disregarded indigenous forms of education, thereby compounding the problem. Focussing on indigenous thought processes rather than bodies of knowledge, this paper discusses the constraints and the prospects pertaining to the study of indigenous education in Oceania. It is argued that teacher education programmes must include systematic studies of indigenous philosophies and processes of education. A thorough grounding in this and exogenous philosophies of education would provide a stronger and more realistic foundation for teachers to practise their profession more effectively in the future in complementary ways that are firmly grounded in local realities.

Introduction

The subject of this paper is part of the broader attempt to search for and enhance the quality of our teacher education programmes in the small island states of Oceania. In seeking to address the question of quality, it is argued in this paper that:

- relevance is an intrinsic constituent of quality,

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- relevance of teacher education in Oceania ought to include a systematic study of indigenous educational philosophies and processes in core programmes, and
- while we have certain ideological and practical obstacles to overcome, it is both possible and indeed desirable to include these studies in core teacher education programmes.

This paper is a critical appraisal of the nature and roles of indigenous education in the enhancement of teacher preparation programmes in our region. The first part briefly outlines the search for relevance for teacher education programmes in this region. The paper then discusses some of the problems and constraints that militate against attempts to systematically incorporate studies of indigenous educational ideas in our teacher education programmes. Thirdly, the paper explores the advantages of the use of indigenous educational ideas in our teacher education programmes. Finally, the paper ventures to propose some possible strategies that could be undertaken to facilitate the realisation of these aspirations. As an exercise in appraisal, the paper attempts to:

- gauge the usefulness and value of the roles of indigenous educational philosophies in teacher education programmes in the region,
- see whether they are based on sound philosophies and principles of learning and teaching,
- judge whether they would contribute to the enhancement of the learning capacities of trainee teachers, and
- consider their contribution to the promotion of the quality and relevance of teacher education programmes.

It is common knowledge that research into indigenous educational ideas is a relatively recent phenomenon. For this reason, it is difficult to adequately evaluate the true extent of the value of the roles

of indigenous education. However, this is not the purpose of appraisal. This paper approaches the task of appraisal from an educational management perspective in which appraisal is regarded as a task involving a critical consideration of all relevant factors pertaining to an innovation to determine whether or not it is practicable to implement it successfully.

Two theories underpin the points raised in the paper: the theories of critical thinking and cultural relativism. In using the critical thinking theory, I propose to highlight the social and educational injustices prevalent in our current educational systems. The theory of cultural relativism, in a nutshell, assumes the inherent goodness of all cultures and holds that each culture has its own unique values and ways of understanding the world around it. Each ethnic group, therefore, needs to be understood in its own culture-specific terms. However, let me point out at the outset that this theory has been criticised by some writers on the grounds that it denies the possibility of reaching a universal “truth” of absolute right and wrong, especially in the context of the *global village* that is becoming prevalent today. A belief that also underpins assumptions being made here is that quality teachers are created rather than born.

Culture and indigenous education

It has been extremely difficult to provide a precise definition of the term *indigenous*. For a start, all ideas and practices, ultimately, are indigenous to some place. However, for the purpose of this paper, let us regard the term *indigenous education* as referring to educational ideas and practices that originate from and are unique to a particular place – in this case, our islands in Oceania. In referring to indigenous education, I shall focus on the thought processes involved in indigenous teaching and learning rather than the body of indigenous knowledge such as local geography and ethno-medicine. The teaching and learning of thoughts, beliefs and processes are perceived to be more appropriate for teacher education in tertiary institutions.

Academic interest in and research into indigenous culture is a relatively recent phenomenon among the people of Oceania, as distinct from being the objects of anthropological and sociological curiosity of other people. There have been serious attempts to delve into the hitherto neglected field. Lately, the emphasis has been shifting to explorations into a very specific aspect of culture – namely, the importance of indigenous educational ideas and practices.

The movement calling for the inclusion of studies of culture in education in Oceania is a post-colonial phenomenon. Konai Thaman is the leading and most energetic, eloquent and prolific “voice” championing the cause for the necessity and the desirability to include systematic studies of Oceanic culture in our education programmes in general and teacher education programmes in particular. In fact, her writings over the years clearly and consistently demonstrate her firm conviction that culture should be the foundation of all development endeavours in education and other fields. Thaman (1992b: 101) has pointed out that studies of culture are important because:

- culture is central to understanding human beings,
- a cultural group has a unique system of perceiving and organising the world around them, and
- it is useful to see parts of a culture as conceptualised by members of that group.

Underlying her viewpoint is the philosophy of contextualisation which holds that the context is essential for the accuracy of interpretation of phenomena. As we all know, context effects are omnipresent but different in terms of time, place and people involved.

Quality of education

The concept of *quality* in general and in the context of education in particular provides a contentious ground for debate with regard to providing a universally acceptable operational definition of the term. An acceptable definition would have to be a multi-faceted one that is specific to a particular point in time, location and function. Seen from this perspective, any definition would have to be a relative construct. Accepting that there is no closed definition of the term, it has been recommended by Berquist and Armstrong (1986) that any attempt to understand this term must be based on an examination of observable characteristics of educational programmes. They posit that a high quality academic program should have the following observable criteria:

- Attractiveness
- Benefits
- Congruence
- Distinctiveness
- Effectiveness
- Functionality
- Growth-production

There has been a long-standing tendency in Oceania to adopt a functionalist or utilitarian view of education, including teacher education, at the expense of the values that lie at the heart of the classical-humanist model of education. In other words, quality was tied up very closely with a specified and often narrow function. In the context of many educational institutions in Oceania, this means being able to find jobs after finishing school. In teacher education, it is generally taken to mean producing a teacher who is able to teach effectively.

Referring to teacher quality, Stewart (1983:30) writes that:

In talking about teacher quality we are primarily talking about actual delivery of effective teaching

in the classroom. We rely on the capacity of the teacher to encourage the youngsters in their charge and to release their talents. I am referring to the skill in challenging and motivating children to reach deep within them and discover their capacities.

Stewart (1983: 30-32) goes on to explain that these quality teachers can be created by balancing pedagogical skills with subject knowledge, providing access to the latest ideas, techniques and curriculum development, and enhancing the professionalism of teachers. While these are all inherently important, a notable omission is the need to incorporate indigenous educational ideas in the training and preparation of teachers.

An ideal type of teacher education curriculum in the region, according to participants of the 1995 Pacific Teacher Education Consultation meeting – many of whom were principals of teacher training institutions – is one that produces a teacher who, among other qualities:

- has a holistic view – who is concerned for the overall physical, mental, cultural and spiritual development of the child;
- recognises the cultural underpinning in the various disciplines and uses these to advantage;
- has a thorough understanding of human development in the Pacific, and of the roles of education in Pacific societies;
- has ... the ability to balance western and traditional cultural values and methodologies.

(Pacific Curriculum Network, Vol. 4 No. 1 1995: 3)

The above points and those espoused by Thaman (1988, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996) can be taken to constitute an operational

definition of a quality teacher education programme at this point in time in our region to prepare teachers to transmit our culture to children in the twenty-first century.

The search for relevance

The idea of relevance is inherently present in the conceptual and operational notions of quality outlined earlier (Stewart 1983; Berquist and Armstrong 1986; Bacchus and Kach 1990; *Pacific Curriculum Network* 1995 4(1)). The search for relevance in educational programmes occurred in earnest in Oceania in the 1970s with an emphasis on self-reliance (Baba 1986). This was also the period of decolonisation for many countries in the region. The desire for relevance was motivated largely by the search for self-reliance (an economic objective) and national identities (national pride factor) of the newly independent countries. This search for relevance took the form of curriculum development for primary and secondary schools and the establishment of alternative types of schools (variously called Community High Schools and Rural Training Centres) geared towards those who could not make it in the academic schools and those who lived in rural areas. However, as pointed out by Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984), there was no certainty about the precise direction countries in the Pacific wanted to take regarding cultural development. Neither were they certain about the right mix of local and alien culture. Many of the teachers in the profession today are products of such schools. The quest for relevance and excellence is important if Oceania teachers are to be genuinely empowered and emboldened to perform their pedagogical responsibilities at optimal levels of effectiveness and efficiency.

Recently, there has been a lot of attention given to improving teacher education and curricula in tertiary institutions. In most cases in the past, these attempts concentrated more on updating curriculum content and teaching methodologies, rather than including indigenous education. More recently, there has been a surge of interest in and research into the incorporation of Oceanic cultural knowledge and understandings as well as indigenous philosophies

and processes of education in regional teacher education colleges. The UNESCO-sponsored seminar in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, on education and culture is one important indicator of this interest. The proceedings of the conference clearly demonstrate a strong desire by Oceania peoples to utilise education for cultural development and to participate fully in this process (Teasdale and Teasdale 1992).

Teacher education institutions in Oceania have done relatively well in other regards, prompting the World Bank (1993: 33) to conclude that:

The quality of *teacher training* in this region is judged to be generally good, although there is a wide diversity in the training strategies.

But this is no cause for complacency. The report also pointed out a number of shortcomings. Firstly, there were varying degrees of success in teacher education programmes among countries in the region. Secondly, one of the factors frequently pointed out is the “low quality of education that results in students being inadequately prepared for senior secondary and post-secondary vocational and professional training” (op cit. vii). This is a shocking revelation, given that countries in the region generally and consistently demonstrate strong support for education by allocating very significant financial resources, both public and private, to formal education.

Challenges and constraints

There are several factors that have been and still are likely to militate against the incorporation of systematic studies of educational ideas in teacher education programmes. These include:

1. marginalisation of abstract ideas,
2. the foreign nature of formal education,
3. overseas training of some teachers,
4. dearth of relevant literature on indigenous education,
5. politicisation of education,
6. aid-driven nature of educational innovation and reform,

7. inferiority perception of anything local,
8. predominant functionalist view of education, and
9. costs.

1. Marginalisation of abstract ideas

There is a widespread misconception in Oceania and elsewhere that, because of the omnipresent pressures to survive in a difficult world, there should be a pragmatic emphasis on practical issues that satisfy our basic human needs rather than on abstract ideas. This misconception is perilous because all theories, including those that underpin indigenous philosophies and processes of education, are themselves abstract. However, as educators, we are aware of the synergetic relationship between theory and practice. In terms of teacher education programmes, this is represented in the preparation of our teachers to teach effectively in the classroom. Such preparation is guided largely by the underlying notions of western philosophies of education.

2. The foreign nature of formal education

Formal education, of which teacher education is a part, is really a foreign import into Oceania. As you all know, missionaries introduced formal education to these islands. Colonial governments took an active interest late and participated later. Missions and governments had different motives underlying their interests in education. For the missionaries, education served the purpose of converting indigenous peoples to the new religion. For the colonial governments, it was a way of acquiring junior administrative officers and also for making the locals more "civilised". There was no attempt at all to incorporate studies of aspects of local history, geography and the like. As such, formal education ultimately culminated in the cultural domination of the islanders and their subjugation to western culture and values. The problem with formal education here was aptly expressed by Thaman (1992b: 100) who writes that:

... much of the contents as well as the methods of our formal education systems have been and continue to be based on mainly western rather than indigenous belief systems.

This formal education system exists amidst changing, but still largely conservative, societies of Oceania. For a number of reasons, many of the students eventually have to continue their education overseas. Formal educational institutions, therefore, faced and still face the double-headed arrow of having to provide an education that is relevant to our environment as well as one that is compatible with standards overseas.

Courses on educational studies are widely regarded in Oceania and elsewhere as core and essential courses in both primary and secondary pre-service teacher education programmes. Work on the inclusion of culture in teacher education programmes has been going on in many teacher training institutions and is continuing. Some have made significant progress, again with varying degrees of success. These are fine. However, I would argue that they are omitting a very important component, and that is studies of indigenous education.

3. Overseas training of teachers

Some countries rely on teacher training overseas in the “Meganesian” countries of Australia and Aotearoa and even beyond. There is nothing inherently wrong in studying in overseas institutions. In fact, it can prove useful in the pursuit of successful interdependence within the global community. The downside of this is, as Terepai Moetaua of Cook Islands complained in the case of Cook Islands, teachers who return from overseas training “full in Western ideas” (Benson & Taylor 1992: 10) and are unable to adapt successfully. Some countries, such as Tuvalu and Nauru, do not have local facilities to train primary and secondary teachers so they send their people for teacher training in neighbouring Oceanic

countries or they recruit teachers from these countries. These countries are, therefore, unable to provide their teacher trainees with a firm grounding in their own cultures.

4. The dearth of relevant literature on indigenous education

The dearth of relevant literature on indigenous educational philosophies in this region has been a major problem. In true Oceanic tradition, all of their knowledge and traditions have been oral, rather than written, and guarded zealously. This compounds the problem further. However, they have been exceedingly powerful forces shaping Oceania societies for ages. In fact, they still influence the practices of people in Oceania. The problem, then, is not the lack of ideas but that these ideas were not written down. Now, some significant inroads have been made but, as the researchers responsible would agree, much more research needs to be conducted if we are to achieve a deeper and more holistic understanding of these complex thought systems that govern our indigenous education practices.

In her examination of the underlying rationales for the establishment and development trends of eleven higher education institutions in Fiji, Nabobo (1996) found that the absence of indigenous studies was a common feature in many of these institutions and that modernisation was a dominant factor in all of them. Nabobo (1996: 223) pointed out that the:

[e]xclusion of indigenous studies was consistent with modernisation ideas which dominated the rationale and development of all higher education institutions studied.

Goldsmith (1993: 285, cited in Thaman, 1994a: 7; emphasis added) is even more forthright and exceedingly powerful in his conclusions:

The colonial powers sought to destroy the cultural patterns of traditional societies largely because

many of their essential features prevented traditional people from subordinating social, ecological and spiritual imperatives to the short-term economic ends served by participation in the colonial economy. **There is no better way of destroying society than by undermining its educational system.**

This exclusion appeared to be a common practice during the colonial era, culminating in the marginalisation of natives in their own lands. The natives were effectively missing out on the best of the two worlds. On the one hand, they were not given the best of European education and, on the other hand, they were not given opportunities to study and develop their indigenous cultures. In fact, some countries in the region have lost, or are in danger of losing, significant aspects of their culture due primarily to this brand of colonial education and materialism which, in many respects, represents a dehumanising of the people of Oceania. Nabobo and Teasdale (1995) have argued very convincingly about the need to strike a good balance between the study of indigenous cultures, and subjects based on western knowledge in the curriculum. Upon closer examination, such deliberate omissions really represent an educational and social injustice to people in the region, including trainee teachers.

We have often overlooked the fact that students, including teacher trainees, come into training colleges with different and unique feelings, needs and expectations. Research has also shown very clearly that people from different cultural backgrounds show distinctly different preferences for learning and teaching styles. When one considers these in the light of changing societies such as those we have in Oceania, a conflict model of inter-active learning becomes necessary as people interact with their environment and re-define and negotiate their roles.

5. The politicisation of education

The politicisation of education is another problem. There is no doubt that education has been used – and is likely to continue to be used – as a handmaiden of politics. Education is widely used as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. It is also frequently subjected to the market ideology and the globalised economy. In this context, indigenous education is wrongly perceived as incapable of satisfying these needs. Consequently, it has been placed on the backburner or, worse still, neglected altogether.

6. Aid-driven nature of educational innovation and reform

Overseas aid donors have sponsored much of educational reform, training and curriculum development. The economies of many countries in Oceania are such that dependency on these external sources of funding for major educational exercises is likely to continue in the foreseeable future. However, such funded exercises can be and in fact have been fraught with problems like lack of genuine interest in and/or ignorance of local cultures (Thaman 1992c) and a covert desire to promote donors' hidden agenda such as political ideologies over genuine local needs, realities and aspirations (Baba 1989). Unfortunately, indigenous education is wrongly perceived as not having significant contributions to make in the cash economies of today. In fact, donors may not be willing to provide funding for projects that may undermine their political agenda.

7. Inferiority perception of anything local

In this period of modernisation, there has been a widespread misconception that anything local is inferior to anything western. This view appears to apply to perceptions of Oceania islanders about institutions of higher education (Crocombe and Crocombe 1994). Such views could prove to be significant impediments to pursuits of studies in indigenous philosophies of education.

While the merits of indigenous educational ideas have been expounded here, there are factors pertaining to hallmarks of indigenous culture and educational practices which we need to address critically. These are to do with the issues of gender balance and equality, and the clandestine and selective nature of knowledge dissemination. The relevance of these must be critically and objectively reviewed in the light of contemporary needs and realities.

8. Predominant functionalist view of education

Formal education was and is widely regarded from a functionalist perspective, the perceived purpose of which is to guarantee a job in the end. A consequence of the increasingly important cash economy is the development of the narrow perception that formal education should lead to jobs for school leavers. In the case of Kiribati, this is the most important single factor in parents' views (Burnett 1998). This is not a surprising finding at all but it confirms what has been known all along.

9. Costs

Lastly, the question of costs is inevitably an important and often crucial one in the context of the small economies of Oceania. I would argue that this is a minor issue here. Firstly, I believe that once people and political leaders have been convinced of the ideological and practical merits, the question of costs is likely to be found justifiable. Secondly, teachers have awesome and critical responsibilities for our future – that of transmitting our culture to the next generation. Their preparation must, therefore, be absolutely thorough for it is considered imprudent to endanger our future. Thirdly, the number of people targeted (trainee teachers) is comparatively minimal and the costs involved will be correspondingly minute. All these would justify the costs.

Prospects and merits

Recent research on vernacular educational philosophies and processes clearly demonstrates that there is indeed an existing corpus of indigenous philosophies of education. The documentation of these indigenous ideas in their respective countries has been steadily and increasingly cutting useful inroads into this hitherto ignored and unexplored area. It is apparent that each island and ethnic group possesses educational ideas and processes that are diverse and quite complex but very highly relevant to the societies they serve. The research also shows that there are significant differences between the indigenous and the exogenous philosophies and processes of education. The challenge confronting educators now is to organise the findings into a systematic programme of teaching to prepare selected people to become teachers.

Studies of indigenous education can and should be included in the core of teacher education programmes rather than as something in addition to studies of western philosophies of education. Such studies also need to be taught early, preferably at the beginning of courses in education. This way, we move from the inside outwards. This is educationally sound practice. It enables our students to start by exploring something that is not only relatively familiar but also relevant to the local culture and then move on to attempting to understand abstract theories. The latter are mainly written by foreigners in foreign lands about foreign cultures at different times in history. If teachers are to be enabled to perform their responsibilities optimally in a context in which two distinct systems of beliefs and educational philosophies co-exist (though not always harmoniously), it is absolutely essential for them to understand both sets of philosophies. This way, they can be empowered to make responsible professional decisions about how to act on the spot.

In the case of Fiji's Lautoka Teachers' College, for example, it should be possible to include systematic studies of indigenous education in the course *Foundations of Education*. At the Kiribati Teachers' College, similar studies can be incorporated into the courses ED31

Education and Society or EDJ12 *Principles of Teaching and Learning* without significant disruptions to the original objectives of the courses. With an ever-increasing availability of relevant literature on indigenous educational philosophies and processes, specialist courses in this field can and must be developed.

After studying both indigenous and exogenous educational ideas, it follows naturally that a comparative analysis between the two should take place. Another logical step is the practical application of these ideas. This is especially essential because the local reality at this point in time is that the two systems are inevitably in operation side by side, causing students to experience misunderstanding and confusion. The issue here is aptly expressed by Thaman (1992c:3):

Today, perhaps the most important question which Pacific Island educationists are grappling with is how best to reflect upon their traditional education practices through the imposed structure of the school so that people are able to survive in a modern world and retain their cultural identities.

The role of critical teaching ought to be an emancipatory and enlightening one. Emancipation here refers to freedom from previous injustices inherent in the earlier teacher education programmes which featured the subjugation of studies of indigenous educational ideas to western ones. Such an emancipation would culminate in freedom from ignorance of our own indigenous educational ideas and a reclamation of an important part of our cultural heritage. Emancipation from ignorance is likely to culminate in heightened enhancement of our understanding, enlightenment, empowerment and emboldenment to control our lives – in brief, self-determination. This, in essence, becomes liberation education in the sense that it liberates our students and ourselves from the mental confinements within the subjection to exogenous philosophies of education – a kind of colonisation of the mind. It also liberates us from a purely functionalist approach to education into a more classical-humanist mode of thinking. It would transform our teacher education

programmes into something that is more just, relevant and appropriate.

There is an increasing interest in this area. Firstly, research, teaching and publications from students and academics in universities bear ample testimony to this. At The University of the South Pacific, for example, the Department of Education and Psychology has been offering ED253 *Theories and Ideas in Education*, a course that:

... identifies a core of intellectual and practical puzzles within Education that seem amenable to sustained in-depth analysis within a variety of intellectual traditions. Themes include educational provisions across cultures and historical periods and the nature of schooling and its ideological bases. It ... examine(s) indigenous educational ideas and practices, systematic schooling, pedagogical practice in classrooms and how the legacy of the past may be accessed. (Thaman and Subramani (eds) 1998: 46).

This course begins with a study of indigenous ideas and then moves on to study the ideas of other thinkers on education from different historical periods and places such as Plato, Rousseau, Peters, Locke, Freire, Dewey, Lawton and others. In the course, students are encouraged to critically study and examine values (indigenous and exogenous) that underpin education. Such ideas are re-visited in greater depth in a postgraduate course, ED451 *Education and Culture*. Moreover, studies of indigenous education in Oceania are a component of another course, UU104 *Pacific Worlds : an introduction to Pacific societies*.

Secondly, the importance of this in the creation of quality teachers has been repeatedly advocated by teacher educators in the region in their meetings and consultations. Thirdly, members of the educated elite in the region are interested. The consistently favourable reactions of USP students enrolled in the courses mentioned earlier are a positive indication. The increasing number of people doing postgraduate research in the area is also encouraging. All these augur well for the future.

Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing issues, constraints and aspirations, two broad recommendations are proposed.

While very useful studies by regional faculty staff and students have been and are being conducted at the University of the South Pacific and other universities, further research is needed. Furthermore, such research must be facilitated and conducted out there in the islands. That is where many of the real experts are. Regional governments and teacher education institutions need to play pivotal roles here. The longer we procrastinate, the more we stand to lose. The more we lose, the more we have to continue relying on exogenous models and ideas. This research is indeed an on-going necessity if we are to achieve an ever-deepening understanding of our indigenous educational ideas. Such research would lead to greater understanding, which, in turn, would place us in good positions to be more responsive to emerging needs and circumstances.

Secondly, there is a need to put in place a policy and administrative framework, both at ministry and teacher training college levels, to facilitate the systematic inclusion of indigenous educational philosophies as a core component of the teacher education curriculum. This would have to begin with selling the merits of the ideas to the powers-that-be. Once political and high level official support is obtained, the chances for success are greatly enhanced. For example, in the colleges, course contents and timetables could

be adjusted to cater for these ideas as integral components – not as something extra. At the ministry level, due importance and recognition need to be given to this subject.

Conclusions

I would like to conclude by emphasising once again that despite the formidable challenges and constraints confronting us, it is possible and very desirable to include systematic studies of indigenous educational philosophies in our teacher education programmes. It is desirable from the following perspectives:

- sound educational theory and practice,
- the pursuit of quality and excellence,
- cultural revival and development, and
- relevance of programmes.

The inclusion of studies of indigenous philosophies of education in our teacher education programmes has great potential to contribute to the quality and relevance of our teacher education programmes. This would empower teachers as pedagogues to make optimally effective decisions regarding the performance of their responsibilities in ways that seek to address the concerns of the day. This reconstructionist approach to our teacher education programmes is necessary for the re-shaping of our societies based on sound and relevant educational ideas. It is essential for a holistic preparation of our teachers as definers of our reality and as transformative intellectuals in our region.

It must be emphasised that the approach recommended in this paper is not an “either/or” one. Instead, it is one that seeks an inclusion of studies of indigenous education in teacher education programmes in the first instance and then attempting to strike a sensible and realistic balance between this and exogenous educational ideas. A complimentary co-existence is thus recommended.

A substantial amount of high-quality research has been conducted in the area, many elegant ideas have been articulated, and important progress made in the area of indigenous education in general. But more needs to be done in the area of indigenous educational philosophies and processes. While some challenges are practical in nature, the most important one in my view is attitudinal. Once the latter is overcome, a major part of the challenge will have been met.

In a coconut shell, the paper has argued that the inclusion of systematic studies of indigenous philosophies and processes of education is both possible and appropriate. It is, therefore, recommended that we re-place them at the centre of our teacher education programmes to make the latter more relevant and appropriate for the needs of Oceania teachers in the twenty-first century. The need to turn from mere rhetoric to action is needed now more than ever!

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