Indigenous Schools and Schooling

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Policies, Practices, and Problems in New Zealand, Australia, and Fiji

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Abstract

This chapter describes schools and the schooling process historically in relation to three countries, namely, Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand. It sets out a concise historical context for each setting in relation to elementary and postprimary schooling emergence, provision, and change, with specific reference to Indigenous schooling arrangements, developments, and subsequent controversies. In so doing some of the more important and far-reaching consequences of the dominance of non-Indigenous people's thoughts and actions over Indigenous persons in the schooling arena also are analyzed. The chapter further demonstrates the latent emergence of critical perspectives from affected parties about what was being delivered to them as either appropriate, relevant, or essential to their children's education, citizenship, and future success in a given society or

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T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Handbook of Historical Studies in Education*, Springer International Handbooks of Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2362-0_18

community. In each of the three environments, what it meant to be an Indigenous person was subjected gradually to closer scrutiny and critique by Indigenous people themselves, with the result that it was no longer acceptable – politically, socially, and educationally – for policy makers to act unilaterally in the education policy and practice domains. The chapter outlines some initiatives taken by Indigenous people to bring about the kinds of reforms they value in their respective countries. These reforms relate usually to the revitalization of Indigenous persons' language(s), to their philosophy concerning the form(s) that a worthwhile education should assume, and to the positive prospects for their people's greater self-determination and sovereignty. Some contemporary challenges within the three Western-oriented schooling systems are identified and assessed.

Keywords
Australian education · Fijian education · New Zealand education · Culture · School curriculum · Education policy · Vocational education · Education history

Introduction

Historians of education and education policy scholars generally agreed that matters relating to Indigenous schools and to Indigenous schooling deserve a prominent place in any and all contemporary and historical inquiry on education. Among their ranks, many lament the fact that until the last three or four decades, minimal attention has been paid to critiquing the many and varied assumptions that underpinned schools and schooling provision. It was commonplace for non-Indigenous policy makers and educationists to presume that they were best placed or well placed at the very least, to decide what was needed – indeed, what was essential – in and for the school careers of Indigenous children and youth. The result has been the emergence and the application of policies that have been poorly matched to the requirements and needs of these people. Such policies were seldom the outcome of informed and open dialogue with the parents of those Indigenous children and youth who were affected directly – and, arguably, significantly – when those policies were implemented (Dudley and Vidovich 1995). Rather, what was and is evident is the presence of policies and practices that were deemed to be in the best interests of their recipients.

One consequence has been the creation of alternative schools and schooling systems that were founded taken-for-granted assumptions about the professed, and sometimes unstated, desirability of having some level of differentiation in the school curriculum. Any commonality in provision tended to be evident for citizenship reasons mostly, as part of attempts to prepare children and youth for their perceived and forthcoming roles in a given community or wider society. These roles often were different, to some extent, for people who were seen as being different from one another – Indigenous compared with non-Indigenous persons, in this instance. Within the Aotearoa/New Zealand setting named "Maoriland" from about 1900

until the early 1920s, for example, for many decades from the early twentieth century, it was thought that the "natural" role or vocation for Indigenous (Maori) people was as a farmer and as a farmer's wife, for males and females, respectively. Such thinking was discernible at a time when Maori people were rural rather than urban dwellers, namely, until the late 1940s, after which time migration to towns and cities intensified markedly (Mason 1945). For as long as no serious scrutiny was given to what these roles were to be and should be, policies and practices affecting Indigenous peoples remained largely unchanged.

To put the point another way, the status quo persisted in the absence of any visible pressure for reform, as opposed to any advocacy of a minor change to a given curriculum subject or subject orientation. For practical purposes, this situation meant that Indigenous males and females were more likely than non-Indigenous persons to have a restricted range of vocational opportunities available to them; employment frequently was nonacademic, nonprofessional, and not well remunerated. One consequence was the lower socioeconomic status and attendant marginalization of a group of people who, prior to their urbanization, had been inconspicuous largely on account of their area(s) of residence (Hancock 1961). With greater visibility came a growing awareness by policy makers and educationists of the different and difficult situations that had befallen Indigenous persons generally, educationally, vocationally, and economically. In post-World War II societies and in the context of the emergence of independent nation states in and from the late 1940s, it was less likely that the views of Indigenous people now could and would be ignored. A predictable result was that the nature of the schooling provision that had been deemed appropriate, if not ideal or entirely unproblematic, for Indigenous pupils, began to be investigated and confronted more critically and more often.

A large part of the process of having greater awareness and interrogation of long-held ideas involved the adoption of a dialogical rather than a monological orientation toward Indigenous schooling policies and practices. In the later twentieth century, ministers of education and department of education officials were less inclined to determine curricula for Indigenous pupils unilaterally and to make education policy decrees without undertaking something approximating "consultation" with the parties affected. This bilateral approach of course made for more time-consuming and, arguably, more intense discussions and debates over Indigenous schooling matters. An alternative strategy, however, would have involved persisting with the status quo and ignoring the reality that wider input into curriculum decision, indeed, into the work undertaken within schools and the schooling process itself, was being sought by the public more actively. There is firm evidence to conclude that a strategy of status quo preservation had become more unpalatable and less acceptable politically and publicly by the late 1980s in particular. Indigenous people sought more formal recognition of their cultures, philosophy of living, and their languages in schools than had been the case previously. No longer were they prepared to tolerate a situation not of their own making, in which "assimilation ultimately means absorption and that means extinction" (Horne 1964, p. 116).

The Schooling of Maori Children: Elementary and High School

Initially in the three countries being considered, schools and schooling systems had been constructed with particular functions to fulfill. In the missionary era (in New Zealand, from 1814 to around 1870), in a country comprised of two islands about 1,000 miles long and occupying an area of approximately 168,000 square miles (Stewart 2009), the main objective was to promote denominational Christian teachings, most notably Anglican/Church of England, Wesleyan/Methodist, and Roman Catholic (Butchers 1932; Lockyer 2003). It was believed that boys and girls would be prepared well for their future vocation in life if their schooling was conducted within a religious setting and if they received elementary-level tuition in the English language, in industrial arts/crafts to develop their manual and technical facilities, and in a designated Christian faith. In New Zealand the most important audience as seen by missionary authorities was the Indigenous Maori children, in the belief that when they had become familiar with religious teachings then they would become, ipso facto, good, rural living, Christian citizens.

Non-Indigenous children were not excluded from missionary schools. Initially, Maori's interest in the missionaries' work was minimal (Lockyer 2003). Irrespective of the type of learners, then, such teaching was occurring at a time when a state or government was not involved in schools and in their provision. In other words church personnel, not state-appointed persons, were fulfilling a dual role as both educator and mentor. These roles were undertaken without much, if any, discernible debate, even when the government began slowly to signal a desire to prescribe a curriculum, albeit, a very basic one, and to contribute some funds directly to the church authorities for them to deliver that curriculum, subject to government inspection and basic audit requirements specified under the Education Ordinance of 1847, to both Maori and non-Indigenous children (Butchers 1932; Lockyer 2003; Openshaw et al. 1993). Given that in 1850 Indigenous people comprised 50% of the population of New Zealand (Parker 2005), it was highly unlikely that non-Indigenous policy makers would omit them from legislation that was concerned with schools and with schooling, particularly when they tended to view Maori as being easily demoralized and needing "[speedy assimilation] to the habits and usages of the European" (Walker 2004, p. 146).

Tailor-made, targeted, provision for Maori children was not abandoned with the introduction of nationally applicable primary (elementary) school legislation in 1877, although the New Zealand Education Act of 1877 that ushered in free, compulsory, and secular elementary schooling did not apply to Maori children. The latter, however, were able to attend primary school free of tuition fees. Politicians at the time acknowledged that relations between "Pakeha" (non-Indigenous) and Maori people had been strained severely during the land wars of the 1860s and early 1870s (Butchers 1932), referred to by contemporary Maori as "te riri Pakeha" (the white man's anger) (Lockyer 2003, p. 35). A result was that the former did not want to be seen by Maori and by the public to be inflaming existing tensions further. It was intended that Maori youth would be schooled in "native schools" exclusively, created under Native Schools Ordinances (Acts) passed in 1858, 1867, and 1871

and based in rural communities (Bird 1928). Maori children, however, began to attend education board-controlled elementary schools (i.e., schools run by regional or district education authorities) in steadily increasing numbers during the twentieth century (Butchers 1932). This situation led ultimately to the abolition of Maori schools (as the "native schools" were relabeled, from 1945) nationally, in 1969. The nineteenth-century ordinances had been deliberately introduced by the government to ascertain the interest of Maori communities in elementary schooling provision (Parker 2005), given that Maori people initially were required to contribute a portion of their land holdings for a school site and to make a contribution to the teacher's salary *before* any native school would be erected (Butchers 1932; Lockyer 2003; Walker 2004). All instruction (reading, writing, arithmetic, geography), however, was to be delivered through the medium of English, and the teachers employed in the native schools were more often than not non-Indigenous men and women (Lockyer 2003).

There was an expectation among many Maori that their children's schooling would be conducted entirely through the medium of English, because Maori parents believed their sons and daughters should be taught, and should use, their mother tongue in their family home only (Parker 2005). Such thinking was evident in the 1880 Native Schools Code. This legislation that was underpinned by the assumption that Maori language would be spoken in the children's homes but that through the native schooling system, the Maoris would be "enabled to effect a more or less successful adaptation to the new [British] civilization" (Butchers 1932, p. 87). When more Maori children were able to demonstrate their proficiency in English, then revisions were undertaken to the syllabus of instruction for native schools, which had included English, reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, geography, and sewing for girls spread over four standards of attainment compared with six standards for state ("ordinary") elementary schools (Bird 1928).

From 1892, their curriculum began to resemble that of the public elementary schools more closely, and it became identical from 1929, with access to the full six standards of instruction and formal examinations also being made available (Butchers 1932). One historian of education, writing in the 1930s, declared boldly that as more Maori children (and adults) became immersed in European culture and in the Western schooling system, "prejudices and misunderstandings are steadily dying out as the two races have come to understand one another better" (Butchers 1932, p. 88). The same author also opined, optimistically, that "the story of their [Maori people's] resuscitation as a virile and proud people living on terms of harmonious political and social equality with their British conquerors is one of the great ethnological romances of modern times" (Butchers 1932, pp. 91–92). However, it was a "romance" that was to prove short-lived (indeed, if it was true at all), owing to the urbanization of the Indigenous population that had been gaining momentum from the 1930s (Metge 1968). Notwithstanding Butchers' advocacy of an overly romantic perspective on race relations, he nevertheless was willing to concede that "Europeans may learn much that is of value to themselves by watching and studying the recent, present, and future development of the Native [Maori] race" (Butchers 1932, p. 91).

At the elementary, native school, level, Maori children received instruction in a small core of subjects that constituted their curriculum, but it was not until the late 1920s that they were encouraged to prepare for the senior-level primary school examinations for those in Standard 5 and Standard 6 (known as the Proficiency Examination classes (Bird 1928)). The underlying premise was that Maori youth had no need for a higher-level, formal, elementary school qualification beyond the fourth standard, for employment purposes or as part of their general education, and that such a qualification was not required for the kind of work being envisioned for them. Non-Maori children attending primary school did not have this prohibition placed upon them, however, and so were able to enter the senior standard classes in steadily increasing numbers from the late nineteenth century (Openshaw et al. 1993). There is evidence, nonetheless, of a growth in Maori parental support for their sons' and daughters' success in the native schools' four standards examinations (Bird 1928); "[Maori parents had] learned from successive years of observation what was to be expected from the children in the various [standard] classes" (Bird 1928, p. 68) and were quick to regard teachers as either inefficient or worthy of congratulation. One result of this type and level of differentiation was the very low number of Indigenous people enrolled in high schools in the early-to-mid-twentieth century (Metge 1968). With children's attendance and longer period of enrolment at the latter institutions becoming more important for parents seeking upward social and vocational mobility for their sons and daughters and with a direct connection having been forged between senior high school student retention and candidacy for high-status public examinations, one significant outcome was that it was more difficult for Maori boys and girls than for non-Maori children to obtain access to higher-level schooling opportunities and to remain in high schools for longer periods of time (Adams et al. 2000; Shuker 1987). Such an outcome was to have far-reaching educational, social, and fiscal consequences for Maori children (Adams et al. 2000).

The changing enrolment pattern (from native – later, Maori – schools to Urban Education Board schools) increasingly evident from the 1930s, which gained the attention of education officials, was a consequence primarily of the movement of more Maori people from isolated rural communities to the towns and cities (Butchers 1932; Stephenson 2006). It was scarcely surprising, therefore, that there would be greater contact between Maori and non-Maori children and adults when they began to be schooled side by side in increasing numbers and with increasing frequency. In such a situation, concern was expressed more often and, arguably, more vociferously, about the extent to which Maori children's education needs, requirements, and interests were being addressed adequately. To this end, it was more likely that assumptions about different curricular provisions for Indigenous and non-Indigenous pupils would be subjected to closer scrutiny as more of these pupils came into direct contact with one another.

Debate over the "proper" direction of education for Indigenous children intensified nationally, to a considerable extent, due to increase in the awareness of the public and educationists of the academic success and subsequent success at university of secondary school Maori students at Te Aute College, an Anglican high school for Maori boys. The college's principal from 1878 to 1912, John Thornton, had gained publicity if not notoriety from the early 1900s, from his

unapologetic promotion of many able Maori students as top-class sports people and as candidates for prestigious, high-level, secondary school examinations, all of which allowed successful candidates to enter universities in New Zealand and overseas (Parker 2005). Several Maori scholars gained university degrees and proceeded to enter and to distinguish themselves in the medical, legal, dental, and teaching professions and in other professional occupations (Parker 2005). In this way they tested the conventional wisdom of the era which held that Maori youth should receive instruction in practical subjects within a curriculum that ought to be geared deliberately toward Maori adults' occupancy of manual, practical, non-academic, and unskilled or semi-skilled, low-paid vocations. Thornton was adamant that Maori communities would be well served by having Maori people working within them, in professional employment that resulted from a successful, higher, university, level of education (Butchers 1932; Parker 2005).

It is not surprising that Thornton's schooling philosophy was demonstrably at odds with that held by the majority of early twentieth-century secondary school principals and particularly non-Maori principals. The commonly held view was that Maori were "destined naturally" to work in nonprofessional occupations, that they were seldom if ever academically minded, and that they needed separate schooling provision from non-Maori children; any perceived commonalities or points of overlap between individuals would be provided for, it was believed, by having some school subjects common for Maori and for non-Maori children. According to this thesis, Maori were markedly different from Pakeha children in critical respects and were likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Their "natural abilities" or aptitudes, interests, and aspirations were seen as being different although, as indicated above, such thinking was challenged by the publicity surrounding the academic success of Maori youth. Several Maori children found ready and tangible support for their studies, most notably at the high or postprimary school level, in the small number of boarding or residential schools created for Maori boys and girls specifically (e.g., Te Aute College for Maori boys, Hukarere College for girls, Queen Victoria College for girls, and St. Stephen's College for boys), rather than in the government-controlled native schooling system (Mason 1945). Because of the tendency for many more Maori to reside in the North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand than in the South Island (Lockyer 2003; Mason 1945), colleges for Maori boys and girls were located in the former island. Nonetheless, official declarations were still being released as late as the mid-1940s concerning Maori children's allegedly limited academic aptitudes. One Minister of Education in 1945 noted, for example, that "a minority of Maori boys and girls are fitted for academic studies" and that "for some years to come, the Maori child will have special needs, which are best catered for in a school system adapted to help him [and her] meet his [and her] peculiar problems" (Mason 1945, pp. 57–58). Furthermore, Maori children should not expect to gain "the same education" wherever "equal opportunities for education" were being invoked (Mason 1945, p. 53). Rather, their schooling was designed "[to cater] specially for the needs of the Maori child" (Mason 1945, p. 53), "needs" that were assumed to be more practical than academic (Metge 1968).

Provision for Maori Language Teaching

During the missionary school era in Aotearoa, instruction of Maori youth was conducted in the Indigenous mother tongue, *te reo Maori* (the Maori language), because missionaries understood that, initially at least, they had to communicate with Maori in their own language (Lockyer 2003; Walker 2004). This meant that missionaries had to acquire some degree of fluency in *te reo*, orally at first and then in written form because hitherto it had not been a written or a recorded language. Access to imported printing presses helped in the dissemination of religious tracts that soon were translated from English into Maori for instructional purposes. Interest in the missionaries' teaching activities increased markedly when the Bible and prayers subsequently were translated into Maori and were disseminated more widely, utilizing local printing presses (Lockyer 2003). For intelligent and ambitious Maori learners, however, considerable status or prestige could be gained from acquiring literacy in English as a mark of distinction from the majority of the Indigenous people. Gradually more Maori became literate in English, with the temptation being for many to view their mother tongue as being less valuable than fluency in the English language (Walker 2004).

This situation led to genuine concern from the mid-to-late nineteenth century about the poor survival prospects of Maori people and, consequently, their language. The superintendent of Wellington Province in 1856, Dr. Isaac Featherston, had remarked that the act of "smoothing the pillow of a dying race [Maori people]" ought to be undertaken by "good compassionate colonists" who had a duty to make Maori people's forthcoming demise easier than it might otherwise have been (Keith 2001, p. 42). Significantly, Featherston emphasized the importance of showing compassion toward Indigenous people for the very reason that "[then] history will have nothing to reproach us with [as non-Indigenous people]" (Keith 2001, p. 42). Clearly he wished to present the death ultimately of all Maori people in an uncritical light. Commentators, some four decades later, sought to highlight the worth of Maori both individually and collectively, noting, for instance, that Maori crafts and arts are "so pleasing a feature of their individualism," that Maori are "a noble race," that they are "the finest people that British colonisation has ever come in contact with," and that as a group Maori will experience "glorious success" (Keith 2001, p. 42).

From the early 1900s, the notion of what form(s) a successful life for Maori might assume was increasingly being scrutinized by prominent Maori spokespersons who were adamant that English "civilization" had had harmful, long-lasting, consequences for Indigenous people, that the actions of the colonizers had "retrograded" Maori, and that Maori had gained little of value from Pakeha (Keith 2001). Such was the power of the colonizers that many Maori leaders believed there was "no alternative but to become a pakeha" (Keith 2001, p. 43). It was not a desired path, however; rather, it was seen as one that might arrest the rate of the Maori population's decline (Lockyer 2003). Accordingly the momentum of assimilation was maintained, if not accelerated, a situation that led more Maori to be transformed into "brown *pakehas*" (Keith 2001, p. 44). However, the latter were not without its problems because by the late 1920s, Maori leaders had come to appreciate the

considerable impact that "this [ongoing] policy of imposing pakeha culture forms on our people," particularly in terms of undermining *Maoritanga* – what it meant to be, and to remain, a Maori man or woman (Keith 2001, p. 45) – as well as their mother tongue. From the 1930s, their advice to their people was to preserve Maori arts, culture, language, and traditions and to step up efforts to draw public and political attention to the limiting effects of assimilation upon New Zealand's Indigenous population (Barrington 1987).

Department of Education officials, for their part, sought from 1930 to emphasize selected facets of Maori culture (e.g., arts, crafts, and dancing) in the native elementary schools and stressed the importance of practical work (e.g., woodwork, cookery, and related home management skills or domestic training), but no formal provision was made for teaching the Maori language (Mason 1945). The rationale given for this omission was that because "the Maori community begins school handicapped in language and all too often in home background" (Mason 1945, p. 53), it was deemed necessary to make available to boys and girls "the rudiments of a European academic education in order to fit the Maori for life in a pakeha world" (Mason 1945, p. 55). However, no irony was seen in the official statement that accompanied the above assertion that teachers in native schools would be able "to help the Maori, as a Maori and not as a 'brown European,' to adapt himself [and herself] to the modern economic world" (Mason 1945, p. 55) without prioritizing the use of the Maori language. Given that from 1905 there had been official prohibitions on Maori pupils speaking their own language in school playgrounds (Walker 2004), it was unlikely that the mother tongue would be valued in the foreseeable future. Instead, it was taken for granted that native school teachers had a primary responsibility to "[prepare Maori pupils] to compete in a Europeanized economic system" by promoting English language facility (Mason 1945, p. 55). This responsibility did not change significantly at the native district high school level for Maori students, either because academic courses and language instruction (other than in English) were not offered (Mason 1945; Shuker 1987). Academic instruction was seen to be the exclusive if not protected preserve of the high-status, prestigious, denominational secondary schools for Maori boys and girls (Mason 1945) and not the non-denominational native district high schools.

The Post-World War II Scene in New Zealand: Developments and Challenges

When viewed in the context of an assimilation policy that was being promoted actively and unapologetically throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century by colonial policy makers and prominent people toward Maori persons and school-age children in particular, it was predictable that "the future" for Maori was seen to lie with their remaining in often remote rural communities, performing the practical, largely unskilled, low-status type(s) of work that non-Indigenous people wanted them to undertake (Barrington 1987; Mason 1945; Walker 2004). What had been underestimated, however, was the reality that when

more Maori came to engage with, understand, and work with English customs, culture, and the language, they began to question what was being directed their way from Pakeha (McLaren 1974). This response was a perceptive one, from an intelligent and curious people who wanted to know precisely what was being planned for them by others, socially, vocationally, economically, and educationally (Walker 2004). Such a reaction was evident increasingly from the 1920s, and it was especially marked in the post-World War II era.

The steady decline in the number of Maori people able to converse and write in their mother tongue from the late nineteenth century has been well documented in the Aotearoa/New Zealand education literature (Walker 2004). In 1900, for example, more than 90% of Maori children who entered elementary schools spoke their other tongue; six decades later, only 26% were Maori language speakers (Walker 2004). This change was a direct consequence of education policy makers de-emphasizing Indigenous person's opportunities to converse in, and engage with, *te reo* in primary and secondary schools until the latter part of the twentieth century, whereupon concern began to mount regarding the potential and imminent demise of the Maori language altogether unless urgent action was forthcoming (Shuker 1987; Walker 2004).

The Labour Government's stated policy, from 1939, of providing ready access for all boys and girls to high schools, wherein they would receive "[an education] of a kind for which he [and she] is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his [and her] powers" (McLaren 1974, p. 75), had far-reaching consequences for Maori and non-Maori children. Although Maori children were still being viewed by many politicians and education policy makers as being less academically able than their non-Indigenous counterparts, the academic success of Maori boys and girls in the denominational, high-status, Maori secondary schools persuaded some of them to revisit their assumptions about Maori people and what was "relevant" educationally for Maori (McLaren 1974; Openshaw et al. 1993).

This process, however, was to prove a gradual one because of official reluctance throughout the 1940s and 1950s in particular to admit that race relations in New Zealand were not of a high quality, that non-Maori people tended to view Maori people negatively, and to acknowledge that "a clash of cultures [was] inevitable in all modern multi-racial societies" (McLaren 1974, p. 77). The commonly held belief that true equality existed between Pakeha and Maori, and that equal education opportunities applied to both groups, has been described as having "a certain ostrich-like quality" to it (McLaren 1974, p. 77), notwithstanding the fact that more attention was being directed throughout the 1950s to finding ways to enhance Maori children's school success and to listen to and embrace Maori people's views about what they wanted from schools (McLaren 1974; Openshaw et al. 1993; Walker 2004).

By the 1960s, it had become more difficult, politically and socially, to ignore disparities and inequalities between Maori and non-Maori people, as evidenced by the publication and wide dissemination of several reports from government agencies and other parties throughout that decade (McLaren 1974; O'Malley et al. 2010; Shuker 1987). Support was expressed for greater Maori parental involvement in the

schooling of their sons and daughters, for courses to be introduced into teachers' training courses that focused on Maori education, language, and culture directly, for enhancing Maori pupils' interest in and engagement with schools, and for more serious and respectful treatment of the Maori language in schools (McLaren 1974; Simon 2000).

The task of turning the official rhetoric, no matter how sincere it might have been, into reality for Maori school children has proven especially difficult in subsequent decades (O'Malley et al. 2010; Simon 2000). Maori scholars have argued that numerous education myths relating to Maori people still persist, including myths relating to the perceived lack of value of the Maori language in schools and in the wider New Zealand society, to the alleged worth of adopting an integration and not an assimilation approach to schools and the schooling process (O'Malley et al. 2010), to the need to reduce if not eliminate perceived and real "gaps" between Maori and non-Maori people (O'Malley et al. 2010), and to the need for all pupils to gain school credentials in order to avoid being unemployed. In a competitive, capitalist society such as that in New Zealand, it has not been easy to dissuade parents and their school-age children from adopting a view where greater school retention opens up access to credentials (i.e., marketable and valuable qualifications) that, in turn, enhance job-getting prospects, given the prolonged use of high-order school qualifications for this very purpose (Adams et al. 2000; McKenzie 1983; Openshaw et al. 1993).

What lay at the core of criticisms by Maori and non-Maori scholars alike of schools and the schooling process in New Zealand were the roles that school personnel performed as part of schooling their pupils for reproducing the dominant culture, unknowingly or consciously (Simon 2000; Walker 2004). A core ingredient in perpetuating a given culture's dominance, and the consequent marginalization or minimization of another, is the level to which an Indigenous people's language is promoted actively and valued widely within a given society (O'Malley et al. 2010; Walker 2004). Recognizing the parlous state of the Maori language, several architects of *te kohanga reo* (Maori language nests, in early childhood education settings explicitly) and, subsequently, of *kura kaupapa* (primary and secondary school environments wherein teaching is undertaken mostly if not solely in *te reo*) have played a significant role from the early 1980s in actively promoting the importance of teaching in the Maori language, thereby assisting in its preservation (O'Malley et al. 2010; Walker 2004). They knew that they had to introduce, and then expand, this initiative for Maori learners because they sensed that the New Zealand government was unlikely to act first. This work proved especially challenging for Maori educators, given that for several generations their language has been discouraged, if not prohibited altogether, from primary and high schools (Walker 2004).

That substantial progress has been made in Maori language acquisition since the 1980s in particular is beyond doubt. It attests to the fact that the assimilation aim from the nineteenth century for Maori by non-Indigenous policy makers was not, and has not been, absolute, complete, or all embracing. Neither has the subsequent integration policy, "to combine (not fuse) the Maori and Pakeha elements to form one nation wherein Maori culture remains distinct" (Metge 1968, p. 215), been

adopted without critique (Metge 1968; Shuker 1987; Simon 2000). On the ascendancy politically and educationally, however, is the view that Indigenous people must have the right to exercise autonomy in their activities and to be self-determining (O'Malley et al. 2010). The retention, and promotion, of their language in schools and in the wider New Zealand society is one means whereby this sovereignty can be demonstrated.

Australian Aboriginal Education

Australian researchers have argued persuasively that the schooling situation for Aboriginal, Indigenous, people in Australia was one that similarly involved different treatment for people perceived as being different from white Australian citizens (Horne 1964; Welch et al. 2015). The former also had encountered, and were continuing to confront, the effects of colonization that carried with it assumptions about inferior intellectual capacity and expectations concerning different positions or stations in life for members of any allegedly "inferior race" (Welch et al. 2015). Scholars concluded that "if Aboriginal people were afforded schooling at all [then] it was mostly very rudimentary in form, leading only to the most basic occupations (housework for girls, unskilled farm work for boys)" (Welch et al. 2015, p. 95). Moreover, echoing closely the policy adopted for schooling of Maori children, the assimilation approach that applied to Australian Aboriginal children's schooling was based on the simplistic premise that merely enhancing Indigenous people's access to white people's education institutions that continued operating largely in unmodified form would ensure equality of educational opportunity and educational progress for all learners, automatically and without exception (Hill 1991). It also was a policy that involved a lack of agency and the absence of any form of self-determination, by Aboriginal people themselves, although it was presented as being beneficial for Indigenous persons (The Australian Department of Territories 1967). The assimilation of Aborigines into Australian communities and society, officials maintained, was necessary in and beyond the 1960s so that "all persons of Aboriginal descent will choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians" (The Australian Department of Territories 1967, p. 44).

Controversy, however, arose over the extent to which Aboriginal people might lose not only their identity but also important aspects of their culture (e.g., their language, beliefs, values, and particular customs), through absorption into Australian society. It was thought in some quarters that if Aboriginals were to become successful in Western terms then their education and/or training along Western lines could result in a diminution of their beliefs, rituals, and practices, each and all of which might cease to be valued by succeeding generations of Indigenous people as the assimilation process evolved (The Australian Department of Territories 1967). A connection was forged between schooling and employment

prospects, with the result that from the 1960s most Aboriginal people attended public or independent schools and studied the normal state school curriculum taught by state-educated and trained teachers, a curriculum that was intended to provide "a sound basic education" (The Australian Department of Territories 1967, p. 105). This arrangement was thought to be essential because of the assumption that Aborigines needed to be "[prepared] for their inevitably deepening contact and association with the modern society which is enveloping them" (The Australian Department of Territories 1967, p. 93).

While there was growing recognition that for some Aboriginal people Western-style schools have been, and remain, artificial environments in which teachers are permitted to intervene in people's lives and where there has been increasing appreciation of the desirability of having parents more closely involved in their sons' and daughters' schooling (The Australian Department of Territories 1967), the assimilation of Indigenous people was still being advocated enthusiastically by politicians and other influential parties. Consequently, there was discernible support for the official view expressed in the 1960s that any integration of Indigenous people, as opposed to their assimilation, should be discouraged because it represented "a protest against absorption" and had "a stronger racial and political connotation than assimilation" (The Australian Department of Territories 1967, p. 109). This situation might help to explain the importance of Aboriginal people adopting the English language as their primary but not sole means of communication, although the language usage took a variety of regional and localized forms in the Australian context (Welch et al. 2015).

As was the case in New Zealand with Maori school children, cultural considerations and experiences in learning within a non-Indigenous context did not receive serious attention by non-Aboriginal education policy makers and other influential parties until later in the twentieth century. It is a scenario, as one Australian researcher has described it, that requires much more than simply adopting a multicultural perspective on the schooling of Aboriginal people; rather, "[a guarantee is necessary] that the schooling process achieves not merely socialisation into the pluralistic society but true educational transformation" (Hill 1991, p. 91). Hill's objective was the attainment of "a transcultural perspective" (Hill 1991, p. 91), notwithstanding his understanding of the difficulties involved in achieving this goal. Such a perspective, not to mention the likelihood of it being realized, was slow to materialize, however, on account primarily of the powerful legacy of British colonization of Australia and, by definition, of its Indigenous residents (Dugan and Szwarc 1987). One nineteenth-century commentator offered the following critical account of why Aboriginal people were unable to flourish as individuals and as a group: "The attempts to civilize and Christianize the Aborigines, from which the preservation and elevation of their race was expected to result, have utterly failed . . . neither the one nor the other attempt has been carried into execution with the spirit which accords with its principles" (Dugan and Szwarc 1987, p. 30). Views on Australian Aborigines as members of a dying race, similar to those in nineteenth-century New Zealand, were heard, as was the belief that should they survive (because they lived usually in areas where few white people resided), then

"education" would hold the key to their subsequent "elevation" (Dugan and Szwarc 1987; The Australian Department of Territories 1967).

As noted above, improvements in Indigenous persons' circumstances were more likely to eventuate whenever affected parties began to voice their concerns and express demands for reform more vigorously and more widely, often through selected spokespersons and leaders (Glowczewski 2005). In Australia, with regard to Aboriginal people in particular, this agitation for reform was barely evident until 1938, when European Australia commemorated 150 years of settlement. The Aborigines Progressive Association, for their part, declared in that year that "hard words" were needed to describe the debilitating effect of colonization on native people. To this end they declared: "You [white European migrants] have almost exterminated our people, but there are enough of us remaining to expose the humbug of your claim, as white Australians, to be a civilized, progressive, kindly and humane nation" (Dugan and Szwarc 1987, p. 92). What the association's members wanted was genuine equality with white Australians, not their "protection" or physical separation, so that Aborigines would be assured of equal education, equal opportunities, and equal rights as citizens (Dugan and Szwarc 1987). The "negative separation [approach]" had already proven disastrous for Aborigines in the 1920s and 1930s (The Australian Department of Territories 1967, p. 33).

Such equality was slow in coming however, although during and beyond the 1980s, changes in perspectives toward Indigenous people were apparent because of Aboriginal people's campaigns, international pressures, and greater publicity associated with Indigenous people's adverse living conditions and circumstances (Dugan and Szwarc 1987; Glowczewski 2005). Furthermore, prospects for equality were heightened with the emerging understanding that the term "Aboriginal" should not be applied to a unified, single, group of Indigenous people. Barbara Glowczewski, for example, has observed that "today, Aboriginal groups have not only different languages and cultural backgrounds, but different histories as well" (Glowczewski 2005, p. 135). She lamented that "many [people] still claim that there is such a thing as an 'Aboriginality' which unites everyone under the same identity, even if not everyone can agree on its definition" (Glowczewski 2005, p. 135). In this context, it is argued that encouraging Aboriginal persons to actively determine their futures (i.e., personal self-determination, in policies and in practices) and to manage their own affairs, rather than perpetuating assimilation and integration views and actions unthinkingly and uncritically, will help them with their "many-sided Aboriginality," individually and collectively (Glowczewski 2005, p. 155). Much of value, personally and for communities, can be gained from emphasizing the persistent identities (from beliefs and language usage) and resistant identities (derived from analyses of exploitation and exclusion) of Indigenous peoples alongside local identities of congregations of Aboriginal men and women (Tcherkezoff and Douaire-Marsaudon 2005). This orientation, not surprisingly, has clear implications for the activities undertaken in schools and for schooling practices, notably, but not, exclusively, in the curriculum area of social studies.

As demonstrated above, it is abundantly clear that Aboriginal people in Australia were perceived and treated as second-class citizens for many decades and that

official optimism about the unconditionally positive effects of assimilation for and on Aborigines was seriously misplaced, if not manifestly naive. The situation was not helped by the widely held and long-standing belief that Australian Aborigines were incapable academically of benefiting from studying a school curriculum identical to that made available to non-Indigenous people (The Australian Department of Territories 1967). The result was that they were offered something different for at least half of the twentieth century, in the belief that "inborn racial disability" was responsible for lower school performance and attainments (The Australian Department of Territories 1967, p. 93). Along with the emergence of more sophisticated, research-based, cultural and sociological understanding of learning and teaching approaches evident increasingly from the 1960s, came improvements in parental and children's views about, and attitudes toward, schools and the schooling process. This process was accompanied by a more overt, official, desire to retain Indigenous children in schools in Australia in order to encourage them to continue their education beyond elementary schools.

Education in Fiji

One major reason behind the increasing level of official scrutiny in various countries of what was being offered under the rubric of "education" lay with a greater awareness of both the lower participation and retention rates of Indigenous people in schooling systems when compared with non-Indigenous pupils, notwithstanding the introduction of policies intended to assist children's access to and duration of stay in dedicated education settings (Welch et al. 2015). As Thaman (2015) notes in relation to several Pacific Island countries and Fiji especially (her country of birth), the more recent practice of making one kind of schooling system available to children of different ethnicity has contributed to the domination of a Western-style academic curriculum, particularly at the high school level, a curriculum directly connected to university requirements. In this milieu not every pupil will succeed at school in a strictly academic sense because some learners will wish to study a more overtly vocational and/or technically oriented curriculum, given that few aspire to attend a university.

Thaman (2015) concludes that the existence of a one-size-fits-all approach to high school curriculum design and delivery tends to diminish or suppress the all-important cultural and moral ingredients of education. Accordingly, she advocates introducing "a more flexible system that allows for a diversity of curriculum offerings as bridges between different levels and types of education" (Thaman 2015, pp. 214–215), one that enhances pupils' success at school and helps to promote the merits of genuine lifelong learning. The architects of this system, Thaman (2015, p. 216) opines, should avoid emphasizing "abstraction and conceptualization" over "work practical, hands on experiences." Rather, they should focus on promoting four pillars of learning in schools more broadly: learning to know, to do, to live together, and to be. Thaman (2015) is confident that in the developing and emerging nations' context of Pacific Island schools and schooling, a meaningful synthesis can, and will, be achieved between different, but equally meritorious, aspects of education.

Much will depend, however, on "action rather than [a] 'business' as usual [orientation]," on facilitating "social dialogue" (Thaman 2015, p. 216), and on acknowledging and engaging with the many difficulties involved whenever any education reform, rather than a mere change, is being promoted.

Additional insights into Fiji's colonial history, and its effects on schools and on the schooling processes, can be gleaned from Sharma et al.'s comprehensive research. These scholars describe the schooling activities undertaken by Roman Catholic and Methodist church missionaries from 1829 to 1835, respectively, in Fiji and conclude that more often than not the former placed a higher emphasis on academic, literary, instruction than did the latter. As was the situation in Aotearoa with Maori children being taught in, and exposed to, the English language, English quickly became the main language of Indigenous Fijians once Fiji became a British colony from October 1874. The colonial government there sought to retain a racially divided schooling model that culminated in the creation of three parallel systems from 1916 (Gounder 1999). This arrangement laid the foundation for what is considered to be a range of present-day inequalities in Fiji. One such inequality arose from, and was perpetuated by, the generally lower quality of schools that were located in more remote areas, similar to the native schooling system for New Zealand Maori pupils who resided in remote, isolated, communities (Stephenson 2006). Schools in urban Fijian communities, by comparison, were seen as offering higher-quality education provision. The children of Indians who migrated to Fiji in significant numbers between 1879 and 1916, to seek work in the country's several sugarcane plantations, began attending Fijian schools in larger numbers than did Indigenous Fijians (the *iTaukei* people), and they made extensive use of academic rather than agricultural and other more overtly vocationally directed curriculum offerings, with predictably positive consequences for their social and economic advancement.

One outcome, among many, was the deepening division, if not demarcation, between rural and urban Fijian communities that culminated in significant differences in education achievement, schooling outcomes, and the reinforcement of an ethnically divided schooling model. In this respect, similarities between the schooling experiences of Australian Aboriginal people, Indigenous Fijians, and Maori are again evident, whereby children who resided in different communities had different schooling provision and opportunities available to them (Stephenson 2006). As Sharma et al. (2015) have demonstrated for the Fijian environment, the legacy of this structure has been a long lasting one both pedagogically and ethnically. It has made the more recent, twenty-first century process of school reform especially difficult, given the length of time that an academic curriculum orientation has dominated the work of schools and occupied center stage in the perceptions and practices of many Fijian residents. To put the point another way, the process of shifting conceptions of what has counted, and what should count, as being worthwhile, personally meaningful, and valuable schooling is, and will remain, undoubtedly a complex one. At its very heart lies long-standing, well-established, traditional and, arguably, conservative perspectives that might well prove obdurate or unaccommodating to reform efforts (Bakalevu et al. 2015; Thaman 2015; Welch et al. 2015).

Conclusion and Future Directions

There is abundant research evidence to support the claim that whenever people from different cultures have encountered one another, there has been a strong temptation for one group to wish to give or to transmit something(s) ostensibly of value to the other in the genuine belief that the humanity and well-being of those other persons will be elevated (Adams et al. 2000; O'Malley et al. 2010). Such thinking was evident during the missionary era, where the teaching of Christian religions and the induction of an Indigenous audience into Western ways of living were seen as indispensable to the main task of converting noble but uncivilized, allegedly "savage," people into better or superior human beings. Schools, and the schooling process, were regarded as being perfectly suited to this purpose, given that their personnel were assigned special responsibilities by officials for preserving and ideally perpetuating the dominant culture across successive generations by working closely with children (Simon 2000; Walker 2004).

In order to make school teachers' work more palatable to people from both the dominant and the non-dominant culture, mention was made increasingly of the benefits of providing access to "educational institutions" and the "need" to modify the school curriculum to suit the perceived different requirements, circumstances, and abilities of different kinds of pupils, based, primarily, on unexamined and untested assumptions about Indigenous learners and what was deemed "relevant" (and irrelevant) for them (McLaren 1974; O'Malley et al. 2010). This situation persisted for as long as there was an inability and/or an unwillingness by affected parties to analyze the messages officials sought to relay to children, through the medium of schools, by government-approved teachers in a nation's classrooms.

In the post-World War II era, however, growing awareness of the importance of considering cultural factors in education settings that were being understood better through scholarship and research endeavors meant that the status quo was no longer secure. Indigenous persons became more vocal in their critiques about their culture's and their people's comparative invisibility and marginalization and sought reforms to what was being offered for their people under the rubric of "education" (O'Malley et al. 2010; Walker 2004). Their desire for reform, in education and elsewhere, was not always received positively or acted upon promptly, with the result that prominent Indigenous people assumed responsibility for securing the sorts of reforms they desired (Walker 2004). One key motivation for them was to try to stem the decline of their language (Glowczewski 2005; Thaman 2015; Welch et al. 2015).

There is widespread consensus among education researchers that past and present-day myths about schools and the schooling process need to receive continuing scrutiny, given their powerful effects on both non-Indigenous and on Indigenous. There also is general agreement that what is being presented as well-informed, enlightened, education policy and practice warrants serious, sustained, investigation. It is likely that education policy scholars and historians of education now and in the future will find themselves engaged in uncovering and analyzing official agendas relating to the work undertaken in schools (e.g., the orientation of a given curriculum

and the reasons given for the inclusion of certain subjects and for the exclusion of others). In so doing it is hoped that they will pay careful attention to any attempts that seek to promote certain interests in education at the same time as diminishing the status of others.

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