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“Disadvantaged by a Pakeha Based Education System”
The Impact of Biculturalism on Radical Educational Reform in New Zealand

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In 1988, following the release of Administering for Excellence (the Picot Report) and the publication of the Labour Government’s response, Tomorrow’s Schools, New Zealand’s education system was subjected to the most thoroughgoing administrative reforms since 1877. A new Ministry of Education replaced the former Department of Education, the regional education boards were abolished, and at the school level, there was devolution of power to school-based Boards of Trustees (BoTs). These reforms were very controversial in New Zealand. To some extent they remain so, with influential education policy researchers arguing that they were an Antipodean version of what had already occurred in education in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, where a mixture of privatisation, consumer choice, and cost-savings symbolised the triumph of global neoliberal ideology (See for instance, Gordon & Codd, 1990; Grace, 1990; Openshaw, 2009).

This paper contends, however, that whilst neoliberal ideology undoubtedly played an important role in the sweeping educational changes New Zealand was to experience during the 1980s, there is a need to look beyond single cause explanations if we wish to account for the widespread rejection across the entire political spectrum of a system of national educational administration that had existed since 1877 (Openshaw, 2009). To date, for instance, there has been little critical examination of the degree to which charges that the traditional centralised education system had manifestly failed to deliver equity for Māori and other groups deemed marginalized impacted upon educators and policy makers, calling into question as it did, the integrity of the existing system. This paper will demonstrate how, by the mid-1980s, the solution to the problem of ethnic disadvantage was being increasingly articulated by bicultural advocacy groups and neoliberal Treasury officials alike in terms of community empowerment through devolution, charters, and consumer choice. In effect neoliberals and biculturalists drew upon each other’s discourses to successfully challenge existing bureaucratic structures and the post-war liberal ideology that traditionally underpinned them. The paper goes on to trace the development of a new policy discourse during the decade immediately prior to the reforms that was to effectively unite economic and social radicals in a common cause that both damned and doomed existing educational structures.
Converting Pakeha Educators to Biculturalism

From the 1970s on, the ideology of cultural essentialism (Nanda, 2003) swept through state agencies in many Western countries with increasing force, with significant consequences for the formulation of social policy, including education. A number of researchers have shown how this ideology, originally arising as an academic theory within American social anthropology circles, owed its subsequent widespread popularity within education systems to the fact that it gave absolute primacy to culture rather than to more traditional concepts such as social class, as a means of explaining beliefs and actions. This occurred precisely at a time when faith in the ability of existing liberal democratic institutions to solve problems of inequality was fast declining among Western intelligentsias (Rata, 1996). The first section of this paper illustrates how biculturalism, a specific manifestation of cultural essentialism that eventually came to dominate public policy decision-making in New Zealand, was rapidly translated from a purely academic discourse into a powerful sector-wide demand for radical educational change.

Professor Ralph Piddington, who arrived from the United States as Foundation Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Auckland, established the first Māori Studies Department in New Zealand in 1950. Over the next two decades he trained a whole generation of Pakeha social anthropologists, recruiting many of the senior Māori scholars who eventually came to head Māori Studies Departments throughout the country. Networks and other mechanisms of crucial importance in spreading Piddington’s message throughout the education system were thus established with the result that, in the decade immediately prior to Picot, the concept of identity politics became dominant throughout the state education sector and within the centralised education policy environment (Openshaw, 2006). Eric Schwimmer was one of the first New Zealand academic commentators to reject the concept of integration and instead to advocate biculturalism as its replacement in his widely read edited volume, *The Māori people in the Nineteen Sixties*. Drawing upon a chapter contributed by Piddington, Schwimmer defined biculturalism as being similar to pluralism, but going beyond mere tolerance and mutual encouragement, becoming a reality only when both Pakeha and Māori cultures possessed characteristic superstructures of institutions, values, and symbols (Schwimmer, 1968). It was this concept of dual, indeed oppositional cultures, that was henceforth to underpin biculturalism as New Zealand’s ultimate expression of cultural essentialism.

For many Pakeha educators, exposure to biculturalism was to have close parallels with religious experience, leading to considerable zeal on the part of the newly converted. This exposure rapidly increased during the 1970s following the introduction of regular marae-based courses for Departmental officers, school inspectors, principals, deputy principals, and senior teachers. A number of letters explaining reasons for non-attendance suggest that among the few valid excuses for exemption were prior engagements which could not be altered, and ill-health (Smith, 1977). One reason for virtual compulsion was that marae-based courses were envisaged as serving political as well as cultural ends. An address to the Hauiti marae-based course in April 1977, for instance, was formally opened by Jim Ross, Assistant Secretary, Schools and...
Development. Ross argued that multiculturalism and assimilation should be rejected in favour of biculturalism and positive discrimination, both because a specific New Zealand identity was now necessary and because many Māori could not cope with a Pakeha based society (Hauiti Marae, Programme Draft, 1977).

The programme for a marae-based course from 29 May to 2 June 1977 held at Mangamuka, Hokianga, for senior Departmental administrators and inspectors of primary and secondary schools was relatively typical. In addition to being introduced to Māori rituals of protocol and conduct, participants were given extracts from books by Joan Metge (The Māoris of New Zealand), Anne Salmond (Hui), Michael King (Aspects of Māoritanga) and V.B. Penfold, inspector of Māori and Island Education (New Zealanders: One people?), backed by lectures from bicultural advocates such as Garfield Johnson, Alan Smith, Hiwi Tauroa, then Principal of Tuakau College, and John Rangitau, Research Fellow, Centre for Māori Studies and Research at the University of Waikato (Marae based Courses, Mangamuka, Hokianga, 1977). Although there was opportunity for participant dissent, the intensity of group feeling and the environment itself probably served to discourage it. Thus, a letter of thanks from one participant to the organizers of a course at Te Wai Pounamu College, Dunedin, claimed without irony that; “it was I think most significant that there were no dissenting voices, and considering the composition of the course this was in itself remarkable. Well done indeed” (Letter from participant to the organisers of the Te Wai Pounamu College Course, 1977).

By the early 1980s, professional Māori facilitators were regularly inducting Departmental curriculum officers into a selective and highly gendered Māori protocol that included: whaikorero (selected officers), reply to karanga (selected women officers), mihimihi (all officers) and poroporoaki (selected offices), together with morning and evening prayers. One facilitator noted: “if the task that has been entrusted to me is to ensure that ALL CURRICULUM OFFICERS acknowledge, support and are committed to reflecting our multicultural society THEN there is no better way than using a bi-cultural base as a starting point (Taha Maori Across the Curriculum, 1983).

The notes produced by the Curriculum Development Division to accompany the Hui Whakamatatau at Taurua Marae, Rotoiti, in November 1984 attempted to define for Pakeha, the elusive fifth element ‘Quintessence’, as “an all pervading element, the overall intangible bond that holds it all together. Taha Wairua – Wairua Māori perhaps. The things that cause Māori life to remain a totality. A sense of unity. Pakeha life often seems to lack that totality” (Curriculum Development Division, 1984).

The relatively uncritical acceptance of biculturalism by educators frequently resulted in a passionate commitment to radically change existing structures. In July 1986 a report on the proceedings of a National Residential In-service Course held at the Lopdell Centre in July 1986 claimed that

[this report is written from the pain and anger felt by the members of this course – pain, because we see the continuing oppression of Māori people in Aotearoa and the tragic results this has; anger, because those who hold power in the education system already know well what must be done, but have not yet made significant public commitment to real power-sharing, and challenging of racism. (Taha Maori and Change, 1986)\]
Its first recommendation demanded “that the Department of Education ‘management plan’ give absolute priority to funding programmes for equity for the next five years”, and that “any programme requiring funding would have to prove the involvement of and benefit to Māori and other groups disadvantaged by the system” (Taha Maori and Change, 1986). By the time the Picot taskforce met, therefore, educational structures in general and the Department of Education in particular were well on the way to be demonised by educators themselves, with the solutions increasingly being framed in terms of devolution, choice, and measurable outcomes. Ironically, these were precisely the goals that have subsequently become associated with neoliberal rather than with left-liberal ideology.

The Policy Road to Picot

In addition to influencing many educators, Māori activism was having an increasingly significant impact on the Wellington-based policy environment by the early 1980s. This next section of the paper illustrates how claims that the primary responsibility for historic Māori educational underachievement, lay principally with educational structures in general and in particular with the Department of Education effectively united critics from both sides of the political divide.

Māori activism was particularly visible in its calls for a separate system of education. The Te Kohanga Reo ideal was first advanced at the 1980 Hui whakatauira (Māori Leaders’ Conference), partly in response to Pakeha educator Richard Benton’s research on Māori language loss (Smith & Smith, 1990). Te Kohanga Reo was strongly rooted in cultural essentialism. It aimed to create an environment for young children which was “Māori in action and language,” whilst addressing the need for “a Māori based programme to stop the decline of Māori speaking people in New Zealand’ without which “there (could) be no Māori culture; no unique Māori identity” (Report on Te Kohanga Reo Operations Nationally, 1983).

By early 1983 there were 83 Centres in operation, with 118 further centres proposed for 1983/4 (Jones, 1983). In requesting further information in August 1983, the Department of Education conceded that the Kohanga Reo movement was growing rapidly, and that the government had allocated substantial financial support for its development, but conceded that the schools were not under Department of Education control (Ross, 1983). By September 1983 there were 146 Te Kohanga Reo Centres catering for 2,300 pre-schoolers, with 232 supervisors and 254 Māori Elders, along with 1,223 voluntary full and part-time workers (Report on Te Kohanga Reo Operations Nationally, 1983).

The Kura Kaupapa Māori schools were designed to build on the success of Te Kohanga Reo. Smith and Smith, analysing the future directions of Māori educational initiatives, have argued that, as Kura Kaupapa Māori developed outside the existing state system, it implied a manifest criticism of state structures as well as constituting “a conscious and manifest resistance to Pakeha dominated educational structures and schooling processes” (Report on Te Kohanga Reo Operations Nationally, 1983).

Despite these developments, however, many Māori and Pakeha activists continued to attack the inadequacies of mainstream schooling. Typical was a hard-hitting article
in the major daily, *The Auckland Evening Star* that commented on a report on the disadvantages suffered by Māori pupils. Its author, Māori teacher and activist, Maiki Marks, argued that schools were often not working to save Māoritanga, but rather to preserve it as an irrelevancy, like Greek and Latin. Accordingly, Marks wanted schools with predominantly Polynesian rolls to have, “management committees, drawn from the community the school serves,” able to, “formulate policies and select the teachers they want” (Glasgow, 1984).

Radical devolutionary ideas were also finding increasing receptivity in the education policy community. In 1984, Labour’s Minister of Education, Russell Marshall, set up the influential Committee of Inquiry into Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications in Forms 1-7. The inquiry attracted many public submissions, that from the left-leaning Citizens Association for Racial Equality (CARE) being particularly noteworthy in arguing that the education system was too centralised in all its crucial decision making procedures, resulting in the capture of educational processes by Pakeha bureaucrats. Consequently, argued CARE, “only major and system-wide reforms will suffice to remove those inequalities” (Submission from Citizens Association for Racial Equality, 1984).

In what might have been a blueprint for both the 1987 Treasury briefing papers and the Picot Report, CARE proposed a comprehensive re-shaping of the education system. Curriculum control was to be decentralized, particularly in schools where most students were Māori or Polynesian. In place of uniform prescriptions and syllabuses, schools needed broad goals within which to work, but otherwise were “to be free to restructure themselves and their relations with their communities in order to become bi-or multi cultural” (Submission from Citizens Association for Racial Equality, 1984).

CARE also advocated a radical decentralisation of school assessment, including a shift from a norm referenced system to one where there would be a continual monitoring of student progress. By the early 1980s, therefore, both Māori and Pakeha advocacy groups were espousing both the rhetoric and philosophy that was to punctuate the wider educational reform process.

Māori aspirations for control over the education of their youth on the grounds that the state system had failed them thus increasingly accorded with neoliberal advocacy of free choice for all parents in a devolved education system, more responsive to client demands. For example, concern over gangs in the late 1970s had led first to the 1979 Parliamentary Select Committee on Violent Offending, and then to the 1981 Inquiry into Gangs (the Comber Report). These initiatives were to play a significant role in advancing radical devolutionary policies. For instance, the approach taken by Treasury in formulating subsequent proposals for the Labour government that succeeded National in 1984 were based on two key assumptions that emerged from a reading of these reports. These were that government provision of conventional social services had failed to respond to the needs of ‘at risk’ minority youth, and that responding to social problems by simply putting more money into the bureaucracy was both wasteful and inefficient (Minister of Finance, 1984).

This merging of left-liberal and neoliberal rhetoric can be clearly discerned in the Community Education Initiative Scheme (CEIS), one of two pilot projects initiated to
address the ethnic gang ‘problem’. Involving the predominantly Māori and Polynesian communities of Otara, Mangere and Porirua, CEIS was designed to assist ‘at-risk’ youth by providing funds to be used locally for education and recreation (Report of the Committee on Gangs. Government Response, 1984). Peter Brice, a senior Department of Education officer, was to be a common link between CEIS and the Picot Committee, hence the scheme provided both an administrative and a philosophical bridge between the traditional centre-periphery model of educational provision, and the ‘new’ consumer choice strategies of the Picot Committee.

In late 1984, the incoming Labour Government inherited CEIS. The minutes to a CEIS Interdepartmental Committee meeting in September 1984 noted with approval that the Scheme possessed the potential to manage money better and more effectively (Minutes of the CEIS Interdepartmental Committee Meeting held on Thursday 20 September, 1984). It was emphasized that, in view of continuing financial constraints, the government was obliged to look for alternative methods of addressing social issues. The CEIS example, it was contended, did not require expensive resourcing. Moreover, “this was a different kind of policy. People are enabled to help themselves. The idea should be promoted with Ministers that this is an aspect of how we can people to help themselves. A new kind of social thinking” (Minutes of the CEIS Interdepartmental Committee, 1984).

The attractiveness of this “different kind of policy” for the ideologically divided Lange Government was exemplified in the October 1984 CEIS meeting with key Labour Government ministers held in Parliament Buildings. Chaired by Hon. Russell Marshall, Labour’s Minister of Education, the meeting was attended by a number of top Labour MPs, including Geoffrey Palmer, the Minister of Justice; Anne Hercus, the Minister of Social Welfare and Police; Peter Tapsell, the Minister of Internal Affairs; Stan Rodger, the Minister of Labour; and Colin Moyle, the Minister of Agriculture in addition to the full CEIS Interdepartmental Committee.

The Department of Education was to reap the whirlwind that stemmed both from increasingly bitter claims that the largely Pakeha educational bureaucracy had failed Māori, and the increasing attraction of consumer choice rhetoric across the political spectrum. In May 1986, New Zealand’s last Director-General of Education, William L. (Bill) Renwick, wrote to the Chairperson of the Waitangi Tribunal expressing the concern of his Department at the Tribunal’s findings relating to the historic issue of Māori educational underachievement. What particularly saddened Renwick was that, although both he and his Departmental colleagues had welcomed the Tribunal’s findings regarding the place of Māori culture in New Zealand state schools and applauded recognition of the central importance of Te Reo Māori, their evidence to the Tribunal had been contemptuously dismissed, with the Department being depicted as deliberately evasive (Renwick, 1986). In Renwick’s view, the Tribunal had been “less than even-handed” in the way it had dealt with criticisms of past Departmental policies, permitting the Department no effective avenue of response (Renwick, 1986).

By mid-1987, therefore, as the Picot Taskforce prepared to begin its deliberations, it was confronted with a powerful line of argument, based on cultural essentialist beliefs, to the effect that Māori disadvantage stemmed from a single underlying cause
the failure of the existing unresponsive educational structure to accommodate Māori aspirations. Thus according to Jack Ennis, whose Tu Tangata article was one of the articles placed before the Taskforce in July 1987,

While you read these lines thousands of Māori children attending New Zealand schools are being subjected to a ten year process of schooling that very effectively and efficiently atrophies their potential growth as people. It degrades their culture and denies them the life fulfilment and expectations that most concerned pakeha parents expect and demand for their children. (Ennis, 1987)

Biculturalism and the Picot Taskforce
Given the growing concerns over Māori underachievement amongst educators and policymakers by the mid-1980s, it is hardly surprising that the Picot Taskforce rapidly resolved on radical change rather than any tinkering with the existing system. At the first full meeting of the Taskforce on 31 July 1987, members agreed to make major decisions “in the light of comments previously made on the system that were available to them” (italics mine), given that their “overall thrust (was) that the system (was) too complex and too unresponsive” (Notes of a meeting of the First Meeting of the Taskforce, 1987). Accountability for outcomes would therefore be mandatory at every level of the new system. Devolution was rapidly identified as the only viable option (Notes of a meeting of the First meeting of the Taskforce, 1987). By late August, soon after the end of the second meeting, the decision had definitely been taken to: “use the ‘blank page’ approach in the first place, rather than try and massage existing structures into a more appropriate form” (Taskforce Status Report, 1987).

The Māori representative on the taskforce, Whetu Wereta, likewise emphasised devolution, pointing out that both the Health Department and the Department of Māori Affairs were already promoting it (Taskforce to Review Educational Administration, 1987b). Wereta was later to claim that failure to introduce bulk funding constituted a major defeat for Māori (Openshaw, 2009). The argument that consumer choice and devolution could effectively counter provider capture can also be clearly seen in the decision to invite the Māori Council, the Kohanga Reo Trust, the Māori Women’s Welfare League, the Pacific Islands Resource Centre, and Pacifika, but not the two teachers’ unions (Openshaw, 2009).

In a later interview, Picot himself was to recall that the ‘blank page’ approach was taken because the difficulties inherent in trying to massage an outdated and inappropriate 110 year-old system into shape were simply too great to meet present and future demands. He rejected as “absolute rubbish” any suggestion that the Taskforce was simply trying to save money or to create a competitive education system (Transcript of Interview 33 with Maurice Gianotti, 1996). What does appear to have had considerable influence on the taskforce, however, were the poor exit qualifications among Māori students. The 1986 statistics the Taskforce had access to, for instance, revealed that whilst only a single secondary school on Auckland city’s wealthy North Shore had more than 25 per cent of students leaving without a single School Certificate subject, in South Auckland with its high Māori and Pasifika population, it was true for no fewer than 13 out of
16 secondary schools (Transcript of Interview 29 with Brian Picot, 1995). Hence, the strong feeling amongst taskforce members that opportunities for choice be maximized, especially for those cultural groups who held strong views about what schools should provide (Taskforce to Review Educational Administration, 1987a).

These feelings were to be reinforced by the documents subsequently placed before the taskforce. Amongst its listed readings were the Report of a Ministerial Working Party [the Probine-Fargher Report] (Taskforce to Review Educational Administration, 1987b).

The recommendations of the Fargher-Probine Report into continuing education and training published just four months prior to the Taskforce’s first meeting provided a blue print for a number of the solutions and concepts subsequently adopted in the Picot Report. In their forward to this report, Ray Fargher and Mark Probine justified taking a wider view of education than just continuing education and training, because of the seriousness of the issues that required addressing.

Significant issues include low participation rates in tertiary education in NZ compared with other countries; the rate at which people with technological skills are being produced; a highly centralised style of management which inhibits the adoption of an entrepreneurial approach to the delivery of services; lack of coordination in the delivery of training; and last but by no means least, the need to provide special help for socially disadvantaged groups such as young unemployed, Māori who have been disadvantaged by a pakeha-based education system, women who wish to enter non-traditional occupations, residents of rural areas, the disabled, and the socially isolated. (Probine & Fargher, 1987)

In response, the report aimed to improve accountability through the introduction of specific charters, formulated after consultation with the local community. Charters would contain a statement of the responsibilities, tasks and goals of each institution. In addition, the use of corporate planning techniques which emphasised measurable objectives against which performance could be assessed, was recommended (Probine & Fargher, 1987). Once again, this rhetoric reflected decidedly mixed ideological roots.

The need for radical devolution on the grounds that the education system was the prime cause of underachievement amongst marginalized groups, especially Māori, was also taken up in detail in the second volume of the Treasury submission, prepared by Simon Smelt and Michael Irwin, and passed on the Picot Taskforce. This volume was entirely devoted to education, justified by its authors because of, “the complexity of the issues involved . . . the importance of the educational sector to wider issues of social equity and economic efficiency, and the extent of apparent public concern about the public education system” (The Treasury, 1987). Whilst Treasury viewed some recent changes in a positive light, it warned that “substantial elements of current government expenditure are, at best, ineffective when viewed in terms of the equity and efficiency concerns that justify such expenditure” (The Treasury, 1987).

The Treasury analysis raised issues that owed much to the vigorous bicultural debates of the 1970s and early 1980s. It was pointed out that New Zealand had an
overwhelmingly state education system with a small private sector and hence little consumer choice, apart from the “vigorous and fast growing Kohanga Reo movement for preschoolers” (The Treasury, 1987). Whilst the dominant form of state intervention was direct provision of educational services, however, Treasury observed there was no a priori reason why intervention should take this form. Here Treasury noted the recent ACCESS programme which subsidised training providers who could be private, likening this initiative to Te Kohanga Reo, which provided a separate Māori delivery mechanism in response to call for Māori control over resources. Whilst government educational services were provided virtually free to consumers and parents through to post-graduate level, there was little targeting of assistance for disadvantaged groups, and a high degree of centralised educational control that produced rigidity and a slowness to react to changing demands. Hence, according to Treasury, Te Kohanga Reo and ACCESS could “be seen as ways of by-passing a system that has failed to react sufficiently, or fast enough, to the needs of specific groups.” Perhaps picking up on the anti-provider-capture recommendations of the Cartwright Inquiry and the Scott Report, Treasury asserted that a unified teacher workforce hindered the application of incentives for high performance, and discouraged sanctions for poor performance (The Treasury, 1987, Preface).

Chapter 8 of the treasury document was particularly noteworthy in that it focused specifically on the causes of Māori underachievement. Here, Treasury was able to cite a wealth of recent academic research both in New Zealand and elsewhere, for both its diagnosis and its remedy. This included Richard Harker’s work on social control, hegemony and cultural capital, Ranginui Walker’s work on Pakeha capture of Taha Māori and the struggles of urban Māori, Judith Simon’s revelations of how teacher’s practices contributed to the denigration of Māori culture in classrooms, Richard Benton’s advocacy of a separate Māori-controlled system, and the research of Roy Nash on educational inequality. Treasury was also able to point to increasingly strident range of calls for education to be held to account for failing to acknowledge the primacy of partnership and the special place of Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi, exemplified in the 1982 report, Race Against Time, and the conclusions of the Waitangi Tribunal. It backed these imperatives with numerous citations of overseas research by Bernstein on language codes, Bourdieu on habitus, and Boudon on secondary effects. Smelt was later to claim that it was research evidence such as this rather than the example of Thatcher’s government in the United Kingdom, that had largely fuelled Treasury present concern (Transcript of Interview with Simon Smelt, 1994). Thus, Treasury emphasized the need for a Māori component in education because, in its view, the Māori emphasis on community, acted as a strong counterweight to the individualism of the Pakeha” (The Treasury, 1987, p. 244). This last recommendation also had its antecedents among liberal educators dating back to at least J.H. Murdoch’s 1944 assertion that “the strongly developed community life of the Māori is a necessary corrective to the selfish individualism that is so marked a feature of Pakeha society” (Murdoch, 1944, pp. 429-430).

Even in presenting its subsequently controversial argument that education was not a ‘public good,’ but instead benefited individuals, Treasury was able to draw on longstanding left-liberal as well as traditionally conservative concerns that, although
education was funded by the community, those who provided educational services frequently sought to defend and develop their own interests. Thus, in critically examining the four key educational issues of who paid, who chose, who benefited, and who was accountable, Treasury was merely summarizing the widespread and ideologically diverse dissatisfaction with education that had increasingly marked the previous forty years. Thus it was alleged that, despite the claims of liberal-progressive educators since Beeby’s time, secondary schools had neither produced equity nor equality of outcome (radical sociologists, revisionist historians, feminists). Deeply embedded structural and cultural inequalities meant that not all families were able to purchase or take advantage of education, with Māori in particular bearing the brunt of systemic failure [NACME; Turangawaewae Marae, 1984; Taha Māori and Change, 1986]. Institutions were unresponsive to the needs of consumers [CPA; CARE, Race Against Time, the Benton research, radical Māori agitation, the Gibbs Report]. Middle class providers, especially teachers and pakeha bureaucrats had effectively captured the system for their own ends, with consumers often unable to hold them to satisfactory account [the Erebus Inquiry, the Scott Report, the Cartwright Report] (The Treasury, 1987, p. 272).

Solutions, however, could be glimpsed in promising new initiatives towards devolution [CEIS, Te Kohanga Reo, ACCESS].

The Probine-Fargher Report and the Treasury briefing papers were by no means the only documents that drew on the extensive advocacy literature of ethnic disadvantage. By late November an extensive list of abstracts featuring no fewer than 131 relevant papers and commentaries generally supporting radical educational change was available to Taskforce members. These were drawn mainly from academic and professional publications, books, magazine articles, parliamentary debates and newspaper features from Australian, North America and the United Kingdom as well as New Zealand. It is noteworthy that the voucher issue featured strongly in the list, with the first 17 items dealing either wholly or in part with educational vouchers. Of these a paper entitled “Education Vouchers” dated 2 February 1987, produced by the New Zealand Government Research Unit, is particularly revealing. This paper argued that, while there were no explicit tests of the voucher concept immediately available, the Youth Training Scheme in Britain and the introduction of Te Kohanga Reo in New Zealand permitted some useful conclusions to be drawn. Turning to Te Kohanga Reo, the paper emphasised that the scheme had emerged as a Māori educational initiative against initial objections from the Department of Education to the extent that “consumers were thus able to direct funding towards providers by their decision to use those providers.” The result was that

*Te Kohanga Reo has now become an accepted alternative in the pre-school area and its funding has shifted from the ad hoc use of employment programmes to specific provision through the Māori Affairs Department. It remains, however, as evidence that, provided they have access to financial resources, and the freedom to design or demand programmes which they believe meet their needs, then even disadvantaged groups are capable of putting very effective programmes into action.* (Government Research Unit, 1987)
Despite advocacy of these policy precedents, however, the voucher scheme as such appears not to have been seriously entertained by the Picot Taskforce. However, the Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa examples were to provide further justification for the Taskforce’s decision to provide a mechanism through which parents could choose to either withdraw their children from mainstream schools, create schools within existing schools, set up their own schools, or to homeschool.

Yet another indication of the influence on Taskforce opinion concerning the fairness of New Zealand education, particularly the adequacy of a single system to accommodate cultural diversity, can be found in the numerous references to the Royal Commission on Social Policy in surviving documents. The final report of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research published in late 1987 and placed before both the Royal Commission on Social Policy and the Picot Taskforce, was particularly influential. The first volume of this extensively researched two-volume document, commissioned by the Royal Commission on Social Policy, identified no fewer than seven groups who were likely to be disadvantaged in schools: those from low socio-economic status homes; girls and women; Māori, Pacific Island groups; the disabled; ethnic migrant groups; and rural dwellers. The report sensationally claimed that “allowing for overlap between these categories, this accounts in fact for at least three fifths of the population included broadly within the education system” (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987, p. 1). It concluded that “the situation of disadvantaged groups will only improve if there are major changes in our education system” (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987, p. 5).

This profound social pessimism was explicitly ethnicised in the second volume, written by NZCER’s researcher on Māori education, Richard Benton (Benton, 1987). Benton argued that the high failure rate of Māori children in an essentially Pakeha state education system clearly demonstrated that the cultural and social needs of Māori were not being met. The system was essentially closed and self-perpetuating. In addition, he claimed that there was “widespread research evidence that teachers as a group assume that Māori children at all levels are likely failures.” (Benton, 1987, p. 69). Drawing upon Karl Polanyi’s 1944 analysis of the impact of market economies on societies and citing the disappearance of Māori schools in the 1960s as a prime example, Benton claimed that a closed educational market such as that imposed by the New Zealand education system was “essentially totalitarian in nature, absorbing, and where possible destroying, alternative structures, even alternatives which it has generated itself” (Benton, 1987, p. 71). In some respects this was essentially similar to what many left-liberal and neoliberal critics had long been arguing. Benton’s conclusion, however, and particularly the ideology that underpinned it, are particularly revealing:

According to Polanyi’s analysis, the community can recreate itself by a process of social restoration involving what would in Māori terms be called mana motuhake. This is just what the kohanga reo and many other Māori social initiatives are aimed at. It cannot be said, therefore, that Māori people must inevitably be victims in the market place. On the contrary, they may well be able to exploit some of the new market forces to their own educational and social advantage, and
use this advantage to defend themselves and their institutions from further erosion. It is because of this that some of the ideas contained in the 1987 Treasury analysis of the management of the education system (1987) are, in my opinion, to be welcomed. [Emphasis mine] (Benton, 1987, p. 71)

Polyani’s attractiveness to a radically changing Antipodean policy environment during the 1980s can perhaps best be understood in the context of his highly-individualistic and radical approach to societal reform. Born in Vienna in 1886, Polanyi had been educated as a philosopher before fleeing Central Europe first to Britain and then to the United States. His brother Michael Polanyi, who like Karl was to gain an international scholarly reputation, had been closer to his near-contemporary Friedrich Hayek in his belief that the state could no longer effectively run a modern economy. Karl Polyani, however, sharply differed from both men in placing little faith in any of the West’s major political, social, and economic ideals; hence his attractiveness to many disillusioned academics, post-1968. In his-best known work, The Great Transformation (1944), Karl Polanyi emphatically rejected the free market system along with the various attempts to regulate or militate it, including socialism, liberalism and fascism. Instead, he claimed to have re-discovered what he expansively termed “the primacy of society” (Polanyi, 1944, pp. 3-4). In advocating the shifting of Western industrial civilisation onto a new non-market base once the Second World War ended, Polanyi drew upon a highly idealised view of non-Western tribal societies for his ideas of a model self-governing and independent community – hence he particularly appealed to those who advocated Māori self-determination in education during the mid-1980s. Polanyi’s eccentricities, however, have been critiqued in a recent book by Roger Sandall who describes how Polyani’s delusions of romantic primitivism, and suspicion of Western-style democracies led him into an, “obsessive search for an idealised pre-capitalist culture” that never actually existed (Sandall, 2001, p. 88).

Soon after the implementation of the reforms, a perceptive paper by Logan Moss, a Waikato University education lecturer, maintained that, in its frequent use of the word “community” the Picot Taskforce was consciously re-invoking a legend common to virtually all European societies: that of an idealised collection of small, cohesive communities beset, torn apart, and finally reduced to servitude by a malevolent outside force (Moss, 1990). As we have seen, a number of other critics of New Zealand education appear to have held somewhat similar views at this time. Hence, any proposal for radical education reform had perforce to be seen to deal with the central issue of freeing communities from the yoke of the existing system (Moss, 1990).

Be this as it may, Benton’s hopes for a fully devolved, Māori-controlled education system certainly appear to have resonated with those of Treasury, even though they proceeded from different ideological positions. Thus whilst Benton followed critical left-liberal New Zealand academic commentators such as Boston and Snook in rejecting a voucher system as proposed in the National Party’s 1987 election policy, he nonetheless favoured “a freer, more flexible, decentralised and innovative approach to education” (Benton, 1987, p. 71) that an open market might convey, particularly in
giving Māori families the power to take control of their children’s education.

Perhaps the key Picot Report recommendation was that individual learning institutions were to constitute the basic unit of educational administration, because these were where there was “the strongest direct interest in the educational outcomes and the best information about local circumstances.” The running of individual learning institutions was to be a “partnership between the teaching staff (the professionals), and the community” (Report of the Taskforce to Review Educational Administration, 1988, p.ix). However, as the state provided the funds and retained a strong interest in educational outcomes, there were to be national objectives and clear lines of responsibility. This was to be reflected in the charter which, as the contract between institution, community, and state, was to be the ‘lynchpin’ of the entire new structure. Yet once again it should be emphasised that this concept had first arisen in the context of the longstanding New Zealand debate about how best to address the needs of disadvantaged groups, especially Māori, in an education system labelled as exclusive pakeha. Hence, in the new arrangements recommended by the Taskforce, every institution was to be held accountable for meeting its charter objectives by an independent Review and Audit Agency reporting directly to the Minister of Education (Report of the Taskforce to Review Educational Administration, 1988, p.ix).

**Conclusion**

Within New Zealand educational circles, the ideology of neoliberalism and the actions of both Treasury and State Services commission are often held to have been not simply the main but the sole factor in driving radical educational reform during the 1980s. However, this paper has demonstrated that increasing perceptions that the existing education was fundamentally unfair due to the maintenance of outdated structures, reinforced by continuing Department of Education culpability in the historic educational underachievement of Māori played an equally key role in the political isolation of state education in New Zealand during the 1980s. In this context, calls for radical restructuring from across the political and ideological spectrum were certain to find ready support amongst Wellington-based policymakers. In turn, the new, radicalized policy environment thus created was to have a significant impact on the Picot Taskforce as it deliberated the necessity of reform during the crucial months of late 1987 and early 1988.
References


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**Endnotes**

1 For the purposes of this paper, cultural essentialism, often termed ‘culturalism,’ is defined as the ideology of ethnic politics, which gives absolute primacy to culture.

2 See for instance, ABEP, W4262, Box 2677, 40/1/4/5, Marae-based courses for teachers, part 1, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

3 The Minister also attached to this memo a paper from the Minister of Education, with recommendations to Cabinet Committee on Social Equity.

4 Ennis had been an inspector of schools for 17 years and hence, a Departmental officer.


6 The accompanying footnote explained that this breakdown was based on 50% girls and women, 30-35% low SES, 15% Māori, 5% disabled and 13% rural, which was claimed to be “a very conservative view of the degree of overlap between these groups.”
Beyond Centre-Periphery: Higher Education Development in South-East Asia

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Abstract
Once the mantra for understanding the unequal relationships in international higher education, centre-periphery theory has recently been challenged with ambitious reforms in university systems characterised as ‘peripheries’, including those in South East Asia. This article argues that in their attempts to demonstrate the peripheral position of Third World universities, some scholars of a centre-periphery framework have focused almost exclusively on actions of the ‘centres’ and adhered narrowly to North-South discourse, thus giving little attention to the agency of the local actors. This approach ultimately plays down not only the local agency in response to external forces but also risks exaggerating the ‘Western’ hegemony in the post-Cold War period. To illustrate this point, this article explores different reform agendas undertaken by policy-makers of some South-East Asian countries and examines the development of the regionalisation and inter-regionalisation processes of higher education as a challenge to the narrow focus of a centre-periphery framework.

Introduction
Explaining and responding to marginalisation and inequalities in global educational systems has been one of the persistent concerns for educational administrators and researchers for years (Altbach & Gopinathan, 2005). Numerous articles and studies have grappled with this issue from a variety of mainly alternative perspectives, from the pro-development to counter-development models. Among the more widely discussed explanations for the politics of education at the international level are various theoretical frameworks that draw upon different theories such as centre-periphery, dependency, and neo-colonialism. These concepts have been both a source of inspiration and a centre of criticism for a variety of studies seeking to understand the inequitable structuring in international educational relationships, including higher education systems.

Though with different names and developed by different authors from various academic fields in dealing with the realities of inequalities in international settings, the ideas of ‘dependency’, ‘centre-periphery’, and ‘neo-colonialism’ in education draw their source from imperialism and dependency theory developed by some sociologists and economists in the first half of the twentieth century (Altbach, 1998; McLean, 1983). Based on Lenin’s notion of imperialism and some dependency theorists such as James Cockcroft and Andre Gunder Frank, Johan Galtung defined the ‘centre-periphery’
concept as part of a structural theory of imperialism (Altbach, 1998). This theory was first applied to explain the role of intellectuals in the Third World by Edward Shils, who maintained that the centre-periphery relationship was a natural consequence of inequality. In contrast to Edward Shils’ proposition, Galtung and others, by introducing the concept of ‘neo-colonialism’, have blamed Western industrialised nations for maintaining the peripheral status quo of the Third World. Neocolonialism, as explained by Altbach (1998, p. 23), is born out of “the wide-spread desire by industrial nations to maintain their dominant position” over the Third World even after the colonial era. According to Altbach, Third World countries are dependent on many of the products of education and modern technology from wealthy industrialised nations, who possess wealth, technological innovations, and well-established educational and research institutions. Closely related to such notions of ‘centre-periphery’ and ‘neo-colonialism’ is Wallerstein’s world system theory which proposes that the stratification of the world into countries of different development levels (the core, semi-periphery and periphery) is due to the evolution of the Western capitalist economy dating back to the 16th century. World system theorists argue that the cause of the poverty and backwardness of poor countries is their peripheral position in the international division of labour (Arnove, 1980; Caruso, 2009). The dependency paradigm shares the same notion that the less developed countries (the ‘periphery’, the ‘satellite’, or the ‘province’) are dependent upon the more developed (the ‘centre’, the ‘core’, or the ‘metropolis’) because of the latter’s domination and exploitation (Raggatt, 1983).

When translated into educational scholarship, the dependency thesis comes in various manifestations. These are either voluntarily and uncritically adopted by Third World countries through education transfer or their continued use of the language of instruction from the former colonisers or which are deliberately planned by the industrial nations by means of educational programs and foreign aids to perpetuate the educational and political structures that “will ensure stability and a generally pro-Western orientation” (Altbach, 1998, p. 23). Although such manifestations of centre-periphery framework have been analysed in various levels of education systems, most studies following this tradition are to be found in higher education.

The centre-periphery framework was widely used in various studies seeking to explore the dependency of the Third World universities during the Cold War period. However, the end of the Cold War has changed the world system significantly with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the dominance of the US, and the emergence of several Asian countries like Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, China, India, and Singapore in the global knowledge production system and the international economic power structure. In this context, changes in South East Asian university systems reflect clearly the evolving discourses of centre-periphery (Postiglione, 2005). Ample evidence has shown how local educational policy-makers in the area have articulated their own agendas with the convergent global discourse of knowledge economy with their own agendas. For example, while Malaysia embraces the vision of world-class universities, Thailand looks for universities of local wisdom (Postiglione, 2005). As well, the robust cooperation in higher education among country members in this area in order to change their peripheral position also challenges the centre-periphery framework.
This paper argues that in their attempts to uncover the inequitable structuring of the international higher education relationships, some scholars have focused almost exclusively on actions of metropolitan enterprises and adhered narrowly to Western/non-Western discourse, thus paying little attention to the agency of the local actors. This approach ultimately hides more than it reveals; it plays down not only the local agency in response to external forces but also risks exaggerating the Western hegemony in the post-Cold War period. The argument is laid out in three parts. The first part of the paper provides some critical account of dependency analyses of higher education in the Third World. The second part explores different reform agendas taken by policy-makers of some South-East Asian countries. After examining the initiatives in regionalisation and inter-regionalisation of higher education as a challenge to the narrow focus of a centre-periphery framework, the paper concludes with a comment on centre-periphery theorising.

The Centre-Periphery Framework in Higher Education

As one of the pioneers of the centre-periphery concept in education, Phillip Altbach has used this framework to analyse the relationship between universities in industrialised countries and those in the Third World as well as universities within nations. He argues that universities in the international knowledge equation are stratified into the ‘centre’ and the ‘periphery’. The centre, mostly located in developed Western countries, plays the dominant role in giving directions and providing research. At the same time the peripheral Third World universities only “copy developments from abroad, produce little that is original, and are generally not at the frontiers of knowledge” (Altbach, 1998, p. 20). Altbach also notes that due to historical colonial tradition and the contemporary inequalities in economic power and resources, there is little likelihood that universities in non-Western countries can break away from the domination of the core. Other provocative studies that link Third World universities to the workings of centre-periphery thesis are those of Mazrui (1975), Woodhouse (1987), Arnove (1980), and Berman (1983). These studies examine the relationship between the flow of cultural goods, the role of foreign donor agencies, and the changing roles of universities in different periods.

Ali Mazrui (1975), by employing concepts of cultural capital and cultural dependency, describes the roles of universities in Africa as the most sophisticated instruments of foreign cultural penetration. According to Mazrui, cultural dependency is the result of the historical and contemporary involvement of Western multinational companies in African education, which has shaped universities as ‘cultural corporations’ dedicated to importing and spreading Western cultural goods, including course content, language of instruction, and evaluation system. By remaking African values in a pro-Western way, the universities function as a tool to ‘de-Africanize’ their students to the point that these students emerge as “cultural captives of the West” (Mazrui, 1975, p. 198). Similarly, Woodhouse (1987), studying how a Nigerian school enrolls students, points out that Western educational institutions, particularly universities, play an important role in elite formation and consolidation and, hence, in promoting dependency in Nigeria. He identifies two distinct roles of Nigerian universities: to reinforce inequalities of the
social class structure by privileging students from the higher class while restricting opportunities to gain social mobility for those from the lower class. Based on Mazrui’s proposal for an autonomous African university, Woodhouse calls for an alternative university model and a collective African determination, tenacity and innovation to bring about a cultural independence from Western metropolises.

Robert Arnove (1980) and Edward Berman (1983) have analysed the manipulative agendas of some United States donor agencies on university graduates of Third World countries. Arnove (1980) points out that the Ford Foundation revised its strategy for assisting higher education and related research organizations in developing countries. Rather than sending American intellectuals to conduct research in such countries, the Ford Foundation now prefers to attract their best intellectuals to the United States graduate schools by means of grants and research fellowships. The Foundation trains them in the appropriate methodological tools of analysis and sends them home to conduct research that would be too politically sensitive for Western scholars to engage in. Similarly, Berman (1983) explores how the United States philanthropic organisations such as Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller ‘enculturate’ or ‘socialize’ a generation of university graduates from developing countries in the ally recruitment race during the Cold War. On the basis of interviews with foundation personnel and archival research, he argues convincingly that the ultimate purpose of these programs is to mystify the indigenous elites, who would internalize the external hegemonic ideology (Berman, 1983).

As the very brief and limited review above has shown, the foregoing studies, convincing as they may seem, are bound to be limited in certain respects, especially when they focus narrowly on the metropolitan educational intervention. The authors share the same idea that the imported educational practices produce undesirable outcomes for the recipient countries. These include the intensification of social division and cultural alienation (i.e. the local students develop pro-Western attitudes and behaviours). The assumption is that peripheral actors unconsciously and uncritically “accept attendant ideologies that subsequently facilitate their own and their nation’s subordination in the world system” (Clayton, 1998, p. 488). Altbach, for example, argues that universities in the periphery “copy developments from abroad” (Altbach, 1998, p. 20) and function only as ‘consumers’ or ‘distributors’ of knowledge produced from First World countries. Similarly, Woodhouse notes that under the influence of educational technical assistance, indigenous students “willingly accommodate themselves to the cultural and economic needs of the metropole” (Woodhouse, 1987, p. 122). For Arnove (1980), Third World academics are merely “conduits for the transmission of knowledge”, while for Mazrui and Berman, periphery actors ‘acculturate’ or ‘internalize’ Western ideologies through educational transfer. Most of these accounts place as much emphasis on the hegemonic power of the metropolitan countries as on the passivity of the local actors.

Strong criticism levelled by writers such as McLean (1983), Noah and Eckstein (1992, 1998), Raggat (1983) and Clayton (1998) has generated perspectives that problematize this narrow focus on the power relationship depicted in centre-periphery analyses. McLean (1983) notes that the dependency thesis fails to give “sufficient weight to local reactions, and so overlooks “the degree and nature of dependency varies from country to country and that governments of peripheral countries have a positive
and active role in modifying external influences” (McLean, 1983, p. 39). Similarly, Noah and Eckstein (1998) point out that Altbach’s (1998) and Berman’s (1983) work are misconceptions about the unidirectional nature of power. They argue that the dynamics, options and outcomes of the forms of dependence may not be the same in different stages, and to ignore the changes that have taken place in the history of power relationships is anachronistic.

The depiction of agency in centre-periphery analyses has also been severely attacked. Raggat (1983), basing his evidence on Soulez’s (1982, as cited in Raggat, 1983) analysis of Tunisian government’s responses to two international organisations, dismisses the assumption that “the receiver at the periphery is essentially passive” (p. 3). He considers it a “serious flaw” because it leaves “no space in the paradigm to explore how imported ideas and models, as they pass through different levels in the system, interact with deep seated cultural commitments and notions of cultural identity; and how they may be changed or rejected in the process” (Raggatt, 1983, p. 3). In a similar vein, Noah and Eckstein write that such an assumption is “an exercise in oversimplification to picture the people of the periphery as mere objects of successful manipulation by the center” because “[t]he resilience and vigor of nationalism, local and national languages, and national cultures and historical traditions continue to mock all forecasts about the growth of a global culture” (Noah & Eckstein, 1992, p. 175). Clayton (1998) also complicates this simplistic view of centre-periphery theory by drawing on a number of authors delineating different forms of resistance from the indigenous actors. Peripheral actors unconsciously absorbing hegemonic ideology and passively accepting the exploitation is untenable, he argues (Clayton, 1998).

Eurocentricism in a centre-periphery framework is another area attacked by authors embracing a recent post-colonial perspective. Postcolonial analyses in education, originating in literary or cultural works developed by poststructuralists such as Edward Said (1978) and Gayatri Spivak (1995), point out that the inherent deficiencies of a centre-periphery framework lie in its economic origin derived from dependency theory as well as its exclusive binary opposition between the European and the non-European (Tikly, 1999; Crossley & Tikly, 2004). Seeking to overcome such weaknesses, post-colonial theorists offer an alternative approach which drifts away from economic concerns to focus on race, culture, and identity in education systems in explaining the reality of globalisation and education in post-colonial states (Tikly, 1999). In doing so, they emphasise less the imposition of European culture onto non-Europeans and suggest a “more holistic and less Eurocentric understanding of the relationship between globalisation and education” (Tikly, 1999, p. 610). Arguably, this approach may be less Eurocentric by recognising the active role of local actors and becoming a more open-ended ‘dialogue’ through negotiation of cultural messages among different geometries of powers (Tikly, 1999; Washbrook, 1999). Even so, however, this approach has led to contradictory understandings, either as a complicity of global capitalism on the one hand (Dirlik, 1994, as cited in Tikly, 1999) or a risk of “a more far-reaching critique of European world-centrality and dominance than discourse theory ever managed” on the other (Washbrook, 1999, p. 610). The uncritical use of this framework, it can be argued, may lead to a homogenisation of colonial experiences and the myopia of the complex
dynamics in international educational development. The contribution of post-colonial theory to the understanding of the politics of international educational development is perhaps, at this point in time, still limited and controversial.

Although critics of the centre-periphery framework in educational scholarship have convincingly pointed out several limitations of this thesis, their attitudes to its validity are not the same. Noah and Eckstein (1992), on the one hand, dismiss the explanatory values of the framework as simplistic. They argue that the centre-periphery concept merely “substitutes new terms for old without adding significant explanatory power”, and thus is “a weak tool for comparative study” (p. 174). One the other hand, scholars such as McLean (1983), Clayton (1998), and Raggatt (1983) and post-colonial theorists, while exposing the flaws of the approach and calling for either an alternative model (McLean, 1983; Raggat, 1983; Tikly, 2001) or a ‘re-connection’ (Clayton, 1998), all agree that the centre-periphery framework is still important, stimulating and necessary in unfolding the unequal relationships in international educational systems.

However, while problematising the centre-periphery framework that implies Western/non-Western relations, most of these scholars do not depart from this axis; instead, they either argue or show that the relationship is bi-directional rather than unidirectional. They have not, in other words, gone one step further in exploring the more horizontal links in knowledge transfer between developing countries as well as the diverse local agendas in educational reforms that emerged during and after the colonial era.

In sum, the evolving discourse of the centre-periphery in the contemporary era needs further discussion. The next section explores in greater depth how policy makers of some Third World countries in South-East Asia articulate with the global discourse by taking different decisions in reforming their higher education systems. The examination into the regional and interregional process in higher education cooperation in the area also serves as a challenge to the centre-periphery framework.

**Higher Education Development in South-East Asia in the Global Era**

South-East Asia is a cluster of 12 countries with vast development diversity, varying in geographical size, economic wealth, political ideologies and educational traditions (Lee & Healy, 2006). On the pathway to development and modernization, all the countries in the area, except for Thailand, carry with them the colonial past, which profoundly affects their contemporary higher education systems.

**From a Common “Twisted Root”...**

Altbach & Selvaratnam (1989) use the phrase ‘twisted root’ to refer to the common origin of contemporary higher education systems in Asia in general and in South-East Asia in particular. According to them, the contemporary higher education systems in Asia are a replication of non-Asian models that were either imposed by the colonial powers or adopted voluntarily by the non-colonized state like Thailand. However, even the university system in Thailand also stemmed from a Western model. According to Altbach (1998), Thailand adopted the Western higher education model to develop
their national university system in the second half of the 19th century as part of the self-strengthening strategy. Altbach (2007) also argues that such an implantation of Western academic models has had a profound impact on higher education system in these countries, as evidenced by their continued use of the colonial language (English in Singapore, for example) or the current strong ties with the colonial powers (such as Singapore and Malaysia). Other traces of Western imported models can be found in part of Indonesia (under Dutch colonial rule), the Philippines (colonised by both Spain and the US) and Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia (influenced by French colonisation).

Even after independence, no universities in the area chose to break away from the original models (Altbach, 1998). Instead, embarking upon a program of rapid socio-economic development based on the modernization theory model, governments have looked to industrialized countries through technical assistance or donor programs for reforming their universities. These have been considered ‘an engine of growth’ that would unlock the door of economic development and growth (Selvaratnam, 1988). It is also worth noting that although developed from a common platform of the Western model, universities in South-East Asia find themselves at a disadvantage in acquiring a place in the frontiers of international academic and research network, largely due to their relative and varying lack of wealth, power and resources as compared to the industrialized countries (Altbach, 1998).

In the last decade, a wind of change has been blowing in higher education sectors in SEA. The collapse of the Cold War followed by the changed landscape in the world system and an intensified economic globalisation has placed higher education development in a new discourse. An unprecedented expansion of higher education is being observed in the area (Postiglione, 2005). Furthermore, like elsewhere the world, the implementation of university reform in South-East Asia has been significantly affected by the promotion of neoliberalism and other challenges of globalisation. Despite diversity in the region, universities in South-East Asia face similar problems, including increasing student enrolments, financial constraints and the stress of the knowledge economy. The growing influence of international organisations such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have pushed universities to be more responsive to the market and emphasised such notions as accountability, cost-effectiveness, institutional autonomy and quality assurance in higher education reform (Lee, 2002).

From the above observation, it could be said that much of what has been happening in Southeast Asian higher education appears to be a dependent pattern of adaptations driven by Western developed economies and Western neoliberal discourse. However, the contemporary knowledge development in South-East Asia, as elsewhere, increasingly challenges the relevance of the centre-periphery framework in explaining the inequality of universities among the First ‘Northern’ world and the Third ‘Southern’ world.

... to Diverse Local Agendas in Contemporary Higher Education Reforms ...

Spring (2009) rightly argues that hardly any country imports exactly and passively the policy agendas of transnational organisations and networks. Local conditions and actors determine the actual influence of such an adoption. Higher education reforms in South-East Asia promise ample evidence to prove this point.
One of the first attempts to look closely at the dynamics between global and local forces in reforming South East Asian universities could be attributed to Postiglione (2005) in the article titled “Questioning Centre-periphery Platforms”. As an attempt to address Altbach’s question: “Can universities in the periphery hope to become world-class universities that are able to produce and disseminate new knowledge and attract students and faculty from the core?”, Postiglione’s analysis of Southeast Asian universities shows a shift in the centre-periphery equation. He argues that even in the past this paradigm was not sufficiently relevant to the orientation of Thai universities and the extensive privatisation and massification of higher education in the Philippines prior to colonialism. He also notes that the emergence of Singapore in the international knowledge system, and the stratification of higher education development among the countries (in relation to his classification of the region’s economic development into high-end economies like Singapore, emergent economies including Thailand and Malaysia, developing economies including Indonesia and the Philippines, and transition economies such as Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) reveal “a significant resistance to status quo centre–periphery relations and a vast competitive potential to alter these relations” (Postiglione, 2005, p. 220). This is a strong point as it attacks the common assumption of many centre-periphery authors who tend to label peripheral countries (or the South, the East, the non-Western, or developing countries) as homogenously poor and externally dependent.

While his article contributes significantly to the understanding of the issue, his conclusion drawn from only an overview of each country seems to be inadequate. It would be more convincing if he could go further into a close examination of distinctive higher education reform decisions of some, or better, of each of the countries in responding to external pressures. This, in turn, could support the conclusion about the relevance of the centre-periphery framework. One example to illustrate this point is the case of Malaysia, one of the ‘developing economies’ in Postiglione’s classification, with its vision for a World Class university.

Malaysian universities followed the models of British universities in its early stage of development. Over the years, the trend has been toward adopting many aspects of American Higher education (Lee, 2004). Following global trends, many Malaysian universities have adopted a whole range of ‘corporate culture’ to improve accountability, efficiency and productivity (Currie, 1998, as cited in Lee, 2004). Recently, in an effort to be the hub of higher education excellence in South-East Asia, it has embarked on a national higher education plan from 2007-2020 to achieve world-class status among its universities. In 2007, Malaysia’s Ministry of Higher Education published a blueprint entitled ‘The National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010’ to spearhead the transformation of higher education in the immediate future. It also laid out strategies to achieve world-class universities in Malaysia through the APEX experiment, where a university will be selected to carry out the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX). Apex Universities represent the nation’s centre of academic distinction, and will be given greater latitude in order to work towards achieving their world-class status (Muda, 2008). However, being a world-class university means a share of greater autonomy, but in Malaysia’s case, the power of the state override the university
constitution or by-laws (Lee, 2004). Clearly, the adoption of an external educational idea has been adapted to the local agenda.

Some analyses of higher education development in South-East Asia have pointed out several missing points in the centre-periphery framework. First, while giving recognition to the role of power and wealth in shaping the knowledge transfer map, several authors merely adhere to the domination or exploitation of the West as the cause of educational inequality while de-emphasising the role of local actors. The fact is, educators in one country might borrow an idea from a Western country or an international organisation, but local conditions often do not allow it to be copied intact resulting in some forms of adaptation. Besides, the adoption of educational ideas is due to multiple reasons, not necessarily due to an imposition from outside. Of course in some cases, such as loans from the World Bank, governments are pressured to adopt their education agendas. Whether lent or through pressure there is no guarantee that a particular educational model will be exactly copied at the local level (Spring, 2009). According to Steiner-Khamsi (2004), one reason that an educational policy leader borrows a policy is to certify or decertify (i.e., to validate or criticise) a school policy by referring to an imaginary global community such as ‘international standards’ or to the concrete policies of another nation or global organisation. In other words, they use external authorities to justify local actions. Externalisation is particularly applicable during periods of political upheaval when politicians search for outside validation of their actions. But validation does not mean an exact copy of the policies of the outside authority.

Another aspect that seems to be a missing in most studies of centre-periphery framework when examining higher education development in Third World countries in general and in South-East Asia in particular is its regional and inter-regional dynamics. In a time of globalisation, higher education is not only a prime motor for many countries’ striving for a so-called ‘knowledge economy’, but the sector is also being mobilised in the constitution of social relations that extend beyond national borders (Robertson, 2008).

One initiative for such an agenda is the promotion of regional cooperation in higher education. In South-East Asia, knowledge transfer could now be realised or legitimised by cooperation among the countries in this area through various activities, including knowledge exchange through ASEAN university network. According to Berkens (2004), the ASEAN University Network was founded as another initiative to promote cooperation and solidarity among scientists and scholars in the region and to develop academic and professional human resources as well as to produce and disseminate scientific knowledge and information among the region’s universities. The predecessor of the ASEAN University Network can probably best be traced back to the founding of the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning in 1956 as a non-governmental organization. This cooperation among Third World countries at that time was a manifestation of their resistance to “a largely Western-oriented knowledge and research system” (Selvaratnam, 1988, p. 59). Further collaboration in education came with the establishment of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation
(SEAMEO) in 1965 with the purpose of promoting cooperation in education, science, and culture in the Southeast Asian region. Among its various cooperation initiatives, the Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development was dedicated to higher education and development.

An arrangement of 17 universities in the 10 ASEAN countries, the ASEAN University Network emerged from a highly ambitious idea of the ASEAN leaders and the ASEAN Subcommittee on Education (ASCOE) to establish an ASEAN University. Since its establishment in 1995, the ASEAN University Network with its ASEAN Studies Programme has been one of the instruments to realise a regional awareness and identity through many activities such as student and faculty exchange programmes. The network attempts to better exploit the complementarity of the different universities by giving more room for the initiatives of individual universities (Berkens, 2004). It also proposes various measures for creating a common language of higher education, such as the current agenda for harmonisation in quality assurance and the credit transfers among member universities. In this sense, the ASEAN University Network is constructed as the so-called ‘epistemic community’, a word coined by Philips Jones (2007) to refer to a transnational network of “like-minded actors linked together through a convergence of interest, outlook and technique” (Jones, 2007, p. 334). Higher education, thus, is playing an important role in institutionalising regionalisation. Similar processes such as the Association of African Universities, or the MERCOSUR-Educativo in Latin America, are becoming a popular trend in higher education development across the world.

So what does this imply about the centre-periphery framework? The movements among Third World countries towards regional groupings or a creation of organisations to facilitate knowledge transfer like ASEAN University Network is probably not uncommon in the world today. What is noteworthy is that studies on this kind of ‘horizontal’ education tie are few and far between (Abdenur, 2002). Although several centre-periphery theorists as well as post-colonial theorists have recognised the role of South-South intellectual transfer, its scope and politics as well as the complex issues surrounding the legitimacy of this particular transfer, particularly in higher education, remain rather under-researched or uncritically examined (Abdenur, 2002). For example, some post-colonial theorists (e.g., Hikling-Hudson, 2004) tend to conclude that the forging of South-South collaboration would bring about an “independent traditional direction and financing with strings from the wealthy countries of the ‘North’” (Hikling-Hudson, 2004, p. 308) or a solution for the “deepest problem of colonial aftermath” (p.309). In doing so, they still bind themselves to the North-South axis while blindly believing in the altruism of South-South cooperation. This ignores the asymmetrical geometry of powers among these nations. In fact, the most recent findings (e.g., Caruso, 2009; de Sá e Silva, 2009; Abdenur, 2009) have revealed how motivations, reasons and outcomes in South-South transfer and cooperation have changed over time, as well as how the politics and modalities of the process are influenced by the inequalities and differences within the North and the South alike (Chisholm, 2009).

Parallel with the construction of regionalism, inter-regional arrangements in higher education is another aspect of development in South East Asia. Countries in this area
are now jointly exploring to develop a more innovative social space mediated by higher education. Robertson (2008) reports that countries in the region are promoting the construction of a common higher education space by bridging ASEAN with the three powers in North-East Asia, namely Japan, South Korea and China, and other external multi-level links. To illustrate one such link, she gives an in-depth account of the inter-regional building process between ASEAN and EU through the ASEM meeting. Robertson argues that the inter-regionalisation of Europe-Asia relation is not always a fixed process, but historically contingent, with its socio-economic content evolving with time to reflect “important transformations taking place both within and across these regional spaces” (Robertson, 2008, p. 725). First, the European Union’s (EU) interest in higher education in South-East Asia was driven by the continent’s ambition to “promote visibility in Asia through curriculum collaborations and building networks” (p. 727). With the emergence of China and the increased interest of the United States in South East Asia, the EU, felt the need to change its cooperation strategy so as not to lose a foothold in the region. Thus, since 2000, EU’s policies and projects in South-East Asia higher education are more driven by a neoliberal agenda, aiming at Europe’s aspiration to become a globally competitive knowledge economy through the Bologna Process. Needless to say, tensions emerge with the escalation of EU’s development fund to achieve its own agenda while overlooking the promotion of cultural diversity and mutual interdependent relationship. Robertson concludes that such moves could risk being accused of “a continuation of past forms of colonialism and as a new form of economic imperialism” (p. 727). While Roberson’s argument, like those critical theorists in international relations who employ Robert Cox’s (1996, as cited in Robertson, 2008) analytical framework of New International Economic Order, provides sharper insights into higher education development in the current context of globalisation in that it embraces complex international relations rather than the oversimplified power structures, it should also be born in mind that Cox’s framework is predicated on the North-South axis. An over-adherence to this paradigm, again, may lose sight of important developments in South-South partnerships.

**Conclusion: Thinking Beyond Centre-Periphery**

In their attempt to understand the power relation underlying the educational transfer, some scholars tend to choose a specific framework as their lenses of observation. While this framework may be true for a number of instances, confusion happens when scholars use the same framework in other instances or at other points in time. This is because of their assumption that if a theory is true for a number of cases then it is true for all cases (Spring, 2009).

Centre-periphery theorists could risk making such a mistake if the lenses are not cautiously used. In fact, although this discourse was widely applicable in the past, its explanatory values have been criticised due to a misconception of power relationship, an underestimation of local agency, and an overtly Eurocentric focus. Specially, the discourse is increasingly contested in the light of globalisation and new educational developments among peripheral countries. In this respect, higher education development and cooperation in Southeast Asian also serves as a ‘case of deviance’ to the centre-
periphery framework for several reasons. First, the countries in this area are investing in higher education in ways that help them alter their position in the global area, both economically and politically. Second, the stratification of development diversity of countries in this region as well as the emergence of Singapore as a knowledge centre in the world also disturbs the centre-periphery paradigm. Finally, by adhering to the Western/non-Western discourse, centre-periphery theorists also blind themselves to the importance of knowledge cooperation among Third World countries, like the case of ASEAN University Network.

This brief discussion on the relationship between higher education development and processes of globalisation, regionalisation and inter-regionalisation illustrated in SEA brings us to the heart of theoretical considerations of the centre-periphery framework as a lens to make sense of the international dynamics in higher education. In a globalised world, the international politics of education is not operating merely through a vertical hierarchy but entangled within a multi-level and multi-scale matrix of power configurations. National systems of education are complemented by an emerging, expanding and increasingly significant system of transnational influence. Enmeshed with various activities of such transnational networks are the confluence of several multi-level actors, especially powerful international organisation such as the World Bank, OECD, UNESCO and Asian Development Bank, to name a few. Such changes have important implications, both for the trajectories of national systems of education, and for the development of increasing global governance in education. Dale and Robertson suggest that the motor for decision making does not rest at national level but is being lifted to the transnational level (Robertson & Dale, 2006). Jones (2007) further explains that the interdependence of higher education beyond national borders through multilevel transnational networks could powerfully transcend conventional national authority in educational decision-making through their interaction with the nation state system, international agencies, and partnership with the private sector and NGOs. One consequence of such transformation is an increasing standardisation in educational activities as manifest in identical reform agendas, uniform measures, harmonisation of qualifications and convergence in curriculum framework, all of which are moulded along the preferred status of some lines of thoughts and models, indicating the emergence of global hierarchy of knowledge. Clearly, the global power imbalances still persist in higher education landscape.

In this context, it can be argued that certain elements of the centre-periphery framework remain valid and offer a practical instrument to analyse the unequal structuring of international higher education. However, due to the nature and consequences of this multi-scalar, multi-centric relation within and across new knowledge spaces, the analytical focus on bilateral causal explanations, particularly the North-South paradigm, which features the conventional centre-periphery approach, needs to be extended to include different manifestations of globalisation. This includes both the processes of horizontal cooperation among developing countries and the multilateral educational enterprise. Independently or combined, such developments are transforming global, regional and national spaces as well as the function and significance of universities within them. It is therefore suggested that the traditional centre-periphery approach
needs to be altered so as to throw the nature as well as the various modalities of South-South cooperation with its regional and interregional dynamics into relief, while being mindful of the new developments in transnational and global governance. Research in global governance provides a practical guide in understanding the nature and dynamics of international authority in higher education as well as in identifying the “possibilities for transnational institutions capable of realising democratic ‘operating rules’ for the world polity” (Mundy, 2007, p. 340). Further analysis of these factors would be richly rewarding and allow us to redirect empirical research in higher education to unexplored areas of education transfer.

References


Utilizing Pre-Laboratory Preparation Period (PPP) to Enhance Scientific Understanding

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Abstract
The article describes a study that investigated an alternative laboratory approach: Pre-laboratory Preparation Period (PPP). The aim of the study was to understand how different modes of pre-laboratory preparation contributed to a successful laboratory experience for primary school teacher candidates on an access programme. The study also investigated the instructional usability of computer software in the classroom to determine which software is most suitable and practical for pre-service science teachers. An action research approach was used in the study to assist pre-service teachers to enhance their science understandings in the laboratory and to evaluate their academic progress due to PPP. Twenty-four pre-service teachers enrolled in an introductory science laboratory course in science teacher preparation programmes participated in the study. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if significant differences existed between the academic achievement of the experimental and control groups. The analysis of the results revealed that some differences in the academic performance existed.

Keywords: Interactive learning environment, technology in education, computer simulations in science education, science teacher programme.

Introduction
Although science educators have attempted various methods in developing ways to improve pre-service teachers’ conceptual understanding of science, a fundamental dilemma appears to be that students continue to have conceptual difficulties in understanding science content. In such cases, science educators often use scientific models to address this problem and to enhance pre-service teachers’ understandings of science topics. Recent studies about students’ laboratory activities indicate that most students gain little understanding during school laboratory activities regarding either the major concepts involved or the process of concept constructions (Novak, 1988). Other research indicates that the pre-service teachers tend to follow a cookbook-type approach to experimentation, and their articulated purpose in laboratory activities is simply to match that which is presented in textbooks (Roth & Roychoudhury, 1994; Tsai, 1999; Watson, Prieto & Dillon, 1995). Since pre-service teachers do not gain adequate knowledge of science concepts and also do not feel comfortable dealing with
laboratory materials, developing alternative approaches should be investigated.

In developing countries like Turkey (and even in some developed countries), students are given a laboratory book that describes the science experiments and defines essential terms. Students are able to start conducting experiments as soon as they arrive at the laboratory without any necessary explanation given by teacher because the steps for the activity are clearly written in ‘cookbooks’ (the laboratory books). After replicating the experiment and producing the data described in the laboratory book, the teacher will usually explain why these results have been obtained and describe the correlation between the theoretical explanations and the students’ actual findings. It can be a very boring process. A more desirable science education experiment would have the teacher explaining the reason for the experiments before a demonstration of how the experiment should be conducted. This should occur without anticipating the experiment’s results. However, since the students can’t do the experiments themselves, they don’t understand the point of either the lesson or the experiment. In such situations, good pre-laboratory preparation is needed. Students and teachers, however, have limited time to allow for this more comprehensive approach to science education. In these conditions, computers and computer programmes can be very helpful.

The importance of producing a laboratory or practical component for undergraduate students is widely discussed but generally accepted. Some form of laboratory work is usually included in the undergraduate curricula, and there is certainly a strong need to ensure that laboratory activities are as productive and valuable as possible (Dom, 1999; Elliot, Stewart & Lagowski, 2008; Mbaigou & Reid, 2006). Clark, Clough, and Berg (2000) recommend essential modification to ‘cookbooks’ (laboratory manuals) so that teachers can mentally engage their students. His recommendations include:

- Include students in determining laboratory questions to be investigated.
- Have students determine and discuss results of data revealed.
- Ask students to challenge questions to reduce their frustration.
- Delay students’ summative evaluations and explanations.

The Importance of Models in Science Education

There are several ways of monitoring students’ understanding of scientific phenomena (White & Gunstone, 1992; Tunnicliffe & Reiss, 1999). A scientific model is generally defined as a representation of a phenomenon, an object or an idea (Gilbert, Boulter, & Elmer, 2000). Thus, it can only relate to some properties of the target. Some aspects of this purpose must be excluded from the model (Van Driel & Verloop, 1999) such as when studying cell contents, students can only imagine the mitochondria as the cell’s factory rather than its true function as a very important part of the cell to survive. According to some science educators (Ornek, 2008), there exist two types of models in science education, firstly, conceptual models which consist of mathematical, computer, and physics models, and secondly, mental models, which mainly play a major role in cognition, reasoning and decision making. Among them, computer models are the most widely used types of model in science teaching. These are believed to be an important area of research in science education. In this paper, we are interested in computer models and their application to students’ conceptual understanding of selected science issues.
**Computer Models**

Computer models allow students to develop numerical images of the real world. For example, the software utilised in this study is called a modeling system or simulation language (Holland, 1988). Such computer simulations make it possible for students to analyse complex systems. Sometimes, it is necessary to employ more sophisticated mathematical tools to examine complex systems, in that case, the use of computer applications is necessary (Chabay & Sherwood, 1999).

Computer simulations such as pictures, two-dimensional or three-dimensional animations, graphs, vectors, and numerical data displays are usually considered helpful in understanding difficult concepts e.g. in science (Scherer, Dubois, & Sherwood, 2000). Students shouldn’t have to deal with such difficult software as computation programmes, package flash programmes and java applets. They should be focusing on how to use it and apply it to scientific experiences. In those circumstances, they can analyse a model instead of creating their own models. Teachers and students prefer computer simulations as they teach biological, chemical and physical events in science courses.

**Computer Programmes in Physics**

Computer applications in teaching physics have been utilised from the beginning of the computer age in 1970s (Chonacky, 2006). Since that time there have been many studies analysing the effectiveness of new technologies applied in the teaching of physics. (See, for example, Kenny, Bullen, & Loftus, 2006).

There is a wide debate about the influence of computer-assisted education in physics courses (Kenny et al., 2006). Some authors consider that computational physics provides a broader and more flexible approach than the traditional physics course. Moreover, they consider that teaching physics as a scientific problem-solving paradigm is a more effective and efficient method than using the traditional approach (Landau, 2006).

In the field of computers and usability, Norman (1983) strongly argues that awareness and management of our mental models can provide us with some control over our experience and proficiency in specific tasks. Such models can be analogical, incomplete, and sometimes very fragmentary with respect to their representation of how an integrated system functions. Users are able to change their mental models while constructing them through interaction with the system. Norman also stresses the importance of ensuring correspondence between the mental models of the designers and users of them in the classroom.

**Interactive Programmes**

The term ‘interactivity’ is used to describe a variety of learning activities including interactions between students (student–student interaction), interactions with the tutor (teacher–student interaction), and interactions with the teaching material itself (student–content interaction) (Moore, 1989; Schrum & Berge, 1997). When the teaching material takes the form of a multimedia computer system, two forms of student–content interaction can be distinguished: those initiated by the student, and those initiated by the computer system (Schär & Krueger, 2000).
In the former, the student seeks some information from the content in a similar way to looking something up in a book or watching a television programme. In the latter, the system requires some input from the learner, such as pressing a button or answering a question by clicking on one of a number of options. The ability of the system to initiate interaction is unique to computer-based media as opposed to television broadcasts, films and distance learning texts (Laurillard, 2002). The variety of forms of interaction often creates confusion over the meaning of the use of the word ‘interactivity’. In order to clarify what we mean by the term ‘interactive system’, we shall adopt the interaction model formulated by Evans and Sabry (2002).

The Research Study

The main purpose of the investigation was to evaluate a particular computer programme, simulation Crocodile Physics 605 programmes of Yteach (www.yTeach.co.uk), for pre-service teachers’ achievements following laboratory experiments on electricity and magnetism. Firstly, data were collected from three different groups in the study. Next, these results were compared with the control group results. As a secondary goal concerning pre-service teachers’ resulting data via our proposed simulation programme, we also investigated how students feel about utilising them in the near future in their classrooms.

Care was taken to pick a subject that both examined the students’ theoretical knowledge and would also be helpful in their laboratory education. A topic involving the building of an experimental circuit was selected in order to evaluate students’ success level in the applied programme. Electricity and electrical circuits in the topic ‘Electricity Guiding Our Lives’, which is part of the 6th grade science class authorised by the Ministry of Education, proved to be the most suitable for testing the applied method.

Participants involved in the study were selected in the elementary education teacher education programme at the Faculty of Education at Erciyes University. They succeeded in achieving necessary scores to get into the programme in the University Entrance Exam (UEE). The Turkish higher education system institution (Students Selection Center) offers a general university entrance exam that senior high school students must take in order to study selected disciplines at a university. Students, who want to become teachers are required to graduate from the same programme at high school in which they later plan to teach. Therefore, their previous education and education level at university shows similarities.

Table 1. Distribution of the students among groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CG³</th>
<th></th>
<th>AG⁴</th>
<th></th>
<th>IG⁵</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n¹:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T²:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1: Number of students, 2: Total number of students, 3: Classic Group, 4: Animation Group, 5: Interactive Group.
According to their preference, the chosen students were divided into three groups: interactive, animation, and classical (Table 1.). The interactive group (IG) was composed of 12 female and male students. The animation group (AG) was composed of 12 students, 6 female and 6 male. The classical group (CG) likewise was composed of 12 students, 6 female and 6 male. The classical group was used as the control group. In order to understand whether there was a difference between the student groups, a pre-test was prepared (Eq. A.). Following this, the final test (Eq. B.) and the laboratory application exam (Eq. C.) were applied.

Research Design

All three groups were provided with a document entitled ‘Electricity Guiding Our Lives’. The classical group was asked to prepare for the laboratory session as they normally do. The animation group was asked to study this subject, and after having asked for permission from Yteach (www.yTeach.co.uk), the group watched some animations from this website. Similarly, the interactive group was asked to study these documents, and afterwards, to build some circuits given in these documents or some other source of their preference by employing the Crocodile Physics 605 programme. Prior to this step, students had already received training in the use of this programme with regard to another subject. The website was contacted for permission.

The yTeach website organised the animations and programmes appropriate for every level and every subject in terms of class activities. The website divided the programmes and the activities into three categories, namely Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and A level. However, we made the students watch only the animations about electricity and electrical circuits in the Electricity topic in the Science section of Key Stage 3.

Fig.1. Electrical Circuits
The students watched the “Electrical Circuits” (Fig. 1) animation to provide an introductory session. This animation gave the students an introduction to electricity, the formation of charges, and static electricity. The students watched the electric current (Fig. 2) animation on electrical circuits and electrical current flow. To introduce the topic of series and parallel circuits, the students watched the series and parallel circuits’ animation (Fig. 3).

Fig. 2. Electric Current

![Electric Current Animation](image1)

Fig. 3. Series and parallel circuits.

![Series and Parallel Circuits Animation](image2)
The interactive group studied their subject prior to the class in which the Crocodile Physics 605 programme was installed and they practised the use of the programme in the class. The reason we particularly selected this programme is that it is easy to use and suitable for students of every level. The circuits section of the Crocodile Physics programme allows students to build experimental circuits by simply dragging the objects with the mouse (Fig. 4).

**Fig. 4. A basic circuit and circuit tools in the programme**

As the above figure shows, if the experimental circuit is built incorrectly, students can see whether the lamp will switch on or not similar to the trial and error method during laboratory sessions. The programme even assists students by signaling the current flows with arrows and red flags during circuit building. At the same time, the programme informs students about what is present in the scene and the active symbols (Fig. 5, Fig.6).

**Fig. 5. A typical scene in the Crocodile Physics-1**
Data Collection

To investigate whether differences existed between the students in the groups, a pre-test was prepared (Eq. A.). This test consisted of matching and filling in the blanks. The test totaled 17 points in all. All three groups took a final exam after the methods were applied i.e. Prelaboratory Preparation Period (Eq. B.). The aim of the final test was to observe whether a difference in the students’ theoretical knowledge emerged and to what extent this was a result of the methods applied. The test totaled 14 points in all.

Finally, the contribution made by the methods to laboratory practices and laboratory classes was analysed. Students were graded in terms of their application during the laboratory session. To this end, they were asked to build circuit elements in the classical question (Eq. C.) and a grading schedule was created (Eq. D.). The description of a circuit of tools was awarded 7 points and the design of the first question was awarded 5 points. The design of the second question was divided into sections: section A was given 5 points; section B was given 3 points; and section C was given 3 points. The laboratory application exam totaled 23 points in all (Eq. D.). Whereas the first question was accompanied by a drawing, the second question was aimed at evaluating the students’ own comprehension.

All the data derived in this study was analysed with the SPSS programme. F test, means and standard deviations were also interpreted. Three teachers participated in the study as educators, and they changed their groups in each step of the research. Therefore, an objective evaluation was obtained both in the application and in the exams.

Results and Discussion

This study utilized statistical SPSS software. Pre-test points were transferred to SPSS version 16.0, and the results were interpreted (Table 2).
As illustrated in Table 2, the mean values of the groups do not change to a great extent (CG: 12.67; AG: 14.00; IG: 12.17). Similarly, the standard deviation values do not differ notably, either (CG: 1.52; AG: 2.60; IG: 2.63). When F and p values are observed (F (2-9): 0.65; p: 0.54), with p>0.01 there is no significant difference between the groups. As a result of these findings, it is evident that the groups have approximately similar levels, and the method can be applicable to students.

After having applied the methods, although there is no significant difference between the standard deviations (CG: 2.82; AG: 0.71; IG: 1.50), the means of the animation group (AG mean: 11.50) and the interactive group (IG mean: 11.67) are higher than the mean of the classical group (CG mean: 10.00). However, since the p value is greater than 0.01 (F (2-9): 0.753; p: 0.506), there is no significant difference between the groups in terms of theoretical knowledge acquirement. The results are shown in Table 3.

After the pre-test and the final test, a practical exam took place in the laboratory to examine the contributions of the methods to the students in an experiential environment, the effectiveness of the applied methods on students in an experimental environment which was our main objective (Eq. C.). Afterwards, the students were graded according to this application (Eq. D.) and the results were interpreted using the SPSS 16.0 programme (Table 4). In this study, the students completed the exam as a group rather than individually and graded as a group. Three different teachers graded the exam. F (2-9): 33.64; p: 0.01. As shown, although the p value is 0.01, an important distinction emerges once the differences between the means are taken into account. The applied method was particularly valuable to the interactive group.

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**Table 2. Average scores of pre-test by group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of testing:</th>
<th>CG³ (N: 6)</th>
<th>AG⁶ (N = 6)</th>
<th>IG⁷ (N = 12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>M¹</td>
<td>SD²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-exam</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12, 7</td>
<td>1, 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1: Mean, 2: Standard deviation, 3: F value, 4: Number of total students, 5: Classic Group, 6: Animation Group, 7: Interactive Group.

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**Table 3. Average scores of post-test by group.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of testing:</th>
<th>CG³ (N: 6)</th>
<th>AG⁶ (N: 6)</th>
<th>IG⁷ (N: 12)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>M¹</td>
<td>SD²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-exam</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10,00</td>
<td>2,82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1: Mean, 2: Standard deviation, 3: F value, 4: Number of total students, 5: Classic Group, 6: Animation Group, 7: Interactive Group.
Table 4. Average scores of laboratory application exam by groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of testing</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
<th>M&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>SD&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab. Exam</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt; (N&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;: 6)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10,33</td>
<td>1,52</td>
<td>0,01</td>
<td>33,64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt; (N: 6)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IG&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt; (N: 12)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18,67</td>
<td>1,15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1: Total number of students, 2: Classic Group, 3: Animation Group, 4: Interactive Group, 5: Mean, 6: Standard deviation, 7: F value.

Our observations showed that the interactive group was more successful than the other two groups. As observed in the figures (Fig. 7, 8, 9, and 10), the interactive group was the most successful one in terms of understanding circuits in the laboratory application exam questions. Unfortunately, the other groups did not accomplish remarkable results. For instance, the animation group failed to complete the serial lamps circuit (Fig. 11) whereas the classical group asked for the teachers’ assistance stating that they were not able to build a simple circuit (Fig. 12).

Conclusion

Hodson (1996) has outlined several reasons for the need for laboratory approach in science education: (1) Enhancing students’ understandings of scientific facts (acquiring conceptual and theoretical knowledge), (2) Improving their knowledge of science concepts and guiding them for developing an understanding of the nature and methods of science, and (3) Allowing them to practise science while engaging with expertise in scientific inquiry. Students may often focus on the ‘aims’ of laboratory activities, but not their ‘purposes’. In other words, students are expected to verify already known scientific results but they do not invest much mental engagement in relating other learning experiences to laboratory work (Hart, Mulhall, Berry & Gunstone, 2000).

Although laboratory usage and applications in science disciplines is not a new way of instruction in science education, laboratory and hands-on activities have recently captured very broad attention in the field of science education to enhance students’ conceptual understandings of various science concepts (Leach & Paulsen, 1999; Wellington, 1998). Assisting pre-service teachers’ ability to teach science via demonstration and hands-on activities is another area that requires further research. We aimed to investigate which computer programmes provide a better fit for teacher preparation programmes in order to determine pre-service science teachers’ ideas about practicability and usability of the programmes.

In conclusion, no major differences were observed in the classical group’s exam results either in the pre-test or in the final test. Although the means of the animation and the interactive groups were higher in the final test than the mean of the classical group, the difference was not significant. Thus, we concluded that the methods applied were not fundamentally effective with respect to the students’ theoretical learning levels.
However, the interactive group scored higher, especially in the laboratory applications, than the other groups. Hence, it is clear that brochures given to the students were not sufficient, and therefore, some supplementary elements should be used particularly for overcoming the difficulties students faced in application.

Acknowledgements

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References


New settlers, old problem: Facilitating water safety education for new residents in aquatically oriented New Zealand

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Abstract
Globally, the Asia-Pacific region has been one of the more dynamic regions for people movement in recent years and evidence of this in contemporary New Zealand society abounds. This paper focuses on community education programmes that prevent the incidence of drowning among new settlers in an aquatically oriented island nation through water safety education. National and regional policy documents that set the framework for targeted community water safety education are discussed in relation to interventions put in place in the culturally and linguistically metropolitan region of greater Auckland. Three case studies of new settler water safety initiatives and evaluations of their impact are presented. They include: the West Coast Rock Fishing Safety Project, the New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC) Refugee Youth Water Safety Programme, and the Auckland Muslim Women’s Swimming Project. Gaps in the current provision of community education water safety programmes are identified and ways to address shortcoming are recommended.

Key words: water safety, drowning prevention, new migrants, immigrants health, CALD

Introduction
A recent international report entitled World Migration 2010 states that, because of growing demographic disparities, environmental change, new political and economic dynamics, technological revolutions and social networks, the number of migrants globally has grown to 214 million, and could rise to 405 million by 2050 (Koser & Laczko, 2010). The Asia-Pacific region has been one of the more dynamic regions for people movement in recent years and evidence of this in contemporary New Zealand society abounds. The transformative power of this trend is one that offers increased opportunities for economic growth, and social and cultural innovation. However, it also has the potential to exacerbate existing problems and generate new challenges within society. This paper focuses on one such challenge: that of preventing the incidence of drowning among new settlers in an aquatically oriented island nation through water safety education.
Historically, demands for greater emphasis on water safety education have been consonant with rising fatalities from drowning incidents, a phenomenon that so characterised early European colonisation of the country in the nineteenth century, that drowning was referred to throughout the British Empire as the ‘New Zealand Death’ (Pascoe, 1971). While high rates of drowning among new settlers in the colonial period were attributable to vicarious modes of transport, poor swimming skills, and unintentional immersion, recent concerns about high rates of drowning incidence among new settlers appear to be more firmly grounded in mishaps during aquatic recreation. Participation in recreational aquatic activity is generally perceived as a positive indicator of a healthy New Zealand lifestyle. However, it does have attendant negative consequences, especially for those not familiar with potential aquatic dangers or the ability to cope with the inherent risk of drowning associated with aquatic activity.

Concerns have been expressed that some new settler groups are over-represented in New Zealand’s drowning statistics. For example, Asian peoples represent 8% of the annual drowning toll yet comprise only 6% of the national population. From 2005 to 2009, 25 Asian New Zealanders died from drowning, 14 (56%) of those in the Auckland region and 72% of these drowning fatalities were associated with recreational activity (Water Safety New Zealand [WSNZ], 2010). Changing demographics can partially explain these statistics. In the past decade, New Zealand, in general, and Auckland, in particular, has become very culturally and linguistically diverse. In 2006, 23% of people usually living in New Zealand were born overseas, compared with 17% in 1996 (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). More than one-third (37%) of people who lived in the Auckland Region were born overseas, compared with the Southland Region, where around 1 in 13 people (7.6%) were born overseas. Comparisons of census data from 2001-2006 suggests the rapidity of ethnic change, the number of Chinese having increased by 41%, Indian by 68%, Korean by 62%, and Filipino by 53%. Furthermore, two-thirds of New Zealand’s Pacific people lived in the Auckland region and they, like Asian New Zealanders, were predominantly young adults. Significantly, the number of multilingual people in New Zealand increased by 20% from the 1996 Census to 562,113 or nearly 1 in 6 in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2010).

Such a culturally and linguistically diverse population presents unique challenges to those such as educators who play a major role in facilitating new settlers into New Zealand society. While health promotion among new settlers has been the focus of some studies, for example, swimming skills and fitness among Somali women in Seattle (Moore, Ali, Graham & Quan 2010), Somali refugees exercise programmes in Hamilton, New Zealand (Guerin, Diiriye, Corrigan, & Guerin, 2003), targeted messages about second hand smoke for recent Asian immigrants (Brugge et al., 2002), and cancer screening initiatives among Vietnamese-American women (Jenkins et al., 1999), little is known about the health risks associated with aquatic recreation among new settlers or what they bring to that participation in terms of their understanding of water safety.

The evidence base for action

Drowning statistics provide some indication of the risk of drowning with over a quarter (26%) of all Asian drowning fatalities fishing-related (Water Safety New Zealand, 2010).
A survey of Auckland’s west coast rock-based fishers in 2006 reported that almost half (42%) of fishers surveyed at high risk sites were of recent residency (<4 years), and half (49%) self-identified as of Asian ethnicity (Moran, 2008). New Zealand is not alone in its high fatal drowning toll as a consequence of fishing from rocks. Australia has recently reported similar incidents and concerns with almost half of the victims in 101 recreational fishing fatalities from 2000-2007 being described as of Asian ethnicity (Crosariol, Vasica, & Franklin, 2010).

One study has identified at-risk beliefs among new settlers with regards to supervision around water. In a focus group study of Vietnamese immigrants, parents defined supervision of children as “watching”, but parents and teenagers agreed that supervision is unnecessary if a child is old enough to be home alone, knows how to swim, and that children can “take care of each other” (Quan, Crispin, Bennett, & Gomez, 2006, p. 428). Other studies have suggested that young immigrant populations are at greater risk of drowning than long-term residents (for example, Smith & Brenner, 1995 in the United States; Nixon & Pearn, 1978 in Australia; Verweij & Bierens, 2002 in Holland; Lindholm & Steensberg, 2000 in Denmark).

A national survey entitled the New Zealand Youth Water Safety (Moran, 2003) provides some insight into the nature of aquatic recreation and understanding of water safety among youth. For example, Pasifika students were less likely than European/Pakeha and Maori students, but more likely than Asian students, to have participated in swimming, surfing, paddling, and boating recreation (Moran, 2007). Pasifika students estimated lower levels of swimming ability than non-Pasifika students, with more than one quarter (27%) believing that they were unable to swim 25 metres or less and almost three quarters (73%) unable to swim more than 100 metres. In contrast to this, fewer non-Pasifika students thought they could swim 25 metres or less (12% vs. 27%) and more thought they could swim more than 100 metres (48% vs. 28%).

While newness to New Zealand society may help explain a lack of water safety skills and knowledge among a small proportion of Pasifika youth of recent New Zealand residency, most 15-19-year-old Pasifika youth (70%) were New Zealand born (2001 Census, Statistics New Zealand). Poor socio-economic background, as indicated by the high proportion of Pasifika compared to non-Pasifika students (70% vs. 30%) that attended low-decile schools, is a more likely reason for limited water safety skills and abilities (Moran, 2007). The lack of opportunity to acquire water safety skills and experiences such as swimming ability and surf safety education, in the home, at school, or in the community at large is likely to be greater among the Pasifika community because of the costs often associated with the acquisition of such skills.

Moran (2006) reported that Asian youth did not participate in as much aquatic activity (with the exception of land-based fishing) as non-Asian youth. They held more positive attitudes towards water safety than their non-Asian counterparts, as well as reporting a lower incidence of self-reported at-risk behaviours during swimming and other aquatic activities. However, their self-reported swimming survival skills and understanding of water safety were poor and unlikely to provide an element of protection in intentional or unintentional submersion incidents.

In response to drowning statistics and descriptive studies such as the national
survey reported above, many regional and national non-government organisations (NGOs) have set in place educational initiatives that address the lack of water safety knowledge among new residents. It is the purpose of this paper therefore, to examine educational interventions targeted at reducing risk of drowning among new settlers in New Zealand, with particular reference to community-based initiatives in the culturally and linguistically diverse metropolitan region of greater Auckland.

From policy to practice

The Drowning Prevention Strategy: Towards a Water Safe New Zealand 2005-2015 envisages a water safe New Zealand, free from drowning (Accident Compensation Corporation [ACC], 2005). It recognises that drowning is a risk to all New Zealanders, whether participating in planned and organised aquatic activities or unintentionally being in the water, for example, slipping on the poolside or falling off the rocks. The Strategy provides a framework to promote water safety skills, knowledge and behaviour to all people in New Zealand. Objective eight of the Strategy specifically highlights the importance of engaging with all communities to promote water safety awareness by “engaging with Maori, Pacific people, Asian people and new settlers, tourists, refugees and their families/whanau in water safety initiatives” (p. 29).

In response to these policies, several national and regional water safety organizations have put into place plans to address new migrants’ water safety needs. At a national level, the New Zealand Water Safety Education Framework (Water Safety New Zealand, n.d.) suggests that water safety education programmes and campaigns need to be inclusive of all cultures and states that “different approaches may be needed to ensure messages and initiatives are accurate, relevant and effective for all the cultural groups represented in New Zealand” (p. 9). At a regional level, WaterSafe Auckland’s Education Strategy and Action Plan identify ethnically diverse populations as a priority area (WaterSafe Auckland, 2009). Under regional priorities for 2009-2011, new settlers and refugee communities are acknowledged, with strategies identified for increasing the knowledge and skills in, on, and around water for these populations. Targeted interventions include: community and school learn to swim/water safety lessons, programmes for international school students and refugee groups, and water safety promotion at community events.

For some communities, traditional methods of delivering water safety and swimming lessons are not effective, and participation in swimming and aquatic activity have conflicted with cultural values, religious beliefs, family commitments and other more pragmatic concerns such as cost and transport issues. Consequently, alternative approaches have been developed in consultation with the community to ensure engagement and participation. Such programmes in New Zealand and Australia have considered cultural values, religious beliefs, family commitments, accessibility issues when introducing swimming to women from Middle-Eastern backgrounds (Lawrence, 2005; Di Francesceco & Hansen, 2002; Islamic Women’s Association of Queensland Inc, 2003). Similarly, previous studies (Coxon & Taufe’ulungaki, 2003; Fusi’tua & Coxon, 1998; Koki & Lee, 1998; Man’uata, 2000; Mara, 1998) have suggested that building school-community-parent relationships is particularly valuable in the context
of Pasifika education. Water safety programmes that address recognised barriers to learning by using language, protocols and communication modes that are culturally appropriate, embrace parent and community perceptions of water safety, and facilitate ownership of the programmes within the Pasifika community have been recommended (Moran, 2007).

Promoting water safety education in a culturally and linguistically diverse community presents several unique challenges. First, many new settlers are unaware of what their new home offers at an institutional level, in terms of both government and non-government organisations (NGOs). Second, transmission of new knowledge is often family- and local community-based. Third, language barriers often make conveyance of information via the dominant language problematic. Fourth, New Zealand’s new settlers include a wide range of incomes from low income refugees to high income business entrepreneurs so economic barriers to participation vary greatly.

To coordinate water safety education among new settlers in the home and via community groups and workshops, WaterSafe Auckland established a New Settlers Water Safety Reference Group in 2005 that included representatives of primary health care providers (e.g. East Health), local council, ACC injury prevention networks, the Auckland Regional Migrant Service, and migrant organisations (e.g. the Asian Network Incorporated). One outcome of the collective debate among network partners was the development of a series of resources that included a New Settler Water Safety DVD, covering swimming pool, boating, beach and rock fishing safety, available in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Korean. Supplementary Be Water Safe booklets covering the same topics, as well as water safety in the home, have also been translated into eight different languages including Arabic, Somali, Farsi and Hindi. Water Safety teaching kits have been developed specifically for international schools and those working with ESOL students, and water safety sessions are available upon request for international/ESOL students.

In response to the increasing numbers of Chinese people participating in boating activity, WaterSafe Auckland and Coastguard Boating Education developed a VHF marine radio course in Mandarin that included a Chinese marine broker delivering the course and the course manual being translated into Mandarin (Mills, 2008a). The course proved very popular and, of 25 initial enrolments, 17 (68%) successfully completed the course and can now legally operate a marine VHF radio. Half of the participants had been in New Zealand for less than five years so gaining this boating knowledge and qualification facilitates safety boating practices not only for themselves, but also their families, and their communities (Mills, 2008a).

From evidence to action

Three projects that promote water safety and aquatic participation to new settler communities are the West Coast Rock Fishing Safety Project, the New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC) Refugee Youth Water Safety Programme, and the Muslim Women’s Swimming Programme. These projects are presented as prime examples of targeted community-based education programmes.
West Coast Rock Fishing Safety Project

The West Coast Rock Fishing Safety Project is an on-going intervention designed to influence the knowledge, behaviour, and attitudes for safer rock fishing on Auckland’s West Coast. This project was established in direct response to a spate of five rock fishing deaths in a four month period in 2005. Success factors to the project include having rock fishing safety advisors employed over the summer to talk to the fishers in their own languages (Chinese, Korean, Samoan, and Tongan). Use of inflatable life jackets is promoted, in addition to discount vouchers, visual and written resources, and most recently the installation of ‘angel rings’ in high risk areas. Doing surveys with the fishers each year has enabled the partner organisations to gain a true picture of the safety knowledge and perceptions of the fishers. Successful outcomes over the last five years include more rock fishers now wearing life jackets often or always (2010, 31%; 2008, 22%; 2006, 4%); fewer rock fishers never wear a life jacket (2010, 35%; 2008, 52%; 2006, 72%); from 2007, slight improvements were reported by fishers of their personal safety knowledge (2010, 66%; 2007, 63%), safety attitudes (2010, 62%; 2007, 61%), and safety behavior (2010, 62%; 2007, 53%). Most importantly, fewer rock fishing deaths have occurred since the inception of the project in 2006, with only six deaths over five years (Moran, in press).

NZOC Refugee Youth Water Safety Programme

In April 2008, a learn-to-swim and water safety holiday programme was run for youth from refugee backgrounds. WaterSafe Auckland led this initiative, in partnership with Auckland Regional Public Health Service, Refugees as Survivors, Refugee Services Aotearoa, and Swimming New Zealand. Ninety-four youth from refugee backgrounds (59 males/34 females) aging from 5 years to 18 years old participated in the programme (Mills, 2008b). The programme consisted of 10 one-hour swimming lessons, first aid, and physical activity sessions. Limited swimming experience of the participants meant that the lessons concentrated on water confidence, water familiarisation, and water safety and introduced basic swimming skills of floating, kicking and breathing. Prior to the programme, 91.4% of the participants indicated that they could not swim over 25 metres. After the programme, 92% of participants rated that they had exceeded their expectations in progressing their swimming skills. Wearing a lifejacket (26%) was the most commonly cited water safety skill learnt. All respondents reported that they thought they would be safer in the water as a result of the programme; 96% of participants believed that programme increased their water safety knowledge beyond their expectations. The most recalled water safety message was to swim between the flags (66.7%). This lack of understanding of the meaning of the flags was indicated by a comment from a participant saying “before I didn’t know to swim between the flags” (Mills, 2008b).

Auckland Muslim Women’s Swimming Project

The Muslim Women’s Swimming Project, established in Auckland in 2005 primarily focuses on the health benefits of swimming for Muslim women and women from Middle-Eastern and African backgrounds. WaterSafe Auckland is a partner on this project, and
The women are offered a private space for swimming every Sunday evening throughout the year (with the exception of Ramadan), and women can do aqua aerobics, swimming lessons, and use the gym facilities. One of the conditions of attending is the women must do an hour of exercise before they can use the steam room, sauna, and spa facilities. The health benefits of exercise programmes have been previously reported (for example, Moore, Ali, Graham, & Quan 2010; Guerin, Diiriye, Corrigan, & Guerin, 2003), but the swimming lessons are also an important component of a water safety programme. An evaluation in 2007 reported that 58% of the 72 women that responded to the survey had learned to swim a length of the pool without stopping (Marshall, 2007). When asked, the participants stated that the main strength of the programme was that it offered exercise and learn to swim opportunities within a comfortable, women only environment. In a previous evaluation in 2005, participants identified other wider benefits of the programme beyond health and wellbeing issues, and that learning to swim had given them more confidence and a sense of security, particularly given the frequency that their children go swimming (Lawrence, 2005). Participant feedback from both evaluations suggests that this programme continues to meet a strongly felt need for culturally appropriate, accessible, and affordable physical activity (Marshall, 2007; Lawrence, 2005). Feedback from similar aquatic programmes in Australia, offer strong support for continuing gender specific, practical water safety education on the basis that such programmes improved women’s skills and confidence in the water and enhanced feelings of self-worth and belonging in their new home (Islamic Women’s Association of Queensland Inc., 2003; Di Francesco & Hansen, 2002; Migrant Information Centre, 2001).

The way ahead

Gaps in the provision of new settler water safety education still exist. A tendency for some government and non-government organisations to promote homogenous water safety programmes contradicts the cultural and linguistic diversity dynamic that is very much part of the current metropolitan Auckland region. For example, the Indian community and the Chinese community have quite different needs, including language, religious, cultural beliefs, and levels of community capacity, yet both groups are often collectively grouped as ‘Asian’ (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). Water safety education programmes are available to the ‘Asian’ community, yet are these interventions appropriate for all people who come under this umbrella? The Islamic Women’s Association of Queensland (2003) has advised best-practice criteria when working with culturally and linguistically diverse women should include appropriate delivery (considering use of translators), accessibility to transport and child care, and using a suitable venue that meets the safety and privacy needs of women. These guidelines could be used with mixed-gender groups, as some cultures require males and females to be separated when participating in aquatic programmes.

In addition, interventions and research for refugees should not be subsumed within larger immigrant populations since their prior experiences and socioeconomic circumstances are likely to be much different from other immigrants (Barnes, Harrison, & Heneghan, 2004). Currently, the health and water safety needs of refugee groups
in New Zealand are understudied. Further research and studies of culturally effective interventions among the refugee population are needed.

Furthermore, not all new settlers are permanent settlers. New Zealand, like many other countries, has experienced significant growth in temporary migration (Koser & Laczkó, 2010). Many young people, especially from Asia, now attend international schools in New Zealand and during their residency experience much of the aquatic lifestyle that is readily accessible and attractive to newcomers. Long stay tourists are also likely to be temporarily involved in things aquatic while on holiday. Yet little is known what these long- and short-term visitors bring to that aquatic activity in terms of water safety knowledge and skills. Some overseas evidence suggests that non-residents are at greater risk of drowning than residents. For example, proportionally more United States tourists drown overseas than at home, the consequence of increased exposure to risk through participation in aquatic recreation such as swimming, snorkeling, and diving (Guse, Cortes, Hargarten, & Hennes, 2007). Mackie (1999) reported that 88 tourists from 12 countries had drowned in Australia during 1992-1997 (age range, 3-78 years; 16 female). The author concluded that tourists and new migrants must be provided with suitable information and perhaps increased supervision when near the ocean. A more recent study has reported that international tourists were the victims in one quarter (25%; n=32) of all surf-related drowning in Australia in 2005 (Morgan, Ozanne-Smith, & Triggs, 2008). Further research is required to determine how best to inform temporary residents about staying safe in and around New Zealand waters.

The evaluation of programmes for culturally and linguistically diverse groups presents challenges. Even after providing programmes suitable for ethnically diverse communities, alternative evaluation practices may have to be implemented. During the evaluation process of the swimming programme for Afghani women in Perth, participants declined to have their focus groups audio-recorded (both pre- and post-intervention) for reasons unknown (Di Francesco & Hansen, 2002). This may be a legacy of the environment and attitude in their home country, inexperience of being interviewed, or concern about anonymity and confidentiality (Islamic Women’s Association of Queensland Inc, 2003). Further research is required to find culturally appropriate yet valid ways of evaluating such programmes.

**Conclusion**

International migration has transformed New Zealand society in the past decade and this has precipitated the need for a more comprehensive approach to capacity-building for new settlers than has previously been adopted. This paper has focused on one aspect of this phenomenon: current new settler water safety education policy and ways in which it has been implemented via community-based education programmes. Cultural and linguistic diversity presents unique challenges to educators across a wide spectrum of social and health settings. The need for safety promotion in and around water and during activities that may be unfamiliar to new settlers is paramount in an aquatically oriented society such as New Zealand. Our new peoples, who are likely to be underserved by health promotion and unaware of what their new home can offer by way of education, deserve nothing less.
References


Prepared for inclusion? Initial and ongoing professional development encounters economic reform

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Abstract
This paper examines the effects of economic reform on initial and ongoing professional development for staff supporting children and adults identified with disabilities in schools and services. Using the experience in New Zealand it explores the impact of these changes on training staff development in disability support. It argues that a return to training that endorses the intrinsic value of all human beings is required to ensure aspirations for inclusive schools and communities are established and maintained.

Prepared for inclusion? Initial and ongoing professional development encounters economic reform.

Like other countries in the Pacific-Asia region, the features of the reform agenda of the World Bank that foster market capitalism have influenced New Zealand. These embody the principles of neoliberal economics, privatisation, deregulation, and decentralisation of state services that are amenable to the forces of the market (Mok, 2002; Tae, 1999). As a result, the role of the state education system has been transformed from “sole educational provider to enabler and quality assurer” (World Bank, 2009) and the health care system from a provider to a “steward or regulator” (Newbrander, 2006). Countries in the region have experienced similar effects as conflicting public and social demands are constrained by limited public finance. Changing policy and governance in higher education reflects these pressures (Forlin, 2006; Mok & Lo, 2007). In addition, in some countries these economic reforms were concurrent with the return to communities of the most disabled people following the closure of segregated institutions.

The use of economic solutions and managerial approaches in education and health have remained in tension with the social values-based approaches associated with the ideas of normalisation (Nirje, 1969/1994). These underpinned the desegregation, deinstitutionalisation and inclusion of disabled adults and children in local communities and schools. This article claims that the changes to professional development for teachers and those involved in community based disability support in New Zealand exemplify the complex and unintended consequences of a political response shaped by competing economic and social imperatives. In particular, the utilitarian focus of managerial leadership has eclipsed the philosophical guidance characteristic of professional leadership.

Training for teachers and community workers who provide disability support for
children and adults in both schools and communities in New Zealand was originally shaped by the public service conditions characteristic of a centralised welfare state between 1890 and 1980. Government departments of health and education were responsible for funding and credentialing training offered in institutions such as training hospitals, technical colleges and teachers’ colleges. The changes to the political economy of New Zealand, initiated by the Labour government of 1984 and continued by the National-led government from 1990, are often called ‘the reforms’. Driven by Treasury, the programme of reform rejected the state regulation of economic and labour market conditions of preceding decades. Instead, the activities and roles of the state were reduced through the privatisation of state assets and the establishment of quasi-markets in what remained of the state sector.

In education, the primary focus of the administrative reform was to shift the responsibility for the management and governance of each state funded school to a locally elected board of trustees and the school principal. This was based on the premise that educational decision making should result from “mutual cooperation of professionals and [local] consumers rather than pressure group politics at the centre” (Picot Report, 1988, p. 23). Schools set annual aspirational and operational goals within the framework of a Charter developed through community consultation and used by the Education Review Office as part of the ongoing quality audit and review of all aspects of education.

In health, the mechanisms of reform were expressed in the “language of markets” (Ashton, 2001, p. 107). The control or purchase of services by the government or its agent as funder was separated from the delivery of services from providers including corporatized public or private hospitals and services. The funder-provider split was to ensure that a range of health services or ‘goods’ that were considered essential could be ‘purchased’ and delivered to a group of ‘consumers’ within the limits of national health policies and priorities (Scott, 1996, p. 15). Services accredited and contracted to provide disability support were audited against service standards and the New Zealand Disability Strategy by agencies also under contract to the Ministry of Health (Minister for Disability Issues, 2001; Ministry of Health, 2001).

Policies for the reform of tertiary education were based on two principles: setting funding limits and acknowledging the benefits of tertiary education to both individuals and society (McLaughlin, 2003). The control and oversight of the investment of government funds in new and existing tertiary and industry training organisations (ITO) was set out in an amendment of the Education Act 1989 establishing the Tertiary Education Commission. In 1992, the new framework for industry-based training was set out in the Industry Training Act. Qualifications for disability support were reassigned either to a new ITO for the health and disability sector or to existing public colleges and universities in the tertiary sector.

**Understandings of disability reflected in policy**

Developing ‘special’ education provision had included itinerant teacher support for students in regular classes as well as separate classes and institutions for the care and education of children with specific impairments. None of these provisions were
mandated in legislation, rather they were influenced by government policies, the ideas of interested officials and experts, or public pressure (Milne & Brown, 1987). Understandings of impairment as deficiency and deviance, either medical or social or both, coupled with concerns about the affordability of nationwide provision shaped the education service response (Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1988). A similar range of separate provisions and concerns remain evident in countries in the Pacific-Asia region (International Comparison, 2007). For example, the Philippines has both state and private special education schools to cater for demand, while Malaysia is increasing the number of special schools to provide better facilities for disabled learners.

New Zealand was an early adopter of the principles of normalisation that sought the experience of ordinary lives as citizens for disabled people who lived in institutions (Nirje, 1969/1994). These ideas were grounded in the values of equality and freedom expressed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948). They were important for children with significant impairments who were still considered unable to benefit from schooling and whose education had been considered the legal obligation of parents (Education Act, 1914). Frequently these children grew up in institutions administered by the Departments of Health and Social Welfare or voluntary agencies (Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1988). The disestablishment of most of these institutions during the 1980s meant the establishment or redevelopment of community-based services and the expectation that all children would attend school.

New Zealand’s experience is not unique. Together with other countries in the Pacific-Asia region New Zealand supported the objective of education for all in regular schools, outlined in the Salamanca Statement. It was viewed as an expression of both human rights and the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of the population (Loreman, 2008; UNESCO, 1994). Currently 73% of New Zealand students with identified ‘special needs’ attend regular schools, however 50% of schools are reported to be resistant to enrolling these students (Education Review Office, 2010; International Comparison, 2007). In the Pacific-Asia region fewer than five percent of the children under 15 years of age with identified disabilities, receive any education or training. One reason is that the region lacks sufficiently trained teachers (Ilagan, 2000). Such contradictions highlight the disparity between the ideals expressed in the Salamanca statement and their realisation.

Features of the American legislation (Education of All Handicapped Children Act, 1975) supporting the civil rights of disabled learners were translated into education practices in New Zealand in the 1980s. In particular, the ideals of an equal right for all to education and selection of least restrictive environments were adopted. The proposed changes were set out in 1987 in a draft review of special education (Department of Education, 1987) and incorporated in subsequent law change reforming the administration of education. The new legislation set out the right of all New Zealand children aged between 5 and 19 to enrol at any state school. However, the provision remains for children with physical sensory or intellectual impairments to be directed to the parallel system of separate classes and schools (Education Act 1989, Part 1 s3).

New Zealand’s policy for resourcing disability support in schools, ‘Special Education 2000’ sought to establish a “world class, inclusive education system”
providing “learning opportunities of equal quality for all students” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 5). Policy was communicated in a series of booklets between 1996 and 2002. The contradiction apparent between the rights-based feature of the legislation and the central demand for administrative efficiency was not clarified through that process. Looking like “incrementalism or muddling thorough,” (Lindblom, 1979, p. 517) these publications interwove policy goals and values. The maintenance of clear policy objectives over such a long implementation period was difficult. Premised on the intention of developing the capability of all schools to support all learners Special Education 2000 operates from a resourcing model tied to individual entitlements for ‘high needs’ or bulk funded ‘moderate needs’ categories. Funding in the high needs category requires verification of impairment related need and has only recently been increased above the level of 1% of learners with highest need of support set in 1996 so that a further 1,100 students can be included (Carter, 2010).

Inclusion and managerialism

Notions from the rights discourse have shaped recent policy in health and disability and education. The Disability Strategy (2001) provided a framework to “enable the government to begin removing the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating fully in society.” It envisaged New Zealand as a “fully inclusive society” that “highly values” the lives and “enhances participation” of disabled people (Minister for Disability Issues, 2001, p. 1). Developed by a Sector Reference Group comprised largely of disabled people, the Strategy occupies the position of a “whole of government” policy and is used as a framework to increase the participation and inclusion of people with impairments in society (Office of Disability Issues, n.d.).

Neither legislation nor funding for service follows from the strategy. Rather education and ‘exhortation’ arising from its content are used to ensure that government, its departments and agencies “consider disabled people before making decisions” (Office of Disability Issues, 2011). All government agencies and providers contracted to deliver any service are audited against the Strategy. The most recent report to parliament on the implementation of the 2008 Convention of the Rights of Disabled People (United Nations, 2008) and the New Zealand Disability Strategy notes that disabled New Zealanders are yet to experience changes that improve their ability to lead ordinary lives (Minister of Disability Issues, 2010).

Values central to inclusion such as respect for all people as equal human beings irrespective of any difference or the cost for their participation are critical to an understanding of inclusion (Reynolds, 2001). However, the publically declared rights approach linked to claims of social justice embedded in legislation and policy conflicts with the managerialist practices of the administrative reforms. The reduction of state investment and the promotion of a market model contributes to a utilitarian rather than an emancipatory focus in support of the social participation of disabled people (Brown, 2011; McInerney, 2007). The effect of this clash is evident in approaches to the initial training and in-service professional development for those who facilitate the inclusion of disabled people in schools and communities (Gordon & Morton, 2006; Kane, 2005; Kearney & Kane, 2006). The following section examines the effect of the repositioning of training for disability support as a private benefit.
Training for community support staff

While most Pacific-Asia countries have endorsed the rights-based claims to the social inclusion of all people, training and professional development for service workers is a commonly identified barrier to its implementation (Ilagan, 2000). Currently many people providing community-based support are either untrained or inadequately trained for the complex services they are expected to deliver (Gorman, Horsburgh, & Abbot, 2009). The following sections examine the effect of ideological and economically driven decision making on training and professional development for those in education and disability services.

Tertiary education had received almost total public funding because graduates’ careers were likely to contribute to the common good. This rationale became problematic as costs and enrolment numbers increased and economists argued for a user pays approach to offset competing demands on the public budget. Arguments were based on the claimed advantage tertiary qualifications provided graduates in the job market (Education Committee OECD, 1998). Propositions grounded in these ideas were outlined in New Zealand Treasury advice to incoming governments from 1984 and 1987. Claiming the notion of education as a public good was “uninformed” it was argued that “in the technical sense used by economists education is not in fact a public good” (New Zealand Treasury, 1987, p. 33). Education was now considered a private good, a market place commodity because of its exclusivity and its potential to add status value for individuals. This narrow interpretation, shaped by the principles of privatisation, has provided legitimation for policy to reduce government funding and control the expansion of provision of tertiary education. Yet as McLaughlin (2003) observes, the public benefit of tertiary education ought not to be dismissed simply because the proportionality of its interrelationship with private benefit may be difficult to estimate.

In this analysis, little attention is paid to the purpose of tertiary education as a tool to sustain democracy or to its multiple aims and clients. The public good is also served by supporting the development of a professional work force to safeguard the wellbeing of citizens least able to achieve these goals through their own efforts. After more than two decades of administrative change in health and education initiated by the reform process in the 1980s, a significant skill gap exists amongst teachers and disability support workers that has not been met by local education and training (Badkar, Callister, & Didham, 2009).

Preparing to teach all

Internationally the failure of initial teacher education to prepare teachers to teach all children has been identified as a barrier to the achievement of inclusive education systems (Titone, 2005). Forlin (2008) reports that in the Pacific-Asia region teacher training institutions have been slow to prepare teachers for inclusive classrooms. A recent review of education in seven southern Asian countries noted the absence of any systematic approach in preservice teacher education to ensure that new teachers had an understanding of the realities of exclusion and the rationale for inclusion. Nor were they being taught the skills to identify, assess, or respond to difference with inclusive
teaching practices (Shaeffer, 2009, as cited in Asian Development Bank, 2010).

In New Zealand, the provision of teacher education has become the business of thirty approved providers. At the same time, the amalgamation of the original teachers’ colleges with local universities has accomplished the long held aspiration for teaching to become a graduate profession. Currently there are 85 ITE programmes for the compulsory school sector (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2010). Training that specifically addresses why and how teachers ensure the social, learning, and cultural needs of disabled children are catered for in ordinary classrooms still remains contentious and problematic in preservice education (O’Neill, Bourke, & Kearney, 2009; Wills, 2009).

For the first century of public education, teachers were prepared to teach only those children considered able to benefit from an education (Panckhurst, 1972). This contrasts with the current focus for preservice education, which is the production of “effective teachers of all of New Zealand’s diverse learners” (Ministry of Education, 2005 p. 5, as cited in O’Neill, Bourke & Kearney, 2009). In this way, learners whose impairments affect their learning have been discursively relocated as ‘diverse’ learners. Little preparation is offered in courses for preservice teachers for the range of diversities in classrooms. Often courses in diversity or special needs are optional while in some programmes notions of inclusion and diversity are described as infused throughout (Gordon & Morton, 2006; Kane, 2005; Titone, 2005).

The range of interpretations and understandings of disability and differing backgrounds of teacher educators also sustains the ideological conflict, between medically based beliefs about the nature of disability reflected in notions of ‘special education’ that identify impairment as an individual pathology and socio-cultural explanations of disability as ableist discrimination (Ballard, 2004; Oliver, 2009). Without more scholarly professional leadership these contradictory frameworks persist as exemplified in this advice “it would be desirable that teacher educators have qualifications, theoretical expertise and practical experience in special (inclusive) education” (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2009).

Graduate studies for specialist teachers

The administrative reforms gave the Ministry of Education a different role described as “supportive and facilitative rather than directive” (Ministry of Education, 2007a). This is achieved by providing advice and information to the government, administering funding and specialist resources, and making regulations. The Ministry maintained the graduate training programmes for up to 120 specialist teachers annually instigated by the Department of Education in the 1970s. Teachers selected for these courses in the education of students with intellectual, visual, or hearing impairments and later early intervention teachers received a study award with incentives offering continuity of salary while undertaking a year of full time study.

The development of policy, Special Education 2000 (Ministry of Education, 1996), reallocated some of these awards to support learners with moderate needs by training newly designated resource teachers in learning and behaviour. A limited number of full time study awards for teachers of children with sensory impairments and for graduate
studies in educational psychology continued to be offered (CCS Disability Action, 2010). Courses for teachers of children with special learning needs reduced to part time options for study. Viewed as a less attractive option, enrolments fell in these courses in Auckland, for example, and enrolment of 20 in 2001 fell to 5 by 2005, threatening the viability of this area of training (ACE, 2001; The University of Auckland, 2006).

In 2009, the Ministry of Education sought the re-development of specialist qualifications at a postgraduate level. Seeking economies of scale and a strong and cohesive workforce, the Ministry’s proposal outlined a model with common core content described as “advanced generic core theory and foundations of specialist teaching” with a limited selection of optional specialist papers (Massey University & University of Canterbury, 2010). Assistance with fees and travel costs is offered and the payment of relief to schools of 75 days study leave (Ministry of Education, 2010). In 2011, up to 100 supported places have been offered in the new qualification for teachers to study part time for two years. This will produce fewer who take longer to complete the course of study but graduate with a higher-level qualification.

**Professional development in schools**

Central to the ideal of professional development for teachers is the assumption that changes in teaching practice can occur because of the provision of in-service learning opportunities. Often the understanding of implementing change has been at the naïve level. It was believed that teachers would endorse policy directions and implement new practices, including previously segregated learners in their classes, simply from hearing about the ideas and policies (Ingvarson & McKenzie, 1988). In the some of the developing countries of the Pacific-Asia region, a range of approaches has been implemented. In the Philippines, a national federation of disabled peoples’ organisations developed an initiative that included employing special needs education teacher-coordinators to provide training to support regular classroom teachers and to coordinate the placement of disabled children (Ilagan, 2000). UNESCO has also developed and tested a toolkit to assist teachers to create inclusive classrooms (Reiser, 2008), while the Index for Inclusion (Booth, Ainscow, & Kingston, 2002) provides a guiding process for schools to develop inclusive climates.

To support the implementation of the policy Special Education 2000, the Ministry purchased a range of modules for national professional development. Kearney and Poskitt (2001) note that the intention to offer professional development to all teachers was only realised in the session to familiarise teachers with the policy and analyse the training needs of the school. Subsequently, schools nominate staff to attend selected workshops. At least 20% of teachers in schools, received no professional development relevant to the special education policy (Kearney & Poskitt, 2001; Poskitt, 2005). A further survey of teachers in 2004 illustrated that few teachers had experienced any professional development related to students with disabilities and, in particular training, was rarely offered those working with students who required complex learning support (McMenamin et al., 2004). The authors of this report concluded that teachers had few in-service opportunities to gain the required skills. The following section illustrates parallels in the health sector in preparing personnel for disability support.
Professional development for community-based support

Workers in the private sector or teachers in state schools were not specifically prepared for the impact of deinstitutionalisation. Clinical leaders of institutions facing closure predicted the need to provide “extensive in-service training” for new community based caregivers would cause the greatest increase in cost (Watson, Singh, & Woods, 1985, p. 55). In the meantime, training officers, who had been trained to provide educative support through the day programmes in institutions for people with intellectual disability, bridged the divide between the institution, special schools, and community services (Graham & Ahrens, 1985). By 1988 a working party investigating training issues identified the need for re-education and re-orientation of staff from institutional settings and the requirement to train new workers, parents and volunteers (Department of Health, 1988).

These training issues were considered by a working party set up at the time by the Minister of Health and recommended a range of qualifications at certificate, diploma, and undergraduate degree levels. Advisory committees were then set up in local regions “to establish training and retraining course for the existing segregated and largely untrained work force” and implement a three tiered training system (Impetus Conference, 1988, as cited in Espiner, O’Brien, Murray, & McLean, 1994, p. 4). Subsequently, the Certificate and Diploma were offered by 14 tertiary providers nationwide resulting in at least 400 graduates completing the qualifications annually.

The mechanism for teaching became standards based assessment introduced through the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) established in 1989. ITOs set national skill standards; developed packages for training on and off the job, oversaw assessment, and monitored training quality. Certificates and diplomas were to be awarded for the attainment of the type and number of unit standards specified by the relevant sector where unit standards for training were registered (Fitzsimons, 1995).

Initially major employers within the disability sector offered staff incentives for training including assistance with fees and study leave. Some organisations negotiated the payment of an annual allowance to graduates. The national standards setting committee of the ITO progressively shifted the focus of Unit Standards to enable their completion within the workplace eliminating earlier academic input in their delivery or assessment. Changes in government health policy signalled in legislation (Health and Disability Services Act, 1993/1995) removed the requirement for staff to hold a recognised national certificate so that disability services might maintain their funding level. Instead services were encouraged to meet health service accreditation standards and the quality measures in service and care provision that focused on consumer safety. The combination of these factors changed the study incentives for prospective students and enrolments fell.

As state funding for tertiary education in the Pacific-Asia region has been reduced and cost sharing introduced, institutions have been under pressure to maintain enrolment levels to ensure the survival of the courses and programmes (Asia-Europe Foundation, 2010; Forlin, 2008). In New Zealand a new funding model for tertiary education was introduced in 1991 to distribute government funding to institutions based on the number of full time (or equivalent) students enrolled. It was intended as a mechanism to move
tertiary education from its elitist past to a broader base, a market driven atmosphere in which institutions were competitors for the funding brought by an increasing student population. This situation was exacerbated by a series of funding cuts during the 1990s requiring increases in the cost sharing through increased student fees (Russell, 2007).

Payment by enrolment led to a situation such as that in 2005 when the disability ITO received funding for the 1200 candidates who had signed up for Unit Standards based training. Most of these candidates did not complete the qualification; in fact fewer than 40 individuals a year finished the certificate course (Careerforce, 2006). In March 2009, publicity was given to the “record-breaking student” who completed two national certificates in nine months whilst working full-time (Careerforce, 2009). These effects were apparent in other sectors. As a result, the funding mechanism based on sign on has been replaced with a range of proposals for the Tertiary Education Commission to monitor and report on student achievement and improve the level of qualification completion (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010).

There is no compulsory training for caregivers engaged in disability support in New Zealand. A service provider survey identified that only 4.5% of the 14,000 disability support workers were adequately trained (Parsons et al., 2004, p. 61). Survey data reported that most people seeking work as paid caregivers were from lower socio-economic backgrounds with English as a second language and little formal education. They were described as “vulnerable, minimally trained, middle aged women [often] poorly educated and work part-time” (Jorgenson et al., 2009, p. 398). Training and assessment activities were experienced as “intimidating” (p. 402).

To begin to redress the lack of training and the absence of any career structure the Ministry of Health held regional sector workshops, consulted stakeholder groups and developed an eight step novice-to-expert career pathway (Ministry of Health & District Health Boards, 2007). A year later, a parliamentary committee recommended that the Government establish a strategy for improving training including the addition of values-based training for all staff (Fairbrother, 2008). These responses support the notion that the effect of economic reform has neither increased the provision nor raised the quality of training for disability support.

**Inclusion and economic participation**

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is influential in shaping the political response of member nations including New Zealand. Liberalism remains as the guiding political philosophy and social inclusion or cohesion is put forward as an important policy objective. Policy firmly based in the thinking expressed in OECD publications places the responsibility with tertiary education to address the social disadvantage of groups including people with disabilities, (Ministry of Education, 2007b; OECD, 2003). These notions and directions sit uneasily with an interpretation of an inclusive society as “a society that highly values our lives and continually enhances our full participation” (Minister for Disability Issues, 2001, p. 1). Instead the OECD vision for inclusion is linked to the ideas of a good or worthy citizen, a person who has skills, motivation, and ability to improve the nation’s productivity (OECD, 2002). Disabled people, especially those with cognitive impairments, risk being discounted
from social participation in this paradigm when competence is reframed as encompassing cognitive, social, and cultural capability. As Walker (2009) reasons “without intellectual or technical capacity and ‘skills’ there is limited opportunity for employment; without social competence there is also both economic and social exclusion” (p. 344). The bleak interpretation of inclusion as economic participation may justify the technical focus observed in contemporary training those offering disability support. Social policy direction appears to offer little to address the empty space that was once filled by values-based training. Currently the government response to a recommendation that a strategy be developed is to exhort providers to reallocate “existing resource… to provide paid training for workers” (Office of Disability Issues, 2009 s7, Rec 22).

**Rethinking disability support as public good**

Wide differences in provision of support and services and outcomes for disabled people are evident across the Pacific-Asia region. This article has argued that the New Zealand example of the retreat of the state to the role of funder and manager of the social response to disability has not resulted in increases in trained support staff. New possibilities may emerge with public subsidy for courses considered to have social benefit (Goedegebuure, Santiago, Fitznor, Stensaker, & van der Steen, 2008). In both education and disability support, recent small-scale contracts with tertiary institutions funded by the Ministries of Education and Health support graduate level professional level education. These opportunities contribute to the expert level workforce but they require additional funding to compensate employers for the absence of workers on study leave.

This option might be considered for application across the workforce to enable the novice and least skilled workers in daily contact with disabled children and adults to develop understanding and knowledge beyond rudimentary level. Such an initiative may not be sufficient to offset the social devaluation of disabled people in a political climate of individualism and economic utility that ignores the fact that disability is intrinsic to the human condition. Training those who offer disability support throughout whole Pacific-Asia region remains challenging. If teachers and workers are to know what their work does, to and for others, they need more than techniques of practical management. Leadership both political and professional that prizes the worth of human beings above the cost of their support is what matters most.
References


Attitudes towards English: The practice of teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Iranian universities

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Abstract
The well-established status of English as an international language for research and academic publication has increased the worldwide demand for the learning of English and, in particular, English for Academic Purposes (EAP). In Iran, EAP is an obligatory subject for all undergraduate university students. The focus of these courses is to enable students to read and understand texts and materials written in English in their major subject. However, despite the huge budget allocated each year to English language instruction in Iranian universities the standard has never reached a satisfactory level. This paper locates the current problems with the approach towards language learning that underpins the EAP programmes within the context of Iran’s changing attitudes towards the English language.

Introduction
Since World War II, the status of English as a language of global communication and as *lingua franca* for economic and scientific exchange has increased (Farhady, Sajadi Hezaveh, & Hedayati, 2010; Warschauer, 2000). With the globalisation of information, communication, and education, knowledge of English has become a requisite for accessing global science, research, and technology and for promoting modernisation and participation in global commerce (Barber, 1993; Crystal, 1997; Hanson, 1997; McArthur, 1998 as cited in Borjian, 2009). Researchers consider proficiency in English as an essential skill for citizens employed in foreign trade, tourism, scientific, and technological contexts (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009; Huang, 1999; Riazi, 2005; Warschauer, 2000).

Moreover, the well-established status of English as an international language of research and academic publication (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001) has increased worldwide demand for the learning of English and in particular English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (Eslami, 2010; Najjari, 2008). While the ability to study and write in English is needed for students wishing to pursue their education at international universities (Eslami, 2010) for those students from non-English speaking countries, knowledge and competency in English language is crucial in order to be able to access academic materials. Therefore, students learn English in order to use it in their professional or academic lives and to be able to succeed in their academic careers (Gillet & Wray, 2006).
According to Sharpling (2002), there has been an expansion of the discipline of EAP within universities and education institutions worldwide. EAP courses are set up to help those students for whom English is not their first language so they can reach their full academic potential (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). EAP is a requirement for educational studies in countries where English is the native language or the medium of instruction (Riazi, 2005; Zhao & Campbell, 1995), as well as in countries like Iran where English is not the first language or the medium of instruction. While the broad aim of EAP is to help students study or research in English, the focus of EAP courses differs depending on the country in which they are taught. For example, in English speaking countries such as the United Kingdom or the United States of America, EAP courses aim to prepare immigrant students to learn English and related skills that will enable them to overcome some of the linguistic and cultural difficulties they may experience in studying through the medium of English (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Gillett & Wray, 2006). In Iran, however, the main objective of the EAP courses taught at universities is almost exclusively “to facilitate the academic English level of students so that they are able to read and understand texts and materials written in English in their own major, and/or translate the English texts into Persian” (Eslami, 2010, p. 4).

EAP in Iran forms a considerable part of the curriculum for all academic disciplines at universities. It is a compulsory subject for both English and non-English majors at university (Najjari, 2008). Regardless of their academic field, the general requirement for all students at universities is to pass one to three EAP courses. These courses are three credit courses and taught three hours per week either by English or subject area instructors (Eslami, 2010; Farhady et al., 2010). However, despite the huge budget allocated to English language instruction in Iranian universities every year, students still do not achieve acceptable results in proficiency tests held either by the Higher Education Ministry or by international testing programs such as the International English Language Testing Sytem (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Therefore, a long-standing debate continues in Iran about how EAP courses can be made more effective.

An understanding of Iran’s history and the history of English language learning, as well as the country’s political relations with English-speaking countries over time provides an insight into the current attitudes of, and decisions made by, the government regarding English and EAP courses in particular. Iran, with a current population of around 75 million people, is home to a number of different ethnic and religious minorities. The diverse range of cultures living within the borders of Iran make the country a multicultural society. Ethnic groups include: Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians, Balouchis, Georgians, Jews, Kurds, Lurs, Persians and Turks. Among these ethnic groups exist different religious groups such as Bahaiis, Christians, Zaroastrians, Mandaeans, and Sufis (Jahani, 2007). Each of these minority ethnic groups have their own languages and cultures. However, Persians, comprising nearly half of the population, dominate the political system and national language of the country (Jahani, 2007).

Iran, proud of its unique cultural and political heritage, has been occupied and invaded by different powers throughout its 2500 years of history. The country was conquered by Greeks (334 B.C.), invaded by Muslim Arabs (740 C.E.), and was surrendered to
the Turk-Mongol rulers in the mid-eleventh century (1037 A.D.). Nevertheless it has preserved its unique culture and national identity. Apart from Turkey, Iran has been the only country in the Middle East that has been successful in maintaining its linguistic autonomy and non-Arabic cultural identity (Siah, 2009). Shi’ism, the major and the dominant religion in Iran, has also been a determining element in the national identity of the country (Riazi, 2005; Siah, 2009).

Persian, also known as Farsi, is Iran’s official language and the national lingua franca of its people. The two major foreign languages taught in schools across the country are English and Arabic (Riazi, 2005). Students start learning Arabic as a compulsory subject included in their school curriculum from the 6th grade, and English from the 7th grade (Jahani, 2007). While learning English as an international language allows students to take part in the world economy, research and development, and to communicate with the rest of the world, Jahani comments that the major rationale for students studying Arabic is to be able to read the Koran, the holy book of Islam (2007).

Iran has one of the youngest populations in the world. Around 70 percent of Iran’s 75 million people are under the age of 30 years. Of these, 50 percent are between the ages of 18-30 (Mahdavi, as cited in Davis, 2009). Such a large number of young people is due to the baby boom which occurred following Iran’s 1979 revolution and the Iran-Iraq war. There is no doubt, that well educated young people are an important asset for governments anywhere in the world. However, the large unemployed youth population and Iran’s isolation from the international community have frustrated many young people in the country. According to the International Monetary Fund, Iran ranks first in the “brain drain” among 61 ‘developing’ and ‘less developed’ countries (U.S. Department of State, 2010). The educated leave the country to pursue better economic opportunities abroad.

An Historical Overview of the English Language in Iran

The practice of foreign language instruction in Iran dates back to about 160 years ago following the establishment of the first organised institute of higher education called Dar-ul-funun (Riazi, 2005; Siah, 2009). In 1851, Dar-ul-funun was planned by the British educated Mirza Reza Mohandes, and built under the supervision of the Qajari prince, Bahram Mirza. Dar-ul-funun played a significant role in the advancement of technology and science in Iran (Siah, 2009). It was the first Western style higher education institution in Iran and became the symbol of modernisation in the Iranian educational system (Siah, 2009). There were 287 students by 1889, and 1100 graduates by 1891. During this time, the faculty consisted of 16 Iranian and 26 European professors. The main goal of the institution was to train upper-class Persian youth in medicine, engineering, military science, and geology (Riazi, 2005).

Pahlavi Dynasty

Iran’s political leader, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, son of Reza Shah, also well-known as the ‘father of Modern Iran’, ascended to the throne in September 1941 due to Reza Shah’s abdication (U.S. Department of State, 2010). Like his father, Mohammad Reza Shah was oriented towards Western societies and perceived Westernisation as
a means for modernisation. To accelerate the development of the country and solve the socio-economic problems of the time, the government decided to adopt a Western education system (Tollefson, 1991). Subsequently, during the Pahlavi period (1925-1979), the education system was based on the educational and material facilities of Western countries (Behrangi, 1957, as cited in Jahani, 2007; Shavarini, 2003). The government was directed toward more secularisation of Iran’s socio-cultural and educational infrastructure (Riazi, 2005) and aimed to enhance and accelerate Iran’s modernisation.

The task of transforming the social, economic, and military structure of the country required extensive assistance from foreign countries, especially the United States. Hence, the government decided to send students to foreign countries for education (Riazi, 2005). Thousands of Iranian students were sent to universities in the United States to acquire higher education. According to Hakimzadeh and Dixon (2006), from the 1950s until 1979, college students from middle and upper-class families were sent abroad for higher education “as a means of ensuring socio economic security and political access upon return”. Iran had one of the highest numbers of international students in the United States prior to the fall of the Shah (Altbach, 2004). This led to the creation of sister relationships between the Iranian universities and American universities during this time and scholarships were allocated for students to complete their postgraduate degrees at American universities (Farhady et al., 2010).

There was an English language proficiency requirement by host universities for young people and others who wished to go to the United States to pursue their education or for further specialisation (Farhady et al., 2010). Likewise, for the new generation at home searching for job opportunities, knowledge and proficiency in English was an essential requirement. Consequently, English became an important language in the public life of Iranians (Tollefson, 1991). Moreover, teaching English became a social need and, as a result, private language schools started functioning around the country and foreign English language experts were invited to teach in Iran (Tollefson, 1991). During this time, English was the major second language of the country and was included in the curriculum of both schools and universities (Riazi, 2005).

The Revolutionary Period

In 1979, the followers of Ayatollah Khomeini, a religious and political leader, launched a popular opposition movement against the Shah (Ahmad, 2004). The initiative behind the revolution was to break down the ‘class of Taghot’, or those perceived as arrogant and wealthy who were in charge, and to help the powerless and oppressed (Nomani & Behdad, 2006). The revolutionary government announced its objective of eliminating poverty and exploitation (Nomani & Behdad, 2006). With the fall of Shah and the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the new conservative government’s political stance towards the West shifted. At this time, Iran’s political discourse was dominated by third-worldism, anti-imperialism, and anti-Western sentiments (Borjian, 2009). The revolutionary slogan of “attaining national independence by relying on indigenised knowledge and domestic labor force” was widely heard (Borjian, 2009, p. 7). This political shift affected the previously positive attitudes held toward English and created
a breach in the relations between Iran and America.

According to Borjian (2009), the attitude of the Islamic government at the beginning of revolution towards foreign languages (which meant European languages), was profoundly negative. In fact, individuals who were fluent speakers of foreign languages were perceived as Westoxified, upper class, secular individuals who were alienated from the great Islamic heritage (Borjian, 2009). The Islamic government showed intense hostility towards individuals involved in promoting foreign languages and regarded them as “enemies”, “atheists”, and “agents of imperialism” (Borjian, 2009, p. 127). The Islamic government saw the teaching of foreign languages as “the main means of the colonial powers to practise cultural and linguistic imperialism upon third world nations” (Borjian, 2009, p.126). Of all foreign languages, English was the most hated due to its connection with the United States of America, or ‘Great Satan’ - the term used by Islamic authorities. English was regarded as a threat to the Persian language and Islamic culture (Khubchandani, 2008, as cited in Farhady et al., 2010).

After the 1979 revolution, the Islamic republic brought social organisations, including the public education system, under strict Islamic control. The major drive of the revolution was to dismiss and eradicate Western norms in all aspects of the country’s cultural life and to revitalise and strengthen Islamic and Iranian values (Borjian, 2009; Jahani, 2007; Riazi, 2005; Siah, 2009). Determined to create an Islamic image of the country, religion was used as a means “to denounce the legitimacy of the previous regime and to resist external influence” (Borjian, 2009, p. 119). The regime was worried about undesirable non-Iranian and non-Islamic values and patterns of thought and behavior offered by the Western and secular education system of the time (Jahani, 2007; Riazi, 2005).

The new Islamic government was not interested in borrowing and implementing the Westernised version of modernity and development (Borjian, 2009). Approaches that the country had previously borrowed from the West were no longer allowed to continue. The new government’s goal was to craft a homegrown model of development. To eliminate elements of Western thoughts and culture and to replace them with Islamic values, massive ideologically driven educational reform was necessary. Among the many important activities of the regime was the Cultural Revolution of the universities in 1980 (Riazi, 2005). Dramatic changes occurred in the higher education system of the country, during this time (Jahani, 2007). Consequently, thousands of faculty members, university students, lecturers, and staff, whom the Islamic regime suspected of un-Islamic tendencies and “Westoxicated” elements, were expelled (Jahani, 2007).

Prior to the 1979 revolution, textbooks for English courses of university students were generated by the British Council who took the responsibility and initiative for providing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials for Iranian university students (Eslami, 2010). Judging from the literature about the role of English language in Iran during the Pahlavi era, and the attitudes towards English, one would assume that the main focus of British Council resources had been to improve students’ communicative proficiency in English. However, with the change of government the new Islamic republic deemed the content and illustrations of the foreign language textbooks un-Islamic and not culturally appropriate for Iranian students. In an effort to minimise
the country’s need for foreign produced materials and also to indigenise the English education system of the country, the Center for Research and Development of Texts for University Students was established in 1981 (Najjari, 2008). This organisation, well known in Iran as SAMT, is in charge of curriculum development and course design for all academies in Iran.

Some years after the revolution, Iran’s economic condition experienced turmoil and struggled with high rates of inflation and unemployment. According to the U.S. Department of State (2010), economic decline was the result of the domestic political upheaval following the revolution, the decline of world oil prices, and the eight-year war with Iraq. With the coming to power of Rafsanjani in 1989, the Islamic regime accepted the need for engagement in international activities for the economic and political survival of the country (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). Consequently, Iranian politicians were forced to modify their original ideological commitments and, as Borjian notes, “extend their arms for technical and educational assistance to foreign universities” (2009, p. 137).

The Reformist Period

Determined to improve relations with the West, and to replace antagonist behavior with moderation and diplomacy, the government began to re-build a co-operative and positive attitude toward foreign and international development organisations (Borjian, 2009). Since higher education was recognised as a means to achieve economic growth and development, the government allocated considerable budgetary resources to that sector (Borjian, 2009). A number of policies were also developed that promised a secure environment in order to attract foreign investors into the country. One of the positive outcomes of such policies in relation to education was the attraction of many foreign publishers to the Tehran Book Fair. This was a positive move, as the Book Fair provided the only opportunity for Iranian scholars, professors, students, and book lovers to make contact with the international community through foreign publishers and to purchase the latest foreign books (Borjian, 2009).

It was not until 1997, after President Khatami took office that, for the first time, politicians accepted the role of the English language in contributing to the economic, social and scientific growth of the country (Borjian, 2009; Farhady et al., 2010). English was to be re-adopted because of its global significance and the government was committed to change its outlook on the English language. Reformist politicians were committed to improve the economic growth of the country and to build interaction with the international community. They looked for ways to position themselves as participants in the increasing global economy and education knowledge production. The new president advocated ‘dialogue among civilization’ in an effort to improve the image of the country in the international arena (Borjian, 2009).

In 2001 after an interval of 23 years, the British Council resumed its operation in Iran. The goal of cooperation between the Council and Islamic republic reported by Borjian (2009) has been “the promotion of friendly interchange and understanding through academic, scientific, and cultural activity between Iran and the UK” (p. 197). The Council organised various workshops in Tehran to which Iranian teachers, professors,
and graduate students were invited. British experts were to transfer the latest English language teaching pedagogical practices, methodologies, resources, and materials to Iranian English teachers. Promoting professional networking was another one of the Council’s goals. To make connections between Iranian and British professionals, eligible candidates in particular academic fields were identified and the academics sent to the United Kingdom on the Council’s scholarships and award programmes.

Khatami’s government, committed to privatisation and decentralisation, started injecting increasing resources into the private sectors of economy. Thus, throughout Khatami’s presidency English education in Iran entered a new phase due to the rise of private English language institutions on a national scale. According to estimates by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, there were about 2200 private English institutes throughout the country in 2003 with some of these language schools having as many as 50 to 100 branches (Borjian, 2009). These institutes were engaged in expanding English education in the country and importing materials from 1997-2005.

Returning to the Revolutionary Period

Ahmadinejad, a politician committed to the principles of revolution, was elected in August 2005. This marked a return to the early revolutionary period. Ahmadinejad came to power promising to fight unjust imperialism, and wipe out liberal and secular influences from the country’s higher education (Borjian, 2009). The political discourse of the country thus moved from a reformist position to a conservative one. The new president dismissed all the efforts made by the two former presidents to improve the image of the country in the international arena by attracting foreign investors and engaging with education and research in the global economy (Borjian, 2009). Since coming to office, Ahmadinejad has replaced liberal values and principles previously promoted such as freedom of expression, tolerance, respect for diversity and dialogue, with conservative religious aspirations.

Like the beliefs of the revolutionary leader, Ahmadinejad’s conservative government is committed to indigenisation and self reliance. To minimise foreign influence upon the country, several isolation strategies were employed by the post-2005 government. In late 2006 the British Council was accused of performing unauthorised activities in Iran and banned from organising public events such as workshops and conferences (Borjian, 2009). The Ministry of Intelligence prohibited all state-run organisations, ministries, and universities from collaborating with the British Council. Moreover, private language schools were prohibited from collaborating with foreign educational centers. There were systematic efforts to monitor the operation of private language institutes and to reduce their close collaboration with foreign educational centers. Changes also occurred to the structure of the annual Tehran Book Fair in May 2007. The site of the exhibition was changed and the registration fee was increased. This had a negative impact on foreigners’ attendance (Borjian, 2009).

Whilst the post-2005 government has implemented policies eradicating and discouraging foreign influence from the country’s education and English education, their attitudes towards English seem to have been constructive. According to Borjian (2009), this contradiction is the result of politicians’ belief that English is the language
of global research, science, and technology. English is perceived as a utilitarian tool for the students to import the knowledge and technology to serve the country’s modernisation goals. As such, English belongs to the world community as opposed to English speaking nations only. To demonstrate the attitude of Iranian experts and scholars towards English, Borjian (2009) refers to an article in the newsletter of a teacher training university that specifies that three out of thirteen traits of a literate individual relate to English fluency, computer, and information technology skills, and “the ability to adapt with innovation and modernity” (Borjian, 2009, p. 234).

It is within this contradictory policy climate that recent activities have been undertaken by Ahmadinejad’s government to promote English learning. One of these activities has been to amend previous regulation so that English can be used as the language of instruction in selected universities. This new regulation was controversial since it conflicted with early revolutionary principles. Additionally, English programmes began to be broadcasted by the national television network, which is under the direct supervision of the Supreme Leader of the country. As part of promoting English learning, one of the television channels has been engaged in broadcasting daily, for a total of one hour, a programme teaching standard American and British English. As part of this English programme, Iranian experts and professors have been invited to remind people about the importance of learning English to help the country achieve national independence (Borjian, 2009).

**English language motivation in Iran**

Since the victory of the Islamic revolution, the revolutionary leaders considered the socio-cultural dimension of the English language inappropriate and have thus replaced the teaching of English for communicative purposes with that of teaching English for translation and reading purposes. This is done by focusing on the inclusion of phonological, morphological, and syntactical aspects of English in the school curricula (Borjian, 2009). Proficiency in English is tested through the high-stakes university entrance examination, the passing of which is a prerequisite for accessing higher education. These exams, which include a section on foreign language, are developed, administered, and scored by the government agencies (Farhady & Hedayati, 2009). The focus of the tests is to assess students’ grammatical and lexical knowledge through answering multiple-choice items rather than their speaking, writing, and listening skills (Farhady & Hedayati, 2009).

According to Eslami (2010), there has been a systematic move to establish uniform discipline-based EAP programs for universities in Iran. Therefore, several ESP textbooks for students in different academic fields have been compiled by the new organisation of SAMT. While examining the content of these Iranian home grown ESP textbooks, researchers remarked that, while these books lack a communicative component, they encourage students to develop their reading for academic purposes essentially by promoting reading and grammatical skills (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009; Farhady & Hedayati, 2009; Farhady et al., 2010). Researchers often criticise this language instruction approach, asserting that it does not provide students with a full set of language skills necessary to become professional language users (Borjian,
2009; Riazi, 2005). Yet some programme developers and course designers justify the approach, claiming that it assists students in learning the most needed skill – that of reading, the skill which enables them to read academic journals and books related to their special fields of study (Farhady et al., 2010; Riazi, 2005).

Nevertheless, there is considerable literature that opposes such mono-skill courses, arguing that they are less motivating (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Motivation is regarded by many researchers as one of the most important key factors for success in learning a foreign or second language (Dorneyi, 2005; Gardner, 2007; Stern, 1983). Gardner and Lambert (1972) conceptualise motivation into two parts: instrumental and integrative. Accordingly, when people learn a second language for socio-cultural purposes they are engaged in the integrative orientation of motivation. In instrumental motivation on the other hand, there are external needs or practical values attached to learning a language. The learners’ intention for learning a language is to further an academic career (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

In addition, attitudes play a role in affecting students’ motivation in learning a language. Researchers consider attitudes and motivation as two major concepts that attribute to success or failure in second language acquisition (Gardner, 2007; Schumann, 1986; Stern, 1983). While negative attitudes can reduce learners’ motivation, positive attitudes towards the language and the culture of the people speaking that language can increase students’ motivation in learning a second language. Researchers report that in Iran, students do not find ESP courses motivating. Hassaskhak (2005) discovered that university ESP courses were considered to be among the most boring subjects (as cited in Borjian, 2009). He found that students consider ESP courses a quick means to pass a course in their quest for graduation. In fact, EAP learners in Iran like those reported in China (Zhao & Campbell, 1995), take English courses mainly to fulfill the requirement for their promotion to higher levels and graduation and are motivated solely by a desire to progress in their academic studies and career.

While Hassaskhak’s (2005, as cited in Borjian, 2009) study indicates students’ instrumental motivation for their success, the results of a study by Noora (2008) to evaluate non-English major students’ preferences in learning English found that students were highly motivated to learn English for communication with foreigners, understand everyday English, read English texts, and to use it for their future career. Further she notes that, although the vast majority of the students realise the importance of learning English, they are not interested in college English courses, taking the course just because it is a core requirement at all universities. Students do have positive attitude to language learning in general but a negative attitude to college language courses. The reason for this, Noora believes, may be due to the traditional methods of language instruction that are used in universities which can not help students develop their communicative proficiency.

**Limitations of English language teaching**

Despite continuous efforts in designing and redesigning English as a Foreign Language policy in Iran, critics argue that English teaching has not been successful and that problems still persist for both school and university learners (Farhady & Hedayati, 2009;
Farhady et al., 2010). In a national conference on higher education and its contribution to innovation and development in 2008, Dr Mojtabai raised concerns over the failure of the country’s education system in training qualified individuals with enough proficiency in English for the future labor force (cited in Borjian, 2009). In support of his concern, Amirian and Tavakoli (2009) found that both learners and instructors were dissatisfied with the current ESP courses, noting that the courses fail to account for learners’ future needs.

Learners’ needs are believed to be the starting point in the development of EAP curricula. It is frequently discussed that in order to provide EAP programs which are engaging, responsive to learners’ needs and motivating, a thorough and large scale needs analysis assessment needs to be carried out by the programme designers (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009). There is agreement amongst educationalists about the necessity of in-depth needs assessment before planning and implementation of EAP courses due to their diverse and complex objectives (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009; Nikui Nezhad, 2007). Surprisingly, however, Eslami (2010) has noted the absence of any systematic needs analysis from both the students’ and the teachers’ perspective in the development of EAP courses.

English textbooks used for ESP courses in the universities have been recognised as a further problem in Iran. Educators have claimed that textbooks used for English teaching ignore communication and interaction, and are dominated by the outdated method of grammar translation (Borjian, 2009). With reference to the English language teaching overseas, educators have called for a shift of focus in EAP courses in Iran from the grammatical to more communicative properties of the language. Similarly, Talebinezhad and Aliakbari (2002) call for teaching of English for communication purposes reporting that young people in Iran are exposed to English through magazines, books, newspaper, internet, and television, and, thus, the demand for learning English for communicative purposes is increasing. According to Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009), “urban youth in Iran are quite westernised and interested in English ... they learn English these days in order to enter prestigious universities and thereby proceed to the highest levels of education and strata in their society. They are also attracted by the opportunity of studying and living abroad, having access to the huge amount of new information resources, and becoming familiar with the cultural products of western countries” (p. 71).

Judging from the literature and the research studies conducted, it may be true to say that the conservative ideological stance of the Islamic republic towards English language is not responsive to the needs of the new generation. Ignorance in teaching of the communicative aspect of the English language makes the teaching of English similar to teaching a dead language, like Latin. In addition, teaching English using grammar translation methods and the dismissal of the relationship between language learning and cultural experience leads to learning failure. In contrast, implementing the communicative approach in English language courses as promoted by researchers in China will not only develop learners’ confidence and fluency in oral interaction but will also increase students’ motivation in foreign language learning.
References:


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