

Shifting tides: Reflecting on regional aspects of our roles as comparative and international educators

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In this paper, we critically interrogate the way in which comparative and international education coursework at two large institutions in Australia and New Zealand embody or challenge teleological, colonial, and Western/Northern-centric perspectives on education and development. Embedded within a broader and introspective examination of our roles as comparative and international educators in these universities, we deconstruct the intent behind our course objectives, readings, lecture content and assessment tasks, and place them into conversation with our own pedagogical self-reflections, observations of practice and student feedback. In doing so, we highlight ways in which we believe we are beginning to prepare a new generation of more critically conscious, and regionally-minded set of teachers, development practitioners and researchers. Specifically, by 'making the familiar strange,' and encouraging our students to co-construct knowledge, we argue we can begin to create actionable spaces which encourage an alternative reading of the world; something colleagues from across Oceania and further afield have long argued for as part of the decolonizing process. We also highlight how this process has led us to better recognize our own positionalities and epistemologies as CIE educators, in hopes that it can lead to an ongoing space for dialogue between educators and researchers within and beyond the region.

Keywords: comparative education, teacher education, decolonial, postcolonial, self-study, actionable space, pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Students are introduced and exposed to the field of comparative and international education (CIE) in a number of ways, including: as teacher education students; arts-based students in sociology, anthropology, politics or development studies; or as graduate students pursuing individual research projects, among others. In this paper, we posit that students' participation through undergraduate and postgraduate coursework in CIE is a mechanism for shaping and reshaping the field of CIE. We believe this engagement can

(re)constitute enduring understandings about the role and place of education in national and, increasingly, multi-level development efforts. Students' understandings of CIE are then carried with them into the future positions they occupy as educators, international development practitioners, policymakers or scholars. In sum, the conceptualizations of CIE they learn and internalize in CIE coursework have significance beyond the classroom.

To date, however, little research has explored the processes through which CIE coursework aims to cultivate specific understandings of the field. Likewise, scant research has investigated student experiences of the ways that it may do so. Concurrently, there also remains a paucity of scholarly research on the interests, agendas, and backgrounds of those teaching CIE to these individuals. While some work has commenced on charting the history and content of CIE teaching around the world (Bickmore, Hayhoe, Manion, Mundy, & Read, 2017; Crossley & Tickly, 2004; Johansson Fua, 2016; Kubow & Blosser, 2016; Larsen, Majhanovich, & Masemann, 2007; O'Sullivan, Maarman, & Wolhuter, 2008; O'Sullivan, Wolhuter, & Maarman, 2010; Wolhuter, O'Sullivan, Anderson, & Wood, 2011), minimal research has examined how and why CIE is taught as it is within institutions in Oceania. This is particularly important because of the differing epistemologies on which the act of comparison and internationalization within education might be both understood and enacted in the broader Oceanic region (e.g., Coxon & Munce, 2008; Johansson Fua, 2016; Sanga, Niroa, Kalmele, & Crowl, 2004; Smith, 1999; Thaman, 1993, 1999). This article builds on these foundations because it extends research on the pedagogies of practice in the field.

At the 2015 Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES) conference, we started having conversations about different approaches to teaching comparative and international education, based, in part, on Thomas' (2015) presentation about his own CIE pedagogy in Wisconsin. Through these initial conversations, the idea emerged to collectively explore our own pedagogies and processes. We, therefore, launched a small pilot study wherein we sought to investigate the pedagogical means through which the field of CIE is (re)formed at our respective institutions: the Universities of Sydney and Auckland. Both universities have a long history of engagement with and shaping of aspects of regional and international agendas for CIE, and in developing new generations of CIE scholars throughout the wider Asia-Pacific region (Fox, 2008).

Yet, recent geopolitical shifts, increasing concerns about inequity with/between countries in our near Pacific region, and ongoing dialogue about the tensions between globalization, regional, and national appropriation, establish an urgent need to critically assess our own pedagogical intent behind the teaching of CIE (Kubow & Blosser, 2016). This demand is made even more visible when we read the practice of CIE through postcolonial and decolonising critiques of development and new regionalisms which demand us to think about our (re)presentations of ourselves and others (Fox, 2014; Johansson Fua, 2016; McCormick, 2016; Mignolo, 2007; Takayama, Sriprakash, & Connell, 2017). Due precisely to those histories of colonization and ongoing economic and political dependencies, understandings of what constitutes "our" region have been dynamic and varied, dependent on location, standpoint and time (Hau'ofa, 1993; Johansson Fua, 2016; McCormick, 2017). It is for these reasons that we believe it is important to take time to understand how our own pedagogical intent and enactment shapes and influences our students' thinking and understandings of CIE and what it means for their own work as future educators, development practitioners, policymakers and scholars.

At the outset, we feel it is important to provide a disclaimer for this work. From the start, we were highly conscious that our institutions have particular economic, historical, and political locations, notably as both former colonizing nations of the region and currently, financially dominant, aid-giving nations.¹ Due to the nature of the duo-/trio-ethnographic methodology outlined below, as well as logistical, resource and time constraints, the claims that can be made from of this component of the study are, therefore, so far limited to experiences located in these two institutions, within networks of regional personal and professional relationships. While we attempt to draw from that range of relationships and work, our work cannot and does not claim to be representative of the range of places and voices that constitute our region, including from Pacific Island nations, or anyone born and bred in Australia or New Zealand and, importantly, including indigenous perspectives. That said, this first stage of the research was, from the outset, viewed as an exploratory pilot, from which we hoped we would be able to collaborate with colleagues in the broader region with the aim, ideally, of building deeper understandings and contributing to continual processes of addressing and dismantling contemporary and historical inequities, and long-existing processes of decolonization.

To these ends, this paper explores several aspects of our pedagogy. It is effectively research into our curricular and pedagogical practices, with the aim of us understanding ourselves, as university educators, and the experiences of student learning in dialectic with the intended and enacted curriculum expectations for our CIE courses (Hubball & Gold, 2007). This included an analysis of: (1) our course objectives, readings, lecture content, and assessment tasks—what Tikly and Crossley (2001, p. 564) call the “canon of CIE”² and how they are linked to our aspirations and intentions for our students; and (2) the impact this pedagogical canon has on the students themselves. Much of these data are read through the challenge put to all CIE educators by Oceanic scholars, of how we might counter the imperialistic and colonial boundaries, which arguably may be reproduced through the pedagogy of CIE itself (Thaman, 2009). Indeed, many senior scholars within the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES) have been trained and educated at various institutions of the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand (the contexts included in this analysis), and further abroad.

The paper begins by discussing the approach we undertook in this project, which at its core was a collaborative self-study into our own pedagogical intentions and enactments when it comes to the teaching of CIE in parts of this region (Loughran & Russell, 2002). We then move to discussing some key themes and issues arising out of the data we gathered. Given our particular concern about how we might use CIE to disrupt prevalent tendencies, we give specific attention to the notion of disrupting binaries. We believe that only then can we move our students towards what Fox (2016, p. 70) calls “ethical and actionable spaces” where they open themselves to what the “other” is saying, and

¹ We offer thanks to one reviewer for drawing our attention to the fact that we had not acknowledged and explored this important consideration sufficiently in early drafts of the article, even though it has been a consideration throughout the work.

² This canon, according to the authors, includes the major areas of knowledge, issues, axioms, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies that define comparative and international education as a field of study. They acknowledge that the canon is not a fixed entity, is contested, and often reflects particular views of social reality and of human nature that serve to legitimize a range of often competing interests within the academy and in wider society.

recognize another reality for education and development is possible and probable if acted upon in specific ways.

Throughout this analysis, we are particularly drawn to Epeli Hau'ofa's (1993, p. 16) vision of Oceania as a "sea of islands". He claims that "Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us," and he challenges dominant views that have "taken the Pacific further and further into dependency on powerful nations" (p. 2). While acknowledging Hau'ofa's perspective as a response to deep and long inequities and injustices inflicted upon Pacific island states by regional neighbours and those beyond, we believe that view of Oceania could also extend to how we look at and practice CIE *in* a wider Oceania; namely a broad and encompassing field which tolerates, accepts, and welcome different epistemological and ontological paradigms as per Hau'ofa's vision. It is also one that we have discussed in greater depth in other papers associated with this project, and has been discussed regionally (see Thaman 2009, among many). Thus, at the core of this introspective engagement into our own pedagogy is a broader response and call to those who are members or affiliated with OCIES: As part of conceptualizing and realizing a new vision for CIE in the society, specifically one that is more inclusive and more porous to multiple ways of knowing and being, sits a responsibility to examine our own roles as educators within the Oceanic spaces and places within which we find ourselves.

TOWARDS LOCATING CIE AND CIE PEDAGOGY REGIONALLY

At the outset, we feel it is important to acknowledge our own positionalities and some of the key limitations of this voyage. Importantly, we need to acknowledge that this was a pilot study, and the methodology, time, and resourcing did not afford for the study to extend to other institutions in the region, or other units of study (particularly in the case of Sydney). As noted above, there is an inherent bias and potential reproduction of binaries given that Australia and New Zealand are not fully representative of Oceania's diversity. For this reason, it is important to make clear that we do not intend to lay claim to what the teaching of CIE might mean to our colleagues and peers in other institutions across the region; however, we do hope that this pilot research will contribute to and extend existing conversations about this issue in coming years. Additionally, none of us are 'natives' of Oceania, but rather have transplanted ourselves into the region at various times in the past 10-15 years. We are novices in understanding the full complexity of Oceania as a region.

Yet based on our ongoing teaching of CIE, growing engagement with colleagues, emerging research experiences in the region, and awareness that there exists an extensive body of scholarship that stakes a claim for an Oceanic epistemology that is distinct, we aim to make a further contribution, albeit modest, to the conversation about what CIE is or is not, and how pedagogy itself shapes the field. As those now tasked with educating the next generation of teachers, international development practitioners, and scholars of education and development in the region and beyond, we feel drawn to Johansson Fua's (2016) observation that:

Hau'ofa's open invitation to an Oceanic space not only encourages the voices of Pacific people in all their complexity and diversity, but also more recent "travellers" who have come to call this region their home. In today's Pacific, the voices are

diverse, complex and multi-faceted with an increasing blurring of the lines between “insider” and “outsider”. (p. 35)

Johansson Fua goes on to offer a cautionary critique of the field, citing Hau’ofa’s important “foundation for problematizing reliance on outsiders,” in stating that,

The current conversation regarding the centrality of culture and context to the field remains generally for “outsiders”, for researchers, academics and development partners who are external to the context. The question asked here is, if the voice of insiders are included in the conversations about comparative and international educational research, what inferences would this have on research approaches, on methodology and on the knowledge generated? (p. 32)

As educators, researchers, and people from hybrid contexts who aim to recognize these concerns, yet also to variously challenge binaries of “inside” and “out” (see McCormick, 2017 and McNess, Arthur, & Crossley, 2015), we hope future stages emanating from this pilot study and other work can respond to this call.

Scholars like Tikly and Crossley (2001) and McGrath (2010) raise concern about the numerous exclusionary discourses and singular narratives common to CIE, which are then (re)produced in particular pedagogical canons. Specifically, they observe how there is a growing danger that rationalistic and problem-solving narratives within CIE tend to homogenise and decontextualize the local for the purposes of understanding “what works best.” This view has more recently been expressed again by Roger Dale (2015), who notes that CIE politically, discursively, theoretically, and methodology has, in large part, been the product of the teleological project of Western modernization. CIE under this banner becomes a model for empirically testing, and then influencing and shaping national, regional, and global education policies under the banner of making knowledge relevant and immediately applicable. Takayama, Sriprakash, and Connell (2017) suggest that the field of CIE has always had colonial legacies, and present examples of this include the mounting power of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development through measures such as Programme for International Student Assessment, and the World Bank through the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (see Robertson, 2012; Robertson & Dale, 2013). This neo-colonial and modernist view of comparison and internationalization, tends to privilege the Northern, English-speaking episteme as Tikly and Crossley (2001) note; in turn “marginalizing” or “othering” alternative viewpoints.

The prevalence of this modernist and rationalist discourse within CIE in some institutions in the region, and its potential to intentionally or inadvertently reproduce universalist ideas on globalization, international development and educational “success,” is one about which a number of scholars in our region have voiced concern. Koya Vaka’utu (2016, p. 3), drawing on Baudrillard’s (2002, p. 63) notion of the “violence of the global” identifies how the modernist narrative has “conditioned many to believe in its important relative truth and in the bounded rationality that we are only as good as the outside world says we are.” In a similar way, Fox (2008, p. 19) describes the inherent tensions which exist between the Western/Northern narratives and values and local constructions of knowledge in our region, driving “the threat of exclusion” and acting as “driving forces behind resistance” towards CIE. Johansson Fua (2016) recognizes that while CIE has always had space in it for recognizing and acknowledging the centrality of culture and

context, what was missing within the CIE society of the region³ was a space where researchers from the Pacific played an active role in shaping the research agenda, the methodologies, and knowledge generated within the society. Instead, initiatives such as the Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative by Pacific People for Pacific People, the Network of Pacific Education, and the Vaka Pasifiki advanced scholarship and action on what an education agenda for and by Pacific peoples would look like in parallel to the CIE society (see Coxon & Munce, 2008; Manu, Johansson Fua, & Tagivakatini, 2008; Nabobo-Baba, 2012; Sanga, 2016; Taufeu lungaki, Pene, & Benson, 2002; Thaman, 2009). While there was occasional cross-fertilization from colleagues who worked across both spaces, there was a general sense that the CIE society, in its former incarnation was not such a welcoming house, with perhaps not as many rooms as was necessary to accommodate the diversity of the region served by it.⁴ How this might be overcome through our pedagogy became a particular concern for us as CIE educators at two large institutions in the region.

METHODOLOGY

The two institutions where this research occurred—the Universities of Sydney and Auckland—both teach CIE as explicit courses, but with significant variation. Sydney is one of the few remaining institutions in Australia or New Zealand to have an elective course within its undergraduate teacher education programme on CIE (see Fox, 2008). The course, titled: *Global Poverty and Education*, focuses on exploring relationships between education, poverty and international development in multi-spatial geographical, institutional, and policy contexts (from sub-national levels through to global).⁵ It is linked to several of the Australian and New South Wales (NSW) frameworks and teaching standards that reference the diversity of students and their cultural and national backgrounds (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2017) as well as the importance of understanding local and global connections in teacher practice (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). Additionally, at the postgraduate level, three additional courses—two taught online—are offered at Sydney. One is a *Global Poverty, Social Policy, and Education* unit, which presents to students’ various interpretations and contestations on the relationship between education and poverty, and critically analyses policy frameworks (such as EFA and the MDGs) that have been established to address these concerns. Another is a *Globalisation and Education* unit, which affords students opportunities to view educational phenomena through competing theories/viewpoints of globalization, and the third *Development: Communication and Education*, which is located in the Department of Anthropology and more explicitly incorporates linguistics dimensions. At Auckland, just one course is offered on CIE, and only at the postgraduate level. The course, *Education and Development*, is designed for students studying in the

³ Until 2015, the society was known as the Australia New Zealand Comparative and International Education Society, or ANZCIES. The name change of the society, was prompted by a desire to make the society more inclusive and representative of the region (see Coxon, 2016).

⁴ This was discussed by Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, from the University of Guam, in her keynote address at the 2016 OCIES Conference in Sydney.

⁵ It should be noted that both instructors of this CIE course are unsatisfied with its name and have requested a change to something that better reflects the nuance of the field and discourses related to “poverty.” However, due to levels and systems of bureaucracy at higher education institutions, a more comprehensive name change necessitates a series of proposals and subsequent approvals. In the meantime, the instructors have been able to adjust it to “Global Perspectives, Poverty & Education” from 2018 and recognize changing and multiple understandings of ‘poverty’, its causes and consequences.

Faculties of Education and Arts, and often includes students coming from both education and development studies backgrounds. This course covers similar content to the postgraduate courses in Sydney but has historically paid significant attention to New Zealand’s official development aid (ODA) and the manifestation of education and development issues in the Pacific region (see Table 1). Another key difference in the descriptors alone is a clearer signposting in the Auckland course of the problematic labels of developing/underdeveloped as well as of the concept of development—indicated by the placement of the terms themselves in quotation marks in the course descriptor available to students.

As already noted, the research collaboration between the three of us began with the intention of conducting a trio-ethnography, which we started before receiving seed funding through an OCIES Network and Fellowship Grant in 2016. The grant then enabled us to visit each other’s institutions and observe classes/tutorials, as well as virtually collaborate, reflect on, and write together over a period of 12 months. Before the exchanges to each other’s institutions, we commenced by writing an auto-ethnographic account of our own understandings of CIE and pedagogical intentions when teaching CIE. These accounts were shared with each other, with each person responding to the other two reflections as we engaged in a trio-ethnography, more details of which can be found in other existing and forthcoming work (McCormick, Shah, & Thomas, 2016). This aspect of the process revealed that while we all teach, research, and supervise in CIE in our respective institutions, our past experiences, backgrounds and entry into academia have been quite varied. This has, in turn, shaped some of our individual pedagogical intents and foci. Interestingly, despite our variegated backgrounds, we shared several common threads in our aspirations as CIE educators in our respective institutions. These are discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section.

Table 1: CIE courses at Auckland and Sydney included in present study

Location	Auckland	Sydney
Course title	EDUC 705: Education and the Development Process	EDUF 3026: Global Poverty and Education
Students	Postgraduate students in Arts and Education	Undergraduate teacher education students
Course descriptor	Education has been considered a key factor for national development in countries throughout the Global South since the post-WWII emergence of development programmes. A vast array of research literature linking educational ideas, structures and processes with social, cultural and economic change has been produced in the decades since. This course examines the nature and role of education within the ‘developing’ world, with a particular focus on the region of which New Zealand is part, Oceania. The theoretical content of the course is derived largely from concepts and models of “development” and globalization and how these influence	This unit of study explores relationships between education, poverty and development in international contexts. It acknowledges the importance of a broad-ranging view of international development, including its economic, political, and cultural dimensions. The unit examines key indicators related to poverty and education, and explores the educational implications of global programs including Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The roles of

	<p>educational policy and practice. A key question that guides this course is whether and how education might contribute to sustainable, equitable and peaceful development for nations (and their citizens) on the ‘periphery’ of the global economy.</p>	<p>multilateral, bilateral and non-state agencies in educational development are investigated to discuss the multiple actors in global development and the politics of official development aid (ODA).</p>
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Following this trio-ethnography and its subsequent analysis, we engaged more substantively in interrogating our pedagogical canon in light of this initial work. This included sharing and reviewing the course outlines, selected lecture materials, and assessment tasks for units taught in 2016, and observing at least one class and/or tutorial session of another of our peers. A total of six observations in two different units, taught in the latter half of 2016, were conducted across our institutions, and each lasted between one to three hours. The three of us agreed to use a peer review model, founded on principles of mutuality and equality, and which would act as a formative and self-reflective exercise for the observer and the observed (see Gosling & O’Connor, 2009). A protocol was developed for the observation which involved: (1) a pre-observation discussion to identify successes and challenges to date of the unit/section under observation and key areas for the observer to focus attention on; (2) the observation itself which involved recording what was occurring at regular intervals, as well as observer reflection on this activity; and (3) a post observation debrief in which the teacher and the observer both discussed what occurred during that particular class, with some discussion of pedagogical strengths and shared agreement on areas for further consideration/reflection (Bell & Cooper, 2013; Bernstein, 2008). The observation notes and subsequent reflection (often in the form of a conversation), were recorded, transcribed and later coded.

From the student experience side, two sources of data were reviewed and analysed. One included summative evaluations of the courses, conducted either externally by academic quality assurance departments within each of our universities, and/or internally by the teaching team itself. In Sydney, 10 students (out of 34 enrolled in EDUF 3026) responded to the online summative survey (USS), and in Auckland, five out of eight students enrolled in EDUC 705 completed the university-administered online summative survey (SET Evaluation). Both surveys asked similar course evaluation questions using a 5-point Likert-scale on aspects such as course structure, organization, assessment utility/relevance, and overall course satisfaction. Room was also provided in both of these online surveys for students to make comment on aspects of the course they found helpful/enjoyed, and areas they would hope to see improvement. All eight students enrolled in EDUC 705 at the University of Auckland completed a separate survey administered in the last class sessions which asked three open ended questions about how their thinking had shifted on understandings of development, education’s contribution to development, and the similarity/differences in concerns in education between the “developing” and “developed” world.

Attempts were also made in both institutions to speak to students after the completion of the course/unit and gather in-depth feedback on their experiences. A common semi-structured interview guide, used across both institutions, asked questions about how their ideas about education and development, along with CIE as a field, shifted as a result of the course, as well as what they generally enjoyed most and least about the course. In Sydney, despite multiple attempts to reach out to students completing the undergraduate

unit in Semester 2, 2016, only one student committed to be interviewed. In Auckland, five students agreed to participate in an interview, either in person or through Skype/telephone. These interviews were conducted by a research assistant to retain some level of objectivity, and all interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded inductively.

While an extensive array of data was collected as part of this larger comparative project, we are unable to share all of these data in the limited space available to us in this article. Instead, we focus this article on some thematic strands related to the curriculum of CIE—which we broadly understand in this paper as not only the content of our courses, but also our pedagogic intentions, assessment structures, and student experiences/outcomes. Doing so allows us to explore whether and how the way we approach the teaching of CIE at present addresses the important task of creating more inclusive and, potentially, interactive spaces for CIE in our region.

FINDINGS: EMBRACING THE POSTCOLONIAL AND POST-STRUCTURAL TURNS IN CIE CURRICULUM

Tikly and Crossly (2001) note that sitting alongside the rationalist push within CIE has been a growing counter current—shaped by critical theory along with postmodern, postcolonial, and feminist theories—which aims to decentre some of the universal pretensions of Western thought that have marked CIE. This critical voice specifies the need to question taken for granted assumptions embedded in ideas of “good education practice” and to reveal, rather than mask, the links between the modernist discourse and the power of dominant groups in society. The aim of using feminist and postcolonial theory in CIE is to recover “marginalised voices of the Other and to accept alternative truths and a plurality of ways of knowing the world” (Tikly & Crossly, 2001, p. 571).

Specific to our region, Thaman (1999, 2009) and Nabobo-Baba (2012), for example, have noted that those teaching about and discussing the role of education in the region must constantly ask the question of *education for whom and for what*. For educators, such as ourselves, it means presenting and acknowledging the equal merit of alternative knowledge systems and ways of being, and encouraging students to question the complacency of a unilateral perspective of internationalization, globalization, and development-writ-large (Koya Vaka’utu, 2016). This call to “unleash our global postcolonial consciousness” and to act in an intercultural, actionable, and ethical space, can allow us as CIE educators to avoid the reproduction of symbolic violence, which excludes many of our neighbours and colleagues (Fox, 2016, p. 59). Some examples of how this manifested in our curriculum is described in the following sections, which are organized according to two larger themes that emerged from the data and our goals as CIE educators: 1) making the familiar strange; and 2) co-constructing knowledge. Each of these themes are considered in turn.

Making the familiar strange

All three of us agreed that within our region, which has been irrevocably shaped by colonization, imperialism, and the marginalization of indigenous viewpoints, it was vital to take a transparent and critical look at relationships of power that exist within the enterprises of education and development and, indeed, within this research itself, and to embrace a stronger decolonising and post-development theoretical standpoint (e.g., Escobar, 1995; Esteva, 1998; Latouche, 1993). For example, one of us, in our initial auto-ethnography reflected that “I hope my students leave my courses with an enduring desire

and ability to evaluate their actions and the deeply rooted assumptions in development discourse and practice,” with another of us responding to this, “Funny . . . I think I might have written almost the same thing to a tee. Perhaps again this is a commonality that binds us together.”

In reviewing the objectives of two of our CIE courses (see Table 2), we identified that there were several common themes that cut across both units: (1) explicit attention to competing meanings and understandings of “international development” as a concept; (2) focus on the dialectic which exists between the local and global, but with clear attention to the tensions and clashes which neoliberal globalization brings about in small-island and developing nations; (3) a strong critique of the current aid architecture and the ways in which it narrows spaces for authentic “partnership”; and (4) critical deconstructions of binaries and taken for granted justificatory narratives, such as that of the relationship between education and “poverty” as well as broader questions of what poverty and underdevelopment mean within education.

We came to realize that a common thread running through the course objective/learning intentions of the course outlines we compared was clear intention to critically unpack some of the commonly held notions of education and its connections to development nationally, regionally, and globally. The rationale for this was expressed by one of us in our initial reflections during the trio-ethnographic component of the study:

I find that my students come in with quite idealised visions of what role and function education can serve in “development.” I want these students to look at this relationship in a more critical light, and understand that underpinning such a linear and universal narrative are actually quite problematic assumptions and theories of causality. For the teachers I work with, it is important that they see their often classroom experiences contextualised within broader global narratives and concerns about accountability, measurement, universality of knowledge, and where and how “education” can take place . . . I want to open up the Pandora’s box and get them to see that education can be as much as a problem as a panacea for development concerns and issues, and that there are important questions to be asked about the relationship between education and poverty reduction.

Table 2: Course objectives from the CIE courses at Auckland and Sydney

Course	Course objectives
EDUC 705 (Auckland)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify contestations and debates regarding the role of education towards social, economic and political development for countries in the Global South; 2. Critically evaluate the “Global Education Agenda”—informed in large part by the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals—and assess its strengths and limitations, as well as the influences it has had on national and international educational policymaking; 3. Critically analyse processes of globalization and localization and their implications for education policies and practices internationally and/or in a particular context; 4. Consider the social, cultural, environmental and economic consequences of national and international issues in its relation to education and development. 5. Develop skills such as discerning and evaluating arguments from academic texts to present this in written form, and working collaborative and constructively with colleagues.

EDUF 3026 (Sydney)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand major global educational forces impacting on developing countries;2. Apply knowledge of major models of national development and their implications for educational theory, policy and practice;3. Apply this knowledge base to a range of policy issues of current concern in many countries internationally;4. Gain critical understanding of the functions of formal schooling and non-formal education, including early childhood care and education, in countries identified as “developing”;5. Understand Australia’s international relations in education and major multilateral organizations working in education, and appreciate the potential role of course unit graduates in professional and academic work in international and development education;6. Application of the above skills to: advanced academic research in both individual and group tasks; bibliographic searches of high relevance to content; and advanced academic writing skills.
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There was an explicit intention common across all our pedagogical approaches to draw on C. Wright Mills’ (1959) idea of the sociological imagination and to connect personal experiences to society at large. As one of us discussed in response to the above reflection,

I also hope current and future teachers learn to make the familiar strange. I hope their engagement with and exploration of other cultures and educational systems causes them to ask critical questions about the system that is most familiar or comfortable for them . . . [and] consider the broader structural elements.

In essence, without explicitly mentioning Mills (2000[1959]), he hoped that students get outside “the welter of their daily experience” (p. 5) and gain “the capacity to shift from one perspective to another” (p. 7).

At the same time, there was a strong desire to disrupt the “othering” process that is perpetuated in CIE—when we classify countries as developed or developing, Global North/South, fragile/not, or poor. The course in Sydney, for example, asks the critical question of “are we all developing countries now?” before the Sustainable Development Goals made that question a global concern by including all countries in the new development agenda. This then manifests in the course structure, with a lecture that looks at issues of poverty and marginalization in the United States. The objective of the lecture is to challenge students’ conceptions of what it means to be “developed” and, by doing so, allow them to move away from teleological, modernist binaries of orthodox development theory. The lecturer noted that,

. . .the challenge and opportunity to explore . . . one’s own system [is] both difficult and exciting. Yet it’s so incredibly important, in my mind . . . for many of my students . . . [who] are overwhelmingly but understandably myopic in their perspective of education.

Indeed, blurring the boundaries between historic notions of development was deemed pivotal to the function of the course and, therefore, influenced the curating of course content.

The disruption of binaries was also visible in practice in other parts of the course. One tutorial session in EDUF 3026 followed up on a lecture on the impacts of decentralization and privatization of education in Indonesia. The lecturer asked students to consider the

parallels between what had been described as occurring in Indonesia and what was occurring in higher education in Australia. Students were quick to identify how the increasing differentiation of qualifications and associated fees with different degrees were a product of a user-pays model of higher degree provision. They also noted how this culture made students “consumers” and shifted the focus towards keeping students happy rather than ensuring students were challenged and learning. Observation notes, taken by one of us documenting this session, record:

[The lecturer] did an excellent job of weaving the course narrative together—purpose of education as well as question of “whether we are all developing countries” in terms of the common issues and challenges faced across both Australia and Indonesia. [It] provokes students to think beyond critique to action as well as to contextualize their experiences as a student and as future teachers.

This critical lens ideally aims to challenge students to consider the often deeply held assumptions they maintain about their own experiences and perspectives.

Indeed, there was a strong emphasis within the EDUF 3026 course at Sydney to explore in detail the ways in which development thought and practice has maintained assumptions of colonial relations and human capitalist theory. As an example, the lecture, readings and workshops for one week focused on deconstructing and locating the notion of “regions,” particularly in how it has been deployed in the architecture and discourse of education and development, with specific focus on Australia and near Pacific contexts. The aim was to relate to students’ identities as citizens and educators. The lecture began with posing the question: *(How) do you see (y)our region?* This framing deliberately highlighted that some may or may not consider it a relevant marker, and that those understandings may or may not be shared. In the lecture, the whole group shared their responses, which ranged from sub-national ideas of regional affiliation, to macro-level “Global South/North” identifications. The aim was to encourage students to consider questions of geographical and other scale, personal locations and, importantly, to disrupt potential assumptions of shared understanding in language and terminology, which is a through-line of the unit. The lecturer then brought the focus to the supra-national and considers the differential naming of regional and sub-regional variations in: Asia Pacific, the South Pacific, Oceania, Micronesia, Polynesia and their origins with some, such as Melanesia, originally based on racist identification of physical attributes (see McCormick 2011, among others, for fuller discussion) and how these labels change over time. Within the lecture, histories of colonization of and by Australia, slaving/“black-birding” and institutionalized discrimination in Australia, and the parallel construction of formal schooling systems, were outlined. These aspects are located in critical discussions of conceptions of modernity, those identified as “indigenous” or “traditional” epistemologies and knowledges, language, place and related to differing purposes and types of education. These areas of inquiry were, in turn, contrasted with and related to wider education and international development paradigms and theories, including, for example, liberal capitalist, postcolonial, radical humanist, explored in earlier weeks and assignments (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2015).

All of the above topics are framed within a discussion of contemporary decolonizing movements across inter-related research, pedagogy, policy and “practice” spheres, by and with educators and researchers from Pacific island countries. This includes exploring visual metaphors for Pacific education, research approaches and pedagogies (Sanga, 2013) in Tonga, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, examining the Reclaiming Pacific

Education Initiative (Nabobo-Baba, 2012), and the Melanesian Spearhead Group's Alternative Indicators of Development initiative (Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs 2012), and discussing some of the recent work of the OCIES. The course also explores the regional work of Vanuatu's *Wan Smol Bag* organisation and other collaborations between "internal" and "external" education actors, and ties it to multiple scales and types of education activity and actors. Readings and videos for the week expose students to a range of perspectives and voices, and include the Vanuatu Alternative Indicators pilot report, a Papua New Guinean teacher's auto-ethnography and materials from the Pacific scholars cited above (Reta, 2010). The lecturers for the course also consider and invoke complexities of their own roles as educators and researchers in an Australian institution working in different ways in multi-level contexts. In sum, at Sydney, the course and its instructors actively seek to disrupt assumptions through the approaches and perspectives noted above, as well as others not reported in this paper.

In the case of EDUC 705 in Auckland, the inclusion of concerns of poverty and underdevelopment within Aotearoa/New Zealand was only instituted last year based on inspiration from the structure of the Sydney course. This fact alone highlights the benefits of engaging in collaborative self-study across courses and institutions. In New Zealand, there is mounting concern for the impact which neoliberal policies have had on the social egalitarian foundations of New Zealand society, and particularly on issues such as educational underachievement and its links to child poverty (Boston & Chapple, 2014). In response, at the end of EDUC 705, students are now asked to reflect on what the SDGs mandate that all countries be accountable to the goals means for New Zealand. They are provided data on patterns of educational achievement broken down by ethnicity and wealth quintiles, and also access to the report produced by the UN's Commission on the Rights of the Child (2016). They discuss the implications these data have for New Zealand as having "developing world problems" within its own borders, similar to the Sydney lecture on "development" issues of human wellbeing in the United States. Some of the Auckland students, in their written reflection afterwards noted the following:

What the data seems to suggest is that perhaps the binary of developed and developing countries no longer serve us well when we look at issues of sustainable development. It blinds us to the fact that inequalities and inequities exist within so-called developed countries.

When we look beyond the statistics of the big picture of the economy such as GDP, CPI, export and import rates and so on, the figure gathered within any country such as poverty, inequality can show how a so-called developed country face developing issues domestically [sic]. In this sense, it is ambiguous to identify who is absolutely developed or developing for sure.

What these reflections from students suggests is awareness of the unhelpful nature of binaries and othering, which has been an unfortunate legacy of development activities in the region. It suggests growing cognisance of students, of the blurring of lines between "insider" and "outsider," which Johansson Fua (2016) notes is a reality of the contemporaneous Oceanic space we commonly inhabit.

These comments also highlight the extent to which the framing and language of the instructor, as well as the course readings curated by the instructor, influence the thinking and language of the students enrolled in the course. For this reason and others, we contend it is vital for course instructors to interrogate their own assumptions about education and development, and to think critically, perhaps with the assistance of critical friends, about

the discourses, images, and perspectives promoted throughout their enactment of the curriculum.

Co-constructing knowledge

What also became clear as we reviewed our pedagogical cannon is that our assessment activities play an important role in shaping students' understandings of their own assumptions, through authentic meaningful tasks that support peer-to-peer learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 1999). In EDUF 3026 at Sydney, students are asked to facilitate workshops with their peers where they extend on the topic of the lecture through case studies, simulated activities, or in-depth policy analysis. Likewise, within EDUC 705 at Auckland, one assignment has students work in groups and take on the role of an NGO, special interest group, or multilateral organization in shaping the specific targets and indicators of SDG4. In setting these tasks, our aim is to provide students with agency and choices in assessment options so they can pursue personal areas of interest, while at the same time encouraging them to take creative or different approaches, widen their own pedagogical pallets, and engage in authentic learning activities. This co-construction of knowledge, we believe, is emblematic of what Hau'ofa (1994) notes as the "relational space" where dialogue and collaborative learning and research activities can begin to occur. Observation notes from the student-led workshops in Sydney record that the,

[W]orkshops were an excellent opportunity for student led, peer-to-peer discussion and reflection, there was strong evidence of critical engagement, understanding and preparation from the students, and were ample opportunities for students to reflect/extend the readings and think about ideas more broadly within the workshop format.

The importance of students learning and engaging with each other, and forming relationships seemed to be a strength of these CIE courses, because several students commented on this aspect in the feedback they provided. For example, one Sydney student noted the following in the formal course evaluation:

I thought it was really good how a lot of people came together and you could discuss in sort of a group dynamic about what was going on and there was real back and forth in the class. People [came] from all the different backgrounds in our class that I was in and [there was] a lot of conversation.

Another student, in an interview after the completion of the course remarked how the course format and assessment structure led to a classroom culture where, unlike other courses when "often it is the same or similar persons speaking every class," in EDUF3026, "we all had the opportunity to speak every time." This student's comment is perhaps particularly meaningful given her status as an English language learner.

One of the observations in Auckland was of the SDG4 role-play activity led by the students. Again, one of the observers notes that, "the realities of negotiating from different agency standpoints was really brought home to the students" and "it was really clear how students embodied the organizational ethos and behaviours." Students made similar comments about the effect of their participation in this role-play in their final course evaluation and in interviews that took place with them after. One noted:

I think the role-play with the SDGs was really interesting, because we were assigned a group with a particular perspective and not all of us necessarily agreed on [this

position], but we had to fight and justify our cause . . . representing things that [are] not necessarily your own ideas.

These kinds of learning, we argue, cannot be taught through readings or lectures alone.

Important about this pedagogical approach is that it can and does draw students into what Sanga (2016, p. 13) calls “unfamiliar, uncomfortable places” where students may be asked to unsettle common perceptions of development, aid, and education’s role within this. This was recognized as both a challenge and a vital aspect of our work as CIE educators in the region. One of us, when discussing our course objectives, noted:

I can see that the big story I want my students to leave with is one of understanding the complexity of the education endeavour with the development process. There is a strong element of critical inquiry in my approach, which sometimes leads to students feeling a bit despondent as the lectures progress. Balancing that critique with some optimism is something I try to do, but can sometimes become a tough juggle.

For the students’ themselves, summative feedback received from them suggests the critical perspective taken in our CIE courses had strong resonance and impact in unsettling some common truths for them. One Sydney student commented: “I have become a lot more critical about education’s role to development and discovered how education can promote a certain kind of development that is in the interests of specific groups.” In a similar vein, another Sydney student noted: “[The course] made me much more conscious of the whole diversity of views that generally are held towards education and just the values and assumptions that underpin the different educational systems that emerge.” For current and future teachers, there was also a cognisance of how the pedagogy itself had shaped their own work as educators. One student in Auckland, who was already working as a teacher noted:

[T]he course really made me reflect on my students’ capability to think critically and I think that, if anything, it couldn’t be more important given the . . . time for them which we’re living. So just ensuring that my teaching supports . . . critical thought and critical inquiry.

CONCLUSION

Returning back to the concern, identified at the outset, of how we serve the purposes of a more holistic, diverse, and open space within CIE, it is clear to us that the design and enactment of a particular form of CIE curriculum has the potential to move towards this vision. What we began to recognize through this research endeavour, is that as part of unleashing the postcolonial consciousness, which Fox (2016) implores us to work towards, is a need for an introspective look at our own pedagogy. As we progressed through the pilot project, we uncovered the ways in which we are explicitly and implicitly shaping and framing discussions about the act of comparison in ways which serve to challenge what concerns Dale and Robertson (2009) around methodological nationalism, educationalism, and the teleological narrative of modernization within CIE more broadly. But more than just acknowledging these issues, is the ambition we share with some of our Oceanic colleagues to further the decolonizing project by problematizing and disrupting binaries and “othering” processes, and challenging commonly held notions of education’s role in development (Coxon & Tolley, 2005; Johansson Fua, 2016; Nabobo-Baba, 2012; Sanga, 2016; Smith, 1999). In doing so, our ambition is to encourage our students, who will go onto being future teachers, policymakers, and development

practitioners to engage in and with, and seek to understand, the Oceanic space differently, and recognize “the interplay of unequal power and different knowledges in [their] context” (Fox, 2016, p. 67). Indeed, we are continuing to pursue this process ourselves, as both researchers and educators.

Moreover, through authentic and meaningful assessment activities, the ambition is for our students to become not only aware, but gain the skills and dispositions to take action and read their world differently. One former student in EDUC 705 acknowledged that her participation in the course, “made me much more conscious of the whole diversity of views that generally are held towards education and . . . the values and assumptions that underpin the different educational systems that emerge.” What remains to be seen is how this consciousness then translates into the ethical, actionable space in the activities of these students. Additional longitudinal research on CIE pedagogy and its long-term impacts would be beneficial within the field, and is indeed an under-researched area of investigation.

We recognize that there remains an acute need to work alongside some of our other colleagues from the region to identify how we move beyond a curriculum we believe is still dominated by ‘Western’ or ‘Global’ perspectives on education and development; even when they come out of a postcolonial or critical tradition. Our sincere hope is that this pilot project can extend beyond these two universities, which arguably are sites of both considerable privilege and troubled histories, to include other institutions within the broader region. Only then can a full conversation about the pedagogies of CIE and how they influence the conceptualizations of the field for students from within and outside the Pacific occur.

We take particular heed of Thaman’s (2009, p. 1) critique of culturally undemocratic forms of pedagogy in our region, and recognize the urgent need to examine whether our CIE pedagogy, “take into consideration the way most Pacific people think, learn and communicate with each other.” In a separate piece, she notes that it is critical that we move towards a new philosophy of education that is culturally inclusive and gender sensitive (Thaman, 2008). Embracing Oceanic frameworks of knowing and being into our CIE pedagogy requires strengthened partnerships with those who have developed and are using this approach already in their universities and classrooms, as we have been incrementally doing through work in and on the OCIES society and forthcoming projects. Yet, we fully recognize the inadequacy of our current attempts. Perhaps our collective will for advancing and increasing these approaches can be the longer-term aim of this endeavour.

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