Relationality and Learning in Oceania

Contextualizing Education for Development

Seu’ula Johansson-Fua, Rebecca Jesson, Rebecca Spratt and Eve Coxon (Eds.)
The World Council of Comparative Education Societies

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Edited by

Seu'u'ula Johansson-Fua, Rebecca Jesson,
Rebecca Spratt and Eve Coxon
Cover illustration: Afa Government Primary School, Tonga, photograph by Elaine Umal, 2019

All chapters in this book have undergone peer review.

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at http://catalog.loc.gov

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Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 2542-9590

Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Hes & De Graaf, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Rodopi, Brill Sense, Hotei Publishing, mentis Verlag, Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh and Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.
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Foreword

As a Pacific Islands educator, my interests relate to computational development, and within the Pacific Islands, I have been impressed with the education in the region. For me, the authenticity of the approach in leadership education is supported by the rich cultural traditions of their thought leaders. In these settings, I am then to think of the education of leaders in the Pacific Islands, which is based on the approach of leadership development in the region, and the Kingdom of Tonga is a testament to this.

In this book, the authors have brought together a fresh contribution to the scholarship on educational leadership. They have articulated a vision of education as a process of transformation, which is collaborative and holistic. In the context of leadership, education is transformative and relational development.

In contextualizing education, the authors have woven together a three-dimensional development, carefully take context into account, and consider the multiple and interdependent realities. As a sociological explanation, education is a dilemma for north-western educators in nature whereas their education is heteronomous culture. To explore the cultural text behind the context of education, the authors have deep and relationally significant.

Second, in education development, relationality is important in agency and development. Relations between people—
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This multi-authored volume draws on the collective experiences of a team of researcher-practitioners, from three Oceanic universities, in an aid-funded intervention program for enhancing literacy learning in Pacific Islands primary education schools. The interventions explored here—in Solomon Islands and Tonga—were implemented via a four-year collaboration which adopted a design-based research approach to bringing about sustainable improvements in teacher and student learning, and in the delivery and evaluation of educational aid. This approach demanded that learning from the context of practice should be determining of both content and process; that all involved in the interventions should see themselves as learners. Essential to the trusting and respectful relationships required for this approach was the program’s acknowledgement of relationality as central to indigenous Oceanic societies, and of education as a relational activity.

Relationality and Learning in Oceania: Contextualizing Education for Development addresses debates current in both comparative education and international aid. Argued strongly is that relational research-practice approaches (south-south, south-north) which center the importance of context and culture, and the significance of indigenous epistemologies, are required to strengthen education within the post-colonial relational space of Oceania, and to inform the various agencies and actors involved in ‘education for development’ in Oceania and globally. Maintained is that the development of education structures and processes within the contexts explored through the chapters comprising this volume, continues to be a negotiation between the complexity of historically developed local ‘traditions’ and understandings and the ‘global’ imperatives shaped by dominant development discourses.

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