Intercultural Competence in the Work of Teachers

This book critiques models of intercultural competence, whilst suggesting examples of specific alternative approaches that will successfully foster intercultural competence in teacher education.

Bringing together diverse perspectives from teacher educators and student teachers, this volume discusses the need to move beyond essentialism, culturalism and assumptions about an us versus them perspective and recognises that multiple identities of an individual are negotiated in interaction with others. *Intercultural Competence in the Work of Teachers* is divided into four sections: critiquing intercultural competence in teacher education; exploring critical intercultural competences in teacher education; reflexivity and intercultural competence in teacher education; and indigeneity and intercultural competence in teacher education, providing a methodological approach through which to explore this critical framework further.

This book is ideal for teacher educators or academics of education specialising in global education who are looking to explore alternative perspectives towards intercultural competence and wish to gain an insight into the ways it can be utilised in a more effective and productive manner.

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Intercultural Competence in the Work of Teachers

Confronting Ideologies and Practices

Edited by Fred Dervin, Robyn Moloney and Ashley Simpson
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Part I

Critiquing Intercultural Competence in teacher education
Introduction

Daily practices in education can be frightening. A recent incident, reported by a Finnish student, shows that we are far from having won the battle(s) of interculturality (the reader can understand this last word the way s/he wants to at this stage). This took place within the context of initial teacher education in Finland, a country famous for its education, and concerns for well-being and equality. A white professor-teacher educator was introducing the concept of genres in the didactics of history. He presented the students with a collection of short texts about American slavery. In all the texts, that had been translated into Finnish, the ‘N-word’ appeared several times. The professor read the texts and said aloud the ‘N-word’ in Finnish. It is important to note at this stage that a Black student was also attending the lecture. The student who reported the incident started to complain about the use of the word and asked the professor, politely, to refrain from saying it because it made her feel uncomfortable. The professor confronted the student by asking her if she was trying to censor him. He also claimed that the N-word did not have the same connotation in Finnish and that Finland did not have a history of slavery (using the typical fallacy of Finnish exceptionalism) and thus, the word was ‘harmless’ in the Finnish language. The student left the lecture hall, accompanied by the Black student. The same week, a white professor was fired in the USA for having read a text written by Black author James Baldwin that contained the ‘N-word’.

History has had its dose of such incidents and attitudes.

In his Remarks, Benjamin Franklin (1783–1784/2014) talks of a Swedish minister giving a sermon to the chiefs of the Susquehanna Indians, telling them of the ‘facts’ that his religion rested on. In return the Indians told him about their own ‘facts’ about their beliefs. Franklin (ibid.: 425) notes: ‘The good missionary, disgusted with this idle tale, said: “What I delivered to you were sacred truths; but what you tell me is mere fable, fiction, and falsehood.”’

Another example is about one hero of our time: Albert Einstein. In his recently published diaries about his trips to China, Einstein (2018) quotes
Portuguese teachers he meets who ‘claim that the Chinese are incapable of being trained to think logically and that they specifically have no talent for mathematics’. Einstein does not challenge this assertion in any way in his diaries and appears to hold many negative and Western-centric views about the Chinese throughout.

These examples are from the ‘West’. One could easily find similar examples in other parts of the world.

In this chapter, we call these phenomena, beliefs and the ensuing attitudes, ‘walls that have been built by ghosts’ (鬼打墙, Gui Da Qiang). This Chinese aphorism refers to the story of a man trapped behind labyrinthine walls built by ghosts. It means that one is stuck in one’s own thinking, at one stage of one’s journey and unable to move on.

In research on encounters beyond (national) borders, the concept of Intercultural Competence (IC) has been with us for decades, in the ‘West’ first and then globally, to counter – maybe? – the kind of static thinking found in the opening examples. Having spread to different fields of research (business, health, education, linguistics, etc.), one easily notices when one examines the literature and types of studies that have been led worldwide on the concept that ‘walls have also been built by ghosts’ in research – different kinds of walls, but walls too. We could say that we are not going forward with the intercultural and the concept of IC but still rehearsing the same (flawed) ideas around the world and following ‘false prophets’ from the British-American global neo-colonialist motorway of knowledge, supported by powerful supranational institutions and a world governance of research that over-privileges them. These have contributed to make IC in education a specific and politically-oriented figment of our imagination. At the same time, like the aforementioned examples, they have confined us in the ‘dream of the other’. And as Deleuze (1987: 83) would have it: ‘If you’re trapped in the dream of the Other, you’re in trouble’.

**Anything new to say about IC?**

This is yet another book about the concept of Intercultural Competence, with a focus on teachers and teacher education/training. Let us start with a warning: any discourse on IC is ideological. This means that any perspective on the concept relies on (amongst others) political, sociological, personal, glocal ideologemes (bits and pieces of ideology) that are passed onto us by the media, decision-makers, glocal curricula, research, etc. This is why we have decided not to define IC in this first chapter but to let the reader discover and examine the ways the chapter authors understand the concept. We each have our own (incomplete) understandings of IC, of course. We agree on some aspects while disagreeing on others. We know that our understanding of IC is the result of our own experiences, ideological training and brainwashing, and would not want to give the impression that ours is THE right understanding
of IC. That is why we have decided not to share our definitions. We three have chapters in the volume that will give a clear idea of what they are. In this first chapter, we wish to guide the reader in his/her interrogation of the idea of IC, to help him/her tread their own paths through the muddy roads of IC in education.

In a sense we act as conductors here. When they work with an orchestra, conductors use their bodies, faces and hands to communicate. In many cases the conductor and the players do not share a common language. But through their reading of the notes, they come to an understanding as to how the music should/could be played. Each orchestra conductor has his or her own way of conducting (different gestures and postures). Developing his/her own character and personality is essential. For Zolt Nagy (2009: n. p.):

very often an orchestra is a preconception ... you know it is like daily life ... two different people go to an office ... somebody can manage that, their goal, somebody cannot ... how to deal with, how to talk, how to manage the orchestra.

In a similar way, for composer and conductor Pierre Boulez (1999: 23), learning to conduct is not about copying other conductors (for example Karajan or Solti), their gestures and postures but to find one’s own, the ones that make us feel comfortable with others and vice versa. In this first chapter we thus wish to help the reader find his/her own gestures and postures to be able to read the chapters through critical and reflexive lenses, without having ‘our’ predetermined way of understanding what IC is or should be.

Today it feels like everything has been said and written about IC. It even appears that every single teacher’s and student’s IC has been analysed by scholars around the world (e.g. Danish French teachers’ IC; Chinese language learners’ IC; Migrant nurses’ IC in Finland, etc. Note the methodological nationalism of these labels). Interestingly, one of us (Fred) keeps receiving emails from postgraduate students from outside Europe (China, Iran, Mexico, amongst others) asking him to take part in very similar surveys about the concept in order for the students to summarise current scientific views on IC. These surveys, all in English, share the same values, same pre-discourses about IC, although they emerge from different contexts. When Fred asked the students who they contacted for their surveys, they only mentioned the names of white Western scholars, who are overrepresented in the field.

We could go as far as say that the state of IC research and practice in education is somewhat worrying. First, IC is not always central in university departments of education, being often offered as an add-on. It is also sometimes substituted by other trendy words such as global or transcultural. Second, teachers in schools are often treated unequally in the opportunities they have to be educated and trained for interculturality. If educated and trained, they may be easily brainwashed to believe in and worship global systems of IC.
or they may receive hands-on intercultural training purged of any theoretical and methodological elements – yet full of neo-liberal ideologies: there has been a recent push in Finland, for example, to make people ‘play’ to learn about the intercultural.

We feel that there is an urgent need to identify the multiple ideologemes, from both so-called ‘critical’ and ‘conservative’ researchers and practitioners, that have been packaged and sold around the concept. It is vital for teachers, teacher educators but also researchers and students to dig into these ‘walls built by ghosts’. The nicely packaged ideologemes often lead to pre-discourses about IC, see propaganda for wider dominant ideologies. It is high time we found important answers rather than mere echoes of these ideologies. Once the latter have been identified, one could offer keys to problematise and maybe construct new, alternative and fairer ways of dealing with the idea of IC. This is one central objective of the chapters of this volume.

In what follows, we, the ‘conductors’, provide the reader with tools to work their way through the chapters as well as beyond this volume.

In previous publications, we noted the following assumptions and controversies about IC (Dervin, 2016; Simpson & Dervin, 2019). First, it is important to note that interculturality is not something that was invented by the ‘West’, although it is often presented as such. Second, interculturality appears to be a mish-mash of a concept, used by policy-makers, businesspersons, educators and scholars alike to refer to certain categories of individuals (e.g. certain migrants – open secret: not all migrants are valued the same way). Third, the notion is a victim of Western-centrism (ab/use of the words ‘culture’ and ‘identity’, while discarding the social and race in some cases), politicised discourses and practices but also idealistic ‘postmodern’ ideology (non-essentialism, non-culturalism). Fourth, the notion recycles concepts and notions without caring too much about their potential multilingual connotations (e.g. tolerance, respect, open-mindedness, democracy, etc.). Neither does it take into account the ‘social lives of concepts’ in our global worlds (Hann, 2016). Fifth, interculturality still seems to over-emphasise nation-states (even perspectives that refuse to do so) and to rely on ‘Western geography’ and ethnocentrism (e.g. use of the idea of the Orient to refer to China when the name of the country itself means the Middle Kingdom in Chinese, Zhōngguó (中国), Hann, 2016). Sixth, differentialism and comparativism, which are neither neutral nor disinterested, still dominate research on intercultural communication education. As Radhakrishnan (2013) notes: ‘behind the seeming generosity of comparison, there always lurks the aggression of a thesis’. Seventh, most perspectives are still very rationalist in the way they attempt to uncover some ‘truth’ about what people do and say when they meet ‘across cultures’ (see: the resistant idea of culture shock).

We are all of us, to some degree or another, brainwashed to see interculturality, and IC, through these problematic perspectives, these walls.
What to do to take down the walls built by ghosts?

In what follows, as an important complement to the chapters composing this volume, we suggest an approach that consists of two steps when dealing with the current crisis of IC in education. We illustrate the steps below by proposing a list of questions one may use to rethink IC (and enter into meaningful dialogues about it).

Following the philosopher Michel Serres (2019) we believe that the first step should begin with a deep and serious ‘intellectual and emotional catharsis’. The word *catharsis* is from the Greek and refers to emotional discharge through which one can achieve a state of renewal. This is nicely illustrated by Henri Bergson (1907/1911: 32) in his description of how those ‘born with spiritual immune systems’ (criticality), manoeuvre a rejection of conditioning:

> Inner knowledge and anomalous outer experiences show them a side of reality others are oblivious to, and so begins their journey of awakening. Each step of the journey is made by following the heart instead of following the crowd and by choosing knowledge over the veils of ignorance.

Although the last part of the quote might put off some scholars and practitioners (‘following the heart’, such act being implicitly banned from ‘proper’ research), we believe that moving away from the current crowd of IC is essential to begin a ‘journey of awakening’.

The second step could consist in making peace with discomfort and in becoming a ‘disturber of the peace’ (Spinoza, 1955: 374). Many ready-made ideas, discourses, words and phrases are imposed on scholars and practitioners about IC that many people do not dare to question or dis-use. A doctoral student we met recently did not want to reject a concept she felt uncomfortable with. When asked why she used it, she explained that everybody else uses it and that her supervisor had imposed it on her... We must disturb this ‘peace’ and create some discomfort amongst scholars and practitioners. We believe this is the only way we can move forward, be more creative with IC and open up multiple doors to alternative ways of conceptualising and problematising it.

In what follows, we propose a list of issues and questions that can accompany this ‘journey of awakening’ through the two proposed steps. These questions can be used when reading the volume chapters or any other text related to IC:

**STEP 1: Intellectual and emotional catharsis**

- The intercultural is a category and a viewpoint created by the one who utters the word (researchers, decision-makers, etc.): Whose intercultural are we talking about? How is it defined? What supra/national institutions, institutions, scholars are used to justify its definition? Who does
it include-exclude? Are we satisfied with it? Does it correspond to our experiences of the world?

- Definitions and models of IC are mostly Western and globalised (see e.g. Simpson and Dervin, 2019 about the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental economic organisation, on global and intercultural competence). These definitions and models rely on socio-politico-economic positions: What are they? What are the accompanying ideologemes? Can they be identified? What consequences could they have on education and educational actors (students, teachers, leaders, teacher educators but also parents)? What components of IC are included? What meanings/connotations?

- In the use of words (concepts, notions, ways of talking about e.g. assessment of IC), whose words are we using (e.g. tolerance, respect, democracy, social justice)? How do these words translate into other languages? What connotations do they have in these other languages? Do we understand them the same way? Could they be made more meaningful or replaced by another term?

- Like words, (pseudo-)theories circulate around the world. How do we identify and problematise the use of ‘ready-to-think’ (e.g. we Chinese are this, you cannot understand you are not Finnish, the faulty ideas of culture shock or tolerance)? How do we deal with them? How do we define them? How do we negotiate them with others?

- Many researchers working on IC are reluctant to give too much power to culture today (e.g. Piller, 2017) and promote the deculturalisation of IC: how do we open up discussions of IC to include intersectional elements such as age, class, gender, race, amongst others? How do we examine how they overlap? Do we experience cases of ‘culture as an alibi/culture as an excuse’ whereby culture is everywhere, culture only is used as an explanation for what people say and do (Dervin, 2016)?

- Global times call for global voices and knowledge to be heard and listened to. IC is still very much Western-centric as noted before, how do we make sure that we dig into other knowledge to enrich and modify the definition and use of IC (e.g. different views of world order, minority fields relevant to the enriching of IC such as ethnic studies, etc.)?

**STEP 2: Peace with discomfort and disturbing peace**

- Who has the power to decide what the intercultural is, how IC is defined? Whose voices are not heard and should be empowered? Are we given the space to disagree and discuss? Can we question and disturb these power relations?

- How could we make people around us aware of the ideologemes contained in models of IC? At the same time how could we make them realise that these ideologemes might emerge from ‘underground forces’
of which they may not be aware (lobbies, freemasonry, politicians, etc.)? How could we question these ideologemes but also their use? How could we substitute them with other ideas that we find fairer and more ethically acceptable (in co-operation with students and other actors)?

- Should we ask the other who uses certain words or theories associated with IC what they mean with these words/theories, in English and in other languages? Could we question their apparent universalistic use? How could we question the arrogance and potential imperialism that can hide behind the use of certain terms?
- How could we systematically pinpoint cases of racism, language bias, sexism and classism when we see them occur and urge others to circumvent them? The same goes for ‘intercultural knowledgeism’, a form of discrimination against alternative ways of problematising and thinking about IC.

Encompassing these two reflexive steps, we also believe in the power of dialogue, esp. from a Bakhtinian perspective. IC often tends to be monological, in the sense that those who are in contact are treated as separate beings, like two different pieces of a jigsaw. What research on dialogicality shows (e.g. Brandist, 2002; Matsuo, 2014) is that intercultural speakers are part of the same piece. One cannot meet the other without the other meeting them. What one does with the other reflects what the other does with them. What one says depends on what the other says, and vice versa. There is a hyphen between self and other to which we must pay all attention. Extracting one or the other from intercultural encounters, as if they were independent from each other is an ontological error, negating the continuum between self and other. IC must be problematised and examined from dialogical perspectives. We thus suggest shifting intercultural competencies from the position of I or self-centrism (e.g. Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2009) towards intercultural co-competencies based upon an ontology of the self-other, while going through the steps. When observing how the chapter authors deal with IC, we also recommend taking this aspect into account (see Figure 1.1).

**About the volume**

Using the core questions outlined above, readers will find that the volume illustrates the diverse and uneven pathways which educators have taken, towards understanding the competences. Contributors, within their personal and professional contexts, have sought to bring a critical gaze to their work, to issues of power, and to the use of language.

Common themes which emerge from the educators’ work include personal and pedagogical risk, growth, and, in a number of cases, struggle and frustration. Contributors look ahead to further disrupting practice, institutions, and students’ learning, in their ongoing practice.
The studies largely feature the work of researchers in Australia and Finland, some separately, some together. Their personal and professional histories shape aspirations, expectations, needs, frustration with ongoing injustices, and anxieties, in university and school education. While both countries, have, at policy level, inscribed the apparent value of intercultural competences, both contexts are struggling to support critical investigation of problematic practice and uneven outcomes.

The four non-discrete sections of the volume have loosely grouped the studies to reflect four interests: the ongoing critical examination of the concept of intercultural competences; the exploration of different ways in which intercultural competences are represented in teacher education, the use of reflexive approaches to intercultural competences in practice, and finally the possible intersections between intercultural competences and Indigenous Studies.
The first section is titled ‘Critiquing intercultural competences in teacher education’.

A site frequently considered by curriculum writers to be the most ‘obvious’ flagbearer for intercultural competences, has been Languages Education. And yet it has become a problematic site where the concept has often fossilised. It has been the site where teachers, in the name of ‘intercultural’, have simplified, essentialised, focused on difference, and insisted that delivering cultural information is ‘doing intercultural’ (Harbon & Moloney, 2015; Moloney & Xu, 2015). **Robyn Moloney, Maria Lobytsyna and Josephine Moate** have sought to examine how a curriculum’s conceptualisation of intercultural learning is unevenly understood and enacted in two university/school contexts, Sydney and Jyväskylä. They explore conceptual understandings of language educators at three levels, teacher educators, teacher education students and in-service teachers. Their conclusions as to individual practice and contexts echo Crozet’s (2016: 157) perception that

> Even if all practitioners at all levels may all agree that modern foreign language teaching ought to endorse the IP (intercultural pedagogy) as one important aim of their teaching, they still have to decide for themselves how much, and at what pace, they can walk the IP talk in ways that breed success in their particular context of language teaching.

**Ashley Simpson** constructs a strong argument that we need to pay attention to the wider discursive and ideological functions of notions such as democracy and culture, promoted and used by organisations such as the Council of Europe (Simpson, 2018). He uses a critical approach to interculturality to show that considerations of both democracy and culture can be deeply problematic, and can produce and reproduce forms of othering. Simpson analyses meta-discourses about democracy and culture from the Council of Europe Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy. Simpson illustrates how meanings and representations about culture and democracy can be manipulated to function as a form of ideology.

In his chapter **Fred Dervin** presents two complementary models of IC, developed by himself and members of his team since the early 2000s. Dervin shows their complementarity and the problems both entail. The so-called Postmodern Model is based on a postmodern paradigm of identity and representations. Used in language education and teacher education in different parts of the world, this model has been recently complemented by the Confucian Model which relies on a revised understanding of Confucian Ethics, and on Dervin’s attempt at opening up discussions of IC to the intellectual history of China. Although the latter is work in progress, Dervin details the assumptions, core ideas and principles of this Model and explains how it can be used with the Postmodern Model. The addition of the Confucian Model allows to approach IC from an original ethical perspective that moves away from pseudo-theories about the intercultural emerging from the West.

This section focuses largely on the programmes and activities within teacher education departments. Hanna Posti-Ahokas, Hille Janhonen-Aburuquah and Christine Adu-Yeboah, analyse the collaboration occurring within a network of five universities in Finland, Ghana, Tanzania and South Africa from 2012 to 2016. The members of this network, called the Culturally Responsive Education network, engaged in joint teaching, research, conferences, and exchange programmes for students and faculty. The network is analysed as a space for intercultural learning through collaboration across contexts and amongst junior and senior education scholars sharing an interest in culturally responsive education. The network activities are portrayed as possible dynamic contexts for the development of participants’ intercultural competences and with potential for translation to activities benefiting all the institutions. They note that issues of power, access and continuity must be considered in all aspects of North–South–South partnerships to enable meaningful participation and learning by student teachers and teacher educators.

In her chapter, Martina Paatela-Nieminen presents the application of an intertextual model in intercultural art education. The context is that of a course about art history within the framework of an Erasmus+ EU Programme. The students were asked to examine contemporary art and open-endedly weave relations to older art and cultural forms and in relation to the students’ local ‘cultures’ as well as to the global cultural memory. Paatela-Nieminen’s interest is in the students’ development of critical intertextual competence (her take on IC) and their complex understanding of an intercultural work of art.

Tuija Itkonen conceptualises and advocates intercultural ethics in education practice. Itkonen’s approach to critical interculturalism is complemented with Paul Ricoeur’s philosophical hermeneutics of the (ethical) self, and amended with Emmanuel Levinas’ and Buddhist perspectives on ethics. This serves as a framework to examine instances of vocational education and training (VET) teachers’ ethically caring work with diverse students. The qualitative data of this study consists of 10 interviews and 85 open questions from educators in 5 Finnish upper secondary VET institutions in the metropolitan area of Helsinki, Finland. This study focuses on the (VET) educators’ role in promoting ethically caring teaching-learning conditions and facilitating social well-being for all involved.

The second section ends with Sean Kearney and Julie Maakrun who analyse a range of international programmes which have become a feature of many teacher education programmes in Australia, and frequently promoted for their claimed ability to instil a ‘global-mindedness’ in future teachers. They critique to what extent the selected programmes prepare students to develop Intercultural Competence in international settings. Using an embedded, ethnographic case-oriented understanding of three such programmes,
this chapter presents an alternate viewpoint for the critique of such programmes in terms of their problematic relationship with intercultural competences in the teacher education students and the teacher profession more generally.

The third section, ‘Reflexivity and IC in teacher education’, features chapters which explore teacher educators’ reflexive accounts of their practice. Teacher education has sometimes presented its responsibility to be the delivery of a concrete toolkit of skills and answers for any foreseeable contingencies in schools. In the case of Australia, young teachers are assessed using a tick-box series of graduate capacities against a set of teaching standards. There is the temptation for teacher educators to be regarded, and more importantly to regard themselves, as the source of all wisdom. A number of chapters in this section reveal teacher educators doing the opposite.

Robyn Moloney and Tuija Turunen critique their own narrative histories of development and their learning experiences of challenge, identity and forward vision. Both narratives feature acknowledgement of difficulty and failure in some experiences, and the ongoing incomplete process of intercultural competences. Both narrators open up the question of whether they have understood how to adequately bring this personal interculturality to their practice as teacher educators.

Jae Major, Jennifer Munday and Matthew Winslade continue this exploration of the teacher educator, in considering the intercultural competencies needed to lead an international experience for student teachers. This chapter reports a project where the authors engaged in critically reflective work to explore their experiences as programme leaders for international teaching experiences for student teachers to Vanuatu, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Using an Academic Intercultural Competencies Model, they present and analyse three narratives, reflecting on the tensions and contradictions of international experiences, and the personal and professional complexities of managing intra- and inter-cultural interactions and relationships.

Kaisa Hahl and Pia Koirikivi look critically at the assumption, in the Finnish context, that incoming ‘international’ student teachers will be automatically regarded as ‘intercultural experts’. The authors analysed the discursive language of both science and foreign language student teachers, to investigate what (kind of) intercultural competences they expressed. Although many student teachers were aware of the fluidity of cultures and identities, traditional stereotypical images were nevertheless present in their discussions. In another layer of contradiction, or multiple representations, the student teachers regarded themselves as both international and critically aware of stereotypes, and yet also as representatives of essentialised cultural images of their countries of origin.

David Saltmarsh recognises that the terms multicultural or intercultural in policies frequently disguise an insider/outside position. In order to subvert this, he designed a task in which both he and his Teacher Education students
discovered, that, rather than expecting and looking for differences between cultural groups, it can be more valuable to explore shared or common experiences as a means of understanding one another. The chapter discusses a collaborative learner biography, used with groups of students. In sharing personal biographies and experiences of learning, the students critically observed the different ways their peers experienced learning and how they had negotiated difficult situations. Both the students and the facilitator realised that the group contained far greater individual diversity than had been imagined.

Part IV features studies which have focused on intercultural competences in Indigenous education. Intercultural competences are seen as critical to achieving the dual non-exclusive aims of increasing the Indigenous teacher workforce, and developing all teachers’ ability to work with Indigenous Australians. Constructing intercultural competences in Indigenous educational settings has been commonly conceptualised in terms of three main pedagogical approaches, teaching knowledge about Indigenous people (knowing the other), promoting empathy with difference, and reflecting on one’s own knowledge and values (knowing and de-colonising the self).

John Buchanan and Meeri Hellstén question the ways in which international mobility might serve or frustrate the needs of Indigenous or First Nations students. They draw on the situations of Australian Indigenous peoples and northern Scandinavia and Finland’s Sámi people, relating to teacher education, to illustrate some dynamics associated with mobility. Internationalisation, assumed by many to be a benign common good from which to harness intercultural understanding, can also be seen as a potentially vulnerable space of conflict, domination and the misuse of power. They investigate the challenges presented by universalism (incorporating cosmopolitan ideals of internationalism) for particularity, as manifest in postcolonial, minority and Indigenous social projects.

Major injustices have occurred historically across and within structures, which have normalised power differentials, and inequities. Working towards Reconciliation processes, building capacity in intercultural competences in schools has been seen as a priority. The development of greater numbers of Aboriginal educators is also seen as a critical resource. Susan Page, Leanne Holt and Katrina Thorpe present fundamental challenges in their work in Australian universities. They explore eight intersecting and overlapping domains, to map and name explicitly both the individuals who might benefit from intercultural education and the environments which impinge upon their practice. They promote investment in environments that privilege intercultural education from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education perspective. They look for leadership from schools and universities to adopt strategies that link outcomes in increasing the Aboriginal teaching workforce.

The final chapter in this section, by Mercurius Goldstein, engages with the third of the three pedagogical strategies mentioned above, that is, knowing and de-colonising the self. Goldstein’s account of his ‘failure’ to achieve
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an ongoing program in his school illustrates Page et al.’s argument above institutions. Goldstein explores his professional learning encountered in the potential and limitations of a critical intercultural approach towards First Nations languages within a rural Australian school setting. It revisits and reflects on an earlier autoethnographic account of Goldstein’s efforts to develop intercultural competences in everyday classroom practice (Goldstein, 2017). The study finds that where educational projects grounded in a ‘critical intercultural’ approach are dependent on the energy and co-operation of individual actors working within institutional educational frameworks, such efforts can prove to be fragile and unsustainable.

We are grateful to Lesley Harbon, for providing a critical overview, or ‘last word’, to the volume. Harbon takes us back to a classroom moment of awakening which started her journey. She reminds us of the significance of the individual catalyst experiences which awaken and propel us in our difficult journey of critical understanding. It is the work of educators to frame and interrogate these experiences, to ask the questions outlined in this chapter, and to push forward through critical engagement with theory. In becoming aware of the entrapments of easy assumptions and trendy words, we recognise and break down the ‘walls built by ghosts’, enabling us to move forward.

References


Introduction

Teacher education is crucial to supporting equitable educational outcomes and social justice in schools. In a global context of increasingly mobile and diversified school populations, pre-service teachers, and their students, need new capacities and strategies to counter racism and ethnocentric attitudes which appear to emerge in classrooms in many national contexts (Welch, 2016; Dervin, 2016). Intercultural competence has been discussed in many iterations in teacher education internationally for a number of decades. There have been many individual initiatives to devise programs in teacher education to impact pre-service teacher competences (for example, Dervin & Dirba, 2006; Jokikokko, 2005).

It is apparent that curricula in many countries feature, as a desirable outcome in student attributes, the development of a global cultural perspective. It is less common, however, for this goal to be well articulated in syllabus materials or teacher direction. Australia and Finland are no exception. According to our previous investigations (Harbon & Moloney, 2013) the curriculum area where this ‘global perspective’ is often more concretely articulated, and appears to be an explicit responsibility, is that of foreign language (FL) teaching. FL education is in many ways concerned with the crossing of cultural boundaries, encountering different ways of being and communicating and building different types of relationships. This chapter thus examines FL teacher education as a site where one might expect explicit attention to be given to building intercultural competences in pre-service and in-service teachers.

This chapter examines the framing of intercultural competences in both Australia and Finland language teacher education from the perspectives of pre- and in-service FL teachers and teacher educators in Jyväskylä, Finland, and Sydney, Australia. The chapter begins by briefly outlining the different contextual factors that shape both the curriculum and educational outcomes in the two environments before introducing the methodology for data collection and analysis. Through the parallel cases our aim is to generate a