The Fijian Diploma of Nursing Curriculum:  
An indigenous case study of a curriculum change

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at  Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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2011
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Abstract

This thesis explores an educational change process in Fiji and used a case study methodology to examine the introduction of the 2004 Diploma of Nursing programme in the Fiji School of Nursing. The three-year competency based curriculum was developed and funded by the Australian government through the Fiji Health Sector Improvement Project (FHSIP) with limited participation of the local teachers at the Fiji School of Nursing. Many problems beset the programme, beginning with its rushed implementation at the end of an academic year and the incompleteness of the curriculum document. Teachers questioned the quality and nature of the competency based curriculum, and the absence of many supportive networks and resources to facilitate curriculum change. The majority of the staff did not understand the competency-based nature of the curriculum and its requirements.

Using the vanua indigenous research framework and Fullan’s educational change theory to guide and inform the case study, qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were employed, including documentary analysis, participant observations and interviews. Talanoa, a culturally appropriate method of data collection for Pasifika people was used in both individual and group interviews. The research found indigenous nurses continue to be colonised and made to reproduce western ideologies and nursing values, perpetuated by the use of external educational aid and expertise. The execution of the curriculum project and the decision-making flowed from the Ministry of Health down to the Fiji School of Nursing, without consultation with the school’s staff, reflecting the former colonial administration where such a top-down approach was acceptable. Neo-colonialism is therefore regarded as the dominant paradigm where indigenous nursing leaders emulated the dominant behaviour of their former colonisers on their fellow indigenous subordinates. Moreover, it is argued here that foreign-influenced curricula continued to produce nurses who are not adequately prepared to care for the indigenous Fijians, and contributed to the attrition of Fijian nurses to countries whose values underpin the curriculum.
Dedication

To my dear mother, Adi Ela Walesi Volavola who patiently supported me throughout my years away from my family and was called to rest shortly before my Oral Examination, this thesis is dedicated to her memory.
Acknowledgement

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose for them” (Romans 8:28)

I wish to first of all acknowledge the hand of Almighty God who has made everything possible for me and this thesis is a testament to His Glory. Many people, organisations and institutions contributed to the completion of this work and they deserve to be acknowledged in this thesis.

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Fijian community New Zealand
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# Glossary of Fijian words

**B**

| Bula: | Greeting, literally means ‘life’ or ‘health’ |
| Bure: | House mainly for the men |

**I**

| I dola ni cakacaka: | Ceremony to mark the commencement of work, project |
| I Sevusevu: | Yaqona ceremony to present visitors or guests or relatives to ask permission to enter village or to work in a Fijian community or household. |

**K**

| Kabekabe: | food gifting in the Nadroga dialect |
| Kalou: | God/Supernatural deity |
| Kalou Vu: | Ancestral spirit |
| Kaukauwa: | Strong or powerful |

**M**

| Mamaqi: | Stinginess |
| Mataqali: | Clan |

**T**

<p>| Ta’ita’i: | food gifting (in the dialect of Udu) |
| Tekiteki: | Decorative flower behind the ear or the on hair |
| Tiko I bure: | Initiation of young boys through circumcision after which they can live in the ‘bure’ like adults. |
| Tokatoka: | sub-clan |
| Turaga: | Chief |</p>
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<tr>
<td>Vale:</td>
<td>Dwelling house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vakaturaga:</td>
<td>Chiefly demeanour or chief like manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanua:</td>
<td>Land, Government or people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veidokai:</td>
<td>Respectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veinanumi:</td>
<td>Considerate of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veirokorokovi:</td>
<td>Humility /mutually respectful towards others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veivakaturagataki:</td>
<td>To accord respectful gestures towards others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viti:</td>
<td>Fijian for Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yaqona:</td>
<td>Kava or traditional drink made from the root or stem of the Piper Methysticum</td>
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<td>Yavu:</td>
<td>Raised foundation of earth mound of a house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yavusa:</td>
<td>Tribe, largest patrilineal grouping of families related by blood; may also be referred to as the vanua or government.</td>
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