

Micronesian Educator

A Journal of Research & Practice on Education in Guam and Micronesia

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Photograph by Carim Yanoria

Nāna by Kisha Borja-Quichocho

Like the t̄asa and haligi of the ancient Chamoru latte stone
so, too, does your body maintain the shape
of the healthy Chamoru woman.
With those full-figured hips
features delivered
through natural birth for generations
and with those powerful arms
reaching for the past calling on our mañaina
you have remained strong throughout the years
continuously inspire me to live my culture
allow me to grow into a young Chamoru woman myself.
Through you I have witnessed the persistence
and endurance of my ancestors who never failed in constructing a latte.
I gima` taotao mo`na the house of the ancient people.
H̄agu i acho` latte-ku. You are my latte stone.

The latte stone (acho` latte) was once the foundation of Chamoru homes in the Mariana Islands. It was carved out of limestone or basalt and varied in size, measuring between three and sixteen feet in height. It contained two parts, the tasa (a cup-like shape, the top portion of the latte) and the haligi (the bottom pillar) and were organized into two rows, with three to seven latte stones per row. Today, several latte stones still stand, and there are also many remnants of them throughout the Marianas. Though Chamorus no longer use latte stones as the foundations of their homes, the latte symbolize the strength of the Chamorus and their culture as well as their resiliency in times of change.

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A Journal of Research & Practice on Education in Guam and Micronesia

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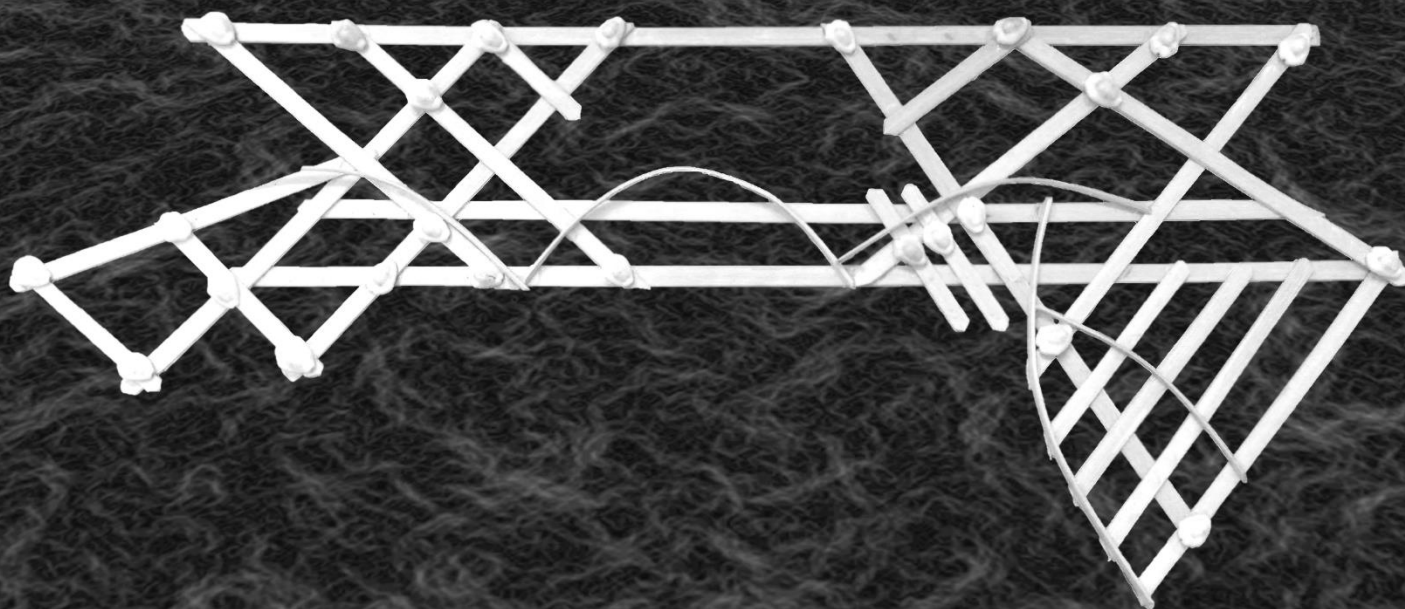
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Contents

Editor’s Introduction	iii
Embracing Philosophical Diversities to Enhance Education	
Chinese Philosophy of Education and Student Learning Outcomes	2
<i>James D. Sellmann</i>	
Where are the Cowrie Shells Hidden? Repositories of an Indigenous Pacific Ethical System	14
<i>Kabini Sanga</i>	
Pedagogical Diversities to Enhance Learning	
A Flexible Delivery Teacher Education Strategy in Micronesia.....	33
<i>Terence Sullivan, Penelope Serow, Neil Taylor, Greg Burnett, Jodana Tarrant, Dianne Smardon, Emily Angell</i>	
Environmental Awareness in a Teacher Education Course in Fiji through Outdoor Education.....	44
<i>Jeremy Dorovolomo</i>	
Learning Japanese through Social Network Sites: A Preliminary Study of Chinese Learners' Perceptions.....	55
<i>Qiudi Zhang, Biyun Huang, Dickson K.W. Chiu, Kevin K.W. Ho</i>	
Indigenous and Migrant Micronesian Spaces in Curriculum and Schooling	
Reclaiming Indigenous Knowledges in Formal Education – Pacific Literature in Secondary Classrooms on Guåhan	73
<i>Kisha A. Borja-Quichocho</i>	
Perceptions of Immigrant Students from Micronesia Regarding Success in Higher Education: An Exploratory Study	93
<i>Josephine Cruz, Geraldine Sablan James</i>	
Issues of Writing at Two Pacific Universities (University of Guam and the University of the South Pacific)	
Isolating Writing Strengths and Weaknesses in New Freshmen at the University of Guam.....	109
<i>Sharleen Santos-Bamba</i>	
Understanding Instances of Plagiarism in Third-Year Accounting Students at the University of the South Pacific	120
<i>Roshila Singh</i>	
Critical Essay	
School Leadership in Papua New Guinea (PNG): Issues and Realities - A Critical Essay	135
<i>Jillian Thiele</i>	
Book Review	
Writing across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing - By Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak.....	153
<i>David Gugin</i>	

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION



Editor's Introduction

Dear readers,

Welcome to another edition of the *Micronesian Educator*! We have ten articles and one book review in this volume under six subheadings. Under the first subheading, *Embracing Philosophical Diversities to Enhance Education*, we have James Sellman on "Chinese Philosophy of Education and SLO." Here, Sellman pontificates that ancient Chinese philosophy and approaches to education may inform Anglo-American attempts to enhance learning outcomes. He notes that Chinese philosophy promotes a deeper engagement with the literary arts and philosophy but strikes a balance with the practical. The second author, Kabini Sanga, on "Where are the Cowrie Shells Hidden? Repositories of an Indigenous Pacific Ethical System" explores the traditional ethical values and standards among the Gula'alā people of East Malai'ta. He notes that the documentation of such an indigenous ethical system can inform ethics of research because it is both context appropriate and provides an alternative to what knowledge is perceived, and how it is owned and valued. Furthermore, he suggests that examining local ethical systems will help determine how local cultures perceive methodologies and the research process.

Under the second subheading, *Pedagogical Diversities to Enhance Learning*, we have three articles. The first, "A Flexible Delivery Teacher Education Strategy in Micronesia", is penned by Sullivan et al. They describe a teacher education upgrading project on the Micronesian Island of Nauru delivered via a flexi mode with online delivery and full-time face-to-face faculty on the ground. The 28 trained teachers then utilized their new learning with other teachers on island. The paper suggests that a full study of the context needs to be made prior to a project so as to enhance the likelihood of addressing challenges early. The paper also notes the lack of consistency in power supply and the different methods and strategies the team had to use in order to enhance outcomes mitigating the differences between technology and culture. The second paper, "Environmental Awareness in a Teacher Education Course in Fiji through Outdoor Education", is penned by Jeremy Dorovolomo. He argues that teacher education courses like P.E. could be done through outdoor class activities and fieldtrips so as to heighten the students' sensibilities and knowledge of the environment. The third paper, "Learning through Social Network Sites: A Case Study of Chinese Learners' Perceptions", is penned by Qiudi Zhang, Biyun Huang, Dickson Chiu, and Kevin Ho. They explore Chinese learners' perceptions on learning Japanese through SNSs using qualitative research. They found the various reasons for learning Japanese using social media sites include: convenience, ease of access and the risk-free learning environment, and user loyalty. They are learning Japanese because of a variety of reasons which include their admiration for Japanese culture and the entertainment industry, better job opportunities in Japan or in a Japanese company, or other related Japanese opportunities.

Under the third subheading, *Indigenous and Migrant Micronesian Spaces in Curriculum and Schooling*, we have two articles. The first, "Reclaiming Indigenous Knowledges in Formal Education – Pacific Literature in Secondary Classrooms on Guåhan", is penned by Kisha Borja-Quichocho. In the paper, Borja-Quichocho reports an action research study where she noted the lack of Pacific literature in the Guam Department of Education curriculum and argues for the inclusion of this. Students surveyed

indicated a high interest in the subject, as well as the relevance of the subject to their lives. The second article, “Perceptions of Immigrant Students from Micronesia Regarding Success in Higher Education”, by Cruz and James, describes a qualitative study of ten postsecondary-degree FSM immigrants on Guam. Interviewees highlight the support systems of the family, community, and students’ organization as important in their success. They also found individual factors like motivation, a sense of belonging, and religion as helpful for students’ success.

The fourth subheading, “Issues of Writing at Two Pacific Universities (University of Guam and University of the South Pacific)” has two papers. In the first, “Isolating Writing Strengths and Weaknesses in New Freshmen at the University of Guam”, Santos-Bamba speaks of the high rates of failure for freshmen on the English Placement Test (EPT) and makes suggestions about how this perennial problem can be resolved at the high school level. In a similar study, Roshila Singh wrote “Understanding Instances of Plagiarism in Third-Year Accounting Students at USP”. She examined 187 assignments of third-year accounting students on how they referenced external and intext information. “About 60% students incorrectly and inconsistently cited direct quotes, while 30% did the same for paraphrases. Finally, results demonstrated difficulty when paraphrasing information. Clearly, the findings suggest that methods of addressing inconsistent and inaccurate referencing are not stringent; thus, it has led to such a high occurrence in third-year assignments”.

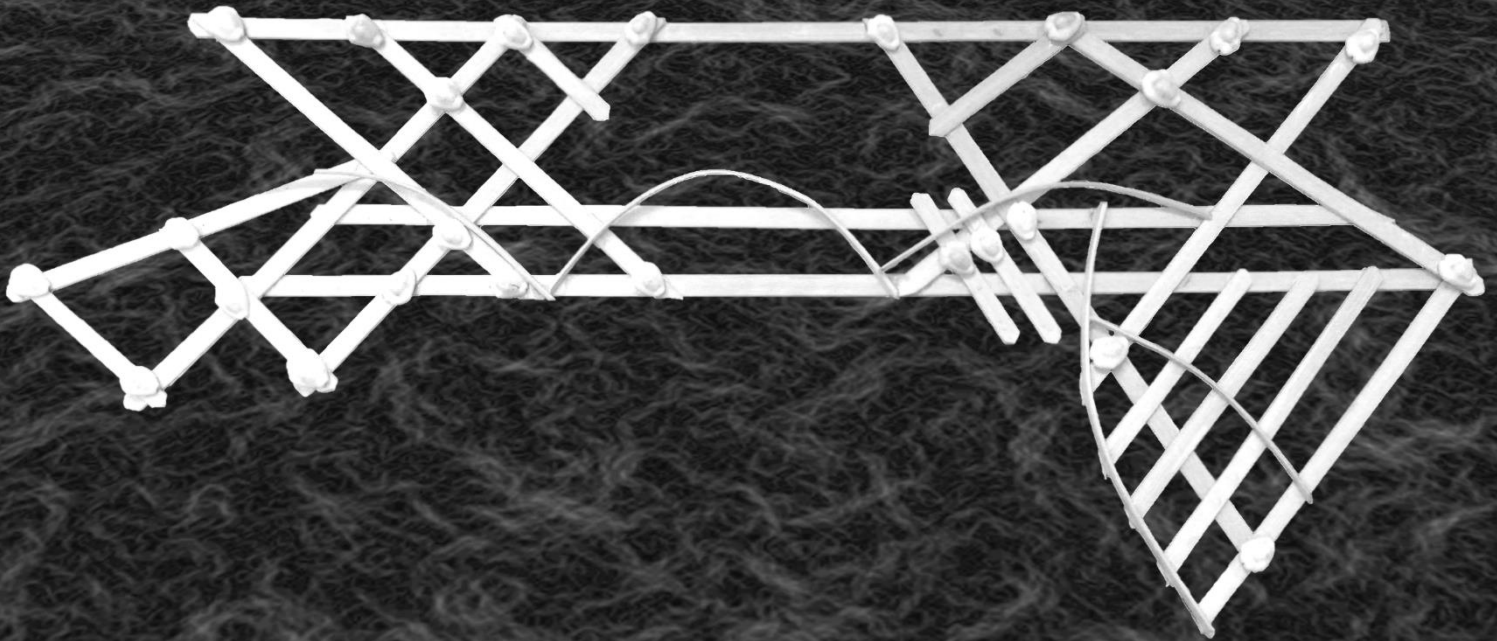
Under the fifth subheading, Critical Essay, we have one paper by Jillian Thiele. The essay outlines issues of leadership in PNG schools, noting that principals in PNG are also considered “big men.” This is a cultural construct which suggests they are responsible for the development of the area/villages and tribes where their schools are located besides running the schools. The author also highlights the many infrastructural, political, and other challenges principals have to deal with in this context.

Under the sixth subheading is the book review by David Gugin on the book *Writing across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing* by Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak. In his review, Gugin praises the authors on their work, and offers suggestions about contexts like the open university, where students enter without college writing readiness.

I hope you enjoy this latest volume of the Micronesian Educator!

Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, Editor

EMBRACING PHILOSOPHICAL DIVERSITIES TO ENHANCE EDUCATION



Chinese Philosophy of Education and Student Learning Outcomes

James D. Sellmann

Abstract

In this paper I argue that ancient Chinese approaches to activate and achieve student learning can inform contemporary concerns and approaches toward student learning outcomes. I argue that imperial China had its own form of “liberal education,” and that contemporary American liberal education could enhance its global, multicultural, and world citizen concepts, ideals, values and beliefs by analyzing, integrating, and valuing other forms of learning and education. I review Bloom’s and Shulman’s respective learning taxonomy, and then I show how ancient Chinese schools of philosophy provide their own taxonomy for learning. Ultimately, one of the main lessons to be learned from any philosophy or process of education is to learn what is worth living for and what is worth dying for, and to ensure that we use good evidence in making the determination. In conclusion I propose that the best results are had by continuing to live for a cause rather than to die for a cause, which is a form of Pacifism.

Keywords: *Chinese philosophy; liberal education; student learning outcomes; learning taxonomy*

Introduction

In this paper I argue that ancient Chinese approaches to activate and achieve student learning can inform contemporary concerns and approaches toward student learning outcomes. I argue that imperial China had its own form of “liberal education,” and that contemporary American liberal education could enhance its global, multicultural, and world citizen concepts, ideals, values and beliefs by analyzing, integrating, and appreciating other forms, models and philosophies of learning and education. In particular I argue that both the Confucian and the Daoist approaches to instruction were very much concerned about demonstrated student achievement or learning outcomes. Confucians and Daoist had their own forms of liberal education. Both teachings attempted to balance the needs of a literate culture with military protection. There is a pacifist position in early Daoist philosophy that promotes what I call “living for the cause,” rather than dying for the cause, and I argue that this pacifist position has relevance today in our own Warring States Period.

People seeking a fast means to make a lot of money might claim that the study of the classics, in particular, and the study of the humanities or the liberal arts, in general, is a waste of time. Although it may not be readily apparent, nevertheless, studies have shown that graduates with a liberal arts background have long-term life satisfaction and employment satisfaction. Liberal arts and social science majors earn more money over the long-term, have greater life satisfaction, and they are employed at pay-scale rates similar to graduates from the other, so-

called, professional disciplines (Humphreys and Kelly, 2014). Three out of four business and nonprofit leaders say they would recommend a 21st Century liberal arts education for future employees (Hart Research Associates, 2013). Salaries are on the rise for liberal arts and social science majors, over the past few years (NACE, 2013). So the study of the classics in particular and the Humanities in general are worthy endeavors for career success, personal cultivation, growth, and life satisfaction. If a liberal education promotes a balanced and healthy life style, then we must grapple with the ultimate outcome of living or dying for a cause, religious or political belief.

Ancient Chinese Philosophy: Cultural and Military Arts

Every major ancient Chinese philosopher had something to say about the military. The binary expression *wenwu* 文武, that is being literary or refined and being martial, denotes the correlative tension in civil life that requires martial protection. In both ancient and modern times a literate culture, *wenhua* 文化, cannot survive without military protection. To fully grasp the importance of the classics, we must also recognize the important role played by the military. A literate culture or a civilization cannot develop its group learning or investigate its mental models or assumptions about the world and life without acknowledging the importance of military protection and security. Every civilization has also developed a just war theory (Sellmann, 1983). To engage in a just war entails both military training for the troops and moral training for the commanders. Hence, we must not only consider the role of the military in defending literate culture or civilization, but also we need to recognize the importance of moral education provided by the classics and the branch of philosophy called ethics and the sub-branch of professional ethics. If the commanders are not educated in ethics, then they will not be able to deploy moral troops in a just war. A literate culture cannot study, let alone produce, classics without the peace of a golden age supported by military protection. The academic and economic growth of the Republic of China on Taiwan, Japan and Singapore stands as examples of this correlative tension between literate culture and military protection. So the role of the military cannot be over emphasized in understanding the importance of the classics. At the same time both the ancient and modern voices advocating Pacifism should be heard in balancing the tensions between literate culture and the military.

High Stakes Learning Outcomes for the “Learning Groups”

What are the processes by which education and learning occur? Why do some individuals and groups appear to benefit more from education and why do they appear to be more proficient learners than others? For nearly 2000 years the imperial dynastic systems of the Yellow River and Central Plains of China, in particular, and East Asia, in general, were supported by bureaucrats who were educated in the Confucian classics (Huang, 2010). For the elite, education began in the home. The least well-off formed village schools in an attempt to have a village-clan member pass the civil service examination, ensuring an appointment to a civil service office, and access to resources. From the family and village school to the state bureaucracy, the success of these groups was measured by their ability to produce valued outcomes. The educated became members of the bureaucracy, controlling the supply of natural and human resources and state power. These “learning groups” were for the most part self-monitored and goal oriented. The stakes were high. When these learning groups failed, people lost their livelihoods, sometimes their lives, and in

extreme cases the dynasty collapsed. More often than not, these learning groups were successful, and we should be able to learn from them.

Theory and Practice in Philosophical Traditions

Philosophers have been branded as being disconnected from daily affairs, having their heads in the clouds and not taking note of what is under their feet; that is, practical worldly affairs. Thales falling in a ditch is the classic example. The masters and sages have always emphasized the importance of putting knowledge into practice and only pursuing ultimate goals, which have been rigorously examined, evaluated and deemed to be of “real” value. Thales cornering the market on olive oil presses is the classical counter example showing the practical abilities of a sage. The caricature of the disconnected, impractical philosopher or academician is not entirely unwarranted. At times throughout history the academy and its disciplines may become ossified, thinking about thinking without concern for outcomes, practical, theoretical, or otherwise; that is, failing to think about outcomes beyond preserving the status quo or their own personal positions in the status quo. Of course there must be a balance between pure theory and practical application. Philosophers, scientists, academicians and others must be able to think about thinking, think about pure theory, or enjoy the flight of the imagination without a concern for practical or creative results. Thinking, theory, and the imagination have their contexts and their applications, too. Living the good life, living the scientific contemplative and theoretical life, living intellectually and morally, require understanding in action skillfully applied, criticized, and analyzed knowledge that engages understanding and ushers people toward enlightenment.

East and West: Philosophical Consensus

When Socrates declared that living an unexamined life was not worthy of a human being and was willing to die for his freedom to engage in rational discourse, and when Mengzi (Mencius 孟子) declared that despite his love for eating bear paws and living life, he would be willing to die for being appropriate or rightness (*yi* 義) because it has greater value, we see that philosophers from both the East and the West do have expectations about human values that place greater emphasis on living properly than on merely surviving. They may differ slightly on whether the Socratic rational life or the Confucian moral life take precedence over the other, but they do generally agree that properly evaluating the meaning of life and its outcome are of the utmost importance for a human being. They agree that dying for the cause is an acceptable outcome. But how do they know that their choice is the correct one? How do they evaluate the value of life and the proper outcome for living appropriately? Is being willing to die for one’s principles really the best outcome or the best approach to solving a hard problem? Are these philosophers, or are we, teaching people to fight to the death for their principles? Are we teaching people to fight for peace *at any price*? Philosophy and philosophers have always had the need to assess their teachings, theories, and the expected outcomes. Philosophers have long been concerned with the question: “how do we know what we know?” Present concerns to assess the outcomes of education and student learning are merely extensions of the epistemological turn in philosophy and the spirit of scientific discovery. We want to know and we want to know how we know, that is we want to know what evidence we have to know, that students are, learning.

On the Goals of Education

What is the purpose and goal of education? Is not the educational process concerned with assisting people to find a reasonable, creative and meaningful way to live to find a meaning for, if not *the* meaning of, living a human life? Naturally there are many practical skills to be mastered, and people do need meaningful employment. Children have to learn to walk, talk, tie a knot, calculate, read and write. Highly trained professionals have to learn to master detailed technical, mechanical, and intellectual skills. The practical skills are instrumental values that guide people toward intrinsic values. The skills and jobs are necessary for living well, but they are not sufficient. People require the ultimate values, concerns and meaning to live a complete life.

If we follow Aristotle's lead by seeking what is unique about being human to find an ultimate, intrinsic value and purpose for living a human life, then we might begin with "seeking personal pleasure" as an answer. Pursuing the sexual orgasm is a popular proposal for the meaning of life, but quickly people discover that there is nothing uniquely human about copulation and orgasms. Aside from pleasure, the sex act is a means to establish a family. We know that families are not unique to humans, nor are they the end all of human meaning. The family is a means to establishing social and political order. Some believe the state to be the ultimate end of living a human life. The state, however, is a means to providing education and learning experiences so people can study, and maybe even discover, their purpose, significance, value and meaning for living whether that ultimate end be happiness or self-esteem, rationality, contemplation, awakening or enlightenment, harmony with nature, salvation, and so on.

Some academicians propose that learning is the ultimate end and meaning of living a human life because it is so intimately tied to the experience of self-esteem, happiness, rationality, awakening and so on. Others argue that education and learning are means to the experience of an intrinsic, ultimate value. Whether learning has intrinsic value or only instrumental value is an interesting question that cannot be resolved here. It may be that many learning experiences have both instrumental and intrinsic aspects. For example, I learn to communicate more effectively, which has instrumental value, but that learning experience is fused with my self-esteem and becomes a value in itself. The importance of liberal education is that it frees people from mere mechanical and instrumental values to pursue more profound intrinsic and ultimate values, purposes and meanings. Duke Maskell and Ian Robinson (2002) debate many of these issues, siding with the intrinsic value of liberal education.

On the Ideals of a Liberal Education

In Europe, the ideals of a liberal education began with Socrates and were articulated by the Stoics (Nussbaum, 1997). It was thought that a liberal education would benefit a free man. The idea that free people needed a special education that is fitting to their status was not unknown in ancient China. Both the Daoists and the Confucians recognized the importance of learning (*xue* 學) and teaching (*jiao* 教); they both developed philosophies of education that share certain humanistic similarities to European liberal education. The ancient Daoists (Daojia 道家) and Confucians (Rujia 儒家) lived in a stratified society with slaves (奴) and free persons, and also like the Stoic notion of a basic human dignity shared by all, slave and master alike, the Daoists

and Confucians developed an idea that any person could become a sage. Becoming a sage was precisely a matter of learning, an affair of self-cultivation, developing skills and mastery. In the middle ages, in the Tang (唐朝 618-907) and Song (宋朝 960-1279) dynasties, liberal education in China served much the same purpose as it did in mediaeval Europe in that it trained mostly aristocratic sons to administer government and religious institutions. For the most part, the Daoists trained their monastery and temple administrators, and the famous Daoist classic, the *Daodejing* 道德經, was used during the Tang dynasty 唐朝 as a source text for the imperial examination system (Twitchett and Fairbanks, 1997). Of course the Confucian Literati (Rujia 儒家), the Military (Bingjia 兵家) advisors, and the later day, Fajia 法家, bureaucrats (so-called Legalists, but better translated as Systematizers) maintained the state by training candidates to take the imperial exam. Government officials were appointed to office by one of three paths: either i) being summoned by the emperor, usually after being recommended by high officials, ii) inheritance, or iii) by passing the imperial examination. In all cases the candidate was expected to demonstrate an understanding of virtue and an ability to behave properly, that is to display the (Confucian) moral virtues, such as human-caring (*ren* 仁), filial respect (*xiao* 孝), rightness (*yi* 義), being trustworthy (*xin* 信), properly performing ritual-action-and-propriety (*li* 禮), being wise (*zhi* 知) and so on. A complete understanding of liberal education in ancient China examines the Daoist counter-culture trends, and the cultural mainstream represented by the Literati, who had absorbed Confucian and Fajia tendencies, and the Military (Bingjia) learning experiences.

Education and Achieving Longevity of Life

It may seem counter intuitive to bring Daoism into a discussion concerning education with the *Daodejing* advocating that people move beyond purposive action, desire and knowledge (*wuwei* 無為, *wuyu* 無欲, *wuzhi* 無知). If we are to understand the mainstream cultural tendencies of the Literati and the Militarists, then we must examine the alleged counter-cultural trends of Daoism. As travelers or wanderers seeking a path or way of living-well, learning-well, and teaching-well, educators *should* be open to entertaining iconoclastic ideas that attack the sacred, higher values and the importance placed on knowledge and action. What if too much knowledge or action prevents a person from fulfilling the meaning and purpose of living a human life? What if Socrates and Mengzi are excessive in being willing to die for a cause? The opening of chapter three of the Daoist text, the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, addresses this problem.

Your life has a limit but knowledge has none. If you use what is limited to pursue what has no limit, you will be in danger. If you understand this and still strive for knowledge, you will be in danger for certain! If you do good, stay away from fame. If you do evil, stay away from punishments. Follow the middle; go by what is constant, and you can stay in one piece, keep yourself alive, look after your parents, and live out your years (Watson, 1968, p. 50).

What is really interesting about this passage is that it offers a lesson to be learned, and it states the expected outcomes to be acquired from the lesson, namely, to keep yourself intact, provide for your family and live a long life or at least complete your natural life span. The passages that comprise the core chapters of the *Zhuangzi* were mostly written during the Warring States

Period (*zhanguodai* 戰國代 470-221 B.C.E) when people regularly died young. The idea of living out your years or living a natural life span is a recurring theme in the *Zhuangzi*. Instead of seeking more, the Daoists are notorious for aspiring for less. Instead of willingly dying for a cause, they would merely seek to live out their life span. A life is precious such that living for the purpose of cultivating that life to its fullest realization is their ultimate goal. Dying for your principles exhibits great honor and courage, but it also cuts short the means by which a person advances those principles. Death precludes being able to live well and properly. Zhuangzi provides an alternative to Socrates' and Mengzi's respective proposals that some values are worth dying for.

The Daoists appear to follow the teaching of Song Rongzi 宋榮子 (also known as Song Xing 宋鉞) an early pacifist and advocate of disarmament, who taught an antinomian philosophy based on moral autonomy or the journey of the heart (*xinzhixing* 心之行) holding the view that being insulted is not disgraceful (Sukhu, 2012, p. 123). His view supports the idea of "living for a cause" rather than dying for a cause.

China's Liberal Education and Student Learning Outcomes

In this section I briefly flesh out some of the educational values and turn to the importance of assessing student learning.

The basic problems of human existence have not changed that much since antiquity; we still dwell in ignorance and desire, suffer, and die. At its root ignorance, a lack of knowledge, understanding, appreciation and moral empathy for others becomes compounded with greed, selfish desires, an over emphasis on the value of sexual orgasms, and hatred, ill-will, violence, and various criminal acts are perpetrated. The Confucians see the problem in terms of people having lost the *dao* 道 or the proper cultural way of life, creating social discord, *luan* 亂. They identify solutions found in Confucian-liberal education, learning the tradition of moral virtues and family values are expected to lead to the immediate goals of self-cultivation for the individual person, and social harmony. The ultimate goal is to generate peace in the empire.

The militarists see the problem more narrowly in terms of military threats from within and outside the state. Their solution is military training for the troops, and a more well-rounded education for the commanders. With proper training, tactics and strategy, the immediate goal of state security and the ultimate goal of unifying and pacifying the empire could be achieved.

The Daoist hold that life's ills are associated with the loss of the way, but the *dao* 道 of their concern was not cultural tradition but the way of nature. To some extent the cultural tradition itself is a large part of the problem of human life. That is imposed social values distance people from nature, others and even from themselves. The Daoist solution requires training but it also entails forgetting, and getting beyond the conventional emphasis on taking charge, commanding knowledge, and indulging in desire. The immediate goals involve self-cultivation and living out our natural life span; the ultimate goals are harmony with nature and union with the *dao*. Military training is required in any culture to establish and maintain civil and inter-state control and order, but such training is not associated with what we call higher education or liberal

education. The heart of liberal education in ancient China resides in the Confucian, and Daoist philosophies, and later in Buddhism.

The Purposes of a Confucian and a Daoist Education

The Confucian and Daoist traditions provide a type of liberal arts education. Confucius had established the six arts (*liushu* 六樹), namely, ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics. These were considered to be the arts for aristocrats. Notice that archery and chariot driving are tied to military skill. The Confucian curriculum was built around the study of classical texts. By the time of the Han dynasty the Book of Music was lost. The five classics consisted of the: *Changes* 易經, *Odes* 詩經, *Documents* 書經, *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋, and the *Record of Rites* 禮記. Commentaries to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and other texts were added to the curriculum to comprise the thirteen classics 十三經. In the Song dynasty 宋朝, Zhu Xi's 朱熹 innovation meant focusing the curriculum and the imperial examination on the Four Books, namely the *Analects* 論語 of Kongzi, the *Mengzi* 孟子 (*Mencius*), and two chapters from the *Record of Rites*, the *Great Learning* 大學 and the *Centrality and Commonality* 中庸 (usually mistranslated as the *Doctrine of the Mean*). The purpose of a Confucian education was to inculcate values and virtues. In their youth, the students were expected to memorize the texts. By adulthood, they were expected to understand how the positive and negative examples of past rulers and ministers applied to contemporary problems. The general idea was not to train future scholar-officials in a specific area or profession. The moral exemplar is not a specialist (*Analects* 2.12). Because his father died at an early age and the family suffered hardship, Confucius had to master various skills to earn a living, but he doubted that an exemplary person had such skills (*Analects* 9.6 and .7). This fits the guideline of a liberal education as opposed to a specialized or professional one.

The Daoists, despite their attacks on conventional learning and praise for forgetting conventions, had their training and education program. The Daoists are not opposed to all forms of learning; they do seek to learn the way. The *Daodejing* 道德經, *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Liezi* 列子, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, *Wenzi* 文字, and various other texts stand as testimony to the valued literary tradition in Daoist thought. When the *Daoist Canon* (*Daozang* 道藏) was compiled in the Ming dynasty 明朝, it contained about 1200 titles. Modern scholars debate about the definition of "Daoism," attempting to demarcate a philosophy, a religion, various alchemical traditions and so on (Welch and Seidel, ed. 1979). Internally, practitioners of Daoism do not delineate between the philosophy and the religion; such distinctions are foreign to them. They would rather distinguish the correct one (*zhengyi* 正一) from the charlatans and shamans. Similar to the Confucians, Buddhists, and other traditions, the Daoists distinguish lineages based on master-disciple relationships and the texts they used. In the formal training of a Daoshi priest, 道士, the acolyte must master various skills (ritual-acts, meditation techniques, music, dance steps, and so on) and an understanding of the texts and their concepts and ideas. The acolyte begins his or her education by studying the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*. After the Han dynasty, the training of a Daoist priest was similar to the training of a Medieval or even a modern Catholic priest. Those who served the masses receive the lower training in ritual skills; while the philosopher-

theologians focused on the higher education of the person. The question remains: how does one know that learning occurs in higher education?

Bloom's Taxonomy and Confucian Virtues as Taxonomy

To answer the question how do we know learning occurs, we have to have an idea of what learning entails. We need a list of key elements, taxonomy, which Benjamin S. Bloom (1956) developed. Bloom's taxonomy can be translated into classical or modern Chinese. First, Bloom developed the cognitive taxonomy consisting of: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Later, Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964) developed a taxonomy for the affective domain consisting of: receiving, responding, valuing, organizing and internalizing. There are fitting classical Chinese translations for these concepts. The ancient Chinese were very much concerned about knowledge, understanding (*zhi* 知 or 智), comprehension (*wu* 悟 or *dong* 懂), application (*xing* 行), a bit less concerned about analysis (*tui* 推), and very concerned about synthesis (*yi* 一, *he* 和), and evaluation (*jue* 决). They were also well-aware of the importance of receiving (*gan* 感), responding (*ying* 應), valuing, (*hao* 好), organizing (*lei* 類 and *zhi* 治), and internalizing (*nei* 內). More recently Bloom's disciple, Lee S. Shulman (2002) proposes another taxonomy, and it too can be translated into Chinese, namely: engagement and motivation (*zhen* 振 to arouse to action 振, and *yu* 慾 desire 慾); knowledge and understanding (*zhi* 知 as clever knowledge and *zhi* 智 as wise understanding, or *dong* 懂 to comprehend and *hui* 慧 wise); performance and action (*li* 裡 ritual-action as proper performance and *xing* 行 as action); reflection and critique (*si* 思 or *xiang* 想 for thought and *bian* 辯 for critical argument); judgment and design (*jue* 决 to judge and *lun* 掄 to choose); and commitment and identity (*zhong* 忠 for dedication/loyalty 忠 and *cheng* 誠 for integrity/sincerity as people's identity or authenticity). Many of these concepts are important in the ancient Chinese literary and philosophical vocabularies.

How do the taxonomies work; how are they to be understood? Shulman warns that taxonomies have many applications, and that their interpretation is situational. He also recognizes that taxonomies may become ideologies, and he warns against this. He describes how Bloom's taxonomy can be presented as an extended metaphor, a limiting principle or a narrative.

Thus, Bloom's cognitive taxonomy tells the story of education beginning with the acquisition by rote of facts that someone else has taught you and which you are only expected to reproduce or repeat. The story becomes more exciting as knowing matures into understanding and application, and then even more adventurous as ideas are subjected to analysis, as new ideas can be created and synthesized, and finally at the highest level, as the learner becomes capable of judging and evaluating the truth or usefulness of the ideas themselves. (Shulman, 2002).

He also relates his taxonomy in story form:

Once upon a time someone was engaged in an experience of learning. And that engagement was so profound that it led to her understanding things she didn't understand before, and therefore gave her the capacity to practice and to act in the world in new ways. But once she started acting in the world, she realized that action doesn't always work out as intended, so she had to start looking at what she was doing and at the consequences of her actions. This meant reexamining her actions to see whether she might want to act differently. Through that kind of reflection on her own performance and understanding, she became wiser and capable of making judgments and devising designs in situations that were progressively more uncertain. And as she did so, she began to internalize the values that she had been exposed to, at which point she was no longer merely engaged but truly committed. Those commitments, in turn, disposed her to seek out new engagements, which led (... the story is a circle) to new understandings and practices. (Shulman, 2002).

Chinese Philosophy and the Implicit Taxonomy of the Virtues

The Confucian philosophy contains an implicit taxonomy mostly consisting of the virtues. A Confucian narrative might go something like this. Everyone is born into a family; even orphans are adopted into a family structure. As the child grows, her biological dependence on her parents becomes filial devotion (*xiao* 孝). She becomes aware of her position in the family and either serves as a role model for younger siblings or learns to follow and obey her elder siblings (*di* 弟 brotherly/sibling love). Through the various family relations, she learns to extend her love for family members to fellow villagers and ultimately to acquaintances, developing *ren* 仁, being human-hearted or loving. She learns that love and affection (*ai* 愛) must be expressed according to the rules of proper deportment and ritual-action, *li* 禮. There is an implicit ability to transfer understanding and virtuous action such that *xiao* 孝, filial devotion in the family, becomes *zhong* 忠, dedicated loyalty to the ruler and state. As the old saying goes, 'filial sons make loyal ministers' (Sellmann 1985). Family and public relationships require her to be honest and trustworthy, *xin* 信. She learns to be just and appropriate in all her actions, *yi* 義. Like Shulman's circle, the Confucian story is a spiral or series of concentric circles in which the past learning experiences must be transferred to present and future situations, which culminate in developing a knack for hitting-the-mark-in-moral-wisdom, *zhi* 知. She becomes a living sage, and at death is honored in ancestor veneration rites for generations to come. Finally her wisdom is passed on for generations in learning groups.

The Daoist story might go something like the following. People are born into nature content and free of restraint, but simultaneously people are born into a restrictive society. Before they know it, their natural place and perspective are lost to social conventions. People are led astray by society and forced to believe that they must suffer, labor, live in anxiety, and die an untimely death. Only after diligent self-cultivation based on acting by non-purposive action (*weiwuwei* 為無為), getting beyond conventional knowledge and desire (*wuzhi* 無知 and *wuyu* 無欲), forgetting (*wang* 忘), cutting loose the fetters of society (*jie* 解), awakening to the dream of life (*jue* 覺), modeling the spontaneous, self-so-ing (*ziran* 自然) course of nature can people return

to the simplicity (*pu* 樸 uncarved block) of their original character, returning to union with the *dao* 道. The paradox in Daoism is that people must get beyond conventional learning; they must unlearn and forget the lessons of society and convention to really learn.

Learning Outcomes and the Philosophical Traditions

Generally speaking Chinese philosophy is down to earth and practical. There must be results, and the results must function. For the Militarists, the results must secure and maintain the state. For the Confucians, the results must be evidenced in a person's proper deportment in the family and the state. For the Daoists, the results must be seen in a person's ability to harmonize with the forces of nature. In Euro-American philosophy, results count. The American Pragmatists, the British Utilitarians, and the Positivists of all backgrounds seek positive, real, workable outcomes. All of the philosophies seeking the meaning of living a human life are tied to attaining results. The exception might be those philosophies dedicated to pure logic and pure theory, but even they have concerns for non-applied outcomes. So philosophy and philosophies of education have always been concerned with outcomes. Today we place greater emphasis on obtaining evidence that the result was achieved.

One of the main lessons to be learned from any philosophy of life or process of education is to learn what is worth living for and what is worth dying for, and to ensure that we use good evidence in making the determination. For Kongzi, there is nothing worse than dying for the wrong cause. For Zhuangzi, there is nothing worse than living for the wrong cause. The followers of Kongzi had a saying, now found in the *Classic of Filial Piety*, to protect people, namely: "Stay on the road, do not take a short cut; stay in the boat, do not go swimming" (Sellmann, 1985). The *Zhuangzi* contains a story about a body-surfer who shocks Kongzi. Allow me to briefly retell the story.

Kongzi is sightseeing at Lüliang where there is a great waterfall and swift moving rapids. He sees a man dive into the rapids. Fearing the man might drown, he has his disciples head down to the bank of the river for a rescue. The man comes out of the water singing. Kongzi catches up to him and asks if he has a *dao* or method for such swimming. The man replies that he has none. He goes on to say that he was born on land and raised to know its security, but he grew up in the water and learned to feel safe in the water. Now it is his character and destiny to swim without knowing why (paraphrasing Watson, 1968. p. 204-05).

Where Kongzi is concerned that the man might die for no good reason, that is, by swimming; Zhuangzi is disquieted by people living for the wrong reason that is living to satisfy social conventions only, being stressed-out, and thereby dying an untimely, early death. What is the best outcome to live for the right reasons or to die for the right reasons? The Pacifists position should be considered. Some might want to reconcile the two and try to do both by living and dying for the right reasons. Death is an ultimate conclusion and cannot be reversed such that dying for the right reason precludes living for the right reason. The art of contextualizing, the ability to

negotiate our health, to negotiate with others and the forces of nature, to live with a purpose without resorting to killing others or self-martyrdom, these are aspects of living for a cause.

For the time being and until better evidence is given, I flow with Zhuangzi. It is best to live in harmony with the forces of nature and keep on living to swim another day.

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Where are the Cowrie Shells Hidden? Repositories of an Indigenous Pacific Ethical System

Kabini Sanga

Abstract

As a subject matter for research, indigenous Pacific Islands ethical systems are at present uncharted. Consequently, as a first piece, this Solomon Islands descriptive study explored the repositories of an indigenous Mala'ita ethical system, based on a multi-year field research among the Gula'alā people of East Malai'ta. The findings show that in an indigenous Mala'ita ethical system, its repositories are in the daily practices, activities and ways of life of the people. As repositories, these are entirely outside of and inaccessible to the university ethical systems which govern contemporary Pacific research.

Keywords: *indigenous Pacific Islands ethical systems; Solomon Islands; East Malai'ta*

*I have been out on the reef
looking for cowrie shells
but every rock has been turned
by those who went before me*

*I am tired and disappointed
but I shall keep on trying
in case I find one
looking for a place to hide.*

Reef Walking (a poem by Konai H. Thaman)

Introduction

The discontentment with conventional research seems widespread. Among indigenous scholars, the bases for this frustration are varied and include a non-alignment of research to indigenous peoples' aspirations (Abdullah & Stringer, 1999), differences of philosophical paradigms (Hart, 2010), inadequate and mis-representation of indigenous peoples in research (Bishop, 1998; Smith, 1999), biased privileging of scientific discourse in research (Deloria, 1980; Smith, 1999), encroachment into indigenous peoples' intellectual spaces (Maddocks, 1991), and misappropriation of indigenous peoples' intellectual properties (Henderson, 2000).

Within this general disquiet, scholars have raised numerous ethical concerns. These have included concerns over the differences of interpretation of ethics (Wax, 1991), claims of systematic neglect by research ethics committees to collective rights and community consent (Glass & Kaufert, 2007) and privileging of a Western-biased ethical system that assumes individual rights as paramount (Brew, 2001). Additionally, apprehensions have been due to applications of inappropriate ethical codes when researching indigenous knowledge (Castellano, 2004), and the exclusion of indigenous ethical processes (Worby & Rigney, 2002). Furthermore, concerns have included issues of cultural validity of ethical decisions by university and professional research organizations (Mead, 2003) and claims of imposition of such ethical principles as autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence (Hudson, 2005).

In relation to Pacific research, the dissatisfaction by indigenous Pacific scholars with conventional research generally mirrors those expressed above (see Gegeo, 1998; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001; Nabobo-Baba, 2006; Vaioliti, 2006). Consequently, in relation to research ethics, advocates of indigenous Pacific research have been calling for all research with, of or on indigenous peoples to reflect Pacific peoples' value systems, including their principles (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samiu, Finau, 2001; Sanga and Pasikale, 2002), moral frameworks (Nabobo-Baba, 2006; Johansson-Fua, 2009; Sanga, 2011), and indigenous Pacific peoples' ethical systems (Sanga, 2014).

Empirical research on indigenous Pacific knowledge systems, however, is relatively youthful. In a recent observation, Sanga (2012) noted that there is still little systematic information available or written about Pacific education research capacity. Having said this, it is acknowledged that there is a healthy volume of writing in the grey literature on indigenous Pacific knowledge systems, particularly from an advocacy perspective (see Sanga and Kidman, 2012; Sanga and Thaman, 2009). However, even in the grey literature, there has been little written about indigenous Pacific ethical systems or theorizing on these systems. As a first piece on indigenous Mala'ita (Solomon Islands) ethical system (Sanga, 2014), I had described a morality system which is integrated, tribe-based, with overlapping relationships between personal and communal morality; a system which privileges obedience and one which is held together through *abu* or holy living. The purpose of that paper was to show that indigenous Pacific peoples do have systems of ethics which are alive and can be clearly described and explained.

At this point, numerous questions can be asked: For instance in oral Pacific cultures, what does an indigenous ethical system look like? How is an indigenous Pacific ethical system structured? What principles does such a system highlight? To understand an indigenous ethical system, where does one look? What does one look for? These and many more questions can be asked. In this article, I focus on the question: What are the repositories of an indigenous Pacific ethical system? In exploring this question I show that in an indigenous Pacific ethical system, the repositories of ethics are not found in institutional policies, professional codes of ethics or state laws. Instead, the repositories are the daily practices, activities and ways of life which are part and parcel of the peoples' moral philosophies. In answer to my focus question, I describe these repositories, together with the principles which are privileged and the social settings of these principles within the knowledge system. It is hoped that researchers, including indigenous

scholars might appreciate the wisdom and contributions of indigenous peoples' intellectual traditions from the modest insights of this paper on a Mala'ita indigenous ethical system.

The Context

The setting for this paper is in Melanesian Solomon Islands, an archipelago of about 1,000 islands east of Papua New Guinea and north-west of Vanuatu. In relation to Micronesia, the Solomon Islands lies south of Nauru and south-east of The Federated States of Micronesia. Politically, the Solomon Islands is an independent state, having obtained its constitutional independence from Britain in 1978. Today, the country is a constitutional monarchy, with the Queen of United Kingdom as the Head of State but represented by a Solomon Islands Governor General and an elected Prime Minister as Head of Government. In terms of geography, Solomon Islands has a land area of 28,400 square kilometres or 11,000 square miles (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon_Islands). Culturally, eighty or more indigenous languages are found in the Solomon Islands with many islanders speaking a number of languages, together with *pijin* English; the every-day language of communication in urban areas. The official language is English. The majority of people live in villages.

The island of Mala'ita has an approximate area of 4,000 square kilometres. The island is one of six main islands in the Solomon Islands archipelago; the others being Choiseul, Isabel, New Georgia, Guadalcanal and Makira. Like the other main islands, Mala'ita is mountainous with a dense tropical forest and numerous rivers and streams. The Mala'ita islanders are Melanesians, with cultures which are patrilineal. There are eleven linguistic groups on the island. From north to south, these language groups are Toabaita, Baelelea, Beagu, Lau, Fataleka, Kwara'ae, Langalanga, Gula'alaā, Kwaio, Dorio, Are'Are and Sā. Mala'ita islanders have village settlements along the coastlines, in river valleys as well as on mountain ridges. Distinct in Mala'ita are the man-made islands in the Langalanga lagoon (near the township of Auki) and Lau lagoon in north-east Mala'ita. While many Mala'ita people live in other parts of the Solomon Islands, those who live on the island number around 140,000 people; making Mala'ita the most populated island in the archipelago. Like other Solomon Islanders, Mala'ita people live on their ancestral tribal lands; practising age-old customs of subsistence and communal living, often not under the direct control of the modern Solomon Islands state. The worldview of indigenous Malaita islanders are theocratic; hence their integrated ethical system.

On the eastern coast of Mala'ita island live the Gula'alā people; speaking the Gula'alā language. Like other Melanesians on Mala'ita Island, the Gula'alā people are indigenous to their context and make up the smallest (about 1,800 people) of the twelve linguistic groups on the island. The Gula'alā people are coastal dwellers and share boundaries and overlapping relationships with the Kwaio, Kwara'ae, Fataleka and Lau linguistic groups. The Gula'alā people are made up of seven tribes. In pre-Christian Malaita, these tribes were hostile to each other whereas today, the Gula'alā are living peacefully with each other and with the neighbouring linguistic groups. This peaceful co-existence is a direct result of Christianity which was introduced to the Gula'alā in the early 1900s. Like other Mala'ita islanders, the Gula'alā live on their ancestral tribal lands, going about their daily lives according to age-old customs and their acquired Christian value system. Neither Christianity nor modernization have completely influenced the ethical

system of the Gula'alā. Apart from Gula'alā people who may be living in Honiara (capital of Solomon Islands), those who live in Gula'alā still speak their indigenous language daily.



[Map of 'Malaita Island']

Literature review

In conventional research, the repositories of the ethical system used are embedded in the policies and associated institutionalized systems of universities, professional associations, state laws and international conventions. In the following paragraphs, examples are described, together with what is deposited in these repositories of ethics. At the end of each paragraph, a brief critical comment is made, from an indigenous research perspective.

First, in modern universities, it is common to find ethics policies, regulations and specific committees which are approved by the governing bodies of these universities. For instance, matters of ethics in research for the University of Hawai'i are governed by the Ethics policies and regulations and monitored by the university ethics committee (<http://www.hawaii.edu/svpa/ep/e5/e5214.pdf>). In this instance, the objective of this policy is to promote and protect the integrity of the University of Hawai'i (1998) and to promote adherence

to appropriate state and federal laws. Further, the University of Hawai'i policy also stipulates that the authorities for and terms of discipline and appeal rest with the university.

Similarly, at the University of Auckland (2013), research ethics are guided by a policy statement which outlines the guiding principles, the application and approval processes and implementation protocols (<https://www.policies.auckland.ac.nz/policy-display-register/code-of-conduct-research.pdf>). This policy is monitored and implemented by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee. The scope of this policy is extensive and covers all researchers including employees, honorary appointees, emeritus appointees, students, staff and other institutional members of the University of Auckland.

At the Victoria University of Wellington (2014), matters of ethics in research are covered by a Council approved policy which defines what is ethical and what is not (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/research-policy/appendix-a-human-ethics-committee-guidelines.pdf>). As well, this policy privileges the key ethical principles of respect, consent and conflict of interest. More so, a particular process is used in applying for, determining and obtaining ethics approval. Similar to the other two universities, the Victoria University of Wellington ethics policy is monitored and implemented by the university ethics committee.

As repositories of an ethical system, the university mandated policies, regulations and processes of ethics are similar, suggesting a certain degree of homogeneity and universality of application. Consequently Castellano (2004) has observed that such systems of ethics are inappropriate for conducting of research in aboriginal and indigenous communities. It is in direct response to such inadequacies that groups such as the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (2003) have devised a code of conduct for research in Northern communities, especially to support such communities to be involved in all stages of research.

Second, there are professional associations within nation states which govern matters of research ethics. For instance in Australia, besides the requirements of individual universities, certain research in education must conform to the code of ethics of the Australian Association for Research in Education (1995), particularly in compliance to its principles relating to harm, consent, deception, secrecy and confidentiality. In the New Zealand context, certain university research activities are governed by professional ethics committees such as the Health and Disabilities Ethics Committee or the New Zealand Association for Research in Education.

From an indigenous research perspective, such repositories of professional ethics are inadequate, hence the establishment in Canada of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (2000) set of ethical guidelines for indigenous communities. Likewise, in the same year, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (2000) approved its Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies; offering advice for researchers and communities in matters of consultation, negotiation, participation, benefits and outcomes of research. While the Canadian and Australian initiatives are positive, these are predominantly institutional programmes and are well outside of the authority of indigenous communities.

Third, there are state or national laws which govern matters of research ethics. In Canada, human subject research is governed under the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS); a Federal government policy for the three agencies, Canadian Institute of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council (Government of Canada, 2010). At a national level, in Solomon Islands, non-Solomon Islands researchers are required under the Education Act (Solomon Islands Government, 1978) to obtain ethical clearance from the Ministry of Education. In New Zealand, certain health-related research are considered and monitored by the Health and Disabilities Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Health and or the Health Research Council (2010).

Again, from an indigenous research perspective, such state laws are deemed inadequate on their own. For instance in Canada, the Assembly of Alaska Native Educators (2000) had devised a set of guidelines regulating research in their communities while allowing for indigenous knowledge practices to be incorporated. Similarly, in New Zealand, in addition to state laws and professional and institutional ethics policies, Government departments have also mandated other ethical guidelines as the Ministry of Social Development (2004) Guidelines for Research and Evaluation with Māori and the Ministry of Education's Pasifika Education Research Guidelines (Anae, M., Coxon, E., Mara, D., Wendt-Samu, T., & Finau, C., 2001) for use by sector researchers when researching Māori and Pacific peoples in New Zealand. In recognizing the value of these mediated additions to advance the priorities of indigenous peoples, it is noted that these initiatives have remained within the authority and jurisdiction of the institutional bodies that created them, rather than belonging to the local indigenous peoples' communities.

Fourth, there are international conventions that house systems of ethics governing research. Many of these include various organs of the United Nations (2014) (see <http://www.un.org/en/>). In 1946 for instance, the World Health Organization constitution stipulated the enjoyment of the highest standards of health as a fundamental right of every human being; a stipulation which has had considerable effect on global health research. Other conventions include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) and the Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) with, among other things, its article protecting the rights of children. More recently (2005), there has been the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights which stipulates a list of ethical principles including human rights, fundamental freedoms and individual autonomy. In response to this latest convention, a Pacific audience (Regional Pacific Ethics of Knowledge Production Workshop in Apia, 2007) refuted the homogenous assumptions underpinning the United Nations declaration and their assumed privileging of the individual person outside of communal responsibilities (Mila-Schaaf, 2008).

Methodology

As an approach for this paper, I use the poem *Reef Walking* by Professor Konai Thaman in a metaphorical sense; searching for *cowrie shells* as those valuable aspects of an indigenous ethical system. It is in my *reef walking* that I upturn a *reef rock* or a metaphoric repository of an indigenous ethical system, describing each repository and its features.

This paper is based on content which had been obtained from my wider fifteen-year research project on the Gula'alā people of East Mala'ita, Solomon Islands. Briefly, the wider project is a multi-disciplinary study of Gula'alā society. In writing this paper, I have drawn from aspects of my wider project that had dealt with moral philosophy and ethics. In addition to the scholarly investigations that I had undertaken over the years, I have used data from my recordings of daily activities, interviews with numerous Gula'alā elders and *ala lā kini* (intentional focussed discussions) with key Gula'alā knowledge experts. As well, I am an indigenous Gula'alā and a clan leader of my people.

The scope of this paper however is limited to the Gula'alā; thereby limiting its application. However, the paper is relevant to indigenous Pacific peoples generally and is inspirational to a new generation of Mala'ita, Melanesian and indigenous Pacific researchers. In writing this piece, I do so as a communal responsibility to this new area of scholarship. At the same time I acknowledge my personal responsibility for any limitations of description, interpretation or execution of scholarship.

Findings

In the following sections, I describe the repositories of an indigenous Gula'alā ethical system, using Professor Konai Thaman's metaphorical reef-walking. Because this work is of a new area of scholarship, the study findings are delimited to basic descriptions, rather than to more analytical treatments.

Reef rock 1: Fānanaua

In our reef walking, we upturn rock 1 and thereunder we find *cowrie shells* of Mala'ita ethical system called *fānanaua* (noun for moral teachings). *Fānanau lā* refers to acts or practices of daily moral teachings, intended to shape the character of Mala'ita clan members. Using oral communication, parents, grandparents, adults and older clan members will deliberately *shape* younger ones about principles, behaviours, norms and aspects of their tribal *tagi* (ethical system). Mothers and grandmothers will, on a daily basis, morally shape their daughters and granddaughters about key societal principles such as obedience, respect, honour, trustworthiness and responsibility. In shaping a child about obedience, a Mala'ita mother might say:

*Wela nau ae,
 'Oe wela 'oko kwaia tala,
 Wela loko 'agera ka laungi 'oe,
 'Oe wela 'o rō loko.*

Translated, this reads:

*My dear child,
 You who will one day be a trail-blazer,
 A child whom others will decorate in honor,*

Such a child is an obedient one.

Fānanau lā takes place when adults and their children are undertaking chores, walking to the food gardens, traveling in canoes or sitting together specifically to administer *fānanaua*. Such activities take time and often children are attentive and receptive to being socialized within these settings. In this form of moral shaping, children actively participate by asking questions, seeking clarifications and even debating with their adult teachers.

As a knowledge domain, *fānanaua la* is a private domain activity hence is not done in public where non-relative tribal members or strangers might hear or witness valuable secrets being conveyed. As a private domain activity, this is a duty for which parents are primarily responsible.

In this indigenous ethical system, *fānanaua* is the centre-piece of indigenous Mala'ita ethical system. *Fānanaua* can be described as the sun around which stars revolve. On one hand, *fānanaua* informs and is the basis for all other repositories of ethics and on the other; all other repositories reflect the radiance or dullness of *fānanaua*. Because of this symbiotic relationship, without *fānanaua*, indigenous Mala'ita ethical system is neglected, becomes unclear or is easily lost. *Fānanau lā* usually appeals to both principles and consequences.

Reef rock 2: Fābasua

As we reef-walk along, we upturn another rock, under which we find *cowrie shells* of Mala'ita ethical system called *fābasua*. *Fābasua* refers to the invocations and pronouncements from priests, elders and parents on members of a clan or family. Sometimes these are disciplinary and are usually based on or referenced to *fānanau lā* (actions of moral teachings). At other times, *fābasua* are corrective or evaluative responses, intended to reinforce or reshape moral character. The action of *fābasu lā* involves an adult clan member, pronouncing or invoking a stern warning or teaching in a one-sided manner and is intended to correctively reshape character. When *fābasu lā* is taking place, recipients of this form of moral shaping are generally expected to “take it all in” in silence. This is not the time for questions or questioning.

The following *fābasua* captures a father’s words as he administered a disciplinary teaching to a wayward son, as follows:

Wenē wela
Ku ‘arefo ‘agu nori
‘Oe wela goumouri ‘utā nē
‘Oe lilisangea ‘asia nō
Kosi rongo, kosi ‘abero
Finigalo gera ka gefusi ‘oe laona kilu.

Translated, this reads:

Oh young man
It sure surprises me
What of you, a child of heritage?
You disobedient one
Who does not hear, nor cares
Might one day be pushed over into a hidden pit.

In this instance, the *fābasua* though intended for a son, is done publicly. The father is reinforcing a teaching on obedience. The father expresses surprise that a son who has an ethical heritage should neglect such a heritage. The father calls his son a disobedient one. He adds a threat about how disobedience often results in dishonor, being “pushed over into a hidden pit.” It is noted that to understand the meaning and the pedagogical style of this moral teaching requires an understanding of the cultural setting. Where the child is unclear or unsure of the *fābasua*, often another adult who is present will follow through on the moral reshaping task with a *fānanaua* session.

Fābasu lā (action or practice of *fābasua*) is also administered for the entire family, clan or community. When this happens, the knowledge which is communicated is a public domain entity. When a *fābasu lā* activity is communal, this is often intended to reinforce certain priority communal moral values and or teachings. Unlike *fānanau lā* which is done in private, *fābasu lā* takes place in a public setting within hearing of family and non-family tribal members. In a sense, a public social setting is deemed as the appropriate social context for *fābasu lā*. When *fābasu lā* is done as a private domain activity, this is administered by family members, rather than by non-relatives. As a public domain activity, any elder including non-family members within a clan can administer *fābasu lā* for younger tribe members but only in public. In contemporary Mala'ita villages, *fābasu lā* commonly takes place within Christian churches and community meetings.

Reef rock 3: Kwaikwaia

In our ongoing reef-walking, when rock 3 is upturned, we find *cowrie shells* called *kwaikwaia*. These are the judgements, punishments, consequential and restorative actions by clan priests, elders, parents and adult members on those who have broken Mala'ita *tagi* (ethical system). From a moral perspective, there are three primary forms of *kwaikwaia*: (1), *Toto lā* (compensations), (2) *Fā didi lā* (restoration of peace, justice or compassion) and (3), *Fā abu lā* (sanctification).

In theocratic Mala'ita, *toto lā* or compensations are regularly demanded and offered between individual and groups. Moral crimes would range from swearing to disrespectful laughing of women or the elderly; from sexual misdemeanours to women farting in the hearing of men; and from boys and men starring at girls or women to a wife walking alone with another male adult.

Fā didi lā is a particular form of *toto lā* (compensation) and it is intended to speedily restore peace. Particularly when serious moral crimes are committed such as sexual

transgressions, or fights resulting in blood being spilt, or a boy has eloped with a girl, then the wronged party will demand an immediate compensation. The family of the wrongdoer is expected by *falafala* (indigenous *kastom* or convention) to immediately pay up a certain amount of compensation, using *tāfuli'ae* (a Mala'ita shell currency). *Fā didi lā* is intended to pacify the wronged party in order to allow for a more negotiated and fitting settlement to be reached, using accepted tribal *kastom* means and hopefully, justice.

In theocratic Mala'ita, moral wrongs must be righted to ensure *abu lā* (holiness). *Abu lā* is obtained through ceremonial activities called *Fā abu lā* (sanctification). Because theocratic Mala'ita is an integrated belief system, both parties (wrong-doer and wronged) are expected to undertake *fā abu lā* to each other and separately, to their spirit ancestors. Where humans defile the sacredness of other creatures (such as land, residence, space, food, utensils, domesticated animals), they too must restore holiness through *fā abu la*, usually in the form of an offering to the spirit ancestors.

These *kwaikwaia* practices in Mala'ita society are essential parts of the indigenous ethical system of Mala'ita. Their daily maintenance contributes to their sustainability as repositories of the indigenous Mala'ita ethical system. Due to the influences of Christianity and modernization, *kwaikwaia* is one of the most eroded aspects of indigenous Mala'ita ethical system.

Reef rock 4: Tarafulā

When rock 4 is upturned, we find *cowrie shells* called *tarafulā* (proverbs). In Mala'ita, *tarafulā* are proverbial wise sayings which appeal to both principles and consequences. Among the Gula'alā people of East Mala'ita, the following *tarafulā* might be heard on any day of the week:

Alua tafu nā ka tō 'ana māsia na afe loko 'i Lau'alo. Translated this says, *Leave the heap of rubbish for the Lau'alo currents to take away.*

As a Gula'alā *tarafulā* (proverb), this wise teaching reinforces the importance of working on a task to completion. Two explanatory observations are made about this *tarafulā*. First, in a pedagogical sense, while this proverb intends to teach the virtues of industry, diligence and completion of tasks, the proverbial statement itself appears to say the opposite (i.e. *leave the heap of rubbish*). In this example, the use of negative logic and or negative association (heap of rubbish on land and sea currents) are common in Gula'alā *tarafulā*. Second, in order to understand the *tarafulā* fully, an understanding of considerable contextual knowledge is essential, such as of the Lau'alo currents of North Mala'ita and the daily village cleaning schedules in Gula'alā.

In another *tarafulā*, one might say:

?llifainia ra Laua 'oto nā. Translated, this asks, *Could it be like Laua?*

Among the Gula'alā, this *tarafulā* is intended to teach trustworthiness, dependability and consistency of word and deed. To understand this *tarafulā*, one has to know the story of Laua; a famous warrior for his people in Mala'ita. Whenever Laua and his band of men would visit another

tribe, this leader would habitually urge his men to be morally upright among their guests; an advice he himself never followed at any time especially under cover of darkness. This leader finally met with fatal consequences as a result of his inconsistent behaviour and double lifestyle.

In Mala'ita, it is usually a mature clan member who would speak *tarafulā* into a situation as a moral injecting or reinforcement. Commonly, *tarafulā* is offered with either light-heartedness or sarcasm possibly as a pedagogical tool for communicating important but difficult moral messages.

Not all proverbial sayings are for moral shaping. Conversely, some of the proverbs might reflect the indigenous moral reasoning in Mala'ita ethical system. *Tarafulā* is a daily practice in tribal settings; and in Gula'alā villages today, older generations commonly use *tarafulā* in their daily communications.

Reef rock 5: Saefua

In upturning rock 5, we find that beneath this rock are hidden *cowrie shells* called, *saefua*. These are short narratives or stories often told with a definite “moral of the story” message. In Gula'alā the *saefua* genre commonly emphasizes *rō lā* (obedience) as this is a privileged principle in Mala'ita society. In Sanga (2014), I recorded two examples of Gula'alā *saefua*, as narrated to children by tribal elder, 'Afu Būga of Ngongosila village. In the *saefua*, 'A'aniwane, 'Afu Būga began his story as follows:

Tōtō tā, rō wela kini dāro tō 'adāro na. Rō wela nori rata dāro ra Suraokwaikwai fainia Suraolibako. Dāro sikau mai dāro ka tō fainia tē dāro leleka dāro ka baita nō. Sui dāro ka angisia tē dāro fana dē lā. Mala tē dāro ka 'urī, 'aia.' Tē dāro ka dalofia nō na dadalo. Ka raungainia bala ilifainia maefinau. Sui ka kwatea nō fadāro. Tē dāro 'e kwatea fadāro 'unori sui ka fābasu dāro nō. “Amoro leleka 'amoro dē, leka 'amoro adasia kwage rama, moro oli nō mai 'i fanua. Fāsia 'A'aniwane ka 'ani 'amoro.”

Translated, this narrative says:

Once there lived in these parts of the island, two boys. The names of these boys were Suraokwaikwai and Suraolibako. Since their childhood, these boys had been living with their mother. Day after day, the boys would urge their mother to let them go fishing. One day, the mother agreed to their repeated requests; made them strings and hooks and passed these on to the boys. But before the boys set off to the sea, their mother sat them down and sternly warned the boys about a cannibal who was living by the sea. “When you go fishing and you see seaweeds floating in towards the shore, it is time to come home. Do not tarry otherwise the man-eater will eat you both.

In this *saefua*, the teaching is about obedience. On the evening of the recording of this particular *saefua*, the storyteller repeatedly emphasized obedience; in his voice tone, repetitions

of parts of the story and or in answer to children's questions about meaning or other enquiries. On this particular evening, three children between 5 and 12 were the audience. The older two had clearly heard this *saefua* before; yet all paid attention intently. All children, including the 5-year-old, asked questions and actively participated in the storytelling and its accompanying discussions. As a genre, *saefua* stories are usually told to children in the evenings and within family settings. Family evening gatherings, however, are disappearing due to modernization influences, such as fathers living away in urban centres from families in villages or children living in boarding schools away from families.

Reef rock 6: 'Ainimae

When rock 6 is upturned, we find *cowrie shells* called *'ainimae* which are historical accounts and narratives of significance for a family, clan and or tribe. Often these historical moments, happenings or incidents relate to lessons learnt from nature or errors committed by members. As a genre of knowledge repository, the *'ainimae* is expressed orally, in song, dance or as skits.

Consequently, when members of a Mala'ita tribe cease their dancing, singing or enacting of the lessons from *'ainimae*, this repository of indigenous Mala'ita ethics becomes neglected and is possibly 'killed.' As a genre, the guardians of this repository of ethics are clan elders who are often expected to narrate (if orally told or sung) or supervise (if enacted) *'ainimae* accounts. In Mala'ita, *'ainimae* narratives or enactments often take place in the evenings within family and clan gatherings.

In a private domain *'ainimae*, an elder might narrate to younger male members of his family, the historical events behind a current animosity between two neighbouring clans. This elder may choose to use the *'ainimae* to teach moral lessons as a deliberate socialization process to inculcate ideology or ethics. In such a setting, *'ainimae* is part of the private knowledge domain.

However, *'ainimae* is also communal and is performed or communicated in a public knowledge domain. For instance in Gula'alā villages, historical accounts of the introduction of Christianity to East Mala'ita or the participation of Gula'alā members in Christianization elsewhere in the Solomon Islands are performed annually in the month of July in village churches. In such communal *'ainimae*, adults retell stories of bravery, courage, sacrifice and service by Gula'alā men and women as a way of inculcating such principles and virtues to younger generation Gula'alā members.

Reef rock 7: Sili lā

When rock 7 is upturned, the *cowrie shells* to be found are called *sili lā*; a creative genre which includes laments and which often contains "sharp truths" (publicly undisputed truths). As a repository of indigenous Mala'ita ethics, *sili lā* is generally done by elders and only on rare occasions. In 2009, I recorded a *sili* by a matriarch tribal leader of Gula'alā; recounting the virtues of a Gula'alā husband, father and male leader. In English translation, some parts of this *sili* called *Alafaitalana*, are as follows:

'Ōi, kelei rurūfia nau 'ae
 Ku manata oli to'ona
 Maedagi 'oro kini
 Dangi ka dangi boro
 Kakarai ka angi boro
 'E angi nō burimu
 'Oe leka nō matakwa daudau

*My memories bring joy
 Of one whose days,
 The rooster was always late to announce
 Because you had gone to the deep ocean blue.*

'Ōi, kelei rurūfia 'ae
 ?'E mamana 'asia
 Lua 'e lua 'urī tā
 'Oe dao mai fainia ta ia 'agu nori
 Ta leleko, ba'ā, 'alā ma ta gwaila kini
 Rau ni fā ele nau kini

*Who among the living will dispute how you honored me, your bride?
 On days like today, as the tide is coming in; you'd be bringing home a canoe-full of the
 choicest of fish; the catch of joy for any bride or wife.*

?Tei mouri nē ka manata buro amu
 Kusi manata buro amu
 Wane dangi ko fāfōlosia asi baita
 Wane 'o galia walo kini
 'Ōi kelei rurūfia lea nau 'ae.

*How can the living forget you?
 Provider for a thousand,
 The one who crosses ocean currents
 and surveys submerged reefs.*

In the example above, both immediately after this *sili* was performed and since then, considerable discussions had taken place among clan members about the person who was honoured by the *sili*, the events referred to, and the subject matters contained within the *sili* and numerous other cultural significance of this *sili*. In each of these numerous discussions, considerable *fānanau lā* was done with younger clan members and numerous other 'ainimae were recounted.

Sili lā is orally performed as a lament or song, and is sometimes accompanied with dancing. When accompanied with dancing, this variety of *sili lā* is performed by a dance troupe. One such example is the *gilo* which is a form of *sili la* in Gula'alā. In *gilo*, a troupe of eight or ten male or female performers would sit or stand opposite each other and sing their *sili* while performing with bamboo sticks.

Generally, *sili lā* as an art form is dying out in Gula'alā and only a few can masterfully perform a *sili*. In summary, it is noted that the findings point to an indigenous Mala'ita ethical system which is integrated and embedding de-ontological, utilitarian, egoistic and natural law features within the various repositories.

Discussion

Reflective of the findings, the following discussion focuses on the nature of the repositories of this indigenous ethical system and explores its implications for research within indigenous knowledge communities.

First, the repositories of this indigenous Mala'ita ethical system are completely outside the realms of conventional university ethics. As this study has shown, the *cowrie shells* are hidden in the daily activities of *fānanaua*, *fābasua*, *saefua* and practices of *tarafulā* and other ways of life of the Gula'alā such as *kwaikwaia* and *sili lā*. These repositories are indigenous and integral to the Gula'alā and located within the Gula'alā philosophical mind, worldviews, value systems, realities and ways of life. Consequently, the *cowrie shells* are not necessarily defined as in conventional ethical systems. The meanings of principles will differ and so is the privileging of principles. Because these repositories of ethics are located within Gula'alā, the knowledge systems therein are practically and intellectually inaccessible to the conventional university system. It is not until there are competent Gula'alā speakers within university systems before these repositories are opened to universities.

Second, in the indigenous Mala'ita ethical system, the repositories are part of an integrated moral philosophy. Unlike the compartmentalized and hierarchical system of ethics of the conventional university, the Gula'alā findings have shown a system which is interwoven around *fānanaua*, a back-bone repository. As stated, in Gula'alā, *fānanaua* is the principal repository for ethical exposition, evaluation and education. To use the metaphor of a distribution system, *fānanaua* is the warehouse where goods are moved in, sorted, labelled and moved out; where product, process and performance reports are received, debated and improvements are

made; and where the brains of the system interact, account, reconnect, engage, envision and sustain. Moreover, within this integrated system of ethics, principles and or virtues such as *abu lā* (holiness), *rō lā* (obedience) and *manatangado lā* (trustworthiness) are interconnected and infused throughout the network of repositories.

Third, the repositories of indigenous Mala'ita ethical system are under the moral and legal authority of families and clans. Elsewhere (Sanga, 2014) I had stated that indigenous Gula'alā ethical system is managed under knowledge management protocols, processes and criteria which belong to Gula'alā society. Consequently, it is Gula'alā clans and families who must deal with issues or questions on accountability, quality, maintenance and sustainability of the Gula'alā ethics repository system. While such autonomy seems clear-cut, this masks the complex conceptualizations and competing interests within and between repositories as families and clans negotiate and make decisions about knowledge, values and agenda.

Fourth, even without relevant empirical studies, it appears that the repositories of indigenous Mala'ita ethical system are under considerable pressure. First, on one hand Mala'ita clans are living within a global knowledge economy which is demanding the freeing-up of knowledge domains, greater collaboration with knowledge communities and engagement with governments, knowledge stakeholders and global scholars. On the other hand, Mala'ita clans are well aware of the risks of losing control of certain indigenous knowledge, including secret and sacred knowledge to outsiders. Second, on one hand an indigenous Mala'ita ethical system may be in conflict with other global ethical systems or levels. For instance, the Gula'alā *fānanaua* (which is the back-bone of Gula'alā ethical system) is a private knowledge domain repository. Only families *hold the keys* to *fānanaua* knowledge. In other words, this repository of ethical knowledge is not publicly accessible even within Gula'alā society. These questions may be asked: How can institutional (such as university) regulations, national and or international laws encroach upon indigenous private domain knowledge repositories and still be ethical? What limits may be justifiably imposed by outside jurisdictions on indigenous private knowledge domains? Why? When? By whom? How? As yet, these questions remain unanswered and beg the attention of indigenous and other Pacific researchers and scholars.

Conclusion

In the Pacific Islands region, scholarship on indigenous Pacific ethical systems is of a new area. To date, little empirical research had been done on the systems of ethics of the approximately 1,000 linguistic people groups in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. In this first study on an indigenous Mala'ita ethical system, it is found that its repositories are clan-based; they are located philosophically within indigenous worldviews and are practically embedded within the ways of life of these islanders. As yet, these repositories of ethics are separate from and operate outside of the realms of the ethics systems of the conventional university. As aspects of an intellectual oral tradition, these repositories are as yet, unexplored and needing the care and attention of indigenous Pacific Islands scholars.

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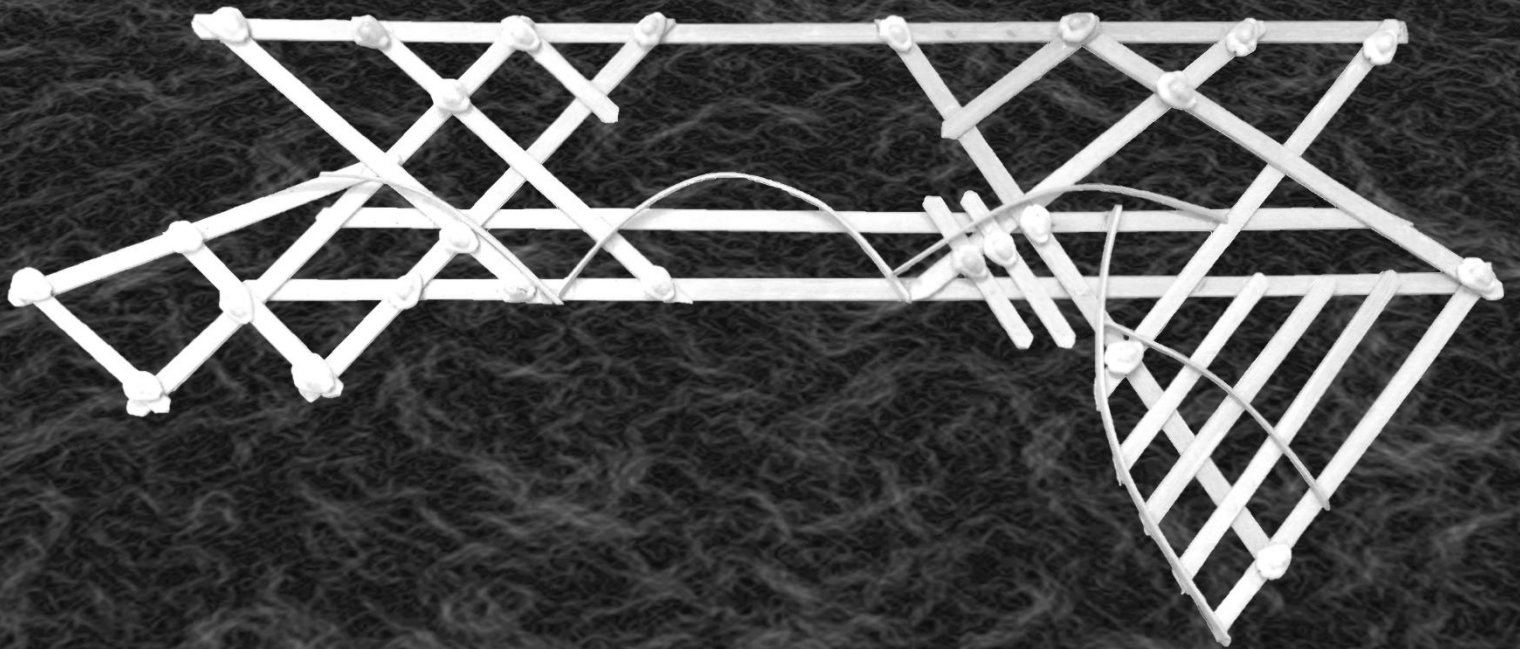
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PEDAGOGICAL DIVERSITIES TO ENHANCE LEARNING



A Flexible Delivery Teacher Education Strategy in Micronesia

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Abstract

This study describes the experiences of a group of 14 pre-service and 14 in-service teachers from a small Pacific Island country in Micronesia, who were enrolled in a teacher education programme that was delivered online to their home country from the University of New England in Australia, with added online and face-to-face lecturer support. At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Nauru to work in partnership to improve its children's school achievement, the project aimed to raise the quality of teachers in the country by enabling these jointly selected participants to cascade their new learning in pedagogical theory and practice throughout the 10 schools in the island nation, whilst remaining teaching in their home communities. The data revealed a complex interaction between certain technological and cultural variables, which needed to be more effectively managed in order to more effectively deliver the online teacher education programme.

Keywords: *teacher education; Pacific Island countries; remote area; e-learning; blended learning; flexible learning; technology; culture*

The participants in this study were enrolled in a teacher education programme designed to suit the Pacific context and meet requirements of the Pacific Island Nation's Education Acts that require a two-year teaching qualification. The programme was jointly developed by the University of New England in Australia and the Republic of Nauru Department of Education, with a flexible learning delivery construction to reach its remote area audience through online delivery with the added inclusion of face-to-face plus online support tutors to enhance the online unit coordinator deliveries.

The characteristics of the learners and of their context, in which they lived and learned, impacted significantly on all aspects of their learning process. At a time when online communication technologies are projecting education further into remote areas, a challenge existed for the source institution to accommodate the characteristics of the participants and their context by adapting the content and delivery of the teacher education programme.

Thaman (1999 & 2014) and the Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative for Pacific People by Pacific People (Nabobo-Baba, 2012) have long campaigned for a more equal and democratic cultural environment in which the myriad Pacific cultures can flourish in a compatible and cooperative globalised environment. As a result of ongoing action research, this particular teacher education programme has incorporated a compatible mix of international, Australian and Pacific pedagogical knowledge, skills and curriculum that is delivered in such a way as to accommodate contextual issues as they emerge.

Purposeful recognition of the Micronesian participants' own voices has been utilized in this research design, in an attempt to more accurately document the challenges experienced by the participants. The authors are mainly of Western origin but with extensive personal and professional experience of Pacific Island life. The synergy of ongoing experience, decision-making and passion to collaboratively benefit Pacific education has hopefully achieved an acceptable level of authenticity of research reporting and usage.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated how the contextual and cultural aspects of the students impacted on the design and implementation of the programme with particular reference to the use of flexible delivery of teacher education in remote areas across cultures. The research was exploratory and aimed at directing the ongoing refinement of the design of the teacher education programme. Empirical evidence was collected in order to support decisions to make further design improvements in later stages.

To illuminate data centred on these themes, the researchers viewed data from a range of sources with the following questions in mind:

- How effective is the current flexible delivery of the teacher education programme in the given physical and cultural context of the study?
- What, if any, recommendations can be made to further improve any emergent findings?

A further purpose of the study was to share findings on emerging issues and their related solutions through journal publication and conference presentation so as to offer guidance to all interested parties who may be involved in similar projects that deal with similar contextual and cultural issues.

Literature Review

Over the decades, social, economic and political dealings between Australia and the Pacific region have resulted in fluctuating levels of agreement, particularly in the areas of trade, migration and developmental aid for in-country infrastructure and education. These globalizing relationships have tended to highlight the need for a more equal and democratic multicultural approach to all international dealings, including the design of teacher education content and its delivery.

The Technology Issue

Thaman (1999) pointed out that the use of technological processes of delivery in online teacher education programmes valued a highly technological way of learning, which in many cases was incompatible with localized social and economic infrastructures. She believed that the necessity to use technology that is prone to interruptions in supply and communication to learn, places significant limitations on the effectiveness of the learning that is taking place. This is exacerbated by having to learn a different way of communicating and learning using technology. These limitations disempower learners by frustrating their learning potential through introducing in many cases the added complexity of having to learn complex technological skills within a fragile infrastructure that is prone to failure. Thaman (2014) recommended a compatible mix of online and face-to-face deliveries even to remote areas of the Pacific.

Hogan (2009) points out that in South Pacific locations where the remoteness and economy has made it difficult to develop the necessary quality of technology infrastructure, two factors are necessary. One is that online learners must firstly learn the use of such technology, and the other is they must be fortunate enough to have it available for their use. He is critical of globalised online deliveries to the South Pacific. His suggested alternative is a flexible delivery approach similar to the design of the teacher education programme under study. Hogan prefers a student-centred approach involving an online and face-to-face mix.

Yusuf (2009) also suggests that flexible delivery modes have the potential to overcome barriers caused by remoteness, natural disasters, lack of quality technology, and contextual alignment with individual student's personal and academic needs. To achieve high levels of flexibility, face-to-face as well as online support, lecturers need to be available on a group and individual basis. These lecturers can support the students individually and as a group through a variety of pedagogical modes. These can include supporting each other in supplying a diverse delivery to students through a team approach; and supporting culturally diverse communication channels by liaising between Unit Coordinators and students.

It appears from the combined insights of these researchers that the issue of the effectiveness of the supply and usage of technology for online learning in remote areas, such as in the context of this study, is characterized by a complex confluence of: i) high-cost infrastructures that are not always compatible with the existing physical infrastructure of the country, and ii) the need to learn new communication skills and practices that are not always compatible with the remote area people's everyday socio-cultural way of life. Thus the delivery of an online learning system can literally be stopped in its tracks as it approaches its destination by an impenetrable wall of technological, economic, social and cultural discontinuities. This study hopes to unveil some of these discontinuities.

Issues of Inter-Cultural Communication and Action

In the area of educational development, Sanga (2005a) made the observation that Pacific culture is relational and that this characteristic carries with it the implication that Australia and its Pacific neighbors must develop equal relationships and decision-making structures in determining the content and delivery of education projects in the Pacific region. Sanga (2005a and 2005b)

argues for giving more 'grass-roots' voice about the content and delivery of teacher education projects, to the teachers who are the final recipients of such projects. The suggested strategy is for Pacific countries to build collaborative development policies with donor countries such as Australia to achieve compatible and desirable educational development. In teacher education, this would result in a compatible globalised teaching culture that supports international as well as local curriculum content and delivery. This is important if future generations of Pacific people are to function in a globalised society.

To design and deliver an effective flexible delivery programme, requires authentic collaboration of all stakeholders. Many cultural rituals come into play in the development and implementation phases of projects. Respect for elders and people in authority and a reluctance to participate in intercultural environments, limit the opportunities for critical communicative interaction between the local Department of Education government officers, professors, students, their families and the local community.

Throughout Oceania, it is customary to develop a relationship with people before entering into in-depth discussion sessions in which all members of the group would be raising ideas and furthering solutions to the issues at hand. In Fiji, for example, this process is called "talanoa", which means, "to chat or relate or share ideas". This group decision-making process occurs in a face-to-face informal and often unstructured way (Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Sharma, 1996). A ceremonial drink is shared and the ritual heightens the importance of the gathering and the following discussions that ensue.

Even though the Australian-based teacher education programme in this study is in a state of continuous adaption to its audience, communication and learning effectiveness is limited due to discontinuities associated with the Pacific notion of knowing each other. Sharma (1996), Sanga (2005a and 2005b), Thaman (1999 and 2014), Hogan (2009) and Yusuf (2009) are all very clear on need for programme designers and coordinators on one hand and students, their families and communities on the other hand, to understand each other and each other's backgrounds for effective higher education learning to take place. Again, this study hopes to unveil these complex interacting discontinuities and their effects on the effectiveness of the teacher education programme under study.

Research Design

This study had a qualitative research design with a constructivist-interpretivist world-view in which meanings of social phenomena were co-constructed through interaction and interpretation by the investigators and the participants (Ponterotto, 2005). Its design emerged from the context and purpose of the research. It focused on a natural setting with the researchers as the key instruments. Data was collected from multiple sources of people having many variables of interest and analyzed inductively using the participants' meanings. Conclusions drawn were then interpreted in terms of previous studies and theories as noted in the literature in order to create a convergent understanding of the students and their experiences of the programme so as to enhance trustworthiness and authenticity (Cresswell, 2009 and Yin, 2009, p. 18).

Participants

The full population amounted to 14 pre-service teachers and 14 in-service teachers. Out of the 28 total students, 20 of students were mothers with many family responsibilities and commitments outside their work and studies. Five of the students were male and all of these were in the pre-service group.

As would be expected, members of the pre service group were in their later teens and lower twenties whilst members of the in-service group were mature age females with lengthy teaching experience sometimes in excess of ten years and often with well-established families. These mature students carried many family responsibilities and commitments outside their work and studies. Most students in the program were first generation university students.

All 28 students were completing the same teacher education programme due to decisions made by the participants' employing authority concerning the recognition of existing teacher qualifications. The pre-service participants attended face-to-face and online sessions during the day with the Support Tutors whilst the in-service teachers attended face-to-face sessions in the evenings. This arrangement resulted because the in-service teachers had much higher daily personal and professional commitments than the pre-service participants.

Methods of Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

The following data collection sources were utilized. Open-ended responses were elicited through a short list of questions concerning the participants' backgrounds and their experiences in the use of ICT infrastructures to access their online learning. This was followed by interviews with the local Department of Education. Observations of the programme lecturers were also done and recording of the data from these were systematically collected and coded. Observations by the face-to-face and online lecturers were also used to triangulate collected data.

It was noted that some participants gave permission for the use of their responses from particular sources and not others and these participants' requests were adhered to during the choice of data used in this research. In order to maintain ethical anonymity, all participants were allocated a pseudonym for the documentation of their responses and in the subsequent reporting of the same.

Methods of Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis of participants' responses and researchers' observations followed Creswell's (2009) suggestions and was filtered through the theoretical lens of literature concerning past research related to the topic of study. The researchers began a detailed analysis using a coding process to categories participants' comments into appropriate themes concerning the state of the island's ICT infrastructure, the accessibility level of the available Internet, and cultural lifestyle factors impacting on the students' opportunity to access their online learning.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Trustworthiness and authenticity were met through striving and sustaining acceptable levels of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Coll & Chapman, 2000) and (Shenton, 2004).

An acceptable level of credibility was achieved through, a) accessing multiple sources of evidence, b) establishing a chain of evidence as the response themes were found throughout all sources and amongst numerous participants, and c) incorporating peer scrutiny through critical discussions comparing the students' responses and the research team's observations. All members of the research team have accumulated considerable background knowledge working in the context of the study.

Transferability was reasonably high for the findings of this study. Sanga (2005a and b), Hogan (2009), Yusuf (2009), and Thaman (2014) and many others have recognized similar research findings into the use of online education in remote areas across cultures has been documented since the beginning of the general use of the Internet toward the end of last century.

Dependability was maintained through the ethical use of research protocol, a diverse group of informants and a mix of data collected from focus groups as well as individuals. This level of confirmability present satisfactorily lowered the inevitable researcher bias by collecting data from multiple participant sources and by cross-checking these findings with on-site observations and conversations.

The researchers had developed personal and professional friendships with the participants over an extended period of time before this study was instigated. This relationship enabled a high level of authenticity to develop through a Pacific Island "talanoa" process (Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Agostinho, 2005 and Sharma, 1996).

Findings

Technological Issues

The state of the island's ICT infrastructure has directly impacted on the accessibility level of the available Internet for the teacher education programme and this problem persists today. The programme is delivered using five WiFi modems situated within the University of New England centre to cater for approximately 20 students at a time. However, this configuration is not a dedicated output and uploading and downloading speeds vary greatly throughout the 24-hour day as a result of usage across the island. The modems connect through the island's only ISP network, which connects globally via satellite technology.

Electrical load shedding regularly occurs across the island. Loading is usually higher at times during the day and in the evenings. This results in the University of New England centre sometimes experiencing power outages at crucial times when the pre-service day students and in-service evening students are accessing the Internet.

When asked about the most challenging aspects of participating in the flexible delivery teacher education programme, one student, Eilani, replied, “*Low Internet connections*”. However, the students demonstrate remarkable determination and perseverance. Another student, Aeisha, commented, “*I had difficulty with this new learning system (you have to do everything through the computer), but I have learned not to give up easily*”. The flexible delivery helped alleviate some of these technological issues.

Most participants appreciated having the opportunity to learn to teach through flexible learning modes. The advantages cited, included being able to study from a world-class university using online mode and still have full-time face-to-face lecturers to ensure a more effective learning and teaching environment. Face-to-face lecturing enabled the students to learn individually as well as in groups with their lecturers. They also had access to online lecturers who were available to support both unit coordinators and also the face-to-face lecturers, thus enabling an acceptably effective contextualized and streamlined delivery of units and the facilitation of learning. Leona elatedly pointed out:

I am enjoying it mostly because this is due to the support I am getting from my peers, lecturers, (we get them flown in) and the Department of Education. I have been in two Universities before this and I was never this motivated to study as an overseas online student.

The technology issues were better managed to some degree through fine-tuning the flexible delivery structure. At the beginning of each unit, visiting lecturers usually brought with them complete copies of all the required resources and documents. These were downloaded on-campus in Australia by the on-campus support lecturers. This meant that students could avoid the frustrations and challenges of low Internet connections and power outages.

Tika stated:

This course is new to me and well it's very interesting, exciting and challenging ... working with others and meeting new people especially the people from the University who came to the island to help us with our unit courses. It is good to have people from overseas and here on island to help you.

Cultural Issues

Cultural Lifestyle Factors Impacting on the Students' Opportunity to Access their Online Learning

Internet connection is not wide-spread across the island. All of the students needed to access their online programme through the University of New England centre. To be present at the Centre to study meant that the students were absent from their roles and responsibilities elsewhere at home, community and work.

In this way, the technology issues and cultural lifestyle issues inter-meshed and escalated each other. One student, Osanna, noted,

The biggest challenge thus far has been Time! Most days I find, I have sooo [sic] much to do and not enough time to do them all in! My first step towards managing this is to draw up and follow a very specific and strict timetable. Every waking moment is accounted for. There is no such thing as free time.

Another student, Leila, lamented that,

So far I have had to make lots of sacrifices at home so that I can be ready for school and UNE [University of New England].

Leila, hesitantly and forebodingly explained the possible short-term nature of her negotiations and sacrifices with her spouse.

At this time, my spouse has been helpful in supporting the things I need to get done at home, school and UNE.

Leila then pointed out her predicament:

I need to discuss some suitable times I can spend on my studying and HAVE [her emphasis] to have more than enough family time.

Another in-service participant, Sepe, also bemoaned her dilemma:

The challenge I am facing right now is being three types of people at the same time - a mother, a teacher and a university student.

Many students find it difficult not only juggling their diverse responsibilities but also finding transport to reach the Centre to access the Internet for their online components. There is very little public transport on the island and often, private family transport is being used by other family members. When asked about on-going challenges to maintaining study commitments, one student, Cora, complained,

I try to arrive in class on time despite the lack of transport and rainy weather. I try to get ready earlier than expected so I can have time to plan ahead.

The full-time face-to-face tutors decided to regularly provide transport for many of the students so that attendance at the University of New England centre and their learning progress could be maintained.

Discussion

Many of the technological and cultural issues were not within the roles of the programme leaders to solve. At best, they could only be alleviated. The flexible delivery allowed the students to partially overcome technology infrastructure and power outages, because as Leona and Tika

appreciatively pointed out, resources were copied by the online tutors at the home campus and brought to the island by visiting lecturers who were flown into the island to teach face-to-face without the need of the on-island Internet connection.

The participants revealed a substantial dependence on their face-to-face tutors' support for re-interpreting the Unit content and organizing their study schedules. As Aeisha noted, having face-to-face full-time support lecturers at the University of New England centre on the island, enabled the students to more readily learn how to use the online technology and to troubleshoot usage problems as they arose.

The face-to-face tutors also provided transport for some of the students to be in attendance in the University of New England centre classroom to be able to study. Mothers such as Cora attested to the advantages of having full-time face-to-face lecturers, who were community-minded and so passionate about their students attending class as to provide transport for such students. This simple community service enhanced the student-lecturer relationship and so supported, strengthened and sustained the effectiveness of the flexible delivery of the programme. Both Thaman (1999 and 2014) and Sharma (1996) take a similar cultural perspective in supporting deliveries that build on the intimacy of Pacific relationships for promoting authentic discussions, decision-making and cooperative learning.

It would appear that this particular flexible delivery strategy of the Nauru Teacher Education Project, rather than a fully online or an online plus intensive school mix, had distinct advantages for projecting higher education into the Pacific. This innovative strategy provides teacher education to pre-service and in-service teachers wholly within their local context; whilst being able to supply all the benefits of online study at an international university. Furthermore, the intensive schools with full resources by visiting lecturers, *plus* implementing a parallel delivery of full-time face-to-face tuition by on-island lecturers have enabled the management of the complex interaction of technological and cultural context variables.

Conclusions

The on-island and online tutor support in the programme was established to harmonize the use of technology for learning in remote areas. The participants spoke of the development of a sustained personal and professional relationship particularly with their on-island full-time lecturers. This grew out of the ongoing need to alleviate culturally incompatible personal and professional commitments and continuous interference to the learning communication caused by online technology infrastructure imperfections.

The full-time online and on-island lecturers' roles became a key factor in achieving an acceptable level of delivery of teacher education within the given context. This is because they were situated at a nexus where a host of incompatible influences were present. They made the difficulties at least acceptable and manageable.

Further, a prior and thorough analysis of the context in which this particular flexible learning is utilized in this programme of teacher education may help the programme team to

become better aware of different directions for developing the flexible delivery strategy. The study of the Nauru context and other Pacific Island contexts may also illuminate on further and or new directions for designing effective delivery strategies for projecting higher education, in this case teacher education, into other remote developing areas and small island states of the Pacific and perhaps elsewhere.

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Dr Terence Sullivan, Dr Penelope Serow, Prof Neil Taylor, Dr Greg Burnett, Ms Jodana Tarrant, Ms Dianne Smardon and Ms Emily Angell are members of the Nauru Teacher Education Project, which is a partnership between the Government of the Republic of Nauru and the University of New England. All members have had extensive experience working throughout Oceania in the areas of teacher education, leadership and school improvement. Our collaborative approach to development work is built on transparency, trust, and local capacity building. We hold the philosophy that relationship building is an essential ingredient in facilitating long-term positive change. This approach meets the day-to-day wellbeing and technological needs enabling students, families and communities to flourish.

Environmental Awareness in a Teacher Education Course in Fiji through Outdoor Education

Jeremy Dorovolomo

Abstract

Based on seventeen camp portfolios of students in a physical education class of the University of the South Pacific (USP), based in Fiji, the paper analyzed participants' insights into the natural world and their perceived relationship to it. It investigated the level of environmental awareness of students. Collected over three semesters, the seventeen portfolios belong to seventeen camp groups consisting of 130 tertiary students of diverse Pacific Islands and international backgrounds. The outdoors is a "laboratory" that can be used effectively for learning, including creating environmental sensitivity among students, vital in a milieu of decreased interaction with the natural world. Through portfolio reflections, it was found that the outdoor, camping experiences provided intense and valuable environmental encounters and realization, indicating that managed risk in prescribed outdoor settings can increase students' concern for the environment.

Keywords: *outdoor education; Pacific islands; environment; tertiary students; Fiji*

Introduction

Ostensibly, incorrect relations between human beings and nature are causing strain on the future of living things. Human beings are increasingly alienating themselves from nature and are viewing it as an endless source thus, compounding environmental problems. It is important that human beings as living creatures clearly recognize that they need a healthy and reliable environment to live in like all other creatures (Karatas, 2013). Thus, sustainability is salient to create and maintain a situation in which humans and nature can live in productive harmony (Karatas, 2013).

Leiserowitz and Fernandez (2007) commented that people around the world strongly profess environmental values, yet these values are increasingly less rooted in actual experience and interaction with nature. There is often a gap between our professed environmental values and actual behavior which stems in part from increasing detachment from the natural world (Leiserowitz & Fernandez, 2007).

Thus, teaching children positive aspects of their local environment can help build their sense of caring and connection to the place where they live. It is imperative that programs foster a sense of stewardship by allowing children to discover through exploration of their local

environment (Fisman, 2005). Moreover, Nagra (2010), in the study of 3,600 school teachers, concluded that crucial in environmental awareness and consciousness, is actions to curb further degradation of the environment. Nagra suggests the need for enriching environmental education in pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. Karatas (2013) also emphasizes that teacher training institutions are of significance in the creation of environmental awareness among graduates (Karatas, 2013). The context of this study is from a teacher education course at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. The aim of the study is to uncover the environmental awareness of students during outdoor education activities.

Methodology

Twenty four (24) camp group portfolios were analyzed through content analysis. Content analysis is the systematic description of the contents of a document (Verma & Mallick, 1999). Content analysis was performed on student portfolios. In content analysis, an essential feature is the use of categories which are often derived from theoretical models (Flick, 2002). This study utilizes Zecha's (2010) three dimensions of environmental awareness: environmental knowledge, attitude, and action, as framework to analyze portfolio contents.

The term 'environmental knowledge' includes two different aspects. One aspect is the knowledge and information of individuals about the environment and nature, flora and fauna and about their links to ecological issues and problems. The second aspect concerns knowledge of how to act in an environmentally friendly way (Zecha, 2010). The dimension of 'environmental attitudes' refer to the theme of anxiety and inquietude. Inquietude is a tendency to react positively or negatively to a certain situation, event, person, or object (Zecha, 2010). The third and probably the most important dimension is the field of action. Environmental action can be divided into three fields: personal environmental action, information-seeking behavior and environmental activities (Zecha, 2010).

Data Analysis

The study utilizes Cohen, Manion, and Morrison's (2007) steps to perform a content analysis. Initially, it is important to establish the unit of analysis. In this case, the unit of analysis is provided by the three dimensions of environmental awareness, in environmental knowledge, attitude, and action (Zecha, 2010). A code or descriptor is then inserted onto the contents of the student portfolios. These were: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, and ACTION. Examples are provided below:

It's amazing how the experience of two days away from a class environment could be like and the many different things we could learn, and also some of the important things that goes by unnoticed but now finally revealed e.g. the sand dunes national park visit. *KNOWLEDGE*

I learn to conserve natural resources e. g. native tree birds and protect our environment. *KNOWLEDGE*

Taking hats off to show respect as it was thought that was the place where people in the past, long, long ago came to ask for power. *ATTITUDE*

For me this trip does not end here but it is only the beginning and we as students should continue the journey. *ACTION*

Taking photos and the sound of laughter everywhere just made me forget tiredness. It was worth the walk and the pristine beach and the fresh atmospheres just feels like paradise. It was an awesome experience and I will never forget it. *ATTITUDE*

The park ranger also briefed us on some educational tips explaining how the sand dunes came into existence but the traditional legend proved the favorite amongst the listeners. *KNOWLEDGE*

The coding examples given above were conducted throughout the student portfolios. Relevant data are then presented and tallied into sub-areas. For instance, under the main area of environmental knowledge, the following sub-areas were generated:

The outdoors as a venue for learning:

It's amazing how the experience of two days away from a class environment could be like and the many different things we could learn, and also some of the important things that goes by unnoticed but now finally revealed e.g. the sand dunes national park visit.

Nature conservation and protection:

I learn to conserve natural resources e. g. native tree birds.
and protect our environment.
A lot was learned about endangered species and conservation.
Sand Dunes An abundance of scenic beauty ... drive for environmental conservation.

Nature, relation and health:

The sand dunes gives me the understanding that this place can be a place of relaxing and I'm enjoying walking in the sand dunes during the tour.
Sand Dunes impact health as walking the routes gets a person moving and at the same time gives us a chance to breath fresh air

Folklore:

Two giants, a basket each of sand, basket fall then the sand dunes are created.

I learned the traditional stories behind the Sigatoka sand dunes.

Flora and fauna:

Most of those trees and their names were new to me and haven't seen it before. Learned interesting facts about different species of parrots, snakes, turtles and Iguanas.

It was a great experience seeing some of the Fiji's very own beautiful animals. The vegetation is predominantly native forest and introduced herbaceous communities.

Interconnectedness with the environment:

We learned other important things concerning our relationship with the environment or nature by observing the different types of plants there, as well as the natural physical features and landscapes of the land.

Once such groupings were completed for all the content areas of the portfolio, comments and attention were drawn to making general and specific points. With regards to the environmental knowledge content area an example under nature and history:

Nature and history:

Sand Dunes is a great place to get a glimpse of Fiji's history as it has conserved pottery and clay from a different time.

It also gives a story of the history such as evidence of the past which is clearly visible throughout the sand dune system as pottery scatters, stone tools and mechanisms, human remains and other archeological relic continues to be unearthed by natural processes.

Sand Dunes ... gave me a new perspective to how my ancestors lived thousands of years ago.

And also by seeing potteries as well as learnt a lot by listening to those stories told by the ranger.

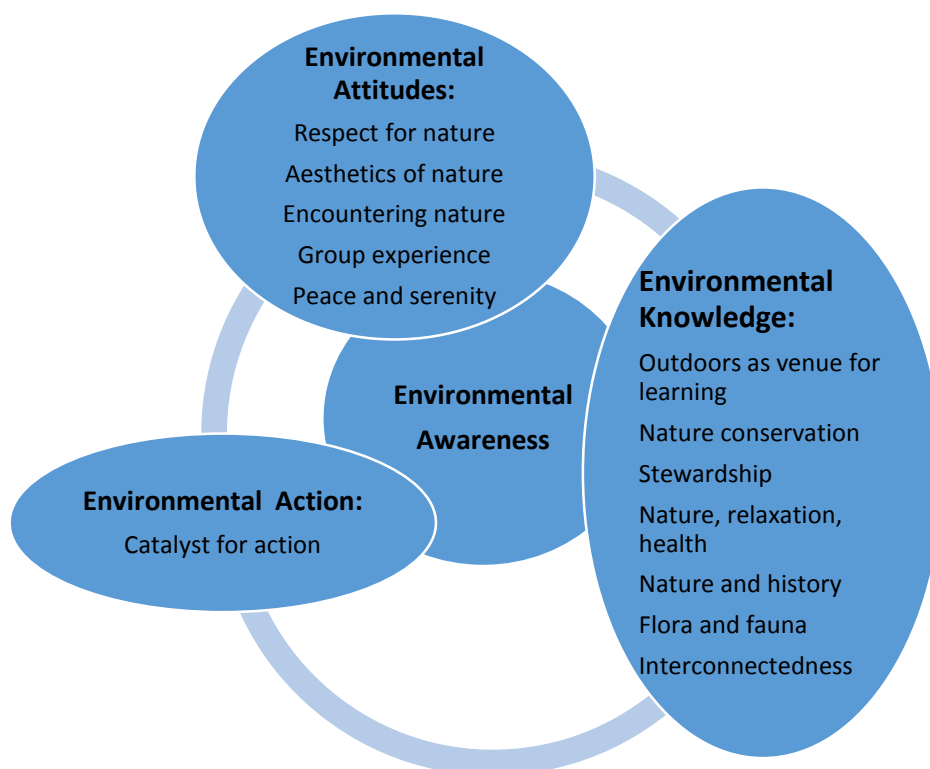
The park ranger also briefed us on some educational tips explaining how the sand dunes came to existence but the traditional legend proved the favorite amongst the listeners.

The park ranger mentioned that it was carbon dated to a couple of thousands of years ago.

Comment and conclusion

By taking them to sites such as the sand dunes, students learned the history of Fiji conserved in pottery, clay, stone tools, human remains and other archeological relics from a different era.

Such a summary was done to all the sub-categories. The categories and sub-categories are summarized in the figure below:

**Discussion***Environmental knowledge*

This study found that students recognize the outdoor environment as a venue for learning. Students recognize that many things about nature could go unnoticed that can only be revealed when time is taken to interact with the outdoors. Wells and Merriman (2002) support this finding by stating that the outdoors provides a laboratory of experiences for effective learning in various subject matter areas. Students can develop concepts and insights about the natural world and acquire skills with which to enjoy a lifetime of creative living (Wells & Merriman, 2002). As such, Wells and Merriman further argue the need for greater focus put on experiential learning and the outdoors. O'Connell, Potter, Curthoys, Dymont, and Cuthbertson (2005) also emphasize that if we are serious about graduating professionals that are able to rise to the challenges of sustainable issues and living, it is essential to engage students in nature-facilitated learning. Shoja (2011) considers such learning as part of more humane educational approaches which value children as subjects of their own learning and their uniqueness, imagination and creativity as means to contribute to their personal development (Shoja, 2011).

Students in this Fiji study learned the importance of protecting and conserving the environment and its resources, many of which are endangered. It is imperative that throughout every phase of an outdoor education program, the basic concepts of environmental conservation be taught as there is indeed a web of life (Bunting, 1989). Curran (2006) stresses that the environmental crisis today is a crisis of values, thus, the key to socioecological transformation lay in a sustained critique of the dominant values that underpinned degradation. It is an imperative that schools educate the next generation about the values of outdoor activities. Within school programs, besides the emphases of teamwork, self-esteem, and problem-solving skills, there should also be the emphasis on environmentalism (Environmental Protection Agency, 2001).

In their portfolios, it is found that students recognized the importance of keeping the environment free of wastes, clean and tidy. They also mentioned the salience of practices that protects the environment such as planting trees. Shoja (2011) recommends that a nature-friendly curriculum should enhance student stewardship and sensitize them to the natural world and encourage them to help solve the environmental crises. Shoja (2011) fervently contends the need to re-conceptualize the epistemology of love towards nature. This love should be more of a love for *being* rather than a desire for *having*. Much of the harm done to nature results from the epistemology of *having*, because it takes the form of keeping animals in cages in zoos, circuses, aquariums, and even in homes. It takes the form of enjoying, owning, and displaying animal skin, heads, and tusks. It also takes the form of enjoying animals as food. Human beings occupy and destroy nature and animal habitats because they think they love nature, but people should know that love is the opposite of possessiveness (Shoja, 2011).

Students in the study commented on their learning names of trees – both native and introduced – many of which are new to them. Students also learned interesting facts about different species of birds and reptiles. People, especially children, are spending less and less time outside in natural settings, which can be called the “extinction of nature experience.” Human contact with other species and wild nature is increasingly mediated through the television, and constrained within the safe confines of the rectangular screen. There seems to be a growing societal blindness to the beauty, succor, and necessity of the more-than-human world (Leiserowitz & Fernandez, 2007). Auskern (1988) asserts that the only way to develop and nourish a relationship with the Earth is to spend time outdoors learning to get to know her. It is not going to happen through the news on television or environmental programs. Those programs might educate to a certain degree, but they are not going to transform students. Change will occur only when students spend less time indoors in boxes and start spending more time outdoors getting to know the Earth.

Students in this study not only learned new flora and fauna but also learned the history of the places they walked on. By taking the students to sites such as the sand dunes, students learned the history of Fiji conserved in pottery, clay, stone tools, human remains and other archeological relics from a different era. In addition, students learned the traditional stories behind the sand dunes involving two giants, who each had a basket each of sand, which they dropped and hence formed the dunes.

Students, in their portfolio accounts, learned the relationships within the environment and their own relationship with their surroundings. It is imperative that students establish connectedness with their natural environment and Shoja (2011) asserts that ecological sensitivity is nurtured when students have an appreciation of interconnection and oneness with the universe and the ensuing global responsibility and a vision of hope. Furthermore, Boss (1999) embraces the idea that outdoor education nurtures respect for our connectedness with nature and the wider community. This connectedness flows over into an awareness of our relatedness to others in the community.

When immersed with nature, students in this study were quick to learn that the natural surrounding is a very viable place for relaxation and exercise, which can contribute to good health. Walking in nature not only gets one to move but also provides a great form of relaxation. Wells and Merriman (2002) reinforce the salience of stimulating interest and enjoyment of nature in order to encourage personal and meaningful relationships with nature and also enable children to be environmentally literate individuals. This is extremely important as many children are increasingly not interacting with the natural world. Modernization and new technological advancements have removed many children from first-hand experience with nature (Wells & Merriman, 2002).

Environmental attitude

During the outdoor education trip, students noted the importance of respecting the environment as it was passed from previous generations for the next. Respect and care for the non-human world, purports Arlemalm-Hagser (2013), should be embedded in the notion of environmental sustainability. Arlemalm-Hagser also considers respect for nature as a recipe for developing environmental awareness. He notes further that to respect nature is to respect oneself. Self-respect and respect for nature are interrelated. We best honor humanity by respecting nature. Respecting nature not only means recognizing the inherent dignity of nature but also honoring our own humanity. It is part of being human to have a relationship to nature (Brooks, 2011). Respect for other living things is important not for humans' sake or the intrinsic worth of nature, but for the interconnectedness in ecological systems (Bognar, 2011).

Students noted being mesmerized by the natural landscape and the beautiful view that took their breath away. Students described the pristine beach they walked on and the fresh atmosphere feeling like paradise. Waves, breeze, trees and the sand were described as beautiful, magnificent, awesome, and amazing. These indicate the aesthetics of nature which Kobayashi (2013) describes as the judgment of taste concerning the 'beautiful'. Kobayashi also believes in the notion that aesthetics should apply more broadly than artistic activities to include nature. Similarly, Barrett (2011) has termed this environmental aesthetics - it stirs interest and attraction to scenes of natural beauty. Barrett purports that if we find nature beautiful, then individuals need to take better care of it. Appropriate appreciation should support and motivate wilderness preservation (Barrett, 2011). Within the beauty of nature, students noted the peace experienced by being around scenic places and the serenity of the natural environment.

Inadvertently, students encounter nature in their own ways and had the first-hand encounter of holding a snake or an iguana. They had the privilege to see a variety of birds or face the challenges of climbing a higher hill. It can really be a rich experience especially for students who live in environments that do not have these. Foran (2005) explains that in outdoor education, the experience can result in intense environmental encounters. Environmental and personal experiences in natural places are pertinent as they are often associated with environmental sensitivity and responsible environmental action (O'Connell, Potter, Curthoys, Dymont, & Cuthbertson, 2005).

Moreover, besides individual appreciation, there was realization of collective experience, as students worked in their camp groups through nature, helping their friends along, if required. In a previous study of the same class, Dorovolomo (2008) found that a collective experience, teamwork and interdependence in the natural environment to be aspects of learning for students in the outdoors. These aspects promote positive relationships, growth, belongingness and generosity.

Environmental action

Importantly, students in the study find renewed catalyst to explore nature and the need to be outdoors more and to enjoy the new experiences that would bring. However, Zecha (2010) cautioned that knowledge generally has little influence on whether somebody acts in an environmentally friendly way or not. Rannikko (2001) on the other hand pontificates that even though measuring the level of environmental awareness in a population can be very difficult, direct exposure to the natural environment or a particular place is a strong factor in determining concern for that environment or place. The availability of opportunities to experience the natural environment can be measured as an indicator of the potential for increased environmental awareness. Moreover, Fisman (2005) emphasizes that environmental awareness is a necessary antecedent to action and environmental awareness focuses on children's ecological knowledge and their awareness of the form and features of their local environment. Furthermore, Foran and Stanec (2009) strongly advocate the pertinence of reconnecting children to the natural world through innovative programs (Mwebi, Foran, & Stanec, 2009). The paper suggests that outdoor education within the Pacific school curriculum is important in developing environmentally aware young people. Getting students to participate in managed risk educational activities outdoors not only develops the skills and knowledge necessary for satisfying participation in outdoor pursuits, but also helps create awareness among students and help find solutions to environmental problems.

Participants to this study are university students. Noteworthy, Reid (2007) urges higher education institutions to commit to a 'pedagogy of responsibility' which is a description of practice that is informed and structured by a teacher's commitment to engaging with questions of diversity, democracy and sustainability in ways that are designed to bring about change in the way that human beings live in, interact with and use the environment on the planet (Reid, 2007). Furthermore, Reid (2007) states that 'pedagogy of responsibility' recognizes that classroom education and the formal curricula are narrowly focused on informational content that is more or less unique to university experience, when the major developmental processes of these years

appear to be about the formation of identities and building identities. On another aspect, Leiserowitz and Fernandez (2007) advise that since the environmental crisis is a social and spiritual crisis, addressing the wellsprings of human caring, motivation and social identity are crucial.

Conclusion

Students should be considered as environmental stakeholders with a right to meaningful participation in environmental issues. By keeping journals and a portfolio in this study, students showed that their outdoor experiences can effectively instill higher levels of environmental awareness. It is envisaged that being environmentally aware and conscious, students not only have increased knowledge but also develop positive attitudes towards the natural environment which translates into action by functioning in concrete situations.

Teacher education can play an important role in creating environmental awareness among its candidates through and across its courses. Unless environmental awareness is developed, it will be difficult to positively shift viewpoints. It is imperative to develop students who are genuinely concerned about finding solutions to environmental problems and display environmentally friendly behavior to protect nature. It is clear that something needs to be done about the fast dwindling natural resources that are increasingly being degraded by human actions. One way to do this is through environmental awareness through education; this is a necessary step to help curb environmental problems the earth is facing.

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Learning Japanese through Social Network Sites: A Preliminary Study of Chinese Learners' Perceptions

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Abstract

Social Network Sites (SNSs) are platforms that provide people with opportunities to share their information and socialize amongst themselves online. This study intends to explore Chinese learners' perceptions of learning Japanese through SNSs using the qualitative research approach. We interviewed ten learners from China using a series of semi-structured interviews. The interview questions used in these interviews can be divided into four aspects in relation to the use of SNSs in learning Japanese, i.e., motivation, benefits, shortcoming, and outcome. Our results show that learners of Japanese language in China with different purposes show little distinction in choosing the SNSs for learning Japanese. However, their views towards the shortcoming of SNSs are quite different. The result of our study can help educators and SNS operators to gain a better understanding on the perception of Chinese learners on learning Japanese online through SNSs.

Keywords: *social network sites; Chinese learners; Japanese language*

Introduction

According to the latest survey conducted by the Japan Foundation (2013), China had the largest number of formal foreign learners of the Japanese language (i.e., people learning the Japanese language in a registered language school) in the world, i.e., 1.05 million at the end of 2012. This is a 26.5% increase from 2009 to 2012. This suggests that there exists a huge demand for providing learning platforms in China to support such demand.

With the development of information technology, learning a foreign language through a social network site (SNS) is becoming an option for many learners. Therefore, in the past decade, there has been an increasing number of learners from China learning the Japanese language by themselves through their active participation in SNSs, such as Renren (<http://www.renren.com>), Baidu Tieba (<http://tieba.baidu.com/>), and Hujiang Forum (<http://s.hujiang.com/>).

The motivation of these Chinese learners to learn Japanese varies. For some, this is due to their strong affection to Japanese Cartoon or Television (TV) drama series. Others say it is due to their desire to learn a second language. Others point to their need of mastering Japanese to prepare for their migration to Japan.

In China, the Japanese language is not listed as one of the choices of a second language to be taught in the elementary to high school curriculum by the Chinese Ministry of Education. Learners basically have no access to formally learn the Japanese language in the local education system unless they choose to major in Japanese when they get into colleges. Under this circumstance, learners begin to turn to other options such as studying Japanese at registered language schools or learning the language through self-study.

The rapid development of social media technology provides a new avenue to learn the Japanese language at SNSs through collaborative learning, which is now widely spreading in China. Learners collaborate with one another to learn the Japanese language through activities on SNSs such as sharing their learning materials, and discussing and learning from one another.

With this background, we set out to research this interesting phenomenon in China using a qualitative study, on an area that has not been investigated before. This study attempts to investigate the perceptions of learning Japanese through SNSs by Chinese students. We explore how activities and contents, such as video and audio, available on these SNSs can help Chinese learners to learn Japanese under four themes: motivation, benefits, shortcomings, and outcomes. Insights from this study may throw some light and inform the learners, as well as the Japanese language institutions and SNS operators on how to develop more effective platforms for the use of SNSs for language instruction.

Literature review

Social network sites (SNSs) and language learning

According to Wasserman and Faust (1994), a social network is a social structure, which is made up of a set of social actors (individuals or organizations) and a set of dyadic ties between these actors. Social Network Site (SNS) is built up from this idea, which is a platform that provides people with opportunities to share information and socialize with one another online. Based on this idea, Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined SNS as a web-based service, which offers services that connect users from different locations, and enables them to articulate and make their social networks visible.

Other research studies show that people use SNSs for seeking information, setting up a special interest group (Wohn et al., 2011), and actively engaging in the activities online (Lamper et al., 2012). Currently, two of the most popular SNSs in the market are Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>) and Google+ (<http://plus.google.com>) (See-To & Ho, 2014). There are also several SNSs, which are developed for educational purpose, such as Whyville (<http://www.whyville.net>), Palabea (<http://www.palabea.net>), Live Mocha (<http://www.livemocha.com>), and Babbel (<http://www.babble.com>) (Stevenson & Liu 2010). These platforms are mainly language-learning platforms based on Web 2.0 technology for

learners whose mother-tongue is English. Other research (Klomsri et al., 2013) also suggests that users like to use SNSs to support their informal learning.

Only a few research studies have been conducted in studying how an SNS would have an impact on language learning. One of them is conducted by Kabilan, Ahmad and Abidin (2010), who investigated how Facebook facilitates English learning in Malaysia. They showed that learners perceived that Facebook was a good English learning tool and provided a good learning environment due to two reasons. First, the use of Facebook can enhance learners' communication skills. Second, the risk-free environment provided by Facebook makes learners more confident and, therefore, encourages them to be more collaborative and interactive with one another on the platform. This helps create an environment to motivate learners to learn the language (i.e., English) proactively. However, they also discovered some negative aspects of learning on Facebook. First, they noted that some learners are of the view that Facebook is not a formal learning platform, which discouraged them from putting real efforts in their learning. Second, some learners had doubts that Facebook (and for an SNS in general) is just another platform for sharing stories and information between friends rather than learning. There are also studies conducted to investigate whether SNSs can be used for professional training (Mathew, 2014) or experimental learning (Arnold & Paulus, 2010).

An overview of the popular SNSs in China

Due to the existing Internet censorship policies in China, those mainstream SNSs which are popular in the world, such as Facebook, Google Plus, and Twitter, are blocked by Chinese authorities. The Chinese SNS market is filled with several major local players, such as RenRen, Baidu Tieba, Huijiang forum, and Douban. As these SNSs are not popular outside of China, the paper outlines some background in the sub-sections which follows to provide the readers ideas on the Chinese SNS market.

Renren

Renren (<http://www.renren.com>) is often known as the Facebook of China. The interface and functions of this SNS are very similar to the Facebook. However, there are some minor differences between these two SNSs. First, these two SNSs are targeted by different types of users. While the target users of Facebook are people from all the age groups, the target users of Renren are undergraduates. Second, Facebook users like sharing pictures and videos of their own lives, but Renren users prefer to re-post interesting videos, pictures or stories. Third, it is more common for Renren users to join groups based on common interests, background or activities than it is for Facebook users. Concerning the possibility of participating in collaborative learning of Japanese in Renren, we noted that there are around 120 Japanese-learning groups which currently exist in Renren as of August 2014.

Baidu Tieba

Baidu Tieba (<http://tieba.baidu.com/>) is the largest Chinese communication platform run by Baidu. The greatest feature of Baidu Tieba is that this SNS allows users to create their own forum or search for forums using keywords. In early 2014, the number of registered users in Baidu Tieba has reached 100 million, and there have been over 8 million forums. In order to meet the

demands of this high usage volume, Baidu has designed applications for Android, iPhone, and iPad to provide more convenient access to users of Baidu Tieba.

There are 3 points differentiating Baidu Tieba from traditional Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) and these are discussed here:

- (1) Topic: In a traditional BBS, a topic can be very broad. However, in Baidu Tieba, the topics are very specific. For example, it could be a singer or a book.
- (2) User demands: While the attraction of BBS is the high-quality of articles published there, Baidu Tieba's attraction lies on individual topics. In BBS, the users are normally not allowed to bump, i.e., post articles without significant meaning. However, there is no such rule in Tieba.
- (3) User Community: A traditional BBS always has a stable user group, while Baidu Tieba has a more dynamic user community.

Concerning the number of Japanese-learning groups/forums in Baidu Tieba, we found that there are around 50 such fora. The biggest one among these 50 fora is called the forum "Japanese Bar", which had over 260,000 followers and close to 11 million posts.

Hujiang Forum

Hujiang, founded in 2001, is the biggest online learning platform in China. There are 70 million registered users and 3 million students in this forum. Hujiang is not only an educational Web site. It also consists of an SNS community, a Business-to-Consumer e-business, a Hujiang online school, among other services.

Hujiang Forum (<http://s.hujiang.com/>), as Hujiang's SNS community, is particularly famous for English and Japanese learning. It is divided into 13 plates. The Japanese learning plate is the fourth one, which is further divided into 6 sub-plates: Japanese learning, studying in Japan, tests, Japanese cartoons, Japanese movie and TV stars, and Japanese TV drama and movies.

Douban

Douban (<http://www.douban.com/>) was launched in 2005. It is an SNS, which allows users to create content about books, music, films, stars and activities. This SNS opens to both registered users and unregistered users. Registered users have their own personal blog, on which they can post anything they are interested in, such as, a book they like or a film they have watched. They can also update their status, and share photos and videos.

A special feature of Douban is that it is more like a combination of SNS and social media. There are groups created for different hobbies and interests. Users can join as many groups as they like. The study noted that many groups related to Japanese learning exist in Douban, such as "Japanese self-studying", "How to write a diary in Japanese", and "Learn Japanese while watching TV drama". Users can access Douban groups via their own devices such as iPad, iPhone and mobile phones with Android system.

Methodology

This study is qualitative. As there has not been prior research focusing on the use of SNS to conduct collaborative learning of Japanese, the qualitative research method was chosen to study in-depth knowledge on how and why the Chinese learners of Japanese use the SNS to learn Japanese. Hence, we collected our data through online interviews which were recorded using the software embedded in the system, and user messages postings as well.

In this research, subjects were selected through convenient sampling, and interviews were done on ten Chinese learners of Japanese language. A number of the subjects are graduates from the Japanese language major of the Zhejiang University City College. The college is located in the Zhejiang Province, the People's Republic of China. Subjects from this college have all passed the Level 1 Examination of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. The rest of the study subjects are amateur Japanese language learners at different levels of proficiency.

The sample was, therefore, divided into 3 groups for comparison of the results of the interviews: (i) amateur learners, (ii) Japanese language majors, and (iii) learners who are preparing themselves for their further studies or work in Japan.

The study also explored how the subjects used major Chinese SNSs, including but not limited to Baidu Tieba, Hujiang Forum, Renren, and Douban, to facilitate their Japanese learning on social media platforms. The study looked at the perceptions of the learners on the use of SNS in learning Japanese in the terms of motivations, benefits, shortcomings, and learning outcomes.

Findings and Discussions

In this section, findings are presented and discussed based on the interview data collected from the three participant groups, namely amateur learner group, Japanese language major group, and the plan to study or work in Japan group. The interviews were conducted in Chinese and the extracts of the interview records were then translated into English as shown in the following sub-sections.

Amateur learners

The first group of our subjects comprised three amateur Japanese learners, who were university graduates without formal Japanese language learning experience. The following are the responses provided by these three subjects on their reasons for learning the Japanese language.

Subject A: I like singing. My hobby is to record my singing and upload it to the Internet. Recently, I found a Japanese song named 'the river of dream' ...sounds so beautiful..., so I decide[d] to learn Japanese and sing it.

Subject B: ...3 months ago, I went on a trip to Japan. It was amazing... that I really want to travel there again. However, many Japanese can't speak or understand English. It seems necessary for me to learn some basic Japanese to communicate with them. Besides, I like the Japanese culture very much. It would be great if I

can understand the Japanese language (which can help me to understand their culture).

Subject C: I'm crazy about Japanese cartoons. You know, many Japanese TV cartoons come from comic books. Comic books are updated online (once they have been published). However, if you don't know Japanese, you need to wait for translation[s]. I want to read them as soon as they are updated instead of waiting. ...That's why I learn Japanese.

To sum up, the responses from the amateur learners indicated their motivations for learning the Japanese language did not come from an academic perspective. It may come from the desire of using the language related to ideas to gain a better understanding of the Japanese culture, or for gaining first-hand entertainment or information.

As these subjects were just beginners in learning Japanese, they could hardly communicate with others in Japanese. But they all agreed that it was easier for Chinese people to learn Japanese since the written Chinese language (and in particular, the traditional Chinese characters, which are commonly used in Taiwan and Hong Kong) and the written Japanese language (i.e., the Kanji in the written Japanese language) share many written characters. This is consistent with the findings of Matsumoto and Obana (2001), which noted that beginners with Kanji background are more likely to continue learning Japanese than those with no Kanji background. Although not all the Kanji used in Japanese carries the same meaning of their counterparts in Chinese (Chu, Nakazawa & Kurohashi, 2012), it is still easier for Chinese people to understand Japanese.

Among the three subjects, Subjects A and B mainly used the Hujiang Forum, and Subject C chose the Baidu Forum to learn Japanese. Subjects A and B thought that the Hujiang Forum was more professional than other SNSs. They used it for two or three times per week. Subject C was attracted by the Baidu Forum and he stated that the community there was more active, as users were allowed to bump there, while the rules were quite strict in the Hujiang Forum.

It is interesting to note that these three subjects never shared their learning materials or contents on SNSs. When asked they said the reason was simple: they felt not confident to share since they had not formally learned the language (i.e., not professional).

When the three subjects were asked about the benefits and shortcomings of the SNS that they used in learning Japanese, they had the following responses.

Subject A: For me, the Hujiang Forum is a great platform to communicate with other Japanese learners (in China). You can get timely feedback, but you will also be distracted easily. The last second you are talking about katakana, the next second the subject turns to your favorite role in the cartoon 'One piece'.¹

¹ Note: One Piece is a famous comic in Japan, which is currently on show in TV as an anime series.

Subject B: I think the best thing about (learning a language at) the social network site is, you don't have to worry about teachers criticizing you in your learning process and progress. You can learn in a relaxing environment and are happy to learn. What's more, learning will not be limited by time or the location as long as you can gain access to the Internet. But the bad thing is that you can't learn systematically as you are learning in school.

Subject C: The good thing is you become willing to learn as there are many friends sharing the same interests with me in the forum. But I'm also easy to be distracted by other things. Actually, 2/3 of my time on Baidu Forum is spent on chatting with net friends. Besides, (in the learning of the spoken Japanese) it's difficult when you want to know how to pronounce a word (and people cannot teach you there).

According to the three subjects, they obtained their learning materials mainly from SNSs. They downloaded those learning materials that had higher click rates. However, the benefits they got from SNSs were not so obvious. All three of them did not have much improvement of their written and spoken Japanese using this method of learning. They said they just learned some daily expressions. However, they all agreed that SNSs provided a good learning environment for them to learn Japanese since they could practice it (mainly the written language) with other learners without worrying about making mistakes. This helped them build their confidence to speak the Japanese language. They could learn more by downloading the listening materials available on SNSs. They also got to know more about the Japanese culture as there were many overseas students in Japan who are willing to share their lives and trips on SNSs. Further, they noted that their learning materials searching skills have been improved. They also noted that it was easier for them to find their required materials in SNSs after their learning adventures in the SNSs.

Japanese language majors

These four subjects are members of the 2013 graduates in the Japanese language major at the Zhejiang University City College. They all passed the Level 1 Examination of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. Regarding their reasons for learning the Japanese language, they had the following responses:

Subject D: Japan has a close trading relationship with China. There are many Japanese companies along the coastal region of China, and especially in the Zhejiang Province. Working in a Japanese company is my dream because big Japanese companies like Toyota and Suzuki own great enterprise culture. I think I can learn a lot in companies like that.

Subject G: The reason for me to learn Japanese is because I'm fascinated about the Japanese culture. I'm deeply attracted by Kabuki, Sumo and Bushido. I want to know more about Japan, and learning Japanese is the best approach.

Further, Subjects E and F both claimed that they chose Japanese as their major because they loved those Japanese cartoon and TV drama series. As we can see, the reason of learning

Japanese becomes more detailed in this group. An occupational factor was considered as well as entertainment.

As for the reason why they selected particular SNSs for helping them learn Japanese, Subjects D and G said they chose Douban for their learning platform, because they perceived Douban to have a better design of its website interface, which is quite terse and elegant.

On the other hand, Subject E chose Baidu Tieba as she felt more comfortable using it. She has been a user for this SNS since she was in high school. This was because she has been a fan of a popular singer since her high school days and she joined the singer's forum in Baidu Tieba. She has been a loyal user ever since.

Subject F is the only subject who used more than one SNS to learn the Japanese language. He used both Douban and Renren. He did not have a preference between these two SNSs and he joined the Japanese-learning groups in both SNSs.

The four subjects with Japanese majors, all learned Japanese in college. According to them, the time that they spent on SNSs for the purpose of learning the Japanese language was not that much compared with the amount of time that they spent in the classes at their university.

As opposed to the amateur learners group, this group of learners felt more confident in posting materials and contents on SNSs. They usually got the materials from teachers and would share these with the community in SNSs.

They were also willing to answer the questions posted by other learners in SNSs. However, they only download sample examination questions and listening materials for Level 1 Examination of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test on SNSs. In their opinion, other materials available in SNSs were not professional enough to be treated as formal learning materials.

When asked for their opinion on the benefits and shortcomings in using SNSs to study the Japanese language, the subjects had the following responses:

Subject D: To be honest, knowing there are so many people not able to speak Japanese as well as me gives me a sense of achievement. It's weird, but I actually feel this way. Except this, my horizon can be broadened, as you get to know many questions you never thought about before. Such problems you never considered as a problem until others bring it up. Well, the shortcoming (of using SNS to learn Japanese) is the professionalism aspect... as you are not sure whether you can get the right answer or not (from the SNS).

Subject E: The benefits (of using SNSs to learn the Japanese language) are obvious. With smartphones, you can download client-side applications of Baidu Forum. In other word, Baidu Forum serves you anytime, anywhere when you have a question or want to learn Japanese: you just login to the application. There is

no need to bring a book or something else. However, the problem is the lack of professionalism...

Subject F: The good thing about SNSs is, you know (that) you are in a safe environment. People are all learners just like you. However, you will also be confused by the materials on the network... Whether they are appropriate for your level? Whether they are [accurate in terms of] certain knowledge or not?... You cannot be sure of that.

Subject G: In my opinion, the best thing about learning Japanese on SNSs is, you don't need to worry about making mistakes. You feel free to communicate in Japanese. However, learning a language needs (to have) face-to-face practice. SNSs are not the best environment for learning Japanese (in this regards), obviously.

Subjects in this group indicated that they benefited a lot from SNSs, as they could acquire countless educational and examination materials from SNSs, and most of the materials were quite useful. In addition, the process of answering other users' questions helped them improve their own Japanese knowledge. Furthermore, one of the subjects who had decided to further study in Japan said that she could find useful information about applying to schools in Japan on social networks, which helped her a lot.

Learners who are preparing themselves for their further studies or work in Japan

There are many Chinese nationals who would like to pursue the Japanese language for further studies or work in Japan for various reasons (Chen, 2008). While some of them would like to learn about certain leading edge technology that Japan has, others are admirers of the Japanese traditional culture, which is quite unique and attractive. We also interviewed three subjects who were preparing themselves for their further studies or to work in Japan.

Subject H was a student majoring in Japanese studies in college. She said she had to master the Japanese language as it was necessary for her to read papers and books written in this language. The SNS she adopted was Renren. She said it was convenient for her to use SNS to communicate with other learners. The problems she perceived were that she could only learn some causal sentences on the SNS, and she could not practice her spoken Japanese. Additionally, Subject H occasionally shared some learning materials she liked on Renren. On average, she spent 2 hours on Renren a week, and she also followed some Japanese on Weibo. That is the Twitter-type social media serving China. However, she has never posted replies there.

Subject I was sent to Japan to work. He spoke no Japanese at first, when he arrived there. He felt that life was miserable as he could not speak Japanese, so he was unable to communicate well with local people. Hence, he decided to learn Japanese online. Besides joining net schools, he spent much time discussing with other users on Hujiang Forum. He said the best thing about SNSs was that it helped him get rid of loneliness. As for the shortcomings, he thought it would be

better if SNSs have functions like video and voice communication to facilitate his learning process better.

Subject J is a student studying in Shizuoka, Japan. She said that before entering university, it was necessary for her to study in a Japanese language school for a year. Besides learning at school, she also spent time in the Renren group. Subject J has been using Renren since she graduated from high school. She was familiar with Renren's functions. The following is her comment about what she perceived to be advantages and disadvantages:

Subject J: For me, Renren is not just a social network for learning Japanese, it is also for entertainment. Talking with others makes me feel relaxed. I learn from people's learning experiences. But I have to admit that it's easy to be distracted by other things like QQ, Weibo and Skype.

For this group of subjects, SNSs open a new door for them to learn Japanese. The questions they post online can be answered quickly and correctly. This helps them to learn Japanese vocabulary and culture in a more relaxed and convenient way.

Discussion

Study finding of the interviews are summarized in Table 1. The table shows that the subjects spent an average of 2.25 hours per week on SNS to learn the Japanese language. Learners perceived the relaxing learning environment as one of the primary benefits of using SNS to learn the Japanese language. Others reported that the benefits of using SNS include easy access to learning resources, instant feedbacks and chances of communicating with other learners. The shortcomings of using an SNS platform to learn the Japanese language is mainly due to being easily distracted, and the lack of professional design of the learning materials provided in SNSs. However, the subjects, except those who are Japanese majors and have a relatively better background in the Japanese language, feel uncomfortable sharing their learning materials in SNSs.

Concerning the reasons for learning the Japanese language, we observe that there are two major reasons, which our subjects shared:

- (i) Their devotion to the Japanese culture and entertainment (such as music, cartoons, and TV drama series). This is the main reason for the amateur learners, and one of the reasons for the Japanese majors, to study the Japanese language; and
- (ii) The need related to their career and their career development. This is the main reason for learners who are preparing themselves for further studies or work in Japan, and one of the reasons for the Japanese majors, to study the Japanese language.

For their reasons for choosing to participate in SNSs to learn the Japanese language, subjects in general provided three justifications:

- (i) The professional help available in SNSs (which is mainly opinion from amateur learners);

- (ii) Their loyalty to the SNS concerned, as they are already users of the SNSs before they considered learning Japanese; and
- (iii) The design of the SNS and the (user friendly) functions embedded in the SNSs concerned.

Among these three reasons, professionalism is an interesting factor. The amateur learners all chose the Huijiang Forum as their choice of SNS for learning the Japanese language since it is the most famous educational SNS in China and thus, it has a high reputation. However, the other two types of users are of the view that the learning materials provided in SNSs lack professionalism. This idea is observed clearly from the responses of the Japanese majors, which is probably due to the fact that they can get the learning materials from their college. In their opinion, the learning materials found in SNSs are just supplementary learning resources.

User loyalty is another reason, which deserves to be further discussed. Hsu and Lu (2004) point out that a higher level of satisfaction of users can lead to a higher level of user loyalty. In this case, the study noted that some subjects mentioned that “I get used to using XXX because I have been using it since I graduated from high school,” or “because I’m familiar with XXX’s functions”, which is a sign of the user loyalty effect. When a user is getting used to using a particular SNS, she or he may finally acquire a habit. As a result, the user will feel uncomfortable when they use other SNSs mainly due to the sense of unfamiliarity with the interface.

Apart from having the dependency on the SNS that a user is getting used to as a habit, a sense of belonging to the SNS also contributes to user loyalty on the SNS, as a user can join the learning groups of the SNS that he/she is familiar with, and be easily engaged with the discussions in learning groups.

The interactive and collaborative processes connect users together, which means friendship grows out of it. It is not strange that net friends meet one another in real life sometimes. The point is that belonging, a fundamental need of humans, is considered a prerequisite for positive outcomes (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The sense of belonging to the SNS is a crucial factor that makes users become loyal to the SNS concerned.

Table 1

Summary of Our Interview Results

Subject	Gender	Social Network Used	Weekly Usage (in hours)	Benefits	Shortcoming	Sharing Learning Materials
<u>Category I: Amateur Learners</u>						
A	Female	Hujiang Forum	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Timely feedbacks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is easy to be distracted 	No
B	Female	Hujiang Forum	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I do not have the feeling of being criticized during the learning process. ● It is a relaxing learning environment. ● There is no limitation in time and location for the learning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I cannot learn Japanese systematically 	No
C	Male	Baidu Tieba	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The environment helps me to be willing to learn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is too easy to be distracted. ● The environment cannot help me to improve my spoken Japanese skills. 	No
<u>Category II: Japanese Language Majors</u>						

D	Female	Duban	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I have a sense of achievement in learning Japanese there. ● The experience broadens my horizon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The learning process lacks professionalism. 	Yes
E	Female	Baidu Tieba	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is possible for me to use my phone to gain access to SNS and learn Japanese. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The learning process lacks professionalism. 	Yes
F	Male	Douban	2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a safe learning environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The learning process lacks professionalism. 	Yes
G	Male	Douban and Renren	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I feel free to communicate with learners in SNSs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It lacks face-to-face communication in the learning process in SNSs. 	Yes

Category III: Learners who are Preparing Themselves for Further Studies in Japan

H	Female	Renren	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is convenient to communicate with other learners of the Japanese language in SNSs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The learning process lacks professionalism. 	Yes
I	Male	Hujiang	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can get rid of the loneliness of self-learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is no video or voice communication in SNSs, which can facilitate my learning process 	No
J	Female	Renren	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can not only learn Japanese in SNS, but also can go for entertainment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is easy to be distracted 	No

Conclusion

In this research, we have explored the motivation, benefits, shortcomings and outcomes of Chinese learners who are learning Japanese on SNSs by interviewing selected subjects. These ten subjects wanted to learn Japanese due to different reasons. While some of them are devoted to the Japanese culture and its entertainment industry, some others are having a desire of getting a good job in Japan or in a Japanese company, in which the knowledge of the Japanese is a must for getting those opportunities.

There are also some subjects who have a need to learn the Japanese language so that they can try to explore other Japanese related learning opportunities. Subjects chose Renren, Douban, Hujiang Forum, and/or Baidu Tieba as the SNS for learning Japanese. Our subjects, irrespective of their background, chose these SNSs to facilitate their learning objective based on the following reasons:

- (i) Convenience: The subjects can receive timely feedback from other SNS users concerning their study problem, and their learning activities are not limited by location or time;
- (ii) Risk-free learning environment: Subjects stated they were not afraid of making mistakes during the learning process, and thus, this environment encourages them to be more willing to learn; and
- (iii) User loyalty: Subjects are used to the functions and interface design of the SNS they chose to use in their learning process.

However, subjects have different perceptions on the shortcomings of using SNS to learn Japanese. The amateur learners all mentioned that a major problem is that they can be easily distracted in the online environment while the Japanese majors have highlighted the lack of the availability of professional learning materials available in SNSs. Views of the learners who are preparing themselves for further studies or work in Japan, are a combination of the above two reasons.

The outcome of learning Japanese using SNSs as a platform can sometimes be a challenge for Chinese learners. Subjects suggested for example that they do not learn too much about grammar or vocabulary on the SNS. For the amateur learners, it seems that they gain more knowledge about Japan in general, rather than learning the language in the SNSs. The Japanese majors, however, shared that much learning and examination materials can be exchanged on SNSs. Besides, having information about how to apply to Japanese schools/universities via SNSs, is also available to them on SNSs.

Overall the Japanese majors gained more useful information than the amateur learners. For the last group, the outcome is unclear, as their ultimate goal is to learn Japanese for other reasons. However, they still perceived that the SNSs opened a new door for their learning.

Similar to other studies, this study also has some limitations. First, the sample used in this study is selected by convenient sampling, instead of random sampling. Therefore, there is a chance that the sampling process is biased. Plus, regional factors were not considered, as our subjects are mostly from

Hangzhou, i.e., a city located in the Zhejiang province. Furthermore, researchers have also not considered the impacts of sub-cultural background and economic factors within China.

For future research directions, the topic can be researched with a wider selection of subjects from different regions of China. Researchers also plan to conduct a series of comparative studies using Facebook as the SNS, with Taiwanese, Hongkongers, and Polynesian subjects. Jick (1979) said that converging qualitative data and quantitative is helpful for data triangulation. It is also planned that researchers may develop a quantitative study to further explore this area.

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Appendix: Interview questions used in the semi-structured interviews

Purpose: The purpose of this interview is to understand how Chinese learners learn Japanese through the social network site (SNS). We hope to find out the motivations, benefits and shortcomings of using SNS for language study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and the interview is completely anonymous.

1. Your gender and age.
2. May I know your reason for learning Japanese?
3. How long have you been learning Japanese? What's your current Japanese proficiency level?
4. Do you communicate with others using Japanese? (For example: F2F/online communication)
5. Do you use Japanese to learn other things? (For example: Read paper or books written in Japanese, watch Japanese cartoons and/or movies,. etc.)
6. What strengths or weaknesses do you find during learning Japanese as a Chinese?
7. What kind of SNS do you usually use for learning Japanese? How often do you use it? Do you think it is useful for your Japanese learning? Why?
8. How much time do you spend on learning Japanese through SNS per week?
9. Except using SNSs, what other approach(es) have you used for learning Japanese? (For example: Books, TV. etc.)
10. What functions do you often use on the SNS? (For example: Online chatting/forum discussion. etc.) In your opinion, what is the most attractive attribute of the SNS?
11. Do you use SNS to search for Japanese learning materials/contents? Could you elaborate on this? (For example: What kind of materials/contents you searched? Do you find the materials/contents you find from your search reliable?)
12. Besides acquiring for resources, have you ever posted any learning materials on the SNS? Compared to sharing for information/resources searching, do you share/contribute more information/resources to the SNS?
13. What benefits/shortcomings do you find when you use the SNS?
14. Is there anything you want to add or change to the SNS?
15. Do you feel you benefit from these activities in terms of your Japanese learning progress? (For example: Did you feel the use of SNS in learning Japanese can help to improve your vocabulary, writing, speaking, reading/comprehension in Japanese, better understand the Japanese culture, help you to prepare for your Japanese proficiency examination, or make you feel easier to find learning

materials, etc.?)

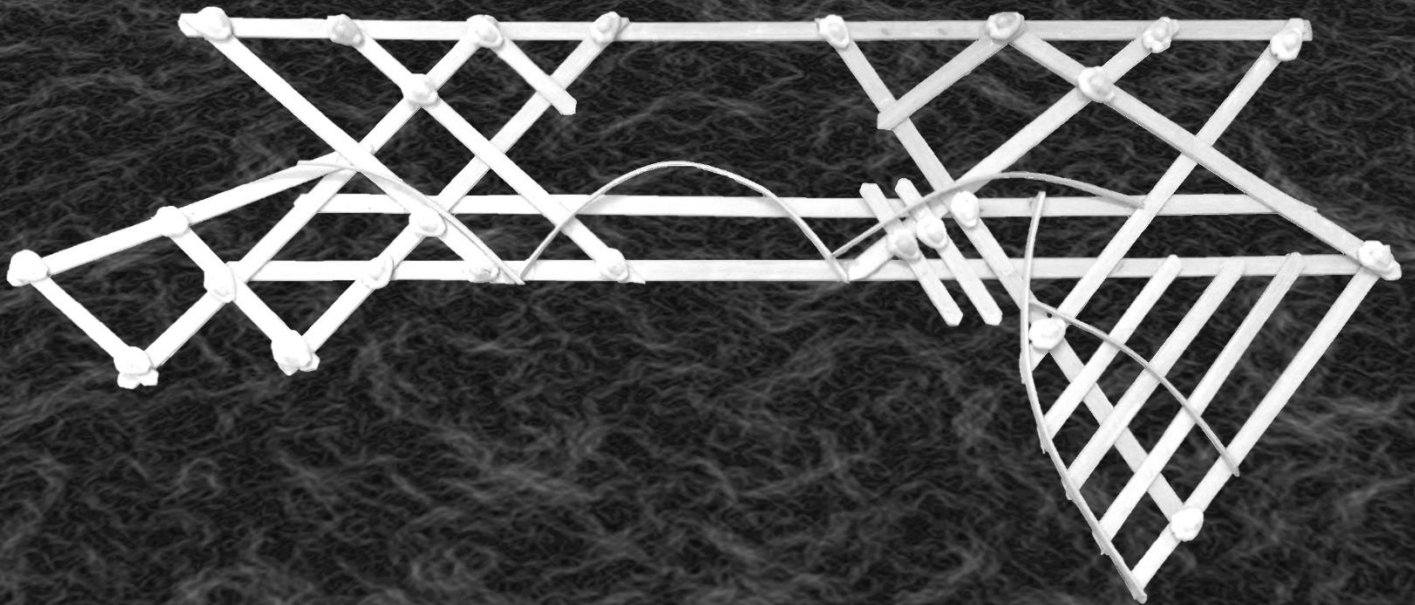
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INDIGENOUS AND MIGRANT MICRONESIAN SPACES IN CURRICULUM AND SCHOOLING



Reclaiming Indigenous Knowledges in Formal Education Pacific Literature in Secondary Classrooms on Guåhan

Kisha A. Borja-Quichocho

Abstract

Pacific literature is not offered as a course in the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) secondary curriculum. This is problematic, as people from Guåhan are from the Pacific and should be aware of the literature (traditional and contemporary) that exists in the region. It would only be sensible to include the literature of the region in the GDOE curriculum. Another reason why Pacific literature is important for Pacific Islanders such as those on Guåhan is that it helps us to make connections with others from the region. Yet another reason is that Pacific literature allows for Pacific Islanders to read literature connected to their cultural and spatial identities.

This action research reported here discusses the need for Pacific literature in the GDOE secondary classrooms. The participants included 53 public high school students from four grade levels enrolled in a Creative Writing course at the study school. This research is structured within a poststructuralist and indigenous research paradigm. The tools of this action research study included surveys, journal entries, participant observations, and text analysis.

The results showed that overall, the participants liked Pacific literature and could relate to it. Further, they felt that it should be offered as a course in the GDOE curriculum.

This paper is one of the first to address the topic of the absence of Pacific literature in the GDOE secondary curriculum. Therefore, further research should be conducted.

Keywords: *Guåhan; Pacific literature; indigenous knowledges; reclaiming; formal education*

“Indigenous people are writing [...]. The boundaries of poetry, plays, song writing, fiction and non-fiction are blurred as indigenous writers seek to use language in ways which capture the messages, nuances and flavor of indigenous lives.”

—Linda Tuhiwai Smith

“Unless there are radical changes in education—beginning from kindergarten—unless politicians, teachers, and lecturers are prepared to introduce sweeping changes in school, college, and university curricula so that they are infused with local content and the local languages as mediums of instruction, true decolonization of the mind will remain a dream.”

—Vilsoni Hereniko

Introduction

Background

Guåhan (meaning “we have”)ⁱ is the largest and southernmost island in the Mariana Islands archipelago in the geographic region of Micronesia. The indigenous people of the Marianas are the Chamorus. On Guåhan alone, the population is about 175,000 people, 37% of whom are Chamoruⁱⁱ. While Chamorus are the largest ethnic group on the island, they are currently still the minority, as the other ethnic groups combined make up the majority of the population (Aguon, 2009, p. 250; Borja-Kicho`cho` and Hernandez, 2011, p. 230).

Guåhan has been “[...] under the colonial rule of Spain (1521-1898), the United States (U.S.) (1898-1941), Japan (1941-1944), and again, the U.S. (1944-present) and is the longest colonized possession in the world” (Borja-Kicho`cho` and Hernandez, 2011, p. 230). At present, Guåhan is an unincorporated territory of the United States. The residents of Guåhan are U.S. citizens, but they are not allowed to vote in U.S. presidential elections and do not have voting representation in the U.S. Congress (Aguon, 2009, p. 249).

In terms of the education system on Guåhan, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) aligns itself with the American school system. Since 1922, the school system on Guåhan adopted the state curriculum of California and New Mexico. “The course of study included nothing about Guam and unless one opened the windows and felt the tropical climate, a student felt like he was in California. Unfortunately, the same situation still prevails today [...]” (Aguon, 1997, p. 95).

Students on Guåhan are taught the English language, U.S. History, U.S. Government, American literature, and several other classes that are required in the American school system. And because “[n]o one [has] questioned the curriculum despite its obvious lack of connection to Guam’s heritage or economic needs” (Aguon, 1997, p. 96), students have become more interested, skilled, and well-versed in the American ways and less interested, less skilled, and less knowledgeable about Chamoru (and greater the Pacific) epistemologies and cultural practices.

At the secondary level, GDOE students are required to take American literature and British literature courses from grades nine through twelve. Grade eleven focuses specifically on American literature, and grade twelve focuses on British literature. These Language Arts courses are required in order to fulfill graduation requirements.

Moreover, the GDOE did create and implement the Chamoru Studies program in the 1970s (under Public Law 12-31)

as a bilingual program to provide all students the opportunity to learn the indigenous language and culture of Guam. The program was first established as a result of Public Law 14-53 and later amended by Public Law 15-9 which was designed to provide cultural pride,

identity and awareness [...] necessary to sustain the Chamoru language. (Dibision Inestudion Chamoru yan Espesiât na Prugrâma Siha, 2012)

The required courses under the Chamoru Studies program are Chamoru language (inclusive of cultural practices such as cooking, weaving, singing, and dancing) and Guam History. GDOE secondary students are required to take the courses (one year of Chamoru language and one year of Guam History) in order to fulfill graduation requirements (ibid).

While the Chamoru Studies program curriculum includes language, cultural practice, and history courses, it does not include a course(s) on Chamoru literature (Pacific literature in general), which is also an important part of our culture and identity: “[...S]tories [written and oral] are ways of passing down the beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass the story down further” (Smith, 1999, p. 145).

GDOE secondary students need to be exposed to the literature of Guåhan, the island they call home, and its people, and the literature of the greater Pacific region. Because Pacific literature has yet to be taught as a course at the secondary level on Guåhan, students (and teachers) are generally unfamiliar with Chamoru writers such as Evelyn Flores, Lee Perez, Craig Santos Perez, Anne Perez Hattori, Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero, Michael Bevacqua, and Julian Aguon, and Pacific writers such as Epeli Hau`ofa, Konai Helu Thaman, Albert Wendt, and Vilsoni Hereniko. Yet they are familiar with writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Jane Austen, and William Shakespeare. Perhaps if students on Guåhan were exposed to more Pacific literature, whether in a Pacific literature course or another Language Arts course, they could gain more knowledge about and pride in who they are and where they come from—if they are from the Pacific—and a deeper respect and understanding of the Pacific peoples and cultures if they are visitors to the region.

Aims

This study aims to question and address the absence of Pacific literature in the school curriculum at a GDOE secondary school on Guåhan. The study further aims to promote the implementation of Pacific literature in the GDOE secondary schools’ curricula.

Objectives

This action research project has five objectives which are to:

- i. Ascertain the absence of Pacific literature at the secondary level (with a GDOE secondary school such as the research site [grades 9-12]);
- ii. Examine the reasons for the lack of Pacific literature in secondary classrooms;
- iii. Survey the importance of implementing Pacific literature in secondary classrooms;
- iv. Examine high school students’ perspectives of Pacific literature in terms of interest, values, and relationship(s) to their realities and life experiences; and

- v. Recommend changes to the current content of the secondary creative writing curriculum as well as the greater literature curriculum in terms of the implementation of Pacific literature.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in this action research project:

- i. What understanding do the participants have of Pacific writers and their work?
- ii. How do the participants relate to Pacific literature?
- iii. How do the participants view Pacific literature?
- iv. What Pacific literature textbooks and resources are available for the students at the research site and elsewhere on Guåhan?
- v. How can the absence of Pacific literature in the GDOE secondary school curriculum be addressed?

Context of the Research

The context of study is a GDOE secondary school on Guåhan. It is one of six public high schools on Guåhan and is located in the central part of the island.ⁱⁱⁱ

The research site is an overpopulated school, with approximately 2,700 students enrolled. It was built to accommodate only 2,000 students. The majority of the students are Chamoru (from throughout the Mariana Islands). Other students are mostly Filipino, Palauan, Marshallese, Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Kosraen, or Yapese. There are about 130 teachers at the school.

Seven Language Arts courses are offered at the school: English 9 (Grade 9), English 10, English 11, English 12, Applied Communications, Drama and, in the 2011-2012 school year, Creative Writing. There are 22 Language Arts teachers. The total number of students who are enrolled in the Language Arts courses is approximately 2,500 at the time of this study.^{iv}

For this research project, I worked with students in two of my Creative Writing courses. There were 53 participants in this study.

Significance of the Study

At the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year, I asked my students, “How many of you know of any British or American writers?” The majority of the students raised their hands. I then asked, “How many of you know of any Pacific writers?” None of the students raised her/his hands. It was evident that the students had never been exposed to Pacific literature and that there was an absence of Pacific literature in their literature classes, an absence of the works of the peoples and cultures they come from:

[...]if it is important for children in England to study Chaucer, Stoppard, Shakespeare, W.H. Auden, William Wordsworth and Jane Austen, in order, among other goals, to better

appreciate their own societies, surely it is equally crucial for Pacific Island [...] children to benefit from the study of writers from their own societies. (Benson, 1995, p. 64)

According to Vilsoni Hereniko (1999), “[...]literature [in this case Pacific literature] and art are symbolic expressions of cultural identities, embodying their creators’ visions of who they were, are, or could be. These visions encompass one or more aspects of culture, such as ethnicity, geographical context, gender, and politics” (p. 137). Through Pacific literature, the students may gain a sense of cultural pride and become more aware and certain of their cultural identities.

Furthermore, no research has been done on the absence of Pacific literature in the public secondary classrooms on Guåhan. This action research project is therefore a good contribution to such research and literature and is part of a growing movement on Guåhan to decolonize (and even indigenize) education on the island. This paper is also a contribution to curriculum development (in terms of contextual knowledge of place, heritage, and identity) in GDOE secondary classrooms.

While this study contributes to addressing the gap in Pacific literature in Guåhan classrooms (secondary), the study recommends the need for further research on the issue.

Literature Review

Written Pacific literature has been around since the 1970s. Throughout the Pacific, particularly the islands in the geographic regions of Polynesia and Melanesia, Pacific Islanders have been writing poetry and prose and have been publishing and sharing their works with peoples throughout the Pacific and the rest of the world. Indigenous Pacific Islanders from the region of Micronesia, however, have not contributed much to the writing and publishing canon of Pacific literature in comparison to the Islanders of Polynesia and Melanesia:

Micronesia is a late-comer to the literary scene. The absence of any major novelists, playwrights or poets up to now has often been claimed to be the result of an education system that did not emphasise creativity. [...]he absence until several years ago of energetic catalysts could be another reason. (Hereniko, 2000, p. 27)

Moreover, “In these islands, a coordinated effort to encourage or facilitate the publishing of creative literature is just beginning” (Hereniko, 1999, p. 155).

On Guåhan, the largest island in Micronesia and the region’s only U.S. unincorporated territory, there is an absence of Pacific literature, particularly in the public school system. It is not offered as a course in the GDOE curriculum nor is there an existing curriculum for the course.

Guåhan’s political status as a U.S. territory has a lot to do with the kind of education that students on the island receive. Since 1898, the island and its people have been occupied by the U.S. (Japan from 1941-1944) (Borja-Kicho`cho` and Hernandez, 2011, p. 230). With the hyper-Americanization of the

Guåhan and the Chamorus, not only have Chamoru rights and lands been jeopardized (J. Aguon, 2009, pp. 250-252) but their education has been jeopardized as well (K. Aguon, 1997, p. 93).

In order to move towards decolonizing the public school system on Guåhan, decolonizing the minds of our people, Pacific literature should be taught (Subramani, 2003) in the GDOE classrooms (K. Aguon, 1997). In the Pacific, colonized spaces like educational institutions have perpetuated foreign histories, languages, cultures, and ways of life and have simultaneously forced the indigenous peoples to forget their cultures and histories (Meyer, 2001; Smith, 1999; Thaman, 2000; Thiong`o, 1986; Nabobo-Baba, 2004). In addition to erasing cultures and histories, colonizers have forced indigenous peoples to erase their indigenous knowledges. Yet, IK must be taught, practiced, and perpetuated as they have been and should continue to be the foundation of indigenous peoples' survival (Settee, 2008; Smith, 1999).

Further, students can relate to Pacific literature and, as a result, can better understand, analyze, and respond to the literature, as it discusses topics such as “[...] colonialism, sexism, jealousy, love of family, and respect for culture, elders and the past” (Wendt, Whaitiri, and Sullivan, 2010). Pacific literature also allows students to engage in critical, relevant dialogue which helps to develop the students' cultural identities and self-awareness (Benson, 1995). Through Pacific literature, students can embrace their knowledges, histories, and cultures, learning them and valuing them, after long neglecting them (Meyer, 2001; Quanchi, 2004; Smith, 1999; Thiong`o, 1986). Students could moreover write and publish their work, thus contributing to the growing written (and oral) literature of the Pacific region and proving that they are no longer going to be silenced by or misrepresented by other writers and literatures (Said, 1978), particularly British and American writers and literatures (Nabobo-Baba, 2004; Wendt, 1983).

This study uses action research which involves identifying a problem or issue and presenting possible solutions to the problem or issue (O'Brien, 2001; Schmuck, 2009).

Methodology

This action research project focused on one GDOE secondary school; however, it must be noted that the findings presented here may have use for the GDOE school curriculum in general. A qualitative study was conducted and because it is influenced by the poststructuralist paradigm, the study used textual analyses and class discussions as opposed to quantifying methods.

The methodology chosen for this research project is action research, which is research that is 'learning by doing' — [where] a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again [...its] focus [is] on turning the people involved into researchers, too — people learn best, and more willingly apply what they have learned, when they do it themselves. It also has a social dimension — the research takes place in real-world situations, and aims to solve real problems. Finally, the initiating researcher, unlike in other disciplines, makes no attempt to remain objective, but openly acknowledges their bias to the other participants. (O'Brien, 2001)

According to Richard Schmuck (2009), action research differs from traditional research in four ways:

The first is *improvement versus explanation*. Action research concerns interventions for continuous improvement. Traditional research concerns a search for explanation. Second is *development versus knowledge*. Action research seeks to foster development and planned change. Traditional research seeks to build a body of accumulated knowledge. Third is *perspectives versus experimentation*. Action research aims to collect trustworthy data on the multiple perspectives of particular individuals and groups. Traditional research aims to obtain objective data from a representative sample of subjects. Fourth is *local versus universal*. Action research focuses on local change and improvement. Traditional research focuses on building universal theory and valid generalizations. (p. 1)

Furthermore, the research is grounded in the poststructuralist and indigenous paradigms. The poststructuralist paradigm “rests on an assumption that no-one can stand outside the traditions and discourses of their time. For this reason, ‘the search for grand narratives will be replaced by more local, small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations’” (Grant and Giddings, 2002, p. 20). Within the poststructuralist paradigm, the researcher is just as invested in the discourses as her participants (p. 21). “Poststructuralist methodologies allow for complexity and contradictions (instead of requiring that we simplify, reconcile or ignore discrepancies) in data” (p. 22).

Moreover, the indigenous paradigm is when the researcher becomes part of the community s/he is researching and all decisions about how the research will proceed and, in particular, what will be done with the findings must be made in full negotiation with this community. Further, the researcher’s membership of the community [...] continues after the research is finished. (Grant and Giddings, 2002, p. 24)

One of the main purposes of the indigenous paradigm is “to make a positive difference for the researched” (Smith, as cited in Grant and Giddings, 2002, p. 24).

A post-colonial and an indigenous methodological approach and framing were used in this study because they challenge the imposed education system that exists on Guåhan. The importance of exposing students to Pacific literature is that it gives voice to the stories of Pacific Islanders and allows the students to gain a better appreciation and understanding of themselves. As Subramani (2003) explains:

Pacific literatures constitute a significant moment in the decolonizing process [...] The obvious functions of literature – ordering the world, making it intelligible, creating new understanding and opportunities for idealism all serve the goals of the projects that we have outlined. The writers have articulated the need to reclaim the [Pacific] region’s

epistemologies [...] Thus they produced the first significant written counter-narratives to the dominant narratives of colonialism. (p. 3)

It is these counter-narratives to the imposed colonial narratives that give inspiration and focus to this study.

Methods

Chosen Tools

To address the research questions, the following tools were selected to gather data: surveys (pre-surveys and post-surveys), journal entries, participant observations, and text analysis. Such tools were used to ensure triangulation of data and enhance validity.

Purpose(s) of each tool

Surveys

Pre-surveys were used to determine the knowledge that the participants had prior to the implementation of the action research project. There were 10 questions on the pre-survey (see Appendix A).

At the end of the research period, post-surveys were used to determine what the participants learned in regards to the absence of Pacific literature in secondary classrooms. There were three questions in the post-survey. The questions were reflective-based, and the students were given three different colored sheets of paper (one sheet for each answer) on which they had to answer each question. The following were the given post-survey questions:

1. What are your views on Pacific literature? Do you like/dislike it? Why?
2. Which Pacific authors and works have you been exposed to? Of the Pacific authors you've read works from, who is your favorite? Why?
3. After being exposed to Pacific literature, do you feel it should be offered as a course? Why?

Journal entries

The participants responded to several journal entries during the course of the research. These entries were used as either anticipatory sets for the lessons or participants' responses to class lectures. During the time research was conducted, the anticipatory sets and course lectures were all based on Pacific literature.

Participant observations

Participant observations were used during class discussions of Pacific literary texts and one Pacific poet's class visit. Brief notes were taken during the observations. This tool was useful as it allowed informal dialogue.

Textual analysis (student work)

The participants' work was collected, some of which was analyzed and used as evidence for this project. The participants' work was significant to the research because it displayed the students' understanding of the assigned readings, the writing activities, and the class lectures.

*Implementation of Tools**Timeline*

Each chosen tool was implemented over the course of five weeks.

Participants

As mentioned earlier, 53 students from two creative writing courses were selected to participate in this study. All of the participants were informed that some of their work would be collected for the study but that none of their names would be used. Further, the participants were also told that if they ever felt uncomfortable sharing their work or other information, they could withdraw their participation.

Results and Discussions

Over the course of the study with the 53 participants, I was able to witness the positive effects of exposing the students to Pacific literature, the necessity of exposing students to Pacific literature, and having them contribute to the growing literature. The results presented here are indicative of what can happen when students of the Pacific region are able to see themselves in the literature that they are reading and when they are able to write themselves into the stories they would otherwise be excluded from.

It is important to mention that my students were exposed to Pacific authors and literature that I introduced via a course reader that I created. The student participants were also exposed to the following Pacific writers through classroom visits: Anghet Hoppe-Cruz (Chamoru poet from Guåhan), John Sarmiento (Guåhan), Willa Wai (Guåhan), Teresia Teaiwa (Fiji and Kiribati), and myself (Guåhan).

This section includes results obtained from the research conducted (through textual analyses and class discussions), the pre-survey results, and the participants' post-survey responses. In addition to the post-survey results, there are also samples of student work which were analyzed. Figure 2 has information about the ethnicities of the students who participated in this action research project.

The following graphs display information about the participants' exposure to American literature and British literature (Figure 3) and Pacific literature (Figure 4).

Of the 53 participants, 96% of them said that they had been exposed to American literature, while 4% said that they had not been exposed to American literature. 100% of the participants claimed that they had been exposed to British literature. Further, 30% of the participants stated that they had been exposed Pacific literature, but 70% of the participants had not been exposed to Pacific literature.^v

Such results are important to note when considering the absence of Pacific literature in the GDOE secondary classrooms.

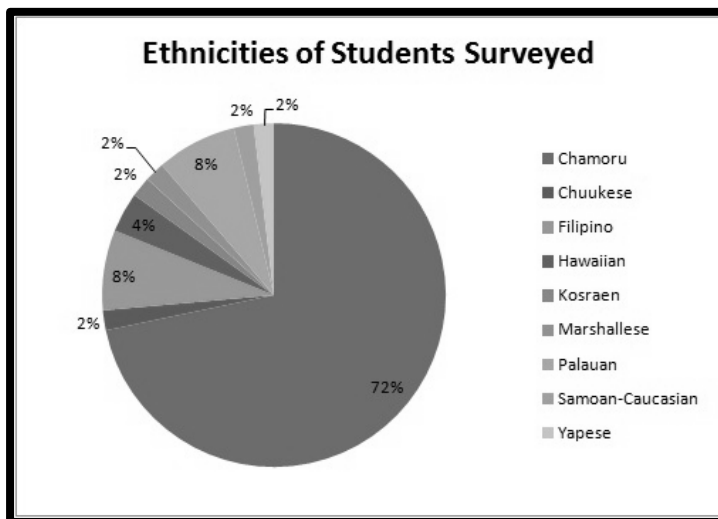


Figure 2

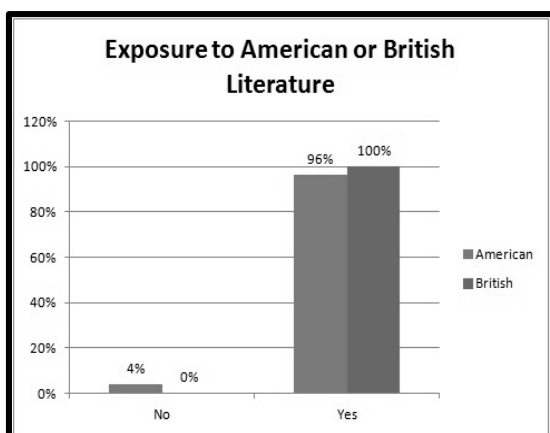


Figure 3: Student Exposure to American and British Literature

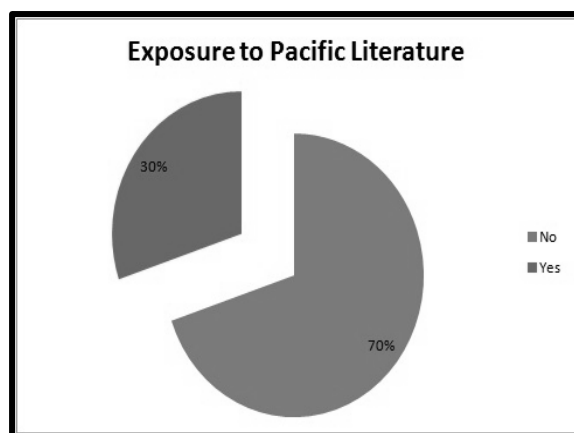


Figure 4: Student Exposure to Pacific Literature

The Absence of Pacific Literature in the School Research Site and the Overall GDOE Secondary School Curriculum

It was evident that my students had not been exposed to Pacific literature on a regular basis or as much as they had been exposed to American and British literatures. The absence of Pacific literature in the research site’s curriculum and the greater GDOE secondary curriculum has resulted in the students’ lack of knowledge about Pacific literature writers and therefore a lack of knowledge about Pacific Island cultures and identities, essentially a lack of knowledge about their own heritages.

This absence of Pacific literature in the GDOE curriculum in general, is an issue that needs to be addressed. As Hereniko (1999) states:

The literature taught in schools and at university level is still predominantly European or American [...]. In such a climate, the oral and written literature and the visual and performing arts of the Pacific are either yet to be introduced or yet to be taken seriously as worthy of a place in the school curriculum. As might be expected, those who graduate from such institutions know much more about the history, geography, and cultures of Europe, America, Australia, or New Zealand than they do about their own or those of the rest of the Pacific Islands. The trend toward an education more relevant to Islanders is developing slowly. (p. 149)

Pacific Students' Understanding of Pacific Writers and Works

While I conducted my research, I had my participants read the works (poetry and prose) of various Pacific writers including Julian Aguon, Anghet Hoppe-Cruz, Melvin Won Pat Borja, Teresia Teaiwa, Ruperake Petaia, and myself. Teaiwa and Hoppe-Cruz even visited my classes and shared their poetry and writing experiences with my students, giving the students an opportunity to meet the writers in person, ask the writers questions about writing and publishing, and listen to the writers read their works.

In order to determine the students' understanding of Pacific writers and their works (the writers and works they were exposed to in my class), the students were asked to respond to the following questions for the post-survey: *Which Pacific authors and works have you been exposed to? Of the Pacific authors you've read works from, who is your favorite and why?* Below are some of the student responses to the questions:

- “[...] I really loved Siñot Peter Onedera’s ‘Growing Up in the ‘50s and ‘60s’. It made me want to experience life as a child back then. I’d always hear stories like his from my own mother.”
- “Poems and speeches written by Julian Aguon as well as Anghet Hoppe-Cruz are just examples of local writers I have read. The poem ‘May(j)amak (Broken)’ [by Hoppe-Cruz] is one of my favorite poems for the fact that [it’s] reality. My Chamoru is broken.”
- “[...] My favorite is Ruperake Petaia [...] because the one poem he [wrote, ‘Kidnapped,'] was how I felt. Why do we have to learn something about places we don’t even know or [that] have nothing to do with this place?”

The students' ability to recall the various Pacific authors and their works showed that they had an understanding of (and even an interest in) the Pacific literature they had been exposed to. They were even able to use skills such as recalling, critical thinking, and analysis to show their understanding of the literature. Moreover, the students' responses, though varied, shared one common factor: They could relate to the literature, especially because of the localized cultural themes that the literature had.

Pacific Students' Relating to Pacific Literature

As an educator on Guam for the past twenty years, it still saddens me that children frequently learn the ‘four seasons’ before Guam’s ‘two seasons’ and that snowballs are a bigger preoccupation in curriculum materials than coconuts. The island’s history,

language and traditions are ‘add-ons’ to an existing curriculum. They should be the fundamental core to which other areas of study are subsequently added. The people of Guam (those who live here as well as Chamorros) must be obliged to know Guam first before branching out to the world. (K. Aguon, 1997, p. 101)

The overall consensus from the participants during the course of my research was that they could relate to and understand the Pacific literature they were exposed to, even more so than American and British literatures. Some of their responses regarding relating to the literature include:

- “[Pacific literature] is very inspirational [...]. It comes from my people.”
- “[...] I like Pacific literature because I like how we share many of the same stories.”
- “[...] To me, it is really great to actually read something coming from people who are just like us, from the Pacific. I get very excited when reading Pacific literature; it warms the heart.”

When indigenous peoples are taught the literatures of the colonizers, they become unfamiliar with themselves. They become familiar and well-versed in the ways of the colonizers, to the extent where they no longer know who they are and where they come from: “He was being made to stand outside himself to look at himself” (Thiong`o, 1986, p. 17).

It is crucial for indigenous peoples, such as Pacific Islanders, to read literature of their peoples and the countries and regions they come from, to see themselves in the text that they are reading and writing about: “[...R]eading and interpretation present problems when we do not see ourselves in the text. There are problems, too, when we do see ourselves but can barely recognize ourselves through the representation” (Hereniko, 1999, p. 35).

When students can see themselves in the text they are reading, when they can relate to the text, then they can better understand the text. They can become more interested in reading and writing and engage in critical discussions about local, relevant issues. They can value their stories and cultures. They can feel validated in the space that has long devalued their stories. And not only can they contribute to discussions, they can also contribute to the growing genre of Pacific literature.

Writing by Students

The following are sample works of students who participated in this action research project. Each piece was inspired by the written work of a Pacific writer and is an example of the participants’ being able to relate to the works they were exposed to. Only the participants’ grade levels and ethnicities are provided, not their names.

Poem inspired by Ruperake Petaia’s “Kidnapped” (written by a 10th grade Marshallese student):

I was kept from

my native language
 not knowing what to
 say at family gatherings
 as they greet me “Yokwe”
 I just stare at them
 with a blank face.
 not knowing what to say.

I was kept from
 my native language
 came to Guam and replaced
 my tongue with a foreign one.
 The only person in my
 family that does not know
 how to speak the language I once knew.

As a kid I was held
 in this room with desks
 lined up in rooms.
 People of this foreign language
 shoving words down my throat
 in order to erase my native language
 from my mouth.
 It worked.
 The language I once knew is gone.
 I was ripped of my native language.

Excerpt of the poem “Maga`Håga,” inspired by Anghet Hoppe-Cruz’s poem
 “May(j)amak/Broken” (written by an 11th grade Chamoru student):

I am not *fluent* in my own language
 And yet you expect me to know yours

You wash my mouth
 And scrub my native tongue
 With a foul-tasting soap called *English*

Clearing away any trace of the
 Proud Chamoru Maga`håga I am.

[...]

Mayamak is My World.
 Mayamak is My Home.
 Mayamak is My Tongue.
 Mayamak is
 MY CULTURE.

I am
 Mayamak.

Pacific Students' Views of Pacific Literature

The participants were generally excited to read and write about Pacific literature. In order to draw sound conclusions about their thoughts on Pacific literature, I asked them the following post-survey questions: *What are your views of Pacific literature? Do you like/dislike it? Why?* Some of the student responses are as follows:

- “Pacific literature is important to learn, especially since we live in the Pacific. I like it because I feel more connected to what we read and write about compared to American and British studies.”
- “My view on Pacific literature is that it is very shameful that we have no way of learning it when we’re a part of it. I enjoy it because it’s the only way I can learn about my culture and other Pacific cultures [...]”
- “I really like Pacific literature. Pacific literature writers write with a passion that only people who have been pushed aside have felt.”

Overall, the students liked Pacific literature because they could: relate to it, understand it more easily (compared to British and American literatures), and learn more about the different cultures and peoples of the Pacific.

The Availability of Pacific Literature Textbooks and Resources on Guåhan

Based on the pre-survey results, 27 student participants said that Pacific literature resources available on Guåhan were inadequate; 25 participants said that there are adequate Pacific resources available and that they could be found at places such as the University of Guam Library, the library at the research site, and local bookstores. One student abstained from answering the question.

While there are resources that can be found at the research site library, the University of Guam Library, the Micronesia Area Research Center (MARC), the Nieves M. Flores Memorial Library, they typically cannot be purchased. They can only be borrowed for a certain amount of time. There are local bookstores such as Bestseller and Faith Bookstore which sell Pacific literature resources, but their selection is limited to just a few shelves.

Addressing the Absence of Pacific Literature in the School and the GDOE Secondary School Curriculum

In order to overcome the absence of Pacific literature in the school research site curriculum and the rest of the GDOE, a Pacific literature course must be created and taught. If a course cannot be created, then teachers (particularly English/language arts teachers), at the very least, should incorporate Pacific literature into their classroom curricula, so students can have regular access to Pacific literature.

The student participants were asked the following to determine whether or not they saw a need for a Pacific literature to be offered as a course: *After being exposed to Pacific literature, do you feel it should be offered as a course? Why?* A few of their responses in the affirmative include:

- I feel that Pacific literature should be offered as a course. [It] serves as a basis and inspiration for people to tell a story about where they live to others who are ignorant of its existence. Before this class, I had no idea there was Pacific literature. We learn about many other literatures so why not learn about our own.
- [...] Pacific literature should be offered as a course in our schools so [that] when people ask us “what Pacific authors do you like best” [we] will have an answer [...].
- Pacific literature should be offered as a course. We should make it a mandatory class, like History of Guam. I feel it is important for the youth to know that there is Pacific literature. It is just as important as any other literature, if not more, because it is ours.

It is apparent that there is an absence of Pacific literature in the research site’s curriculum be addressed. According to the pre-survey results, all 53 student participants agreed that Pacific literature should be taught as a course. The post-survey results were no different from the pre-survey. Students still agreed that Pacific literature should be offered as a course; their reasons included the fact that we are in the Pacific region and therefore should expose ourselves to the literature of the region. Another reason is that the course would allow students to learn more about themselves as Pacific Islanders in terms of their cultures and histories. Finally, a course in Pacific literature is just as important as other literature courses.

Another way to overcome the absence of Pacific literature in the GDOE curriculum is not only through written literature but through oral literature as well. After all, “the written word imitates the spoken” (Thiong’o, 1986, p. 14). One of the ways that GDOE educators can achieve this is through bridging the gap between the classroom and the literary community. In the time that I conducted my research, I brought in several writers from the local community, as well as from off island. These writers—Anghet Hoppe-Cruz (Chamoru poet currently residing in Hawai’i), Teresia Teaiwa (Fiji), John Sarmiento (Filipino poet from Guãhan)—shared their poetry with my students and talked to the students about their writing experiences, publishing, and even how to overcome nerves when reading in front of large crowds. Thus, the students were able to gain more than just literature from these Pacific writers.

Conclusions/Recommendations for Change

21st century Pacific writers are creating literature that is timely, relevant, and very much necessary to and for Pacific peoples. “Their contributions to our understanding of the contemporary Pacific will

continue to inspire us to dream of a new Oceania, free of the shackles of colonialism” (Hereniko, 2000, p. 34). Works written by Pacific writers must be promoted in secondary classrooms on Guåhan. Pacific literature will give the students of Guåhan and students of the Pacific, the opportunity to better relate and understand what they are reading because they will be able to see themselves and their experiences in the stories.

For students in the GDOE (particularly those who participated in this study), the absence of Pacific literature was evident, and the research showed that the students knew more about literatures from places outside of the Pacific region (namely British and American literatures) yet knew little to nothing about the literature, cultures, and peoples of the Pacific region. However, after being exposed to Pacific literature, the students were able to learn about various Pacific cultures and peoples and were able to draw connections between their experiences and the experiences they were reading about, and were thus able to actively engage with the literature through reading, analyzing, critiquing, and responding to the literature. They were also able to write their own stories, giving them a voice in a space that has silenced them for years.

Overall, the students liked Pacific literature and felt that it should be offered as a course. They also admitted that while there are Pacific literature resources available on Guåhan, there are not enough of such resources available.

While my project contributes to the research on the absence of Pacific literature in the curriculum of the research site, it is necessary for the issue to be addressed in terms of the greater GDOE curriculum. There is much that still needs to be done on Guåhan in terms of creating a Pacific literature curriculum in the GDOE curriculum.

It is important that Pacific students on Guåhan be exposed to Pacific literature because it is part of who they were, who they are, and who they will be. Being exposed to other types of literature can be useful and can be an interesting experience for the students. However, it is Pacific literature that allows students to see themselves and their stories in written and oral texts. It is Pacific literature that gives Pacific students a voice and allows them to become active agents in the representations of themselves. It is Pacific literature that will help students on Guåhan to decolonize their minds.

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Appendix A

Pre-Survey Questions

1. What grade are you? 9 10 11 12

2. Which ethnicity do you most identify yourself with (circle only one)?

Chamoru Filipino Chuukese Palauan

Yapese Pohnpeian Marshallese

Other (indicate one ethnicity): _____

3. Have you ever been exposed to American literature while in high school (for example, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Frost, and F. Scott Fitzgerald)? YES NO

4. Have you ever been exposed to British literature while in high school (for example, William Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, and Jane Austen)? YES NO

5. Prior to taking this Creative Writing course, have you ever been exposed to Pacific literature (written work by an author from the Pacific)? YES NO

6. Why do you think Pacific literature is not offered as a course?

7. Do you think Pacific literature should be offered as a course? YES NO

8. Do you have regular access to Pacific literature? YES NO

9. Are there adequate Pacific literature resources available at School X or any other place on Guåhan? YES NO

If yes, where can you access such sources?

10. Are any of your friends in other high schools reading Pacific literature?

YES NO

Appendix B: Terminology

Indigenous Knowledges

Indigenous Knowledges (IK)^{vi} can be defined in several ways. According to Priscilla Settee (2008), IK has long been sustained by indigenous communities. It is the know-how and relationship between indigenous communities and their environments (p. 45). It is local knowledge that is specific to a culture and people that usually cannot be found in the formal educational system. “IK is part of everyday life” (ibid).

Manulani Meyer (2001) states that “[indigenous k]nowledge is shaped by what culture believes are ‘best practices.’ It is not something that is reinvented every generation” (p. 127). It is not just about intelligence but also about spirituality (Pua Kanahēle, as cited in Meyer, p. 128).

Moreover, Max Quanchi (2004) affirms that “[...] indigenous epistemologies are alive and well [and that] they are relevant and useful to the societies and peoples to whom they belong” (pp. 2-3).

Reclaiming

Reclaiming, in the context of this paper, pertains to indigenous peoples being able to create spaces and voices for themselves in places where they have been ignored and silenced. It is resisting colonization within the western education school system. “[...Indigenous peoples] have been not only resisting colonization in thought and actions but also attempting to restore indigenous knowledge and heritage commitment by indigenous peoples to have their voices heard and hence restore their heritages and dignities” (Battiste, as cited in Nabobo-Baba, 2006, p. 2).

It is important for indigenous peoples to reclaim their Indigenous Knowledges and practices such as through their peoples’ literature. “Reclaiming a voice in this context has also been about reclaiming, reconnecting and reordering those ways of knowing which were submerged, hidden or driven underground” (Smith, 1999, p. 69).

Formal Education in the Pacific Islands

According to Albert Wendt (1983),

The formal education systems [...] that were established by the colonisers in our islands all had one main feature in common: they were based on arrogantly mistaken racist assumption that the cultures of the colonisers were superior (and preferable) to ours. Education was therefore devoted to *civilizing* us, to cutting us away from the roots of our cultures, from what the colonisers viewed as darkness, superstition, barbarism, and savagery. (p. 79)

Formal education in the Pacific continues to be taught in the languages of the colonizers (Hereniko, 1999, p. 149), languages which are foreign to the indigenous peoples of the Pacific, thus “systematically changing and alienating them from the cultures of their parents and grandparents” (Thaman, 2001, p. 5). Part of this formal education system that has been imposed upon our Pacific Islander communities is not only the languages of the colonizers but also their curricula (to include their literatures).

Konai Thaman (2002) further states that formal education is “[w]orthwhile learning that is organised and institutionalized [...and that it is] the most problematic” (p. 23), particularly because it is not culturally inclusive and does not promote Pacific traditional indigenous education (p. 23).

Pacific Literature

Pacific literature is written and oral literature created by indigenous peoples from the Pacific Islands (Oceania). Some of the Pacific Islands include the Mariana Islands, Sāmoa, Belau, the Federated States of Micronesia (Yap, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Pohnpei), the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Hawai`i, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Aotearoa, Tonga, Fiji, Rotuma, and Tahiti.

Pacific literature is the attempt of Pacific Islanders to create their own stories in their own words, to create representations of themselves, as opposed to foreigners creating representations of them. It is the Pacific writers’ attempt to “restore full humanity to their people” (Hereniko, 1999, p. 145).

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ⁱ Guåhan is used (instead of Guam) throughout this paper. Guåhan is the Chamoru name of the island commonly referred to as Guam.

ⁱⁱ There are several spellings for the indigenous people of Guåhan: Chamoru, Chamorro, and CHamoru. The spelling Chamoru is used throughout this paper.

ⁱⁱⁱ At the time the research for this paper was conducted, there were only 6 GDOE high schools. As of 2015, there are 7.

^{iv} The population of students and teachers has changed since the creation of the new public high school.

^v The participants defined “Pacific literature” as Chamoru stories and chants. Though these types of works are recognized as Pacific literature, the research was based on contemporary Pacific literature, which the students could not identify.

^{vi} Knowledge is plural in this paper.

Perceptions of Immigrant Students from Micronesia Regarding Success in Higher Education: An Exploratory Study

Josephine Cruz

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the social, educational, and personal factors that affect the educational success of immigrant students from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) living in the United States. A qualitative design using a collective case study of 10 FSM immigrants who have attained a 2-year or 4-year post-secondary degree in the United States was employed. Data were collected in two phases consisting of a demographic questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The findings of the study revealed three significant support systems that contribute to the success of FSM immigrant students. These support systems are centered on the family unit, the academic institution, and the community. These elements of support in association with the individual influence the educational journey of FSM immigrant students in higher education and impact their success in an American educational system.

Keywords: *Federated States of Micronesia; immigrant; success*

Introduction

In the Western Pacific, Guam stands as the gateway of opportunity for immigrants from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The topic for this research study is centered on the factors of educational success of immigrant students from the FSM as they strive for academic attainment and social mobility in America. As an entryway to America, Guam embodies the hopes and aspirations of FSM immigrants as they embrace all the possibilities an American education can provide.

The FSM is comprised of four island states: Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. This inquiry underscored the quandary of students from FSM who immigrated to Guam, the closest United States territory, as a result of the Compact of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. Moreover, the study emphasized the experiences of Micronesian students as they traverse through a myriad of social and educational issues that contribute to both positive and negative academic outcomes.

Immigrant children constitute the largest growing segment of the student population in the United States (Bajaj, 2009). The educational experiences of immigrant students are characterized by issues related to assimilation, poverty, home-school conflicts, and limited English proficiency (Bajaj, 2009). For FSM immigrants, remarkable challenges linked with a high suicide rate and alcoholism among young men exacerbate the challenges of being an immigrant (Hezel, 2001). In addition, schools are faced with meeting the varied needs of this diverse group of students (Ogbu, 1991). This study recognizes the challenges of immigrant students, specifically those from the FSM, as they navigate through numerous factors that influence their ability to succeed in an American school system.

The purpose of this study was to explore the social, educational, and personal factors that affect the educational success of immigrant students from the FSM living in the United States. A qualitative design using a case study approach was utilized. Using the lens of the immigrant perspective, the study focused on the significant factors associated with the educational progress of immigrant students from the FSM. The overarching research question that framed this study was: *What factors do successful immigrant students from the FSM attribute to their educational success?*

Review of Literature

Social Factors

A theoretical consideration in understanding the educational achievement of immigrant students is immigrant optimism (Ogbu, 1991). According to Ogbu (1991), voluntary immigrants tend to succeed and overcome difficulty based on the opportunities that are offered in America versus those in their home country. Therefore, immigrant optimism plays an influential role in the success of immigrant students in comparison to their non-immigrant peers (Kao & Tienda, 1995). Korean and Chinese immigrants fit this context ideally and prior research attributes their academic success to parent emphasis on education (Schneider & Yongsook, 1990).

Educational Factors

Boesch's (2008) exploratory research explored the relationship between classroom climate and the academic success of immigrant students in higher education. The study examined four specific areas: professor and student interaction, student and student interaction, student and pedagogy interaction, and student and content interaction (Boesch, 2008). The results demonstrated the essential role that professors play in facilitating a positive classroom environment for immigrant students (Boesch, 2008).

Personal Factors

Central to motivation research is the Self-Determination Theory [SDT] (Deci & Ryan, 1985). SDT makes a distinction between autonomous and controlled motivations (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Autonomous behaviors originate through personal relevance or appeal (Black & Deci, 2000). Conversely, controlled motivations derive their impetus from external connections or demands (Black & Deci, 2000). The premise of SDT is centered on fostering autonomy over one's behavior in order to increase intrinsic

motivation (Black & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, the premise of SDT has its basis in the satisfaction of three fundamental psychological needs: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Grant-Vallone, Reid, Umali, and Pollert (2004) conducted a study investigating the effect of self-esteem on academic achievement. In the study, a survey measuring levels of student self-esteem was given to a sample of 118 college students (Grant-Vallone et al., 2004). The findings of the study demonstrated a significant relationship between academic success and self-esteem (Grant-Vallone et al., 2004). Moreover, the study also reported that the inclusion of campus services and programs that facilitate academic and social support for students aid in the social integration and college adjustment of students (Grant-Vallone et al., 2004). Thus, students who were more adjusted to college life had greater levels of perseverance towards the attainment of a college degree (Grant-Vallone et al., 2004).

Bean and Metzner's (1985) Model of Student Attrition is centered on the premise that a student's persistence is shaped by their behaviors. These behaviors are connected to internal and external factors (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Internal factors include attitudes, beliefs, and college experiences (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Accordingly, external factors are related to family support and financial circumstances (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Along a similar vein, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) underscored the importance of academic climate and social integration on the persistence of college students. Moreover, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) stressed the significance of faculty and student relationships in the persistence of students.

A fundamental factor to understanding the academic success of immigrant students is the need for belonging (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs framework, only when an individual's basic physiological and safety needs are met can social needs such as belonging and self-esteem be fulfilled. Belonging refers to the relationships and connections that fulfill one's need for acceptance and companionship (Maslow, 1943). Paralleling Maslow's (1943) work, Malsbary (2012) explored the structure of belonging embedded within schools to foster the academic achievement of immigrant students. Findings revealed that the politics of belonging plays a role in shaping the academic lives of immigrant students (Malsbary, 2012). Moreover, immigrant students cultivate a sense of belonging through language and through multinational peer groups (Malsbary, 2012). Both studies are congruent with Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory on self-determination that asserts the significance of relatedness in fostering the intrinsic motivation of students.

Methodology

Participants

For this qualitative study, a total of 10 participants were purposely selected based on predetermined criteria from the public primarily by means of referrals and recommendations from the FSM and higher-education community. The goal of the criterion-based selection process was to choose participants rich in experiences and knowledge who will provide an in-depth perspective of the research phenomena. The criteria for selection included: (a) must be at least 18 years old, (b) must be an immigrant of the Federated States of Micronesia, (c) must have a 2-year or 4-year postsecondary degree from an

accredited American institution, and (d) must use English as their second language. Moreover, the sample selection process depended on community leaders, school officials, and colleagues for recommendations of participants who would be suitable candidates for the study.

A collective case study utilizing face-to-face interviews was employed to investigate the phenomenon of successful immigrant students from Micronesia. The use of case study affords the researcher the capability of uncovering many viewpoints and experiences that are essential for understanding the variables of the study (Creswell, 2009). Thus, interviewing the 10 FSM participants allowed the researcher to explore the social, educational, and personal factors that are attributed to the educational success of participants living as immigrants in the United States.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection in this collective case study involved using one-on-one interviews. Interviews were also necessary for this inquiry because they allowed participants to elaborate on past life events, which were fundamental to understanding the phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2009). Individual, face-to-face interviews were carried out in a series of two phases. The first phase involved obtaining consent; establishing demographics; and building a comfortable, trusting relationship between the researchers and the participant. The second phase of the interview process focused on the life history of the participants. This phase centered on the social, cultural, and educational variables of the study and how these variables influenced the life experiences of the participants.

Data Analysis

Raw data from participant interview transcripts and research observation notes were formulated using Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral which entailed data management, determination of initial codes, narrative description, categorical aggregation, open coding, selective coding, and direct interpretation in order to identify patterns and themes connected to the data. At the conclusion of the data analysis process, a comprehensive picture of the case was created (Creswell, 2007). Using the lens of the participants' perspectives, the researcher reported findings describing the significant factors associated with their educational success.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

The participants in this study were 10 first-generation immigrants from the FSM. The ethnic breakdown of the sample included: four Chuukese, two Pohnpeians, two Yapese, and two Kosraean. The participants have lived on Guam ranging from one to over 30 years. The gender of the participants was three female and seven male. The age categories for participants included nine who were 31 years and older and one who was between 23-26 years old. There were no participants in the age categories of 18-22 or 27-30 years old.

The following section presents a summary of the themes that emerged during the in-depth interview phase of data collection. The themes reported are representative of the study's Research

Question: *What factors do successful immigrant students from the FSM attribute to their educational success?* The goal of this section is to give participants' a voice by allowing them to elaborate on their unique experiences and perspectives as FSM immigrant students which otherwise could not have been directly observed or numerically quantified.

Factors of Success

The interviews yielded 69 significant coded responses addressing the Research Question, which centered on the factors of educational success for FSM immigrant students. Six major themes related to this Research Question emerged from the coded responses: (a) family support and expectations, (b) mentorship, (c) persistence, (d) belonging, (e) motivation, and (f) religion. Family support and expectations generated 18 coded responses and was the theme most cited by participants. For mentorship, 14 coded responses were identified and persistence produced 12 coded responses. The data also generated 10 coded responses in the area of belonging and 12 coded responses for motivation. Finally, the data also revealed six significant coded responses for religion.

Family Support and Expectations

All 10 participants conveyed how family support and expectations were foremost factors in their educational success. The participants candidly expressed, at times fighting back tears and emotion, how the support of their family helped them realize their dream of obtaining a college degree. Without this support, they could not have achieved this goal.

One participant reflected on the role of family in educational success, "I think it really comes down to family. Family – good family breeds most likely good kids...I see that when parents are serious with college, the kids will be" (J, p. 8). In a similar manner, another participant talked about the importance of family expectations, "Family, it starts with the family. It's the family expectations and it's the family support. If your parents don't expect you to finish college, good luck on finishing college, even high school" (B, p. 11). He described how family expectations influence the educational path of FSM students. He also elaborated on how his parents' expectations propelled him to finish college, "I think, especially when I came out here, my parents told me, 'You finish college and you come back home. You only stay on Guam if you are in school'" (B, pp. 11-12). Moreover, the participant believed that even without support, family expectations were a strong influence for him to complete his college degree: "Expectation even without support can help" (B, p. 12).

Equally revealing, one participant acknowledged the pivotal role his parents played in his educational success, "I think the first one is my parents. They helped me throughout, all the time, giving me the foundation, pushing me to study, pushing me to do my homework, trying to give me a place with light [electricity]" (T, p. 5). He was grateful for the most rudimentary of resources that his parents provided. The participant explained, "Growing up we used to have lanterns, but then we were able to transition to electricity. That gives you more time to study. So that's one, my parents, their help, their foundation" (T, p. 5).

In a similar manner, one participant asserted how influential his parents were in ensuring his educational success, “Actually, my parents are a big influence also on my educational success because they push me to work really hard” (I, p. 7). He remarked that despite his parents’ unfamiliarity with the world beyond Micronesia, they still pressed him to leave the comforts and security of home to pursue his education, “Maybe, they [parents] don’t know what Guam is, like we depend mostly on money. It’s an unknown to them, but still they send me. They said, ‘You have to go!’” (I, p. 7).

One participant remarked at how his father’s expectations as well as the expectations embedded within his customs drove him to return to school and finish his degree, “I remember one Christmas break, probably ’91, ’92, when my dad asked me how far I was in my education. And I was not able to answer that because I took off from school and just concentrated on working” (A, p. 6). It was this ingrained responsibility to family and culture that propelled him to continue this education. He explained:

And he [father] had to remind me that he’s getting older and he would need someone to help the family. As in the Chuukese custom, parents depend on the men to be able to provide the income and the support. So of course, he is my dad and I have to honor and respect his request. So that is one of the things that pushed me to think about going back to school mode. So when I came back, I literally started wanting to go back. So I went back just as I had been wanting to do. (A, p. 6)

Mentorship

Nine out of 10 participants described how having a mentor impacted their educational success. Most notably, many of the responses of participants acknowledged the substantial role mentors contributed to their educational success.

One participant described how his professor became a mentor to him, “I remember my English teacher.... He took me in and really had an interest in me coming from Micronesia. My first Thanksgiving, he invited me to his house with his family” (T, p.2). He spoke about the impact his mentor had on his educational journey, “When I got into college, meeting people like my professor who took an interest in me, trying to mentor, teach me ways of how to live in the United States.... I think that’s very important” (T, p. 5). The participant recognized the critical role mentors partake in the success of immigrant students. He explained, “I think it’s important when a new student goes into a new school, the counselor, a good counselor that can really help you and guide you through your years in college. I think he played a role” (T, p. 5).

Likewise, other participants depicted the influence college mentors had on them. One participant asserted, “But I think the faculty then really helped me. I was struggling in biology for example. I got to know the professor.... He helped me” (J, p. 5). He explained about how his professors were not only mentors but also good friends who drove him to complete his education.

One participant also remarked on the effect of his college mentors, “I do have some teachers, some instructors who are truly mentors to me in what they do and they make sure that you understand, you learn what you’re supposed to learn” (A, p. 8). He noted the respect and high regard he had for his mentors for the motivation and encouragement they provided. He elaborated, “There were some who were there to just get paid. But for those that I admired most and I learned from what they taught or teach in the classroom, those were the ones who inspired me” (A, p. 8).

Several participants revealed how their professors influenced them to change their educational path. One explained,

I actually started out as a major in finance. That was my declared major at the university.... I took an anthropology course, again, I ran into this very wonderful lady, who kind of put that seed in me and pushed me further. And she was an anthropologist. (B, p. 7)

He fondly reminisced about the level of support he received not only from the professors but also those in administration:

The support that I was getting while going to school was not only from students, like from my professors, even from our Dean of Students, who kind of adopted me [laughs], took us in, took care of us. I felt like I had a lot of support behind me. A lot of people, you just feel like the whole university community was behind you, pushing you. (B, p. 6)

Persistence

Nine of the participants described persistence as a factor related to their educational success. The participants illustrated how their perseverance and steadfastness toward their educational goals enabled them to complete their college degree.

Five participants described their persistence in terms of finishing things. One participant shared his viewpoint on being persistent, “I think I’m a quiet person, but I don’t like to lose. When I see that there is a need, I will slowly, quietly, persistently do it until I finish something” (J, p. 5). It was this silent but purposeful tenacity that helped to galvanize his educational achievement. Likewise, another participant described her persistence, “I like to finish things.... If I have something in mind, I will get that. And it might take me awhile to get there, but I will get there” (L, pp. 8-9). Similarly, one participant explained what it meant for him to be persistent, “You also have to have the commitment to start it and to finish it. And it may take more than four years.... but if you’re committed to your goal of getting a degree” (T, p. 9).

Five participants pondered how their challenges and obstacles drove their persistence. One commented, “So the persistence in me saying that okay even if I have these challenges, I still want to go ahead and continue my education and see where I can end up” (F, p. 4). It was his persevering character

that provided him with the strength to continue. He explained, “Even if we’re faced with all these challenges.... Yes we make one mistake when we go along, but we learn from that mistake” (F, p. 8).

Another participant related how his personal challenges drove him:

I think one is being poor. Coming from that background, I felt I could survive in any environment because I grew up on very modest things. I just accept whatever I have, it kind of relates to me being poor. I have this attitude that I just accept what comes my way. (B, p. 9)

In the same way, one participant metaphorically described the Micronesian persistent spirit and provided the following guidance:

All journeys have a storm – and we from the islands, our main transportation--we sail through the seawater, and our means of transportation is canoe. We go from one island to another and a lot of the journeys they’re storms and we will bend our head and overcome that storm.... (L, p. 11)

Belonging

Eight of the 10 participants named belonging as a factor that contributed to their educational success. However, there were varying perspectives of what belonging represented.

One participant described belonging as being a part of a fraternity. He explained, “I was the only islander there, and I met some really great people, some friends, my freshmen year. So they kind of talked me into joining this fraternity” (T, p. 3). The friendships that were developed in his fraternity helped the student adapt to living in the United States.

Another participant depicted belonging as bonding with his fellow classmates. He explained how they helped him in his educational endeavors, “Also another thing...I would say is my classmates. We were all working together. We were all helping out each other. We move forward together” (N, p. 6). Echoing this thought, one participant reflected on how having similar goals as his classmates united them, “We came here to go to school, we were all students. We came here – we eat together, we play together, we discipline each other. Therefore, back then most of the group graduated” (J, p. 9).

Several participants equated belonging to being around other students of similar ethnicity. One remarked, “It got to a point where I felt – because you know I wanted to hang out with my own group of people – you know, from the FSM students” (H, p. 2). She elaborated, “The good thing about us being only able to come to school, at that time, is that we stuck together...so we kind of bond together and hang around together” (H, p. 2). Similarly, one described his feelings about belonging:

Three or five years after, where more and more Micronesians were able to migrate to Guam, I felt that there was some relief. Finally there's people that I could talk with in my language or visit and get to know them. That makes the burden lighter because the more you see more Micronesians around, of course you probably don't know them, but it's the culture.... We re-group or get together. Those types of activities really help to alleviate some of the challenges. (A, p. 5)

Other participants described the role student organizations within the university campus played in promoting belonging for them. One remarked, "We have our own organizations – like Kosrae student organization, Yap student organization, all those states from the FSM, they have their own organizations.... I think that's one thing very helpful for us" (N, pp. 7-8). Likewise, another spoke about how his student organization helped him to cope with his homesickness, "We have the Chuukese student organization and that is a good organization. It keeps us busy and we forget about the time and the days. We finally realize it's already midterm or it's already exams. It keeps us busy" (I, p. 10). For him, belonging to the Chuukese student organization served as a means to manage his loneliness and endure being away from his family.

Another participant related his sense of belonging to the support he felt from the university community. He revealed:

I remember my first semester at the university, the President, I think it was his last term or something. But I was impressed to sit with the President and talk stories [laughs with excitement] and I'm like "Whoa, you're supposed to be the President, you're supposed to sit on that side." It's just that feeling of acceptance, belonging. (B, pp. 8-9)

Motivation

Seven of the participants cited motivation as an element that led to their educational success. Participants described both internal and external factors that guided their motivation to finish college.

Two participants talked about their internal drive to complete their education. One shared, "And I could say that I'm a goal-oriented person. If I have something in mind, I will get that" (L, p. 9).

Others talked about how cultural and island pride acted as external motivators for them to finish college. One reflected, "I need to succeed because I left my home, I'm kind of representing my island; so I really need to do better. So I think that many times it really pushed me to do the best that I can" (H, p. 7). Another shared how cultural expectations were a driving force. She elaborated, "There is that family, island, wanting to do – because you come across so many miles to come to this island – hey, do something with your career or your education. So that influenced me a lot" (H, p. 7). Paralleling this perspective, one participant talked about cultural shame as a motivator:

There is also a shame factor, which says that Kosraeans are prideful. I don't know other cultures – you are representing your family – you fail, your family fails – your tribe, your

culture fail. And so I think when I was around in the '80s that seems to be what the professors were saying about the Kosraeans. That the Kosraeans don't really mess up easily as a culture because we don't want to lose face for our family. Because we're a small community, people will talk about us, shaming the island and so the thing, maybe not a good thing, but it helped, it worked. It's the shame factor. We don't want to lose face. (J, p. 5)

One spoke about how growing up in poverty was an external motivator for him. He described his experiences, "If you look at my family in a western perspective, you'll actually say that we're a poor family in terms of finances. So that was really the motivation factor for me to overcome those challenges" (F, p. 4). According to him, it was the arduous conditions and harsh challenges that he experienced growing up that helped facilitate his success by nurturing in him a desire to overcome and succeed and to not become reliant on public assistance.

Religion

Four out of the 10 participants described how religion impacted their educational success. Specifically, many of the participants spoke about how religion enabled them to overcome the challenges related to being a Micronesian immigrant student in America.

One participant spoke about how church helped her to keep focused on her goals. The fellowship the church community provided helped her in coping with the challenges she experienced being away from her family. She elaborated, "You know like when we were homesick, we would come together as a group, we would sing and pray. That did have an impact on me to focus on what I'm doing and really strive for the goals" (H, p. 9). Likewise, another participant commented about how religion influenced him. He shared his perspective on the role of religion in educational perseverance, "I think from my own experience, my own experience and my own observation is that the less spiritual they are, the more likely they'll fail. I just see that so many times" (J, p. 7).

Echoing this thought, another participant revealed how religion was instrumental in helping him to succeed. He explained, "Religion is a very big factor in our culture. So we have learned since we grow up that when you're faced with all these difficulties, if you don't have anyone you can turn to, you can always pray" (F, p. 7).

Other participants provided guidance on how religion and church can help future FSM students. One advised, "Culture in Micronesia is still pretty strong. The culture and the church are strong. Use it at the church and the community level to teach these people to better themselves" (J, p. 8).

Conclusions

An analysis of the study's findings revealed the following insights:

1. Familial support was a significant factor in the educational success of FSM immigrant students. Overwhelmingly, participants cited familial support as an important element in

- their achievement. Responses from the in-depth interviews defined familial support in terms of family expectations and emotional encouragement. Interestingly, participants did not associate support with socioeconomic status or financial backing, but rather support was related to the presence of a strong familial bond, family values, and high expectations from family members. Ultimately, the findings revealed that high parental expectations, even without resource support, were sufficient to motivate participants to achieve educational success. This insight echoes Kao and Tienda's (1995) study on immigrant optimism and Schneider and Yongsook's (1990) research on immigrant academic success, which acknowledged the role parent pressure played on immigrant educational achievement.
2. Campus support resources were underscored by participants as an important factor in the success of FSM immigrant students in America. Campus support was described by participants in terms of mentorship and student support organizations. Mentorship was defined by nine participants as a supportive relationship with professors and counselors. Several participants fondly recalled the special role their professors played in their educational success. Descriptors used by participants of their mentors include motivational, empathetic, and helpful. Furthermore, student support organizations were also cited as a significant factor related to campus support resources and was associated with the theme of belonging. Participants asserted the importance of student organizations that provided FSM immigrants the opportunity to connect with fellow students from the same region. Hence, being surrounded and interacting with students of similar ethnic backgrounds provided immigrant students with a sense of belonging and security. The aforementioned insight is supported by several studies in the literature tied to belonging, classroom climate, relatedness, social integration, and professor and student interactions. Boesch (2008), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) asserted the importance of academic climate as it is expressed through faculty and student relationships thereby paralleling the present study's findings that demonstrated the importance of mentorship. Maslow (1943), Deci and Ryan (1985) and Malsbary (2012) identified the critical role belonging and relatedness played in the academic achievement of immigrant students. In the present study, belonging and relatedness were fostered through student organizations that promoted ethnic identity and through faculty mentorship. Supporting this conclusion, Grant-Vallone, Reid, Umali, and Pollert (2004) reported that campus services that facilitated academic and social support nurtured social integration and promoted persistence.
 3. Personal characteristics were also revealed to be an essential component in the educational success of FSM immigrant college students. Descriptors such as goal-oriented, perseverant, persistent, hard-working, and patient were used to describe personal characteristics that participants possessed that empowered them to achieve educational success. These descriptors relate to Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory that acknowledged the positive relationship between autonomy over one's behavior and motivation and persistence. Furthermore, Bean and Metzner's (1985) Model of Student Attrition stressed that persistence is shaped through behaviors related to attitude, beliefs, college experiences, and family support.

4. Generational status was another strong influence in educational success. The demographic data showed that all participants were first generation immigrants. It was difficult for the researcher to locate second generation participants with a college degree for the present study. Many second generation immigrants from the FSM were still in high school or were still in the process of completing their college degree, or have directly entered the work force after high school. Hence, for first generation FSM students, there was an urgency to complete their college education in order to adhere to family expectations. For second generation students, the urgency and family expectations have shifted in order to meet immediate needs such as rent, food, and utilities that come from living in an economic-based society versus the agriculture-based culture of the FSM. The discrepancy in generational status can be related to Ogbu's (1991) theory on voluntary immigrants that hypothesized that the academic success of voluntary immigrants is related to their desire to overcome difficulties and avail themselves of the opportunities offered in America. For second generation and third generation FSM immigrants, their status is no longer considered voluntary since many were born and grew up in Guam. Therefore, the change in generational status alters the needs and goals of the individuals.
5. Overall, the findings echoed the need for a comprehensive system of support for FSM immigrant students. As one participant contended, there is a need for a "shield of support" (B, p. 12). This system of support is comprised of an interdependent relationship among contextual variables. This final insight synthesizes the breadth of the literature that identifies the factors that contributed to the academic success of immigrants, namely the family, the institution, and the community all working in collaboration with the student (Bean and Metzner, 1985; Boesch, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Malsbary, 2012; Ogbu, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Schneider & Yongsook, 1990).

Implications and Recommendations

The findings revealed the need for a formal system of support for FSM immigrant students as they pursue higher education in America. This core system of support must encompass three specific components: (a) family, (b) institution, and (c) community.

Family support can be strengthened through outreach educational programs that provide FSM immigrant families information regarding applying for and funding a college education for their children. Workshops that train immigrant parents on strategies they may utilize to assist in academically and socially preparing their children for college is another recommendation.

Findings of this study have implications related to the role academic institutions and the community play in the success of FSM immigrants. Recommendations to bolster institutional support include an increase in ethnically based student organizations and activities that bolster belonging and acceptance of FSM students. In addition, mentorship from professors and teachers was a significant theme that emerged from the findings. Therefore, increasing awareness among an institution's faculty and administrators, related to the demographic diversity on campus and how these differences impact

the educational progress of students is recommended. As a consequence, diversity training focused on the major ethnicities on campus may provide insights to campus faculty and staff regarding the obstacles faced by students and how to assist them.

Moreover, the diversity of the campus should be reflected in its faculty. Therefore, the recruitment of more instructors from the FSM is recommended. These faculty are receptive to the challenges and struggles of FSM students and may provide insight in meeting their needs. In addition, a diverse faculty may bolster the sense of belonging in immigrant students.

The findings of this study have yielded several possibilities for future studies. The rich descriptions from participants revealed the multiple factors that influenced their educational success in America. Future research should center on the use of a quantitative instrument to ascertain the factors of success for Micronesian immigrants in America and reach a larger sample population. Therefore, a comparison can be made of the qualitative and quantitative findings to determine areas of intersection and congruency in variables.

Moreover, the present study addressed the factors of success for FSM immigrant students in America. However, there is also need for future research centered on the negative factors that lead to the attrition of FSM college students. Hence, by comparing both positive and negative variables, a more comprehensive assessment of the educational journey of FSM immigrant college students may be depicted.

Furthermore, insights from the findings assert the influence of generational status on the achievement of FSM immigrant students. Future research that explores the choices second generation FSM high school students make after their high school graduation and the factors that affect those choices may shed some light on how various micro and macro contexts influence immigration success for Micronesian students.

The theme of family expectations and familial support emerged from the findings of the present study as a significant factor in the success of FSM immigrant students. Additional research is needed to determine the best methods to involve parents of FSM immigrant students in school policies. Furthermore, future studies involving an in-depth analysis of the school policies that promote or deter the parental involvement of Micronesian families and how these policies influence the educational performance of Micronesian students are necessary to augment the limited body of knowledge related to Micronesian students and their families.

Summary

The current political context both in the United States and on Guam portrays immigrant families as an escalating economic and social burden. Negative stereotypes, threats of deportation, and on-going dialogues regarding the adverse impacts of immigration have dominated the political milieu. Through this study, the stories of participants were given a platform that uncovered a wealth of experiences centered

on the persistence, determination, and success of FSM immigrants. Ultimately, the findings and insights of the study present a portrait of accounts that commemorate the resilience, strength, and humanity of a group of people who have all too often been looked upon as disadvantaged or underprivileged. Moreover, the lives of the participants in the study depict the power of interdependence. Finally, the collective voices of the participants in this study stand both as a testament and a celebration of the tenacity and persistence of the human spirit.

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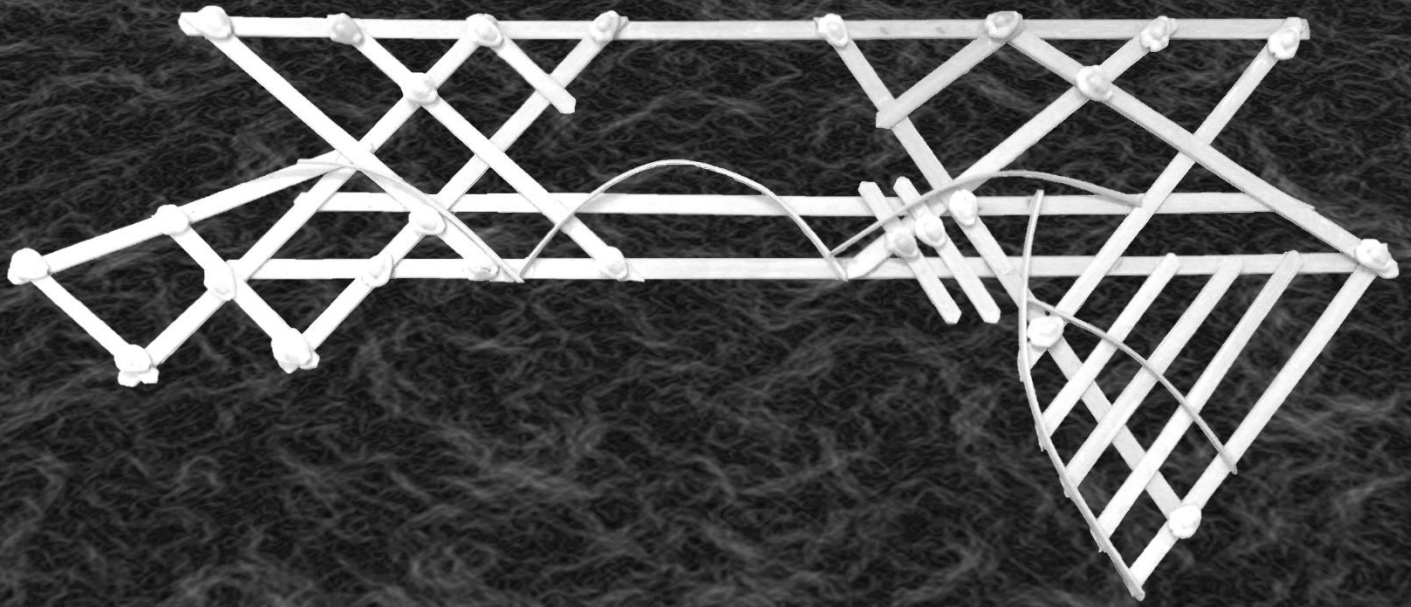
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**ISSUES OF WRITING AT TWO
PACIFIC UNIVERSITIES (UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC)**



Isolating Writing Strengths and Weaknesses in New Freshmen at the University of Guam

Sharleen Santos-Bamba

Abstract

Every academic year the University of Guam welcomes hundreds of new freshmen from Guam, the FSM, Asia, and the U.S. mainland. UOG's open enrollment policy provides the opportunity for students to seek higher education. Because students at UOG come from diverse backgrounds and have varied levels of academic preparation, students are required to take an English Placement Test (EPT). The EPT is a summative assessment that provides insight to students' writing skill set and language proficiency. Unfortunately, most students who take the EPT and enroll at UOG place into Developmental English. This paper offers specific details about new students' writing strengths and weaknesses. EPT essays from 2010 to 2012 were analyzed to develop descriptions of new students' writing skills. This paper presents English placement statistics, descriptions of students' skills at multiple levels, and provides recommendations for best practices in the teaching of writing.

Keywords: *writing skills; freshmen students; University of Guam*

Introduction

Since joining the Division of English and Applied Linguistics (DEAL) at the University of Guam over 10 years ago, I have heard faculty across the various disciplines bemoan their frustration with students who "cannot write." The idea that students were unable to write countered my experiences in the undergraduate composition classroom. Students can write; most are just underprepared for the rigors of university writing.

Being underprepared for college writing is not unique to Guam. Rather, it is a problem that institutions of higher education across the nation share. Specifically, a large percentage of entering college students are "underprepared in at least one of the basic skills of reading, writing, and math" (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005, p. 22). Five years prior to Byrd and MacDonald's publication, McCabe (2000) published a national study of community college education. McCabe reported that 41% of new community college students and 29% of all new college students were underprepared in at least one of the basic skills in reading, writing, and math. For over three decades, colleges and universities have implemented and required placement testing to determine college readiness. In addition to the increased use of placement tests, institutions require or offer remedial or developmental education to address the underprepared population (Moore, et al, 2010; Amey & Long, 1998; King, Rasool, & Judge, 1994). It is

now 2014, and developmental education remains a component in the curriculum of institutions of higher education—inclusive of the University of Guam (UOG).

Developmental Education (DE) is a “comprehensive process that focuses on the intellectual, social, and emotional growth and development of all students. Developmental Education includes, but is not limited to, tutoring, personal/career counseling, academic advisement and coursework” (NADE, 2014). DE at the University of Guam encompasses English and Mathematics. In DEAL, DE is specific to EN085: Fundamentals of English, EN085L: Fundamentals of English Lab, and EN100: Fundamentals of College English. These courses were created for students who enrolled at UOG but were underprepared for college reading and writing. Each semester at UOG, approximately 10 sections each of EN085 and EN085L are offered; course capacity is 18. EN100 is capped at 20 and each semester anywhere from 16 to 20 sections are offered. Most students who take the placement test and enroll at UOG are placed into EN100.

In these DE courses, students receive structured assignments and are required to complete common assignments and an online reading component. In addition, students in these courses receive academic advisement at the start of the semester and then again before the semester ends in preparation for the next. There is a lot of time and energy invested into preparing students for the next level or Freshman Composition. This is the problem: The University utilizes a great deal of resources to prepare underprepared college students. This predicament is echoed across the nation as more and more institutions absorb “the tremendous cost of remediation” (Venezia & Voloch, 2012, p. 77).

Enrollment at UOG has risen steadily. This positive sign indicates that more students are making the choice to pursue higher education; however, placement into DE courses remains quite high and it is a challenge to identify qualified faculty to meet the demands of DE enrollment. It is apparent that there is insufficient alignment of standards between local feeder school systems and UOG.

It is easy to point a finger and say, “What are high schools doing? Their students cannot write.” Another jab at finger pointing, “It’s not the high schools. It’s the middle schools’ fault. Students enter high school and they are not ready.” The blame game or the “chain of blame” (Hoyt & Sorenson, 2001, p. 26) continues at the university level. In the Division of English and Applied Linguistics (DEAL) at the University of Guam, faculty have had to play defense when questions about how students need to learn to write better arise and when comments are made that it is DEAL’s responsibility to “fix” the problem. DEAL’s response to this is that being underprepared for academic writing is a systemic problem and resolving the issue requires collaboration, conversations, and planning with the Guam Department of Education, private schools, regional education stakeholders, and within and across the UOG disciplines. Frustrating as it may be, finger pointing does not address the problem head on. Rather, a positive step can be to identify what students are and are not able to do upon entry to college and work with that data.

While faculty discuss student underpreparedness, many students who are not placed into first year writing question their placement and insist that they do not belong in Developmental English classes.

It is great that students challenge what is reported to them, but their reasons for misplacement suggest that they believe their writing is better than what it really is. Placement results also suggest that students' writing experiences do not prepare them for university level writing. Here are some reasons that students (or their parents/advocates) have used to argue against their perceived misplacement:

1. I took honors English classes throughout high school.
2. I took AP English Literature (or Composition and Language) and got an A.
3. I earned As in all my English classes.
4. Throughout high school my teachers told me I was a good writer.
5. I don't have a problem with grammar; and,
6. I graduated from a prestigious private school, I don't belong in EN085 (or 100).

Here are common responses given to students who challenge placement with the above reasons. Responses are in *italics*.

1. I took honors English classes throughout high school.
Your test results indicate that despite your honors course work, you require further instruction in basic writing and reading.
2. I took AP English Literature (or Composition and Language) and got an A.
Your test results indicate that despite your Advanced Placement course work, you require further instruction in basic writing and reading. Did you forward your AP Exam score to UOG?
3. I earned As in all my English classes.
Your test results indicate that despite your high marks in English, you require further instruction in basic writing and reading.
4. Throughout high school my teachers told me I was a good writer.
Despite what your teachers told you, your test results indicate that you require further instruction in basic writing and reading.
5. I don't have a problem with grammar.
Your test results indicate that you require further instruction in basic writing and reading.
6. I graduated from a prestigious private school. I don't belong in EN085 (or EN100).
Your test results indicate that despite your prestigious private school education, you require further instruction in basic writing and reading.

Many students believe that their writing is far better than what it actually is. Interestingly, a study in the *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, reported that first generation Latino students perceived that they were college ready, but their placement scores said otherwise (Boden, 2011). It is likely that students' perceptions about college readiness stem from the fact that they received high marks in their high school courses. Unfortunately, Hoyt and Sorenson report that, "educators have expressed concerns that grade inflation and the lack of academic rigor in high schools contribute to the need for remediation in college" (2001, p. 26). When students' essays are read by trained, credentialed, and calibrated scorers and their

essays do not demonstrate the skills and rhetorical knowledge necessary to begin first year college writing, then they are placed into the appropriate pre-college English course.

Edward Morante who has extensive experience in testing, assessment, and psychometrics articulates that, “A placement test is a basic skills achievement test that measures skills proficiency (e.g., in reading, writing, and/or mathematics). The purpose of a placement test is to assist entering college students to select appropriate beginning courses aligned with their skill set” (2012, p. 28). Students who place into EN085 at UOG receive face-to-face, academic advisement from faculty who teach in the English Department. Students are advised to take classes that do not have pre-requisites but fulfill General Education requirements. This is done as a way to keep students on track and not too far behind because of the developmental courses they must enroll in. In addition, it is a policy at UOG that if a student enrolls in EN085 and decides to withdraw from the course then the student will be deregistered from all courses. This policy is in place to ensure that students receive the instruction needed to successfully complete all college course requirements. Specifically, reading and writing are quintessential to university study regardless of academic major.

In an attempt to share information with feeder schools whose students enroll at the University of Guam, a team of UOG English faculty delivered presentations at teacher conferences, faculty development workshops, and student meetings. High School administrators, counselors, teachers, and students were provided statistics of how their respective graduates did on the UOG placement test and how they fared in comparison to other schools on island. In presentations to stakeholders, the EPT process was shared, the scoring rubric disseminated, sample prompts provided, student essays of varying strength levels were read and discussed, and calibration sessions were facilitated. Besides such sessions, students are also given EPT information material via email upon application to UOG. A major objective of these presentations and dissemination of information is to be transparent with the placement process. Another objective is to provide teachers with information and strategies to better prepare graduating seniors for the UOG English Placement Test.

The varying levels of preparedness can be seen every semester via the results of the University of Guam English Placement Test.

Chart 1: Fall EPT Distribution 2010-2012

Year	Total	EN	085	EN	100	EN	110	EN	111	NP	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2010	679	113	16.6%	320	47.1%	190	28%	3	0.4%	53	7.8%
2011	647	150	23%	273	42%	160	25%	0	0	64	10%
2012	703	147	20.9%	357	50.8%	130	18.5%	2	0.3%	67	9.5%
Average			20.6%		46.3%		23.83%		0.23%		9.1%

The results in Chart 1 indicate that since Fall 2010 approximately 67% of new students who took the EPT placed into pre-college English and 24% placed into Freshman Composition or first year college

composition.² New freshmen that placed into EN111, 0.23%, took the placement test but opted to apply Advanced Placement scores to receive credit for Freshman Composition. NP indicates “no placement” which means that 9.1% of those who applied to the university but did not take the EPT.

While school faculty and administrators appreciated the placement results, they wanted specific data. They wanted to know which skills students needed to be placed into Freshman Composition. Such information, they posited, would help them better plan lessons and prepare students for the placement test. In response to faculty and administrators’ request for specific information, this paper presents data culled from EPT essays that isolate writing strengths and weaknesses among new freshmen at the University of Guam.

Significance of the Project

This particular project will provide specific data on writing strengths and weaknesses among new freshmen that take the UOG English Placement test. By isolating writing strengths and weaknesses present in placement test essays, faculty at the University of Guam and feeder schools will have useful and concrete data that may be used for lesson planning and writing assessment within their respective institutions. There exists no local literature on the topic, hence the study may serve as the beginning of a documented discourse specific to our local population.

Methodology

Research Site

The research site was the University of Guam (UOG). The University of Guam is the only four-year institution of higher learning in Micronesia that confers baccalaureate and master degrees. UOG’s population is comprised of a diverse group of students (many of whom are second language learners [speakers] of English) from Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Palau, the Marshall Islands, and Asia. While the population comes from a multitude of areas, most who enroll and matriculate on the Mangilao campus come from local public and private feeder schools.

Data Collection

All placement essays for Fall semesters 2010-2012 were numbered and run through a randomizer software. The numbers generated by the randomizer corresponded to essays completed by test takers. Specifically, 25% of essays placed in each of three levels, EN085, EN100, and EN110 for each fall semester were pulled for the sample. A total of 459 essays were analyzed for strengths and weaknesses.

Data Analysis

All essays from each placement level were analyzed using the English Placement Test Scoring Rubric [See Appendix 1]. The rubric is holistic and is used to score essays following each test administration. Scorers are calibrated before each test administration. Inter-rater reliability for each test administration was:

² Note that the number of students who placed into EN110 has decreased each semester since 2010.

- Fall 2010 = 3.4% or 24 of 703 essays went for a third read
- Fall 2011 = 6.9% or 45 of 647 essays went for a third read
- Fall 2012 = 4.3% or 22 of 511 essays went for a third read

On average, 4.8% of essays are read by a third reader for final placement. This means that 94.2% of the time, readers agree. It is important to note, that the cohort of readers fluctuate from semester to semester. Despite the turnover in the readership, there is a consistency in the calibration of evaluators. Scores assigned to each essay determine student placement:

- 0 – 2 EN 085: Fundamentals of English
- 3 EN 100: Fundamentals of College English
- 4 – 5 EN 110: Freshman Composition

The EPT is designed to ensure appropriate placement. Prompts are adapted from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and test takers choose one of three prompts to respond to. Test takers are given 40 minutes to plan, write, and revise their essay. The process in which essays are read and scored is the same process used by Educational Testing Services (ETS) and the Council for Aid to Education (CAE). Each essay is read by a minimum of two readers. If readers disagree, the essay is read by a third. For example, Reader 1 assigns a score of 3 and Reader 2 a score of 4, the essay is read by a third. If the third reader assigns a score of 3, then the final score is 3 and the placement for the said candidate is into EN100: Fundamentals of College English.

Students who wish to enroll at UOG but do not take the EPT default into EN085. In order to ensure that these students are appropriately placed and to re-place students who didn't do well on the test, a writing assessment is administered in all EN085 and EN100 classes on the first day of the semester. The Day 1 Assessment, as it is referred to in DEAL, is an essay test just like the one administered during regular test administrations. Faculty forward essays of new students who demonstrate writing skills better suited for EN100 or EN110 to the EPT committee. New students are those who are brand new to UOG. Transfer students and repeaters are not considered for movement into higher level English courses.³ EPT committee members repeat the scoring process and make the final determination about whether or not a student will remain in EN085 or EN100. Movement into EN100 or EN110 is relatively low. Each semester only a handful of students (mostly those who default into EN085) move up to EN100 or EN110.

Results

Placement distribution indicates that most students who take the UOG English Placement Test are placed into EN100: Fundamentals of College English. From Fall 2010 to Fall 2012, approximately 46.3% of test takers were placed at the EN100 level. While this result is promising because fewer students are placed into EN085, it is still evident that most new freshmen at the University of Guam are underprepared

³ Transfer students' and repeaters' scores/marks from their previous college English course are used to determine placement.

for first year writing or Freshman Composition. Conversely, on average and over three consecutive fall semesters (2010, 2011m and 2012), 23.83% of new freshmen were prepared for EN110: Freshman Composition and 20.6% were placed into EN085: Fundamentals of English.

The following tables provide specific descriptions of strengths and weaknesses identified and isolated in each placement level among 25% of the essay samples reviewed for this study.

Table 1: EN085

EN085: Fundamentals of English	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes attempt to respond to prompts • May provide at least one example or reason to support response • Basic knowledge of mechanics • Fairly simple sentences with some complex sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear thesis • Little meta-linguistic awareness • Does not have control over language use • Issues with grammar predominantly with subject-verb agreement, prepositional use, tense shifts, and words often confused • Incomplete thoughts or sentences (fragments) • Superficially responds to prompts with little to no use of reasons and examples • Disorganized thoughts • Unsubstantiated claims

The strengths and weaknesses identified among EN085-placed students are indicative of writers who have little knowledge or application of basic writing skills. Students placed in EN085 and who enroll in the course begin instruction at the sentence level, move into the paragraph, and then to the short essay.

The challenges associated with teaching students placed into EN085 are many. First, the class is made up of first and second language learners so there is a broad range of skills within the EN085 level. In addition, assessment reports by Pearson’s *MyReadingLab* Diagnostic test, completed by all students who are placed into EN085 and EN100, show that students enter UOG with reading levels that range between 4th and 7th grade.

If students are reading at the 4th to 7th grade levels, then it becomes difficult to utilize textbooks, articles, and other literature written or developed for college level reading and writing. To address reading comprehension, students enrolled in EN085 must also enroll in EN085L: Fundamentals of English Lab. The course meets once a week for two hours and instruction focuses on reading comprehension. In addition, students are required to enroll in Pearson’s *MyReadingLab (MRL)*, an online program that

targets essential reading skills. *MRL*⁴ is a commercial reading program developed by Pearson. The program was chosen among others because it is closely aligned with the student learning objectives in the DE program.

Table 2: EN100

EN100: Fundamentals of College English	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiar with basic essay format • Some organization • Stays on topic • Some application of transitions • Simple sentences and complex sentences • Basic knowledge of mechanics • Makes attempt to respond to prompt • May include more than one example or reason to support response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear or unidentifiable thesis statement • Some grammatical errors (subject-verb agreement, tense shifts, prepositional phrases) • General responses • Issues with syntax, diction, and semantics • Little rhetorical knowledge • Disorganized thoughts and/or unsubstantiated claims

The EN100 placement essays reviewed in this study revealed that writers were able to address the writing prompt, but responses were general and had minimal supporting details. Thesis statements are often not present, and if they are, they are unclear. Writers demonstrated basic knowledge of essay format (Introduction, Body, Conclusion), but often displayed disorganized thoughts and had little to no rhetorical knowledge. Increased instruction in diction and usage will be beneficial as students negotiate various meanings to communicate through writing.

The essays also provide evidence of cognition. Specifically, students who score at the EN100 level demonstrate surface level thinking when responding to prompts. It is likely that students are able to think deeply but are unable to communicate such thoughts in writing. More specifically, writers at this level can be described as novice or emergent. Their writing tends to be “chatty” or conversational in tone and execution.

Like students placed in EN085, EN100 level students have difficulty with reading comprehension. Reading levels range between 4th to 7th grade. To augment instruction, students are required to enroll in Pearson’s *MyReadingLab (MRL)* and are held responsible for completing assignments independently. Completing *MRL* independently may be a concern for some, but DEAL’s position is that students, too, must take responsibility for their learning and be held accountable for active participation in the learning process.

⁴ Please note: UOG or DEAL is not using this study as an opportunity to advertise in favor of *MRL*. If faculty or other academic departments are considering a commercial program like *MRL*, then it is recommended that course and program objectives alongside the commercial program are examined to ensure a good fit for students and aligned with course objectives.

Table 3: EN110

EN110: Freshman Composition	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis is present in text • Presents adequate details and examples to logically support thesis or main idea • Diction is appropriate • Evidence of rhetorical knowledge • Use of complex sentences • Generally well organized • Ideas, support, and main points transition well throughout the text • Maintains focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some grammar, mechanics, and syntax issues but does not interfere with overall readability • Needs further instruction and experience to enhance rhetorical knowledge

Students who are placed into EN110 demonstrate writing competence at both the rhetorical and syntactic levels, but may have occasional errors. As noted earlier, just under one-fourth of new freshmen who enrolled at UOG were prepared for university writing. Generally, students at the EN110 level have had some experience writing research papers and extended prose. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that even these students have difficulty navigating their way through academic texts. Such evidence includes faculty observations and informal assessment through assignments and in class discussions. While this evidence requires further investigation, faculty spend a great deal of time addressing reading comprehension. Faculty have also reported that many students struggle to think and discuss critically and that it is common for students to say that good writing equates to “good grammar”. Grammatical correctness is significant for clear and coherent writing, but it is not the sole criteria.

What can be done to Address Under-Preparedness?

A core principle of improving student writing requires purposeful observation and inquiry that allows teachers to make informed decisions about practices and interventions. Teaching writing calls for providing purposeful feedback, analyzing patterns in student work to provide more precise teaching, and using talk in class as an assessment tool (NCTE, 2014). To better prepare students for university level writing, teachers must be thorough in explaining that the academic essay is not creative writing. Authors of the adopted EN110 textbook, *Writing Your Way Through College*, Fontaine and Smith posit:

academic essays are distinct from creative writing in that they make *specific points* for the purpose of conveying explicit meaning to a reader. Whereas a story, poem, or play may evoke multiple interpretations for readers, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions, college essays convey explicit meaning. Further, college essays are *analytical*; they examine specific evidence and convey to the reader specific points about the material the writer is analyzing. (2008, p. 70)

Here are a few best practices that are manageable and feasible for classroom use. More so, the following recommendations can be implemented at both the middle and high school levels.

1. Move beyond literary works and literary anthologies. While literature is quite valuable, students need exposure to a range of reading and writing experiences. Academic writing is not literary; academic writing is critical, analytical, logical, and evidence based. This is not to say that literary devices are not useful in academic writing. Literary devices can be used to enhance meaning, style, and voice. Before emergent writers further develop their writing style, they must first learn basic writing skills and rhetorical strategies.
2. Teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to write and discuss at length. Talking about their writing with peers and teachers, meaningfully and not merely peer editing, offers insight about writing knowledge for both teachers and students. The main objective of this practice is to allow for talk or discussions about writing and not necessarily about content.
3. Give them prompts that force writers to take a position and support their claims with specific reasons and examples. Rotate this practice between take home and in-class writing.
4. Expose students to a range of primary and secondary sources that include but are not limited to journal articles, empirical studies, charts and graphs, newspaper articles, websites, and blogs. Exposure to such sources should not be done in isolation; rather, bundling a few at a time creates a situation in which students must consider multiple sources to make sound judgments.
5. Use the jargon of the discipline when lecturing or teaching. Make this a regular practice. The earlier students are exposed to jargon like: rhetorical strategy, ethos, pathos, logos, evidence, audience, etc. It is likely that they will continue to use and understand them.

Purposeful incorporation of these best practices will allow for thoughtful engagement and provide focus on writing as the subject.

Conclusion

This study was born out of UOG's engagement with feeder schools. Because DEAL's composition program reached out to feeder schools, communication about university preparation took place. More importantly, this communication continues to shape curriculum at the university level and conversations continue so as to address levels of preparedness among students at the high school and middle school levels.

The University of Guam via the Division of English and Applied Linguistics is committed to transparency about the assessment and placement process. We will continue to place emphasis on academic preparation and rigor and assess our own practices and processes to ensure that placement testing is commensurate with local and regional needs and the nature of our student demographics.

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Understanding Instances of Plagiarism in Third-Year Accounting Students at the University of the South Pacific

Roshila Singh

Abstract

This article is an attempt to describe how third year accounting students of the University of the South Pacific (USP) referenced external information. A total of 187 assignments were scrutinized for referencing applications, and the study revealed that students used both direct quotations and paraphrases. However, the preference for direct quotations was higher. It was also found that about 60% students incorrectly and inconsistently cited direct quotes, while 30% did the same for paraphrases. Finally, results demonstrated difficulty when paraphrasing information. Clearly, the findings suggest that methods of addressing inconsistent and inaccurate referencing vary leading to such a high occurrence in third year assignments. This study, therefore, holds serious implications for teaching referencing conventions and addressing plagiarism at USP.

Keywords: *plagiarism; accounting students; University of the South Pacific*

Introduction

Plagiarism and poor referencing remain persistent issues for most tertiary institutions. Literature describes myriad factors contributing to their occurrence and subsequent processes for their management. Amongst these is the suggestion to deconstruct western perceptions of plagiarism because they impose and prevent realising how students relate to texts and borrowed content (Pennycook, 1996). "Plagiarism also needs to be particularized in other ways: In terms of the particular cultural and educational context in which it is being discussed - what are the relationships to text, knowledge and learning in a particular cultural context?" (Pennycook, 1996, p. 203). This question helps underpin the situation observed and described in the course of this paper since it will enable contextualising incidents of poor referencing and plagiarism in a regional university located in the South Pacific.

This paper describes the nature of inaccurate and inconsistent referencing practised by third year students in a major assignment at the University of the South Pacific (USP).

A small scale study of students' referencing in a major assignment was undertaken in semester 2, 2013. The impetus for the study was twofold. Firstly, the study attempted to delineate instances of improper referencing. This would help understand where students were erring. Secondly, it was

considered that findings from the study would prove to be quite useful in planning and implementing measures to tackle the issue as well as address inadvertent plagiarism.

Literature Review

Literature (Ashworth, Bannister & Thorne, 1997; Marshall & Garry, 2005) on the issue recognises that while there are those who deliberately plagiarize, a good number of students do so unknowingly or without intending to do so (Wilhoit, 1994, p. 161). One reason for this is holding a simplistic view of plagiarism (Roig, 1997, p. 113; Dodou & de Winter, 2011, p. 777). Another is 'inadequate understanding' of the subtle aspects of accurate referencing (Emerson, Rees & MacKay, 2005, p. 12).

To begin with, Breen and Maarsen's (2005) exploration of students' perceptions of plagiarism indicated that students generally understood it as a failure to acknowledge external information. Further studies (Smith, Ghazali, & Minhad 2007; Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre, 2010) on students' perceptions of why they commit plagiarism report ignorance, incompetency and misunderstanding of referencing as well as poor time management, lack of support from lecturers and widespread opportunity to copy and paste information from the net as prominent contributors to the behaviour. Roig's (1997, 1999) studies point towards a more serious issue that needs attention. They reveal students' inability to paraphrase external content and attribute this partially to their inability to process unfamiliar information. In addition, poor writing skills and language deficits (Pecorari, 2003; McGowan, 2003; Shi, 2004, Ellery, 2008; Liao & Tseng, 2010), not understanding the role of referencing in academic writing (Whitaker, 1993) and varying cultural perceptions of 'authorship' (Pennycook, 1996) are likely to result in plagiarism.

The issue of plagiarism to some extent is compounded by the fact that academic staff also face difficulty in distinguishing between plagiarised and paraphrased writing. For instance Roig's (2001) study demonstrates college and university professors not only uncertain about plagiarised works but also committing plagiarism themselves. A recent finding by Zimmitat (2012) reveals that Australian academics from various academic disciplines varied in their definitions of plagiarism and paraphrasing ability. On a similar note, USP's in-service trainee teachers themselves admitted to committing plagiarism (Koya, 2005). No doubt these findings raised issues of ethical behaviour; they also implied that instances of plagiarism are probably being treated with a varying degree of laxity. As a result, more and more instances of plagiarism occur while students continue to remain ignorant and confused, and consequently are able to get away with it.

There are numerous suggestions on how incidence of plagiarism can be reduced. Hillard et. al (2011), believes that a strong ethical awareness could positively impact attitude and behaviour. Roig (2003, p. 4) and McGowan & Lightbody (2008, p. 16) propose that writing guides should clarify plagiarism and focus specifically on how to accurately apply referencing conventions. They point out that definitions of plagiarism are quite generalised and tend to overlook the various categories within which it occurs. Another approach to remedying the situation has been to expose students to proper paraphrasing skills (Roig, 1997). The issue of exposing students to writing skills specific to paraphrasing and summarising has

been raised several times. For example, Hoi Chui Chui (2008) demonstrates the use of a grammar strategy she calls *E-Prime* that not only assists students with paraphrasing but addresses plagiarism as well.

On another note, Landau, Druen and Arcuri (2002) have recommended exposing students to several samples of plagiarised and non-plagiarised works. Their study demonstrates that citing exemplars helps students not only to recognise how to avoid plagiarism, but also how to integrate information in their writing. Furthermore, Landau (2003) provides a tip list on avoiding plagiarism; one of which is refusing to accept direct quotations. Others (MacGowan, 2003; Emerson et al 2005; Waqailiti, 2012, p.176) suggest more learner centered approaches.

The Study Context

USP is a regional university comprising 12 Pacific Island member countries. Each island country is replete with its own cultural, historical and linguistic background. The majority of the students are second, third or even fourth language speakers of English with varying competency levels in the language. This situation no doubt has implications for committing plagiarism.

The institution's efforts at ensuring that its students adhere to academic honesty practices are similar to what has been described in Hillard et al (2011) comparative study of guidelines on plagiarism for 49 universities (including 5 from the South Pacific). USP, too, has a policy on academic honesty which clearly lists three forms of dishonest practices. Of relevance to this paper is section 4.1 (Policies and Procedures, 2011, pp. 2 - 3), which comprises five clarifications on what constitutes plagiarism. Of relevance and interest are points 2 and 3:

Point 2: *Lifting or cutting and pasting extracts without quotation marks or appropriate acknowledgment of sources*

Point 3: *Paraphrasing of content and ideas without proper acknowledgement of the source*

The two statements are fairly clear in defining plagiarism.

The USP Handbook and Calendar (2014, pp. 459 – 463) provides a detailed description of what constitutes plagiarism and its penalties. Since semester 1, 2012, it is mandatory that all students submit their assignments through Turnitin (Policies and Procedures, 2011, p. 4). The Turnitin software, which is commonly known as the plagiarism detector at USP, actually matches students' assignment submissions with external sources and subsequently recognises the margin of similarity between them (Pratt, 2010). A similarity index of 20% is likely to result in penalties if the student does not reduce their instances of plagiarism to a lower percentage. Students found guilty of serious transgressions are reported to the university's Disciplinary committee who then decide how best to deal with the situation. In cases of 'honest' offences, students are subsequently referred to their respective faculty Student Learning Support centres for awareness and curative sessions.

New students into the university are informed about plagiarism, and how to avoid it through orientation workshops. These workshops are followed through with successive workshops later in the semester. In addition to this, all students are made aware of referencing in a 100 level generic course *UU114: English for Academic Purposes*. The same students are expected to take on another generic course at the 200 level *UU200: Ethics and Governance*. Both courses require students to submit fully researched essays and demonstrate referencing. Another measure for curbing plagiarism is the mandatory requirement for students to fill and attach to their assignment a code of academic dishonesty form.

The generic courses are quite instrumental in addressing plagiarism in USP. The course *UU114* undertakes an active effort at exposing students to the mechanics of referencing in the Harvard style. While there is a fairly short section on what constitutes paraphrasing, there is no distinct activity that evaluates students' ability to paraphrase. Their assignment assessment rubric provides a simple continuum that has *no evidence of research* at one end and *fully accurate citations* at the other end (UU114 Research Essay Marking Criteria, 2012) to assess citations.

UU200 also recommends using the Harvard style of referencing. According to the course marking rubric, marks are allocated for: the number of in-text references that have been cited, whether they are academic sources and whether they are credible sources (Introduction and Assignment Booklet, 2014, p. 23). So while the assessment is more focused on critical evaluation of sources, mark allocation for correctly citing and punctuating references is left to students' knowledge.

USP's Student Learning Support section that was decentralised into each of the three faculties is available to assist students in their queries and requirements to minimise plagiarism as well as improve student writing.

Evidently, the mechanisms available at USP to address referencing and curb plagiarism are many, and could even be viewed as overly emphasising the need to reference correctly. This study therefore demonstrates that despite the availability of these services and awareness, student instances of incorrect and inconsistent referencing continue to remain high.

Methodology

This study is an effort to understand how 300 level students referenced external information. This paper no doubt holds implications for how first year academic writing and study skills are addressed to overcome the issue of plagiarism.

In order to investigate the nature of plagiarism, a small study was undertaken. The study involved vetting a 300 level accounting theory assignment to examine how students referenced external information. The accounting course was selected due to its accessibility for the purposes of the investigation. As expected, the study revealed a general prevalence in improper referencing.

Sample

A total of 231 student assignments were used in the study. Student composition was very diverse in terms of ethnicity and culture, however, the common denominator for all was that they had undertaken and successfully completed the two generic courses: UU114 and UU200.

The students were exposed to the American Psychological Association (APA) method of referencing as was required by the courses, and a 2 hour workshop on referencing mechanics. The workshop explained the mechanics of both direct and indirect referencing and a number of group based activities also accompanied the session.

The assignment required students to refer to a number of recommended articles, however, for the purposes of the study, citations for a single article *Financial Accounting: In communicating reality, we construct reality* by Susan Hines was selected to help identify and describe students’ referencing methods. The selection of the Hines’ article over others was an arbitrary decision.

Method

The assignments were coded according to a numerical value, and the treatment and evaluation of data remains within USP’s research code of human ethics.

For the purposes of the study, APA referencing guide (2010) sixth edition was used as a criteria to evaluate the citations. This guideline was also made available to students at the start of their courses.

- Direct quotes to be encompassed within quote marks. This is to be accompanied with author’s surname, year of publication and page number (p.170 - 171).
- Entry to have a corresponding entry in the References section (p.174).
- Paraphrase to be accompanied with author’s surname, year of publication and page number to help locate the information (p. 171).

Furthermore, examples were used to illustrate the use of punctuation in citations.

Each of the assignments was closely scrutinised for external elements and the manner in which they were referenced. They were categorised according to the following criteria (Table 1) and appropriately coded. The data were then tallied and percentages were worked out to display occurrences of improper referencing.

Table 1

Category for Referencing

Improper Citation (some ellipsis; page number is missing)	Direct Quotation with quote marks includes citation
	Direct Quotation without quote marks includes citation
	Paraphrased (missing citation details)
	No citation at all

Proper citation	Accurate citation
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Results

The Workshop

A general feedback from students during and after the workshop indicated that they had found the workshop useful and comments such as “I learnt a lot of things”, or “I didn’t know I had to do this ...” were expressed. An area that some revealed ignorance on was how long should a direct quote be, and whether short strings of external content, such as 2 - 4 words, needed to be acknowledged. With regards to paraphrasing, students mentioned difficulty with expressing technical jargon and phrases that seemed to carry the essence of the author’s argument.

The Assignment

In total 238 assignments were submitted. Since 51 students opted not to use the Hines article in their essay, they are exempted from the total number leaving it at 187. The assignments were submitted through the Turnitin software, according to which 8 were identified with more than 20% similarity index. One assignment accounted for 43% thus, demonstrating an extremely high level of similarity to external content. A follow up on the penalty administered on the student was not undertaken. Additionally, 95 (51%) students resorted to the *Citations and Bibliography* computer mechanism to assist with referencing their information.

An overall analysis showed that students used both direct quotations and paraphrasing, but with a marked preference for direct quotations. This number comprised students who used the *Citations and Bibliography* mechanism as well as those who entered the citation manually.

Citation Practices using Direct Quotes

A frequency count of improper citations using the criteria mentioned above amounted to 110 students. The count reveals that least 50 (45%) used 2 direct quotes in their assignments while 11 (10%) used more than 2 direct quotes. The latter group had 3 students who cited 4, 5 and 7 direct quotes respectively.

Table 2 documents varying improper citations committed when using direct quotes. In total, close to 60% students did not comply with the citation standards as specified by APA Referencing guidelines.

Set A data constitutes assignments that consistently used improper citations. To begin with, there are 80 assignments citing a direct quote without page numbers. The absence of this element rates higher in comparison to assignments with only the year of publication (4) absent. The remaining figure (10) comprises data with inconsistent use of elements whereby some entries are correct while others are not. Additionally, there is inconsistent use of punctuation with comma not used between author’s surname and year of publication (30) and comma either missing or replaced by other punctuation such as semi-colon or colon between year of publication and page number (8).

Table 2

Improper Citation when using Direct Quotes

Citation type	Categories of improper citations	Number of Students	Percentage of students from total number of students
Direct Quote	<u>Set A</u> Direct Quotation with quote marks but missing citation details (page number, year of publication)	90	48%
	<u>Set B</u> Direct Quotation without quote marks and missing citation details (page number, year of publication)	12	6.4%
	<u>Set C</u> Direct quote with no quote marks and citation, but entry present in the References section	8	4.2%

Set B data displays 12 assignments using direct quotations without quotation marks. Although the source is cited, there are flaws similar to that described for Data A. None has been correctly cited.

Finally, Set C consisted of data (8), which are direct quotes without quote marks or accurate citation, but have been listed in the reference list.

There was no external information that was devoid of reference details.

Citation Practices using Paraphrase

Table 3

Improper Citation when Paraphrasing

Citation type	Categories of improper citations	Number of students	Percentage of students
Paraphrase	<u>Set D</u> Paraphrased information from individual pages comprising missing and inconsistent use of citation details (page number, year of publication),	38	20%
	<u>Set E</u> Paraphrases without in-text citations, but entry in References section	18	9.6%

Data on paraphrases yield citation practices similar to that found for referencing direct quotes. Approximately 30% students incorrectly and inconsistently applied citations when paraphrasing.

Set D shows use of paraphrased content that have missing elements and are applied inconsistently. This is evident in missing year of publication and missing page numbers, whereby the citation does not include one or both details.

Paraphrasing Behaviour

Instance of paraphrase is much lower than direct quotations. An analysis of paraphrased elements showed that while there was some good effort at paraphrasing, there was a tendency for students to retain aspects from the source structure. For instance, single words were replaced with synonyms or there was slight modification to the word forms. Total overhaul of sentence structures were minimal.

For example:

Original:

What is 'the full picture'? There is no full picture. We make the picture. That is what gives us our power: *people think and act on the basis of that picture!* (Hines, 1988, p. 254).

Student paraphrase no. 6:

As stated in Ruth D Hines that there is no such thing as the full picture. The report preparers make the picture. That is the power that report preparers obtain. People think and act on the basis of that reality. In this particular case report preparers are creating picture that they assume to be the reality of the organization and stakeholders act on the information as the reality

This sample demonstrates firstly the incorrect citation of reference details. Secondly, there is blatant use of words and phrases (see underlined sections) that are either expressed in their original form or are modified slightly.

Table 4

Sample Paraphrases

Original Forms (Hines, 1998, p.287)	Student Paraphrase
1. Creating reality	1.Create reality
2. Stretching the truth	2. Stretch the truth
3. ... in communicating reality, <u>you construct</u> reality (Hines, 1998, p.287)	3.... in communicating reality, <u>it actually constructs</u> reality ...
4.	4. Hines mentioned that accountants sometimes are creating reality, but they are supposed to communicate reality because they cannot afford to go against the Reality. (RuthD.Hines, 1988)

<p>5 ...prepare <u>the accounts</u> of an organization on the basis of <u>liquidation values</u> rather than costs. (Hines, 1998, p.257)</p>	<p>5a.The accountants avoid showing <u>the accounts</u> as a <u>liquidation value</u> as it may arise panic. (grammar error retained).</p>
	<p>5b.Reference is made to the article “Financial Accounting: in communicating reality, We Construct Reality” referring to the organizations financial performances being worse but in this case the accountants will not liquidate the accounts ...</p>
<p>6. As professional people, we arbitrarily combine, and <u>define, and add, and subtract things, in a different way to the everyday way: that is what differentiates us</u> (Hines, 1988, p. 254)</p>	<p>6.Hines (1988) alluded that professional people, subjectively combine, <u>define, add, and subtract things, in a different way to the everyday way: that is the difference.</u> They communicate reality and in a sense, create reality (p.254).</p>
<p>7. What is 'the full picture'? There is no full picture. We make the picture. That is what <u>gives us our power: people think and act on the basis of that picture!</u> (Hines, 1988, p. 254).</p>	<p>7a. As stated in Ruth D Hines that <u>there is no such thing as the full picture.</u> The report preparers <u>make the picture.</u> That is <u>the power that report preparers obtain. People think and act on the basis of that reality.</u> In this particular case report preparers are creating picture that they assume to be the reality of the organization and stakeholders act on the information as the reality</p>
	<p>7b. The directors are will not fully communicate reality (ability to communicate what is true issues) that is they would not like to show <u>the true picture</u> of the company.</p>
	<p>7c. The company directors along with the accountants have <u>the power</u> to draw <u>a different picture</u> in the financial statement.</p>
	<p>7d. The users claim as having <u>full picture</u>, that is, a true and fair view of a company’s financial position but in fact they do not.</p>

Discussion

This study was an effort to describe the nature of improper citation practiced by students in a 300 level accounting assignment. There are two main findings. First, a strong prevalence of direct quotations is apparent. This finding is consistent with Emerson et al (2005, p. 21) and Shi (2004, p.190) results for students who are not native speakers of English. They believe that language deficiency accounts for the over reliance on direct quotations. This could well be true for the accounting students being described in this paper. The assumption is considered taking into account that assignment instructions specified the maximum incorporation of two direct quotes. Despite this directive, students used direct quotes to the

maximum and some even exceeded the specification. This situation is compounded by the understanding that reliance on direct quotes may be a strategy students use to avoid unintentional or accidental plagiarism (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010). The fear of misrepresenting information through paraphrases is therefore manifested in the marked use of direct quotes, even though, according to conventions, this fails to comply with the required standards.

Furthermore, the samples of paraphrase illustrate a reluctance to deviate from original structures. This is disconcerting as it suggests students may be finding considerable difficulty with understanding the text and an inability to suitably frame the content to enhance their response. Thus, students are most probably combating both appropriate reading and note-making skills as well as writing skills. As such, they are avoiding plagiarism at a deeper level.

The second major finding is that the incidence of improper citation is extremely high. This situation exists despite the workshop on referencing. Wilhoit (1994, p. 162) defines plagiarism as "...a multitude of errors, ranging from sloppy documentation and proofreading to outright, premeditated fraud." Results demonstrate varying patterns of improper and inconsistent referencing and can be described as careless, which could have been avoided had thorough proofreading been undertaken. This trait aligns well with studies such as Dorduooy's (2002, cited in Hart & Friesner, 2004, p.91) that point to poor time management as a cause for the high density of errors in referencing.

Results indicate that the general attitude towards referencing is poor. While students seem to recognise/ understand the need to acknowledge external information and their sources, referencing according to guidelines is overlooked leading to plagiarism. Two instances reflecting this point are firstly, citing only the author's surname as proof of acknowledgment. Roig (1997, p.120) comments that the presence of authors' names in in-text citations seems to be sufficient for students to recognise content as referenced. Likewise, there were students who only mentioned the external source in the reference list. According to Rennie and Crosbie's (2001, p. 274) self-reported survey, this practice is considered alright by a good percentage of students. In addition, the incorrect and inconsistent use of punctuation, as well as errors committed even when the *Citation and Bibliography* computer tool was applied, indicates how negligibly these aspects are viewed and treated. While confusion over a number of styles can be suggested, the fact that students were made aware of these nuances of referencing remains and implies that the intention to properly apply referencing mechanics needs to be addressed very early in students' studies.

In summary a number of factors that could be attributed to this situation as described in this paper are:

1. General laxity and inconsistency in penalizing incorrect referencing. Students have come away with this over the years and continue to submit incorrect and inconsistent work in their third year of studies. A possible contributor for this situation could be staff themselves being uncertain about what they expect from their students. That literature displays academics

- differing in their views on plagiarism and this needs to be taken on board when dealing with the issue at USP.
2. Students are not applying time management to process writing. The apparent 'sloppiness' in citation demonstrates that students have not taken the time to check their work. Similarly, while poor paraphrasing could be a feature of inadequate language skills, more time spent on avoiding problems of writing would have been worthwhile.
 3. Little emphasis on skills such as summarising and paraphrasing as procedures of referencing. Samples of paraphrases as displayed in Table 3 illustrate that students paraphrasing abilities need much improvement. This would be possible if more active measures at including the skill in academic skills based programmes are taken.

This summary of findings displays that the culture at USP could be contributing towards poor referencing. It seems that heavy focus on the context surrounding borrowed information and its penalties may have created a sense of 'fear' of inadvertently committing plagiarism. While this study is limited in its scope to prove whether such attitudes exist, the high use of direct quotes and reluctance to paraphrase borrowed information seem to be manifestations of such perceptions.

Instances of plagiarism are varied and myriad but combating them does not have to be a difficult process. Academic skills courses need to strengthen their modules to address plagiarism from the most basic level, that is, helping students recognise and correctly apply the conventions of the required style. Staff need to be on the lookout and stringently address incorrect and inconsistent referencing behaviour. Likewise some sense of consistency amongst faculty with regards to their view on citations and how they should be dealt with is necessary. There should be stronger enforcement on visiting support sections for assistance as well. Additionally, the skills of paraphrasing and summarising need to be nurtured and treated as useful mechanisms in argument development. There is a need to integrate referencing with writing and reporting skills as it seems that isolating plagiarism from academic skills is a strong perpetrator of the problem at a deeper level. But, above all, the attitude towards treatment of borrowed content needs to be changed so that students do not feel apprehensive about referencing. Pennycook (1996) states that while high standards in academic writing should be adhered to, there needs to be some sense of flexibility in how notions of plagiarism are approached and how language learning, writing skills and referencing are dealt with. Dogmatic attitudes and an over emphasis to not commit plagiarism can actually deter students from being creative in referencing and exploring paraphrasing and summary writing skills.

These suggestions have strong implications for USP's Student Learning Support (SLS) sections as well. SLS needs to work collaboratively with the generic courses as they were established to address attributes believed to be lacking in USP's graduates. Time management and writing skills together with thoroughly proofread and presentable work are visible characteristics of desirable attributes. Poor referencing contravenes these attributes and therefore, has to be viewed seriously.

Conclusion

This paper set out to describe the instances of poor referencing committed by third year accounting students. As per the findings, the occurrence of poor referencing, which is also categorised as plagiarism, is quite high, suggesting the need for concern and appropriate action. While mechanism such as Turnitin is made compulsory to help reduce this transgression, the fact remains that citation of documents is unsatisfactory. These concerns need to be addressed fairly early in a student's programme so as to greatly minimise if not rid instances of plagiarism by the time students arrive into their third year of studies. The paper hints at reorienting the manner through which students are introduced and subsequently interrelate with concepts of referencing and plagiarism to help address the situation at USP.

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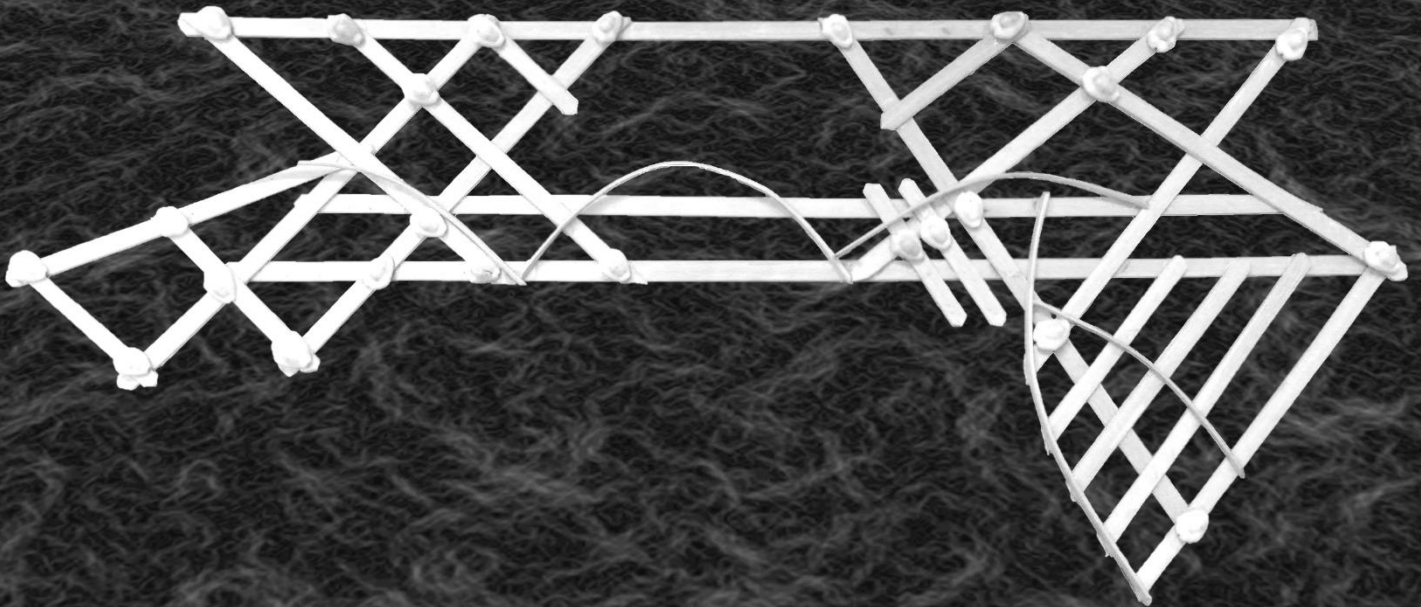
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CRITICAL ESSAY



School Leadership in Papua New Guinea (PNG): Issues and Realities - A Critical Essay

Jillian Thiele

Abstract

It is recognised by researchers that education has the potential to improve health, well-being, provide economic growth, improve agriculture production, enhance the workforce and break the inter-generational cycle of poverty which is heavily prevalent in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Furthermore, for PNG, cultural, social, and historical political factors complicate the provision of quality education. Principals, even though trained as qualified teachers, are faced with a multitude of problems: culturally restrictive loyalties, insufficient training, inadequate skills, lack of resources, and high absenteeism by both teachers and students. Is there any solution to these diverse problems facing school principals? The author provides some plausible solutions. First, formal training obtained at Teachers Colleges must be moderated to include basic practical training, cultural and social awareness issues and project proposal writing and project management skills. Secondly, mentoring is essential. No one is trained as a principal; they are trained as teachers. Thirdly, principals need to recognise that to improve the learning and teaching in schools, the whole community must be involved. Then, a supportive leadership team, complemented by good relationships with stakeholders like Aid agencies, community groups, business and political groups, is a key to improve leadership and related educational issues.

Keywords: *Papua New Guinea; school leadership; education*

History of Education in Papua New Guinea (PNG)

Papua New Guinea is a nation of a little more than 7 million people today. Before colonisation, education in Papua New Guinea targeted skills for village survival⁵. The whole community, with its elaborate cultural and traditional practices, was responsible for the education and safety of the younger generation. Young females practiced their gardening, cooking, weaving and household skills with their mothers, aunties and grandmothers. Young boys on the other hand were taught warrior and hunting skills, and learnt how to protect the village with their fathers, uncles and grandfathers. Some of these young men would become the future leaders, the *Bigmen*⁶ or chiefs, of their community. The *Bigman* possessed the skills and knowledge necessary to enrich their society, protect the weaker member of the clan and ensure food security.

⁵ See Appendix 1 for facts regarding Papua New Guinea.

⁶ See Appendix 1 for more details regarding the concept of the *Bigman*.

At independence in 1975, education was perceived by the new nation of PNG as a means of preparing its citizens for the twentieth century. There was a change of focus from a traditionally integrated community education where children were taught by their elders and saw the world from the view point of the community⁷ to a formalised school system where children were expected to attend school and be educated by specifically trained teachers. The problem is that by 2007, approximately 33% of young people have never attended school⁸.

For convenience sake and political coherence, this new governing and education system had to be administered centrally⁹. Even though a central government was necessary to create a cultural identity referred to as "Papua New Guinea"¹⁰, centralisation, tended to tear school children away from their traditional supporting culture in their locality.

The education system was largely imported from the colonial times and with the churches providing most of the education, linking literacy to Christian conversion. The graduates from the local church-run schools were expected to return to their home villages as ambassadors for the various Christian churches. With some form of education, these school graduates became the leaders of the next generation¹¹. Until 1946, there was still a general lack of interest in providing basic education by the various colonial administrations in PNG as the churches largely took charge.

With the introduction of a western form of education, the form of learning changed. Previously, village children learnt in an informal context, where children and adults intermingled freely with their elders and learnt skills by observation and imitation. With formal, western based schooling, many children were encouraged to leave their self-contained communities and travel to centrally located boarding schools. Students from different clans then found themselves in one class and some of these clans had been traditional enemies for a long time.

While the creation of a new nation was a significant accomplishment, it overturned many of the traditional structures of governance and reduced the autonomy of many of the self-sufficient villages. Originally, many regions had no contact with their neighbours in the adjoining valley. Physical isolation meant that many tribes were managed by the *Bigman*, usually the local chief-warrior, whose prime purpose was the prosperity and survival of the *wontoks*¹² in the supporting local tribes. The people in the isolated rural areas had no concept of a bigger identity, had no idea of a combined economy, or had any idea of one country.

⁷ Matane, 1986, p. 8

⁸ PNG National Statistical Office: quoted in National Youth Commission, 2007, p. 18.

⁹ Kulwaum, 2013.

¹⁰ Dorney, 1990

¹¹ Kulwaum, 2013

¹² Wontoks are related peoples of a specific area who speak the same language and have similar cultural traditions.

Western education replaced warrior and traditional skills with education and business knowledge¹³. The newly created elite class travelled beyond the village, and were employed in other areas with a regular income¹⁴. Education has made them financially successful, the essential ingredient for modern social and economic development in PNG¹⁵.

Recent Development in Education in contemporary PNG

Immediately after independence, education was only for the children whose parents could pay. This resulted in many children not having the opportunity to gain an education. The result is that much of the population was and is illiterate, many of them females. The O'Neill/Namah government during 2014, introduced free education from elementary school to grade 12. Parents were relieved as school fees took a huge percentage of the families' income¹⁶. The problem is that this positive government initiative revealed a multitude of problems in the education system.

Firstly, there are not enough schools and classroom for all the children to obtain education. The existing classrooms are full to capacity; some with over 100 students cramped into small spaces. Many of the classrooms are old; built before independence in 1975.

Secondly is the lack of appropriate and recent teaching resources. The textbooks are usually 20-30 years old. Basic education supplies and resources, libraries and computer labs are non-existent in many schools.

Thirdly, the schools' infrastructure and teacher accommodations are rundown with no obvious maintenance for years. Sanitation and toilet blocks are in unacceptable conditions.

Fourth, there are not enough teachers to provide education with all the students who are expected to attend school. Many of the isolated rural schools cannot employ teachers, as many are not willing to live in places where there are no regular pay, health clinics or a police service. Stories are told of teachers, living in rural highland or island areas, who have not received their pay for years. It is easy to understand why some teachers are refusing to teach in these isolated areas or are moving to islands and are in favour of more lucrative jobs in urban centres¹⁷.

Fifth, another issue revolves around the concept of knowledge. For many Papua New Guineans, knowledge can be purchased, like 'cargo' through mere participation, rather than through a demonstration of competency. Many people believe that if money is paid, then qualification is automatic. This is at odds to the western idea of education, where competency is earned through regular submission of assignments, research and demonstration of specific criteria. This has created a mentality of 'near

¹³ Finney, 1973.

¹⁴ Gewertz, 1999.

¹⁵ Kulwaum, 2013.

¹⁶ Kulwaum, 2013.

¹⁷ Philemon, 2012.

enough is good enough', rather than the recognition of a certain degree of hard work, commitment and competency for whatever level of education that is required.

Principals as Community *Bigman*

In the PNG context, the school principal is not just responsible for their school, their teachers and students, but he is also, responsible for making decision for the surrounding community. They are community leaders¹⁸.

Having the position of principal is not enough; their decision making must be matched with inspiration, hard work and a commitment to the whole community. Most importantly, they must earn the trust of the community members. The principals are also expected to lead by example. With their smart interpersonal and communication skills; their ability to clearly articulate problems and then suggesting possible solutions; and, their on-going achievements, have the opportunity to bring hope and inspiration to a school and the community.

Principals have to find ways to improve the local school and surrounding community. The principal is not only mandated to provide the skills and knowledge to achieve the objectives of basic universal education but also mandated to use his power and authority to benefit the local community. Such principals, therefore, have gained the right to be the leaders worth following, like the role of previous *Bigmen* in traditional society. This role can be overwhelming for principals as many principals have been blamed for poor academic performance of their students, lack of infrastructure development and lack of development in their communities¹⁹.

Negative Issues Facing School Principals

Analysing the issues facing principals may provide a 'window' to the complicated tasks they are asked to fulfil.

1. Lack of objectivity linked to cultural loyalties

Papua New Guinea's unique version of social security, *the wantok system*, has its roots in traditional obligations to be hospitable to one's kin, particularly in the generous provision of food and shelter²⁰. The motivation appears to be based around the necessary self-interest of the community. "Generosity built up obligations on the part of the recipient, and these obligations could be called upon in times of need"²¹

In the school setting, the principal has become the replacement for the traditional *Bigman*. It is surmised that he would not be given this position if he had not proven himself first. Therefore, it is considered 'wrong' to question the decision making of the principal. The clan perceives the principal's prime purpose, not just to provide and improve education opportunities offered in the school, but also,

¹⁸ Harkway & Wood, 2004, p. 126.

¹⁹ Marsh, 1997.

²⁰ Berndt, 1962, p.100; quoted in McLaughlin & O'Donoghue, 1996.

²¹ Coyne, 1974, p.6 quoted in McLaughlin & O'Donoghue, 1996.

to improve the 'life' in the surrounding community. The local community insists that he provide for the whole community. In reality, this means ensuring financial benefits, education enrolment and employment opportunities to the local clan first. Any deviation to this basic idea brings negative consequences, such as destruction of infrastructure and resources or possible harm to life. There are many illustrations²². Schools have been burnt down because the villagers disagreed with the principal's decision to discipline a student from the local village. Buildings, transport and infrastructure have been damaged because it was perceived that the principal did not fulfil his cultural obligations. Students have also been killed because the principal did not influence the school community enough to sway their vote a certain way in the national and local community elections. Fulfilling all these cultural obligations has the consequence of stymieing any possible progress or change.

2. Lack of resources and infrastructure

One of the most difficult obstacles of principals in achieving their educational goals is the lack of education resources and suitable infrastructure for the educational process to take place. It is difficult to find funding for extra buildings; it costs much to purchase resources; and it is often difficult to find transport to move resources from a township to an isolated school. Many of the transport resources are 'stolen' before they arrive at the school community²³.

Even with the production by the PNG Department of Education of curriculum documents and appropriate support resources, many of these documents never reached the schools. Examples are endless: containers of resources fall into the ocean; boxes of resources were stolen by the local *raskols*²⁴ for firewood; pallets of resources were stolen as *payback*²⁵; storerooms in the provincial centres all over PNG are full of resources but there is no transport or fuel to run trucks and boats. In such situations, the principal, along with the teachers, can easily become discouraged and lose interest in their prime purpose to provide quality education, when the promised curriculum documents do not arrive.

Principals understand the need for more classrooms as their student numbers rise. The problems of infrastructure are related to paying for, and obtaining the appropriate building materials on time. Many rural schools are kilometres away from any hardware shop. Time, effort and money are spent trying to encourage and motivate the local people to cut down trees for the necessary timber to build the extra classroom, toilet blocks, assembly areas, resources store room or necessary offices.

A constant flow of money can be a necessary motivation for tasks to be completed. Voluntary labour is not a common concept in rural, cash-strapped areas. Schools are perceived as sources of income. Even a leaking roof may cost many times more to fix and even replace, than in an urban area. Materials

²²The author has attended many School Principals Workshops. Around the meal table, the principals have talked about their issues and frustrations. Many of the examples came from these discussions.

²³ The author sometimes joined the Curriculum Development Unit when members travelled throughout PNG training principals and Heads of Departments regarding the revisions made to the school curriculum. Continual stories are told about the lack of resources.

²⁴ In the PNG context, a *raskol* is thief or someone intending to do damage.

²⁵ Payback is a traditional form of social control of legal dissonance despite being illegal in Papua New Guinea. It is often an act of revenge as a result of some perceived injustice. Larcom, 2013.

and transport costs and labour costs are way beyond the budget of any school. The effect is that infrastructure continues to deteriorate.

If one works in an urban setting, irregular electricity is an annoyance. In a rural area, it is the norm. Lack of money to pay for fuel and the lack of local expertise to do regular maintenance and services, means the generators have a very short life span. Other necessary equipment, such as photocopies and printers, soon are inoperable due to the lack of ink, paper or maintenance.

In many rural areas, the distance between villages and the school is a challenge. That means, students as young as seven are placed in boarding schools. These boarding students need to be fed and schools then need to feed the ever expanding number of students. Lack of water, due to drought, a leaking tank, a non-working water pump or broken pipes, has immediate problems with sanitation, agriculture and cooking.

There are numerous stories of schools that have closed²⁶ as there has been no water for basic services. The lack of access to money and necessary equipment means the fixing of the problem can take months, sometimes years.

3. Lack of attendance: absenteeism

It is difficult to improve the level of education when absenteeism is common among the teachers and students. Principals often tell of stories of teachers who have been away for weeks at a time. There are no replacement teachers for the students. The reasons are endless. Teachers leave their schools to receive their pay since there is no effective mail service, so teachers need to travel to the nearest main centre to collect their pay. Money for travel is expensive. Other teachers may feel the need to supplement their income by selling at the local markets. Others are away due to illness. The most common reason given in interviews for absenteeism is 'personal reasons'²⁷.

Many students are also absent from school. Malaria is one of the most common reasons given for absenteeism. Obtaining basic medical help may mean many days walk away from the village. Assisting the family in the gardens to obtain cash crops, a lack of reliable transport, *compensation*²⁸ and *payback*²⁹ issues and responsibilities take students away from school. It has been estimated that by the time students reach grade 12, they have missed two to four years of education. Improvement in the level of learning and teaching cannot take place if both teachers and students are absent from school. The principal has little to no form of motivation to keep the teachers and students at school.

4. Lack of relevant training

²⁶ The author was the previous Dean for the School of Education. Principals, head teachers and returning trainee teachers would tell her stories of their experiences.

²⁷ In this context, 'Personal reasons' usually refers to teachers selling garden produce at the local markets to supplement their wages.

²⁸ Compensation in the PNG context is defined as payment in the form of money, and/ or goods, as a result of some form of perceived injustice. Specific forms of compensation are 'resource rent'; 'reproduction payments' commonly known as bride price'; and, 'development compensation that may include damage, security or rehabilitation of an area. Many times a compensation package will be accompanied by a feast involving both clans. The whole clan has to be involved in these gatherings. Filer, 1997.

²⁹ Refer to footnote 20.

It is the goal of the Papua New Guinea Department of Education that every principal be qualified at a recognised Teachers College³⁰. As part of their training, they become familiar with 'educational leadership' principles, time management skills, current curriculum content and importantly, common ethical and social issues that plague PNG³¹. They graduate with confidence to make decisions related to education knowledge and teaching skills areas. The problem is they have not been trained on how to deal with pressing practical issues, such as, how to fix the generators, printers, photocopiers, portable saws or the school vehicles. They did not graduate as mechanics, farmers, cooks or cultural ambassadors. They have not learnt the skills of juggling education, cultural and project management³².

5. Lack of orientation to the mission statement and values of their institution

A school's articulated mission statement has the potential to give a school its identity. The mission statement becomes the focus of the school; it provides the means for developing and enabling teachers and students to learn and change while experiencing their 'ministry'³³. The principal, armed with a clear mission statement, has the potential to become a transformational leader of the school. The problem is that most schools have not developed their own mission statements. Communication is the single most important skill of a principal so that he/she can communicate the vision and goals of the school and the ways or strategies to achieve these goals. When the principal is constantly reacting to one crisis after another, there is no time or energy to motivate and inspire the team of teachers in the school³⁴.

Summary

Being a principal in PNG is a multifaceted and a very difficult job. Principals are trained to educate and lead a team of educated professionals, not to accommodate cultural issues, fix machinery or solve teachers' pay issues. Anticipation, enthusiasm and goal setting are soon taken over by one emergency after another. Crisis management replaces teaching and learning, team building and curriculum adjustments. Principals are mentally exhausted in trying to solve the continuous stream of problems. It does not take long for them to realise they are not trained or prepared for this new responsibility of being a principal. In other words, in PNG, there is a lack of the appropriately trained personnel with the necessary diverse set of skills appropriate to fill the position of school principal³⁵.

Possible Solutions

1. Creation of an infrastructure development in the Department of Education

With the increase of the school age population, there needs to be a dramatic increase in the building of additional schools and classrooms. All these additional infrastructure developments need to be approved and funded through the Department of Education. Aid agencies may be part of the official donors but the government needs to take a proactive role in supporting, encouraging and enabling

³⁰ A National Plan for Education: 2005-2014, 2004.

³¹ All Teachers Colleges expect students to complete subjects on Educational Management and Leadership, Curriculum Studies, Cultural Studies and Ethics.

³² The principals interviewed expressed their frustration in juggling the multiple skills needed to be a successful principal. One of the greatest areas of frustration was to do with monitoring building projects.

³³ Bell, April, 2012, p. 1.

³⁴ This sentiment was expressed by many principals interviewed.

³⁵ Medium Term Development Plans 2011-2015, p. 32.

infrastructure projects to happen. The process should be completely transparent and linked with strong accountability practices. It is evident that Papua New Guinea requires aid in the form of human resources, capital and technology. Foreign aid is not without its conditions, however³⁶. In receiving financial aid, the PNG government undertakes to abide by the conditions set by the aid agencies. Accountability to the demands of both the Department of Education and the Aid Agencies can be frustrating and very time consuming.

2. Additional professional training and changes to the teachers college training curriculum

To prepare principals for their diverse roles, there needs to be a revision of the training program taught in Teachers Colleges in Papua New Guinea. It is true that qualified teachers need to become familiar with 'educational leadership' principles, transparent leadership, time management skills, curriculum content and ethical and social issues. Additional information however needs to be added to the program. These are discussed here.

a. Practical skills

Since many of the elementary and primary schools providing basic education are in rural and isolated, teachers need practical training in financial management, basic mechanics, rudiments of construction, knowledge of irrigation, farming practices and solar technology.

b. Training in social justice and equity matched with cultural expectations

Even with sufficient knowledge of leadership issues, there seems to be a mismatch between knowledge and practice. Many principals have failed to comprehend how to practice transparent leadership, financial accountability and responsible decision making to match cultural expectations. There is difficulty in linking community cultural norms with social justice and equity³⁷. Teachers Colleges need to graduate leaders who can integrate the national government proprieties³⁸ with traditional cultural expectations.

c. Proposal writing and project management

Teachers and potential principals need to graduate with the knowledge of how to write a funding or grant and infrastructure proposals. This can be then linked with training related to project management strategies.³⁹

e. Short tailored courses

It is impossible to prepare educational leaders to graduate from Teachers College with all the necessary skills needed in isolated rural school communities. Attending regular short courses, tailored for

³⁶ The Australian Government Aid packages ensures all projects are linked to social inclusion issues such as HIV prevention, gender equity, disability awareness, and environmental and child protection. The author was the Cross Cutting Issues Champion at the Pacific Adventist University (PAU) for five years.

³⁷ Integrated Community Development Policy, 2007, p. 29.

³⁸ Medium Term Develop Plans 2011- 2015, p. 172

³⁹ During the last seven years, the Department of Education has introduced the concept of School Learning Improvement Plans (SLIP). Teachers and Principals are instructed in how to do Action Research with the goal of improving learning and teaching in schools. Many of the SLIPs from principals submitted to the Department of Education for funding focus on project management strategies. Instruction in writing and researching SLIPs are now part of the curriculum in most Teachers Colleges in PNG.

newly appointed principals, has the opportunity to build confidence in the principals. Obtaining a broad picture, understanding obstacles faced by other principals, provides the new principal with hints and suggestions of what and how they can improve their school. Sharing a meal with another principal during short courses can provide incredible practical advice⁴⁰

e. Provision of mentoring

Many principals arrive at their new school totally unprepared for the tasks facing them. Many have been promoted from a senior teaching position. They are in desperate need of mentoring and support. With the distance between schools and the expenses involved in travelling to these distance isolated places; the trips are not always easy nor cheap. It may be necessary for the Department of Education to create a team of Mentors, similar to a team of Standard Officers, whose prime task is to support these new principals to encourage and provide suitable training and resources on a regular basis. These selected mentors would be trained to express empathy, have good listening skills, demonstrate strong emotional intelligence, and have the skills and knowledge to assist the new principal from becoming overwhelmed, disillusioned or even discouraged in the course of duty⁴¹.

3. Creation of school supportive leadership teams

Smart principals know when they are appointed leaders in their schools that their power and position has to be earned and validated in their communities⁴². For example, a long term teacher may be the power broker in the school. Therefore, the first task of a new principal is to work with this long term teacher (or existing anointed leaders) by creating a workable management team that will move the school from the current situation to a better place. These turnaround leaders understand the need to begin building a healthy, transformational team⁴³. The formation of a supportive and cohesive team involve a variety of steps.

First, principals need to create a supportive and cohesive team⁴⁴. The members of the team have the potential to create a workplace culture that celebrates opportunities, transparency, and diverse opinions; all members have an opportunity to enrich conversations and provide a diversity of thought⁴⁵. This energised team should be able to articulate a suitable mission statement that is owned by the school community. This mission statement becomes the vision to change the status quo, to empower people, to accept diversity, to improve the school practices, and most importantly, to address on-going negative practices, attitudes and issues of decision making⁴⁶. An effective team creates alternatives in response to a conflict or crisis. Conflict is seen as a potential for constructive change⁴⁷. A principal is less likely to become overwhelmed with the tasks of a principal, if he has a supportive, proactive team.

⁴⁰ Principals expressed appreciation of their dialogue with other principals. Most of these informal discussions occurred during meal times.

⁴¹ Godina, March 2012, p. 3.

⁴² If principals come from a different clan from that of their school, they have to earn respect from the community before they can be fully effective community leaders.

⁴³ Harkway & Wood, 2004, p. 107.

⁴⁴ The principal may be officially appointed by the Department of Education but he needs to rely on senior teachers and community leaders for wisdom, knowledge and guidance.

⁴⁵ Five Ways Leaders Must Build a Family Environment to Achieve Excellence, 2014.

⁴⁶ Bell, April, 2012, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Lederach, 2003, p. 15.

Secondly, the team needs to include community members. This may increase the potential for the decisions to be accepted by the community at large. “Communities must see that their leaders are playing their part to support the community decisions”⁴⁸. A focused leader, with heaps of emotional intelligence, linked with conviction, commitment, courage and competency, can encourage the team to make realistic, creative and innovative choices. There must be a sense of collective decision making.

Thirdly, an effective team practices ‘openness’. This creates a sense of trust, freedom of expression and most importantly, loyalty. Sharing problems and sharing solutions to the difficulties encourages all team members to be involved in ‘brainstorming of solutions; this leads directly to more effective decisions. Encouraging each team member to be truthful takes courage, it allows the group to express their voice, and allow their perspectives to be heard.

People should not feel that they require permission to express their opinions. The goal is to activate the team, not restrict their participation. This is a far more efficient way to leverage one’s strengths rather than directing energy towards trying to improve one’s weaknesses. The way conflicts are positively handled is a key to a good leader. Leaders who take time to contemplate and use their relationships to remain fresh and stable are good examples. Lessons learned, failures experienced, and successes gained can be building blocks toward wisdom and renewal. Remaining open to all aspects of learning has the potential to make principals better leaders.

In traditional cultures, with a ‘big man’ mentality, many a principal demand that their teachers do as he/she says. With an innovative and committed team, the ‘big man’ is replaced by the ‘Team’. They take ownership of the decisions and the responses that arise from their combined decision making. The ‘Team’ becomes the decision making body that has the authority, accountability and community support. The ‘Team’ is a respected and meaningful authority group; not the lone voice of the principal. This ‘Team’ decision making improves accountability, leads to better teaching and learning, and leads to more effective use of resources. The ‘Team’, with its core set of values and committed hard work are responsible for positive changes in the school setting. The ‘Team’ will operate most efficiently knowing that their momentum will not be disrupted with “political road-blocks” or cultural traditions.

The Team’ needs to understand though the difference between management and leadership. The ‘Team’ provides leadership by advocating by a better way. This works by open discussion and influence. Management, on the other hand, is the ability to use an effective team to get things done in a way that makes best management of all resources⁴⁹. The ‘Team’ becomes the group that plans, organises and monitors the results of their decision. The ‘Team’ has the opportunity to motivate by influence the need to improve a school’s environment. This may be building an extra classroom, creating an assembly flag pole focus area, cleaning the area around the school, painting existing structures, preparing a feeder road or other community infrastructure. With the right motivation, many “communities invest in sweat

⁴⁸ PNG Gov-A National Plan for Education: 2005-2014, 2004, p. 11.

⁴⁹ A National Plan for Education: 2005-2014, 2004, p. 97.

equality⁵⁰. There is a sense that the ‘Team’ has created a community based on the ‘help-out not hand-out elements⁵¹.

4. Forge connections with others and corporate bodies

Principals are the head of a school. It is their role to cultivate relationships with a variety of supportive organisations.

a. PNG Department of Education

The Department of Education’s prime focus is to provide support for schools. Principals need to make contact with Department Heads, create relationships and ask for advice. In PNG, advancement is usually based on ‘who you know’.

b. Incentive Fund and AID agencies

There is money for development, infrastructure improvements and additional resources. It is important to know how to fill out application forms from each of the Aid agencies. It is acknowledged that filling out these forms is time consuming and many applications are rejected. For every 10 applications, one may be successful. Taping into corporate sponsors often has the potential to enormously benefit the school.

The Incentive Fund, an AUSAID support organisation, for example, is a great agency to cultivate a relationship. Financial support is matched with project management support. The Incentive fund assists schools in successfully managing any project and assists the principal and his ‘Team’ in juggling all the school’s additional responsibilities.

Cultivating a relationship with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) has many opportunities for improving learning and teaching at the school.

c. Community agencies

Every community has business, political and social leaders. It is important to cultivate relationships with these people and their organisations⁵². Inviting one of these leaders, such as a politician, to a school for graduation, or a cultural event may bring unexpected but much needed support. As a principal, it is important to attend open council meeting, joining a Social Group, and participate in church functions.

Conclusion

Principals are not just in charge of a school; they are ‘change agents’, for the school and for the community⁵³. They are also resource people who are instrumental in making positive changes in their

⁵⁰ Integrated Community Development Policy, 2007, p. 19. In this context, “sweat equality” refers to hard work and time invested by team members to accomplish the goals.

⁵¹ Integrated Community Development Policy, 2007, p. 19.

⁵² Fullan, 2002.

⁵³ Integrated Community Development Policy, 2007, p. 17.

communities⁵⁴. Principals, with the support of a great team, have the potential to enhance curriculum, professional learning and financial management of their school⁵⁵. Principals and their teams are by default, the 'big men' of the community. They are the group that has the responsibility to improve the whole community in which the school is situated. It is recognised that the principal's actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more (John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States (1825-1829)).

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⁵⁴ Integrated Community Development Policy, 2007, p. 44.

⁵⁵ A National Plan for Education: 2005-2014, 2004, p. 48.

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Appendix

Facts about Papua New Guinea (PNG)

Discovery of Papua New Guinea

It is widely believed that D'Abrew, a Portuguese sailor, might have been the first European to sight the coast of New Guinea in 1516⁵⁶. However, it was not until 1526, when the first landing by a European was made by Jarge de Meneses, in the north-west of the island of New Guinea. He named this territory *Ilhas dos Papuas*.⁵⁷ The word "Papuas" comes from the Malay term *orang papuwal* which means "fuzzy-haired man". The word "New Guinea" suggested the discovery of a new territory which the colonial adventurers thought was geographically similar to Guinea on the coast of Africa⁵⁸.

Natural Resources

The country's geography is diverse. It is extremely rugged in the highlands, with rainforests, swamps, savannah area and wetlands. This diverse terrain makes it difficult to develop a broad road system, a communication network and to maintain the existing infrastructure. Some provinces do not have a road system connecting villages. In some areas, in the highlands, airplanes are the only mode of transport. In some coastal villages, ships are the only form of transport.

Papua New Guinea is richly endowed with natural resources, including mineral and renewable resources, such as forests and marine. Agriculture, both for subsistence and cash crops, provides a livelihood for most of the population. The high cost of developing infrastructure; serious law and order problems; the system of customary land title; and years of deficient investment in education, health, ICT; and, access to finance has resulted in the country lagging behind its' potential.

Indigenous Groups and Related Languages

PNG was traditionally an oral based society where information is transmitted through speech. A person, who knows the history of the place, *ples*, (place) and the traditional stories, *tambuna stori*, (traditional stories) is regarded as a trustworthy leader⁵⁹. Within PNG, there are hundreds of ethnic indigenous groups, with each group having their own language and leader. There are 820 indigenous languages, representing 12% of the world's total⁶⁰. The majority of the tribal groups live in the rural areas of PNG, with only 18% of its people living in urban centres⁶¹. PNG has a population of about 7 million people that occupy a total land mass of 462,800 square kilometres⁶².

There are three official languages for Papua New Guinea. English is the official language of government, politics, education, business and the legal system, but it is not widely spoken by the general populous. The primary lingua franca of the country is Tok Pisin; spoken by most people as they converse with each other. Hiri Motu is spoken by most Papuans who live along the south coast of the island of New

⁵⁶ Ryan, 1961:1

⁵⁷ Biskup, Jinks & Nelson, 1968:18, quoted in Kulwaum, 2013

⁵⁸ Ryan, 1982:2

⁵⁹ Simeon, Mafile'o, Api, Gane & Thomas, 2010, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Lewis, (ed.) 2009.

⁶¹ *Medium Term Development Plans 2011- 2015*.

⁶² Sem, 1996.

Guinea. Most people acquire Tok Pisin or Hiri Motu from the broad village community; their local language, their tok ples (language of their place) from their family and close relatives. By the time, most children attend school they are proficient in Tok Pisin and their tok ples and have some comprehension of various other tok ples languages around their district. English is not the medium of communication in the community; it is the medium of education. Arriving at school, children are confronted with a new totally unfamiliar language; the language of the 'white people' and the media. It is very much a 'sink or swim' situation then when the children arrive at school.

Independence

PNG became an independent nation from Australia on the 16th of September, 1975. This country occupies the eastern half of the island New Guinea and includes numerous offshore islands. The concept of this national, "Papua New Guinea" was a western concept created by the previous colonial powers which ruled the area before 1975. This country was created from mixture of hundreds of diverse cultural and ethnic groups.

The colonial governments, Germany and then Australia, attempted to amalgamate these different tribal clans together to form one country; a difficult process as the country has no common culture. As Waiko⁶³ has pointed out, the notion of a citizenship is a highly problematical one, since the primary allegiance of the people is to a tribe, and not necessarily to the nation. Most Papua New Guineans are thus faced by a conflicting set of obligations: to their tribe, to the provincial authorities and to the national government. Not surprisingly, therefore, there is no strong tradition of nationalism in PNG⁶⁴.

Colonialism in PNG operate only through the work of the expatriate administrators and traders, but also with the work of the various missionary groups. Many of these religious groups believed Christianity would bring financial security, improve social issues and solve some of the law and order issues⁶⁵. They sought to bring Christianity to the indigenous people as a way of ensuring their social and economic development⁶⁶. Even today, churches, in partnership with the government, manage about 40% of the primary and secondary schools in PNG⁶⁷

To create a structure within the new nation, PNG was gradually divided into 22 province-level divisions. Each province is divided into one or more districts, which in turn are divided into one or more local level government areas. Provincial governments are branches of the national government, not a federation of provinces. To create a structure within the new nation, PNG was gradually divided into 22 province-level divisions. Each province is divided into one or more districts, which in turn are divided into one or more local level government areas. Provincial governments are branches of the national government, not a federation of provinces.

⁶³ Waiko, 1993

⁶⁴ Kulwaum, 2013.

⁶⁵ The author is the daughter of a missionary who spend 27 years in South Pacific. The comments originates from discussions with him and other missionaries.

⁶⁶ Kulwaum, 2013.

⁶⁷ Hauck, Mandie-Filer & Bolger, 2005, p. v.

The Role of the *Bigman* as Community Leaders

PNG is a culture of a rich elaborate set of traditions which have evolved to meet the distinctive social needs of this country. In many rural isolated areas, the clan is run by a 'big man' who insists on solidarity and denial of personal desires. No one is neutral; everyone in the clan is either a friend or an enemy⁶⁸ The *bigman* utilises ambition, energy and hard work, of his clan members to build up wealth for himself and his supporters (Bellwood, 1978: 94). In traditional societies, mostly in the rural areas, the elders usually give the 'big man' authority to make decisions because he has proven, over a long period of time, that his decisions are usually just and appropriate for the survival and improvement of the community.

Before independence, the traditional *Bigman* was naturally a male leader. In most instances, he was also the local warrior-chief⁶⁹. His power and authority was determined by his wealth and his affiliation with the chiefly system⁷⁰. He led his clan and followers with a code of ethics that maintained his position and honour within his community. He earned the people's respect through providing security and safety from other clans. This man earned respect by his strong leadership role, oratory skills, bravery and his ability to distribute wealth in his area of jurisdiction⁷¹. The modern day *Bigman's* role covers many of the traditional roles: creating alliances and supporting the development in their local areas. Their roles have changed with the introduction of money, rather than with the exchange of pigs and food. Power and prestige is now gained by the education, as well as, the distribution of money. Money has become the means of appointing someone into a leadership role, sometimes through bribery and 'gifts'⁷² Young people believe their leaders should represent all areas of the community and personally "support various groups within the electorate", "take of the others' and "exhibits kind deeds during crisis moments"⁷³.

From the western perspective, the *Bigman* is driven by greed and graft⁷⁴. Many leaders, often politicians are considered corrupt and self-motivated. As Task Force Sweep chairman Sam Koim puts it, this 'mobocracy of kleptocrats' are the ones responsible for leading the nation down the road towards a banana republic and failed statehood⁷⁵. But many citizens regard the *Bigman* methods as cultural appropriate and hence should not change.

The *Bigman* may not hold an official elected position but nevertheless has authority among the village people⁷⁶. They play an important role in public life and enjoy considerable power and prestige by influencing administrative sections of the government. The *Bigman* has replaced the traditional authority of the chiefs⁷⁷. While the authority of the chiefs was traditional, the *Bigman* enjoy authority assimilated

⁶⁸ Hovey, 1986, p. 104.

⁶⁹ McLeod, 2007, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Simeon, Mafile'o, Api, Gane & Thomas, 2010, p. 17.

⁷¹ McLeod, 2007, p. 2; Philemon, 2012.

⁷² Simeon, Mafile'o, Api, Gane & Thomas, 2010, p. 26.

⁷³ Simeon, Mafile'o, Api, Gane & Thomas, 2010, p. 11, 13 & 16.

⁷⁴ Omena, 'Lidaman, 2013.

⁷⁵ Omena, 'Bigman,' 2013.

⁷⁶ Avolos, 1993 quoted in Kulwaum, 2013.

⁷⁷ Kulwaum, 2013.

with the western traditions of governance. It is interesting to note that the *Bigmen* are now the products of a western education system, having been formally educated in western schools either within PNG or overseas. It is perceived widely that they have a broad knowledge and money⁷⁸. This may explain why so many students strive for post graduate qualifications as it adds more status.

The members of the clan, the '*wantoks*', rely on the *Bigman* for advice and guidance in times of decision making. Reciprocity between the 'big man' and his clan is an expected social norm. "If you help me, I will help you"⁷⁹. In a school setting, the principal, usually the most educated person in the village, with a regular source of income, has become the replacement for the traditional *Bigman*. It is surmised by the community members that he would not be given this position if he had not proven himself first just as the traditional *Bigman* would.

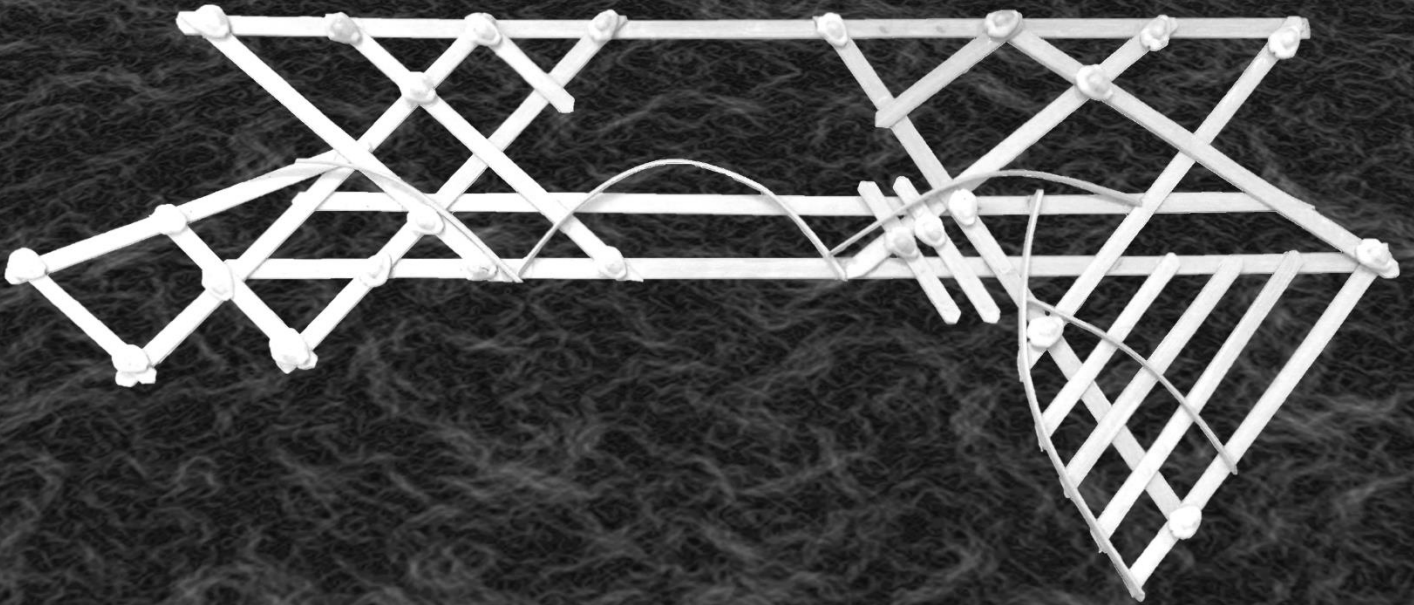
PNG is a social complex country but rich traditions and a complicated history. Creating a balance among cultural norms, education, expansion in technology and preparing the citizens for a new set of expectations is difficult task for any politician or administrator.

Dr Jillian Thiele was born in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, to Australian missionary parents. She and her husband, Dr David Thiele, have been a missionaries in their own right, in Papua New Guinea, for the last 23 years, first at Sonoma Adventist College and currently at Pacific Adventist University. She is a trained teacher with post graduate qualifications in teaching 'English as a Second Language', Library science and education. Her doctorate, from La Sierra University, USA, examines 'PNG English'. Her interests are diverse; she is an energetic and knowledgeable lecturer and researcher in the fields of English, education and history; but her greatest passion, is enabling her students and her ever-expanding PNG family to be academic competent, spiritually aware and culturally appropriate. She has held a diverse number of administration positions at the university. She is currently the coordinator of the 'Learning and Academic Support Centre' at PAU.

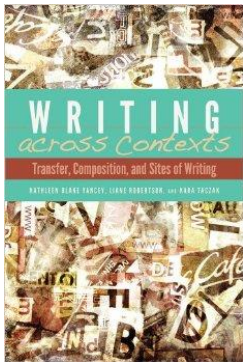
⁷⁸ Kulwaum, 2013.

⁷⁹ Kulwaum, 2013.

BOOK REVIEW



Writing across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing - By Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak



Review by David Gugin. UP of Colorado. ISBN#: 978-0-87421-937-1. 185 pages. \$24.95.

Anyone interested in the teaching of composition should read this book. Indeed Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak should be commended for producing a relatively brief but still highly informative text that introduces readers to both the recent history of transfer scholarship and contemporary applications of that scholarship. The authors have written a book that is useful to researchers as well as classroom instructors, a combination that one does not often see in academic scholarship. What is particularly refreshing, because of its demonstrated commitment to the empirical method, is their detailed description, reinforced in the book's four appendices, of the two-semester study on transfer they conducted from 2009 to 2010 at Florida State University (FSU) – its institutional context, research participants and data sources, deadlines and timelines, comparative approach, goals and hypotheses, results, and objective analysis of those results.

In short, the authors argue that the most effective way to ensure that what students are learning in a first-year composition class (and program) is successfully transferred, or carried over, into their subsequent academic careers is a course curriculum based explicitly on the intentional teaching of transfer. Skeptical of the prevailing practice in many composition programs of simply leaving content largely up to the instructor, as codified in his or her chosen reading list, Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak have instead designed a teaching approach that makes transfer the content, what the class is about. More specifically, they have implemented a curriculum that introduces students to key terms and concepts such as *genre*, *exigence*, and *discourse community*; employs a reading list that focuses mainly on writing and reflection theory; consistently and reiteratively incorporates reflective writing assignments into its structure; and, finally, requires students to produce their own “theory of writing” at the conclusion of the course (73). With all four components working together, the idea is to maximize the transfer of writing

practices and writing knowledge and to give students the meta-cognitive language they need to think and talk about their own writing, now and in the future.

In the study, the TFT pilot course was taught in Fall 2009 simultaneously with two other first year composition courses, all drawing from the same pool of students – one using an expressivist approach which encouraged students to read and write about contemporary social topics from their own perspectives, the other using a themed approach which had the students reading and writing about the numerous elements and influences of culture and the media in American society. Since the results of any such study can be questioned if the quality of instruction in the approaches being compared is not essentially equal, the authors were careful to make sure that teacher competence was not an issue. The expressivist class was taught by an MFA in Creative Writing with five years experience in teaching composition while the culture and media course's instructor, though new to the field, had just won an FSU Excellence in Teaching award. Because differences in teaching (and for that matter, student) proficiency could be ruled out as mitigating factors, differential findings across the three courses must be a result of differences in curricular design. In fact, Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak conclude that “as is conventional practice, each course included a language locating both writing and theme, but it was the language of the TFT course that provided students with the passport to writing across multiple sites” (61). For the authors, who insist correctly that all writing outside and inside the academy is situational (i.e., genre-specific), this metaphorical notion of transfer as passport is crucial. The purpose of a first year writing program should be to make that passport available to as many students as possible.

Of course, almost anyone involved with the teaching of first year composition would agree that its purpose is to prepare students for success in their subsequent academic and professional careers. However, many of these instructors might not be willing to concede that their pedagogical approaches and strategies are not, in fact, helping to accomplish this goal and in some cases are actually preventing it from being accomplished. One of the strengths of *Writing across Contexts* is the objective, well-documented, non-polemical manner in which it questions still commonly held assumptions about writing and the teaching of writing. Following Elizabeth Wardle's critique of what she has labelled “mutt genres,” the book challenges the idea that a “generalized genre called academic writing” even exists, insisting instead that the traditional claim-and-support argumentative essay or research paper represents only one variety of writing at best, a variety of writing that has little real-life value for students once they leave the English departments that typically house first year composition programs (1-2). It then becomes difficult to argue that those programs are all that effective in training students for the more discipline-specific writing both of their later college years and their eventual professional careers – a key reason why many students do not prioritize their first year composition courses or think of them as particularly useful.

As Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak correctly point out, any solution to the problem of transfer, any attempt to make first year composition more pedagogically relevant to students, ultimately involves curriculum design, or rather, re-design. And a proper understanding of what kinds of prior writing knowledge and experience, both from within the classroom and from outside the classroom, facilitate (and do not facilitate transfer) is also necessary. To their credit, the authors acknowledge that a TFT

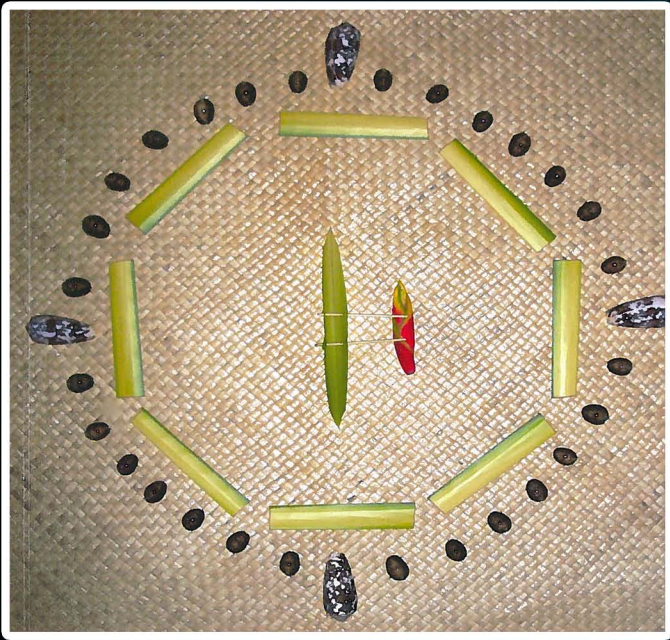
approach specifically designed to substitute transfer and writing-about-writing (WAW) as course content in place of more typical expressivist or themed composition classes might face significant institutional and logistical challenges in many universities with large developmental writing student populations and a heavy reliance on adjunct instructors. But they also provide solid evidence that such an approach can be more effective and does provide students with a much greater ability to think and talk about their writing in a more fluent, cognitively mature way. With that fluency, with their own personally articulated theory of writing, they are in a much better position when encountering new writing situations not to simply “assemble” the new text based on what has been previously learned, but instead to “remix” it, revising prior knowledge and practices to “incorporate new concepts and practices” into their constantly evolving model of writing (116). In other words, they are no longer novice writers.

Clearly, I tend to agree with many of the positions taken in *Writing across Contexts*, one reason being that they are well-supported by actual data. However, I would also suggest that perhaps the best way to approach the teaching of transfer (or at least an alternative way), especially in the Micronesian region, is to focus on designing composition curriculums that do not really focus on content at all. What I have been doing recently in all my courses here at the University of Guam (UOG), but especially my composition classes, is emphasizing not the transfer of content but the transfer of skills. Indeed I am inclined to argue that Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak are in effect employing a similar approach, since thinking metacognitively about writing is first and foremost a skill. I am moving (with no little help from their book) to a TFT pedagogy centered on the reflective learning and teaching of key words such as *summary* and *paraphrase*, with the ultimate objective of assisting students to develop their own theory of writing based on those and other skills. Such an approach can be quite useful at an open enrollment institution like UOG, where a large majority of incoming students are not yet writing at a college level. It can also be valuable in my main area of responsibility right now, which is teaching upper division literature courses to our majors. As Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak admit, the concept of transfer is often undervalued and consequently under-investigated outside of first year composition, but I believe that with the general move in literature departments from larger “comprehensive” curricula to smaller “competence” curricula, transfer, and the lack of transfer, is becoming increasingly important. Finally, a skills-based TFT model can be utilized quite effectively in writing courses like the EN316 Professional Writing class that I also teach at UOG, a class which has immediate and recognizable real-world applications.

A book review is a genre and like all genres has certain almost obligatory components. *Writing across Contexts* is not a perfect book, though any flaws are infrequent. The authors have a tendency to repetition, beginning each chapter with an extended summary of the previous chapter while also ending each chapter with a summarizing section. But in hindsight this repetition does prove to have its uses because the material the authors are presenting is by no means easy to internalize. Furthermore, given their commitment to reflective teaching and learning it is not surprising that they practice what they preach – writing a book that is itself reflective and thus reiterative. Not everyone will agree with what Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak have to say, nor should they, though I do believe that practitioners in the

field should read what they have to say. There is a lot of valuable information in this book, much of which I have not been able to cover because of space limitations. But *Writing across Contexts* transfers well.

Dr. David Gugin is an associate professor of English at the University of Guam, where he teaches literature, linguistics, and first-year composition. He has taught English in the United States, Japan, Tonga, France, Myanmar, and the United Arab Emirates.



Heiwa: Heiwa is the pushing of the canoe on the unfolded mat to demonstrate how a canoe will actually sail in the ocean from the departure island to the destination island. The navigator uses one or more stars or constellations and uses the fauan etak (primary reference island) and possibly a fauan yatil (secondary reference island) in tracking the course. Heiwa is also used to explain the feeling of the canoe's movement caused by the waves and swells hitting the canoe.

Image Design:
Lawrence J. Cunningham and Manny Sikau

