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Inside (and around) the Pacific Circle: Educational Places, Spaces and Relationships

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Editorial

Inside and Around the Pacific Circle: Educational Places, Spaces and Relationships

Eve Coxon

This Special Issue of *Pacific-Asian Education* arose from the 35th Pacific Circle Consortium (PCC) Conference hosted by The University of Auckland's Faculty of Education in August this year (2011). The journal theme, 'Inside and Around the Pacific Circle: Educational Places, Spaces and Relationships', draws on the title of a panel presentation delivered at the conference.

The panel explored the theme of educational interactions arising from the spaces, places, and relationships between the countries of the 'Pacific Rim' and those in what is termed the 'Pacific Basin'. The theme arose from the panelists'¹ concern to revisit some of the earlier debates among academics from and of the Pacific about the contested notion of the Pacific Rim – i.e., those countries that 'frame' the Pacific Ocean (North and South America, Asia, Australasia) – that emerged in the United States in the mid-1970s, around the same time the Pacific Circle Consortium was established.

Pacific Rim discourse was determined by the political-economic realities that shaped the interests of the Rim countries at the time (Jolly, 2007:517). The mid-1970s was a stage of economic decline in late capitalism; a period when US hegemony was in doubt, largely because of its defeat in Vietnam and the ascendancy (and threat) of Japan as a global power; and the Cold War, which viewed the socialist bloc as the strategic 'other' and to be excluded as far as possible from the Pacific. Thus, Pacific Rim discourse was predicated on the development of a connectedness that would strengthen economic, political and socio-cultural relationships between the countries edging the Pacific Ocean. What was excluded from the vision was the 'inside' of the Pacific, and those who live there. Thus, it was argued by those who contested the discourse, most notably the late Tongan anthropologist, Professor Epeli Hau'ofa (1993; 1998), the Pacific Ocean was seen as a hole, like the proverbial hole in the doughnut.

The panellists' decision to revive these debates was based on their concern that the map on the PCC logo represents the very perception that Hau'ofa was critiquing; that is of the Pacific as an expanse of empty ocean encircled by the Rim countries; a portrayal of the "sea of islands" within the Pacific as the 'hole-in-the-doughnut'.

In his seminal work, 'Our Sea of Islands' (Waddell, Naidu & Hau'ofa) Hau'ofa developed an influential vision as an alternative to what he described as "the economic and geographic determinist view of a very narrow kind" (p.6) constructed by "experts"

¹ Auckland University of Technology's Professor of Pacific Studies, Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, Dr David Gegeo from Canterbury University's McMillan-Brown Centre, and Associate Professor Eve Coxon of the Centre for Research in Education and Development in Oceania, University of Auckland.

from Pacific Rim institutions and agencies. He maintained that they constantly typified the small Pacific island states in terms of what they lacked – portraying them as small, poor, isolated, dysfunctional and doomed. These “derogatory and belittling” (1993, p.3) views he saw as perpetuating Pacific peoples’ own bleak perceptions of their dependency on and subordination to the powerful rim nations. This he maintained was denying the reality emerging from the “astounding mobility” of Pacific peoples over the previous few decades. From his perspective when writing in the early 1990s, he saw both a revitalisation of the pre-colonial historical interconnectedness of Pacific island peoples, and the development of extensive and expansive new connections with the countries of the Pacific Rim.

By reclaiming the term ‘Oceania’, he reconceptualised the embodied life experiences of Pacific peoples by focusing not just on their small islands (their *places*) within the vast ocean, but on the varied *relationships* maintained over many centuries throughout the Pacific Ocean, their shared *space*, which more recently have given rise to new relationships with places on the Rim. Oceania is thus a *relational space*, a “much enlarged world of social networks that crisscross the ocean all the way from Australia and New Zealand in the southwest to the United States and Canada in the northeast” (Hau’ofa 1998:391).

The relationships forged through education between Pacific peoples within Oceania’s ‘sea of islands’, and by way of the Pacific diaspora in Rim countries were explored through panel presentations. It was acknowledged that PCC as an organisation does much to include and address the educational interests of those from within the circle – clearly evident in the representation of Pacific/Pasifika participants in the PCC and at the conference - and it was agreed that it was time to change the logo. Also agreed was that the PCC journal, *Pacific Asian Education*, would dedicate a special issue to the theme, thus expanding the body of knowledge about educational interactions within the relational space that is Oceania; about the role of education in what Hau’ofa (1993, pp 10-12) referred to as the revitalised interconnectedness of Pacific island peoples; and the development of new connections with the countries of the Pacific Rim.

All conference presenters dealing with education for Pacific communities in Pacific Rim countries (those *around* the Pacific Circle), or education in Pacific island countries (those *inside* the Pacific Circle), were invited to submit articles for this issue. Thus, most of the twelve articles included in this volume are based on papers presented at the PCC conference. While Aotearoa New Zealand is the only ‘place’ from around the Circle which is written about directly, from within the Circle we have articles exploring education in Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and the Cook Islands. Each of the twelve articles explores, to some degree, relationships, interactions and connectedness between Pacific communities across the Oceanic ‘space’.

Education as a process of change, and its effects on personal identity and culture is examined by our first writer, Tanya Wendt Samu. A socio-historical exploration of the narratives (*tala mai fofo*) of a selected group of Pacific women across time (three generations) and space (from Samoa and Tonga to New Zealand and beyond), draws on a number of theoretical concepts in addressing the question: What does formal education mean to Pacific women? Her findings in response to this question then shape

the discussion of similarities and differences across time and space, of the impact of crucial, high-stakes education experiences on self-identity, self-esteem and confidence, and education as ‘culture crossings’ into new and different settings and contexts.

The second article is concerned with a shared exploration by Cook Islands early childhood teachers from both the Cook Islands and New Zealand of contemporary and traditional understandings about play and its role in the learning of young children. Manutai Laupepe, a New Zealand-based Cook Islands educationist, drew from the findings of her play-related research exploring Samoan and Tongan student teachers’ views of play, in guiding the dialogue and reflections of 150 Cook Islands early childhood educators at a conference held in Rarotonga in 2010. In seeking to provide a platform for affirming the role of teachers as advocates for children’s right to play, the article documents the process followed and explores the contributions of participants.

The three articles that follow detail each writer’s search for culturally appropriate research models and approaches in undertaking education research with Pasifika communities in New Zealand. What is notable in each is the very rich conceptual connectedness between the cultural ‘home’ and the research site, and their reflections on the ‘relational space’ between researcher and researched. Patisepa Tuafuti provides a narrative account of the twists and turns she followed in a research journey through which she explored the possibilities and challenges of adopting fa’asamoa protocols in her study with the Samoan community in Auckland. The epistemological and methodological resources she draws on in arriving at her ‘*phenomenological-fa’afaletui*’ research approach, provides a fascinating juxtaposition of the theories and concepts of both Samoan (e.g. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese; Aiono Le Tagaloa) and Western/European (e.g. Foucault, Husserl) writers. Mo’ale ‘Otunuku’s article discusses the reality of doing *talanoa* research with a group of Tongan parents of secondary school students in New Zealand and sets out the key Tongan cultural principles that shape the research protocols followed. He argues that, because Tongan cultural values and principles were both observed and practiced in exploring an issue so central to the lives of Tongans (Tongans success in formal education), *talanoa* was an effective research approach for his study, and the information and data collected was of high quality and validity. In tracing the development of a theoretical framework to inform research based on explicitly identified principles and values of Samoan culture, Seiuli Luama Sauni presents the *Ula* research model. The development of the *Ula* research approach occurred within a study into Samoan male representation in the early childhood teaching profession in New Zealand. Sauni maintains that the systematic development of a research study processed and written within a Samoan context, created the opportunity to establish relational connections between the researcher and participants, despite differences based on gender, institutional status and cultural status.

The next two articles both relate to the global/regional policy transfer processes emanating from international development agencies for Pacific island education systems. Each explores the processes of reshaping policy directions set elsewhere, and the possibilities for and constraints on their implementation within particular contexts. Niusila Faamanatu-Eteuati discusses her research into Samoan educators’ perceptions about the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education, and

what is required to ensure children with special needs are included successfully in mainstream schools. She reports that special needs students in Samoa have benefited from assistance of international aid programmes in inclusive education, teachers who are educated in the needs of students with disabilities, and increased community awareness. She concludes, however, that the dependence on foreign aid donors hinders the sustainability of inclusive education development in Samoa, and increased collaboration and networking at national level is required. Cresantia Frances Koya Vaka'uta's article argues the necessity for conceptualizing a value-theory approach to citizenship education in Fiji. She lays out the 'crisis of relevance' for Pacific education systems influenced by colonial legacies, aid donor dependencies and global education agendas. The paper provides a reflective journey through citizenship education theory, its introduction into the twenty-first century Pacific and the contextual realities of enacting citizenship education in Fiji's policy environment at this time. Cresantia's key line of argumentation is compelling – that for citizenship education to contribute towards participatory citizenship, national identity formation and social cohesion, the issue of what it means to 'be' Fijian and 'belong' to Fiji must be addressed within a wider socio-historical debate.

Research into issues of secondary education curriculum reform in Samoa is addressed in two separate articles. Each demonstrates a research process characterised by educational interaction across the relational space of Oceania. The main author in each case – Faamoemoe Soto and Faalogo Teleuli Leituaso-Mafoa respectively – draw on education research undertaken for their masters' degrees, a requirement of their employment at the National University of Samoa. The co-author of each paper, Carol Mutch, provided supervision for both main writers from the New Zealand degree-granting institution concerned. Another aspect of the connectedness between, and further evidence of issues surrounding education policy transfer as discussed above, is that the process of secondary education curriculum reform discussed in these articles was developed with assistance from a New Zealand aid programme managed by the University of Auckland. Soti and Mutch explore the factors impeding the implementation of the 'encoded' Food and Textiles curriculum, by analyzing Soti's research into the policy 'decoding' processes within case study schools. The development and implementation of the Business Studies curriculum through the lens of globalisation is the approach taken by Leituaso-Mafoa and Mutch in their analysis of data collected from two secondary schools. Both articles point to the potential of the curricula concerned, but the very significant need for improved teacher development and resource support in order to realise that potential in the classroom.

A model for culturally-responsive pedagogy in the teaching of Physical Education in Cook Islands secondary schools, based on the metaphor of a Cook Islands *tivaevae*, is the topic of the article from main author Aue Te Ava and his two supervisors, Airini and Christine Rubie. The combination of culture, values, teaching and learning as the basis for culturally responsive pedagogy are explored and the various dimensions involved in the model discussed. The model's intention reports to assist teachers to approach the dual task of providing time and space for students to be socially and culturally engaged, while also ensuring learning activities enhance students' academic achievement. The

article maintains that such pedagogy will provide Cook Islands students an opportunity to engage in their culture and make education a lifelong learning experience.

Vaovasamanaia Meripa Toso's article seeks to extend the body of knowledge about spirituality as an underpinning philosophy for Pasifika early childhood contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her particular focus is on defining Samoan spirituality, exploring its philosophical and practical dimensions and their implications for early childhood content and pedagogy. She also addresses the place of Samoan and other spiritualities within New Zealand's holistic early childhood framework, Te Whariki, and presents a number of recommendations for its incorporation at policy and organizational levels.

The last article in this issue, by Alexis Siteine and Tanya Wendt Samu, reports on a study that set out to investigate the ways in which Pacific peoples have been represented in the New Zealand *School Journal*, and the types of understandings that students reading it might develop about Pacific peoples. A hundred and eight issues of the *School Journal*, published between 2002 and 2009 were selected in order to identify the scope and nature of the representation of Pacific peoples in the twenty-first century. Their findings indicate that Pacific peoples are often depicted in stereotypical ways, likely to reinforce ideological and deficit views of Pacific peoples, their location and identity in New Zealand society. Because of the pervasiveness of the *School Journal*, not only in New Zealand schools but also in those of many Pacific island countries, this research has crucial implications for Pacific learners.

Finally, the significance of this Special Issue of *Pacific Asian Education* goes beyond its demonstration of the overall theme of educational interactions within the Oceanic relational space. In the journal's Conclusion, co-editor, Dr Airini, identifies three important educational research themes which come through strongly from the collective work of the sixteen authors: the appreciation of education research as a means of social transformation; the advancement of new possibilities in Pacific education research approaches; and the notion of Pacific education scholarship and research as service. Thus, this collection of twelve education research informed and focused articles is brought to a fitting conclusion.

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Tala Mai Fafo: (Re)Learning from the Voices of Pacific Women

Tanya Wendt Samu

Abstract

This paper examines a selection of narrative accounts of mainly Samoan women from across time and space. Education as a process of change, and its effects on personal identity and culture, is examined via a socio-historical approach that also includes the application of several theoretical concepts from analytic philosopher of education, J.R. Martin. The main question that guides this paper is: What does formal education mean to Pacific people – particularly Pacific women? The findings shape the response to the secondary question of: What are the discernible differences across time and space, in terms of the meaning of education for Pacific women?

Key words: Pacific women, education, change, time, space

Introduction

Formal education continues to be perceived by Pacific peoples as a vital, highly valued process through which to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to enable achievement of certain collective material and socio-cultural aspirations. This paper demonstrates the persistence, across time and contexts, of such a perception, by reflecting on the following question: What does education mean to Pacific women?

The paper undertakes a socio-historical analysis of selected extracts from the (auto)-biographic narratives of Pacific, mainly Samoan, women. The main purpose of this analysis is to “...challenge habits of mind, particularly our own as Pacific educators and researchers well-established now in our metropolitan homes away from home” (Samu, 2010, p.1). It is time to re-visit and re-think the ongoing processes of formal education that shaped our generation, the generation before and the generation that came after us, and learn from the connections between them.

The first section of this paper examines the question, ‘What does formal education mean to selected Pacific women?’ In considering the broad theme of education and change, it explores how a number of Pacific women have responded on the personal level to the changes wrought by their experiences with formal education. The second section of this paper explores the question, ‘What are the discernible differences across time and space, in terms of the meaning of education for Pacific women?’ The final section theorises and discusses the implications of these.

Education and change: What does it mean to Pacific women?

Regardless of the form of the provision, according to Snook (1972),

We do in fact tend to use the term 'education' in a favourable sense. To speak of someone as educated is normally to praise him. To call someone an educator is to commend his work. Education carries a plus sign....It is a key term that carries notes of approval. (p.103)

Pacific Polynesian peoples viewed the western formal education institutions introduced during the missionary era in the 19th century with considerable approval (Mara, Foliaki & Coxon, 1994). In some Pacific cultural traditions, expectations of formal education have become deeply embedded. One aspect of this is individuals making choices about their education in terms of the collective, because they define themselves in terms of their families and communities. In other words, for some Pacific peoples, personal motivation in education is derived from an over-powering sense of duty and obligation to an external entity and authority –which is also a primary source of personal identity.

Such a sense of duty and obligation to an external entity and authority also includes commitment to an embedded cultural value or ideal. In her autobiographic, critical reflection of her education experiences, Lonise Tanielu describes how she won a scholarship to study towards a BA degree at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji (2000). At this time she was married, a church minister's wife, with three young daughters. She left them behind in Samoa to study in Fiji. She describes her motivation to make such a great personal sacrifice as the desire to gain an education that would enhance her teaching career which “in the end, would benefit not only me and my family *but many others*” (p.58, emphasis added). She was committed to the culturally informed value of service to others – the purpose of pursuing higher education was *for* a greater cause, a collective good.

Tala mai fafo means stories from afar – collectively, the stories considered in this paper come from far across time and space. They are socio-historical analyses of women's first-hand experiences of education and cast light on the effects of specific aspects of their experiences on personal change, culture and identity. In analysing these stories, J. R. Martin's ideas about education and change provide additional conceptual tools. She argued,

when an individual undergoes an educational metamorphosis, his or her thinking, behaviour, feelings, emotions, attitudes, values, and ways of being in the World all undergo radical change. (2007, p.13)

She sees education metamorphoses as having two dimensions – an inner one (personal transformation or identity) and an outer dimension. She terms the outer dimension as “culture crossings” (p.2) which may be either internal or external. An internal culture crossing, for example, is when a child leaves home to study only to find that each time s/he returns home, s/he has less in common with family and old friends. External culture crossings, on the other hand, involve learning how to live successfully within a new culture and society.

First-hand Experiences from Samoa, 1945-1955

Tamaitai Samoa: Stories of Samoan Women (Fairburn-Dunlop, 1996) is a book whose overall purpose was to record the stories of selected Samoan women – women who lived their lives across the twentieth century. The aim was to gather the narratives of as wide a group of women as possible – teachers, secretaries, a planter, a nurse, a Registrar of the Lands and Titles Court among others. In terms of their roles and responsibilities over their adult lives, they were collectively:

- daughters of pastors, administrators, and planters;
- rural women, urban women (two of which were based overseas but maintained strong ties);
- those schooled in Samoa, and those who spent some school years in New Zealand;
- untitled women and those who hold chiefly, or *taupo* titles; and
- all active in their church affairs.

In identifying patterns from the various narratives, Fairburn-Dunlop (1996) found that, “Each story emphasizes the enduring and all-embracing strength of the customary ways (as shown in the family systems and how these are nourished by *tautua* [service] and acts of love and reciprocity) and how women’s roles are very firmly set in these family systems” (p.vii).

Getting married, raising children and being involved with church, village, and extended family as well as paid work in government departments – all these activities were motivated by a strong sense of service (*tautua*), and a personal identity of being daughters. Their successes, their efforts, and personal reputations were built on the desire to live up to and reflect well on family, particularly the family one was born into and would forever remain tied to via genealogy. Faithfully serving the family one marries into also reflects well on the reputation and standing of one’s own family.

In sharing stories of her formal education, each woman describes her experiences, particularly when going to the more competitive schools in Apia, as challenging. Learning English was cited as a particular difficulty. Those who went overseas on scholarship to New Zealand also describe challenges associated with language, social adjustment and home-sickness. Their descriptions of how they coped are, however, quite simple, quite pragmatic. According to To’oto’o Pulu, “Despite my homesickness, I learnt to rise above the difficulties I encountered by adjusting myself to my new environment. Our headmistress was a great help and I valued the experience I gained from this school. She taught me not to let my new environment overwhelm me” (1996, p.117).

It seems the women who went overseas to New Zealand for further education on government scholarships (late 1940s-1950s), were women with strong personal identities deeply rooted in their Samoan language, culture and family. For example, Suia Matatumua Petana stated:

I never took a matai title, but my sisters Fetai, Moana and Eni have titles. They are each very capable women and play very public roles in Samoa. I suppose, compared with them, I look like the quiet one in the family. People often ask me what it is like living in a family of such

assertive strong women. I say to people, 'Is that how they appear to you? To me, they are just my sisters.' My sisters are strong, but they are strong with a purpose. It's not for themselves. They are doing what we have always been taught to do: serving'. (1996, p.154)

The women story-tellers who went overseas for schooling did so with the intention of returning. They, and their families, were well aware they were part of the New Zealand administration's efforts to prepare Samoa for independence (scheduled to take place in 1962). According to Namulauulu Galumalemana Netina, "The women scholarship students were encouraged to be teachers, nurses or clerks, while the boys took plumbing, medicine and later law and those sorts of programmes. That's probably why so many women have held top education posts in Samoa: because our best women students went into education" (1996, p.132). When To'oto'o Pulotu returned home from New Zealand, married with children, her extended family stepped in help with child care enabling her to work as a teacher. She said, "In fact my father would get angry if I stayed home from work to watch a sick child. He would send me to work reminding me to be honest about the work I was doing for the government because it was the government that had sent me to school" (1996, p.119).

It would seem that for these women, their individual personal identities were defined by their families, the *faasamoa*, the cultural value of service to one's family and one's nation. Going away in the late 1940s -1950s to New Zealand in order to experience a western education does not seem to have challenged or affected their inner dimension in any significant way. Were external culture crossings required? Yes – learning English, adjusting to a new climate and lifestyle, making new friends, and adjusting to settings and contexts in which there were few if any other Samoans or Pacific peoples.

Education and Culture Crossing: Samoa, 1960

Lonise Tanielu (2000) describes her formal education journey from early childhood through to post-graduate studies. She began attending pastor's school or Aoga Faifeau, when she was three years old. This was when she was first introduced to the competitive nature of formal schooling in Samoa. She explains,

These formative years were to shape my lasting impressions of what formal education is about: sitting still, keeping quiet, listening carefully, speaking only when asked, being rewarded with the stroke of a stick or broom for misbehaviour. (p.49)

This approach to schooling children continued in the village primary school that she attended. She describes and discusses how "the tendency for children to compete in school often interfered with their capacity to adapt when cooperation was needed to solve academic problems" (p.52). In her view, cooperation was reserved for co-curricular activities of school life, such as "entertainment, feasting and cleaning purposes, learning dances and items, preparing food and beautifying the school for special occasions" (p.52).

Tanielu writes that,

Despite the restrictions and rigidities of my education during those years, they were some of the most memorable times in my life and I continually reminisce about those good times. Life during these years was not all mechanical and routine. There were opportunities for us as children to think and act independently and creatively, especially outside the classrooms. (p.53)

It was not until Tanielu won a place at the prestigious government school in town that she experienced what one can describe as her first major education metamorphosis (Martin, 2007). The shift from the familiar village school setting to Samoa College was a culture shock. It required her to move to the capital of Apia, and live with a relative during school terms. The many changes that Tanielu and other students from rural areas had to adjust to included: school leaders and teachers who were palagi (European); a strict English-speaking only policy; rules regarding truancy and attendance and protocols such as standing at attention for daily flag-raising ceremonies. Tanielu writes, “For me and no doubt other rural students, having to adapt to a new school as well as an urban life-style, was alienating...Any confidence that I had, and the novelty of attending the top school in the country soon wore off” (p.55).

Tanielu describes a classroom situation very different to the one that played such a strong socialising influence on her formative years. This was a classroom environment facilitated by a New Zealand trained teacher who “encouraged us to do well, to participate in class and group activities and to ask questions if we did not understand” (p.55). Tanielu, however, was a student reluctant to speak out let alone in a language that she did not feel very competent in, a student who “spoke only when asked”. She also states that, “The fear of getting put on detention for speaking Samoan overcame any desire to ask questions” (p.55). Reflecting back, many years later, as an experienced educator, Tanielu stated that, “The transition from the village and district schools to Samoa College left a learning gap that needed bridging” – and regrettably, at that time, no one recognised and supported children in such a situation to develop, “the semantic resources and essential schemata to close the gap” (Tanielu, 2000, p.56).

Tanielu’s experience is interesting in terms of an external culture crossing because it was a crossing into a very different type of classroom setting. Her physical move was from a rural village in Samoa, into a better resourced school in the capital town of Samoa (Apia) organised and run by New Zealand expatriate teachers. This was just before Samoa became independent from New Zealand. It affected the young girl that she was then, in terms of how she saw herself – her loss of confidence was a real consequence. One can imagine the additional anxieties related to the fear of failing at school and letting her family and village down.

Education and Culture Crossing: New Zealand, 1960-70s

Not long after the time that Tanielu was immersed in the changes wrought by her new education experiences within her own home-land, Lita Foliaki (1992) was a new arrival from Tonga to Auckland, New Zealand. As a high achieving and only daughter, her

parents and family sent her to a Catholic boarding school, in the belief that they were doing the best for her. She, too, found the new classroom situation problematic.

I could not join in the discussions because I did not speak English well enough, but more than that I did not know how to debate, or understand the process that was going on. I wanted the teacher to say what were the correct opinions, and she did not do that.

I became very confused, then I began to feel very dumb. I believed that the other students perceived me as dumb, and maybe they did. Unfortunately, I think the teachers may have thought I was dumb too. When one is the only non-white person in the classroom and one is the “dumbest” in the class, one begins to think that the two factors are connected. There are probably very few schools in Auckland today with only one Polynesian student in the class, but I think the only difference is that instead of one Pacific Islands student at the bottom of the class, there is now a group of Pacific Islands students at the bottom of the class, thinking the same thing that I did (how many years ago?)....

The added problem is that neither the teachers, nor my family, knew what I was going through. My family would have been quite shocked to hear of the discussions that went on in the school and they would not have been able to help. The problem of connecting “feeling dumb” with one’s race is that one thinks that one cannot overcome being dumb because one cannot change one’s race. The parents, before they came to New Zealand, had no sense of racial inferiority and believed that the children could achieve anything, that we could be academically very successful. However, when the children go to school they very quickly acquire the opposite belief about themselves . . . And so many children do not make it in the academic game. It is depressing and disappointing for the parents, but it is also very depressing and disappointing for the child because the child actually shares the parents’ ambition.

(1992, p.18, emphasis added)

This experience can be analysed both as an external culture crossing and change to the internal dimension that is not so obvious to others, even those we are close to. The inner dimension is of particular interest in this example - the young girl, the only Tongan and only Pacific Islander in the classroom, who associated her inability to connect to what was going on with ‘being dumb’ or unintelligent. In this process of education, a profound change was experienced – one which led to a young, isolated girl acquiring the belief that she was a failure. Being ‘dumb’ had something to do with being Tongan – an unchangeable birthright, therefore minimising her chances of academic success at school, and in New Zealand. This negative self-perception (not necessarily permanent) was what she acquired as a consequence of her first education metamorphosis.

Education, Culture Crossing and Identity: Wales, 1981-83

In 1981, I was selected by the Western Samoan government scholarship committee to attend a two year senior secondary school programme in Wales, in the United Kingdom. Applicants were by school nomination only. Nominations were on the basis of ‘all roundedness’ as well as academic performance. I had been placed second nationwide in the New Zealand School Certificate examinations sat in Western Samoa the previous year. I was a sprinter on the school athletics team. I was the head girl of Samoa College, a school perceived, as the ‘top’ secondary school in my country. It was the only scholarship at that time to Britain, of all places – a common sense belief being that if the school was in Britain, it would be far superior to anything offered in New Zealand.

The send-off by my school, let alone my extended family, was amazing. Off I went, the “cream of the crop of Samoa” (or so said Mrs To’oto’o Pulotu, the senior mistress of my school). I was going to “bring victory to the family” (or so said my Great Aunt Ita). Off I went, to a school where the Chairman of the Board was the Prince of Wales, his mother the Queen of the Commonwealth was the patron, and all my potential friends would come from more than fifty different nations of the world. Off I went literally half a world away, to live and learn at a school located in rural south Wales. I was excited, and very confident. However, much like Tanielu’s experience, any confidence that I had, and the novelty of attending a top international school, soon wore off. By the end of the first term I crashed and burned as far as academic achievement was concerned, and spent the next 18 months struggling to figure out how to at least pass my examinations and NOT return home a failure.

The ethos of this international school emphasised the importance of global service, international relations, superiority of western democracy, capitalism and individualism. The young person I was then struggled to connect to such an ethos and to feel a sense of place within the school community, particularly when some of the students and teachers from so-called developed nations perceived me and others from developing nations as the undeserving members of the economic elite of the various Third World nations that we called home. In such a setting, my culture, my world view was an anomaly at the very least. My response was to generally withdraw – as evidenced in my year book statement “I did not share with those who did not ask- I thought they did not want to know” (Atlantic College Yearbook, 1983, p.42).

Much to my relief, I did pass the International Baccalaureate, which I sat two years after my arrival. I still hold the belief that I passed because (i) I was motivated by the awful fear of disappointing my extended family, and (ii) the influence of two white male teachers who exhibited a brusque sensitivity towards students in the “situation of immigrants in both the narrow and broad sense of the term” (Martin, 2007, p.151).

A Firsthand Experience from New Zealand, 21st Century

In 2009, journalist Tapu Misa wrote a newspaper opinion piece entitled ‘Full marks to preference for minorities’, and discussed differential entry criteria and scholarships for Maori and Pacific university students. A young New Zealand born Samoan university student wrote the following (unpublished) email to Misa in reply.

Thanks so much for writing that piece . . . I really appreciate it. It's such a sore subject with many of my peers, it's resented so much . . . I found that there was a lot of anger and annoyance at the perceived free ride for M/PIs¹, through the scholarship and the quotas.

That anger and frustration can make one who is eligible for them feel really guilty and shamed. I was really self-conscious at school prize-giving at the end of my last high school year when I publicly received recognition for the CAT scholarship . . . In the months previous that resentment had been voiced frequently, and here were those same people, at prize-giving, watching me . . .

But there's a bigger picture. Always the bigger picture. When I read your article I was really pleased that you pointed out that trend of a growing PI population but a lagging proportion of those who are highly educated. DUH PEOPLE. I knew when I took that scholarship that there were societal expectations. You get the scholarship so you can contribute to your community. That's the way I've always seen it. I don't think any non-Maori/PI people who voice resentment see that clearly, or are in a position to see that clearly . . .

(Personal communication, 2009)

While I could identify with this young woman's espoused belief that her education should be used to contribute to her people (in other words, 'serve'), I could not understand or relate to the peer pressure and tension that affected her. How can winning an academic scholarship, a watershed in one's education journey, be a source of embarrassment, guilt and shame? I realise that the reason why I cannot relate personally to this particular education experience is that currently, for young Pacific women growing up and becoming educated in New Zealand, there is a very different reality. And as in the young Foliaki's experience, neither their teachers nor family may know or understand what they are going through.

Maybe this is because Pacific people experiencing education in 21st century New Zealand are part of a minority – but the minority that they are members of is not the educated elite of a developing Pacific nation. Rather, they are members of the second largest multi-ethnic migrant community in a westernised, developed nation that has claimed and taken pride in a Pacific national identity for itself only in fairly recent times. They are members of a minority group with a unique, distinctive and chequered socio-historical location in this country – chequered in terms of ways in which wider society has perceived and responded to it over time. For example, in 1976 an education publication by a major newspaper opened with the following statement – “For years New Zealanders have been vaguely aware that the 78,000 Pacific Islanders living here have special problems and in turn create problems which we have not yet found a way to handle” (Shortland Educational Publications, p.3).

Twenty years later Ongley, in his more academic and measured needs analysis, argued

1 Maori / Pacific Islands

that the Pasifika population “ought to be a focus for policy-makers and strategists in facilitating those communities *to contribute even more to the fabric* of the New Zealand society” (1996, emphasis added). His remarks were made when the Pacific population of New Zealand was over 200,000, and almost half were New Zealand born. A decade later, in *The Listener*, the editor stated, “Pacific peoples are immensely innovative... they are upbeat achievers...they are a formidable national asset” (Stirling, 2006, p.5). By this time the Pacific population stood at almost 270, 000, with about 60% being New Zealand born and raised (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

Pacific peoples are now very much a part of New Zealand society. However, there still exist social constructions that are not favourable. I once wrote,

Sometimes I ‘see’ others and situations relative to the social and historical position of Pasifika as a multi-ethnic group in this country. I did not know what it was like to be part of a social group that carried labels such as ‘under-achievement’, ‘marginalised’, and even ‘tail-end’ until I migrated to New Zealand from Samoa. Such labels do not apply to me personally. They are irrelevant as descriptors for many members of my immediate family. But irrespective of our individual situations, the general political, social and economic realities of the third largest ethnic minority group...in New Zealand are a part of the collective identity of this group as members of New Zealand society. (2004, p.9)

For the current generation of Pacific-heritage New Zealanders, this is one of the realities of subscribing to a Pacific or Pasifika identity in New Zealand.

Are there discernable differences across time and space, in terms of the meaning of education for Pacific women?

Consider the women of *Tamaitai Samoa*. One wonders, why are these women’s stories of education change so dissimilar to that of Tanielu and Foliaki? Perhaps it is because Tanielu and Foliaki wrote with a critical, analytical lens - at the time of their writing, they were both associated with academia, as post-graduate students and/or lecturers in the School of Education at the University of Auckland. Another reason to account for the different tenor of their reflections is that the very first cohorts of selected women who left Samoa to go to New Zealand for schooling did so in the mid 1940s and 1950s. In 1945, the population of Pacific Polynesians in New Zealand was a mere 2159. In 1956, the population had risen to 8103. By 1966 it had jumped to just over 26,000 (Statistics New Zealand, 1997). In other words, students from Samoa in the 1940s/1950s did not migrate into strong, negative pre-existing social constructions of Pacific Islanders. The great migratory influx to New Zealand from Samoa, Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands, and subsequent settlement (and socio-economic positioning) had not yet begun. Any pre-existing perceptions of Pacific peoples, as limited as they might have been, would not have reflected views such as these:

For too long the community has looked the other way. We have been amused and a little patronising about their quaintness, their old-style religion, worried, too, about their violence and their boozing.

But about the problems we cause them, and they cause us, we don't want to know . . . Yet when the history of Auckland in the '70s is written later in this century, this could be the issue historians say the city failed to see or neglected to deal with . . . the growth of decadent suburbs, ghetto accommodation for unskilled Island labour, either enticed here by agents for industry, or drawn by their own unsophisticated ambition.

(Shortland Educational Publications, 1976, p.5)

Any efforts to cross into New Zealand culture, society and its classrooms and lecture halls, from the 1970s onwards, would have been a very different experience, compared to that of the Samoan students of the 1940s/1950s.

As *tala mai fafo*, the experiences of education in subsequent decades have almost eerie similarities. From the voice of the Samoan girl from a small village community who moved into the elite secondary school in the urban area of Apia before Samoa's independence in 1962; the voice of the lonely, isolated Tongan girl in an Auckland Catholic girls' school in the late 1960s; the voice of my own experience of learning alone and disconnected in Wales in early 1980s; to the voice of a young university student, writing to a journalist in the first decade of this millenium. These voices signal something significant – the impact of crucial, high-stakes education experiences on the inner dimensions such as self-identity, self-esteem and confidence, and education as culture crossings into new and different settings and contexts. These appear to be journeys into the margins and fringes of westernised learning settings – and demonstrate that these were, and continue to be (at least initially), disabling social spaces to be within.

Can the way be eased for those setting out on their own high stakes education journeys?

The different stories referred to in this paper demonstrate that some aspects of the meaning of education persist across time and place for Pacific women. For instance, the conviction that success in formal education enables one to serve the collective or family and community. This was an important finding in recent research by the Equal Employment Trust which examined the engagement of young Pacific peoples in the workforce. It said “Pacific youth overall see prosperity in terms of families and relationships rather than material wellbeing” (2011, p.39). The different stories in this study also demonstrate the persistence of the nature of struggle at the personal level, the inner dimension. As asserted above, Martin's concepts of education, change and identity provide insight into complexities which are quite possibly overlooked, undervalued or assumed to be irrelevant, by current Pacific educators. However, research and theorising into such matters is not enough. According to Martin,

what is especially needed [is] . . . a kind of mass remembrance and review of our own firsthand experience . . . If in addition we acknowledge that there may yet be more personal transformations/ culture crossings in our own futures, who knows how many of us will be inspired to ease the way for those who are already setting out on brand new journeys.

(2007, p.152)

One wonders, can the changes wrought by education such as transformation or metamorphoses be managed? Is it possible to coach and mentor people experiencing such crossings, in order for the process to carry less risk and to be less “harsh and brutal” (Martin, 2007, p.73). Is it possible to nurture and support young people, in ways that enable them to develop the kind of cultural resilience that might better equip them –to be more savvy, astute and even strategic; to self-anaesthetise, if need be, in order to protect themselves from developing negative, undesirable dispositions such as inferiority complexes, loss of confidence, insecurity and reduced self-efficacy?

The *tala mai fafo* analysed in this paper have provided an opportunity for revisiting, reviewing and reflecting on selected stories and their story-tellers. New insights and knowledge on education and change have been the result, demonstrating “the power that can be found in the sharing of our stories, the passing on of experiences through the generations” (Young, 2010, p.374). In doing so, the analysis has served to connect experiences of education and change across generations, reducing the risk of estrangement from our lived histories as Pacific women for whom formal education still means so very much. At the very least, this study signals the need to (metaphorically) take stock, and, if needed, mend sails and re-set directions for the education and inevitable challenges of change the next generation must experience.

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Professional development in the Cook Islands: Confronting and challenging Cook Islands early childhood teachers' understandings of play

Manutai Leaupepe

Abstract

This paper arose from a presentation to a Cook Islands' early childhood teachers' conference held in Rarotonga in 2010. Teachers from Aotearoa New Zealand and throughout the Cook Islands attended. The first of its kind, the Taokotai'anga o te au Punanga Reo Kuki Airani o Akarana Association hosted over 150 teachers, carers and administrators involved in early childhood education in both countries. This conference provided a valuable opportunity for participants to revitalise neglected knowledge and engage in dialogue and reflection about contemporary and traditional understandings about play and its role in the learning of young children. The challenges that confronted teachers were related to understandings about play and the implications of these understandings for their practice. The conflicting and often contradictory views of play that Cook Islands early childhood teachers held, and the tensions arising from those views, are the focus of this paper.

Introduction

In the context of early childhood education (ECE) within Aotearoa New Zealand and similarly in the Cook Islands, the notion of play continues to intrigue and challenge teachers in their ability to not only recognise the significance of play and its contribution to the holistic development of the child, but also in how to further create opportunities for young children's play (Hedges, 2003; Leaupepe, 2009). Cook Islands teachers are guided in Aotearoa by New Zealand's ECE curriculum framework, Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education [MOE], 1996) and the Api'i Tamariki Potiki (ECE) Curriculum Development Draft (MOE, 2005), the Cook Islands early childhood document. Both emphasize the need for children's play to be valued as "meaningful learning" and the need for teachers to acknowledge the "importance of spontaneous play" (MOE, 1996, p.84; MOE, 2005, p.14).

Research suggests that it is very important that adults working with children know and understand what play is (Bruce, 2001; Dockett & Flear, 2003; Leaupepe, 2010a; Saracho & Spodek, 2003). They need to be trained and have knowledge of its fundamental contribution to the learning that children experience. Teachers working with young children are required to support and extend children's play with sensitivity and skill, and ongoing professional development becomes an essential element and source of support for teachers in fulfilling this requirement. At a Cook Islands early

childhood teachers' conference, held in Rarotonga in 2010, the ambivalent attitude towards play amongst ECE teachers in the Cook Islands and in Aotearoa New Zealand was a key focus. One of the aims of my conference presentation was to address this ambivalence.

What Cook Islands early childhood teachers know and understand of play, and how they support children's play, as recorded at the 2010 conference, is discussed in this paper. Moreover, influential factors that have led to the ways in which teachers encourage or discourage play opportunities for young children are explored. Teachers need to be able to convincingly persuade parents, carers, school administrators and other teachers, of the need for children to play as they make important planning decisions about providing adequate time, space, resourcing and opportunities for play.

Conference theme and presentation

The conference theme: *'Ē patu i te kōrero ki runga i te papa tei 'akamou'ia 'e te 'ui- tūpuna - The foundation has been laid by our ancestors. The place we come from is unique'* was based on the ideas of returning to what had previously been prepared by preceding generations and to never forgetting one's origin. The vision for the Association is to ensure that the cultural identity of Cook Islands *tamariki* [children] is encouraged through the use of *te reo Māori Kuki Airani* [Cook Islands Māori language]. By fostering aspects of spirituality in children, the Association believes that the educational needs of Cook Islands children could enhance their ability to succeed (Taokotai'anga o te au Punanga Reo Kuki Airani o Akarana Association, 2010). It is not uncommon for Cook Islands people to seek divine inspiration. The following psalm is very familiar among Cook Islands people. It set the tone for my presentation and was recited to the audience as a chant and salutation: "*E akarainei toku mata, kite au tuaivi? E rauka ainei te tauturu iaku i reira. No ko ia Iehova ra te tauturu iaku, ko tei anga i te e au rangi e te enua*" (Salamo CXXI:1-2). "I look up to the mountains and where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121: 1-2).

It was important that this recognition and acknowledgement be made as this is considered as being culturally appropriate for such an occasion. To have not done so, would have been received by the Cook Islands people as being disrespectful to them, the land and *tūpuna* (ancestors). I understand that as Cook Islanders, the importance of this acknowledgement demonstrates the significance of spirituality in the lives of our people.

As a keynote speaker I was asked to address one of the major themes for the conference – 'Play is learning and meaningful'. However, I chose to deliberately extend my presentation to 'Revitalising neglected knowledge: challenges, assumptions and responsibilities'. The word 'neglected' was used with intent to uncover what the teachers knew and understood about the concept of play from their own childhoods as a key to understanding their contemporary professional practice and how the early childhood curriculum is actually implemented (Leaupepe, 2010b).

The intention of the conference was to engage Cook Islands teachers in reflective and critical discussion about why and how teachers provide play opportunities for young

children. Further, a full ranging discussion about the teachers' own experiences of play as they were growing up in traditional contexts was aimed at revitalising neglected knowledge and deep-seated attitudes towards play and its values in early childhood learning and teaching. Without personal and cultural insights arising from such discussions teachers may experience barriers in implementing their own pedagogical approaches and teaching through play experiences. Pedagogy and play in Cook Islands' *punanga reo* [Cook Islands ECE centres] must be developed consistent with the principles and strands of Te Whāriki and the Cook Islands curriculum document. Therefore reaching a shared culturally appropriate understanding of the concept of play is crucial.

Most adults retain fond memories of playing as a child, many of which are recalled as being pleasant, joyful, fun-filled moments of laughter, excitement and freedom. Yet these vivid memories are often forgotten or overlooked when adults are faced with providing educational play experiences for the young children they are teaching. Revisiting their childhood play memories provided shared understandings and an evidence base for critical reflections by the Cook Islands teachers at the conference. Consistent with Sandberg and Samuelsson (2003), who propose that teachers reflect on their own childhood play experiences and consider how their experiences may be different to the children that they interact with, I asked the teachers to consider the implications of analysing their childhood experiences for exactly the same purpose. In addition, I was interested in investigating the challenges this process may pose for them.

In order for the teachers to be able to critically reflect upon their experiences and explore their own values and beliefs about play, it was important to provide time and space to do so. This involved the ability to facilitate discussions openly and honestly and to critique one's own practices in a manner which is "ongoing, intentional and succinct" (Leaubepe, 2011, p.24). It is through such a process that one can begin to examine influential factors that impact on a person's disposition and provides opportunities to address why this might be the case. It is also about identifying what this means for the individual and implications that may be posed from such an examination. The Cook Islands teachers at the conference were willing to do this and noted how this was a "very useful and helpful exercise". Smyth (1989), refers to such exercises as "forms of action with respect to teaching" (p.2) and proposes a series of questions to provide assistance for the process:

- "What do I do?" - Describing
- "What does this mean?" - Informing
- "How did I come to be like this?" - Confronting
- "How might I do things differently?" - Reconstructing

These questions were used as starting points to guide discussions as teachers reflected on their own childhood play experiences.

As adult practitioners we often underestimate the power of socialisation and the construction of socio-cultural knowledge over time and how that knowledge informs what teachers do and why (Leaubepe, 2011). It was my intention to address this often ignored or neglected relationship with Cook Islands teachers from New Zealand as well

as those based in the Cook Islands. In doing so I was highlighting the importance for teachers to reflect on their own early learning as an example of how early childhood teachers become critically reflective practitioners.

What is play?

Play, its nature and purpose, continues to be an elusive concept that is often difficult to define (Ailwood, 2003). Play has become one of the most complicated concepts to study and understand, despite the fact that there is so much literature about it. Play is an umbrella word that is impossible to pin down (Bruce, 2004) which is perhaps one of the reasons why it has become so politicised. The ‘rights’ of the child to play are high on the agenda for many who advocate play for young children (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002; Jalongo, 2003; UNICEF 2011; White & Rockel, 2011). And yet, this ‘right to play’ may not be shared by other cultures and can become problematic. Play has been part of early childhood education programs since its early beginnings with Froebel’s concept of children playing in the garden (Dockett & Fler, 2003). He believed that play was not trivial, nor was it a preparation for life - rather he regarded play as the “highest phase in the child’s functioning, and for this reason, considered it to be a spiritual activity” (Bruce, 1991, p.45).

When children play, it brings together the ideas, feelings, relationships and physical life of the child. Play supports children to use what they know and to understand things about the world and people they meet. Through play, children are able to recreate their lives; practice the future; contemplate on the past; and get their thoughts, feelings, relationships and physical bodies under their own control (Bruce & Meggitt, 2002; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2003). The act of playing provides children with a sense of mastery and competence to face the world, and supports them to cope with it. This is crucial for the development of positive self-esteem and influences the growth of their personalities. Play and exploration experiences provide unique contexts for extending a child’s learning and their wellbeing and development within a supportive, responsive and holistic curriculum.

Reflective narratives

At the beginning of my conference presentation, I asked everyone to consider what play had meant for them when they were children. I posed these questions: What are your recollections of your childhood play memories? Where did these occur? Who was involved? What resources were used to encourage play opportunities?

From my own childhood I can vividly remember playing and feeling as if I could do anything I wanted and be anyone I wanted to be. I remember the laughter, the competitions, the ‘crowds’ – my childhood play memories involved groups of children playing together, socializing, negotiating and problem-solving; although, at the time, I would not have identified the types of learning that would occur during my play.

I also remember adults calling to me to ‘come in’, that ‘that was enough playing’, ‘stop playing’, ‘it’s getting too dark’, ‘you’re making a mess’, and ‘you’ll get yourself dirty’. I felt as if I was being punished or denied my privilege of wanting to play and the effects this would have on me. Now, as a mother, educator and emerging researcher,

I realize just how important it was for me to play – the need to play and the wonderful opportunities that were created through play to explore, investigate and discover new knowledge, new learning and new adventures. I was also very vividly shown my own family’s views of what I was doing. Unless I stop and consciously reflect on my practice I find myself thinking about play in the ways my parents and other adults did back then.

Despite the training that Cook Islands teachers have received from their respective tertiary education providers, they have often found themselves conflicted between what they understood about theories of play and what they actually encouraged or discouraged with children as they engaged in play. Teachers at the conference shared that although they understood that play was beneficial for young children they felt challenged by their own resistance to resolving this conflict. In addition teachers became somewhat disenchanted by some of the long held practices that had gone unchallenged within some of the ECE centres and *punanga reo*. There was a contradiction between the theory and the practice. The need to advocate for play had no longer become a priority for them. For example, one teacher shared her frustration in the following quote that best sums up what other teachers were saying.

I know that there are times when I can see that children are really interested in what they are doing, in their play – you can see that they are really concentrating and focused, and a lot of energy has gone into what they are engaged in. You see children negotiating and problem solving, learning to work together and pretending to be this or that, and then, because of time and what has to happen next with the programme, I have to stop what they are doing. I don’t like it and I can see that this upsets the children, but that’s what happens.

When children are engaged in play, as described in the above quote, where it is free-flowing and not teacher-directed, there is a tendency to place less value on this type of play. Those who are uninformed about the importance of free-flowing play tend to value play only when it is structured and initiated by adults. Cook Islands teachers expressed the need for uninterrupted time for children to play but felt compelled to provide some kind of structure, reverting back to accepted practices within the centre. One teacher shared her reason for this.

I know how important play is, but parents sometimes, not all the time, want to see their children doing something that is ‘educational’ in their eyes.

The ‘educational’ is explained as children working and doing something perceived as more productive. Producing paintings and drawings were regarded as providing educational experiences. Teachers may feel obligated to carry out the expectations of parents, produce evidence of children’s learning by way of worksheets and other related tasks. This has been noted as being the situation in some case studies with Pacific Island parents who do not see the value of play in itself (Hughes, 2004; Leaupepe 2008b; 2010a). The assumption is that if children are using skills that encourage writing, then they are learning and not “playing”. Advocating for children’s play is something that

teachers need to be able to articulate with authentic belief and passion. As child-centred early childhood approaches recommend, children need to be physically active in safe and secure situations where they can use their senses, think creatively and relate to each other. All this can be achieved through active exploration of play.

Parents can be influential in the kinds of learning that can occur within an ECE environment, however, so the challenge for Cook Islands teachers is their ability to convince Cook Islands parents of the need for children to play and the benefits play has for their learning and development. Another teacher shared her experience of a parent expressing concern for her child playing in the following quote.

You know our parents mean well, but sometimes it can be hard when they don't have that knowledge. I was once like that too. I had a mum come and talk to me about her daughter, coming home with paint on her clothes or dirty from the sandpit. She didn't like her daughter coming home 'messed up' even though we encourage our parents to bring extra clothing. You know, I like messy play, working with children outdoors and the potential for learning, seeing children engaged in fantasy or make believe play. This mum reminded me of how my own mother didn't want me to play outside, cause I would do all sorts of things, whenever I could, I would play, climb trees, swim, running with my friends, pretending, lots of fun.

For this teacher, her commitment and passion for children to be given opportunities to play is met with disapproval and is reminder of how her own mother would not allow her to play. Despite her understanding of and benefits of play she is reluctant to continue providing such experiences.

Another example that provided insight into the understandings about play and its implications for practice was in the area of teacher-child interactions. Cook Islands teachers expressed that encouraging some forms of children's play was challenging because of the nature of play. When children pretended to be superheros or engaged in rough-and-tumble play, or play that had been associated with violence, like gun-play, it was not encouraged. There were various reasons as to why. Some had shared their own personal stance towards such types of play and felt that it was encouraging children to be aggressive and violent.

What teachers did not reflect upon was the ways in which through play and active exploration teachers validate children's lived experiences and realities. Children whose lives were involved with the use of guns for hunting purposes were cut off from sharing about these experiences. Teachers need to consider whether this form of 'acting out' was harmful to self and/or others. Children who may have come from war-torn countries, who have seen guns and violence, role-playing what they had lived through, were being discouraged to play and asked to stop what they were doing. One teacher shares her experience.

We had two children, both from different countries – they were from the refugee countries. And they would pretend to shoot each other, running around the centre. I would tell them that we don't play with guns. They

would turn blocks into guns; anything that they seemed to get their hands on became guns. My thought was, No! No guns, that's making them get rough with each other.

This one-shared experience sparked a lot of conversations regarding what was appropriate play for children, and was very useful for teachers in order to express themselves. It was not about who was right or wrong in this situation, but about the ability of teachers to justify why they believed this to be so. There is so much that can be learned from such discussions. This was an opportunity to think about how one's own biases can inform the types of play that are encouraged. It would be useful for teachers to consider how their own values and beliefs about certain types of play can enhance or hinder children's learning.

Drawing from the findings of my own play-related research that explored Samoan and Tongan student teachers' views of play (Leaupepe, 2008a), I found that the narratives related by this group of Cook Islands teachers were similar in nature to experiences of the participants recorded in my case study. They shared similar childhood play memories and recalled play episodes occurring within a peer grouping that took place outdoors and which involved no adult participation. According to these teachers it was within these types of play sequences that friendships were nurtured and the ability to care and show empathy for others developed. Like my research participants, Cook Islands teachers recalled their parents' attitudes towards play as one of a direct lack of encouragement. Parents and adult members of the extended family would not encourage children to play because they did not approve of their children playing but preferred their children to work. A range of household chores needed to be completed and were deemed more important and relevant to the communal and village way of life (Leaupepe, 2009; 2010a). Such strong familial influences during childhood still impact on the ways in which they themselves, as adults and early childhood teachers, viewed play.

Following the keynote address, a variety of workshops was conducted in which I was a part of a team of facilitators. The workshops consisted of five forty-five-minute rotational stations and focused on the following topics: making relevant links to the essential learning areas through play; heuristic play for infants and toddlers; outdoor play within natural environments; socio-dramatic play, and active movement through play for young children. For many of the attendees who participated in the conference, the opportunity to share their early experiences of play was a thought provoking exercise.

Concluding thoughts

I have very fond childhood memories of play and its positive influence on my lifelong love of learning. Therefore I am very passionate about my crucial role as a teacher when providing opportunities for children to play. After the keynote address and workshops were completed, I had a conversation with Mrs Ina Hermann, support chief executive for the Ministry of Education for the Cook Islands. She thanked me and expressed her pleasure that the theme of play had been addressed, discussed and reflected upon.

Ina and the many others who had participated in the conference were reminded once again about the important role of play in a young child's learning and development. Ina Herman supported the need for more professional development within the ECE sector on the concept of play within a Cook Islands cultural context, although she also realized that achieving this would be difficult. Yet during the conference an important beginning had been made. It is hoped that this paper, and the contributions by the Cook Islands early childhood teachers at the conference, can provide a platform for further discussions regarding the importance of play, for affirming the role of teachers as advocates for children's right to play, and working alongside parents in encouraging play experiences.

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Multiple challenges in research within the *fa'asamoa* context

Patisepa Tuafuti

Abstract

This paper discusses a research project with the Samoan community in Auckland, and the possibilities and challenges of adopting *fa'asamoa* protocols in the research. The paper is a personal narrative, which begins with a brief summary of the research topic, followed by a recount of the research journey with all its subsequent twists and turns. The narrative will summarise the challenges that I have encountered in pursuing a *fa'asamoa* approach to the research and suggest some ways forward in light of it.

Keywords: *fa'asamoa* protocol, unpredictability, complexity, challenges, bilingual/immersion

Introduction: Backgrounding the Study

The research study discussed in this paper focuses on the establishment of Samoan bilingual/immersion units in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Centres in primary and intermediate schools in Auckland. The study, which began in 2004, initially aimed to involve centres, schools and parents. However, after a year or so, it was decided to remove centres and schools from the study and focus on parents only. Such a decision was based on my observations that parents were often silent during initial combined meetings with schools and centres.

After this change in focus, there were some negotiations with a Samoan language/culture expert on an appropriate Samoan interpretation of the topic. Through emails and a face-to-face meeting with Professor Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, a Samoan title, '*Pululima Faifai Pea*' was discussed and I finally accepted it as the title of the research study. *Pululima Faifai Pea* is not a literal translation of the English version of 'the establishment of bilingual/immersion units.' The rationale behind the Samoan title reflects on-going work, roles and responsibilities that the Samoan community in Auckland have contributed in the establishment of bilingual/immersion units in ECE Centres and schools.

The research can also be described as a self-study in the sense that not only is it an investigation of a specific topic, but it is also a focus on how I, as a Samoan researcher, educator and community member, study and learn to overcome/create challenges throughout a research journey. Changing the focus of the research highlighted the importance of collecting parents' narratives in relation to the establishment of bilingual/immersion programmes. The current focus of the research is thus about parents' storying and re-storying of their experiences. Whether they are personal, communal or

representational stories, they are significant sources of data in any type of research that involves Pacific people.

Using the ‘vaka’ metaphor, the research participants and I launched this outrigger together in partnership, with a dream that it would be a smooth journey. However, the slippery nature of the oars has caused more challenges in the journey and a much-prolonged timeframe for completion. Having said that, the most satisfactory experience that I have endured are the on-going encouragements, not only from my crew but also from family, friends and the Samoan community. A couple of examples of such encouraging words are; “*Ua a mai le kakou sikaki?*” How is our study?; “*Fa’amalosi ma kakalo!*” Be strong and pray! Such inspired comments and encouragements are reminders of my commitment and obligation to the participants and community to complete the research project with integrity.

Multiple challenges

The sequence of multiple challenges as documented below is not necessarily in the same order as they happened during the research journey but is employed as a heuristic device to highlight key aspects of the research process.

Learning to say “No”

Learning to say no to community and family responsibilities is a challenge. I have asked more questions than given answers since the beginning of the study. How can I possibly distance myself from schools and the Samoan community when they request support for the development of their Samoan bilingual/immersion programmes? How can I distance myself when there is a death or a serious life-threatening illness of a family member? How can I turn our students away when they ask for extra support and guidance? These are just examples of some ongoing questions that create the multiple challenges that I have faced. The sacrifices that we face as Pasifika educators and researchers are beyond anybody else’s comprehension. Although I made a commitment at the beginning of the study plan to place communal and family responsibilities aside during the research, that plan has never been followed through. The fact is that real-life commitments and responsibilities are unpredictable. Inside and around a Pacific circle of academic life dwells a rough patched circular pathway. It is easy to follow the circle but when you come to the rough patches you stop and seek for appropriate resources to mend them. In my view, it is simple to document the elimination of family and communal responsibilities in a study plan but it is definitely a struggle to follow them through. I have no doubts that other Pacific researchers have experienced the same challenges. However, in my case, learning to say no to community and family commitments and responsibilities, although it is being done in a positive manner, has taught me to say no to ‘others’. ‘Others’ in this context refer to those exclusively using westernised research methods and methodology, or solely Samoan cultural methods and models, especially if they were used trivially or narrowly.

I have learnt the ‘others’ idea from Michel Foucault’s writings as they are my primary source of readings on power relations. I first stumbled across his work in 1996 when I was struggling with my Master Degree in Linguistics. Since then, Foucault’s

poststructuralist ideas are important ingredients of my critical analysis framework. Hence, I am constantly trying to overcome being disappointed and frustrated by a tokenistic approach that still frames the knowledge wealth and wisdom of Pacific children and their extended communities as ‘problem’ or ‘deficits’ (see May, 2009; McComish, May & Franken, 2006; McCaffery & McFall, 2010; McCaffery & Tuafuti, 2003, Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005 for further discussion).

Searching for a culturally appropriate methodology

Unpredictable challenges were faced when I began searching for a culturally appropriate research methodology. I was aware that my study positioned itself within the qualitative research paradigm, although it also included as a minor component a quantitative survey via a questionnaire.

I began my reading with exploring the nature of qualitative research literature. To name a few readings from western perspectives, I made connections with Denzin and Lincoln (2000 & 2005), Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, (2000), Creswell, (2002), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Lichtman (2006). These theorists’ perceptions of qualitative research highlight its dynamic nature as being a “complex historical field” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 2). Such a field has its own links with interconnected fields, disciplines and interpretive practices for a researcher to gain better understanding of the ‘phenomenon’ in question.

Qualitative research is also described as “fluid and ever-changing”, as having a dynamic nature because it employs and follows complex ways of doing things (Lichtman, 2006, p. 9). Creswell (2002) describes qualitative research as a conceptual “civic” of participation and collaboration between a researcher and participants with on-going complex moral dialogues (p. 49). This is also about the study of contexts and experiences, as they exist rather than “contriving artificial situations and experiments” (Lichtman, 2006, p. 11).

From my reading about the nature of qualitative research, I then began to explore more about three common characteristics that are relevant for this research. The three characteristics are: naturalistic, collaborative and holistic inquiries. I revisited the same literature with the additions of McMillan (2008), Gomm (2004), and Reason (1988). Naturalistic inquiry is one of the “distinguishing characteristics of most qualitative research”, according to McMillan (2008, p. 272). This is because behaviour and the sharing of real-life experiences are best understood when they occur in natural settings, as the interpretation and meanings of shared experiences rely heavily on contexts. The other characteristic is collaborative inquiry. This occurs when all those involved in a research project work together fully as co-researchers and all participants are encouraged to contribute to the discussion of a phenomenon and build authentically collaborative relationships. Holistic inquiry is the final characteristic of qualitative research that drew my attention. The term ‘holistic’ or ‘wholeness’ means that a researcher and co-researchers (or participants) belong together and all partake in each other’s discussion. Hence, participation is an implicit aspect of holistic inquiry as the above-mentioned sources comprehensively discussed.

However, useful though they were, these western methodological approaches

still did not give me enough validation of my cultural identity as a Pacific researcher, working in Pacific research contexts, so I looked further.

Perspectives on indigenous based research

I have also engaged in an on-going interest in reading Maori and Pacific (especially Samoan) indigenous-based research in relation to language/culture. Increasingly, there is documentation of approaches to conducting research with Pacific people. Tanielu (2004) and Utumapu (1998) discuss important issues in relation to research with the Samoan communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Samoa. Tanielu, in her research on literacy education, language, reading and writing in the *A'oga a le Faiife'au*, which refers to the Pastor's School of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS), discusses the merging of the *fa'asamoa* (Samoan culture) and the *fa'apalagi* (western education). The merging system, according to Tanielu, had made a huge impact on maintaining and retaining the Samoan language. Tanielu also emphasises the importance of using Samoan cultural beliefs and values in research methods. Utumapu (1998) in her study of the Samoan language nests also emphasises the significant roles of the core values of the *fa'asamoa* in her research, especially when more than half of the language nests researched were church operated. Le Tagaloa's (1996) documentation of references to the creation of the Samoan alphabet and the written language by the missionaries also shows positive outcomes for children and their families when the *fa'asamoa* and the *fa'apalagi* systems were merged, regardless of the arguments in relation to powerful and colonised processes used. And yet, even after reading all these studies, I was still unclear as to how best to proceed methodologically.

Other Pacific research that I currently have a critical interest in reading more about, include Anae (2007; 2010) on the Samoan cultural concept of '*teu le va*', as a research approach. My critical interest to read more about this new approach, is based on my beliefs and values of the multiples sacred meanings of '*teu le va*' in the *fa'asamoa* context. Hence, any research inclined to be based on the '*teu le va*' needs to include the sacredness and negotiation of identities between the researcher and researched. It is not just about building relationships, as the meaning of the concept may encourage the researched to respect the researcher, and therefore keep their silence. Avegalio's (2009) story on both his academic and cultural journey highlights the importance of wealth and capital, in Samoan indigenous contexts, in which prioritisation of human need rather than profit is paramount in any Pasifika research. These commentators helped me to explore further the challenge of combining both the *fa'asamoa* and western perceptions in my research without demeaning or belittling our *fa'asamoa* protocols. Spirituality, language and cultural practices of respect, service and negotiation of identities between the researcher and the researched, must be practised in research with Pacific people. I was asked to do a presentation about my research to an audience of Pacific educators and researchers. There were challenging questions asked in relation to my 'blended methodology' and concerns about using such methods instead of a 'pure' Samoan methodology, if indeed one exists. Questions such as 'why don't you use a pure '*fa'afaletui* methodology?' 'What is this phenomenological-*fa'afaletui* all about? It is not a Samoan method'. Such challenges have given me more strength to find out

if there is such a thing as a ‘pure Samoan research methodology’. Although it sounded promising and exciting, it was soon learned that a pure Samoan research methodology is not ‘challenge free’.

The challenge that I have experienced, and I am certain that other Pacific researchers have experienced, is the struggle to make Pacific knowledge, beliefs and values systems legitimate in research, formal education and the academy. And yet, because I am a product of a colonial reality, a complete ‘break’ from dominant westernised ideas would likely be just a forceful, short-term, tokenistic exercise. My story and re-storying that I am trying to express in this paper is a combination of the intersection of many complex threads of reality. This has caused the back and forth movement that I have encountered in searching for a research methodology that suits me as a Samoan researcher. Searching for such a methodology is necessarily a dynamic, contradictory process.

Tamasese, Peteru et al. (2005), in their investigation of Samoan perspectives on mental health and culturally appropriate services, which use the Samoan concept of *fa’afaletui* interchangeably as both a method and a methodology, refer to a “critical process of weaving (tui) together of all the different expressions of knowledge from within various groups” (pp. 300- 303). But again, this is only a small component of the ‘wholeness’; thus, the search continues.

Samoan indigenous writer, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi (2009) writes extensively about the importance of blending philosophies and methodologies in policy settings and research. Tui Atua suggests that any policy and research about Pacific peoples needs to be congruent with Pacific worlds. Tui Atua continues by asserting that “Pacific people should draw on the strengths, understandings and meanings of their worlds and have their own role models leading [the research]”. If this approach is adopted, according to Tui Atua, Pacific peoples will “offer rich new paradigms, greater diversity and colour in practice, and the warm connections of humanity with land, sea and spirituality”. *E iloa le lima lelei o le tufuga i le soofau* (the mark of good statecraft is shown in blending idiosyncrasy) (p. 91).

I continued with my re-reading process of different Pacific research methods and methodologies from experts such as Konai Helu-Thaman’s metaphor of *kakala* (1996). Other Pacific research models include Vaioleti’s (2006) metaphor of *talanoa*, which he refers to as part of the phenomenological family; *tivaevae*, a Cook Island research model, and so forth. All the above-mentioned Pacific metaphorical models and concepts are important in research, but being important is not enough. I tend to agree with Tupuola’s (2007) argument that any researcher who does research with Pacific peoples’ needs to have a “full understanding of Pacific knowledge and an awareness of Pacific cultures”. Such knowledge, according to Tupuola, has been “absorbed from other dominant discourses and ideologies” (p. 54). However, being aware of Pacific knowledge and culture as Tupuola emphasises is one thing, doing something about it is another. When I read the above research models, I created more challenges for myself as a researcher. Challenges include critiquing my own colonised judgment and view of research; grasping for clarification of various Pacific research approaches and their interconnectedness to westernised perspectives; and, the most critical challenge of all, critiquing the ‘*teu le va*’ as a research approach.

I strongly believe that the concept of '*teu le va*' in research can cause the researched to be too respectful towards the researcher, with the effect that their voices will still be unheard. Being respectful is also about identity, ethical behaviour and relying on Pacific ways of knowing and being. Hence, the Pacific ways of knowing including respect between people with status [researcher] and the 'others' [researched]. Because of that respect, robust research results 'about' and 'with' Pacific people would be debatable when '*teu le va*' is used as a research methodology.

To capture the complexity of this research, I also turned to some Maori indigenous-based research for guidance. Smith's (1999) comprehensive discussion of 'Indigenous Methodologies and Kaupapa Maori Research' has given me an insight into how the *fa'asamoa* core values and principles of *alofa* (love); *tautua* (service) and *va fealoaloa'i* (respect) can be integrated into my research methodology. According to Smith (1999), Kaupapa Maori Research is "related to being Maori, connected to Maori philosophy and principles, takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Maori, the importance of Maori language and culture, and is connected with the struggle for autonomy over own cultural well being" (p.185). "Kaupapa Maori is a discourse that has emerged and is legitimated from within the Maori community" (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 63). The concept of *whanau* in Kaupapa Maori Research Methodology, as Smith (1999) and Bishop (1996) discuss, aligns with the *fa'asamoa* concepts of family, which refers to extended *aiga* or *fanau*, village and church family. Bishop (1989) and Smith (1999) talk about the importance of the concept of *whanau* as a "supervisory and organisational structure for handling research" (Smith, 1999, p. 185). In relation to my research journey, the *whanau* notion can be used as a concept within the focus groups' discussions, which enables the participants to articulate their lived-experiences in a 'bound relationship.'

Revisiting qualitative research literature

Revisiting qualitative research literature also drew my attention to the concept of phenomenology and phenomenological research, which I began to explore in depth and with enthusiasm. Qualitative literatures that I have encountered often referred to Edmund Husserl, a German mathematician who was a key early proponent of phenomenology. However, the more entangled I became in the complexity of Husserl's concept of phenomenology, the more I became puzzled. A phenomenological concept of 'bracketing,' which refers to researcher's awareness of preconceptions and assumptions in order to 'bracket them off', was a significant challenge to me as a Pacific researcher. Such a challenge was based on the fact that I wanted to be actively involved in sharing lived experiences, including assumptions and beliefs, with the participants. It took a while for me to grasp the concept of 'bracketing', or to stand back from my comfort zone and just listen. Unfortunately, when I faced more unexpected developments and challenges, and with my enthusiasm to join the discussion, the 'bracketing' idea was thrown out of the window. Having said that, after reading and exploring more about phenomenology and the Samoan indigenous based research discussed earlier, I decided to employ the concept of phenomenology as a key aspect of the research methodology.

Making a sharp ‘U-turn’ in my research methodology

As I read more about phenomenology, I made one further accidental ‘U turn’ when I encountered the term ‘*bricolage*’ while reading Mazzei’s (2007) book, *Inhabited silence in qualitative research: Putting poststructuralist theory to work*. I then faced a dilemma of shifting from ‘phenomenology’ and putting all my attention into exploring ‘bricolage’. From Mazzei, (2007), I explored Denzin, (1989), Denzin & Lincoln (2000), Kincheloe, (2001, 2003 & 2005), Kincheloe, & Berry, (2004) and more. The French word ‘bricolage’ refers to a ‘handyman or handy woman who makes use of the tools available to complete a task’. Kincheloe, (2001) discusses and conceptualises the word in relation to research – in particular, how bricolage offers an insight into multiple dimensions, relationships and interconnections among phenomena under investigated. My brief reading about ‘bricolage’ grew out of my curiosity and openness to learning new ideas. I have yet to incorporate the concept into my research methodology, however, as I am still exploring the methodological implications of the approach to the study.

My Research Methodology

Searching for a culturally appropriate methodology has taken most of my research time and energy to date in relation to this research study. I have learnt from indigenous based research of the significance of utilising traditions, values and beliefs in research and conducting research with people rather than about people, which is about inclusion and empowerment of the whole family and community to partake in discussions. The writings explored have also provided me with a critique of westernised research, power relations between western perspectives and indigenous research methods and methodologies, issues of debate on ethics and validity, and on who does research for whom and for whose benefits. A key learning from the research traditions that I have discussed here is that research is multi-dimensional and multi-methodological, hence there is no ‘pure *fa’asamoa*’ research methodology.

Revisiting Fa’afaletui

To conceptualise the term ‘fa’afaletui’ in this study, I firstly defined the word as used in this study from a linguistic perspective. *Fa’a* is the causative prefix used with a large number of bases and serving many separate functions, which cause someone or something to have or to do something, and *fale* means a house. The word *tui* in this concept means to ‘thread through’. *Faa-fale-tui* is thus used in this study both as a verb and as a noun. As a verb it refers to the methodology of sharing lived experiences. As a noun it refers to the results of the actual sharing. The term also refers to the process and the product of the *fa’afaletui*, which aims at building close bonds between the researcher and participants through collaboration. *Fa’afaletui* includes ‘others’, which refer to the Samoan idiomatic expression of *teu le va* that reinforces the *fa’asamoa* protocol and community structure of gerontocracy among the participants, and the negotiation of identities. I also used the other idiomatic expression of ‘*aua le toia le va*, which is ‘a call for order,’ within the *fa’afaletui* methodology. Such an intervention is important to the concept of *fa’afaletui* in this research, but not within a coercive powerful manner.

For example, there were some interruptions during focus groups' discussions when enthusiasm to speak overruled respect in turn-taking process. Hence I had to intervene with '*fa'amolemole 'aua le toia le va*' - please don't disrespect the space.

I am still exploring such a challenge with Samoan language/culture experts. At this point, I have termed my research methodology a 'blended one' called '*phenomenological-fa'afaletui*'. This combined approach has the potential to challenge both existing Samoan and mainstream research mentalities and perceptions.

Discussion

Now that I have arrived at this place I realise that what has driven and sustained me in my research journey is my passion. My passion for Pacific children's bilingualism, biliteracy and academic success within the Aotearoa/New Zealand educational system, and the associated empowering of their parents and communities, is derived from multiple threads of personal, colonial, family, cultural, spiritual and educational experiences. That passion has driven me to a more complex educational life. My intellectual storage of thoughts has been shaped by the 'Kura Kaupapa' move of decolonising western methodologies in research, our Samoa Head of State, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi's wisdom, Samoan linguistic professor Fanaafi Le Tagaloa words of guidance, and Foucault's poststructuralist ideas. These various forces, plus my cultural understandings and beliefs within the *fa'asamoa* context such as the need for intervention, mean my research journey in the current education system is a struggle, albeit one that is exciting and rewarding.

Currently, I am facing more challenges in my research including developing *fa'afaletui* methodology to the next level of conceptualisation, which I cannot do alone. I need to read more literature on the *fa'asamoa* and its evolution in research in the 21st century. My desire is to be able to conceptualise our *fa'asamoa* methods and methodologies in depth within academic research, as our children, family/communal historical experiences are all parts of our present and future. I would like to finish this narrative with words from Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese and Foucault.

Tui Atua Tamasese Ta'isi (2009, pp. 52-69), in '*Fa'asamoa speaks to my heart and soul*', states,

Resistance in the modern context is sometimes induced by the perception that the performance of ritual and the observance of customs and culture are demeaning and irrelevant. (p. 52)

Words from Foucault (1998) are also inspiring,

I am fascinated by history and the relationship between personal experience and those events of which we are a part. I think that is the nucleus of my theoretical desires. (p. 124)

In-depth conceptualization of *fa'afaletui*, including idiomatic expressions such as *teu le va* and '*aua le toia le va*', takes time, courage, patience and strong ethical beliefs, and presents multiple challenges. The concept of *fa'afaletui*, as a methodology for this research, is not about explanation of any theory and its connection to nature; it is more an explanation of people's relationship to nature.

Conclusion

I have discussed various Pacific models and Kura Kaupapa Maori research approaches, which highlight the importance of including cultural values and beliefs in research with Pacific people, and the need to search for multiple culturally appropriate approaches. Research is dynamic and complex; hence there is not a 'pure *fa'asamoa* research method' because the knowledge and lived-experiences of researcher and researched are educationally, historically and culturally influenced. There is a need for Pacific researchers and for those who research with Pacific people or community to be exposed to multiple epistemologies, methods and methodologies, especially when research is based on people's lives. There is also a need to explore specific methodologies and methods that are commensurate with Pacific historical and cultural traditions, within a transformative paradigm of research.

In this methodological journey, my journey of realisation, consciousness and subjectivity of language change/loss and cultural survival has made me stronger.

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***Talanoa*: How can it be used effectively as an indigenous research methodology with Tongan people?**

Mo'ale 'Otunuku

Abstract

The nature of Pasifika peoples conducting indigenous education research in New Zealand, is now contested by some scholars and researchers. These scholars and researchers claim that the standard procedures for doing research on indigenous peoples are inappropriate and therefore advocate new, more grounded approaches. This raises questions such as, what do these research studies look like and can they actually be effective? This paper discusses the reality of doing *talanoa* research with a group of Tongan parents and caregivers of secondary school students in New Zealand. The research aimed to obtain rich descriptions of how the participants understand New Zealand school processes. The research was able to collect valuable data and, at the same time, observe participants' cultural values. It demonstrates that in undertaking *talanoa* focus groups with Pasifika participants, researchers will sometimes need to depart from more task-oriented practices in order to successfully collect data while practising appropriate protocols with the participants.

Key words: Tongan education, research methodology, *talanoa*, indigenous, cultural competency, autonomy, respect, reciprocity

Introduction

Over the past few decades, Indigenous Research Methodology (IRM) has been promoted as an alternative paradigm for doing research that involves indigenous people and issues. In New Zealand and the Pacific, this promotion has seen the recent emergence of a small but strong group of Pasifika, Māori, and non-Pasifika academics whose scholarly writings on educational issues aim to deconstruct and reclaim Pasifika indigenous education. They propose a policy and methodology underpinned by the cultural systems of indigenous peoples.

Most prominent in this claim are Smith (1999), Bishop (1998), Thaman (1992, 1996, 2003b), Baba at el (2004) and Taufe'ulungaki (2002). Smith (1999), an internationally-renowned researcher in Māori and indigenous education, in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, instigates an extensive critique of the domination of traditional Western paradigms of research and knowledge. She calls for a new agenda for indigenous research that has a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values that inform research practices. She sets out guidelines for non-indigenous researchers to improve their practices that involve indigenous communities, especially

her own Māori community, and discusses the fundamental issue of whether it is appropriate for non-indigenous researchers to be involved in research with indigenous people.

The push for a new agenda in IRM saw the development of the Kaupapa Māori research and principles to guide research that involve Māori. Māori principles such as self-determination, validating and legitimating cultural aspirations and identity, incorporating culturally preferred pedagogy, mediating socio-economic and home difficulties, incorporating cultural structures which emphasise the 'collective' rather than the 'individual', and a collective vision/philosophy, were identified to guide research that involve Māori people (G. H. Smith, 1990). In 2001, guidelines for doing educational research on Pasifika peoples in New Zealand were released which embraced Pasifika cultural values (Anae, Coxon, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001). These guidelines provided the foundation for the *Guidelines on Pacific Health Research* released in 2004 by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRCNZ) to assist research with Pasifika peoples in New Zealand. Though aimed specifically at health research, the guiding principles for maintaining ethical relationships are relevant to all research into different aspects of Pasifika peoples' situations. These guiding principles: relationships, respect, cultural competency, meaningful engagement, reciprocity, utility, rights, balance, protection, capacity building, and participation, need to be developed, cultivated and maintained when researching Pasifika peoples (Health Research Council [HRC], 2005).

The Study

Using focus groups, the aim of the study on which this paper draws was to explore experiences of schooling for Tongan parents and caregivers of secondary school students. The aim was to obtain a baseline qualitative description of how a sample of Tongan parents understood New Zealand schooling experiences. This qualitative research was undertaken by using a Pasifika approach (*talanoa*) to focus group discussions. The responses from the participants were examined for conceptions and metaphors used by the Tongan communities concerned about the purposes and characteristics of schooling.

After reviewing issues in Tongan education overseas, as well as drawing on the researcher's insights as a Tongan parent and a teacher, four issues were identified as featuring strongly in connections with Tongan people schooling abroad – aims of schooling, underachievement, responsibilities, school choice. These four issues were seen as important to be explored in the parents' focus groups.

Methodology and Method

Focus groups have the potential to provide in-depth information in a relatively short period of time. While the validity of results will be high, there will be questions about the reliability of data due to chance artefacts associated with using a small number of participants. The number of participants in a focus group is small, so a critique of such intensive, qualitative data collection is its weak basis for generalisations and for detection of differences at the group level. However, regardless of the weakened

ability to generalise from the results, a focus group has real strengths. These include the ability to collect large amounts of data on a topic in a limited time, the opportunity for a great variety of interactions with the participants, and the chance for the moderator to encourage and to ask for elaborations and clarifications.

Talanoa

A recent IRM development is *talanoa* (Halapua, 2002; Vaioleti, 2003), a combination of two Tongan words, *'tala'* which means to tell or to talk, and *'noa'* which means anything or nothing in particular. Generally, it is a Tongan term for people who engage in conversation. *Talanoa* allows group conversations to develop over a considerable time-period in which the focus is determined by the interests of the participants. The nature, degree, direction, place, and time of the *talanoa* are determined by the participants themselves, and their immediate surroundings and worldviews. It is a dynamic interaction of story-telling, debating, reflecting, gossiping, joking, sharing families' genealogies, food and other necessities. It is talking about everything or anything that participants are interested in. *Talanoa* helps build better understanding and co-operation within and across human relationships.

Talanoa is consistent with the Pasifika education research guidelines that suggest the best research methodologies for Pasifika people are sensitive to contemporary Pasifika contexts, capable of embracing existing Pasifika notions of collective ownership, collective shame, collective authoritarian structures, and capable of withstanding the test of time (Anae, et al., 2001). This is also consistent with the ethical research principles listed by the Pacific Health Council, in particular, the principles of respect, cultural competency, meaningful engagement, and reciprocity (Health Research Council [HRC], 2005). Another significant attribute is that *Talanoa* may also occur using Pasifika languages like Tongan.

Participants

The participants in the Tongan parents' focus group included eleven parents and/or caregivers who had children in secondary schools. The participants were recruited from one of the Tongan-language Methodist churches in Auckland, New Zealand. The church is divided into smaller groups known as the *kalasi'aho*, similar to a cell-group in an English church. The members vary for each *kalasi'aho* depending on the overall population of the church. Big churches have between twenty to thirty families in one *kalasi'aho* while smaller churches have fewer families or members in it. Usually, the families within *akalasi'aho* are either related (extended families), have common ancestral heritage (coming from the same place in Tonga) or are friends.

A quick oral survey brought out these facts from the participants. There were six males and five females. They ranged from 37 to 68 years old. All of them were educated in Tonga before they came to New Zealand. Years of residence in New Zealand ranged from one-and-a-half to 37 years. In terms of language use in participants' homes, for seven Tongan is the language mostly used, with a mixture of both Tongan and English for three homes and mostly English for one home. All participants have some senior students at secondary school.

Analysis

A qualitative categorical analysis approach was seen as appropriate for analysing the data. Qualitative categorical analysis refers to the process of developing and applying codes to data. It involves the systematic organization of data into themes, categories or groupings that are like, similar or homogeneous. It is a repeated operation aiming to identify any kind of relationships between data items, and to, then, identify logical relationships among categories of items in order to refine the number of categories to be used in summarising the substance of the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Rose & Sullivan, 1996).

Procedure

Three focus groups were undertaken. Two of the focus groups (teachers teaching Tongan students, and Tongan senior students), were conducted and recorded in English and according to the normal procedure of doing focus groups. Two important elements of focus group processes were observed – the timeframe had to be an hour to an hour and a half at most, and the discussion had to focus on the topics.

Unlike these two groups, the Tongan parents' focus group was conducted in the Tongan language and a procedure for translation was implemented. Two important aspects of *talanoa* - an absence of a timeframe and deviation from the focus - meant that making connections between researchers and participants -either through family, relatives, school mates, place of birth, or shared acquaintances - took nearly half the time prescribed by the literature on focus groups. The discussions of this focus group were conducted in Tongan, transcribed in Tongan, and then translated into English. Transcribing of the tapes started as soon as the focus groups were completed. A Tongan teacher (research assistant) transcribed the tapes. He was enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (BEd) programme at the University of Auckland. He was born, educated as a secondary school teacher, and taught in Tonga for more than ten years before migrating with his family to New Zealand. He transcribed the parents' discussion into written Tongan language.

The Tongan transcription was translated to English by a Tongan linguist who has been a language teacher for many years. Copies of the Tongan transcription and the English translation were sent to three other Tongan teachers to check for consistency in meaning. The English translation of the Tongan transcripts, thus, was deemed to be functionally equivalent in content and substance to the Tongan transcription (Di & Nida, 2006; Werner & Campbell, 1973).

Talanoa: Guiding Principles and Challenges

Tongans take considerable pride in their Christian faith and their formal education. This is significant given that the target participants were Tongan parents and caregivers of secondary school students. The 2006 census had found that the Tongan ethnic group in New Zealand had a population of 50,478. Those affiliated with a religion made up 90%, of which 98% were Christians (Statistics NZ, 2007). This very high church attendance was a strong factor in the choice of a Tongan church as the venue for the focus group because it provided a familiar and natural setting for the Tongan parent

group. Furthermore, because the *talanoa* sessions were between Tongans, moderated by a Tongan, about an issue that is so central to the lives of Tongans – Tongans success in formal education - Tongan cultural values and principles were both observed and practiced. Both the church venue and cultural protocols were observed and practiced because those were important aspects of life for both the participants and the moderator/researcher.

While the analysis of the data provided insights into the conceptions of schooling of these Tongan parents, some principles of doing research with Tongans were demonstrated and challenges indentified. Below is an attempt to highlight those principles.

Principle 1: Relationship / fekau’aki

When Tongan people meet for the first time, they search to find any connections using *talanoa*. Making connections is an important part of building relationships and locating your participants in their own ‘context’. Bishop (1998) refers to this in the context of Maori as *whakawhanaungatanga*, “the process of establishing family (whanau) relationships, literally by means of identifying, through culturally appropriate means, your bodily linkage, your engagement, your connectedness, and therefore an unspoken but implicit commitment to other people”. When the researcher appreciates the context and location of his participants, his understanding of their individual competencies is enhanced. Trying to make connections on a personal level builds up trust and confidence among participants. This is important because they may only share information with people they trust and confide in. The professional identity was in the background because the researcher wanted to make a connection on a personal level with his participants.

Making a connection on an emotional level with people who are not yet known, is an important part of building relationships. It is often felt by Pacific people that the development of the relationship is integral, and this takes precedence over the importance of the issues or the business at hand. In order to make such a connection, it may require the researcher to shed a powerful professional identity and ‘de-role’ from a ‘professional identity, to connect on a personal level.

(Health Research of New Zealand, 2004, p. 11)

Principle 2: Establishing equality / potupotutatau

The researcher introduced himself to the participants as an equal by his full name, his parents’ names, parents’ ancestral homes and, if needed, grandparents’ names and ancestral homes. To first introduce himself as a professional (researcher, post-graduate or scholar) may generate a feeling of uneasiness and may not help participants to open up and share genuine information. They may see the researcher as an ‘outsider’ so it is vital for the researcher to introduce himself appropriately. The relatively small size of the Tongan community makes it easier for people to find connections among themselves.

The participants, in turn, started to make connections either through family, relatives, school mates, same island, and even someone known to both parties (participants and researcher). This delays the research process but it establishes equality between researcher and the participants.

Principle 3: Establishing appropriate confidentiality / fēfalala'aki

The concept of *fēfalala'aki* (establishing appropriate confidentiality) was observed when the researcher introduced himself at the beginning; he was trying to be accepted as 'one of them' and not to be seen as an 'outsider' by the participants. When participants made connections, they also built up trust and confidence as members of the group. These connections and trust helped participants to open up and make honest contributions to the discussions.

This is a Tongan way of trying to position one's social standing within the socio-spatial worlds of the *talanoa* gathering. It is locating one's identity in space and in relationships, or establishing one's social standing by organizing and connecting their socio-spatial worlds. This is very important for the *talanoa* process because you can only share certain information with certain people depending on the strength of those relationships, positions and connections. This establishment of appropriate confidentiality and trust, through application of *talanoa*, leads to greater honesty.

Principle 4: Meaningful engagement / fe'ilongaki

The concept of *fe'ilongaki* (meaningful engagement) was observed when the participants knew the researcher not only as a researcher and a student, but also by connecting on a personal level. Observing Tongan cultural protocol appropriate to *talanoa*, the participants and the focus of the *talanoa*, which is an important issue to the Tongan community, made the engagement meaningful to all participants. Because he needed to connect to his participants on a personal level, he first introduced himself by reciting his genealogy and heritage; his 'professional identity' as a teacher and a university student came later.

It is also important to understand the participants in their own 'context'. The participants for the parents' focus group were Tongan parents and caregivers of current senior students in secondary schools. As already stated, the vast majority of Tongans attend church, and most attend Tongan-language churches. Since this research focuses on participants with a strong Tongan identity, it was decided to focus on those parents and caregivers attending Tongan-language churches. This was seen as a way of enhancing meaningful engagement, by meeting the participants in their naturally-occurring social circles and using those as the basis of the focus group.

Principle 5: Cultural competency / poto'ianga

The concept of *poto'ianga* (cultural competency) required that the researcher observe Tongan cultural protocol. The researcher knew how to address the gathering appropriately, how to dress for the meeting and the language to be used. It was also important to show humility in the way the researcher talked to the participants, the way he addressed them, and the way he talked about himself, his work and his family. It is not good to be seen as showing off or talking too highly of oneself and family.

An opening and a closing prayer is an important part of any Tongan gathering and the researcher was well aware of that. The focus group started and closed with a prayer, which the researcher asked two members of the group to say. This is a church protocol that a majority of Tongans observe.

Principle 6: Autonomy / tau'atina

The concept of *tau'atina* (autonomy and initiation) was observed when the selection of the participants for the focus group was undertaken by the participants themselves. They also decided the time of the focus group. These small tasks made participants believe in themselves, established their pride, made them feel that they were appreciated, and also empowered them to feel and believe that they are useful members of their own community. Very often, outside people impose agendas on indigenous people without first consulting them, and most often these well intended initiatives fail, simply because indigenous opinions and insights were never sought in the first place. In doing research with indigenous people like Tongans it is important to involve them at the beginning and always seek their inputs and approval of the process.

Principle 7: Respect / feveitokai'aki

Respect is an important part of Tongans life and they believe that people will respect you if you tend to respect them. The moderator during the *talanoa* was respecting his participants by the way he addressed them and the way he dressed up for the meeting. At the same time, *feveitokai'aki* (respecting participants' culture) was practised when the discussions were conducted in the participants' own language, rather than a foreign language that the participants were not confident using. The researcher also asked the participants to decide the time and the venue, and allowed the participants to be involved in making decisions, to take responsibilities and feel ownership of the study, rather than imposing an agenda that participants were not happy with or felt uncomfortable with.

Principle 8: Freedom to disagree / 'atā ke fakaanga'i

During the discussion, there was a disagreement when some participants expressed the view that part of the blame for their children underachievement lay with the church. It was maintained that parents were spending a lot of time at church, leaving their children unsupervised at home and failing to do their homework. Also, that some students spent most of their time in church and youth activities. After various views on this were expressed, one participant wanted to know what they could do to solve that problem if it was right. They agreed that, as parents, they should not allow their children to be involved in any activities during the week. They also agreed to raise the issue with the *kalasi'aho* leaders at the next meeting and to forward their concern to the church authorities.

Principle 9: No enforced, artificial or arbitrary boundary / 'ikai ke fakangatangata

Talanoa has no enforced, artificial or arbitrary boundaries. The benefit of this is that complete and honest information is collected. This principle was demonstrated when, after the first two hours of the focus group discussion, the researcher asked one of the male participants to close the *talanoa* with a prayer. Shortly after the prayer, two female participants excused themselves and the other three females did so about half-an-hour later. However, although the prayer had indicated to the participants that the session was completed, the *talanoa* still went on.

It is culturally appropriate that the females left the males to themselves. Talanoa can also be gender-based depending on the issues discussed and Tongan males will leave the females alone when they know that such needs arise and likewise for their female counterparts. It was after 11p.m. that the *talanoa* was finally called off. By this time, only the male participants were still involved. The researcher's assistant had recorded all the three tapes that she brought plus extra handwritten notes. The one to one-and-a-half hours prescribed by the focus group literature was not relevant in this case.

Principle 10: Reciprocity / fe'inasi'aki

A most important principle governing any relationship among Tongans is reciprocity. This is the sharing of resources and information between members for the benefit of the whole community. When the researcher prepared food for the participants, he was practicing *fe'inasi'aki* (reciprocity). This was to thank them for participating in the focus group. The participants also asked the researcher for another *talanoa* session to inform them of the NCEA frameworks and to discuss issues relating to their children's education further. A *faikava* session was undertaken so the researcher could give back something to his participants even before the findings of the study could be fed back. The researcher also made clear his intention to report back to the Tongan community and schools with his study results.

When the male participants asked the moderator for another session of *talanoa* to clarify NCEA to them, the moderator felt obliged to do so because it is an expected obligation for him. He has asked the community for their time which they have given him so now it was his turn to give back to the community.

Challenges of Talanoa

When employing *talanoa* as a research instrument, the researcher should invest considerable time over several sessions in order to cover the research agenda. At times, the *talanoa* may turn or deviate from the researcher's agenda, deadlines and priorities. However, the researcher allows for these digressions because it is respectful to allow them to happen, and it helps with the rhythm and the flow of *talanoa*. Trust, respect and integrity are important underpinning values if *talanoa* is to happen well.

In formal gatherings, there is a shift from the everyday Tongan language to a metaphorical level of communication called *heliaki*. This therefore created an additional challenge, as considerable insider knowledge is required to correctly interpret the *heliaki* used by people in social gatherings like the funeral, wedding or birthday celebrations. It is doubtful that a lot of Tongans would be able to make appropriate interpretations without this knowledge. It is also doubtful that non-Tongan researchers reading the English transcript would be able to make appropriate interpretations without this knowledge.

Heliaki means to say one thing but mean another, and it requires skill based on cultural knowledge to carry out. *Heliaki* is manifested in metaphor and layers of meaning and is developed by skirting a subject and approaching it repeatedly from different point of views. Encoding hidden meanings and unravelling them layer by layer until they can be understood requires considerable creative skill and imagination.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that *talanoa* is a research method that is culturally sensitive and recognises the participants' social relationship as an appropriate context for collecting data. For this study, while the process of collecting the data was slower, *talanoa* provided an arena where the researcher and his participants' engaged as equals.

In summary, the following research principles were fulfilled by *talanoa*. The principle of building relationship between researcher and the researched was observed. Establishing equality between all the stakeholders of the research was achieved. The appropriate confidentiality was established and cultural practices were always paramount over the research agenda. Meaningful engagement with the participants was an integral part of the research which include respecting the participants' as individuals as well as members of social groups. It also includes respecting the participants' language.

Because the researcher had competency in the Tongan culture, this ensured cultural protocols related to the research were observed; for example, reciprocity, communality and collaboration. Also, understanding that *talanoa* has no enforced, artificial and arbitrary boundary helped the success of the focus group discussions.

Talanoa, when used effectively, will provide important data for researchers. It may be time-consuming but researchers need to ensure there is adequate time in the planning stage of the data collecting process. When carefully prepared and undertaken, however, *talanoa* has the potential to provide in-depth information in a relatively reasonable period of time. The validity of the results also will be high, although there may be questions about the reliability of data due to chance artefacts associated with using a small number of participants. It is, therefore, the prime responsibility of the researcher to create procedures to ensure reliability.

For this study, the information and data collected was of high quality because the whole process of *talanoa* was conducted in a familiar setting observing all the appropriate cultural practices of the participants. Without observing the research principles above, the process of collecting valid data of sufficient quality and quantity might not have occurred.

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Samoan Research Methodology: The *Ula* – A New Paradigm

Seiuli Luama Sauni

Abstract

Current dominant research methodological paradigms evident in applied educational research methods are based on Western values and do not take cognisance of alternate yet equally valid research models or frameworks. This paper suggests a theoretical framework to inform research that is based on explicitly identified principles and values of Samoan culture. The *Ula* model of engagement was designed to maintain and protect the integrity of the relationships between the researcher and participants. In this small scale study, the *Ula* model created a rare opportunity to establish relational acceptance and connections. It provided meaningful, honest, and genuine dialogue between the researcher and participants despite differences based on gender, institutional status and cultural status. The model is offered for consideration as a means for researchers in other cultural contexts to consider and inform their own research practice. The *Ula* model approach is argued to be ethically sound as it addresses issues concerning power relationships when engaging in collaborative evidence-based research, that are characteristic of early childhood educational theory and practice. It is maintained that culturally appropriate research models such as the *Ula* can be used to reflect cultural competency, reciprocity and respect. These are argued to be prerequisites for successful outcomes in Pacific research that should be featured in many more contexts where such concepts are required to be made explicit.

Introduction

Since the 1950s, Samoans have migrated to New Zealand in search of better opportunities for work and education, and in the hopes of ensuring a stronger future for their families. However, success in education for Samoans living in New Zealand has not been easy. The journey to becoming a ‘successful’ person (whatever that might mean) continues to be a struggle in a competitive, multicultural and capitalist society. Despite the difficulties, their resilience and persistence to maintain and sustain Samoan cultural values, beliefs, language and cultural identity have been instrumental in reaching their aspirations. In the 21st century, Samoan people are amongst the many Pacific people in New Zealand who have become part of the professional, educated, middle-class as well as leaders within politics, education, sports, church, university, law, medicine and the arts (Taule’ale’ausumai, 2001).

According to the 2006 census, Samoan New Zealanders are the largest Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand, making up 131,100 (49%) of New Zealand’s Pacific population (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). It is predicted that by 2020, a possible

25% of the eligible workforce in New Zealand would be made up of their numbers (Sutton, Airini & Panara, 2011). It is important, therefore, that Samoan people who have established themselves in New Zealand are enabled to achieve at higher levels in education and therefore economically and socially. With a track record of the education system underperforming for Samoan New Zealanders, new knowledge is needed about how to enable higher levels of success, and new ways of attaining that knowledge through education research. With these goals in mind this article proposes a research methodology drawn from Samoan knowledge, values and practices: the *Ula* model.

The research study this paper draws on explores the experiences of a group of Samoan men who migrated from Samoa in the 1970s. Although they all had previous teaching experience in Samoa, when they arrived in New Zealand, employment was found only in factory work. However, their own desire for better professional status and working conditions, together with the encouragement and support from their families, motivated them to enrol in a Pacific Islands Early Childhood Teacher Education Programme (PIECE) which provided them with new curriculum knowledge, skills and understandings and better equipped them for the teaching profession in New Zealand. These were the first Samoan men to successfully gain a teaching qualification from a pre-service teaching programme which has now enabled them to teach in early childhood centres in New Zealand. Their future is important to the future of our children and the future of New Zealand.

Pacific research models

New Zealand's educational and political landscape is slowly changing as Pasifika people have been able to academically achieve while maintaining their cultural values. Pacific research is both in contrast to and complementary with Western research models. Committed to new knowledge, drawing on sound evidential bases, Pacific research is also epistemologically nuanced to the collective responsibilities and ownership principles inherent and common in Pacific culture, values and practice (Anae, et al, 2001, Health Research Council, 2004).

The introduction of a new research paradigm model, the *Ula*, takes into consideration cultural knowledge, understandings within the family and their individual and collective roles, and responsibilities and ownership frameworks in Samoan society. It provides a holistic approach for nurturing and valuing the relationships which exist within the family, extended family, church, school and workplace. These "patterns of individual and group behaviour, Pacific values, Pacific notions of time, Pacific understandings of knowledge and its value, ownership for things tangible and intangible, gender, class and age relations" (Tupuola, 2006) are all important aspects which need to be considered and should be included when conducting research involving Pasifika peoples.

The *Ula* model is informed by the underpinning theoretical frameworks which are founded on the principles and values of Samoan culture (*fa'asamoa*). *Fa'asamoa* can be described as the Samoan way of doing things. Principles and values are cultural concepts which guide the social behaviour and interactions of Samoan people. Aiono Dr Faanafi Le Tagaloa (1997) describes the importance of understanding our individuality and our cultural identity in Samoan contexts. This is where understanding, acceptance

and appreciation of the 'other' person begins. 'Knowing one's self' and his/her surroundings and environment exemplifies the importance of having this knowledge for attaining wisdom and success. Therefore, *fa'asamoa* is dominated by the concepts of the extended family (*aiga potopoto*), chiefly structure (*fa'amatai*), and ceremonial gift giving and exchanging (*fefa'asoaiga/fesuaiga*). These can be identified as foundational experiences of spirituality for Samoan people that, "pervades every aspect of life from birth to death and commerce to politics, providing a unique and authentic experience" (Twining-Ward, 2002, p368).

There is the need for researchers, both Pasifika and non-Pasifika, to acknowledge culturally inclusive models and conceptual frameworks and accept the perception of scholarship and knowledge of other cultures (Tupuola, 2006). Such models have raised research consciousness as these methodological frameworks should be recognised by non-Pasifika researchers as intellectual and legitimate approaches for research with potential for further exploration and development (Tupuola, 2000). The necessity to take into consideration the culture of participants and to incorporate their culture into the methodological framework and written text should be embraced by Pasifika researchers and non-Pasifika researchers. Using appropriate research models and alternative cultural methodologies in the academic environment is more likely to produce new knowledge and enhance understandings about Pasifika peoples and their issues. Finding culturally inclusive ways for ensuring the inclusion of their cultures, values and beliefs can make a difference for research participation of Pasifika peoples. For the study this paper documents, when appropriate processes and understandings were considered, the relationships, interactions, communications and engagement between the Pasifika researcher and participants was an empowering and enriching experience. The *Ula* model promoted Samoan values and principles within the protocols and practice of "respect, love and service" which are inseparable (McDonald, 2004).

The provision of Pasifika research protocols and guidelines for the Ministry of Education (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu & Finau, 2001), identified key areas of collaborative relationships between Pasifika and non-Pasifika researchers to enhance cross-cultural understanding and skills. Pasifika researchers need to engage in research which reflects and addresses the concerns of Pasifika peoples, educative or otherwise. Pasifika researchers are also challenged to design and develop research models that capture the full meanings of Pasifika knowledge.

Noted here is that 'Pasifika' is a heterogenous term and refers to the migrants and New Zealand born Pacific peoples from the Pacific Islands - mainly Tonga, Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tuvalu and Tokelau - who are living in New Zealand. In the past, the assumption was that one approach for all Pasifika peoples' educational development and achievement would be sufficient. However, Pasifika research by Pasifika peoples and communities using Pacific paradigms is only the beginning of research exploration for greater education success. There is an existing need to continue exploration for new research paradigms using Pasifika epistemological underpinnings so that the final research outcomes are successfully achieved. Diverse cultural groups need theories and models for research that are reflective of their specific cultures and relevant to their, social constructs, social contexts and their own world views "both at an individual

level and collective level of participation” (Anae, 2010, p.5) More importantly, research should also reveal strengths and positive aspects of Pasifika knowledge, scholarship and critique. The *Ula* model offers a Samoan-led approach that will hopefully contribute to Samoan-specific research knowledge which is culturally relevant, authentic and robust.

The Study

The small-scale, qualitative research study reported in this paper was conducted in 2004. It involved four Samoan male student teachers in the Pacific Islands Early Childhood Education diploma programme. The programme was established in 2000 under the umbrella of the former Auckland College of Education, now the Faculty of Education at the University of Auckland. The cultural philosophy, principles, beliefs and values underpinning this qualification were to ensure quality and equity in early childhood education (Alipia, Tuafuti and Suani, 2000). The programme provided an opportunity for men and women from the Pacific Islands to gain a professional teaching qualification that prepared them to work in early childhood centres throughout New Zealand.

The researcher had anticipated the study would be relatively straightforward because both the researcher and the four male participants were Samoan. The researcher felt secure about her ability as a Samoan researcher and assumed that the power relationships between the participants and herself would not be problematic. However, the study raised ethical dilemmas requiring critical reflection and the search for a framework that allowed for the research process to validate and articulate their own cultural meanings and interpretations of their experiences. Ultimately, this ambiguity and complexity led to the designing of the *Ula* model as a pedagogical and culturally appropriate approach to the relationships established and maintained within this research project.

The *Ula* Model

The *Ula* model defined the study’s terms of engagement based on Samoan cultural protocol, values, beliefs and pedagogical practices on which the study was conducted. The *Ula* model protected the integrity and power relations between the researcher who was a Samoan female lecturer and the four Samoan male participants who were students. The *Ula* model placed the researcher and participants, all of whom had ‘matai’ (chief titles), on an equal platform for oral communication. The bestowment of a Matai places a person in an honourable role of leadership which means they have authority to make decisions which are respected by within the family, extended families, church and communities in Samoan culture. Because of this, they were able to respectfully express their thoughts and ideas because of their shared understanding of cultural knowledge and practices within their respective place and context. In other words, the codes of conduct, the proper and acceptable ways of doing things were part of the life and experiences of all those involved.

The *Ula* model was used to address the question of power relationships for safeguarding and protecting the integrity of the researcher and participants in this study. The Samoan males were permitted to safely express their social, cultural, spiritual,

emotional and intellectual values and beliefs through honest and open dialogue, thereby building up respectful and trusting relationships between the researcher and the participants and amongst themselves.

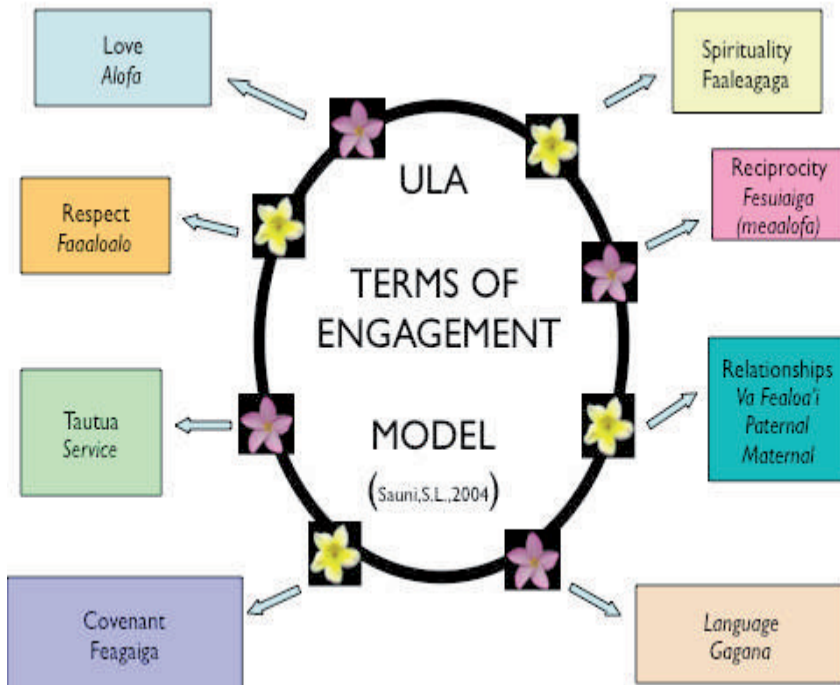
As this study progressed, the necessity for both the researcher and participants to use appropriate process, common epistemologies, cultural perspectives and experiences became increasingly apparent. “Cultural sensitivity to *fa’asamoa* protocol and etiquette of *fa’aaloalo* (respect) is imperative for the researcher and participants before, during and after the research” (Tupuola, 2000, p.175) summarised the totality of experiences within the study. Recognising that Samoan cultural values were fundamental for research conducted in a Samoan context, the *Ula* model became an important conceptual and philosophical framework for this research study.

The *Ula* Model Principles

The development of the *Ula* research approach occurred within a study into Samoan male representation in the Early Childhood Education teaching profession.

The *Ula* (Figure 1) provided an appropriate metaphor based on the principles and values of *fa’asamoa*. *Ula* means a lei or garland which is used throughout the Pacific Islands, particularly in Samoan culture. The presentation of the *ula* is an important gesture for welcoming visitors, special guests at cultural events and Samoan celebrations where people participate in performances such as singing and dancing. At the initial meeting the men were presented with a lei or ‘ula’ to welcome them and give

Figure 1



them a sense of belonging as participants in the research study. The designing of the *Ula* model as a theoretical framework symbolises the notions of Samoan hospitality and generosity. The circular shape of colourful, scented flowers, strung together, is an expression of the unending and continuous practice of these cultural values throughout the life of a Samoan person and the continuous practice of these cultural values were visible throughout the research study regardless of gender, age, status or location. The ‘space’ within the *Ula* model may be referred to as the *va* or sacred/relational space which provided room to establish and maintain the good relationships (Anae,2010) between the researcher and participants throughout the study.

Here, I, the researcher and author of this paper, begin to conceptualise the underpinning principles of Samoan culture that created a unique platform for honest, genuine dialogue between the researcher and participants, despite differences based on gender, institutional status and cultural status.

Fa’aaloalo (respect) is the most important principle of Samoan culture because it governs the way one learns to sit, walk, stand and speak. Samoans are expected to sit down when they are speaking to someone or being spoken to. As a rule, Samoans must sit down when eating. It is regarded as being ‘impolite’ to eat food while you are standing up or walking around. When you have to walk in front of someone, you must remember to say “*tulou*” or “excuse me”. The hierarchical nature of Samoan society dictates how and when to stand up, and when it is your turn to speak. Therefore, knowing your place, your status and your role within Samoan culture is important in building self-confidence and trusting relationships within different social contexts. Samoan children learn about having pride in their cultural identity in their early years and this belief in one’s sense of self and belonging is upheld throughout life. Obviously, there were similar cultural upbringing and experiences and commonalities of all who were involved during the interviews. The researcher and participants were aware of their status and roles because Samoan values of respect were embedded in their early upbringing. Therefore the interactions and relationships were culturally respectful between the researcher and the participants and towards one another throughout the research study.

Alofa (love) is a fundamental principle of Samoan culture because Samoans make reference to their faith and spiritual beliefs as Christians. Showing *alofa* (love) is a principle associated with God’s love, and Christ’s example of unconditional love when dealing with everyday situations. *Alofa* is therefore the most important and essential principle in Samoan culture because Samoans believe that although you may be a good speaker, or give generously within your family or church if your motives for doing so are not based on love then everything you do is empty and worthless. From a Samoan perspective, the men who participated in this research project were all spiritual leaders and continued to share and show love and respect during the interactions and interviews.

Tautua (service) refers to the roles and responsibilities in traditional customs, which include the young serving the adults and their elders. There is a Samoan saying, “*O le ala I le pule o le tautua*” which means that the way to authority is through service. For young men, their responsibilities would be to serve food to the *matai* (chief) which

may lead, in future years, to a bestowment of a chiefly title in return for this kindness and respect. Knowing oneself means knowing one's genealogy, and knowing one's genealogy is knowing one's place in society. In the context of this study, the men demonstrated their willingness to serve through their contribution and information shared with the researcher. As previously stated, both the researcher and the participants had chiefly (*matai*) titles, therefore the "mana and respect in true pule or authority" (Tui Atua, 2005, p. 21) was equally shared throughout the research study.

Fa'aleagaga (spirituality) is *mana* (power) for Samoan people because of the connections to their various roles of leadership in families, villages, work places and within government. According to Alipia, Tuafuti and Sauni (2003,) spirituality should be included in the development of young children in early childhood education.

Fa'aleagaga is *mana* for Samoan people because of the connections to their Christian faith, traditional beliefs and spiritual ancestors. The researcher and participants in the research study were spiritual leaders within their families, churches, and communities.

Prayers and verses from the Bible were used to encourage the participants and continue to direct their thoughts so they would continue participation and their commitment to this study.

Fesoa'aiga/fesuaiga (reciprocity) refers to the reciprocal giving and receiving of gifts. It is believed that when this principle is practised by Samoan families, then there will be continued preservation of material wealth throughout the life of Samoan people. Reciprocity also determines the status of Samoan people. Reciprocity is not only about the exchanging of material commodities but reciprocal relationships encompass the art of sharing regardless of status in Samoan society. Reciprocal relationships should be regarded as sacred relationships and, therefore valuing and nurturing these is important. Both the researcher and the men in this study understood the importance of reciprocity because it was a constant principle to understand when the researcher was invited to have dinner and meet their families after their interviews.

Va (relational space) in the context of Samoa is referred to as the 'sacred relational space' that occurs between individuals or groups of people. The *va* is central to the communications and connections that take place day-to-day in the life of a Samoan person. Anae (2010) describes *va* as sacred relationships between people which happen within the protocols and the concepts of the *va fealoai*, *va tapuia* and *teu le va*. According to O'Meara (1990), in Samoan culture, the *va fealoa'i* concept is practised from childhood and continues until people are adults or old enough to have their own children. Therefore, in Samoan culture, learning acceptable social behaviour and learning to use appropriate language is necessary for establishing or re-establishing successful relationships within your family and extended families. In a Samoan child's early upbringing learning the values of respect and obedience towards superiors is very important (Mara et.al.1994).

The *va* is described by Tuagalu (2008, p. 109) as the "social and spiritual relations between people and that is how Samoans relate with one another and the world at large". However, according to Wendt (1996), meanings change as the relationships and contexts change, so Samoans learn how to nurture, care and cherish the *va* relationships.

Reflecting back on the research study, the *Ula* model created the relational space for

both the researcher and participants to establish and maintain respectful relationships. An understanding of the *va* in research provided a different way to interact and behave. For example, the researcher was not always the first to speak during the meetings as sometimes the participants were given the opportunity to reflect and express their feelings about the research because they were men. Before the actual interviews took place, there were conversations about their families and their interests back in Samoa. This usually helped to boost their confidence and encouraged them to reciprocate information throughout the study.

Gagana (language) communicates and gives meaning to all social and cultural relationships between groups or individuals, and this should not be ignored (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 1996). To have knowledge of the Samoan language is a blessing because it affirms your cultural identity. Language is a useful tool in contextualising and consultation processes within Samoan contexts. Language is essential and fundamental for bridging understandings, translations of conversations and maintaining relationships within Samoan culture. Using English and Samoan languages was an important aspect to consider in order to encourage flexibility, gain meaning and understandings of the expectations and purpose of the research study.

Feagaiga (covenant) is a sacred and honourable principle within a Samoan *aiga* (family) context. The Samoan saying, “*O le ioi mata o le tama lona tuafafine*”, translates as, a sister is the pupil of her brother’s eye and therefore needs to be protected.

These respectful relationships between male and female, or brother and sister, are an important and significant aspect of Samoan protocol. According to Tupuola (2000), the term *feagaiga* refers to a sacred obligation for males to honour, respect and protect their sisters. In Samoan culture, these relationships between males and females, brothers and sisters, are to be respected at all times, regardless of bloodline. Throughout the research study, the men treated the researcher respectfully. For example, whenever the researcher was invited to the men’s homes, the researcher was given the privilege to say a prayer before the meal was served. Whenever, there were conversations between the researcher and the male participants, it was felt that the words chosen to use were always consistent, meaningful and respectful.

Research Implications of the Ula Model

The following discussion will briefly describe why the approach taken in the designing of the *Ula* model has implications for Samoan research. The implementation of the *Ula* model was a collaborative process, involving the researcher and all the participants. At the initial meeting with the men, there was opportunity for introductions about themselves and their families. They reflected on their past experiences back in Samoa and how these have impacted on or influenced their choices to become early childhood educators. Discussions regarding the purpose of the research were always open and negotiable. There were many opportunities for questions, and then together through individual discussions a collaborative planning process towards the actual investigation and collecting of research data was undertaken.

Throughout the study, the Samoan language was useful in making sure that the participants were comfortable and they had an understanding of the research process.

At every meeting with the participants, they were welcomed in their own Samoan language and during the interviews both Samoan and English languages were used. The men were confident to share their perspectives regarding their roles as educators in early childhood education. They recognised the importance of their roles as male role models in the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, social and cultural development of young children. The four male participants viewed themselves as being responsible for providing a positive and equitable environment for diverse learners in early childhood education.

The introduction of the *Ula* model is relevant and useful for making the connections between theory and practice, analysis and interpretations of research data, and establishing respectful and reciprocal relationships. For this study, listening to the voices of all the participants, understanding the meanings of words and research terminologies, enabled research with Samoan men to have successful outcomes.

The *Ula* model can be used as an alternative framework when doing research with Samoan participants, although some academics (predominantly palagi/European) may show reluctance to use or accept culturally inclusive models such as the *Ula* because they are perceived to be unscholarly (Tupuola, 2006). However, the challenge for Samoan researchers will be to prioritise the use of research frameworks that are based on the holistic perception of knowledge and scholarship, appropriate communication styles both oral and written, and which endorse the protocols of consensus and respect.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the usefulness of the *Ula* methodological research model. It has highlighted the importance of cultural pedagogical understandings and the significance of research paradigms focussed on the terms of engagement required to achieve successful outcomes. The *Ula* model is offered for consideration for future research. It asserts that Samoan culture, language and relationships based on respect, love and service can be meaningful for both researcher and participants. The *Ula* model has been designed in response to the challenge that the time has come for Samoan research to be processed and written within a Samoan context. The *Ula* model provided an ‘open’ space and a ‘comfortable’ platform for establishing reciprocal engagement through dialogue and telling stories, and sharing their cultural and spiritual experiences, throughout the research; that is what made the difference in this research study.

The increasing use of research models like the *Ula*, which consider the appropriateness of cultural values for Pasifika research, is necessary in order to more systematically reveal cultural knowledge and the social construction of cultural identity within the discipline of applied research. The intention and responsibility is on Pasifika researchers to continue to address cultural issues and add to collective wisdom (Alton-Lee, 2003). The intention of constructing the *Ula* model used in this research study was to contribute to that wisdom.

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Se'i tatou 'aleaga: Samoan educators' insights into inclusive education development

Niusila Faamanatu-Eteuati

Abstract

This article discusses Samoan educators' perceptions about the inclusion of children with special needs in education today. It reports on an investigation into the development of education for people with disabilities. The study involved teacher trainees and educators in government, missions and private schools around the country examining their perceptions and discussing the pedagogies they use to successfully include children with special needs in mainstream schools. The research study aimed to find out what assistance is required to ensure children with special needs are included successfully in mainstream schools. This information is paramount to the work done with the training of teachers in this area. Perceptions and ideas from this study will help determine the way forward in the development of inclusive education in Samoa.

Keywords: special needs, inclusive education, reflective practice, action research

Introduction

Inclusive education is translated in Samoan language as *ā'oā'oga sāuo'o*, which simply means 'education that embraces everyone'. It represents an education system where, "...all children are welcomed and educated regardless of their gender, abilities or disabilities, economic situation, race or religious beliefs" (UNESCO, 1994, p.5).

Children with special needs continue to face difficulties wherever they are in the world. Whether those difficulties are with mobility, communication, obtaining an education or getting a job, it is inevitable that there will be some struggle along the way. Many of these obstacles exist as a result of negative attitudes towards individuals with special needs. With education, training for teachers, awareness programmes, exposure and experience, these attitudes can be changed. Many countries and organisations around the world continue to work collaboratively towards programmes and opportunities for these marginalised individuals.

At the global level, inclusive education has come to the fore since UNESCO's 1994 Salamanca Statement which emphasised the need for schools to accommodate all children regardless of their disabilities. The different countries that participated in this agreement stand together for the common goals of providing equal educational opportunities and the right for all children to be taught together with their non-disabled counterparts, and Samoa is no exception.

Inclusion is a term that expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. For inclusion to take place there are four key elements that must be considered, as encompassed in the following statement:

Inclusion is a process and it is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers. It also is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students in schools. Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement so therefore it is about creating a classroom environment that values diversity.

(Berberich & Lang, 1995, p10)

This means there should be no segregation, a barrier-free environment, learner-friendly classrooms, accessibility to all services, and provision of specific individual needs.

This whole idea of inclusion is quite challenging for teachers in Samoa, and programmes are in place to prepare and encourage educators in their practices to be more reflective in order to enhance inclusive education.

The culture in schools must first be changed for an inclusive, learning-friendly environment for all children to be provided. Schools should be safe, culturally aware, promote teacher development, and provide learning that is relevant to the children. They should also promote participation, cooperation and collaboration for all individuals, regardless of gender disparity. An inclusive learner-friendly school environment should promote healthy lifestyles and skills, involve parents and families, and include all children.

After fifteen years of being an educator in Samoa, and being exposed to the United Kingdom and European systems of inclusive education, I continue to reflect on my experience. As a lecturer and coordinator of the special needs education program at the National University of Samoa, I uphold the importance of being reflective in practice and thinking and to encourage action research within our own area of work. This study has allowed me to present my ideas and arguments about what needs to be changed for Samoan teachers in order for inclusive education to be achieved effectively.

People with disabilities in Samoa

Samoa is a small, democratic island nation located in the South Pacific, and is known for its kind and caring population of approximately 180,000. It has a strong culture and upholds religious beliefs that mostly influence the way people do things in everyday life. One of the beliefs that have been held for a long time in Samoa is that disabilities, both mental and physical, are a result of sin or wrong-doing by the parents at some point in their lives. Therefore, the child inflicts shame and embarrassment on the parents as their child is a tangible representation and constant reminder of sin. Although this belief does still exist in Samoa, during my research no individual directly expressed having this view-point, although many individuals mentioned it.

A recent survey, undertaken in 2009 by the Nuanua o le Alofa (NOLA), identified

4959 persons in Samoa with disabilities. Of these, 55% are males and 45% are females. About 75% of this population acquired their disabilities very recently (2-3 years ago). It is evident from the study conducted by NOLA that diabetes and old age are the common cause of disabilities for those aged 80 years and upwards.

For children aged 0-15 years, the causes of their disabilities are a combination of three factors: family accidents, car accidents and poor health care facilities during birth. Specific learning disabilities, such as epilepsy and deafness, have been identified as the common impairment for young people. What is significant is that most of these children have little or no access to proper health care facilities and limited or no access to education. Some have had access to only two-to-three years of primary school, some attended special needs schools, but many have never entered a classroom throughout their lives. The majority of the children's families have requested assistance so their children can be reintroduced into the education system and eventually use their learning to pursue careers, regardless of their disabilities. However, some young people with disabilities are not comfortable with going back to mainstream schooling and would prefer vocational and informal training with income generating programmes. They believe that, given an opportunity, they will be able to develop their talents and contribute effectively to the development of Samoa.

Current status of inclusive education in Samoa

The government of Samoa in its 'Strategy for Development of Samoa 2008-2012' highlights education's role in its vision to "Improve the quality of life for all", and emphasizes the need for a "quality holistic education system that recognizes the spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical potential of all participants, enabling them to make fulfilling life choices" (Strategy for Development of Samoa, 2008, p10).

Furthermore, at the beginning of 2011, the government of Samoa launched and enforced the National Policy for People with Disabilities, as well as its Education Act, 2009. Both pieces of legislation provide guidance to the work of all government ministries and non-government organisations towards the inclusion of people with disabilities and their rights in all areas of national development. For instance, the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESCC) has incorporated the goals and priority areas from these documents into its policy areas across all sub-sectors of education, to ensure its goal of improved education outcomes is achieved.

The government continues to support all efforts to improve the quality of life for all citizens of the country and, therefore, intends to enforce legislations, policies and all advocacy work towards the inclusion of people with disabilities in the country.

The non-governmental organisations continue to advocate for an improvement in the quality of life for people with disabilities, especially within education. The latest programme in this area is funded by the Australian government and is called the Samoa Inclusive Education Demonstration Program (SIEDP). It began in 2009 and will continue for five years. In two years, the SIEDP program has already had a positive impact on the lives of girls and boys with disability in Samoa. Successes in 2010 included the opportunity to have over 160 pre-school, primary and secondary students with disabilities access early intervention and support services, up from 11

in 2009 – a dramatic increase. The programme aims to support systemic change in regular educational providers, thus allowing children with disabilities to attend their local primary school (Lene, 2010).

Many other education developments and initiatives also provide professional support for teachers and educators in keeping them abreast with what is happening globally in inclusive education.

Teacher preparation for inclusive education

Samoa's Teachers' Training College, formerly known as TTC, was first established at the Malifa Compound, Apia, in 1939. In 1997, it was merged with the National University of Samoa, and the Faculty of Education took responsibility for pre-service teacher education. This is where all teachers in the country are prepared in the areas of: Early Childhood Education (ECE); Special Needs Education (SNE); and general teaching for both primary and secondary school.

Teacher trainees can now study towards a Diploma or Bachelor in Education and, since the year 2000, the inclusive education course has been made compulsory for all. This gives them an opportunity to learn about the various types of disabilities and an introduction to what inclusive education is. Those who may wish to major in special needs education can do so by studying five other major courses for a Diploma to support them with teaching children with special needs. This major programme began in 2000 and culminated in the first six graduates in special needs education, all of whom are still working in Samoa. Since then, there has been an increase in the number of teacher trainees with qualifications in special needs education and who are interested in this area of education (McCullough, 2005; World Education Forum 2000; Faamanatu, 2006), although it still has not solved the problem of lack of teachers in schools. The courses enable teacher trainees to explore the nature of inclusive education and its barriers, and to be exposed to designing individual education programs (IEP) and assessments strategies for disabled children.

Teacher trainees also have the opportunity to do educational activities for children at the paediatric ward at the national hospital, work with visiting friends from overseas, and to study several organizations for people with disabilities.



Fig 1.1 Student teachers in community – Reading to children at pediatric ward



Fig 1.2 Special Needs Group of teacher trainees 2011



Fig 1.3 Students with visiting friends



Fig 1.4 Teacher trainee doing educational activity for children at the hospital

By the end of 2011, there will be close to 50 graduate teachers who will have completed the Diploma of General Primary Education, majoring in Special Needs Education (SNE), since the beginning of this programme at the National University of Samoa. The majority of these graduates teach in regular primary schools, while a few have opted to teach in special needs schools like Loto Taumafai, Fiamalamalama and Senese. The choice of schools for teachers is mostly made by the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture. The special needs schools are all administered by non-governmental organizations and the salaries for teachers are less than those paid in government schools, hence the reason why most teachers of special needs continue to work in regular schools. The training sometimes is seen as under-utilised as there are only a few students with disabilities in regular government schools. In the near future, the government has promised to pay the salaries of all teachers working in special needs schools and early childhood education, as these areas are not currently covered by government. In the meantime annual grants are given to all these sectors of education to help with the salaries of teachers. Teachers who have not been through the training for special needs education have been able to cope by using a teachers' manual which was published in 2003, and provides a guide for teachers in regular schools towards inclusive education.

Having all these support mechanisms in place does not guarantee effective inclusive education in Samoan schools, however, and teachers often find themselves facing criticism and high expectations. Regardless of all the training, awareness programmes and resources available, there are still some basic necessities for teachers that should be addressed in order to raise the standard of inclusion to another level.

Teachers are always at the centre of international community attention when it comes to reforms in education, but there is often ignorance about the role of teachers in educational change (Faamanatu, 2006). This was shown in a report by the 1995

World Bank Education Sector Review of six options for reforming educational systems without dealing with teachers (Thaman, 2001). Moreover, for a country to improve its quality of education and ensure successful inclusion of children with disabilities, many educational researchers argue that there should be emphasis placed on action research for teachers, educators and policy makers (Ainscow, 2005; Dewey, 1993; Ponte, P., 2003; Thousand & Villa, 2000).

The Purpose of this Research Study

An important part of the Salamanca Statement was its urging of the governments of all countries to:

Ensure that, in a context of systematic change, teacher education programs, both pre-service and in-service, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools. (UNESCO, 1994, p 2)

Samoa has committed to taking measures and developing plans to ensure teacher preparedness for inclusion. However, there are still some weaknesses in the system and, therefore, there is a need to consolidate ideas and theories in relation to practice, thus closing the gap. Although there may be several other factors that may hinder full inclusion, it is argued here that teachers play an important role and are the most influential figures in the learning environment for these students. There is a need to change teachers' perceptions and cultural beliefs, and to update teaching methods via more collaboration, more practical courses for training, and by continuously reflecting on current practices.

Fifteen years of teaching experience, and five years of lecturing in this area and collaborating with organizations working with disabled children, have allowed me to substantiate ideas about teachers and inclusive education in Samoa. My main aim is to contribute to the training of more competent teachers at the Faculty of Education at the National University of Samoa, improve programmes and courses for teacher trainees, ensure sustainability in inclusive education progress, and continue to sensitize educators and policy makers in the country with education development towards inclusion.

My involvement as a board and advisory member for Loto Taumafai since 2006, Special Olympics Samoa 2009, and SIEDP, has enabled me to learn more about education, activities and development for children with disabilities. Also, my exposure to European and United Kingdom schools and community encouraged me to take action research and be a reflective practitioner in the area of inclusive education.

Research participants and questions

In this research, in order to investigate what is going on in Samoa for people with disabilities, I targeted people working in schools, family members, the relevant ministry officials, and organisations for people with disabilities. I was interested in finding out participants' responses to the following questions:

1. What do you think of inclusive education development in this country?
2. Is there a change in attitude and perceptions about children with disabilities?
3. What pedagogies are used by teachers in handling children with disabilities?

Methodology

Every year since 2002, I have had the opportunity to visit schools for special needs during teaching trainee practice, or through other educational projects and research. I was able to record most of these experiences and observations. I also conducted interviews with my student teachers who are currently studying and some graduates

who are doing part-time courses. Questionnaires were also distributed to educators in schools on both islands of Upolu and Savaii.

One methodological approach to this study was *talanoa*. The *talanoa* method is widely used where the researcher and participants share not only their time and interests, but also their emotions. This has to be done in culturally appropriate procedures for it to be effectively used. *Talanoa* is an oceanic word for telling stories. The emphasis in *talanoa* lies in the depth of the art of listening. Communication and dialogue in the context of *talanoa* becomes sacramental when quality listening is honoured. *Talanoa* at its best ensures that voices are heeded, honoured and celebrated (Otsuka, 2006; Halapua, 2008).

Findings

This study revealed that most initiatives aimed at assisting or improving the lives of People With Disabilities (PWD) are begun by the private sector, NGOs, and regional or international organizations. Although government ministries in Samoa provide assistance during specific projects or endeavours, they are not structured to handle matters dealing with persons with disabilities exclusively. The initiatives have provided essential information and opportunities for knowledge of specific disabilities, causes, preventions, and effective strategies for empowering teachers to work with children with disabilities and their families.

From interviews and *talanoa* sessions with educators, I found that there is a change in traditional beliefs and attitudes. The many programmes in the country for people with disabilities have led to a more positive approach and attitude to teaching these children, compared to ten years ago. Most teachers who have recently graduated from National University of Samoa have a more positive attitude towards inclusive education development and children with special needs than those who have been teaching for a long time – 10 years or more. All agreed with the importance of professional development and awareness programmes as major contributing factors in enhancing their potentials and abilities to cope with these children.

The elimination of national exams for Year 8, which will happen in 2012, is another factor that will see the increase in positive attitudes and approaches towards successful inclusion – this was seen as another barrier to children with special needs being fully included. In 2011, the government has also enforced the Compulsory Education Act of 2009, together with the School Fees Grant Scheme, which enables all children in primary schools to access education for free, and encourages parents and the community to educate all children.

Teachers have also been empowered through training to think positively, and change their traditional attitudes and beliefs towards children with special needs. In schools, there is less corporal punishment and teachers tend to reward good behavior, thus developing positive teacher-learner relationships and improving student behavior. Teachers have changed to using more inclusive-friendly approaches and pedagogies to encourage inclusion at all levels. The use of Individual Education Programs – IEP – is common, and buddying a child with a disability with a non-disabled child is another method frequently used.

It can be seen that since the work of a number of NGOs in the 1960s, special needs education has received increased attention from both the general public and the government. Although negative attitudes still exist among many parents and untrained teachers, there are a growing number of individuals who stand apart and who are working to improve conditions for special needs children.

Many teachers, in the rural areas particularly, lack adequate experience teaching children with special needs, and because of distance, finances and lack of interest, rural children are often unable to attend specialised schools. Comparing the education of a child with special needs in a rural primary school to a child in a specialised school, such as Senese, reveals sharp differences in insights and attitudes.

Reflections

It is clear that there are many struggles for children with special needs in obtaining a successful education through lack of general knowledge, resources, transportation and teacher training. However, as Samoa changes and moves out of the 'least developed country' category, attitudes towards disabilities are similarly changing and improving. With the assistance of international aid programmes in inclusive education, teachers who are educated in the needs of students with disabilities, and increased community awareness, special needs students are looking at a brighter future and more positive attitudes.

My years of teaching and training, as well as being affiliated with several local and international organizations, have really encouraged me to continue advocating for inclusive education. I have been able to improve the quality and learning experiences of teacher trainees in special needs courses by increasing exposure to the practicality of theories studied. I have also been involved in action research and realized the importance of being a reflective practitioner as I learn from all the struggles and successes I have had along the way.

It is contended here that if an individual teacher develops knowledge through interaction, it will make him/her contribute more to the strength of collective knowledge developed with colleagues and peers. This should be encouraged for Samoan teachers as there is a need for more collaboration and understanding in order to cater for the students integrated into schools, and to reduce doubts and misconceptions amongst educators. Networking and collaboration will encourage mentoring and team teaching, peer buddy systems, and specialists working with teachers in planning, designing, monitoring and making decisions to ensure needs of the students are met (Thousand & Villa, 2000; Ponte, 2003). The more teachers network and collaborate, the more it allows them to adjust teaching methods, reduce isolation and competition, and increase confidence to promote interactive learning strategies with their students, accommodating their specific needs.

Educators need to lead the way in making sure the children with special needs are welcomed into an inclusive learning-friendly environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study reported on in this article shows that there is a need for organisations catering for special needs children to work collaboratively and closely with schools and educators in identifying the needs of these children, and in updating the relevant data about the new referrals and cases for teachers to assist with inclusion. This will also help to reduce discrimination amongst children and teachers towards children with disabilities.

There is also a strong need for teachers and educators to continue to strengthen action research in the critical areas of teaching and learning because it will help provide the necessary information needed to enhance professionalism in education.

For educators to change and improve attitudes, some have suggested incentives for teachers who are working with children with profound needs. These incentives could be either financial or through more training opportunities overseas to increase the amount of expertise in this area, rather than depending on foreign donors for assistance and volunteers. Although these are appreciated they hinder the sustainability of inclusive education development in Samoa.

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A reflection on ‘being’ ‘Fijian’ and ‘belonging’ to Fiji: Conceptualizing a value-theory approach to Citizenship Education

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Key words: citizenship education, participatory citizenship, critical consciousness, being and belonging, value theory approach, Fiji, curriculum mainstreaming

Abstract

Education in the 21st century is marked by the vast influence of globalization and the drive for international comparability. In Fiji, as in the rest of the Pacific, this is no different. Education systems in the Pacific islands are characteristically informed and influenced by external push and pull factors which are reflective of colonial legacies, as well as current donor dependency and the agendas that these dictate. This educational reality may be seen as a crisis of relevance that has been well documented by Pacific scholars. This paper presents the argument that the issue of what it means to ‘be’ Fijian and to ‘belong’ to Fiji is a wider socio-cultural/historical debate that has not been adequately dialogued. This dialogue is critical if citizenship education is intended to contribute to participatory citizenship and towards conscientization of national identity for social cohesion. It is further argued that a holistic curriculum package would enable students to learn through problem-solving the ability to bring about change in their own lives and in their communities.

Introduction

*Come to Niusila, he said.
This island will bring you no happiness
You will always be on the fringe looking in
You’re never going to be Fijian enough
No matter how much you do for this country.
I pretend my battery is dead
And hang up
This is my home*

*My place of beginning and becoming
The land where my umbilical cord has been planted
Beneath a young coconut tree
That promises to fruit*

*While
My feet like roots
Have grown into this soil
My hands reach for something intangible*

Excerpt from 'Niusila' (Koya 2008)

Global efforts to promote the teaching and learning of citizenship are guided by predetermined goals of the perceived ideal society and citizen behavior. These efforts share common goals of developing an understanding of what citizenship means in an effort to encourage active participation within the nation-state, and also emphasize global citizenship.

Educational theory provides a link between the works of John Dewey and Paulo Freire and our understanding of citizenship education (CE). Dewey's writings explore democratic communities; social service; reflective enquiry, and education for social transformation (Saltmarsh, 1996, p1). This view assumes that every individual has a responsibility to play in social transformation and development.

The Fiji Citizenship Education (CE) program was initiated as part of the Fiji Education Sector Reform Project (FESP). FESP, resulting from an agreement between the Governments of Fiji and Australia, spanned over the 2003 – 2008 period and focused on the development of a National Curriculum Framework (NCF) adapted from the Western Australian outcomes-based education (OBE) model (Koya 2008, p31). The NCF advocates a process approach, shifting emphasis from teaching to learning and learning outcomes.

OBE also emphasizes the need for articulate and competent teachers who are able to effectively engage students in higher order thinking (McNeir 2003, cited in Koya

2008, p.32). CE has emerged in this context of OBE, emphasizing on the one hand the broad umbrella aim of life-long learning, and, on the other, prioritizing measureable outcomes. After much investment and publicity, the NCF has never been fully implemented in Fiji, and is currently shelved for further discussion. Despite this, the OBE approach is currently adhered to, as is the Assessment for Learning (AfL) which has seen the reduction of three national examinations and the introduction of Class Based Assessments.

This article explores the value and contribution of CE to the development of active and participatory societal engagement from the standpoint of the Fiji Islander, premised on the beliefs that,

- CE *in context* should be conceived as about 'being' and 'belonging' to Fiji
- The current 'imported' form of CE ill-represents Fijian Society;
- The value of CE has yet to be explored intellectually and socially within the wider community.

Framing Citizenship Education

The Delors' Report, *Learning the Treasure Within* (1997), operates as a global framework for CE. The significance of the report to global discourse on Education in

the 21st Century is well known. The report provides a useful framework from which to develop a contextual framework for CE where the first two pillars, *learning to know* and *learning to do*, can be seen as the primary concerns of formal education in their relation to knowledge acquisition and the acquisition of skills. The remaining two pillars are reflective of a socially conscious movement in education beyond the traditional technical approach to schooling. These pillars – *learning to live together* and *learning to be* – are cognizant of the CE discourse.

CE Philosophy can be described as the search for purpose and process. CE should be viewed as a content area for inclusion in the formal school curriculum that has educational value as either a mainstreamed subject area or as an integrated across-the-curriculum content opportunity. As a starting point, Kerr (1999) provides a useful definition:

Citizenship or civics education is construed broadly to encompass the preparation of young people for their roles and responsibilities as citizens and, in particular, the role of education (through schooling, teaching and learning) in that preparatory process. (p.4)

A contested term, Citizenship presents numerous definitions for CE development and it may be useful to consider the notion of ‘active citizenship’. The GHK (2007) in collaboration with European Commission, and the Centre for Research on Life-long Learning in the UK, writes; “...it is clear that active citizenship is not only about civil rights and democracy” (p.24). In a study of fifty-seven examples of good practice and ten case studies in the European Union (EU) - covering formal, non-formal and informal education, and initiatives focusing on diverse groups including children, youth, women and girls, adults, the elderly and mixed groups - they found:

Actors emphasize the importance for Active Citizenship Education to focus on socio-cultural issues, including integration for newcomers and ethnic minorities, and multiculturalism in addition, active citizenship should be empowering, as this is the first step to giving people voice, and the “courage” to stand up for themselves and the group that they represent. (GHK, 2007: 24)

Citizenship Education in the 21st Century Pacific: Agendas and Tensions

The concept of teaching and learning about citizenship is an example of the influence of global agendas in Education. Tuinamuana (2002) explains how these agendas influence the way that education is defined, developed and perceived:

The definition of educational agendas by international agencies such as the World Bank and UNESCO has extended from a direct influence on policy formulation to the permeation of dominant global discourses on education that will affect perceptions about what education is for, and the best way to effect these aims. This permeation extends beyond education to society in understandings about social development and growth. (p.4)

In the Pacific, the drive for CE is a direct result of global influences towards the internationalization of education. As asserted by Thaman (2004),

...there is now, in our region a push towards civic and human rights education, currently under the banner of citizenship education... largely due to direct and indirect pressure from international development agencies ... involved in various forms of reforms and restructuring aimed at ensuring that Pacific governments and people become good citizens by embracing the values of democracy, freedom, human rights, good governance and so forth. (2004, p.3)

Pacific education is reflective of the globalizing effect of educational reform in the context of comparability and perceived value of educational outcomes. Thaman (2004) presents an overview of the general notion of citizenship and the Pacific Nation by Pacific Islanders in the region. She considers the newly introduced ideology and calls into question issues of relevance, context and applicability:

The conceptions of citizenship in liberal democracies make certain assumptions about the nature of society as well as the nature of personhood and take for granted so-called universal values such as democracy and human rights. But for most people in Oceania, especially those who are not schooled in Western liberal ideas and values and their associated languages, citizenship education is not so straightforward as one might like it to be. The idea of the nation state, for example, so closely linked with citizenship if one asks the question of 'citizenship of what nation?' is not yet fully understood among communities who were governed by foreigners who had different assumptions, values and beliefs. Fifty years ago, all of the people of Oceania (with the exception of Tonga) were under foreign rule, either that of Britain, France, the USA, Australia or New Zealand. Most gained their political independence in the 1970s and 80s, so the idea of an independent nation not to mention a feeling of belonging to one nation, with all that that implies, is a relatively recent phenomenon. (p.2) [Emphasis added]

Citizenship Education efforts the world over, appear to prioritize perceived universalities about what it means to be a citizen and to participate in a democracy. Given the limits of such a global perspective within an internationalized approach to CE, the need for localizing the teaching and learning of citizenship for Fiji is evident. Kerr (1999) articulates the need for contextualization, explaining that CE is necessarily the child of interpretation. His five pronged criteria for the contextual development of CE in-country includes: (1) historical tradition; (2) geographical position; (3) socio-political structure; (4) economic system, and (5) global trends (p.4).

'Relevance' for quality education remains critical and CE is largely influenced by political notions of democratic rule and governance taken from political perspectives of government, governance and citizenship rights in a politically democratic state. Veramu (2010), a Curriculum Trainer and Project Manager of the Fiji in-School Citizenship

Education Project funded by UNDP, emphasizes that CE, "... is expected to improve students (citizens) knowledge and understanding of the constitution and democratic processes" (Veramu 2010, p.2).

This is telling of the strong political grounding of the program. Simultaneously, the agendas of international agencies and donors cannot be denied with the above project being funded by the Australian Aid, European Union, New Zealand Aid and UNDP. The New Zealand and Australian agenda against the political situation in the country is exemplified in their stand on the need for an expedient return to democratic rule, as has been made known within the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Community. Notwithstanding these political agendas, New Zealand and Australian continue to contribute large sums of money towards educational development in Fiji through their respective aid agencies.

Citizenship Education in Fiji

A reflective analysis of the basis for CE indicates its grounding in *Value Theory* with an emphasis on the *transformative* role of education. At the very basic level, Value Theory in education simply refers to the implicit foundation of values that a country bases its entire educational planning on. In most cases, these values are inherent within the broad vision and mission of the national curriculum, or articulated distinctly as foundational or guiding values.

The educational philosophy articulated in the *Suva Declaration* provides an inclusive vision of the value and benefit of school based learning:

Education in schools will contribute to the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional aesthetic and physical development of students who will have reverence for God. They will grow into healthy, happy, caring citizens committed to cultural, multi-cultural, religious understanding and tolerance; harmonious living; global co-existence; and environmental sustainability. Students will be informed, creative, responsible and productive citizens contributing to a peaceful, prosperous and just society. (Ministry of Education 2006, p.7)

This is juxtaposed against a reality of a content-full, resource-empty system which has on a superficial level removed the pressure of national examinations, but on the other replaced this with a series of multiple subject-based Internal Assessment (IA) tasks. The broad vision statement implies a liberal educational experience valuing the transformative role of education and experiential participatory learning. The school reality however, remains a rigid controlled environment, ill-equipped for the emancipatory objectives of holistic CE. School outcomes are still measured by scores and rankings with a mere shift from one form of written assessment to another. A 2008 research on the IA process conducted in Suva, provides some insight in highlighting the fact that teachers saw IA as detracting from the syllabus – some even admitted to ‘teaching to the IA’ in a product centered approach (Koya, 2008, p.45).

A second document, the Fiji Education Reform document *Building a Strategic Direction for Education in Fiji 2006 – 2015* stresses the qualities of an “ideal learner” in the 21st century as having “a democratic mind” and being “a holistic person who is

not only able to fulfill his or her life goals, but is able to contribute effectively to Fiji's society" (Ministry of Education, 2005, p.31).

The term *democratic* appears consistently in Fiji curriculum documents without any real description or definition of its intention and scope. Reflectively, in the Deweyan philosophy, democracy was, "... aimed at the enhancement of democratic education and ... democracy was cultural not political" (Saltmarsh, 1996, p.10). In Fiji, while a broad simple vision statement is expressed, the socio-cultural dimension of CE remains underscored.

Political events in Fiji resulting in the overthrow of the democratically elected government and the self-installed Military rule in 2006, led to a review of the CE program. Despite this, topics and issues remain focused on political democratic rule and the roles of a citizen within that politic under the five themes of 'democracy', 'peace and justice', 'cultures and beliefs', 'sustainable development', and 'human rights and responsibilities' (Ministry of Education 2010a, p.6).

This perspective of CE in the Fiji/Pacific context, assumes an understanding and value of nationhood. The content points at a program of study for political literacy. Further demonstrating the strong political emphasis, the Form 5 – 7 (Year 11 – 13) CE program was designed as part of the Fiji Good Governance Program offered by UNDP. As stated:

...the principal justification for citizenship education derives from the nature of democracy. Democracies need active, informed and responsible citizens – citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their communities and contribute to the political process. (Veramu 2010, p.4)

The socio-political context of nationality in Fiji for the forty years from Independence in 1970 until 2010, designated official nationality into three main categories - indigenous citizens as 'Fijian', those of Indian descent as 'Indian' (or Indo-Fijian), and the non-descriptive 'Others' included citizens who did not fit into the first two categories. However, in the context of the 1997 Constitution, Willoughby (2004) concludes,

... the statutes do not prescribe a single, unifying name for all people living in Fiji...and only uses the expression "the people of the Fiji islands"...consistent with the Fiji Constitution Review Commission, which had proposed the common name 'Fiji Islanders', but considered it was not necessary to make provision for this. Nor do the statutes prohibit any particular name from being used to designate all people living in Fiji. As a result, the debate is left wide open.

More recently, the 2010 Military rule has legislated 'Fijian' to include all Fiji citizens. Indigenous nationals are further identified as iTaukei. In the context of developing national consciousness and united nationalism at the symbolic interactionist level, problems with these new categories have been identified such as the need for ethnic baseline statistics in recording births, deaths, migration, fertility rates and disease demographics (Narsey, 2011)

While one of the CE themes is *cultures and beliefs*, and another, *sustainable*

development, the CE program does not begin from a local contextualized understanding of what it means to be Fijian and belong to Fiji. Nor does it explain the underlying platform for identity studies within a broader CE framework. The international and external agenda of CE has resulted in the development of a program that is skewed in focus and does not offer the potential to develop a critical mass for national conscientization towards a sustainable society of responsive critical and creative thinkers. Also alarming is that while OBE presents a noble vision, that is overlaid onto a product approach curriculum without due consideration to pedagogical concerns within a mixed-approach that includes process curriculum perspectives.

The untapped potential of CE for Nation-building in Fiji

Nation-building as a concept remains an abstract notion implying underlying principles of unity and social cohesion. Etzioni (2004, p.2) attempts to address this problem, “The phrase ‘nation-building’ is generally used to describe three related but different tasks: unification of disparate ethnic groups; democratization; and economic reconstruction”. CE for transformational change requires a combination of all three perspectives. The diversity of the Fiji citizenry necessitates *unification* and *democratic process*.

Transformational education realizes the need to affect changes of beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviour in relation to citizenry. Pedagogical tools for the affective domain (see Bloom’s taxonomy) are undoubtedly the most difficult to devise for a number of reasons not the least of which that these experiential learning outcomes are categorically immeasurable by means of traditional pen-paper tests and assignments. Assessment for learning must therefore provide critical and creative thinking and application opportunities. Mezirow (1997), on transformative learning; reminds us that, “Becoming critically reflective of the assumptions of others is fundamental to effective collaborative problem posing and solving” (p.9).

The Intended CE Curriculum

Community voice is integral to the development of a Fijian CE philosophy where current and hoped for realities of citizenship within Fiji as a nation-state are reflected. The *Interpretive Constructionism* paradigm (Eriksson 2007, p.15) provides a strong basis for the valuing of multiple socio-cultural/historical realities. Epistemologically, it is critical that a longitudinal study be conducted to ensure that the multiple perspectives of Citizenship in relation to being and belonging are documented. Such an exercise is crucial to establish the *entry point* of CE in regard to inherent assumptions and taking into consideration the value-laden nature of curriculum work at all levels. Dual considerations of *constructionism* and *constructivism* are of equal significance in this undertaking. In the constructionist view worthwhile knowledge about CE is socio-culturally/historically constructed by communities of knowers (constructionism). Contrastingly, in the constructivist view, attention is paid to the learning process and to learners’ capacity for knowledge acquisition. Both perspectives are critical to the philosophical framing of CE in any given context.

Essential terminology such as ‘citizen’, ‘citizenship’, ‘nation-state’, ‘nationality’, ‘nationhood’, ‘nation-building’, ‘national interest’, ‘national aspirations’, and

'nationalism' are central to this discussion. Equally important is the core issue of the perceived benefits of CE to the individual learner and to the nation, drawing from iTaukei and other culturally linguistic conceptions of these terms. This undertaking brings the conversation to the prime issues of 'being' and 'belonging' in context and what these entail.

Is it Citizenship or Civics Education?

Some use the terms Citizenship Education and Civics Education interchangeably, but it is important at the curriculum level to ensure the distinction between the two forms. The consensual philosophy of CE should rationalize the selection of choice. Despite teacher training on development and use of CE materials, the lack of ownership of CE implies that the level of awareness and support for the program will vary. The role of specialist curriculum developers is essential to construct curricula based on a CE philosophy that is reflective of community understandings.

A holistic and inclusive CE program should be premised on the Fiji Constitution and the recently compiled 'People's Charter' - the governing legislature of the country. If CE is to mean more than lip-service, real consideration must be given to the development of citizens who feel that they *belong*; and are *valued* and *valuable* members of society with community and national responsibilities.

To move CE beyond political literacy, Friere's notion of the liberating role of education towards emancipation and empowerment, prioritizing action, dialogue and conscientization is pivotal. Additionally, Kerr's three forms of CE may be viewed as phases within a holistic model; (1) Education *about* Citizenship; (2) Education *through* Citizenship; and, (3) Education *for* Citizenship. In the first phase, education about citizenship emphasizes cognition or knowledge transference. In the second phase, education through citizenship is driven by the notion of 'learning by doing' building on prior knowledge acquired in the first phase. The third and final phase, according to Kerr is education for citizenship. Here, students are equipped, "...with a set of tools (knowledge, understanding, skills, aptitudes, values and dispositions) which enable them to participate actively and sensibly the roles and responsibilities the encounter in their adult lives" (1999, p.12).

An inclusive philosophy of CE provides the basis for *curriculum mapping* which in turn indicates potential content-areas for CE integration and subject mainstreaming. Investing in a CE program that is not valued by students, teachers and the wider community in Fiji is a tremendous waste of resources and time.

The Enacted CE Curriculum

This relates to what happens at school and in particular in the classroom. It is concerned with planning effective instruction and assessment *of* and *for* learning. The latter is discussed in the next section on the assessed curriculum.

Evidence of poor pedagogical practice in Fiji highlighted by the Education Reports of 1969 and 2000, respectively, leads invariably to teacher preparedness, training, education and personal philosophies of teaching. Meaningful CE curriculum mainstreaming must be a 'cause' within teacher training and education institutions in Fiji. This means valuing and promoting CE to bring about teacher conscientization on

the life-long benefits of CE. This may take the form of content inclusion within courses and programs of study and community initiatives; where teacher trainees themselves are able to experience CE in all three forms: ‘about’, ‘through’ and ‘for’ Citizenship. In this way, teacher-practice is powerfully informed by the lived experience. Mezirow (1997) highlights the importance of discourse in the learning context. In his view, it is critical that teachers are able to provide opportunities for critical conversations/debates in safe learning spaces where each view point is valued. He maintains that critical reflection is key to this undertaking (p.10).

The pedagogical concern in Fiji remains the prevalent ‘certification’ mentality which is grounded on an examination-based education. The official focus may have shifted to an outcomes-based education, but there is no evidence to indicate that teaching practice has changed. In fact, it would appear that IA tasks and the final examination remain the primary concern of the educational process which contradicts the desire for authentic learning experiences as advocated by AfL. In order to facilitate this shift in teachers’ practice, teaching texts for CE in Fiji are needed, including teacher toolkits/manuals, teaching resources and assessment tool guides covering both AfL and AoL.

The Assessed CE curriculum

The debate about assessment highlights its importance for learning, emphasizing that unless and until a real shift of educational priorities takes place which removes the emphasis on test scores and task outcomes, CE is unlikely to have lasting impact in the school and in Fijian society. School and classroom practices should be monitored so as not to fall back into the routine chalk-and-talk, and quantitative outputs paradigm. Teacher toolkits and samples of good practice on planning assessment for CE are also key.

Final reflections on CE for Nation-building for Fiji

*Paint my gun
with the Fiji flag
red and white and blue
bananas
and warriors
and the faithful Union jack*

*Paint my gun
with the Fiji flag
So it matches my thermal mug
a rugby ball and a coconut tree
take a sip
then one, two, three
shoot to kill
and look at me
dressed up in the Fiji flag*

Excerpt from ‘Paint my gun’ (Koya, 2010b)

Fostering a Fijian National Consciousness built on ideals of diversity and multiculturalism, but providing a safe space within this for iTaukei indigenous rights, knowing and being within the context of Fiji will not be easy. For some *iTaukei*, the change in name, is not welcome - thus necessitating inclusive CE consultation. This implies political-will towards meaningful citizenry where awareness that the name change does not denigrate the indigenous rights or privileges to cultural heritage, land ownership or legal standing of the first peoples of the land.

Issues which need further analysis include the value of language as a mediatory of nation-building for national identity. In education, one such development is the inclusion of conversational Fijian, Hindi and Rotuman as new subject offerings. The role and use of the media in the promotion and delivery of CE and ways and the need to addressing racism in particular between the various ethnicities are additional areas of concern, as is the value of public spaces for critical and creative discourse.

CE provides a contingency for 'Fijians' beyond the rhetoric of a mandated label where nationals feel that they are 'of' Fiji, beyond a detached sense of merely living in the country. This sense of nationhood is key to constructing and maintaining connectedness of the national community, while being cognizant of multiple realities.

The current climate of internal political tensions and heavy media censorship presents a climate of fear within which CE Teachers, fearful of reprisal, may be uncomfortable to deal with issues of 'democracy'. An example is a 2010 CE inter-institutional workshop within the CE in-school program, which was introduced with a request to refrain from political discussions and to avoid the use of the word 'democracy'. It is puzzling to situate this program into such a climate of apprehension. A personal reflection is shared in the following verse from a poem titled *Checkpoint* (Koya 2010b).

*A friend of mine
Was taken to the barracks
She never talks about it
And I don't ask
Both of us afraid of what we might learn*

Stop!

Do not pass go.

Check point.

Indigenous and contextualized understandings of what it means to *belong* and to *be* of place contributes to understanding complexities of 'citizenship' within the Pacific. A major concern is the likelihood that little if any attempt will be taken to understand these ideas at the grassroots level as any attempt to develop CE in the absence of such dialogue is destined to fail. The critical pedagogy suggested is based on ideas conceptualizing and contextualizing CE within the Fiji reality, by drawing on a variety of theoretical frameworks. Of particular pedagogical concern are the dual strands of

constructionism, constructivism/ situated learning and the incorporation of indigenous pedagogies (cultural context and ways of learning). The globalized technological reality of the 21st Century, continuously references the *global community* and global citizenry. A transformative approach to CE may provide a platform to plant the seed for such a worldview.

Developing a national consciousness can bring about critical mass movements for change - a primary building block towards regional conscientization leading to the potential development of meaningful regional identity to inform and expand outward. As a Teacher Educator, and a Fijian of mixed ethnic heritage, I find myself coming to terms with the reality that hope is all that remains.

*While
My feet like roots
Have grown into this soil
My hands [still] reach for something intangible...*

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Teaching and Learning Food and Textiles in Samoa: Curriculum Implementation as a Contested Process

Faamoemoe Soti and Carol Mutch

Abstract

Curriculum development and implementation are complex processes in which subjects have to compete for their place in the curriculum hierarchy. Once a curriculum policy is written, it does not necessarily follow that its implementation will be successful. The aim of this small-scale research was to examine the perspectives of those engaged in teaching and learning Food and Textiles Technology (FTT) in secondary schools in Samoa. The study attempted to understand the major factors that are impeding the successful implementation of FTT teaching and learning in secondary classrooms. A qualitative case study methodology was used to underpin the collection and analysis of data. The findings show that FTT education does provide learning opportunities to develop new concepts, skills and behaviours and that it can enhance the options available for early school leavers. In order to implement the curriculum successfully, however, teachers must be professionally trained and be able to effectively teach the relevant knowledge and skills that FTT offers to students.

Introduction

Curriculum writers highlight the complex and contested nature of curriculum development (see, for example, Apple, 2004; Bernstein, 1975; McGee, 1997; Mutch, 2004). What policy makers aim to achieve is filtered by curriculum developers, interpreted by professional development facilitators, and re-interpreted by schools, teachers and learners. Trowler, (2003) explains that there are actually two processes at work – the policy *encoding* process and the policy *decoding* process. The policy encoding process is where society's aspirations, government visions and stakeholder expectations are gathered through consultation and analysed by policy makers. In the curriculum field, these are then passed to curriculum developers to devise appropriate curriculum guidelines. Walker (1972, cited in Marsh, 1992) suggests that the policy encoding process provides the platform from which curriculum developers can frame their deliberations and embark on their overall curriculum design. McGee (1997) sees curriculum development as a more “dynamic ever-changing process that is situated in complex contexts” (p.44). McGee suggests that decisions need to be made about intentions and objectives, content to be studied, learning and teaching activities and the evaluation of learning and teaching – not in a linear manner – but in a way in which each decision impacts upon the other until the contradictions are resolved and the curriculum is coherent yet flexible enough to suit changing contexts and learner needs.

The policy decoding process begins once the curriculum document is completed and is ready for dissemination. There are many factors that might impede the successful implementation of a new curriculum. Even though a government might see this new curriculum as a priority, if it is not supported by funding for resources and professional development or if it is not included in high stakes assessment then it might not be accorded the same status in schools. Schools will accordingly see it as a lower priority in terms of staffing, resourcing, timetabling and rooming. This lower status will be reinforced by lower numbers of students enrolling in the subject, fewer parents encouraging their children to take the subject, fewer pre-service teachers learning to teach the subject and so on – the downward spiral will continue.

Food and textiles technology (FTT) in Samoa provides an interesting case study of such a curriculum impasse. While it is a curriculum area that brings together traditional values and activities with the possibility of future job prospects, it is not accorded high status. Samoan schools value FTT education as part of school activities through cooking, sewing, fabric printing, feasting, and floral arrangement. Parents see the value of teaching and learning FTT through which their sons and daughters come to learn more about home and family life. Enhancing personal, family and community well-being are all skills learnt through FTT and they help young people learn how to care and provide for their families. It is considered that young people might later be able to pursue active and rewarding careers in design, catering or tourism. It also supports family, local and national economic growth and development. Yet, it is not a compulsory area of the secondary curriculum and, therefore, is only implemented in a few secondary schools in Samoa. Schools prefer to concentrate on the core subjects – English, science, social studies, Samoan and mathematics.

This study set out to examine the multiple perspectives of participants towards teaching and learning food and textiles technology (FTT) in secondary schools in Samoa. The study aimed to identify the major factors that impeded the successful implementation of FTT teaching and learning in secondary classrooms. This article, therefore, focuses on the issues in the policy *decoding* process – the implementation rather than the development – of the FTT curriculum (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture [MESC], 2000). It does so with the aim of presenting a stronger argument for the wider acceptance of FTT as an important subject within the curriculum and concludes by providing recommendations to enable this goal to be achieved.

Methodology

Because this study is set in one particular context (Samoan secondary schools) and the topic is focused on one curriculum area (FTT), a qualitative case study method provided an appropriate research design. Case study design focuses on providing rich description, often through multiple methods, of a bounded case. The case could be a person, a setting or a concept (Mutch, 2005). In this study, the ‘case’ was focused on participants’ perspectives and insights into the issues surrounding the teaching and learning of FTT.

The participants comprised four students selected from two different Year 12 classes in two different secondary schools, four parents, two Ministry of Education, Sports and

Culture (MESC) officers and four teachers. The key participants selected for this study were valuable because of their on-going involvement in the teaching and learning of FTT.

The multiple methods used were semi-structured interviewing, non-participant observation and document analysis. These were all consistent with the purpose of this research and provided the opportunity to triangulate the findings from different sources in order to arrive at credible themes.

The interviews aimed to capture the personal perspectives and lived experiences of the research participants, which are strengths of the qualitative paradigm (Mutch, 2005). Interviews and observations were conducted with the selected students, parents, teachers and MESC officers after appropriate ethical clearances had been granted.

Non-participant observations were carried out during teaching sessions, where both students and teachers were observed. Listening to the teachers' discussions on teaching strategies and other issues – like FTT issues, the MESC issues and school committees – also contributed important data to this study. Document analysis was used to gather data from teachers' work plans, curriculum materials, timetables, teaching strategies and assessment activities.

Findings

The findings shared in this article are in two parts. Firstly, the two case study schools are described from an analysis of the observations, interviews and documentation. Secondly, a snapshot of the issues raised by the interviews is provided.

Case study schools

The case schools are referred to as Case Study 1 (CS1) and Case Study 2 (CS2). CS1 was a government-managed school with a roll of 400 predominantly Samoan students, and CS2 was a church-based school of mainly Catholic Samoan students. CS1 and CS2 were similar in many aspects of administration and both the school buildings were well maintained.

Case study school (CS1)

Although this school began as a Form 3-5 junior secondary school, in 1997, it established a Year 12 class so that students could be examined via the Samoa School Certificate. In 2004, the MESC selected this secondary school to become a college (senior secondary school) in Samoa. The majority of the students in this school come from eight surrounding villages.

Consistent with the general school practice, one of the teachers observed prepared her weekly workbook in advance. This was signed by the principal or vice principal, who approve that the teacher has planned out his/her week.

The topics covered in the FTT curriculum in this school included kitchen hygiene, food preparation, recipe trialling, meal planning, nutrition and related diseases, food budgeting, sewing and tailoring. There were three electric sewing machines and one hand sewing machine which were expected to cater for the needs of many FTT students.

Along with the lack of resources, another problem raised included insufficient time to implement the FTT curriculum effectively. The classes were not given priority with most of the classes occurring in the afternoon when students were getting tired and unable to concentrate fully. The low status of the subject was also apparent as it was seen as the best place for 'slow learners,' while academically oriented students were expected to take the more academic subjects. It was observed that the school operated with a largely academic curriculum, on a fixed timetable and mainly teacher-directed lessons.

A strength of the school was that teachers valued their Christian beliefs as a guide for maintaining harmony in the school community. It was noted that there was positive collaboration and teamwork between the school committee, principal and teachers in managing the school.

As noted above, there were difficulties but there was some evidence from the school principal that FTT was valued, for example, he confirmed that most of his FTT teachers were sent to attend relevant professional development. This was to encourage the teachers to become familiar with the content, research, practical skills and teaching strategies of the new curriculum. If the teachers were correctly trained, then they could encourage students to develop a positive interest in FTT.

Observing the teachers in their daily teaching routine provided an opportunity to understand how each teacher had facilitated the learning of FTT knowledge and skills. One teacher, for example, who had spent more than 10 years teaching FTT was experienced in teaching both the content and skills of the FTT curriculum in the way the curriculum guidelines advocated, whereas another was new to the school and had only been teaching FTT for four years. This teacher rarely attended any workshops for FTT teachers. As a result her delivery was teacher-directed and the students received these skills and knowledge via a transmission style.

Case study school 2 (CS2)

The second case study school was established in 1956 as a secondary school/college and provided secondary education for female students of the Catholic faith. Most of the students were selected from the Samoa Year Eight Certificate Examinations. The school had an organisational structure similar to the government schools, that is, principal, assistant principal, heads of departments, assistant teachers, and students. The school's PTA and the Old Girls' Association also played an important role in the school's management.

Observation and document analysis revealed that this school also operated with a largely academic curriculum, a fixed timetable and teacher-directed lessons but there was a willingness to tailor programmes to students' needs. The staff met monthly to discuss matters concerning students, teachers, general school matters and teaching programmes. According to the principal, the FTT teachers in her school were quite experienced and she supported them so that they could teach the FTT content and skills effectively. The principal and teachers prioritized the learners' needs in terms of teaching and learning in both FTT content and skills. Furthermore, the researcher observed that students were encouraged by teachers to take FTT and other vocational

subjects. In this school these subjects were given higher priority and status than in other schools.

A strong theme to come from the case study school data analysis was that where schools valued FTT and other vocational subjects, they supported these through resourcing, timetabling and teacher professional development.

Perspectives of the participants

This snapshot of participant perspectives includes responses from teachers, principals, students and parents. They raise issues that support some of the findings from the school observations and add other concerns. First, teachers were asked for their perspectives of FTT and the issues they faced. Overall the teachers, particularly, Teacher 1, felt that the FTT curriculum was very important – both the theory and practical elements – however, teachers differed in the aspects that they thought were most relevant. Teacher 2 considered that teaching the concepts of consumer education was important:

“It was an important subject when students learnt about the skills and knowledge of consumer education, such as expiry dates on food products, food labelling, and use of new and technological appliances at home.”

Teacher 1 noted that learning FTT could lead on to benefits post-school:

“This subject was important to learn the life skills. I taught one student at this school who, when he left school, started to run a small business at home baking home-made scones, coconut cream buns and doughnuts to sell to the village people.”

A common concern, as expressed by Teacher 1, was that the MESC provided very few resources. This was supported by Teacher 3 who felt the MESC should share resources equally between government and mission (church) schools.

Teacher 1 also pointed out that there were other issues and gaps that needed to be addressed in order to implement the curriculum effectively:

“[Firstly]. . . the biased attitudes of one of the principals towards teaching subjects in school. His first priority was to appoint teachers to teach English, maths and science, and not FTT. Secondly, FTT teachers had to struggle to get resources. And, most important – this was the main reason why the school has a shortage of FTT teachers – because teachers, who originally trained as FTT teachers at the Faculty of Education / National University of Samoa, were pushed to take English, maths and science.”

It was made clear by the teachers that the MESC, principals and school committees needed to hear teachers’ voices, and that the MESC be encouraged to work collaboratively with teachers, principals and school committees.

Principals also raised their concerns, although this differed according to their situations. The principal of CS1, for example, was not very happy with the way the

school funds were handled by the school committee, whereas the other principal was however more praiseworthy of her school committee. She asserted:

“It is very important to work in partnership with the school committee and PTA in order to strengthen the school programs and developments in school. I rely on them for their support and school improvements. I learnt a lot from them in terms of sharing knowledge and experiences.”

Principal (CS1) also felt that MESC needed a more hands-on approach to curriculum implementation:

“The MESC needed an on-going monitoring of school curriculum by the curriculum officers. This was an important issue to ascertain if the teachers were following the curriculum correctly and to help teachers close gaps on the teaching of the curriculum and the teaching practices in the classroom.”

Students and parents were also asked about their perspectives of FTT. Most students said that they liked to continue education in FTT because the content matter of the subject, both theoretical and practical, motivated them to learn more of FTT’s practical and life skills. One parent explained that although FTT had low status, it was still valuable:

“FTT is a ‘second class’ option for early school dropouts. So the schools need to teach the FTT curriculum effectively, until the students leave school. This opportunity of ‘learning something’ will enable the students to reach out to contribute to their families and society.”

However, another parent noted the demands that learning FTT can put on a family:

“I am required to pay the school fees and provide other resources needed for my children in learning FTT, such as cooking ingredients, sewing materials and sometimes providing used cooking utensils from home for my daughter’s practical tasks in school.”

In summary, the participants’ responses, as some of these examples show, confirm that FTT teaching and learning faces challenges, but FTT knowledge and skills can enhance student learning and post-school opportunities, and can make a contribution to the economic development of communities in Samoa. In order to strengthen the status of the subject, it requires more commitment to the subject, improved respect between the stakeholders and a more collaborative approach to solving the issues.

Discussion

Key themes from data analysis

Three themes to come from a synthesis and analysis of the interviews, observations and documentation will now be discussed in more depth. These are the importance

of professional development for teachers, the development of appropriate teaching strategies, and the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

The importance of professional development

The strongest theme to come through was that where teachers were provided with and undertook quality professional development they were better able to implement the FTT curriculum in the way in which it was intended. According to the literature, effective professional development frequently requires groups of teachers to work actively and collaboratively together (McGee 1997; Stoll 2000). Furthermore, effective learning is not just about building teacher knowledge, but it is also about transferring teacher learning into class practice (Hill, Hawk & Taylor, 2002).

Crawford (2008) states that professional development programmes aimed at improving teachers' pedagogical content knowledge of any subject matter results in teachers improving their use of specific strategies for effective teaching. Bell and Gilbert (1993) identified that continuing teacher professional development did lead to improvements in teaching and learning in the classroom.

Professional development is not just necessary for teachers; principals need continuing education (Cooper, 2004). Riley and Louis (2000) suggest that educational leaders/principals should be professional learners too. Sergiovanni (2007) suggests that principals and teachers who know about teaching, and care about teaching, are willing to help each other, and are committed to being continual learners.

The purpose of professional development is to enhance student learning, especially where schools seek improvement and make changes to teaching and learning practices (Fullan 1991; West, 1994). A successful education in vocational subjects like FTT is an important part of the educational system (Maia'i 1957; MESC 2003; Nabobo 2001). Through FTT, students can gain skills to increase employment scenarios, particularly for school leavers who can then contribute to the social and economic development of the country (Sharma, 2000). Creating a strong FTT curriculum will assist with the challenge facing parents and teachers to ensure that students emerge from school with a strong commitment to the community and to living a fulfilling and productive life (MESC 2003; Atwell, 1992).

The development of appropriate teaching strategies

The observations of the teachers in the case study schools revealed both differences and similarities in the teaching strategies used by the teachers. Many factors impact on teachers' practices. A recent report from the Education Review Office in New Zealand (ERO, 2011, p.44) describes the characteristics of effective teachers:

Effective teachers are committed to providing high quality education for all their learners. They treat children and young people as individuals, positively acknowledging their differences and building collaborative learning relationships. Teachers set high yet attainable expectations, providing learning-rich programmes that respond to learner needs and interests. Effective teachers differentiate the curriculum as needed and

engage learners in purposeful learning through a range of media and resources. Teachers are supported to undertake professional learning and to strengthen their pedagogical content knowledge.

This study found that some of these characteristics were observed and others were not so apparent. In general, teachers developed positive relationships with their students but these were at the formal end of the continuum. Three of the teachers planned and implemented FTT curriculum competently even if delivery of content was usually more teacher directed and practical activities were limited. These teachers attempted to use a more student-focussed approach to learning, although this is somewhat contrary to the traditional cultural approach. They also attempted to adapt activities to the needs of individuals or groups of students. One of the teachers observed, however, never used any practical activities in her teaching because of a lack of resources. As a result, her students did not appear to be actively engaged in learning. It seems that students who undertook more practical work were engaged more in FTT learning.

As noted, in the data obtained from the one school, the bias towards teaching academic subjects versus vocational is an important issue to consider for future implementation of the FTT curriculum. In CS1 the ‘slow learners’ were pushed to take FTT while more academically oriented students were encouraged to study the academic subjects. Teaching less able or less-motivated students, in fact, requires teachers who are more skilled in a range of teaching strategies and have strong pedagogical content knowledge and the understanding of the conceptual underpinning of the subject in order to differentiate the curriculum according to students’ needs and abilities. As Alton-Lee (2003, p.v) states, “The central professional challenge for teachers is to manage simultaneously the complexity of learning needs of diverse learners”. This is a challenge that is especially apparent in teaching and learning FTT.

The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture

A clear message from the principals and teachers was that the MESC needs to thoroughly monitor the school curriculum and to conduct on-going training for teachers in all subject areas. Vocational subjects like FTT should be considered equally as important as other subjects. FTT was strongly endorsed by teachers as a useful, culturally-embedded subject – students learn to cook, sew, weave local crafts, arrange flowers for church and hall decorations, make wreaths, paint fabric and do screen printing to earn money for the family. Furthermore, it provides skills for self-employment opportunities when the students leave school, allowing them to contribute to the welfare of their families and communities. One teacher spoke about one of her students who left school early, because his parents could not afford to pay his school fees, used the life skills he learnt from FTT at school and applied it to a home-baking business.

Another of the teachers also felt that there was value in teaching FTT as it helped prepare students for the Year 12 and Year 13 national and international assessments. If the students achieved good marks in FTT, they would be able to continue education at the National University of Samoa or even gain scholarship awards to study overseas. For this reason, FTT also needs to be properly staffed and resourced.

The MESC was seen as having an important role in up-skilling teachers’ knowledge

and practice. One teacher appreciated working collaboratively with the curriculum officer at the MESC. She recommended that the MESC officers should come more often to visit schools and help teachers solve their difficulties.

Although the MESC officials who supported teaching FTT were enthusiastic, there were clear expectations that the MESC should further support teaching and learning FTT in all aspects, including the provision of resources, and on-going monitoring to check the equipment, tools, utensils and consumables supplied to schools for implementing vocational subjects effectively.

Conclusion

The FTT curriculum has much to offer students in secondary schools in Samoa. It can motivate them to engage in practical and creative learning both as part of their schooling and in preparation for later career opportunities. In general, teachers of FTT and principals where this subject is taught have a positive attitude towards the subject and its place in the overall curriculum. It has even been seen as a useful preparation for students who undertake examinations for higher learning post-secondary schooling. Unfortunately, it does not always figure highly in the curriculum hierarchy. It suffers from being seen as a non-academic subject, often as a place to put less able or less-motivated students. Subsequently, it is not well funded, staffed or resourced. It does not often receive favourable consideration when decisions are being made about professional development for teachers, maintenance or upgrading of facilities and resources, or placement on the timetable. This leaves the subject in a difficult position. These are the very things that need to be given higher priority in order for the subject to live up to its promise and possibilities.

In order to lift the subject's profile, a co-ordinated approach needs to be taken at a range of levels. At the Ministry level, the MESC needs to provide on-going teacher professional development, MESC officers to liaise with schools on curriculum implementation, and adequate funding for facilities, equipment and resources. At the school level, each subject, whether academic or vocational, needs to be valued for its overall contribution to students' learning and development. FTT deserves to have teachers who are trained in the subjects' pedagogy or who are upskilled to teach in this area and not for these teachers to be used to fill vacant places in other curriculum areas. At the teacher level, steps could be taken for teachers to work collaboratively to share expertise and support innovations that allow for more practical experiences for students and for teaching that is differentiated to meet students' needs.

Finally, to return to the theoretical concept of encoding and decoding policy, there is plenty of evidence in the literature that schooling in the 21st century needs to prepare young people personally, intellectually and socially to take their place in an increasingly globalised world (Levi, 1995; Thaman, 2002). The school curriculum is important in articulating society's goals and interpreting these for particular cultural and educational contexts. In order for the *encoded* curriculum to be correctly *decoded*, however, it is necessary to reinforce consistent messages. If FTT is to take its place as a subject that builds skills for the 21st century and supports Samoa's cultural identity and economic growth, it must be recognised, funded and supported to do so.

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Global influences on curriculum in Samoa: the case of Business Studies

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Abstract

Globalisation has become a strong force in all aspects of our lives. While it is now embedded in the economics, politics and culture of developed countries, developing countries such as the small island nations of the Pacific are no less immune. This article examines the development and implementation of the Business Studies curriculum in Samoa, through the lens of globalisation. A small-scale study investigates how teachers implemented the new Business Studies curriculum – what helped and what hindered. A qualitative case study approach was used to collect data from two secondary schools. The findings show that the confidence and competence of teachers, originating from their initial academic disciplines, impact on the ways in which they use curriculum materials and teach the subject. The article concludes with recommendations, such as the need for more professional development and in-school support to improve curriculum delivery in order to bring Business Studies education to a level that supports economic growth in Samoa and enables the nation take its place in the globalised world of the future.

Introduction

Samoa is a small independent island nation in the Pacific with a population of approximately 180,000 people. Formerly Western Samoa, it gained independence from New Zealand in 1962. It is a Christian country with a stable democratic government and strong ties to its traditional culture. Economically, it depends on agriculture and tourism, however, a large proportion of its income comes from foreign sources, such as remittances and aid (Ministry of Finance, 2008; US Department of State, 2009; World Bank, 2005). Samoa makes an interesting case study of the impact of global forces over time on one small country. Writers on globalisation talk of three main types of influence: economic, political and cultural (Waters, 2001). Each of these types has impacted in different ways on the development of Samoa, its education system, its school curriculum and, as will be discussed in this article, the teaching and learning of Business Studies.

While globalisation seems a modern phenomenon, there are varying views on how long globalisation has been around. One theory is that it has been around since the dawn of time but has had a sudden and recent acceleration. Another theory is that globalisation is linked to industrialisation, modernisation and the rise of capitalism, while a third theory is that it commands more attention in a world of post-industrialisation, post-modernisation and the disorganisation of capitalism. The common thread in all these

theories is that, regardless of globalisation's longevity or recency, it has influenced economics, politics and culture world-wide (Waters, 2001).

The writers of this article take the view that globalisation has been around throughout history but that it has increased in speed and intensity in the last century. This article first sets the development of the schooling curriculum in Samoa in the context of economic, political and cultural globalisation before focusing more directly on the development and implementation of the business studies curriculum. The results of a small scale study will illuminate some of the influences – both positive and negative – in more depth. The article will close with recommendations for improving the delivery of Business Studies education so that Samoa can take its place in the globalised world of the future.

Globalisation

Globalization has become the hallmark of the twenty-first century as it articulated a new form of social organization—an increasingly borderless world where flows of capital and new technologies are propelling goods, information, people, and ideologies around the globe in volumes, and at speeds, never previously imagined.

(Lockwood, 2004, p.1)

While globalisation is a process of social change, the change is not in one direction. It has both expanded and contracted our world through a set of complex, dynamic, interrelated forces. Globalisation has brought about positives and negatives, and it both enables and constrains (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2009). It appears to have a momentum that is unstoppable, which Dale (2008, p. 25) explains as appearing as, “a single, irresistible force to which we must all conform.”

Globalisation has had a marked impact on schooling world-wide as education policies systems become more alike (Dale, 2008; Stromquist, 2005). Spring (2006, p.xi) explains:

In the 21st century national school systems have similar grades and promotion plans, instructional methods, curriculum organisation, and linkages between secondary and higher education. There are local variations but the most striking feature is the sameness of educational systems.

Samoa has not been immune to the influences of globalisation in its economic, political or cultural spheres (Lockwood, 2004). The next section of the article will briefly discuss how global trends in these spheres have impacted on developments in Samoa.

Political globalisation

Archaeologists and anthropologists put the first migrants from Southeast Asia as reaching the Samoan islands over 2,000 years ago. The Samoan islands then became a stepping off place for the settlement of much of the rest of Polynesia (Lockwood, 2004;

Macpherson, 2000; Feinberg & Macpherson, 2002; Strathern et al, 2002). First contact with Europeans came in the 1700s but it was the arrival of missionaries and traders in the 1830s and 40s that was to have the most impact on Samoan culture (Afamasaga, 2007). Globalisation came to impact on Samoa and other Pacific islands politically, economically and culturally through exploration and colonisation. As Lockwood, (2004, p.11) states, “Most island groups had already experienced a century or more of invasive and culturally destructive contact from European explorers, sailors, whalers, and missionaries before they were officially colonised in the mid-1800s...” In 1899, the Samoan islands were divided into two parts. The western islands, originally of interest to Spain, came under German control and became Western Samoa. In 1904, the eastern islands became territories of the United States and today, as American Samoa, are still controlled by the US. In 1914, the League of Nations put Western Samoa under New Zealand administration, which continued until Samoan independence in 1962 – the first Pacific Island nation to gain independence from colonial powers (Afamasaga, 2007; Lockwood, 2004).

Politically, there are many legacies. The 1960 constitution, which was formally adopted with independence, is based on the British Westminster parliamentary system, modified to allow for *fa’a Samoa* (the Samoan way). The unicameral Legislative Assembly or *Fono* (parliament) contains 49 members serving 5-year terms. Universal suffrage was extended in 1990, but only *matai* (chiefs) may stand for election to the Samoan seats. The prime minister is chosen by a majority in the *Fono* and is appointed by the head of state to form a government (Ministry of Finance, 2008; World Bank, 2005). The judicial system is also based on English common law and local customs with the Supreme Court as the court of highest jurisdiction. A feature of Samoa’s judicial system is the Lands and Titles Court, which settles customary land and *matai* title grievances (Meleisea, 1987; Ministry of Finance, 2008). As Lockwood (2004, p.7) asserts, rather than total “Western homogenization”, there has been “selective adoption and rejection, customization and ‘cultural creolization’” and this is apparent in the way Samoan society has produced a hybridized political and legal system.

Economic globalisation

Samoa’s main sources of income are agricultural exports (mainly coconut-based products), development aid and private family remittances from overseas, with tourism and the service industry making a greater contribution in recent years. These are all important contributors to Samoa’s trade deficit, which was exacerbated by various natural and economic disasters in the 1990s – Cyclone Ofa (1990), Cyclone Val (1991), taro leaf blight (1994) and the near collapse of Polynesian airlines (1994). In 1991, approximately 68% of capital expenditure was funded by external aid from New Zealand, Australia, Japan and the United States (US Department of State, 2009). In recent times the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the European Union have also provided technical and financial aid with further assistance from the United Nations family of organisations (Asian Development Bank, 2008; World Bank, 2005).

The Samoan government responded to the disasters of the 1990s with economic reforms and a major public works programme. Over this time, Samoa also saw

substantial improvement in human development – increased life expectancy, a rising adult literacy rate, increased schooling enrolments and growth in average incomes (Ministry of Finance, 2008). Since then, economic reforms have continued, aiming to increase private sector development, improve infrastructure and utilities, and increase efficiencies in public administration (Asian Development Bank, 2008; Ministry of Finance, 2008; World Bank, 2005). These reforms are monitored carefully by the donor countries and international banks, which put Samoa under pressure to follow their advice and continue with market-led style reforms, that is, to lessen the role of government, liberalise trade, corporatise state-owned enterprises and so on. When talking of Samoa's reforms, the impact of globalization, through the trend toward neo-liberal ideology, can be seen in this statement by the Asian Development Bank (2008, p.1):

In many of these areas [economy, trade, health, education and development], progress has been made in transforming economic policy away from the promotion of inward-looking, state-dominated, import-substituting activities, toward freeing up trade, reducing the role of the state, and reforming institutions.

The September 2009 earthquake and tsunami will mean that Samoa will be dependent on further foreign assistance to get the country and economy back to where it was and moving forward again. Because of Samoa's vulnerability, the significance of developing business skills and diversifying the economy takes on more importance than ever.

Cultural globalisation

Cultural globalisation has also had a major impact on Samoa. While over 90 per cent of the population is of Samoan ethnicity, there is a cultural mix including descendants of Chinese workers brought to Samoa a hundred years ago, Europeans, Euronians and a Polynesian/Asians, as well as a variety of new migrants. The main religion is Christianity (98.6 per cent of the population) with the church being a significant part of family, village and national life. Samoan and English are official languages and both are used in schools. While there is a high birth rate, there is also a net loss overseas, so the population growth rate is only 1.4 per cent, with 60 per cent of the population under the age of 15 (Ministry of Finance, 2008). This has a significant impact on education and health services.

Samoa is considered a developing country (having moved from the 'under-developed' category) and is now placed in the middle range of the Human Development Index range (75th out of 177 countries). Samoa has made considerable progress towards the Millennium Development Goals – reducing poverty, child mortality and gender disparity in education. However, there is still work to be done as the Samoa Ministry of Finance (2008, p.2) explains:

While there has been a general rise in the level of human development, there have been concerns over inequality of income distribution, hardship amongst vulnerable groups, a lack of formal employment

and income generating opportunities (especially for school leavers), limitations in access to quality education, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases, and emerging social problems.

Globalisation and education in Samoa

One of the features of globalisation, is that while global trends are at work cross-nationally, there is also a counter reaction within countries and cultural groups to protect languages and cultures under threat. As Afamasaga (2007, p.7) says:

The history of the Pacific is one of colonisation. As small Pacific nations have gained independence and political strength, they have also sought to reclaim their unique cultures, languages and knowledge systems. Education is seen as a key vehicle for cultural survival and sustainability.

The first formal schools were the mission schools of the 1840s. The curriculum was based around the Bible through which reading, writing and morality was taught with the underlying agenda of ‘civilising’ Pacific people into Christian ways (Afamasaga, 2007). The approach was holistic and this suited the Samoan way of learning. Christianity was accepted quickly and relatively peacefully and became integrated into the lives of the Pacific people with its own local flavour. As schooling developed in its colonial setting, the curriculum came to reflect that of New Zealand and later other aid donor countries. Yet as these countries moved forward with more progressive schooling practices and curricula over the 20th century, Samoan education has remained largely unchanged. Afamasaga (2007, p.10) states that as a result:

. . . the schools that we have today have become alienating institutions for most children in Pacific schools. The schools are palagi [European] buildings with typically four-walled classrooms in which students arrive early, sit for six hours in orderly rows at desks (or on the floor on mats) listening to teachers espousing knowledge, then leave again to the freedom of their villages, to . . . learn to do what they should be doing as citizens of their villages. The doing and the learning in the village plays no part in school at all. It is neither in the curriculum nor in the activities of the school . . . Thus the school remains an alien institution which is often associated with palagi knowledge.

In 1992, the World Bank reviewed Samoa’s education system. The review highlighted the need for access to early childhood education, improved primary school facilities and curriculum materials, more relevant evaluation and assessment of learning, and a re-organised secondary schooling system. This resulted in the formation of a planning committee which outlined a series of goals to shape policy directions based around equity, quality, relevancy and efficiency (Education Policy and Planning Committee, 1995).

Of relevance to this study, were the clear intentions to (a) make a more comprehensive education available to a wider range of students by unifying the dual-stream secondary

system; (b) strengthen the cultural component of schooling in order to, “sustain and strengthen Samoan culture and heritage in a rapidly changing and multi-cultural world” (Education Policy and Planning Committee, 1995, p.12); and (c) provide a sound basis upon which “occupation-specific training” could be built and which included “an awareness of employment opportunities” (p.13).

The Business Studies curriculum

In order to achieve the aim of preparing students for working life following their schooling, a stronger focus was needed on optional subjects such agricultural science, home economics, industrial arts and business studies. The curriculum for Business Studies was prepared by a team of Samoan educators with the help of New Zealand consultants. It is a combination of economics and accounting topics in Years 9 to 11 and it splits into two specialist subjects in Years 12 & 13. Gounder (1992) explains in order to effect curriculum change in the Pacific, teachers are given a detailed curriculum plan to be followed, which outlines expected levels of attainment for precisely specified objectives and teachers are expected to be faithful curriculum implementers of the intentions of curriculum developers. In 2000, a very detailed Business Studies curriculum statement for Years 9-13 was prepared (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2000). The curriculum was supported with student workbooks. Other education initiatives later followed which aimed to increase interest in developing economic thinking, such as the Entrepreneurship and Financial Education project in 2007, changes to the Business Studies curriculum to streamline the economics and accounting components in 2008, and the integration of an enterprise studies strand and a financial studies strand for Years 9 – 11 in 2008 (UNDP Pacific Centre, 2009).

Research into the implementation of the Business Studies curriculum

The purpose of this small-scale study was to find out how Business Studies teachers were implementing the Business Studies curriculum in Samoan secondary schools, how they were using Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) curriculum materials and whether these materials were adding value to their teaching. The researcher’s interest in curriculum implementation meant that the research questions would include finding out what teachers knew about the Business Studies curriculum, what curriculum materials were available, how useful these were and how well teachers felt the materials helped them implement the Business Studies curriculum.

Methodology

In order to understand the insights and perspectives of teachers engaged in teaching Business Studies, a qualitative research approach was used. Qualitative research aims to uncover the lived reality of the participants (Mutch, 2005). Qualitative researchers are encouraged to focus on the stories of the participants. Stoller (1989, cited in Glesne, 2006) suggests that researchers must learn to sit and listen to these stories to see what is revealed inside each story.

Research design

Observations and interviews were used as the main data gathering tools within the qualitative approach. Participant observations are a useful strategy for direct, face-to-face social interaction with “real people” in a natural setting (Neuman, 2000, p. 345; Mutch, 2005). Kvale (1996, cited in Mutch, 2005) suggests that qualitative interviews can be a construction site of knowledge when there is an interchange of views between two people conversing about a theme of mutual interest. These research methods supported the researcher’s wish to gather data from the research participants in a manner that was supportive yet informative.

Each participant received an information sheet and consent form when they were selected by their heads of department. It is important to have signed and informed consent form to indicate that participants understand the research purpose and are willing to be involved (Mutch, 2005). Two data gathering visits were undertaken – one included the interviews and the other was to undertake observations of teachers during classroom teaching of Business Studies. Consistent with advice from Burns (1997), field notes were recorded and written up more fully immediately afterwards.

Interviews with participants

Interviews were semi-structured, as suggested by Mutch (2005), who supports having a set of key questions that provide guidance but can be flexible and followed in a more open-ended manner. Open-ended interview is regarded the best strategy for getting close to teachers’ thinking. All interviews took place in the school setting.

As part of the interview, demographic questions were asked to gather information about the teacher’s background and position in their school, before moving on to their knowledge and use of curriculum statement, their use of the curriculum materials, the use of other supplementary resources and the types of learning activities they include in lessons.

Classroom observations

Each teacher was observed teaching for a period of 45-50 minutes. The researcher’s presence in the classrooms was considered not too disruptive to the teachers as they are used to MESC personnel visiting their classrooms on a regular basis. During the observations, the researcher observed the levels of interaction occurring in the classroom, the teaching and learning activities undertaken and the skills being taught and developed in Business Studies. Note was also taken of resources and other supplementary materials used for teaching Business Studies. This data was supplemented by the interviews with the teachers.

Sample Selection Process

Two schools, one government school and one mission school, were selected for this study. They were purposive samples, in which the choice is made of settings and/or participants that best meet the research aims (Burns, 1997; Mutch, 2005). Patton (2002 cited in Glesne, 2006, p.46) states that “the logic and power of purposeful sampling

leads to selecting information-rich cases for study in depth.” The schools were chosen because they participate in in-service training provided by MESC and are well supplied with the curriculum books for all subjects, including Business Studies. After explaining the research to the principals and heads of department, participants were identified as teachers who were teaching Business Studies in Years 9-11 and teaching either accounting or economics in Years 12 and 13. All teachers were of Samoan ethnicity and both male and female teachers were involved in the study. Table 1 indicates the six teachers with their qualifications and years of experience.

Table 1: Teachers involved in the research

Teacher identifiers	Qualifications	Years of service
Teacher A	B. Commerce	3 years
Teacher B	Diploma in Theology	9 years
Teacher C	B. Commerce	2 years
Teacher D	B. Commerce	4 years
Teacher E	Dip. Education	8 years
Teacher F	Dip. Education	10 years

The Research Settings

The two schools were quite different in their approaches to education. One is a mission school, situated in the urban area administered by the Congregational Christian Church. It has 28 teachers and about 500 students who come from all over Samoa. The second school is a government college fifteen minutes’ drive from Apia which selects high achieving students from Year 8 to go into Year 9 and continue to Year 13. There are 45 staff and 900 students. It has a hostel to board students from rural villages and other islands.

Results: Observations

The research results are drawn from the participants’ interview responses and the observation of the Business Studies teachers in their classrooms. This section discusses the classroom observations and teaching methods of the participants. Classroom observations were carried out as part of this study to gauge the types of interaction between teachers and students, the teaching and learning activities undertaken and the skills being developed during the teaching sessions in the six classrooms.

Discussion of Classroom Observations

Teaching styles were similar in all the classrooms observed as each teacher directed whole class discussions by asking questions and having students answer. All the teachers used the students’ books in their lessons. However, a difference was noted in teaching methods relating to teachers’ experience. While most teachers were using the traditional method of teaching using chalk and blackboard, others extended their teaching methods using speaking and listening activities in oral presentations

and had students work in pairs or groups. Three features of the observations are now discussed in more depth: teaching experience; methods of delivery and use of curriculum books and resources.

Teaching Experience

In line with the proverb, “Practice makes perfect”, the teachers with more years of practice had a higher degree of confidence in teaching Business Studies. Saunders (2000, cited in Quan-Baffour & Achemfuor, 2008) states that effective teachers at a mature stage of development tend to know their subject matter well, use pedagogies appropriate for the content and reflect on their teaching and children’s responses. They also create and sustain an effective learning environment and show that they care about their students. These experienced teachers have higher levels of pedagogical content knowledge. Quan-Baffour & Achemfuor (2008) define pedagogical content knowledge as the ability to blend technique and content including understanding how specific topics are related to one another and how they are most effectively organised and presented in the classroom to maximise learning.

Methods of Delivery

Of the teachers observed, three extended their approaches to let students work in pairs and in groups in order to learn from one another. One teacher asked the students to go out to the village shops and collect source documents. This ‘discovery learning’ or ‘education outside the classroom’ helps develop skills such as collecting primary information, investigating, problem-solving and interviewing. Students find that people in the community can also help them learn. In this case, the documents were used to create a resource (wall chart) as a source of information in the classroom.

Overall, however, the traditional method is the one seen in most classrooms. Teachers ask questions, students answer during class discussions before copying notes and completing written exercises. The pedagogies needed to make Business Studies a more relevant and useful subject were not very evident.

Use of Curriculum Materials and Resources

National documents (curriculum overview, curriculum statement and students’ books) were developed for the implementation of the Business Studies curriculum. There were no teachers’ manuals so teachers use the students’ books to prepare their classroom lessons. Three of the observed teachers had not seen the Business Studies curriculum statement so they did not know how to use it. All they had were the students’ books to provide the outline of what to teach. One other issue observed was the lack of resources used in most classrooms due to the nature of the subject. Although Business Studies is classified as vocational (practical), its concepts are more theoretical requiring teachers to understand and teach definitions and meanings well. Therefore, teachers concentrate more on explaining definitions than using resources to expand the relevance and interest of the subject.

Results: Interviews

This section discusses the data gained from the interview responses and how they addressed some of the research questions.

The first question asked what curriculum materials teachers had in their schools. Teachers mentioned the curriculum statement, the students' books and the school's annual plan. Teachers A, C and D said they were not familiar with curriculum statement, e.g., "[It was] *not included in NUS commerce courses and I haven't been to any in-service training.*" Teachers were often the only source of information for the students. They depended on the notes and activities provided in the students' books and they did not often look for other supplementary sources for their own background knowledge.

It was recommended that both pre-service teacher education at the National University of Samoa and in-service school-based programmes, through departmental meetings and professional development, should include an introduction to all the curriculum books and materials available.

The second question asked how useful the available materials were for delivering the Business Studies curriculum. While some teachers found them a useful basis for knowing what to teach, for planning their lessons and for designing annual plans from which they prepared term and daily plans, others used them with less thought. For example, they got students to copy notes straight from the books or they made no attempt to extend the students beyond the exercises provided in the students' book. In one class, students were told to: "*Copy all notes on the given pages then do activities that follow*" and when the bell rang, the teacher reminded them to "*make sure you finish copying those notes before our next class*".

Question 3 asked teachers what other support materials were available. Some teachers had no materials other than the curriculum books and had no idea where to get them, or could not afford them, whereas others used ESA publications from New Zealand or older Form 3 & 4 accounting or economics texts. Teacher B was motivated to look beyond the curriculum materials provided: "*I have no educational qualifications but teaching for nine years has motivated me to look for other texts especially when I take Year 11 classes.*"

The next question asked the teachers to consider how well they thought they implemented the curriculum. A strong theme was teaching to their preferred discipline. Teacher B said "*I love teaching accounting as I have been doing accounting work in the bank.*" Teacher E was more comfortable teaching economics than accounting. She said, "*Economics was my best subject when I went to college, I like writing essays and hate numbers.*" When implementing the curriculum, some teachers just followed the prescription and the set exercises. Others tried to supplement the exercises in the students' books with other activities and exercises. They felt this was more in the spirit of the curriculum's intentions. Again, the importance of pre-service and in-service professional development can be seen to increase teachers' awareness of the curriculum's intentions and the ways to teach to these.

Related to this, teachers were asked about attending professional development workshops. The responses ranged from none (Teacher A) or one (Teachers C and D) to every workshop the Ministry had offered for their subject. Teacher B commented: "*I've learned a lot from these trainings, I attend every time the Ministry runs these.*"

It is important for teachers not get complacent. There is a place for professional development for all teachers even though they have relevant qualifications. Professional development updates teachers' knowledge and skills and teachers gain both personally and professionally. Professional development does not just need to be provided by outside facilitators. Smith, Mockler and Normanhusht (2003) suggest professional groups in schools (focused on school-wide improvement, staff development and classroom development) could contribute to whole school development.

Discussion

While this latest Business Studies curriculum has been available in schools for over ten years and has been refined over time, it has not received the support that is needed to make it a valuable and relevant subject for students leaving school to find a job. This small scale study provides some insights into this concern. Some of the issues are with the subject itself, others are with teacher knowledge and curriculum delivery, and others are with the provision of in-school support and teacher professional development.

Nature of the curriculum

Business Studies is an optional vocational subject which aims to prepare students for life when they leave school as useful contributors to society and to Samoa's economy. One issue raised in the study is that there are two disciplines (accounting and economics) combined in business studies content. Firstly, teachers often favour one discipline over the other depending on their own backgrounds. As one teacher commented: "*My major is economics and I am forced to teach accounting as well*". Secondly, the content comes in separate texts – Book 1 for economics and Book 2 for accounting. Thirdly, the content is quite conceptual and is difficult to teach. This means that without extra support materials, lessons tend to be quite formal and transmissive in nature, for example, in accounting the only exercises used are those in the students' books. Fourthly, because the subject is optional, how much time and how many periods are available to teach business studies depends on the school-based programme and what is seen as a priority.

Teachers' Content Knowledge

All participants were either more comfortable in economics than accounting or vice versa. Teachers found the subject hard to teach because part of the content was not related to their own background experiences. They also expressed that there were specific topics they had never studied at college and therefore lacked the confidence to teach effectively. In order to gain confidence in teaching the other discipline and in approaching Business Studies in a more integrated manner, teachers need professional development opportunities. Whether they undertake study on their own, participate in collaborative learning in schools or attend MECS professional development, the situation will not improve without personal motivation and external support. McArdle and Coutts (2003) suggest that reflective practice is an approach to continued professional development which teachers come to understand their own deeply held beliefs and the way these impact on their professional practice. King (2002) suggests that teachers

can both engage in careful individual inquiry about their own practice and inquiry as a collaborative activity among themselves to contribute to a professional community and enable their schools to become learning organisations.

Knowledge of curriculum materials

The study found that more experienced teachers understood the intention of the curriculum, the relationship between the curriculum statement and students' books and had the confidence to draw from a wider range of curriculum materials. Beginning teachers and teachers new to the subject need to be provided with an induction into the subject and to be encouraged to consider the ways to use the curriculum materials and how to supplement them with ideas from other sources. Experienced teachers also need updating in new curriculum content and pedagogies.

Teachers' pedagogies

Teaching is not just about content, how teachers teach is as important as what they teach. It takes time to move from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred one. As has already been noted, teachers need strong content knowledge in order to be confident enough to try new teaching approaches. If Business Studies is to achieve its potential students need to gain experience in the essential skills of questioning, interpreting sources and problem-solving. The study showed that both individual and collaborative inquiries are rare. There are many strategies teachers can use to introduce both content and skills into the classroom, such as seminars, debates, field trips, surveys and interviews but without professional learning opportunities for teachers, they will remain with the status quo.

Teacher preparation and development

If teachers studying at the National University of Samoa (NUS) are being prepared to teach Business Studies, then some course and career guidance would help them select appropriate subjects to prepare them for teaching both economics and accounting. The teachers in this study had not had this opportunity and on arriving in schools, they often conceded that they had not attended any workshop provided by MESC, nor had there been any school improvement programme available in their schools. One teacher commented '*Our staff has meetings every Monday but it's only on other matters*'. This was confirmed by the subject advisor who said that most Business Studies teachers needed training on the curriculum in relation to content, teaching pedagogies and learning activities.

The need for in-service training in content knowledge and teaching methodology for effective classroom teaching should be a priority. Quan-Baffour and Achemfuor (2008) consider that in-service training is a strategy, not only to address gaps in content knowledge and provide skills in teaching, but also to improve teachers' confidence and general competence.

In-school support

MESC has now developed training programmes aiming at preparing principals and teachers, with appropriate knowledge and skills to be able to offer the curriculum as part of continuous school development and improvement. Thus, in order to reduce the problem of teachers not getting professional development, the responsibility is passed to principals to set up their own school-based programmes of teacher professional development. King (2002) in his research describes a range of strategies that can be used to support teachers, such as visits to other schools, meetings with teachers from other schools, professional development activities like workshops with outside authorities, and activities within the school such as curriculum team meetings.

Principals and teachers should be encouraged and motivated to understand the importance of school-based programmes and put them into action. They also need to identify strengths and weaknesses in their school programmes so that external help can be sought from the ministry and others to address any concerns raised during this school-based staff development.

The curriculum development process

Teachers felt removed from the curriculum development process as they were not involved in the writing of the curriculum document. Although some teachers participate in curriculum development, they tend not to be involved in making decisions as most decisions flow from the top. McGee (1997) believes that teachers are, in fact, the key curriculum decision makers. They make a number of decisions with respect to the implementation of any given curriculum and to reach these decisions, they need to consider the learning abilities of their students, the curriculum documents, resources available and their own strengths. If teachers can come to see themselves as curriculum decision makers they will feel more empowered to participate in professional development and to implement the curriculum in ways that are more relevant to students.

Conclusion

Business Studies has the potential to make a strong contribution to the social and economic development of Samoa. The effects of globalisation on Samoa, including the impact of its colonial past on its politics, culture and economy, combined with its vulnerability to natural hazards, mean that a multi-faceted approach is needed to ensure Samoa's on-going stability and sustainability. Some of the problems faced by Samoa currently are its reliance on foreign aid and investment, lack of diversity in income-generating activities, growing social and economic disparity, and youth disengagement and unemployment. The Business Studies curriculum, combining accounting and economics and more recently, entrepreneurship and financial education, offers part of the solution.

What this study has shown, however, is that teachers need to be prepared and upskilled more thoroughly with on-going professional development that covers curriculum content, familiarisation with curriculum materials, student-centred pedagogies and

opportunities for collaborative teacher networks and in-school support. Teachers, teacher educators, schools and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture need to value the opportunities that Business Studies provides for young people to contribute to Samoa's development and to work together to achieve the goals of Samoa's development strategy: "Ensuring sustainable economic and social progress" and "Improved quality of life for all" (Ministry of Finance, 2008, p.v).

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Akarakara akaouanga i te kite pakari o te kuki airani: Culturally responsive pedagogy

Aue Te Ava, Airini, and Christine Rubie-Davies

Abstract

This paper explores the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy in Cook Islands secondary schools. A combination of culture, values, teaching and learning creates the basis for culturally responsive pedagogy. A definition of the concept of values in relation to pedagogy and a subsequent focus on the dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy is provided. The metaphor of a Cook Islands *tivaevae* is proposed as a possible model for conceptualising a culturally responsive pedagogy. The concept of culturally responsive pedagogy is explored in relation to teaching in Cook Islands secondary schooling.

Keywords: culturally responsive pedagogy, values, Physical Education, Cook Islands, teaching and learning.

Introduction

Cultural values provide Cook Islands students an opportunity to engage in their culture by working together with the teachers and community to make education a lifelong learning experience. This paper investigates how cultural values could be employed in culturally responsive pedagogy, focusing on PE in Cook Islands secondary schools. Integral to this approach are indigenous values. Henry (1992, p.12) posits that:

Cultural values in the Cook Islands are an important part of education. Cook Islanders should not abandon their cultural value in favour of the western education. Since the natives are aware of their loss, they owe it to their children to gain what they did not. It does not mean that Cook Islanders should cling to the glories of the past. Cook Island people instead, should seek balance between cultural identity and pride. Every generation and every nation must look to new glories.

Henry proposed that Cook Islanders should return to values of the past not to stay there, but rather to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. This paper seeks to contribute to that dynamic by exploring ways in which culturally responsive pedagogy could be used by teachers in Cook Islands secondary schools.

This paper draws on evidence from a multi-faceted research study into culturally responsive pedagogy (Te Ava, 2011). Broadly viewed, the research seeks to further

understandings of indigenous education and the conversion of educational theory into practices that support positive futures for indigenous peoples. More narrowly, the research explores culturally responsive pedagogy in a specific context, that of the Cook Islands. This paper is particularly concerned with a conceptual investigation of Cook Islands culturally responsive pedagogy.

‘Pedagogy’

The term pedagogy is a western concept, from Greek origins, that draws attention to the process of teaching. Although there is no Cook Islands term for ‘pedagogy’, there are forms of pedagogy in the Cook Islands PE curriculum. These might be described as the singular constructs of *api’i* (teaching and learning) and *tu ako* (to teach and listen). Such constructs are expressed in a range of contexts, including classroom practices and curriculum, and in wider society through cultural practices such as *imene tuki* (singing of hymns); *raranga* (weaving); *rutu pau* (playing drums); *ura* (dance); arts and crafts; and food gathering of different kinds of vegetables, fishing and hunting. These methods are important socially, culturally, historically and economically (Borofsky, 2000). Through these, children learn not only what is in official PE curriculum, but also what are the values underpinning Cook Islands society. Teaching and learning through culture becomes the site for students’ learning about contemporary society with cultural awareness (Howard & Borofsky, 1989). The need to find a balance between western and Cook Islands understandings of pedagogy, national curriculum and culture remains of critical importance. Pedagogy presents itself as a powerful way of conceptualising a relationship between teaching and values in educational settings.

Pedagogy also includes a consideration of the intentionality of teaching. When a teacher, coach, or parent engages practically in particular knowledge transmissions, they have a pedagogical intent (Tinning, 2010). Framed in this way, pedagogy can be used to understand specific cultural practices in Cook Islands society. For example, Buck (1930) observed how Cook Islands chiefs taught young Cook Islanders fishing skills in Aitutaki. They originally trained their subjects to dive for fish until they ultimately mastered these skills. In this interaction process, the chiefs communicated values related to the structure of society, learning about fishing and the teaching of it, as well as respect for the marine environment, spiritual dimensions, and service in communities.

Intentionality means that students’ outcomes may be expressed and assessed through value-based collective activities, such as teamwork, *angaanga pakari* (work hard) and *tu akangateitei* (respect) and achievements. Similarly, teachers may develop planning processes that integrate effective learning skills. This may include student leadership and abilities in planning curriculum-related activities. Thereby, in Cook Island terms, a collective ethic and practice within the society generates *angaanga pakari* in achieving specific objectives. Intentionality in such a context is about more than a single lesson and teaching approach. Intentional pedagogy from a Cook Islands perspective will link values and curriculum outcomes.

While the concept of pedagogy draws attention to the process of knowledge production and the intentionality of the teaching act, the importance of values is frequently overlooked. To not consider values is to risk marginalising indigenous

knowledge and its continuation, and to limit children's learning to western practices and curriculum (Meyers, 2003). The question remains: how might we understand values in order to teach in culturally responsive ways?

Values

Cultural values shape indigenous peoples in their ways of knowing and being, and represent the elements of a society that are valued for creating and sustaining community (Merriam & Mohamad, 2000). It has been suggested that cultural values are foundational to teaching and learning in Cook Islands communities (Jonassen, 2003). Eight interconnected values in Cook Islands Maori culture have been identified in teaching: *kitepakari* (wisdom), *'irinaki* (faith), *akakoromaki* (patience), *ora* (life), *rota'i'anga* (unity), *akaaka* (humility), *noa* (freedom) and *aroa* (love) (Jonassen, 2003). Culturally responsive pedagogy will integrate such cultural values which are also enacted by the community.

Tinning (1997) has suggested that values in PE are important not only for traditional links but also for contemporary considerations about the lives and cultures of peoples living in diverse societies. This suggests an expanded understanding of PE, beyond that of physical activity and gaming, to one in which cultural traditions and multiculturalism like the Cook Islands within PE play an important role in helping students from various backgrounds to express their thinking to other students and to become culturally engaged in each other's learning practices (Nieto, 2004). How then might culturally responsive pedagogy be conceptualised in ways that attend to values, learning and contemporary life in the Cook Islands?

Culturally responsive pedagogy

What is 'culturally responsive pedagogy'?

Culturally responsive pedagogy is multidimensional in that it encompasses curriculum content, learning, context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, and performance assessments (Gay, 2000). As such, while mindful of these dimensions, culturally responsive pedagogy is broadly defined as teaching in purposeful ways that integrate the values and culture in the community (Gay, 2000). In this sense, culturally responsive pedagogy is about the individual and the collective.

New Zealand education researchers have found that culturally responsive pedagogy is vital to learning by Pasifika school children. From a Pasifika perspective, it is important to establish an understanding of culturally appropriate pedagogies. This may require defining what pedagogy means in a learning institution (Coxon, Anae, Mara, Samu, & Finau, 2002). Some have argued that for pedagogy for Pasifika students to be correctly defined, it should reflect the cultural values of Pasifika peoples and be attuned to context (Samu, 2006; Mara 2006; Nabobo-Baba, 2006). There is a need to develop classroom instruction that is both culturally orientated and responsive to Pasifika students (Airini, McNaughton, Langley, & Sauni, 2007).

It remains however that investigations into culturally responsive pedagogy are yet to be undertaken in the Cook Islands. This paper seeks to address this gap to enable teachers to adjust their practices to improve education outcomes through attention to the cultural attributes of the student.

Tivaevae as a model for conceptualising culturally responsive pedagogy

The metaphor of a Cook Islands *tivaevae* is proposed as a possible model for conceptualising culturally responsive pedagogy. This model has been long advocated by Teremoana Hodges (2000) as a model for underpinning education. In this research, however, the application of the *tivaevae* metaphor locates culturally responsive pedagogy within the Cook Islands curriculum, with a particular regard for PE curriculum. It pays attention to the values that are important for incorporating into Cook Islands' pedagogy. The *tivaevae* model comprises five key values: *taokotai* (collaboration), *tu akangateitei* (respect), *uriuri kite* (reciprocity), *tu inangaro* (relationships), and *akairi kite* (shared vision). In this section, there is a description of how *tivaevae* is made along with the concepts of the *tivaevae*. The *tivaevae* model suggests a holistic approach to the Cook Islands Health and PE curriculum statement.

The *tivaevae* is a large canvas decorated with other pieces of cloth of different designs and patterns with the aim of making a picture or telling a story. The designs and colours are evocative of the Cook Islands environment – flowers, leaves, emblems, landscapes, ocean, and sky. The stitching is part of the canvas. It sits on top of the fabric pieces where each stitch can be seen, and provides a reminder of the women's hands crafting the *tivaevae*. Rongokea (2001) illustrated two methods of sewing a *tivaevae*: patchwork, or piecework and appliqué. Further, there are four different styles: *tivaevae taorei* (piecework/patchwork), *tivaevae manu* (appliqué), *tivaevae tataura* (appliqué and embroidery), and *tivaevae tuitui tataura* (embroidered squares of fabric joined together with either crocheting or lace borders).

Taokotai (collaboration) plays an important role in making the *tivaevae*, bringing together a shared passion and love for *tuitui* (sewing). Collaboration has an important practical dimension:

I don't think I can make a tivaevae by myself; it's much quicker when you work with a group because when women get together they come up with different interpretive realities. Our group has worked on a number of tivaevae together. Sometimes we've worked on it until four in the morning to try and get it right, and we've worked on a tivaevae taorei that took four years to complete.

(Mareta Matamu cited in Rongokea, 2001, p. 63)

Taokotai is important when learning within a community group. Not only is striving to achieve shared objectives important, but so too is patiently practising *tivaevae*-making. The sewing of the *tivaevae* involves both time and inspiration as the pattern fitting gradually evolves. The need to negotiate designs and space, and to be patient in this process, adds to personal learning and development.

Tu akangateitei (respect) is fundamental in the production of *tivaevae*. Hence Cook Islands women's patching expertise derives from experience, and mutual respect is revealed throughout the stages of the creation of the *tivaevae*. According to Rongokea (2001), the making of *tivaevae* suggests learning is a form of respecting the knowledge of others. In this sense, the *tivaevae* becomes a useful metaphor for explaining, structuring and acknowledging the culture. The ultimate process of designing a *tivaevae* is to blend traditional cultural values with an artistic piece of work.

According to Maua-Hodges (2003), reciprocal practice to which both the teacher and the learner contribute is vital. Likewise, the Cook Islands women develop reciprocity abilities (*uriuri kite*) that produce a *tivaevae*. They represent the shared ideas about discrete roles teachers, *pa metua* and students play in both assisted and supported learning environments. The concepts of *tivaevae* are intertwined with each rather than singly separated, therefore, learning experiences are viewed as similarly structured.

Tu inangaro (relationship) is valued in the making of *tivaevae*. This relationship initially starts in the family then grows out to the community. It is particularly depicted in *tivaevae* about history and genealogy (Maua-Hodges, 2003). A process of relationship-making occurs over a period of time; time that is spent on spiritual matters, observation, demonstration, listening, practising, analysing, experimenting and reviewing the task of producing a *tivaevae*. Practical scaffolding has a significant role in this learning process (Maua-Hodges, 2003). Once an adroitness in handling a *tivaevae* has been reached, *tivaevae* students share their arts with the community.

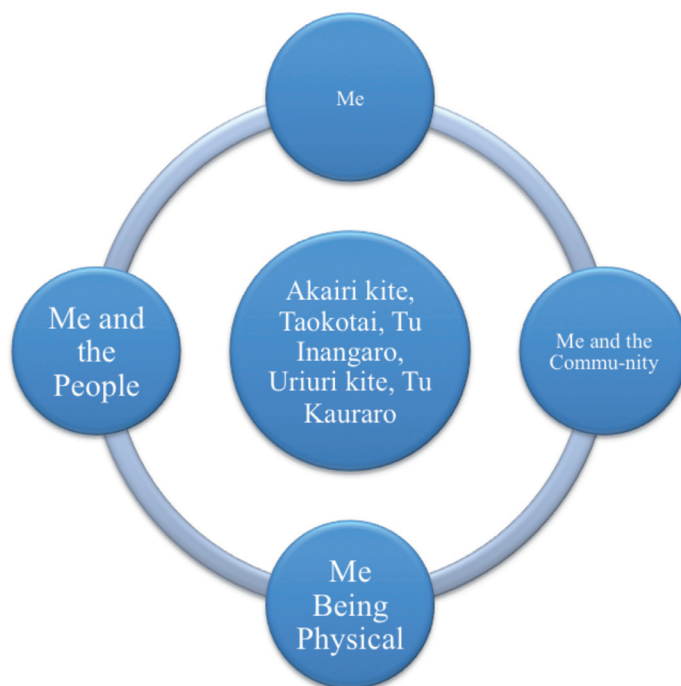
Akairi kite (shared vision) is highly respected among Cook Islands women making the *tivaevae*. When the women come together, they have a shared vision of how the *tivaevae* is going to turn out. Rongokea (2001) stated that shared vision of *tivaevae* is based on constructing knowledge incrementally, complementing personal growth and development. According to Rongokea, shared vision is culturally responsive because it represents the values of *tu akangateitei* (respect), *tu akakoromaki* (patience) and *tu kauraro* (humility).

When knowledge is shared, whether right or wrong, it remains unamended. Appreciating each other in shared vision portrays gratitude which enables teacher and student to discuss the outcome of any knowledge gained. The *tivaevae* has a shared vision with sparks of godliness which every Cook Islander should be proud of – respected and cared for. The *tivaevae* is a validation of cultural knowledge that is respected in Cook Islands communities.

A tivaevae approach to Cook Islands curriculum

In 2004, the Health and PE curriculum (HPEC) adopted a holistic concept in classroom teaching which involves the social, spiritual, mental and emotional, and physical dimensions the society had on the environment it constantly affected. '*Oraanga e te tupuanga meitaki*' aims to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation to make effective decisions that contribute to general well-being. In order to develop learning skills, students must know their physical wellbeing (Cook Islands Ministry of Education, 2004).

Four general aims provide direction for learning in health and PE and become strands for academic achievement: '*me*', '*me being physical*', '*me with other people*'; and '*me in the community*'. The *tivaevae* model is helpful for understanding practices associated with the Cook Islands curriculum of Health and PE (HPE) programme in secondary schools. The *tivaevae* model contextualises the aims of the HPE curriculum within Cook Islands values. As shown below (Figure 1), each aim, when interpreted through the model, becomes the nation, the people and the language history. As a metaphor, the completion of the shared task of the *tivaevae* can also be the shared responsibility for providing teaching and learning to enable all Cook Islands children to reach their potential.

Figure 1: A Tivaevae model of the Cook Islands PE aims

When making the *tivaevae*, collaboration is fundamental (Amira in Rongokea, 2001). One person may be sewing one part of the design, and others may provide cooked food to support workers. Subsequently, agreement about the design to be crafted and respected by those taking part (including leaders) reveals the shared project vision. Similarly, when a student is learning through HPE in the Cook Islands, the *tivaevae* model suggests education should be based on values of collaboration, respect, reciprocity, relationships and shared vision between teachers, students and community.

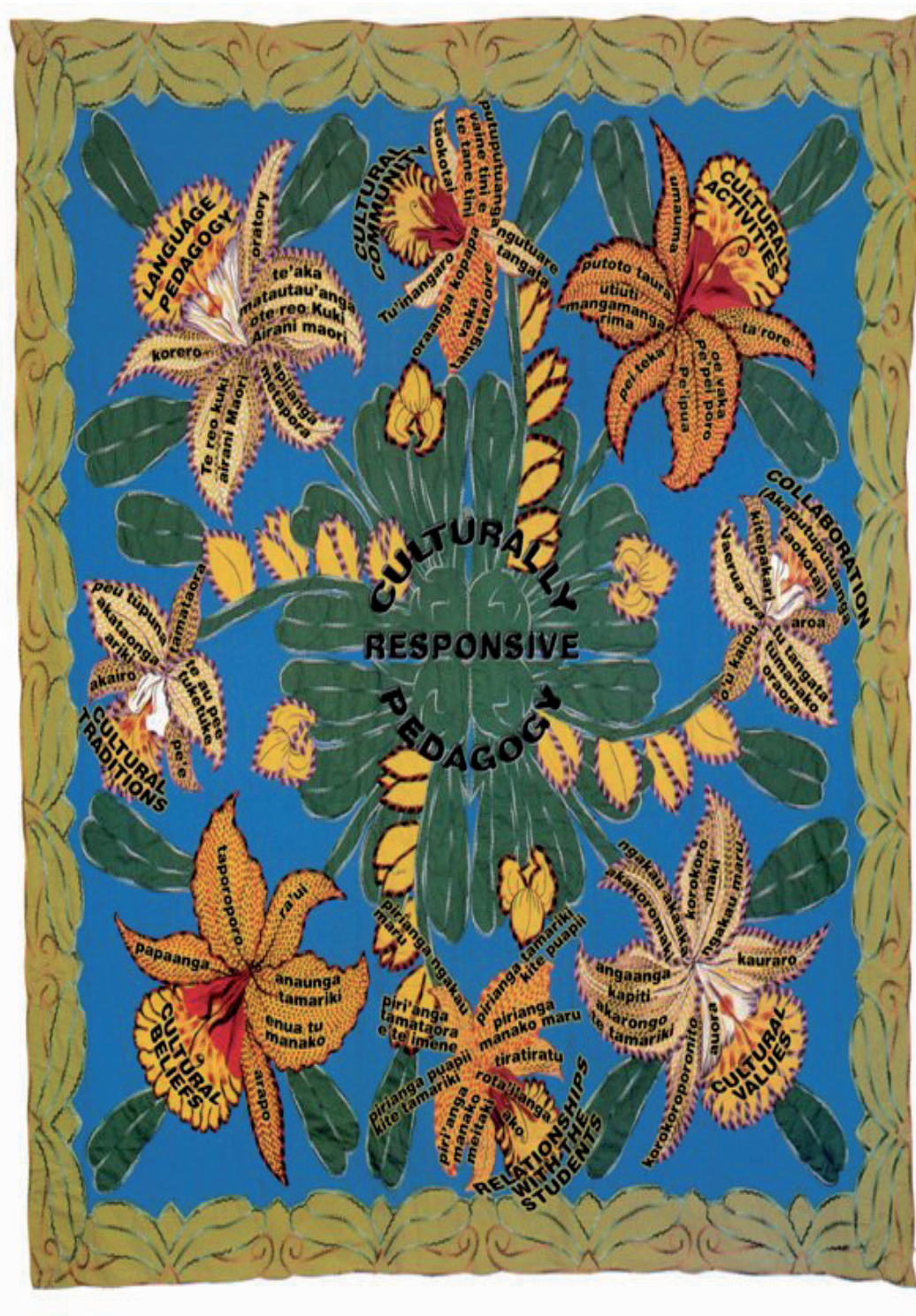
The challenge is to understand how the *tivaevae* model could be used in the context of education in the Cook Islands. The next section conceptualises its application to Cook Islands secondary PE.

A culturally responsive model for Cook Islands secondary schools pedagogy

The metaphor of the *tivaevae* has been suggested as a ‘holistic’ conceptualisation framework for teaching. It conveys an idea of cultural responsiveness and pedagogy in response to the question: What constitutes culturally responsive pedagogy for Cook Islands schooling and PE?

The *tivaevae* model is organised in various flowers with distinct designs and patterns, as illustrated in Figure 2. The flowers depict concepts of *te reo Maori Kuki Airani* (Cook Islands Maori language), *peu ui tupuna* (cultural traditions), *peu inangaro* (cultural beliefs), *tu inangaro* (relationships), *peu puapinga* (cultural values), *akaputupu taokotai* (collaboration), *peu angaanga* (cultural activity), and *peu oire tangata* (cultural community).

Figure 2: Based on Rongokea's (2001) book, the author created a tivaevae model as a conceptualised theoretical framework for a culturally responsive pedagogy in Cook Islands physical education (Te Ava, 2011).



The concept of *te reo Maori Kuki Airani* suggests the following values: *apiianga metaporo*, *korero*, oratory, and *te aka matautauanga o te reo Maori Kuki Airani*. These values encourage success and that *te reo Maori Kuki Airani* maintains students' language as the essence of their cultural heritage. Kauraka (1983) indicated that, when protected, *te reo Maori Kuki Airani* generates Cook Islands students' ability to maintain their values in the classroom and in the community.

One flower pattern of the *tivaevae* represents the value of *peu ui tupuna*. This encompasses traditional practices that are influential to the lifestyle and cultural essence of the Cook Islands. It is therefore integral to culturally responsive pedagogy. For example, games such as *putoto taura* (tug-o-war) and *utiuti rima* (pulling interlocking fingers) are subject to cultural rites such as *peu taito* (legends and chants), *akataoanga ariki* (title investitures), *ura tamataora* (Cook Islands traditional dance), *pe'e* (chants), *pe'e tuketuke* (different kinds of chants) and *akairo* (signs) are all representations of the social, cultural, emotional and spiritual components which keep Cook Islands cultural practices alive. If teachers were to teach the *peu ui tupuna* in schools, they would provide opportunities to build a new horizon that would enable students to grow and to develop their thinking skills.

The flower pattern *peu inangaro* reflects the abstract idea of a culturally responsive pedagogy inclusive of Cook Islands lifestyle. *Peu inangaro* implies *ura* (traditional Cook Islands dancing), *imene* (singing), and playing traditional games and activities. Similarly, it involves *taporoporo* (preserving food and crops), *papaanga* (genealogy), *enua tumanako*, *arapo* (nights of the moon), *ra'ui* (customary sacred prohibitions), and *anau tamariki* (traditional way of giving birth). Literally, the *peu inangaro* teaches students a variety of practices that enable them to value their past and to make their future better. According to Tai'a (2003) *peu inangaro* is a motivational factor that helps students learn to acquire the skills necessary to improve their learning in school.

Tu inangaro suggests trust and academic achievements. Teachers develop the value of *tu inangaro* with students by using strategies such as *pirianga ngakau maru* (humility), *pirianga tamataora e te imene* (social interaction), *pirianga puapii kite tamariki* or *akairi to ratou tu inangaro* (relationships), *pirianga manako meitaki* (developing healthy habits), *pirianga manako maru* (learning with the heart), *pirianga tu inangaro te tamariki kite puapii* (students' relationships with teachers), *rota'i'anga* (unity), *tiratiratu* (honesty), and *tu ako* (to listen or to teach). Developing the *tu inangaro* is one of the many keys in Pasifika education where knowledge between teacher and student is gradually constructed (Samu, Mara, & Siteine, 2008).

Peu puapinga is another pattern that acknowledges values identified by the *pa metua*: *tāueue* (participation), *angaanga taokotai* (cooperation), *akatano* (discipline), *akakoromaki* (patience), *ngakau akaaka* (humility), *kauraro* (respect), *angaanga oire kapiti* (community involvement), *te reo Maori Kuki Airani* (Cook Islands Maori language), and *auora* (physical and spiritual wellbeing). Ama (2003) believed that Cook Islands *peu puapinga* are essential for the development of a healthy society and an enriching environment that prepares a challenging pathway for Cook Islands youth to achieve goals and objectives in schooling. These values are all reflected in the thoughts of the *pa metua* (Te Ava, 2011) as important to schooling and wider social practices.

The flower *akaputupuanga taokotai* is representative of the value of learning from each other. It has been suggested that students' confidence increases as they work together with their teachers' talents through *vaerua ora* (spirit). Jonassen (2003) argued that *akaputupuanga taokotai* is an element of *tu tangata* (personality and culture). According to him, *tu tangata* is *kite pakari* (wisdom) and *arua* (love) and these are significant to the student learning environment. Therefore, having teachers as the main source of delivery encourages and inspires students to become versed in their *peu oraanga* (cultural identity). The involvement of parents and communities in this learning process also contributes to *akaputupuanga taokotai*. Generations together have opportunities to mentor each other.

Peu angaanga values game-playing as a form of culturally responsive pedagogy. These might include *putoto taura* (tug-o-war) and *utiuti rima* (pulling interlocking fingers). *Peu angaanga* also includes *tamataora* (performing arts), *umauma* (arm wrestling), *oe vaka* (canoe paddling), *akarere manu* (flying kites), *opara'para vaevae* (foot pushing/cycling), *tataki toka* (stones for lifting and throwing), *ta'iri kaka* (skipping), *ura Kuki Airani* (traditional dance), *papa'oro'oro ngauru* (surfing with a board), *ko akari* (coconut husking), *piki tumunu* (coconut tree climbing), *pokopoko* (traditional wrestling), *pe'pei poro* (ball tossing) *pe'ipua* (disc throwing or rolling for accuracy or for distance), *ta rora* (stilt walking) and *pei teka* or *pei kakao* (dart throwing) (Te Ava, 2001). Kautai et al. (1984) suggest that *peu angaanga* are exciting activities that encourage participation, particularly if used in a caring and responsive way.

Finally, *peu oire tangata* also provides key values associated with *kauraro* (respect), *tu inangaro* (reciprocity), *ngutuare tangata* or *anau* (family), *vaka tangata oire* (community experts), *putupuanga vaine tini e te tane tini* (women and men's community projects), *taokotai* (cooperation), and *kopu tangata* (community workers). It is suggested that in schools where PE includes valuing *peu oire tangata*, they have the potential to be culturally responsive to students (Vai'imene, 2003).

Conclusion

The proposed *tivaevae* conceptualisation model seeks to support culturally responsive teaching practices in the Cook Islands. The intention is to enable the fulfilment of the curriculum statement through being attentive to the social and cultural needs of all students. This model is intended to assist teachers to approach the dual task of providing time and space for students to be socially and culturally engaged, while also ensuring learning activities enhance students' academic achievement. Just as the making of *tivaevae* is collaborative, so too does the educational endeavour in schools involve many people (PE teachers, principals, cultural experts, government officials from the Ministry of Education, community *pa metua*, language teachers, advisers, academics, policy makers, communities, parents and students). It is suggested that, in this way, the education becomes more than qualifications alone. Rather, the curriculum is how our children come to understand the value and essence of culture and being. Culturally responsive pedagogy, when viewed as values-based and context oriented, suggests our work in education supports the whole person (socially, culturally, emotionally and spiritually). In context, culturally responsive pedagogy is a culturally innovative,

creative and dynamic way of tapping into the learning potential of Cook Islands students in PE. This paper has sought to recast the familiar account of *tivaevae* in new ways. It remains, however, that more is needed to be known about how to enable teachers to make meaning of curriculum through culturally responsive pedagogy and how to use this understanding in Cook Islands secondary schools for the best education outcomes.

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Reconceptualising spirituality as a philosophy of practice for Pasifika early childhood education in New Zealand: A Samoan Perspective

Vaovasamanaia Meripa Toso

Abstract

This article reconceptualises spirituality from a Samoan cultural perspective. It draws from a range of philosophical perspectives with the intention to inform programmes for Pasifika early childhood education within Aotearoa New Zealand. It maintains that an articulation of a Samoan approach to spirituality to support practices in early childhood services is overdue. This article seeks to extend the body of knowledge about what underpins the philosophy, content and pedagogical knowledge of Pasifika early childhood contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Key words: Spirituality, philosophy of practice, Samoan spirituality, New Zealand, early childhood education, Pasifika pedagogy

Introduction

<i>Ua faafetai, ua faafetai</i>	<i>[Translation] Thank you, thank you</i>
<i>Ua malie mata e vaai</i>	<i>Our eyes are happy with what we observe</i>
<i>Ua tasi lava oe, ua tasi lava oe</i>	<i>You are the only one, you are the only one,</i>
<i>I lenei faamoemoe</i>	<i>in this special situation/occasion</i>

This opening statement in Samoan is a special spiritual proverbial expression. It is a song that is sung to express gratitude and appreciation. It outlines a prayer of thanks to those who have performed a good deed. This song is used within the social context where respect and thanks are shared by the collective. As a Samoan, writing from my New Zealand location, I believe that it is a blessing derived from ancestors and from various authorities within the Samoan culture yesterday, today and for the future. The blessings and thanks given have a deeply shared spiritual meaning that speaks of *faaaloalo* (respect), *alofa* (love) and *tautua* (service). In the context of early childhood learning and teaching, it depicts a wish that teachers consider, through accepting spirituality as a philosophy of practice, that very young children are treasures and blessings to be thankful for. *Ua faafetai, ua faafetai* notes great thanks to the audience, infants/toddlers, young children, the *faiaoga* (teacher), and other adults who are present in early childhood education environments, for the continuous learning received. *Ua malie mata e vaai* speaks of the happiness that learners feel through effective learning experiences, and how parents and *aiga* witness this in the eyes of their children. *E tasi*

lava oe, e tasi lava oe, I lenei faamoemoe is uttered on the lips of parents to explain how they feel about their young – that they are “the only one and very special”. It is a heartfelt experience. This in turn expresses a desire of parents for their young to learn today and, in the future, to teach others. Spirituality in teaching and learning is seen to be relevant for Samoan children, their parents and Samoan communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Spirituality has been previously conceptualised within the literature in many ways. Betham (2008) for example outlines that spirituality is life expressed in solidarity, a communion with the whole of creation. Spirituality is an important concept for understanding ways that many Samoan children and adults relate to one another. Indeed spirituality is a widely-held cross-cultural phenomenon across the Pacific, whilst its expression varies between and within cultures (Toso, 2011). Mulitalo-Lauta (2000) described spirituality as the “emotional and intellectual values of Pacific peoples” (p.17). Spirituality has been recognized as diverse and pan-Pacific.

A reconceptualisation of Samoan spirituality as a philosophy of practice in early childhood education draws on understandings of critical realism which observe that the pursuit of knowledge is about continuously seeking in-depth understanding of reality (Wright, 2000). This is not a solitary endeavour. One alone cannot construct personal values. Wright identifies four philosophical traditions in spiritual education: critical realism, post-modernism, materialism and romanticism. In contemporary spirituality, Wright outlines a variety of opportunities to guide people’s lives that occur within a collective mechanism. That is, people create within groups what is important to them and is meaningful.

From a Samoan cultural perspective the values of *fefaasoai* (collaboration), *fetausia* (reciprocity), love, *tapuia/va fealoai* (respect) and *tautua* (service), *tofa autasi* (consensus), *ava fatafata* (protocol) enable young children to develop a sense of being and belonging. The importance of the spiritual self is vital as this supports a sense of identity from birth and that may be named within a spiritual process (Toso, 2011).

Spiritual identities are developed and shaped via relationships. From a Samoan perspective *faasinomaga* (relationships) connect at a deeper level than everyday reality and notions of self are in-depth. Truth (about self, identity, life) exists and awaits to be discovered through relationships (McDonald, 2004; Tui Atua, 2005). The *va* relational space is of great importance as this has spiritual grounding (Airini et al, 2010; Tui Atua, 2005). *Va* is the space between those in communication, not space that separates, but space that creates relatedness. It is the space which gives meaning to things and meanings change as the relationships and context change. The Samoan usage of the expression ‘*teu le va*’ is about cherishing and encouragement of the *va/* relationships.

This article begins with an exploration of the term ‘spirituality’ from a range of perspectives. This is followed by an examination of spirituality, making a distinction between social and cultural dimensions of this concept. Next, the significance of Samoan spirituality and its positioning within the philosophy of Samoan early childhood education in New Zealand is considered.

This exploration concentrates on the notion of relationships, connectivity and notions of self that are established and built up over time amongst teachers, very young

children, their parents and their community.

The following questions have guided this exploration:

- What are the implications of spirituality as a philosophy of practice for Pasifika early childhood education?
- How does spirituality enhance the holistic development of all children?

The article concludes with summarising the implications of the responses to these questions including the practice implications and challenges for early childhood teachers in respect of Samoan meanings of spirituality.

Different ways of understanding spirituality

Spirituality is an ongoing topic of critical discussion within education. Betham (2008, p.3) describes spirituality as “. . . life expressed in solidarity, a communion with the whole of creation, the very life of a people, their history, stories of creation, myths, legends and culture. It speaks of their way of thinking (mentality) hopes, beliefs, values and aspirations.” Even with such unity, there is complexity in spirituality, including when understood through indigenous lens and the endeavours to live within the contemporary world yet following *Faasamoa* – the Samoa way of life (Avegalio, 2009; Betham, 2008). In Samoan traditional spirituality, a harmony between mankind and self is reflected in many tasks of the day (Tui Atua, 2005; Betham, 2008). Tui Atua describes four key harmonies: with the environment, cosmos, with one’s fellow persons and with one’s self (as cited in Tuagalu, 2009, p.116).

A connection between emotion and spirituality has been explored. Masoe et al (2009) affirm that spirituality is an important aspect for good mental health and outlines specific notions of self as a fundamental concept underpinning Samoan notions of mental wellbeing. Taufua (2003) links spirituality to mental well-being; being about both prayer and meditation, and a place of refuge. His work with Pasifika people in mental health in Auckland supports his contention that spirituality is the ability to cope with things beyond one’s control. This needs an acceptance of one’s limitations, and with that brings serenity, peace and tranquility.

Pasifika researchers have described spirituality as the basis of total well-being for human development. This means the mind, body and intellect working together to generate a sense of ‘wholeness’. This may for some take expression in the Christian notion of the trilogy; the intimate relationship between God, man and spirit and thereby a disposition to good actions. Darragh (1997) describes Samoan spirituality as a group of virtues that include *fa’aaloalo* (respect), *tautua* (service) and *alofa* (love) which McDonald affirms. Within the New Zealand context there will be meaningful dialogue with other spiritualities including those of *tangata whenua* (McDonald, 2004, p.4).

Wright (2000) locates spirituality within the context of four philosophical traditions important in contemporary spirituality because they offer a number of opportunities to guide and support people’s lives. First materialism emphasizes the value-free physical world in which reality is reduced to physical objects endeavors to align the importance of reason, science and technology. Second, romanticism emphasizes intuition and emotions as the basic elements of knowledge. This celebrates culture, music, literature, creative arts, aesthetic, religious and moral discourse. Third, through post modernism

comprehensive world views are the foundation of understanding reality. Neither God, the material world, nor one's personal experience can explain human conditions. This view stresses freedom to conjure and recreate spiritual values at 'will'. Last the idea of critical realism suggests that knowledge is about continuously seeking for an in-depth understanding of reality. This is the notion that one alone cannot construct personal values. Spiritual identities are developed and shaped via a relationship with reality that is objective and meaningful. In this sense truth exists and waits to be discovered (McDonald, 2007 p.3).

Critical realism in particular offers a reconceptualisation of Samoan spirituality as a philosophy of practice in early childhood education. Spirituality is defined as a concern for the highest meaning and reasons and purpose of existence. As early childhood educators, awareness of a variety of perspectives from a range of spiritualities assists and extends our view of content and pedagogical approaches and knowledge as we enhance learning experiences for very young children from their cultural backgrounds.

Samoan Spirituality

Samoa has its own cosmology of gods and beliefs in their creation. This spiritual world has ancestral ghosts (*aitu*), and environmental gods, including Atua Tagaloa, Samoa's principal god and creator of the Samoan islands. (Kramer, 1994; Meleseia, 1987). Many aspects of the Samoan culture were known to be sacred (*sa/tapu*) and were worshiped. Ancestors lived together and in communion with nature as this was a source of *mana* and spiritual atonement. For Samoans there is the belief that our lands are our forefathers. Samoans have lived in close affinity with ancestors, the land, sea and the universe as a whole; traditions, culture and language that are held in great esteem and known as personal properties. Invalidation of any of these properties would destroy the culture and also cause loss of identity and *mana*. It has been claimed that people have to be careful not to break any known *tapu* as this in turn diminishes *mana*. (McDonald, 2004).

Kamu (1996) contends that spirituality is relational and is grounded in a healthy self-image and grows within the context of family life affirming and nurturing relationships. Traditional Samoan social structure and organization of *aiga* illustrate this nurturing relationship in the life and spirit of Samoan society. Children are 'fed' with words that convey that solid foundation, healthy self-image, life and spirit of a people—the *faaSamoa* (Kamu, 1996). Family leaders take up the responsibilities of guiding and scaffolding them, as they continue to experience the wider perspective of Samoan life and culture. It is in the *aiga* and *nuu* community that young adults are exposed to the 'life of service' and the art of serving others as support by this proverb '*o le ala i le pule o le tautua*', the path to leadership is service. This is a strong cultural value in Samoan traditional society: to serve others and not to be served (Kamu, 1996).

Leadership is anointed to those who have served the *aiga* and scaffolds the traditional beliefs of the collective (Aiono, 1997). For very young children, this aspect of the spiritual self is evident daily within their interactions with their peers, teachers and parents and the community. The *aiga* is an important component of very young children's lives as they are the people who nurture with usage of language, uphold and

encourage the child's identity through use of culture and practices of spirituality that as the child develops creates their own notions of who they are. This brings *mana* and knowledge to very young children's lives which are reconstructed by them within the early childhood environment through routines. This is a human right from birth: the right to belong to a collective in family and to be nurtured for total wellbeing.

Cultural values and beliefs, and spirituality, underpin early childhood Samoan pedagogy, and are used by the *faiaoga* (teacher) to design effective programmes and learning experiences for very young children in the early childhood education context (Airini et al, 2010; Betham, 2009; McDonald, 2004; Tuagalu, 2009; Sauni & Toso, 2010). Spirituality is affirmed in cultures, spiritual beliefs, stories of creation, missionary-influenced histories, contemporary beliefs, practices and experiences, and stories of migration to Aotearoa New Zealand (McDonald, 2004; Toso, 2011).

There is a clear need for further research into Pasifika pedagogy and content knowledge in early childhood education in New Zealand (Mitchell & Cubey, 2003, Mara & Burgess, 2007). Pedagogical knowledge is defined as "the way we make the knowledge accessible and understood to others" (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2006, p.67). Indigenous views of reality, knowledge and beliefs are well recognized as significant processes of learning and teaching (McDonald, 2004, p.2). They are present in cultural protocols carried out daily by children, such as ways of welcoming in a heritage language, and the inclusion of migration stories, that occur within Aoga Amata. Pasifika pedagogical content is closely related to the revitalization and maintenance of Pasifika languages and cultures.

Te Whariki – the New Zealand early childhood bicultural curriculum

The principles and strands of the curriculum document Te Whariki (1996) are followed by educators across the New Zealand early childhood education sector that is comprised of many different centres and services. As a holistic framework it guides teacher practice and teachers must consider at all times the total wellbeing of the child. All aspects are interwoven so that cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions of human development become the central focus. Learners are empowered when their own ontologies and epistemologies, and are integrated into curriculum as significant content knowledge. For Samoan families and their very young children cultural knowledge (*faaSamoa*) is sacred and must be protected and respected at all times and this must underpin any teacher practice to be responsive and respectful of all Pasifika young children (McDonald, 2004; Toso, 2011).

There are established early childhood centres and services that feature spiritualities. In Aotearoa New Zealand these include *kohanga reo*, the indigenous Maori early childhood provision, and others from European origins (e.g. Montessori, Steiner and Reggio Emilio). These latter services incorporate spiritualities in their programmes, teaching practices and interactions with children in the implementation of Te Whariki (Bone, Cullen & Loveridge, 2007).

Some common features of these programmes include: a sense of order and calm, the observance of times of collective silence, the courtesy of care and forgetting of self for others, a sense of oneness with place, time, and people (Bone et al, 2007).

If a programme is meeting spiritual needs the early childhood centre is a place of replenishment and its ethos is one of a re-energizing of the spirit (Bone et al, 2007).

Samoan and other Pasifika early childhood teachers seek to articulate the meanings of spirituality for them alongside other early childhood teachers and philosophies. In the following section the implications of this discussion to early childhood teachers and their pedagogical practice are outlined.

Spirituality as a philosophy of practice

Te Whariki (Ministry of Education, 1996) makes clear statements about the place of spirituality in young and very young children's lives:

- Children's theories about the world are "...infused with a spiritual dimension"... (p. 44).
- "...important place of spirituality in the development of the whole child ..." (p.47).
- Adults should : "...acknowledge spiritual dimensions"...(p. 46).
- Adults should recognize "...the spiritual dimension of children's lives..." (p.41).

Based on Te Whariki, Pasifika early childhood teachers are challenged to confront the complexity of Samoan and other Pacific spirituality in their practice. We accept wholeheartedly and from our own cultural knowledge that spirituality is a lived reality within the lives of the children we teach from the time they enter the early childhood centre. Our own spiritual journey is obvious in our daily interactions that occur in the early childhood environments, with our *aiga* (family), and with our local communities, parents and extended family, and these must be upheld and utilised as contributors to pedagogical content in learning and teaching.

It is the purpose and professional responsibility of the *faiaoga* to encourage the development of spirituality for very young children. Cultural values for Samoans of collaboration, love, reciprocity, respect are significant aspects of spirituality that form a Samoan and other Pacific philosophy of practice for early childhood teachers. As argued previously spirituality cannot be separated and indeed must be integrated with other values of *faaSamoa* since that is how our children have been socialized from birth. For infants and toddlers, it is vital for them to know from day one that they are welcomed unconditionally to the service or centre since belonging (one of the five strands of Te Whariki) within the learning environment gives them a sense of identity and ownership, knowing that they are safe, warm and free to play and explore in their own time (Toso, 2011).

Some strategies for Samoan culturally responsive approaches

There are a number of culturally responsive approaches to enhance spirituality for very young children. In her paper about culturally inclusive teacher education in Oceania, Helu (2001) affirms the importance of ensuring that Pacific cultural values are appropriately embedded within the process and structures of formal education in order to build a strong foundation for effective learning to occur. For Pasifika early childhood education, or indeed any centres or services with Pasifika children and their families,

this would mean that cultural values are important for teachers to celebrate and to respect daily in terms of incorporating the spiritual dimensions of every child. Consistent with Helu, (2001), Mitchell and Mara (2010), and Mara (2011), the following approaches in Pasifika early childhood education for implementing spirituality are recommended:

- For Pasifika families of very young children, socially, it means strengthening respectful relationships and partnerships with the community at all levels. Teachers need to incorporate parents and their *whanau* systems in the centre's planning, and policy development including the review of all policies annually in regard to the teacher's culturally inclusive practice and incorporation of spiritual values.
- All teachers increase their pedagogical knowledge, skills and practice about Pasifika spirituality in being aware that formal practices such as *lotu* and the teaching of moral Christian values interact with each other. Many Pacific communities believe that our children are "Gifts from God". Therefore in all early childhood programmes and practices children are cherished and protected at all times.
- Pasifika teachers celebrate the spiritual aspect of the holistic curriculum and are committed to articulating that dimension throughout their practice: planning, teaching, assessing, evaluation, self-review and professional development priorities.
- Pasifika teachers respect the silences and quietness that spiritual peace and wellbeing brings with it, including respect for silences and where appropriate cessation of quietness (Tuafuti, 2010). In other words the centre staff, children and families observe respectful reverence for the learning "space" or *Va*, within which everyone comes together to learn, share, develop and grow whilst remaining safe enough to explore, question and be interconnected around the child's needs and interests (Airini et al, 2010).
- Adapting existing forms of student assessment that take account changes in curriculum and pedagogy to reflect the dimension of Pasifika spirituality. Many Pasifika centres already write their learning stories or narrative assessments in Samoan and Tongan, for example. The nuances of meaning in Pacific languages can be related back to Te Whariki but there may be other culture-specific meanings or allusions that explain a child's behavior or learning that are significant to Pacific families and their values and beliefs.
- Pasifika teachers, researchers, teacher educators and policy makers need to develop a new iteration of early childhood pedagogy based on Pacific values, beliefs and knowledge systems that incorporates Pacific styles of learning and ways of knowing.
- Reorienting teacher education and training in order to ensure that all teachers are competent in, and have a deep understanding of, as many Pacific languages and cultures as possible.

Beyond these centre-based innovations there are further organizational and policy developments that need to support the adaptation of Pasifika early childhood programmes and practices:

- Advocate for the legitimacy and importance of Pasifika languages, cultures, beliefs and values as integral to successful educational outcomes for all Pasifika children in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Incorporate indigenous Pacific processes, ways of management and administrative structures across all Pasifika centres.
- Ensure sustainability of Pasifika early childhood centres as viable businesses and improving the quality of teaching and learning within their programmes (Mitchell & Mara, 2010; White et al, 2009).
- Strengthen research capabilities within early childhood education so that teachers can research their own practices such as those achieved by projects within Centres of Innovation such as the Richmond Road Aoga Amata (Taouma et al, 2005).

Conclusion

The holistic early childhood curriculum framework in Aotearoa New Zealand, clearly provides for pedagogical knowledge and teaching and learning practices to include the spiritual beliefs and values of Pasifika very young children. However, it is only relatively recently that Pasifika early childhood research and teacher education pedagogy has articulated the link between Samoan cultural spiritual knowledge and values and the holistic early childhood curriculum.

Samoan and other Pacific people's spiritualities, especially as these relate to very young children, must be supported, further articulated and used in order to contribute to content knowledge and pedagogical approaches of the *faiāoga* (teacher). The essence of the early childhood education curriculum, *Te Whariki*, is that teachers are responsible for the wellbeing of the whole child, including their spirituality. The holistic approach of learning and teaching is culturally inclusive and as such provides increasing opportunities for teachers to develop appropriate professional practices for teaching very young Pasifika children.

Our individual and collective spiritual voyages as Pacific peoples have, according to our respective traditions, been predicted by our ancestors and this, in turn, creates our present – our future will depend on both the past and the present (McDonald, 2004).

This paper has attempted to respond to two key questions. In terms of the first it is clear there is a well-argued basis for incorporating spirituality within the early childhood curriculum, however, in respect of Pasifika spiritualities, the implications of spirituality for practice must be owned and advanced by Pasifika educators themselves. Any innovative changes will be based on the nature of cultural knowledge outlined in this article, in the first instance, for very young Samoan children and their families. In response to the second question it is too early for any definite conclusions about how spirituality enhances the holistic development of the Pasifika child in early childhood education.

Further, this article makes a call for early childhood educators to plan and implement new directions in the development of spirituality in Pasifika early childhood education.

This paper concludes with an echo of the song shared at the beginning of discussion.

Ua faafetai, ua faafetai! Ua malie mata e vaai. Ua tasi lava oe, ua tasi lava oe, I lenei faamoemoe. It is the hope that Samoan teachers will utilize their values, beliefs and ‘spirit’ to practice with this philosophy of spirituality for *ananafi* (yesterday), *lenei aso* (today) and *taeao* (the future). I sing this song as a humble token of appreciation, gratitude and honour. May this be shared for infants and toddlers now and evermore, that they are special cherished and have a spirit of their own that is worth teaching.

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The Representation of Pacific Peoples in the New Zealand *School Journal*

Alexis Siteine and Tanya Samu

Abstract

The general image of the Pacific and Pacific peoples that emerges from resources for schools is “often superficial and limited to cultural components of ritual and artefacts such as food, dance, music, and dress” (Siteine & Samu, 2009, p. 51). Limited research exists, however, about the representation of Pacific peoples and the types of understandings that students develop about Pacific peoples. This paper reports on a study that set out to investigate the ways in which Pacific peoples were represented in the New Zealand *School Journal*. This research focuses on journal issues from the years 2002 to 2009. Journals were analysed for the frequency of representation, activities, language and roles of Pacific peoples. The findings confirm that Pacific peoples are often depicted in stereotypical ways. These findings are seen as problematic as they reinforce ideological and deficit views of Pacific peoples, their location and identity in New Zealand society.

Introduction

The New Zealand *School Journal* occupies a unique place amongst all the texts that have been published for New Zealand school children because of its longevity, purpose, and accessibility. The *Journal* was first published in 1907 by the Department of Education and was the first schoolbook published in New Zealand for New Zealand children. It remained the Department’s only publication for children for the next 32 years and is believed to be the longest-running serial publication for children in the world (First Journal Published, n.d.).

The *School Journal* was inspired by Inspector-General of Schools George Hogben’s idea that New Zealand children should have access to a free publication of New Zealand based material that provided all that was needed to receive a comprehensive education. At its launch he proclaimed, “A child . . . would need nothing but his ordinary literary reader . . . a book of questions in arithmetic and the *School Journal*” (Department of Education, 1913, p. 3687 cited in van Rij, 2008, p. 2). Though the content, form, and frequency has changed over time, the idea that the journal should represent the ideas and values that are important to the nation can be traced through its 104 years of publication.

There has been in on-going interest in, but limited investigation about, the *School Journal* and its contents. As early as the 1939 the *School Journal* was examined for the social attitudes that were promoted in its contents (Jenkins, 1939, cited

in Malone, 1979). Other investigations into the *Journal's* contents have included research related to sex-role stereotypes (Department of Education, 1980); Maori content (Beaglehole, 1981 cited in Pere, 1982); ethnic and cultural representation (Caddick, 1992); and the way in which the *School Journal* has reflected pedagogy, policy, and socio-political contexts since 1907 to 2008 (van Rij, 2008). This current research attempts to add to the research begun by Beaglehole (1981) and extended by Caddick (1992). Both studies were concerned with the way in which ethnic groups were portrayed and represented in the *School Journal* and hoped that analyses such as these might “identify further ways of improving the representation of ethnic groups and cultures in School Journals” (Caddick, 1992, p. 8). Our work has taken the basic structure of Caddick’s work and applied it to our interest in the way in which Pacific people are represented.

One hundred and eight issues of the *School Journal*, published between 2002 and 2009 were selected in order to identify the scope and nature of the representation of Pacific peoples in the twenty-first century. These contained 708 items such as stories, articles, plays, and poems. Each item was analysed for the following features:

- Ethnic groups represented
- Activities in which Pacific peoples are involved
- Human characters by ethnicity
- Languages other than English

Ethnic Groups Represented

In order to identify the frequency of Pacific peoples’ representation in journal items, all items were examined to find the ethnic groups that were represented using five major categories: Pacific peoples, Pakeha, Maori, People of Colour, and Other. The category *Pacific peoples* is used to describe the multicultural and heterogeneous groups that include but are not limited to the seven main Pacific islands in the New Zealand population: Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau and Tuvalu (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). The category designated *Pakeha* is used in accordance with common usage of the term in New Zealand to describe non-Maori who are white and includes “anybody of Anglo-Celtic origin (England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales) and, as the integrated, Northern Europeans (Scandinavians, Germans, and Dutch), white Americans, Canadians and South Africans” (O’Connor, 1990). The only category that refers to a single and specific ethnic group is *Maori*, who are the indigenous people of New Zealand. During the survey we found that some ethnic characters were not clearly identifiable. For that reason, we included a category which we labelled *People of Colour*. This category is used to describe characters whose ethnicity could not be determined but where the content or the illustrations suggested that they were not Pakeha. We have borrowed the term from our American colleagues who write about diverse peoples in education (for example, Banks & Banks, 2009; Cochrane-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2001) and though we acknowledge the critique that ‘colour’ is an aspect of identification “imposed by the dominant vision to classify and identify people” (Escobar, 1991) we consider its usage appropriate in this context. The category entitled *Other* is used as category to count those not included in the previous four categories but were not of interest to us for the purpose of this research.

If one of these groups featured in the journal item, they were counted once irrespective of whether the group was in the foreground, background, or of the number of characters featured.

Figure 1: Journal Items in which Ethnic Categories were Represented

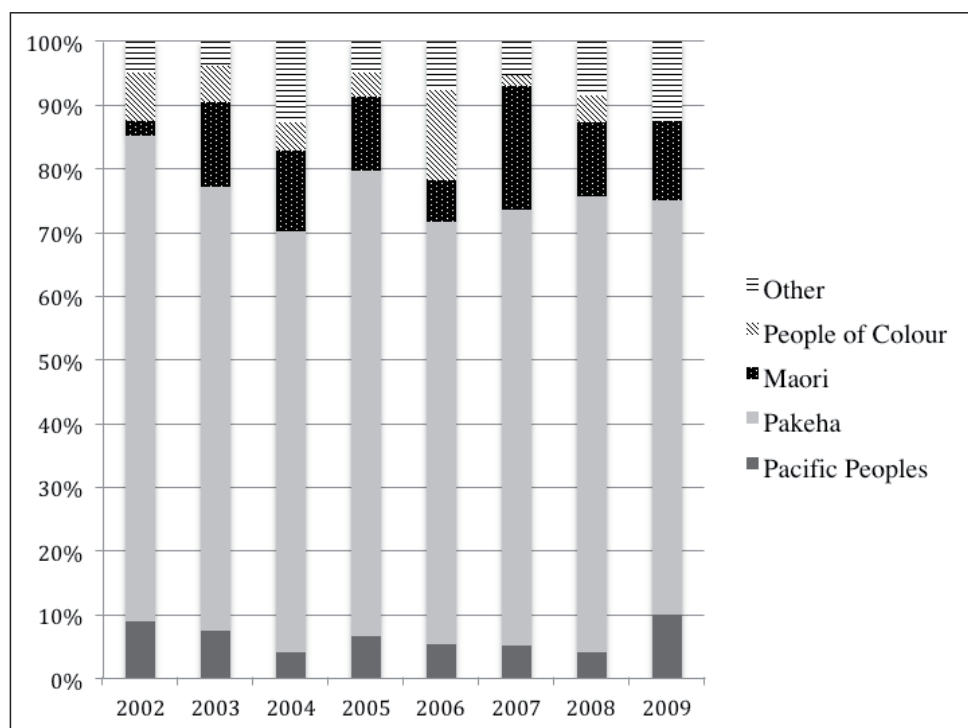


Figure 1 shows that from a total of 708 journal items surveyed, 497 items featured Pakeha peoples and 211 featured non-Pakeha peoples. Pakeha peoples, with 70.1% representation, dominated the texts. Of 211 items in the remaining four categories, Maori had the highest representation with 10.5%; 46 items featured Pacific people, which equates to 6.5%, a comparatively low representation given that this category represents seven distinct Pacific Island nations each of whom have very low percentages of representation. Pacific peoples do not feature in the text or illustrations of 662 of the 708 journal items or 93.5% of the journals published in the eight years surveyed. Of the 108 journals examined, 18 featured only Pakeha, and 25 featured only Pakeha and Maori.

Types of Activities

The Journals were analysed for the number and type of activities described for various ethnic groups. These activities were identified and then sorted into broad categories for ease of reporting and comparison.

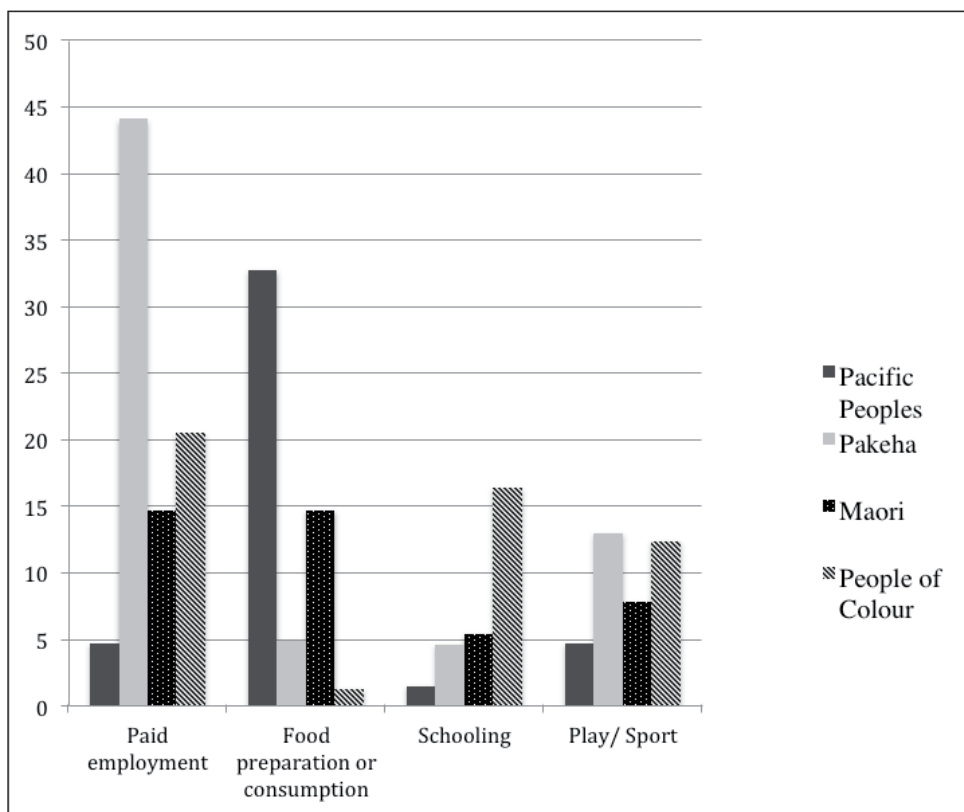
Figure 2: Types of Activities

Figure 2 shows the four most popular activities in which characters in plays, stories, poems, and the people featured in the articles, were involved. The full range of activities ranged from forms of paid employment, to leisure past-times, to family responsibilities and also included religious acts, traditional practices, travel, and community pursuits. For Pacific peoples, a total of 64 activity situations were identified in the survey period. Of these activities, the most popular, 32.8% (21) were related to food, its preparation, gathering, harvesting, growing, hunting, sharing and eating. By comparison, of the 474 activities identified for Pakeha, 4.9% (23) were in the same food focussed activity. Traditional practices were primarily a non-Pakeha activity and could be interpreted as Pakeha being represented in contemporary activities and non-Pakeha ethnic groups portrayed according to activities and practices that link them to the past. For Pakeha, a total of 474 activity situations were identified in the survey period. Of these activities, the most popular, 44.1% (209) were related to forms of paid employment. By comparison, of the 64 activity situations identified Pacific peoples, only 4.7% (3), were in this category.

These figures showed a marked difference in the type of activities Pacific peoples and Pakeha characters were represented in throughout the survey period 2002-2009. Activities in which Pacific characters were involved were far less varied than those shown for Pakeha characters.

Ethnicity of Human Characters

The number of human characters in the text of Journals was counted. Groups of an unspecified number were not included in this analysis.

Figure 3: Human Characters by Ethnicity

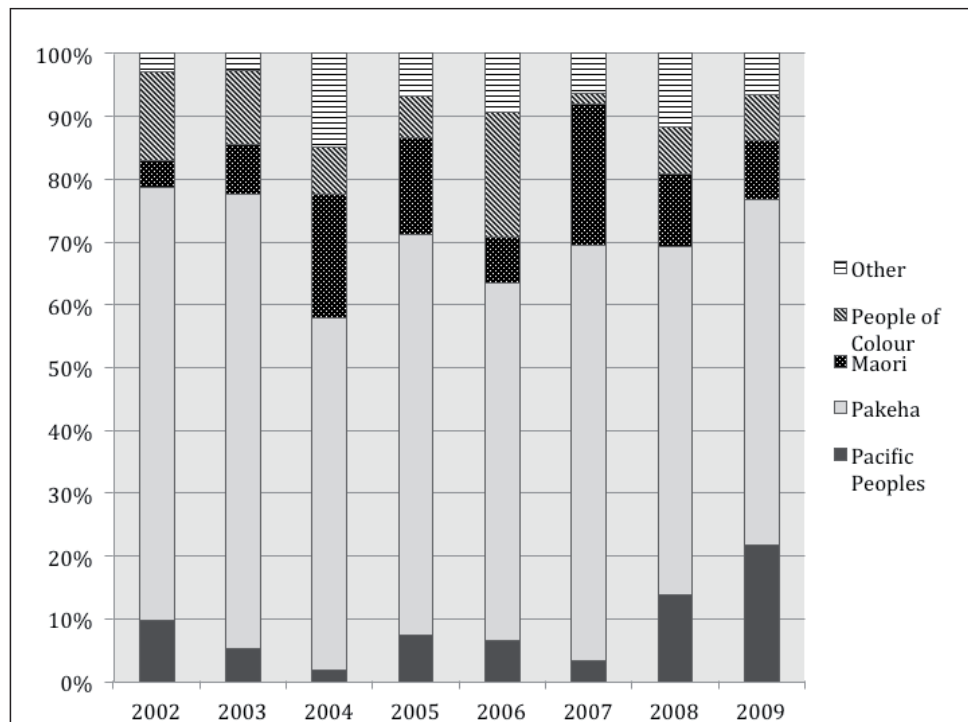


Figure 3 shows that during the survey period, the majority of characters were Pakeha. Pacific peoples rank fourth in frequency. At its lowest point of representation in 2004, Pacific peoples made up 1.9 % of human characters in journal texts. The data also shows, however, that over the survey period there has been a general increase of Pacific peoples in journal texts, and a marked increase from 2007 culminating in the highest representation of 21.9% in 2009.

The use of non-English languages

All journals were surveyed for non-English words or phrases. Each non-English word was counted once regardless of either the number of times it occurred or whether it was spoken by human or non-human characters. The results were combined for all journals. As it was extremely rare for a language to be identified for its ethnic origin, all non-English languages were attributed to the ethnic origin stated in the text or illustrations. This lack of information in-text indicated a culturally unsympathetic trend towards non-specificity in ethnic identity, particularly for the seven distinctly different Pacific Island nations.

Table 1: Non English Language Usage

Language or country of origin	Number of words	%	Pacific languages total
Maori	698	68.3	
Tongan	90	8.8	
Samoan	63	6.2	
Cook Island Maori	11	1.0	
Tokelau	10	1.0	
Niuean	3	0.3	
Fijian	2	0.2	
Tuvalu	0	0	
Pacific Island unspecified	40	3.9	219 (21.4%)
Other (13 languages)	96	9.4	
Unknown	9	0.9	
Totals	1022	100%	

As Table 1 shows, words from 21 identifiable non-English language groups were recorded; unknown and unspecified Pacific Island words were not counted as languages, simply categories for the purposes of research. Maori words made up the majority (68.3%) of non-English words in the journals surveyed. Pacific are the next most frequent and make up 21.4% (219) of the non-English words in this survey period. Of the 108 Journals surveyed, 25 did not include any non-English languages, that is, they were English only.

Visual Representation of Characters

The illustrations in all the Journals (2002-2009) were examined and where possible the number of human characters from various ethnic groups in each illustration was recorded. Where the number present could not be determined accurately, as in crowd scenes, such illustrations were not included in the tally.

Figure 4: Ethnic Identification of Characters in Photographs and Illustrations

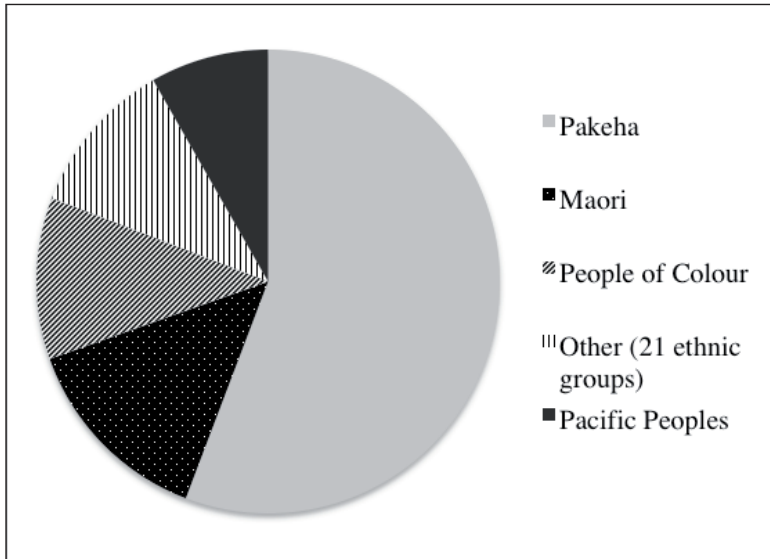


Figure 4 shows that Pakeha characters dominated in photographs and illustrations with 6,179 (55.5%) of characters represented in photographic and non-photographic illustrations out of a total of 11,143 in the *School Journal* items. Pacific peoples featured in 915 illustrations (8.2%). A further breakdown of the Pacific peoples' category as outlined in Table 2 shows a significant underrepresentation of characters from Fiji, Tokelau, and Niue, while Tuvaluans do not feature at all in any visual representations.

Table 2: Pacific Characters in Photographs and Illustrations

Pacific peoples	No. of characters in illustrations	%	No. of characters in photographs	%	TOTAL	%
Tongan	43	0.7	200	3.7	243	2.2
Cook Island Maori	22	0.4	173	3.2	195	1.7
Samoaan	49	0.8	106	2.0	155	1.4
Fijian	0	0	72	1.3	72	0.6
Tokelauan	4	0.1	38	0.7	42	0.4
Niuean	2	0.1	7	0.1	9	0.1
Tuvalu	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unspecified	107	1.8	92	1.7	199	1.8

Discussion

This survey attempted to identify the way in which Pacific peoples are represented in a sample of School Journals. Where data could be compared with New Zealand population statistics, the frequency and representation of Pacific peoples was slightly lower, in each instance of comparison, than the percentage of the Pacific population as recorded at the time of the 2006 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). Table 3 shows this comparison.

Table 3: Comparison of Ethnic Groups with New Zealand Population Statistics

	NZ population %	Representation in Journal items %	Human characters in Journals %	Visual representation in Journals %
Pakeha	59	70.1	62.1	55.5
Maori	21.6	10.5	12.1	13.7
Pacific peoples	9.1	6.5	7.8	8.2
Asian	8.2	n/a	n/a	0.6
Other	2	n/a	n/a	n/a

In 2006 Pacific peoples made up 9.1 % of the New Zealand population. Representation of Pacific peoples in the *School Journal* was closest to that number in the visual representations (8.2%) and farthest in the count of Pacific characters (6.5%). This gap, in itself, is not surprising, and could be accounted for when other data are taken into account, such as the significant number of People of Colour (5.8% of *School Journal* items, 10.1% of human characters, and 11.2% of visual representation). The underrepresentation of Pacific peoples and Maori, though minimal, has produced overrepresentation of Pakeha people in the *School Journal*. That the majority of items, characters, and visual representations of people in the *School Journal* are Pakeha is expected. That Pakeha are overrepresented is of concern given the social and cultural dominance of this group in New Zealand society and raises question of whether these messages of dominance are being sustained in New Zealand schools through the publication of the *School Journal*.

Of greater concern is the fact that Pacific peoples were inadequately represented in “positions of authority, power, and social recognition” (Caddick, 1992, p. 23) in the same way that they were some 20 years ago. Pacific peoples continued to be portrayed in a limited range of activities that were stereotypical. For example, approximately one third of the activities in which Pacific peoples are represented relate to food preparation and consumption. These findings are worryingly similar to those found by Caddick in her 1992 survey, and suggest that the ways in which minority ethnic groups are featured have not changed but continue to promote dominant group perspectives.

Involvement in food-related activities suggests that Pacific peoples are featured in either celebrations or domestic occupations. Neither representations are factually incorrect but they advance a particular view which promotes what we have argued

elsewhere is a tourist approach to education about the Pacific (Siteine & Samu, 2009). A tourist perspective involves the representation of a particular ethnic group in terms of the shallow features of culture: food, dress, myths and legends. If a tourist perspective is evident in texts for children, they can perpetuate the stereotypes, misrepresent cultural realities, and undermine a sense of belonging and identity for Pacific learners.

This argument is not new to New Zealand school publications. In 1964, the New Zealand School Publications Branch issued a bulletin entitled *Wash Day at the Pa*. The booklet was written for eight to twelve-year-old children and profiled a Maori family living in rural New Zealand. After the release of *Wash Day at the Pa*, the Maori Women's Welfare League called for its withdrawal because of its concern about the way in which Maori were portrayed. Their objection was specifically related to the portrayal of the family in the bulletin as "a typical Maori family" (Caxton Press, 1964, p. 3). Arthur Kinsella, then Minister of Education, agreed to withdraw the book and commented on the benign portrayal of the family as "affectionate, good-humoured, and cooperative" and explained that while the family was never "intended to be regarded as completely typical . . . a big group of Maori people . . . felt the booklet degraded their race" (Caxton Press, 1964, p. 3). Kinsella conceded that "the primary child is much susceptible to images" and that those images included in the text could lead to children drawing conclusions that were not intended (Caxton Press, 1964, p. 4). The possibility that the bulletin would convey unintended messages of power and dominance about Maori in New Zealand society was compounded because of the infrequent and uncommon representation of contemporary Maori in publications for New Zealand school children.

The lesson of the 1960s remains true for school publications and texts today. They should be scrutinised for their unintended and unexpected messages. This is of particular significance for a publication such as the *School Journal* that is delivered four times a year to every New Zealand primary school. The way in which people in general and Pacific peoples in particular, are represented is important because "it gives the impression of 'the truth'" (Smith, 1999, p. 35). The inclusion, representation, or exclusion of any group of people carries values that are assimilated by learners. Patricia Grace, a New Zealand writer whose stories for children have appeared in the *School Journal*, has commented about the way in which literature can carry values about groups of people, and also about the reader. If books do not accurately portray the characters in the text, then, Grace argues, they are dangerous.

If books . . . do not reinforce values, actions, customs, culture and identity, then they are dangerous. . . . If there are no books that tell us about ourselves but only tell us about others, then they are saying 'you do not exist' and that is dangerous However, if there are books that are about you and they are untrue, that is very dangerous If there are books about you but they are negative and insensitive so that they are saying 'you are not good', that is dangerous. (Grace, 1985)

The way in which Pacific peoples are represented and the extent to which they are included in the *School Journal*, therefore, can be dangerous for learners of Pacific

heritage if they do not accurately represent the social and cultural realities of those learners. These outcomes may be unintended but they are, nonetheless, significant. Pacific learners may read about Pacific peoples in the *School Journal*, but they may not recognise themselves in the representation.

Texts hold and convey messages of power. Greenwood and Wilson (2006) explain that “Stories are central to the way we see things . . . they shape much of what we think and do. Some stories cramp us into spaces that are tight and limiting. Some give life” (p. 67). Editors of publications like the *School Journal* hold the power to make decisions to “tell the stories and sire the voice of those often underrepresented in our community and . . . histories” (Wilson & Wright, 2010, p. 302). Stories that ‘give life’ (rather than restrict) cultural and ethnic minority groups, fall into the category of multicultural literature. Park and Tyson (2010) present an argument informed by social justice theory. They recognise that multicultural literature has the potential to “help young children develop critical literacy for social justice and make textual and intertextual connections between the words that students read and the world they live in” (p. 296). Teachers who want to do more than enhance and strengthen basic literacy skills, “make consistent and conscious efforts to locate children and young adults’ experiences in the realistic stories they read” (p. 296). In order for teachers to locate their students’ experiences in realistic stories, these stories need to be available and accessible. The *School Journal* is an ideal site for the publication of such stories about Pacific peoples.

Recommendations

The findings of this study have implications for decision-making at two critical points. One point of decision-making is the selection of items (stories, poems, non-fiction pieces) by editors of the *School Journal*, and the development of such items by writers for the *School Journal*. A second point involves teachers in schools, and the choices they make about the stories and other articles that they will include in their learning programmes.

Siteine and Samu (2009) have argued that teacher-perception of the Pacific and Pacific peoples will determine the nature of the content (or the stories) with which students will engage. We proposed a conceptual framework to enable teachers to apply a more critical perspective in their decision-making. This framework would also be useful for those who make the decisions about which stories and articles about Pacific people to choose for inclusion in future volumes of the *New Zealand School Journal*. The framework of the Oceanic perspective, the Small Island perspective and the Tourist Approach (Siteine & Samu, 2009; Samu, Mara & Siteine, 2008) could enable more critical reflection.

Park and Tyson (2009) recommend teachers generate a conceptual framework that “organises social justice oriented pedagogical strategies and . . . locate children’s literature that explicitly addresses the criteria on their list” (2010, p. 297). This could be useful for both decision-making points. Given the focus on the representation of Pacific peoples in texts taken by this study, Park and Tyson’s suggested conceptual framework has been adapted for this purpose.

Figure 5: Criteria for texts that provide non-stereotypical representations of Pacific peoples

1. Texts can bring everyday lived experiences into a classroom by:		
Helping students locate themselves in cultural contexts	Helping students locate themselves in historical contexts	Helping students understand their cultural & historical backgrounds within power structures
2. Texts can bring multiple perspectives into a classroom by:		
Focusing on those whose voices are not included in the traditional literature e.g. Pacific peoples	Helping students understand there are two sides of oppression: the oppressed and the oppressors	Helping students understand how power structures constrain human dignity
3. Texts can address socially unjust realities and fight for a better world by:		
Helping students understand structural and institutional injustices	Helping students understand social justice both as process and goal in challenging social injustices	Telling the power of collective actions by ordinary people; leadership by unique individuals
4. Texts highlight the victories over specific examples of oppression by:		
Helping students identify similar issues and triumphs in different contexts	Helping students understand social justice is an on-going project	Helping students develop civic courage and hope
5. Texts can emphasise the importance of social activism by:		
Helping students realise their own social agency.	Helping students identify what kinds of action social activists take in the face of oppression	Helping students understand the importance of collective social actions
6. Texts provide extra information on social justice issues by:		
Helping students understand how mainstream culture has oppressed and marginalised groups of people	Helping students develop historical and political understandings of racism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc.	Helping students understand the complexity of multiple positionalities

Adapted from Park & Tyson (2010, p. 299)

Our research has found some journal items that might contribute to bringing everyday lived experiences into the classroom where stories, poems, plays, or articles help students to locate themselves in cultural or historical contexts, and that may help students understand their cultural and historical backgrounds within power structures (see criterion 1 in figure 5 above). However, there is little that would address criteria 2-6 of the framework. We propose that this framework be used as a guide for editorial choices in publications such as the *School Journal*. We understand that limited submissions in these areas may make this task difficult for editors, and encourage the commission of work that address this criteria. Action such as this would go some way

to address our concern and reduce the representation of Pacific peoples in stereotypical and limited ways. While this is beyond the scope of this article, educators too may use this same framework, and the research upon which it is based, to include a range of non-stereotypical texts in their classroom programmes for the teaching of or about Pacific peoples.

Conclusion

Given its longevity, the *School Journal* can be seen as a national archive of sorts – an archive containing what was and is considered by educators, to be the valued knowledge for New Zealand children to know. This paper contends that there needs to be improvements, even changes, in the ways Pacific peoples are represented in a state-funded resource such as the *School Journal*. The Head of State of Samoa, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi Tupuloa Tufuga Efi (2010) had this to say about the importance of stories, and the story-telling to society. His views attest to the life giving nature of story-telling.

Stories . . . can help us to discern through emotion, wit, analysis and poetry what matters to us most and why; what holds, moves and defines us. They allow us to sift through and remember the good and bad; to learn and move on. . . . When we tell and retell stories about ourselves, our families, villages and countries we learn about ourselves; we remember and celebrate history, heritage and identity.

(Young, 2010, Foreword)

A few months ago, the New Zealand Minister of Education visited Rekohu (the Chatham Islands) and acknowledged “the intergenerational adverse effects of incorrect information taught about Moriori in New Zealand schools and published in early school journals” (Education Gazette, 2011). The Minister hoped for an authentic voice for Moriori in the *School Journal* so that “present and future generations of Moriori . . . [know] what it means to be Moriori. . . . [and] all New Zealand children will have the opportunity to learn about Moriori people, their culture and identity” (Education Gazette, 2011). As authors of this research and as educators of and about Pacific peoples, this is our hope for the Samoan, Cook Island, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian, Tokelauan, and Tuvaluan learners in New Zealand schools. The selection or commissioning of texts for publication is a political choice that can either reinforce ideological and deficit views of Pacific peoples or present realistic and authentic men, women, and children of Pacific heritage. Those who make these choices must be cognisant of and responsive to these distinctions in order that the heritage of Pacific learners is not misrepresented and that they can recognise themselves in the stories they read.

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Conclusion

Dr Airini

To my mind, there have been three key themes running through this special edition of *Pacific Asian Education*, which are relevant to the journal's focus on issues of education within and around the Pacific Circle. The first is the exceptional level of appreciation for research in all the articles in this edition. Whilst at a doctoral student research seminar recently I asked a fellow participant, "Why do people research?" She looked around, looked back, and said, "I can't speak for them, but I know for me that I am in education research because it is about social justice". Seeing this from our different locations throughout the Pacific, all sixteen authors in this special edition, along with Assoc Prof Eve Coxon and me as co-editors, concur - education research is linked to social transformation through well constructed, robust research that makes a difference to the education delivered

The second theme is the advancement of new possibilities in Pacific education research approaches. This special edition expands the philosophical and methodological base for education research across the Pacific region. A pan-Pacific notion of research has been explored and we have confirmed a collective approach: research action intentionally focused on Pacific education outcomes and the utilisation of Pacific peoples' approaches to knowledge creation. The idea of *Pacific* research approaches is the single most important aspect in moving beyond the identification of, and procrastination about, the state of education research, to a place of action — getting things done in ways that benefit all stakeholders and which uphold the moral, ethical, spiritual dimensions of relationships for all those involved in the research. Each article in this edition has made a unique contribution to the understanding and use of Pacific knowledge systems alongside contemporary western knowledge systems. This has been a particular area of interest for Pacific New Zealander researchers.

In some cases the authors have taken education research beyond generic approaches ('Pacific research methodology') to culture-specific methods. Several articles have explored distinct research methodology and methods informed by Pacific cultures, languages and identities. This development acknowledges that Pacific education research is both collective by nature and responsive to distinct communities. The advancement of Pacific research approaches is about having authority, confidence and understanding to manage and govern research projects from a Pacific perspective. In total, this edition's authors have described new realms of 'Pacific research', addressing areas of confusion and concern that do exist within Pacific research, and signaling possibilities for new approaches.

The interplay between education research as an individual endeavour or community-

focused is profiled through the articles in this special edition. There are areas where Pacific researchers hold knowledge creation assets on behalf of their community, a fundamentally different perspective to the individualistic research paradigm that sees the work of the researcher as privately held. The latter conceptualisation has knowledge creation being owned by individuals operating on their own behalf, while the former has knowledge creation owned by groups of Pacific peoples, on behalf of its members. A third conceptualisation running through this edition is that of all researchers, regardless of ethnicity, bring expertise to the task of research for better education outcomes within the Pacific.

The advancement of individual Pacific education researchers is something to be celebrated and supported. The ‘individual’ in this sense should not be confused with ideas of collective/individualistic ownership mentioned above. Rather, these researchers are important because, in developing their research skills, it will be them who cultivate new knowledge and promote Pacific cultures in education research, ensuring that education research will reflect Pacific heritage and content.

Each of the authors in this special edition is engaged in research leadership. Leadership is about saying, “This is where we are going and what we want to be, and this is the range of things we need to do to make this happen.” It is clear that conventional approaches and thinking have not always been up to the task of dealing with education issues within the Pacific Circle region. Ultimately that is the purpose of Pacific education research – to get us to where we want to go to in the Pacific region.

Finally, the third theme from this special edition is one of service. In particular, this is about the good that comes from sustained generosity of spirit and scholarship committed to high standards. Bringing to mind our leaders and mentors in Pacific education research, I would like to acknowledge this special edition’s co-editor Associate Professor Eve Coxon. Dr Coxon spearheaded and drove the production of this special edition, just as she has provided service for numerous other important education initiatives. In New Zealand and across the Pacific we draw on Dr Coxon’s scholarship in Pacific education research methods, factors affecting student outcomes, and the development of effective teaching, curriculum and policy. Not only does she set necessarily high standards for research in the Pacific, but she enables new and developing authors to reach these heights, often in innovative ways. Scholarship in this sense is knowledge generation in the context of dynamic, collective and collaborative relationships across research communities, locations and needs. We respectfully acknowledge Dr Coxon’s service and leadership through such scholarship.

This special edition brings together education researchers with a shared agenda to help improve education outcomes for, and with, learners in the Pacific region. As co-editors we express our respect for and thanks to each of the contributors to this special edition. The insights of your research are fundamental to the insights of ourselves; because we have been able to benefit from your research, we have come to know ourselves better. The challenge now is how we might use this research to advance education and social outcomes across the Pacific, and the further development of Pacific ways of creating knowledge through education research.

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The Pacific Circle Consortium for Education

The Pacific Circle Consortium is an organization dedicated to the improvement of teaching about peoples and nations within and around the Pacific Ocean, and in Asia. From 1997 to 2004, the Consortium was an official program of the Centre for educational Research and Innovation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/CERI). Currently, the Consortium is an independent organization.

The purposes of the Pacific Circle Consortium are to:

- Share ideas, resources, information, material and personnel among Pacific and Asian countries and educational institutions;
- Promote internationally co-operative research and development in education; and
- Undertake co-operative development of curriculum materials and educational support services.

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The membership of the Consortium is made up of individuals from many institutions. Recent membership is drawn from countries as diverse as New Zealand, Australia, Samoa, Fiji, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, South Korea, China, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Ecuador, Latvia, and the United Kingdom.

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