

Critiquing Pasifika Education Conference @ the University

4TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2013

**AUT UNIVERSITY, CONFERENCE CENTRE
MANUKAU CAMPUS**

SUNDAY 30 JUNE TO TUESDAY 2 JULY

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



**Edited by
Dr Mere Kēpa, University of Auckland, Dr Linitā Manu'atu &
Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride, AUT University**

CONFERENCE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
Published in June 2013 by AUT University
Private Bag 92006
Auckland 1142
New Zealand
Telephone + 64 9 9219999 Fax (09) 9984

ISBN 978-1-927184-13-4

**Cover design: The Island of Tafahi in the Kingdom of Tonga where the
sun rises first in the world**

Disclaimer:

The views, photos and images in this book are the authors and not of the Conference Co-ordinating Committee. You may use the material and please acknowledge the author(s).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Foreword	6
Part 1: Authors	
Arohanui, Aro`anui, `Ofa atu, Alofaatu, Alofiatu, Aloha, Love! Education for Criticism <i>Dr. Tangiwai Mere Appleton Kepa</i>	8
Inangaro, Aroha, Love and Education <i>Morag Teina Pepe</i>	19
Talanoa 'Ofa, Love, songs and teaching: Stories from Tonga and the Philippines <i>Nanisi Mabbs & Binky Laureta</i>	31
Alofa Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow <i>Papaaliitele Siufeai Muliausolo Dr. Moeimanono Fouvaa</i>	44
Love of teaching: Reflections of what it means to be an effective Pasifika ECE Lecturer <i>Dr. Tafili Utumapu-McBride</i>	54
Langa Ngāue 'i he 'OFA: Building success in Tongan ECE from the teacher's perspectives <i>Jeanne Pau'uvale-Teisina</i>	64
A Double-Hulled Kalia Katea Māhanga: 'Ofa, in research and education <i>Rev. Dr. Tevita Tonga Mohenoa Puloka</i>	76
The Bicultural Lens of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa: A journey of spiritual transformation <i>Dr. Selina Ahkter</i>	93
Embracing the Next Education of Pasifika Students: Cypress College's Airline Travel Careers (ATC) Programme <i>Dr. Charmaine Kaimikaua</i>	106
Mālō e 'Ofa! Renewing the spirits of Tongan Migrants through a new educational programme @ the University <i>Dr. Linitā Manu'atu</i>	130
Is there 'love' in our current assessment system? <i>Akata Galuvao</i>	142
What drives Pasifika students' masters and doctoral research studies in education: putting 'alofa' into action <i>Dr. Meaola Amituana'i-Toloa</i>	153

Part 2: Presenters and Non-authors

Loto'Ofa WhatuManawa: A new frame for researching Indigenous and Migrant Education (IME) <i>Mele 'Ileini Taione</i>	163
'Ofa Fonua: Towards a Tongan love-based curricular and pedagogical framework <i>Sione Tu'itahi</i>	164
'Ofa Ngāue / Tae'ake Aro'a: Colleagues at work <i>Luhama Fale and Vainenooroa Tamarua</i>	165
Peer Reviewers	167

Tafili Utumapu-McBride

AUT University

tutumapu@aut.ac.nz

Tafili Utumapu-McBride was born in Samoa (Safotu/Levi Saleimoa) and immigrated to New Zealand with her parents at the age of two. Her father was her inspiration in her studies. She has a Doctorate from the University of Auckland and is currently working as an Education lecturer for AUT University. Her research areas are Pasifika Education, pedagogy, research methodologies, postgraduate supervision and life-span development. Tafili and husband Tim organise their lives around twin daughters Charlotte and Lily.

Love of teaching: Reflections of what it means to be an effective Pasifika ECE lecturer

Key words: communication, feedback, effective, cultural capital, template

Abstract

This paper is based on my reflections of an effective Pasifika Early Childhood Education (ECE) lecturer (as a result of my own personal journey and insights, e.g. my career change from that of a Learning Development Lecturer) and also through a literature review. The Auckland University of Technology's (AUT) academic promotion evaluations clearly stipulates in the criteria the characteristics of an effective lecturer as being someone who is approachable; and well prepared; communicates effectively; enthusiasm helps students to learn; helps students learn by using explanations and practical examples; effectively uses subject knowledge to guide students' learning; assess understanding when teaching and gives constructive feedback about students' progress; seeks and responds to feedback from students; clearly communicates assessment requirements; treats students with respect; creates a positive learning environment for students; helps students to take responsibility for their own learning; and lastly is seen as a highly effective teacher.

One of the main determinants of Pasifika students' success in tertiary education has been the impact of the teacher and student relationship or lack of; this has been highlighted in recent research (Airini et al., 2010; Allen, Taleni & Robertson, 2009; Cowley, Dabb & Jones, 2001; Dickie, 2000; Tagoilelagi-Leota, Kesi, Tagoilelagi, Penn &

Autagavaia, 2011; Tuagalu, 2008; Utumapu-McBride, Esera, Toia, Tone-Schuster & So'oaemalelagi, 2008; Utumapu-McBride & Tuagalu, 2010). It is important in the current economic/political climate that Pasifika educators are effective in their practice. Samu (2006) conveys the importance of teachers being aware and informed of Pasifika diversities and able to consider their own practices in bridging complex cultural and social difference. For Airini et al., (2010), they emphasise teachers as critical practitioners.

In a recent Pasifika research report from the Ministry of Education (2012), it identifies effective teaching and learning priority questions, such as - How prepared are teachers to effectively teach Pasifika learners? What knowledge, skills and qualities do teachers need to effectively teach Pasifika learners? Then it suggests topics for research, such as - Teacher education preparation for teaching Pasifika learners, and Pasifika pedagogies and culturally responsive teaching for Pasifika. TEC (2013) argue the need for educators to facilitate a tertiary education environment that creates a sense of belonging, that is affirming and open to diverse cultures, that understands Pasifika diversity and experience and to tailor and respond their teaching to this. Fiso and Huthnance (2012) discovered that that "Private training establishments (PTEs) shared and encouraged 'ofa, fakalofa, alofa and aroa or compassion for their students. Pacific staff demonstrated advanced understanding and knowledge of identified cultural values - va, fa'asinomaga, feagaiga, tua'oi, tapuakiaga, tau, tautua, vosa and vagahau - and they competently integrated these in their own respective practices" (p. 38). International research (Colker, 2008; Johnson, 1980) have also identified the top 10 characteristics of an effective teacher - enthusiastic, an effective communicator, adaptable to change, a lifelong learner, competent, accepting of others, patient, organized, hardworking, and caring. The resulting 12 characteristics also include: (1) passion about children and teaching, (2) perseverance, (3) risk taking, (4) pragmatism, (5) patience, (6) flexibility, (7) respect, (8)

creativity, (9) authenticity, (10) love of learning, (11) high energy, and (12) sense of humour. This has also been found in a recent Australian study (Devlin & O'Shea, 2012), where students commented on lecturer availability to help, their enthusiasm and dedication and effective communication.

Therefore the literature highlighted important factors such as teacher and student relationship. It also conveyed how some tertiary institutions, related to Pasifika students by showing alofa and compassion, through acknowledging and respecting students' cultural values (for example, space, identity, boundaries, service, language) as demonstrated in staff teaching practices and the contextual environment. Effective teaching staff not only embraced student diversity (whether Island born, recent migrants or New Zealand born), they were also in a position to cater for the needs of Pasifika students.

After six years at AUT University working in the field of Academic support under Te Tari Awhina (now known as the Student Learning Centre), I decided it was time for a career change. For me I was going back to my passion (or as I refer to coming back 'home') to the field of my doctorate - Pasifika ECE, with an even stronger calling/grounding having become a first time mother at 41 and the arrival of my twin daughters. I had already established a close relationship with the National Diploma ECE Pasifika students and staff at the Manukau campus since 2005, I had gotten to know them (and vice versa) as my initial job description included providing Academic support to this campus. In my previous role, I had been providing academic writing and study skills support. Whereas in my new role as a content lecturer, I am teaching theory, but also using cultural knowledge, and including students' cultural capital, and examples to make it easier for students to understand. The concept of cultural capital is from Pierre Bourdieu (1986) who describes it as knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that a person has, which gives him/her status. For example parents provide their children with cultural capital by teaching and passing on attitudes and knowledge needed to succeed in education.

In the past in mainstream university programmes the type of knowledge that tended to be taught was mainly palagi (European), whereas nowadays there is a plethora of knowledge like Pasifika Education. In fact, being Pasifika has become fashionable in Aotearoa New Zealand!

Pasifika Education has become 'a strong hold' at AUT University with the popularity of the National Diploma ECE Pasifika (finishing in 2014), and the new Bachelor of Pasifika ECE which began in 2013. I teach on both programmes. There is a unique feature of the new degree in that what students bring with them (their cultural capital) is welcomed and they get to incorporate or weave that knowledge in their assignments. This means that the majority of the ECE students who are of Pasifika decent (from Samoa, Tonga, Cook Island, Niue, Fiji, Indo-Fijian, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Tahiti) can confidently use their first languages and cultures in the classroom to validate and develop their teaching practice. We also have non-Pasifika students, who are palagi, or Maori, and others from countries like South Africa, India, Iraq, China, Vietnam and the Philippines. So in the Fonua (Human Development) paper that I teach, in the first assignment students are asked to explain their understanding of the concept of Fonua using their own cultural perspective. This has also been an opportunity for our New Zealand born Pasifika students who are self-conscious about their lack of fluency or lack of cultural knowledge to start the journey of researching into their culture and heritage.

So what are my teaching techniques?

When explaining an assignment for the first time, I like to use a template which is simply the marking criteria broken down into manageable steps. I also use an assignment checklist, which students can use alongside their work to see if there is anything that has not been attended to before they submit. This includes things like – whether student has answered the question, spell check, and several

examples of grammar, in-text references and reference list (common errors by students that I have collated over the years). I keep referring to the template over a series of lectures, until students are absolutely clear about what they have to write and my expectations of their work. Students often like to ask questions in class, in my office or via email (when they are unsure or wanting further clarification). I always foster a classroom environment that is comfortable and welcoming for students to enable them to approach me about anything. In my feedback with students' assignments, I give constructive comments so that they know what they have done well and what needs to improve for the next assessment. I identify students who have potential (their writing or research skills) and I keep commending them for their efforts and alert them to the endless possibilities ahead. Whereas for the students who need extra support because of grammar, writing styles, structure etc, I provide the self-help alternatives first and then direct them to the Student Learning Centre. My personal teaching philosophy is aligned with my Christian beliefs, through the wisdom of my parents and their stress on the Samoan cultural values of alofa, fa'aaloalo, fa'amaoni, tautua and my professionalism (in my attitude and public conduct).

Another popular method is mind-mapping the assignment question on the white board or on power point with students. In my communication with students I try to use words that are easy for them to understand. In small group discussions, I encourage students to use their life experience (their cultural capital) as a basis to try and understand particular topics. For example when we talk about spirituality in our Kainga class, we start off by examining the concept from students' cultural perspective. In teaching our lecture topics we use readings by Pasifika people (academics, researchers and writers), even subjects that have a western emphasis like the theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. I have found it practical to utilise Pasifika research that have applied the same model, and in this case within a Samoan context (Lipine, 2010; Utumapu, 1998), so that

students have a cultural perspective that would aid their understanding and therefore they do not settle for the same western alternatives found in their textbooks. I teach Te Tiriti o Waitangi to year two (in the National Diploma ECE Pasifika), which I have always found challenging mainly because I am not Tangata Whenua. However my Treaty booklet (Utumapu, 2007) has been a reliable resource, which I translated into the Samoan language this has enabled students (in particular Samoan born) to understand the history of the Treaty and its background. There is also an English version of this booklet which other students have found useful.

Being biliterate, I can confidently conduct the whole session in Samoan for Samoan students, either one to one or in an Ako class (tutorial facilitated by a lecturer/tutor). During these classes I invite students to bring their drafts, which I am able to read and then give immediate feedback. I also learnt that marking all my students' assignments myself, instead of using an assistant marker guaranteed consistency with marking and feedback, and that communication with students should always be transparent especially with assessment instructions.

To develop a rapport with students, I also like to tell stories and often sharing from my life experiences (as a Samoan migrant, mother of preschoolers, daughter with an elderly mum, wife of a palagi), as anecdotes to illustrate a point in my teaching; as well as a way to give students some insight into 'me the person'. It also reminds and reassures students that I was once a student like them – having the same issues and struggles! I truly believe that in tertiary institutions we make things difficult for students. It is timely for Pasifika educators to develop and implement strategies to make it more straight forward for Pasifika students.

How do I see myself as an effective Pasifika ECE lecturer?

I have found students' feedback in evaluations (when each paper concludes) as useful in terms of my own teaching, whereby they have identified my teaching strengths; such as my cultural knowledge, communication skills, preparation and organisation of my teaching materials, teaching skills (knowledge of content/referencing, clarity with assessments), aspects of my personality (being approachable, respectful), time management, constructive feedback regarding assessments so that students learn from their mistakes, and my professional attitude. They have also alerted me on areas that I need to work on – like voice projection. Another improvement, before students were given only the readings for a lecture, now as a result of feedback, students are also provided with a copy of the power point a week ahead, which allows them to familiarise with the material beforehand. The other helpful feedback is from colleagues in the form of moderation of assignments and in observing teaching and presentations. In addition, there is also continual professional development through attending conferences, participation in forums and being aware and up to date with current research literature. I acknowledge my academic literacy mentors (Diana Nicholson and Yvonne O'Brien) for fine tuning my skills and for setting the example of teaching with dedication. It was Diana who said to me in the beginning that teaching was no different from acting, that no matter how I felt, as educators we still had to teach/perform regardless, and that it was vital to operate from a student-centred approach.

For me, I define an effective ECE Pasifika lecturer as an educator who loves to teach, knows and applies the content, has a holistic rapport with students from all backgrounds (intuitive to their needs), has excellent communication skills (is a good listener and explains clearly) and someone who is constantly improving and developing one's practice as a result of feedback from others (like students and colleagues) to maintain that grounding and professionalism. An

effective Pasifika lecturer is also someone who relates well and identifies with students' needs and their backgrounds. Empowering Pasifika students begins with acknowledging what they bring to the learning environment, and then using culturally appropriate processes to bridge and develop their skills to enable them to succeed in their studies.

Overall, feedback was a strong reminder that "the teacher is automatically in a *va* relationship with the student" (Tuagalu, 2008, p. 122). My teaching role can also be described as that of a "teacher who weaves various forms of knowledge through practice demonstrates quality *matâlâlâga*" (Tagoilelagi-Leota et al., 2011, p.4), even more so affirming and utilising the cultural capital (knowledge and backgrounds) that students bring into the classroom. For Samoan people, we have a saying "O le ala i le pule o le tautua" – leadership is through service. As a migrant I have always believed in the merits of Education and I know that I have a lot to offer (and a lot to learn). I came to AUT University because I wanted to serve my community and to make a difference to peoples' lives. In closing, Pasifika ECE lecturers need to be continuously reflective in their practise so that they remain effective educators.

References:

- Airini, Anae, M., Mila-Schaaf, K., Coxon, E., Mara, D., & Sanga, K. (2010). *Teu le va: Relationships across research and policy in Pasifika education: A collective approach to knowledge generation and policy development for action towards Pasifika education success*. Wellington, New Zealand: Auckland Uniservices
- Allen, P., Taleni, L. T., & Robertson, J. (2009). In order to teach you, I must know you: The Pasifika initiative: A professional development project for teachers. *NZ Journal of Educational Studies*, 44(2), 47-62
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook for theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp.241-258). New York, NY: Greenwood Press

Colker, L. J. (2008, March). Twelve characteristics of effective early childhood teachers. *YC Young Children*, 63(2), 68-73

Cowley, E., Dabb, H., & Jones, B. (2001). *Academic experience of Pasifika students in the New Zealand Diploma of Business Economic Environment 120*. Paper presented at the Bridging Education in New Zealand, Manukau Institute of Technology, New Zealand

Devlin, M., & O'Shea, H. (2012). Effective university teaching: Views of Australian university students from low socio-economic status backgrounds. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 17(4), 385-397

Dickie, J. G. (2000). *Pacific Nations students in primary tertiary training investigating their learning needs*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Fiso, T., & Huthnance, L. (2012). *Le so'otaga: Bridging the divide - Holistic teaching and learning practices at Pacific private training establishments in Aotearoa New Zealand - Research report*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ako Aotearoa.

Johnson, M. (1980). *Effective teaching as perceived by teachers and principals in selected Indiana school corporations*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Ball State University, Indiana, USA

Lipine, T. (2010). *Education of secondary Samoan students in New Zealand: The road to success*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand

Ministry of Education. (2012). *Pasifika education research priorities: Using research to realise our vision for Pasifika learners*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author

Samu, T. W. (2006). The 'Pasifika umbrella' and quality teaching: Understanding and responding to the diverse realities within. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12, 35-49

Tagoilelagi-Leota, F., Kesi, F., Tagoilelagi, I., Penn, S., & Autagavaia, M. (2011). *Matâlâlâga a le faiaoga Aoga Amata: Authentic teacher in Aoga Amata*. Paper presented to the 3rd *Critiquing Pasifika Education Conference @ the University*, AUT University, Manukau Campus, New Zealand

TEC. (2013). *Doing better for Pasifika in tertiary education settings: Progress report*. Unpublished document

Tuagalu, I. (2008). Heuristics of the va. *Alternative an International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 4(1), 107-126

Utumapu, T. (1998). *O le poutu: Women's roles and Samoan Language Nests*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Utumapu-McBride, T. (2007). *Fa'amalamalama o le Fegaiga o Waitangi: Understanding the Treaty of Waitangi*. Auckland, New Zealand: Te Tari Awhina, AUT University

Utumapu-McBride, T., Esera, E., Toia, S. F., Tone-Schuster, L., & So'oaemalelagi, F. L. (2008). Saili mo le lumana'i: Research on Samoan students' learning perspectives and the impact on their achievement. *Alternative an International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 4(1), 149-172

Utumapu-McBride, T., & Tuagalu, I. (2010, November 24-26). *Pasifika student engagement at AUT University: The Pasifika Transition - Helping our students survive at university*. Paper presented at ATLAANZ Conference, CPIT, Christchurch, New Zealand