



EDITORIAL

Education for sustainable futures: Comparative dialogues

Co-editors, Special Issue 2024

Tepora Wright,  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1373-0286>

Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific, Fiji: farita.wright@usp.ac.fj

Kabini Sanga,  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0487-4111>

Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand: kabini.sanga@vuw.ac.nz

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The 2023 OCIES Conference was held in beautiful Samoa, hosted by the National University of Samoa. The call for papers for the Special Issue following the conference attracted just under 30 abstract submissions. Following selections of abstracts and blind reviews, ten completed manuscripts were received within the 2024 Special Issue timeline. The papers explore and suggest insights on enacting education policy in the Oceania and Asia contexts relating to student and teacher well-being and success, teacher preparation and practice, learning program design, and the importance of culture and context to sustainable development in education.

We extend our appreciation to all reviewers for their time and work on enhancing the quality of the final manuscripts. We extend a heartfelt thank you to Professor Carol Mutch, Associate Professor Rasela Tufue, Dr Adreanne Ormond, Dr Anna Joskin, Dr Anne Shinkfield, Dr Daniel Couch, Dr Grace Ji, Dr Irene Paulsen, Dr Martyn Reynolds, Dr Philip Wing Keung Chan, Dr Rebecca Spratt, Dr Shaoru Annie Zeng, Dr Sofia Ali, and Dr Sonia Fonua. We further thank our editorial team: Dr Niusila Faamanatu-Eteuati and Associate Professor Rasela Tufue from the National University of Samoa and Ms Pine Southon and Dr Martyn Reynolds from Victoria University of Wellington. We sincerely thank Dr Philip Wing Keung Chan, Joint Senior Editor of the [IEJ:CP](#) and his team for supporting this Special Issue 2024 project to completion.

This Special Issue opens with an in-depth exploration of how the Oceania Oralities Framework (OOF) (Sanga & Reynolds, 2023) enables deep sense-making of what education means to local communities from the perspectives of *tok-stori* participants. The paper highlights the potential of the OOF to support sustainable education by identifying what education means and why to local communities. This identification is made possible by ontological holism, abstract analysis of education understandings rooted in the spiritual space, ordering of cultural principles as orderings of space, and acknowledging the performance aspect of oralities. In so doing, Sanga and Reynolds and their group of authors offer methodological insight into applying the OOF to help communities make meaning through an oralities approach.

Amton Mwarakurmes then explores the lesson-planning practices of Mathematics teachers in Vanuatu concerning national education policy advocating student-centred learning and teaching. His work suggests that teachers undertake most of their lesson planning without consideration of or reference to national policy on student-centred learning, struggle to enact student-centred learning for new mathematics curriculum, often do not receive needed professional development to support enactment of student-centred teaching and learning and

are constrained from supporting student-centred learning in the absence of a variety of teaching and learning resources. Mwarakurmes' analysis provides insight into implementing a student-centred learning policy in a developing country context where factors constrain teachers from fully realising the potential of such a policy for transforming student learning.

The paper by Effrel and Mwarakurmes utilised a Community of Inquiry approach to explore the online learning experiences of 60 primary school teachers in Vanuatu during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research identified challenges and opportunities for teachers to shift to online teaching modes using technology. The contribution of their case study from the experiences of Vanuatu's primary school teachers is a welcome addition to the literature on teacher experiences of the shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rasela Tufue and Grace Sootaga report on qualitative research that examined factors that influence students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to study and do well in school. Their research with students in Samoa suggests the central importance of recognition and encouragement from teachers and other individuals in the student's network, expectations from parents and family, and factors related to the classroom learning environment. Tufue and Sootaga's article highlights the importance of supportive relationships to students' school experiences and potential for success.

Rasela Tufue and Floraleta Losi explore teachers' and students' perspectives of teaching and learning in composite classes within the context of Samoa education policy, which allows composite classes in schools with fewer enrolments. Student and staff voices are integrated throughout the article, presenting a compelling and nuanced case of composite class teaching and learning challenges and opportunities. The paper makes a strong argument for re-evaluating the composite class policy in Samoa's context under current levels of resourcing and support for teachers.

Grace Xuecong Ji, Philip Wing Keung Chan and Penelope Kalogeropoulos discuss a research project that explored the impact of the Double Reduction Policy in China, presenting a contrasting education context to the other research papers in this Special Issue. The paper illustrates how an education policy designed to combat a particular issue, in this case, declining student well-being, negatively impacts teacher workload and well-being. Ji, Chan and Kalogeropoulos' research suggests an opportunity for enhancing policy design and enactment processes to improve the positive impact of education policies such as the Double Reduction Policy.

Gayleen Tarosa's paper explores the induction experiences of new secondary school teachers in Vanuatu, drawing on the perspectives of new teachers and their principals. Beginning teachers in her research experienced similar challenges but responded to them differently. Tarosa's research provides insight into an important part of teacher preparation for teaching critical to developing countries' aspirations for quality education for sustainable development. Such insight is highly relevant in the current climate of teacher shortages in the research context of Vanuatu and across Oceania. Tarosa's paper makes important connections for policy to support professional learning and well-being for beginning teachers in Vanuatu. There is a welcome indication that applying Tarosa's research findings to policy and practice has already started in Vanuatu.

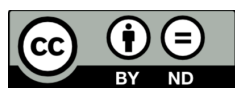
Anne Shinkfield explores the disentangling of ideas about cultural differences and socioeconomic disadvantage within the context of an early years learning programme in Australia. Shinkfield's paper suggests a local solution to a global problem by grounding early years education in local culture with the engagement of family members in school learning

activities. Her work makes an important suggestion for the design of early years learning programmes for Indigenous children in Australia, framed within the culture of children's families.

The group collaboration paper by Shaoru Annie Zeng, Sun Yee Yip, Grace Xuecong Ji, Yaqing Hou, Hongzhi Zhang, Philip Wing Keung Chan, Zane Diamond and Geraldine Burke examines the extent to which community engagement and resources are evident in lesson planning for a particular curriculum priority. The curriculum theme in question is Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia Cross-Curriculum Priority in the Australian Curriculum. Using an analytical tool to compare selected elements, such as types of community resources, community engagement strategies concerning stated educational aims, and the link to lesson planning elements, provides a practical example of how the enactment of curriculum policy can be comparatively examined using lesson plan artefacts.

Adreanne Ormond and Martyn Reynolds' paper examines the experiences of Māori tertiary students in Aotearoa New Zealand through video dialogic research. Their work centres Indigenous student voices and experiences and demonstrates the importance of cultural connection for student success in higher education. Ormond and Reynolds' paper reinforces the centrality of relationships in supporting academic success and provides insights for improving tertiary education support systems for student well-being and success.

Overall, the articles in this Special Issue contribute to the discussion on educational quality for sustainable futures, which was the theme of the 2023 OCIES Conference. The papers examine issues key to the debate on education quality, such as student and teacher well-being, teacher preparation and practice, the systemic pressures on teachers and students, and the importance of education policy and practice to culture and context. As a collection of papers, they provide insights into the challenges and opportunities in implementing education policy where there is often a gap between policy intention and implementation. The papers span diverse methodological approaches within qualitative research and integrate cultural perspectives in their research designs and analyses while sharing a common concern for the practical application of research to inform education policy for sustainable development. Together, this suite of papers constitutes a dialogic contribution from members of the OCIES research community to the wider scholarship on education for sustainable futures. We congratulate all authors for their contributions to this Special Issue. We commend these papers to our readers and hope you enjoy the contributions articulated therein.



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