Comparing Turkish and Pakistani teachers' professionalism

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The purpose of this study was to compare perceptions of teaching professionalism by Turkish and Pakistani teachers. The study used a quantitative, non-intervention, descriptive survey design. The research sample was 315 teachers from Turkey and 202 from Pakistan. The teacher professionalism (TP) scale used to collect data included 46 items, two of which were negative, which examine nine dimension of teaching professionalism (alpha reliability coefficient = 0.93 abd TP scale showing a total variance of 58.96%). Results of the composite professionalism scale revealed that the teachers in Pakistan had more significant positive/higher perception of professionalism than the teachers in Turkey. Comparisons of the sub-dimensions of the TP scale revealed that Pakistani teachers had more positive/higher perceptions in five of the nine sub-dimensions, whereas only one sub-dimension was positive/higher for teachers in Turkey. In Pakistan, male teachers had more positive/higher perceptions of professionalism than female teachers. Other findings showed that there was no significant difference between the Turkish and Pakistani teachers according to school type.

Keywords: Teachers; professionalism; Turkey; Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Professionalism is an issue that every occupation recognizes as necessary for upgrading its status, growth and acceptability within that dogma (Eraut, 1994); professionalism defined as a number of attitudes and behaviours of a specific workforce that are unlike but associated with organisational ethos and that have inferences for individual motivations, cooperation and professional interaction among colleagues (Epstein & Hundert, 2002). Professional physiognomies are formed of specific information, a common mechanical culture, a strong service ethic, and self-regulation (Carr, 2000; Etzioni, 1969; Larson, 1977). Professionalism is a societal plan or task that aims to increase the advantages of an occupational group; it announces the perfection and charisma of the individual's beliefs and movements within a specified group (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996).

The fulfilment of the teaching occupation in a professional way differs from country to country, within the same country and over time. Barber (2005; as cited in Whitty, 2006)

notes that the teaching occupation has passed through four stages from 1960 to the present: "uninformed professionalism" that provided autonomy to teachers but teachers did not hold qualifications in the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by a modern society; "uninformed prescription" in which a national curriculum was imposed for political rather than educational reasons; "informed prescription" in which standards of the teaching occupation were established within the framework of evidence-based policies; and, finally, "informed professionalism," which involves the teaching occupation. In this fourth stage, teachers have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to be rewarded by the government with a greater degree of autonomy to manage their own affairs.

Teaching professionally may be thought of as "a job done to ensure income." However, this definition ignores the virtues of teaching. Güven (2010) holds that such a view is incompatible with teaching because teaching is a revered profession which requires a high level of self-sacrifice. Strike (1990) notes that whenever professional occupations are mentioned, the medical and legal professions usually come to mind; they provide paid services, leading to the implication that learning and professionalism are linked. Etzioni (1969, see also Strike, 1990) recognized some professions, such as teaching and nursing, as semi-professional since they do not have all of the characteristics or status of the medical and legal professions. However, there is no consensus on the definition of professionalism (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010; Raymond, 2006).

Interest in the nature of professionalism by sociologists began in the 1950s (Whitty & Wisby, 2006). Researchers have increasingly focused on determining the characteristics of a profession rather than to attempting to define the concept of profession. Millerson (1964) believed that the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge, the certification in those skills via testing, and the existence of a strong professional organisation were determining characteristics. Gerrard (2012) believes that the application of specialised knowledge is one of the hallmarks of professionalism. Tobias and Baffert (2010) added that a relatively high degree of social status and economic returns and a certain level of independence and autonomy while performing the work is also a characteristic. Based on this view, Gür and Çelik, 2009 suggest that Turkish policy makers should give Turkish teachers more autonomy, especially in terms of curriculum adaptation to match students need, to increase the status of teachers as professionals.

In terms of the professionalism of the teaching occupation, Furlong (2001) highlighted the importance of teachers' knowledge base, including improving teaching in the classroom, assuming responsibility and using authority in order to contribute to the learning of the students, and being free to plan teaching tasks. Kılınç's (2014) research revealed that supporting, task and bureaucratic cultures were significant predictors of teacher professionalism. Cerit (2012) found that the effective bureaucratic school structure was an important explanation for TP in the Turkish context. Evans (2011) identified three dimensions of teaching professionalism: the "behavioural" dimension, which relates to the competency of teachers and their attempts to improve student learning; "attitudinal" dimension, which relates to teacher perceptions and beliefs about the profession; and "intellectual" dimension, which focuses on the knowledge of teachers and their teaching and analytical competence.

Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves, and Cunningham (2010) found that expectations of teachers as professionals include developing teaching practices in the classroom, taking responsibility for the learning of the students, following the latest advances and results of

the studies in their field, and collaborating with their colleagues. Clement and Vandenberghe (2000) note giving importance to the activities of research and development, and being accountable, trustworthy and devoted to their jobs are important dimensions. Professional collaboration behaviours can be said to be more aligned with progressive forms of professionalism that emphasize an exchange of ideas at a deeper level (OECD, 2009). TALIS data show that these behaviours occur at lower rates when compared with simple exchange and co-ordination between teachers (this includes surface-level behaviours such as exchanging teaching materials with colleagues, having discussions about students or attending conferences together). Thus, it may be useful to consider how these behaviours can be improved within and across countries so that they occur at least as much as the other behaviours (OECD, 2014). Kincheloe (2004) indicated that professional teachers are able to develop appropriate strategies to use in the class by correctly defining the needs of the students. Day et al (2007) stated that having a sense of moral purpose, planning their studies autonomously, and participating in the process of decision making at the school are fundamental dynamics of teaching professionalism.

In Turkey, a number of studies have been carried out related to TP (Bayhan, 2011; Cerit, 2012; Güven, 2010; Kılınç, 2014). In these studies, which discuss the concept of professionalism in terms of basic characteristics, the researchers questioned whether teaching had a professional status in Turkey. Continuous changes of direction and employment policies in teacher education, scarcity of civil professional organisations, and the decisions and implementations relevant to educational processes, which are, in most cases, centrally regulated, challenge the idea of teaching the occupation as a profession. Bayhan (2011), in his research into the perspectives of Turkish teachers, revealed that "subject matter," "teacher personality," "school administration," "government policy," and "educational laws", respectively, are the topics most affecting the teaching profession. Bayhan concluded that the professionalization of the teaching occupation in Turkey is insufficient. Nevertheless, the level of teacher perceptions of occupational and personal professionalism is high. However, this level is limited to class and student factors.

The research reported in this paper studied the Turkish and Pakistani contexts of TP. According to the World Bank (2016), Turkey is representative of a middle income European and Central Asian nation, and Pakistan is representative of a low income South Asian nation. Turkey has a long history of being a part of Western culture with an Eastern background, whereas Pakistan has a long history of having an Eastern culture (Pew Forum, 2010). The profession of teaching requires both a college degree and the successful completion of a Bachelor of Education Degree in Pakistan, but the budget for good quality of instruction and teaching context is low, depriving teachers of quality teacher training, well-maintained facilities, and satisfaction (Aly, 2007). A vast majority of teachers seldom receive professional development trainings or workshops, leaving them with little prospect of growing in their careers.

The educational system in Turkey is characterized by lower than OECD countries average per pupil expenditure (NCES, 2016), and teachers are required to hold a college degree for primary school teachers, and for teaching secondary school to also have successfully completed further certification (Turkish Council of Higher Education, 2015). Along with ongoing professional development delivered to teachers across the school year in Turkey, the last two weeks of June and the first two weeks of September are compulsorily designated time for professional development activities (Preschool & Elementary Schools

Regulation, 2014. To describe and compare perceptions of teaching professionalism by Turkish and Pakistani teachers, this research considered the following questions:

1. Do Turkish and Pakistani teacher perceptions of teaching professionalism differ according to the TP scale sub-dimensions?
2. Do Turkish and Pakistani teacher perceptions of teaching professionalism differ according to teacher gender and school type?

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research method was used for this study. Creswell (2005) divided quantitative research design into two broad categories: intervention and non-intervention research. This research uses non-intervention (Cresswell, 2005), utilizing a descriptive survey design (Fraenkel & Wallen, 20090, which seeks to reveal the characteristic or behaviour of a particular population in a systematic and accurate fashion by using questionnaires and interviews to collect information about individual attitudes, beliefs, feelings, behaviour, and lifestyles (Leary, 2011). Surveys allow the collection of data about participants' beliefs that would be difficult to measure using observational techniques (McIntyre, 1999).

Sample

A convenience sample method was used in this research; that is, teachers teaching at primary, secondary, and high schools in Turkey and Pakistan who volunteered to participate in the study made up the sample. Turkish teachers in the study were from 25 different schools located in four different Turkish cities in the western Black Sea region. The Pakistani teachers were all from Lahore. Return rates of surveys were high (79% in Turkey, yielding a total of 315 responses). The class levels into which surveyed teachers where teaching are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teaching level of survey participants

Variable	Level	Turkey sample [*n* (%)]	Pakistan sample [*n* (%)]
School Type	1. Primary	106 (33.7)	38 (18.8)
	2. Middle	97 (30.8)	24 (11.9)
	3. High School	112 (35.6)	140 (69.3)
	Total	*315 (100)*	*202 (100)*
Gender	1. Female		158 (78.2)
	2. Male	Data not available	44 (21.8)
	Total		*202 (100)*

Survey instrument

To measure TP levels for this research, the instrument developed by İlgan, Aslanargün, and Shaukat (2015) was used. The instrument includes a 5-point Likert-type scale that asks the participant to rate level of agreement to statements (indicators) regarding the professionalism of teaching. The options of the instrument are "never," "scarcely," "sometimes," "mostly," and "completely," meaning that a high score obtained from the instrument represented a high level of teaching professionalism and a low score represented a low level of teaching professionalism. An initial draft scale included three

negative and 62 positive items but exploratory factor analyses of results from administration of the survey showed that a TP scale containing 46 items, two of which were negative, represented nine dimensions which are reliable and valid, with a total of 58.96% variance, factor loadings ranging from 0.47 to 0.83, and a reliability coefficient ranging from 0.56 to 0.91. In addition, t-test values regarding the lower and upper 27% group average score comparison were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Sample items with the highest factor loading for each dimension are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample items for each dimension

Dimension	Sample Item
1. Teacher quality and professional sensitivity	Teachers have strong self-control.
2. Perceptions of top administrators and the public of the profession	Policy makers and authorities hold the teaching profession in high esteem.
3. Commitment to the profession	I am fond of teaching.
4. Having higher knowledge and skill	Teachers have capacity to begin change and set new methods of application.
5. Professional discipline	Teachers attend the courses on time and finish punctually.
6. Professional development	I regularly follow publications in my profession.
7. Public perceptions of trust in the profession	Parents and students believe that teachers are responsible for valuable achievements of students.
8. Perceptions related to the importance of the profession	Teachers' high standards of abstract information make them powerful.
9. Professional autonomy	Teachers are able to decide on matters related to their jobs.

Data analysis

The data gathered by the TP scale were analysed using the SPSS (Version 20) program. Percentages and frequencies were used to analyse demographic variables. In order to describe TP, descriptive statistics (i.e., mean and standard deviation) were used. The independent samples t-test was used to compare Turkish and Pakistani TP levels. The skewness index of the composite TP scale was – 0.42 and the kurtosis index was 0.043; skewness and kurtosis indices ranged between – 1 and 1, which is considered excellent (George & Mallery, 2001). These results indicated that the parametric statistical procedures used to analyse the data were appropriate.

RESULTS

The t-test results comparing Turkish and Pakistani teacher professionalism levels in terms of composite and sub-dimensions are presented in Table 3, showing that teachers in Pakistan had a more significant positive/higher perceptions of TP than teachers in Turkey [$t_{(515)} = 7.69$; $p < 0.05$]. In the comparisons of the sub-dimensions of the TP scale, Pakistani teachers had more positive/higher perceptions in five of the nine sub-dimensions, whereas only one sub-dimension was positive/higher for teachers in Turkey. Specifically, teacher perceptions in Pakistan were more positive/higher than those of teachers in Turkey in the sub-dimensions of "perception of top administrators and the

public to the profession" [$t_{(515)}$ = 15.15; $p < 0.05$], "having higher knowledge and skill" [$t_{(515)}$ = 6.24; $p < 0.05$], "professional development" [$t_{(515)}$ = 7.39; $p < 0.05$], "public perceptions of trust in the profession" [$t_{(515)}$ = 7.57; $p < 0.05$] and "professional autonomy" [$t_{(515)}$ = 13.57; $p < 0.05$], whereas teachers in Turkey were more positive/higher in the dimension of "commitment to profession" [$t_{(494,5)}$ = 15.15; $p < 0.05$]. No significant differences were found between the two countries in the sub- dimensions of "professional discipline" and "perceptions related to the importance of the profession".

Table 3: T-test results comparing Turkish and Pakistani TP levels

Sub-dimensions	Countries	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	t	p
1. Teacher quality and professional sensitivity	Turkish	315	3.85	.555	515	.078	.938
	Pakistani	202	3.84	.520			
2. Perception of top administrators and the public to the profession	Turkish	315	2.53	.669	515	15.15	.000
	Pakistani	202	3.48	.725			
3. Commitment to the profession	Turkish	315	3.78	.993	494.5	2.57	.010
	Pakistani	202	3.57	.779			
4. Having higher knowledge and skill	Turkish	315	3.53	.661	515	6.24	.000
	Pakistani	202	3.89	.630			
5. Professional discipline	Turkish	315	3.80	.615	515	1.64	.101
	Pakistani	202	3.89	.570			
6. Professional development	Turkish	315	3.50	.680	459.9	7.39	.000
	Pakistani	202	3.93	.613			
7. Public perceptions of trust of the profession	Turkish	315	3.39	.723	515	7.57	.000
	Pakistani	202	3.90	.777			
8. Perceptions related to the importance of the profession	Turkish	315	3.92	.710	515	.918	.359
	Pakistani	202	3.97	.651			
9. Professional autonomy	Turkish	315	2.81	.771	515	13.57	.000
	Pakistani	202	3.76	.796			
Composite Scale	Turkish	315	3.44	.468	515	7.69	.000
	Pakistani	202	3.76	.452			

As can be seen in Table 3, teacher perceptions of professionalism corresponded to a medium level in both the Pakistani ($X = 3.76$) and Turkish ($X = 3.44$) context. The teacher levels of professionalism in Pakistan according to gender are presented in Table 4, showing that, in Pakistan, male teachers had more positive/higher perceptions of professionalism than female teachers [$t_{(200)}$ = 2.53; $p < 0.05$].

Table 4: T-test comparisons of TP levels in Pakistan according to gender

Variable	Level	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	t	p
Gender	Female	158	3.80	.464	200	2.53	.012
	Male	44	3.61	.372			

T-test comparisons of TP perceptions in Pakistan and Turkey according to school type are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparisons of teacher perceptions of professionalism in Pakistan and Turkey according to school type

Countries	Level	N	$\overline{X}$	SS	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	p
Turkey	1. Primary	106	3.45	.45	.664	2	.332	1.518	.221
	2. Middle	97	3.38	.49	68.291	312	.219		
	3. High Sch.	112	3.49	.46	68.956	314			
	4. Total	315	3.44	.46					
Pakistan	1. Primary	38	3.65	.62	.684	2	.342	1.685	.188
	2. Middle	24	3.74	.35	40.393	199	.203		
	3. High Sch.	140	3.80	.40	41.077	201			
	4. Total	202	3.76	.45					

As seen in Table 5, no significant differences were found according to school type between teachers in Turkey [$F_{(2,312)} = 1.52$; $p > 0.05$] and Pakistan [$F_{(2,199)} = 1.69$; $p > 0.05$].

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Results from this study shows that the professionalism level of teachers in Turkey was slightly above moderate (X = 3.44), corresponding to "mostly" on the five-point Likert scale, and teachers in Pakistan were also at the "mostly" level (X = 3.76). It is possible to state that perceptions of TP were slightly above medium in both contexts of Pakistan and Turkey. This level could be considered respectable but should be higher. Kılınç's (2014) study of Turkish teachers, in which he used a five-point Likert type survey, with TP of X = 3.44, aligns with the results of this research. However, Yılmaz and Altınkurt (2014b) found a TP level of X = 3.92, and Cerit (2012) found that Turkish primary school teacher professionalism was low at X = 2.27.

Hoodbhoy (1998), and Shaikh (1997 as cited in Rizvi, 2003) found that, while teachers at public schools in Karachi, Pakistan, were less educated, had less training, were lower paid and under-valued, they felt confident and efficient, put their cards on the table and shared with others, decided for themselves, took responsibility, appreciated cooperation and learned from each other, and were willing to take the role of leadership when they found the chance. A study of 3,037 teachers in Malaysia found that the professionalism level of teachers was low to moderate (Noordin et al., 2007).

When considering the composite TP scale, this study found that the professionalism perception of teachers in Pakistan was higher than that of teachers in Turkey. Turkey is a developing country, but it is resourceful and provides a satisfying life for its people. Teachers in Turkey have more commitment towards the teaching profession compared to Pakistani teachers. In Pakistan, teachers enjoy their government jobs and support their colleagues, and there are no strict checks and balances to oversee their performance as

would exist in private organisations, which may explain their low level of commitment (Hoodbhoy, 1998; Shah & Abualrob, 2012). Recently, the government of Pakistan has taken initiatives toward the professional development of teachers in the form of teacher training and refresher courses to strengthen their teaching skills. Different organisations like Pre-Step, UNESCO and the Directorate of Staff Development are striving to improve teaching quality and teaching style, and to motivate teachers towards teaching excellence. This may explain the reason behind the higher level of Pakistani teacher perceptions about professional development and the importance of the teaching profession (Rizvi, 2003). The National Education Policy, put in force in 1998, also aims to include effective institutionalization, matching demand with supply, providing incentives to attract the best talent, and improving pre-service and in-service training as well as providing management training opportunities for administrators (Jamil, 2004). In the public sector of Pakistan, people benefit from more facilities compared to the private sector. Moreover, they have more professional autonomy and power compared to the private sector.

Thus, the reasons teachers in Pakistan have more positive professionalism perceptions than teachers in Turkey could stem from the reform initiatives that have pointed out the key issues and problems of teachers in Pakistan over the last 30 years. Professional development initiatives of Pakistani teachers include increasing knowledge of subject matters, human growth and development, knowledge of Islamic ethical values/social life skills, instructional planning and strategies, assessment, learning environment, effective communication and proficient use of information communication technologies, collaboration and partnership, continuous professional development, codes of conduct, and teaching of English as a second foreign language (NPSTP, 2009; Rehmani, 2006; STEP, 2004). Khan (2011) pointed out that there were already a few hopeful signs of improvement in TP in Pakistan, including teacher education in moving from traditional and often instrumental modes of practice to more holistic and progressive models of educating prospective teachers. Furthermore, TP has been conceptualized in terms of four dimensions (Rizvi & Elliot, 2005; Rizvi & Elliott, 2007): teacher efficacy, teacher practice, teacher collaboration and teacher leadership.

The results for TP of teachers in Turkey show Turkish teachers have relatively high positive perceptions of the importance of their profession and the quality of what they are doing. Research also shows Turkish teacher self-perceptions of their self-efficacy is relatively high (Korkut & Babaoğlan, 2012 (X = 7.36 (9-point Likert scale)); Özerkan, 2007 (X = 4.09 (5-point Likert scale)); Telef, 2011 (X = 6.78 (9-point Likert scale)); Üstüner, Demirtaş, & Özer, 2009 (X = 3.89 (5-point Likert scale))). Gömleksiz and Serhatlıoğlu (2013) concluded that preschool teacher perceptions of the efficacy of the teaching-learning process was high (X = 4.68). All these results are in line with those found in this study.

The lowest levels of Turkish teacher perceptions on the professionalism scale appeared in the dimensions of "perception of top administrators and the public towards the profession" and "professional autonomy". According to research by Özpolat (2002), only 2% of teachers believed that authorities value the teaching profession and 42% believed they were under-valued by authorities. Gök and Okçabol (1998) found that 75% of teachers thought their profession was under-valued by authorities, whereas 78% had similar ideas about local authorities. A similar study carried out by one of the teacher unions (Eğitim Bir-Sen, 2004) with 9,790 teachers found that only 10% of the teachers shared the idea that "society", "ministry of education," and the "mass media" valued

teachers. Teacher candidates had the same perceptions that their profession was under-valued (Karamustafaoğlu & Özmen, 2004). According to research conducted in 21 countries with approximately 1,000 people per country and funded by the Varkey Gems Foundation (Dolton, Marcerano-Gutierrez, 2013), teachers in Turkey had the highest social status after China and Greece, teaching was valued as much as nursing, 52% of participants agreed that students respect teachers, and the educational system was rated 4.7 out of 10. This research implies, as other studies do (Eğitim Bir-Sen, 2004; Gök & Okçabol, 1998; Özpolat, 2002), that society in Turkey ascribes more value to the social perception of teaching than believed by teachers. A survey carried out by TES and YouGov (2015) of more than 600 British teachers revealed that 81%, regardless of whether the respondents were classroom teachers, senior leaders or supply teachers, said that the teaching profession was under-valued by the public.

This study indicates that the professional autonomy of teachers in Turkey is relatively low (X = 2.81), although it corresponds to a medium level according to this research. Empirical research directly concerning professional autonomy is limited. Öztürk (2011) characterizes professional autonomy as: (a) planning and practicing teaching, (b) being involved in important decisions and school administration, and (c) developing teachers' professional competence. Özaslan's (2014) defined professional autonomy as "not interfering in the preference of teachers since they are professionals in their subject matter." Öztürk (2011) found that the Turkish educational system limits the autonomy and power of teachers. Özaslan's (2015) research revealed that teachers considered the following to be necessary in terms of autonomy: (a) being able to use the learning materials of their choice, (b) being able to apply disciplinary sanctions of their choice, and (c) being able to make their students repeat a course or grade level when necessary. Noordin et al. (2007) asserts that teachers in Malaysia should have the right to determine the course book, course contents, and evaluation of the students. High professional autonomy means that teachers should have these opportunities while they are teaching.

The finding in this study is that female teachers' perceptions of professionalism is more positive than that their male counterparts in the Pakistani context in spite of the fact that they have similar work settings as their male colleagues. In Pakistan, women teachers are less qualified and, therefore, more poorly paid than their male colleagues, and they work predominantly in the primary school sector where teacher status and participation in education is low and where they remain under the control of middle school head teachers (Barrs, 2005; Coleman, 2010; Sales, 1999). In addition, Takbir (2014) notes that continuing professional development opportunities for teachers in rural elementary schools are rarely made available for teachers in general and female teachers in particular. Nevertheless, females are more inclined to enter the teaching profession than men because it is considered to be a safe and convenient occupation (Hunzai, 2009) given their limited work opportunities. This factor may account for the positive attitude of female teachers. This study did not gather data on the female/male split in Turkey, however research carried out by Yılmaz and Altınkurt (2014b) found that teacher perceptions of professionalism in Turkey does not differ according to gender. Another study (Bayhan, 2011) revealed that, out of four sub-dimensions, female teachers had a more positive perception than males in the dimension of "professional competence."

This study found perceptions of professionalism did not differ for school type in either Pakistan or Turkey. This conclusion is supported by another study (Yılmaz & Altınkurt, 2014b) showing that teacher perceptions of professionalism according to the type of

school where they worked were more or less similar. Khamis and Sammons (2004) stated that, in Pakistan, teacher education programs were determined to be both overly theoretical and far removed from current knowledge of teacher development, and they did not meet the classroom-based pedagogical needs of pupils and teachers. The general tendency regarding schooling and professional development could also be important for teachers and students.

Consequently, the following implications revealed in this study could be developed in further research.

For Turkey:

- The study showed that teachers' perceptions of professionalism towards their job were not up to the mark. Therefore, a primary recommendation is ensuring senior administration and public support for teachers, which is the sub-dimension which had the lowest level in the study. An increased sense of awareness of teachers and teaching as well as of their societal value should be developed by the Ministry of Education policy makers and administrators.
- Teacher autonomy was found to be low in this study. It is recommended that teachers be given more freedom in class and some degree of authority in curriculum development, and that they be involved in the decision-making process in school administration.
- Public trust of teaching and teachers was found to moderate according to teacher perceptions. The Varkey Gem Foundation (Dolton & Marcerano-Gutierrez, 2013) in a study utilizing random sampling among communities, found that the social status of teachers in Turkey was at a reasonable level, ranked third out of 21 countries. Further research should be carried out to find an explanation for why teachers have a lower perception of their professionalism than does society.
- The study found that the level of teacher participation in professional development activities was reasonable. It is a common for personnel from any sector to adopt professional development as a life philosophy in this rapidly changing and turbulent world. Thus, teachers should be encouraged to participate regularly in professional development courses.

For Pakistan:

- This study found that teacher perceptions of professionalism in Pakistan were moderate but higher than those in Turkey. Since training levels, earnings and social status of teachers in Turkey are higher than in Pakistan, as noted in Rizvi's research (2003), the reasons for lower teacher perceptions of professionalism in Turkey or for the higher perceptions of professionalism in Pakistan, despite negative living conditions for teachers, should be explored.
- Ensuring senior administration and public support for teachers in both the Turkish and the Pakistani context is recommended. As in the case of Turkey, Ministry of Education policy makers and administrators need to have an increased sense of awareness of teachers and teaching as well as of their societal value.
- In spite of the fact that the work settings of female teachers and their male colleagues are similar, the reason that female perceptions were higher than those of males should be explored.

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CFS policy and Cambodian teacher education and training: Beeby revisited

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This paper explores educational policy implementation in Cambodia through the lens of teacher education and training. Acknowledging the centrality of teachers in the implementation of pedagogical reforms globally, this study investigates the extent to which the education and training of teachers in this study equipped them to implement the Cambodian Ministry of Education's Child Friendly Schools Policy. Using Beeby's 1966 Stages of Development as a framework, this paper considers how teachers' education and training affect their ability to enact pedagogical initiatives in the classroom. Using a case study methodology, data was collected, primarily, through a survey and interviews with educators in three government primary schools in distinct locations. Findings identified the following factors that inhibited teachers implementing CFS: weak content knowledge; inadequate pre-service preparation; and a lack of professional development. The findings underscore the importance of developing the requisite content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers on an ongoing basis.

Keywords: Beeby; Cambodia; teacher education; pre-service training; CFS

INTRODUCTION

An extensive body of literature has, over time, contended that factors such as classroom management, pedagogical content knowledge, utilizing a range of teaching methods, and ongoing professional development are key to developing effective teaching and learning (Hattie, 2009; Joyce, Calhoun, & Hopkins, 2010; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Shulman, 1987). Furthermore, the academic education and pedagogical training of teachers is acknowledged as critical for enhancing student learning experiences and for raising student achievement levels (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; UNESCO, 2014a). Indeed, several influential studies have asserted that highly educated and trained teachers play a crucial role in helping to achieve quality educational systems (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Luschei & Chudgar, 2011; Sahlberg, 2011). For example, Luschei & Chudgar, in their large-scale international study, found a direct correlation between a teacher's academic qualifications and student achievement. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that there is a clear connection between having certified teachers and an increase in student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005).

In what has come to be called the Global South, international actors contend that, without well-educated and well-trained teachers, Education for All (EFA) goals will not be realised (UNESCO, 2015a). Additionally, achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2015), and target 6 of UNESCO's current

strategy (UNESCO, 2014b) rely on well-educated and well-trained teachers. Indeed, the *Incheon Declaration*, as part of the 2030 international education agenda, seeks to make a grade 12 certificate or its equivalent the minimum entry requirement to the profession (United Nations, 2015).

This paper uses the lens of teacher education and training to explore educational policy implementation in Cambodia. It investigates the extent to which the education and training of teachers equipped them to implement the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport's (MoEYS) Child Friendly Schools (CFS) Policy. Beginning with an outline of the scholar and education minister, Clarence Edward Beeby's, "The quality of education in developing countries" (1966), which provides a framework for this study, this paper will then provide a brief outline of the educational situation in Cambodia with particular reference to the MoEYS' CFS policy and the pedagogical approach underpinning this initiative. It will then analyse data drawn from educators in three schools. In conclusion, it offers insights for those seeking to implement pedagogical reforms.

BEEBY'S "THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES"

Clarence Edward Beeby (1902-1998) was an educationalist, lecturer, government minister of education, ambassador, and advisor. Influenced by the work of progressive educationalists, like John Dewey, and the ideas of learner-centred education, he firmly believed that primary education should be open to experiment and change and that all young people had the right to continue their education beyond the compulsory years.

Drawing upon his vast experience in his home country of New Zealand and in the countries of the Pacific, particularly Western Samoa and South and Southeast Asia, Beeby's 1966 book, "The Quality of education in developing countries," developed an alternative model to improve the quality of primary education in the developing world, focusing on qualitative educational improvements in contrast to the prevailing human capital approaches (Schultz, 1961). Examining what occurred in the classroom and focusing on teaching and teachers, he argued that it was the quality of a country's teachers that was the key to improving the quality of education in any setting. He developed a hypothesis of stages of development that a primary school system must pass through if it is to develop a quality education system, contending that while these stages "may be shortened" they "cannot be skipped" (1966, p. 51). He proposed four stages of development that a primary education system passes through:

> Stage I: Dame School Stage. Characterized by: teachers who have little schooling themselves and are untrained; narrow subject content covering the 3Rs; reliance on rote learning; there may or may not be a syllabus, if there is, it will be very tentative. He later wrote that such schools may only exist in isolated areas (Beeby, 1980).

> Stage II: Stage of Formalism. Characterized by: teachers who have little schooling themselves but are trained; teaching by rules; a rigid syllabus; set textbooks; with a "tight external examinations and a rigorous system of inspection of the work of both pupils and teachers" (1966, p. 62).

> Stage III: Stage of Transition. Characterized by: teachers who are better educated, definitely to secondary school level and are trained; set textbooks; maybe a library; still a reliance on rote memorization of facts; external controls in the forms of inspections and examinations although less restrictive than at stage II; the syllabus is

"more permissive and the adventurous teachers make forays beyond its bounds; the rest do not" (1966, p. 64).

Stage IV: Stage of Meaning. Characterized by: teachers who are both well-educated and well-trained; students are encouraged to think for themselves; meaning and understanding become predominant with rote learning taking a subsidiary role; external examinations may still be present but do not have the prominent characteristic of early stages; likewise, inspection is characterized by "professional cooperation" (1966, p. 68); and the gap between home and school is reduced.

The central contention in Beeby's 1966 work was that the stage of a country's development must be considered when introducing educational innovations developed in very different educational settings. He argued,

[T]here are two strictly professional factors that determine the ability (as distinct from the willingness) of an educational system to move from one stage to a higher one. They are: (a) the level of general education of the teachers in the system, and (b) the amount and kind of training they have received. (1966, p. 58)

He centred his argument on the role of teachers, maintaining that, as change agents, they play a vital role in the successful introduction of educational innovations. In a later work, he continued to assert that it was the lack of a qualified teaching force that hinders educational change (Beeby, 1980). Therefore, when considering introducing an educational innovation, the key question to be addressed is "not whether these techniques are effective, but under what conditions they are effective, with what types of teacher, and for what purposes" (Beeby, 1966, p. 93). In other words, while the innovation may have been proven to work in one setting, that does not, necessarily, mean it will have similar results when transferred into a different situation. This issue is highlighted in many different educational contexts in the international education policy transfer literature (Ball, 1998; Crossley, 2010; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). The critical consideration, therefore, that must not be overlooked when introducing an innovation is the education and training gap between those teachers in the country where the innovation is being introduced compared to those teachers in the country where the innovation originated.

Beeby's work has been criticized because it disregards the appropriateness of transferring practices developed in the West to countries with very different cultural, historical, political and economic systems. Beeby has also been criticized for positioning Western forms of "progressive" teaching and learning as more desirable than those found in other cultures, and for the theoretical underpinnings and methodology used in his Stages approach (Guthrie, 1980, 2011). Mindful of these criticisms, the core of Beeby's contention that teachers' level of education and pedagogical training are key factors in determining whether and how educational innovations are enacted in the classroom (Beeby, 1966, p. 58) are pertinent; these factors are often not accorded sufficient prominence when considerations are made concerning the introduction of an educational policy and/or pedagogical innovation. Therefore, using Beeby's Stages as a framework to explore educational policy implementation provides an alternate lens through which to examine the extent to which the level of education and training of teachers in this case study affected their ability to implement the MoEYS' CFS policy.

CAMBODIA AND CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

The Cambodian education system was devastated and its teaching population decimated as a result of the civil war and Khmer Rouge (KR) regime of the 1970s. International isolation in the 1980s then further hindered Cambodia's re-development. Since the 1990s, substantial developments have taken place aimed at quality improvements to the country's education system; however, considerable hurdles remain for the Ministry to reach its goal of achieving high quality in all sectors by 2030 (MoEYS, 2014).

A focal point for enhancing its education system since 2001 has been UNICEF's CFS initiative. Promoted in many countries in the Global South, this programme draws on a rights-based approach that focuses on the holistic development of the child (UNICEF, 2009), encapsulated in its framework's five dimensions: inclusive access to education; academically effective teaching and learning; health, safety and protection of children; gender sensitivity and responsiveness; and developing school-community engagement. In Cambodia, after an extended pilot phase the MoEYS developed its CFS policy (2007a). Updated in 2011, CFS has become the MoEYS' signature means to enhance the quality of its education system and meet its EFA commitments. The CFS pedagogical approach, embedded within the latest curriculum, is seen as the means to transform teaching and learning in the nation's classrooms.

The preferred pedagogical approach that UNICEF has adopted in CFS and incorporated into national CFS policies is variously known as child-centred, student-centred, or learner-centred education. With its roots in constructivism, and drawing upon the work of educationalists such as Dewey (1996), Piaget (1952) and Vygotsky (1978), emphasis is placed on how the learner constructs knowledge. It views "learning as an interpretive, recursive, nonlinear building process" (Fosnot, 2005, p. 34) undertaken through contextually meaningful experiences. Importantly, while constructivism is not a theory of instruction, it does have implications for the form teaching should take and with it the role of the teacher.

In the literature on constructivism as well as in UNICEF's CFS documentation, teachers are viewed as facilitators of learning. Teachers who use a constructivist child-centred pedagogy are characterized as being able to: use a range of teaching and learning methodologies; develop safe and flexible learning environments; organize, plan for, and teach well-structured lessons using a range of activities conducive to open-ended enquiry that promote independent thinking; foster cooperation and collaboration that enable students to question, develop ideas, experiment, discuss and reflect, whether on their own, in groups or as part of the whole class; and effectively use formative and summative assessments to provide feedback to students and parents (Fosnot, 2005; Hayes, 2013; Schwarts & Pollishuke, 1991; UNICEF, 2009). In this interpretation, teachers play a central role in developing critical and reflective thinkers and problem-solvers. As such, teachers require in-depth content knowledge and wide-ranging pedagogical skills to develop engaging and challenging learning activities best suited to the learning needs of all their students. As Schweisfurth (2013, p. 172) contends, introducing child-centred pedagogies, "relies heavily on teachers' capacities and agency".

In the Cambodian CFS policy, a major objective is to develop teachers who "promote active, creative and child-centred approaches" in their teaching and encourage "co-operative learning" and "divergent thinking" in their students (MoEYS, 2007a, pp. 5, 8). In the accompanying "Effective Teaching and Learning" (ETL) (MoEYS, 2007b)

package, a manual providing guidelines to educators, great emphasis is placed on child-centred pedagogies. For example, teachers are encouraged to include activities that foster participatory and collaborative learning in their lessons. They are to develop learning environments that promote creativity and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their students, through learning games, group work, and self-directed learning. Furthermore, teachers are to make their classrooms "attractive and stimulating" (MoEYS, 2007b, p. 15) places where students "can learn in different ways (whole class, individually, pairs, small groups)" (MoEYS, 2007b, p. 2). In other words, teachers are to provide a child-centred, flexible learning environment conducive to a range of teaching and learning activities.

My contention in this paper is that the introduction of CFS, with its emphasis on teachers incorporating a child-centred pedagogy into their classroom practice, appears to place greater demands on them. In particular, it requires that they have both in-depth content knowledge and comprehensive pedagogical skills, which has implications affecting the education and training of teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This small-scale case study was focused on three Cambodian government primary schools situated in different locations reflective of the places where schools are found—urban, rural and remote. Each school offered the full primary grades (1 to 6) and had a large staff from which to gain sufficient data. Data is based primarily on semi-structured interviews with guided questions with the principals and all grade five and six teachers in the schools. Although many of the teachers interviewed had taught for, on average, 15 years, there were some who were relatively new to the profession and others who were nearing retirement. The numbers of male and female teachers interviewed was dependent upon those who taught grades five and six at each school. I interviewed more females than males reflecting the larger numbers of females teaching at the primary level. Data was also collected through an anonymous questionnaire-survey that was given to all teachers in each school. Out of a total of 106 teachers across the sites, 104 completed the questionnaire. This information provided base-line data on staff.

Teachers' perspectives have, largely, not been sought in Cambodia. Significantly, in this study, priority was given to seeking the views and perspectives of ordinary teachers concerning their education and training. Drawing upon their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, it is hoped that their insights will enable a more nuanced understanding of the challenges they face in implementing CFS. To provide further insights into the education and training of teachers, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the directors of the primary teacher training centres (PTTCs), MoEYS' officials in each location, and expatriate advisors working for major agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in teacher education at both national and local levels. Interviews were conducted in Khmer or English, depending on preference of the interviewee.

Although the sample size is small, teachers in Cambodia form a fairly homogeneous group. It is hoped that findings will not only shed light on the situation faced by these particular teachers but will also act as a starting point for further larger-scale research. Reflecting on his 1966 work, Beeby wrote: "If it starts trains of thought . . . that lead to a better understanding of the role of teachers in the improvement of education in developing

countries, it will, with all its flaws, have served a useful purpose" (1980, p. 472). Beeby's Stages provides a useful tool to compare the current education levels and pedagogical training of the teachers in this case study with what is being asked of them by the MoEYS. Using Beeby's Stages as a framework will, it is hoped, provide insights into the extent to which the teachers in this study are equipped to implement a child-centred pedagogy as outlined in the MoEYS' CFS policy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher education

The current entry qualification to train as a primary school teacher in Cambodia is a grade 12 certificate. Candidates are also required to pass an entrance examination. The following table provides data on the education level of teachers in this study.

Table 1: Education level of surveyed teachers

Ages	Lower-secondary education	Upper-secondary education
20-29	0%	1.8%
30-39	6.7%	37.4%
40-49	42.9%	49.1%
50+	50.4%	11.7%

Comparing the level of education of the teachers in this study against Beeby's stages, it would suggest that the majority would fit into Stage III—those with a secondary school education. However, although those who entered the profession more recently have completed a grade 12 certificate and four respondents, out of 104, held a university degree, what stands out from this data is the high number of teachers in the 50+ age bracket with only a lower-secondary education (grade 9). Even those in the 40-49 age bracket with a grade 9 education remain quite high. Comparing these figures to national data (MoEYS, 2016) indicates that the education level of the teaching force is improving. Of a total teaching force of 90,345 teachers (teaching pre-school to secondary school) 50,381 have a grade 12 certificate, 16,405 are graduates and 970 have a post graduate degree. However, there remain significant numbers with only lower-secondary schooling, 20,948, and 1,641 still only have a primary level of education.

One reason for this was explained by a director from a Provincial Teacher Training Centre where primary school teachers are trained. With few upper-secondary schools in remote locations, many students dropped out of school after grade 9. Generally, students from urban areas entered the PTTCs. Once they had graduated, many were posted to schools with teacher shortages, often in rural and remote locations. Far from family, they did not want to remain there. It was decided that if students with a grade 9 who came from remote areas were allowed to be trained, they would return to their local communities to teach and would remain there. Although this dual entry system, which has operated since the 2007/08 academic year, helps to explain the numbers of teachers with a grade 9 certificate in remote areas, it does not fully explain the whole picture.

Setting this data in the context of Cambodia's recent turbulent history, the reason why many older teachers only have a lower-secondary education becomes clearer. Those teachers born before 1970 had their education disrupted, some more than others, because

of civil war (1970-1974) and the KR regime (1975-1979). Indeed, one of the most defining aspects of the KR regime was its systematic persecution of those marked as educated, particularly educators from all levels of the system. It is estimated that 75% of teachers had died or had fled the country during those years (Ministry of Education, 1983). With the collapse of the KR regime, a major strategy was to establish schools as quickly as possible and recruit, what a later report termed, "the emergency-recruited teaching force" (MoEYS, 1997). Post-1979, many primary school teachers had only received a primary or, at most, lower-secondary education. Indeed, a study conducted over a decade later (Shardlow, 1993) found the majority of primary school teachers in that dataset required assistance with most aspects of the curriculum and whose educational characteristics reflected those in Beeby's Stage II.

Although the education level of Cambodia's primary school teachers has improved considerably since the 1990s, many teachers in this study indicated they needed to improve their subject knowledge. Statements such as, "I need to increase my knowledge to teach my students effectively" (Teacher-C1), were common. Commenting on current teachers' subject knowledge, an advisor working in teacher education observed:

> Content knowledge in certain subjects remains very poor. I believe not enough emphasis is placed on that by many donors. A lot of programmes are concerned with the methodology and not the content (Advisor-A).

A teacher, made the pertinent observation that, "in teaching primary students there are many challenges because the teacher must have knowledge in many areas" (Teacher-A7). Indeed, a substantial number of teachers shared how they wanted to increase their subject knowledge. However, of the four curriculum content areas in the primary curriculum: Khmer, Mathematics, Social Science and Science, it was in the latter two subjects where many teachers spoke of their need for in-depth content knowledge. For example, "In social studies I neither have the knowledge nor skills to teach this well" (Teacher-C7), and "In Science, my knowledge is weak, and I need further training from a teacher who really understands science and how to teach this subject" (Teacher-A8). An advisor observed:

> Those teaching science, have limited knowledge and weak reasoning skills, which leads to dependence on teacher books and teaching that relies on rote learning. There is little scope for students to think; instead they simply find answers in their textbooks (Advisor-B).

Indeed, teachers spoke about their reliance on teacher books that provided content knowledge and examples of how to teach a given topic in their lesson preparation. It is suggested that this dependence on these books was indicative of their lack of confidence in their subject knowledge. The overwhelming message from teachers in this study, regardless of their education level, was their acknowledgment that, in a number of areas of the curriculum, they lacked the requisite content knowledge to teach their students effectively.

To teach using a child-centred pedagogy, advocated in CFS policy, requires teachers who, it is argued, are characterized as having in-depth content knowledge reflective of teachers in Beeby's Stage IV. An interviewee posited: "Teacher knowledge is very important as those with deeper subject and pedagogical knowledge are more likely to be innovators" (Advisor-F). Elaborating on this, another advisor observed:

Before you can take the step to child-centred approaches you need to master the content. A teacher who is not confident with their own content knowledge will never teach in a child-centred way because they will be afraid of losing face when their students ask questions or when an experiment fails and they cannot explain why (Advisor-A).

Pedagogical training

The second component of Beeby's analysis focused on the type and amount of pre-service training that teachers received. Since the 1980s, the primary pre-service course has been transformed from ad-hoc training delivered during school vacations to a full-time two-year programme. As Tan and Ng (2012, p. 128) state: "Cambodian teachers today are better qualified and trained, having learnt about new knowledge, theories and skills." The following table provides data on the pedagogical training of teachers in this study.

Table 2: Pedagogical training of surveyed teachers

Pedagogical Training	Age 20-39	Age 40+
1 year or less	2.6%	97.4%
2 years of more	55.9%	44.1%

While all the teachers in the study had received some form of pedagogical training, there was an age divide with younger teachers receiving two years of pedagogical training and most older teachers receiving one year or less. How does this data compare with national statistics? MoEYS data (MoEYS, 2016), indicates that only 943 teachers out of 90,345 had no pedagogical training—some 0.01%. In other words, most teachers, at all levels of the system, have undergone some form of pedagogical training.

Although data from this study reflects national statistics, interviews with older teachers provided further insight into their training. After the collapse of the KR regime, providing a full-time training course prior to actual classroom teaching was out of the question as this would have exacerbated teacher shortages. A series of ad-hoc training programmes were developed to provide pedagogical training during vacations. A principal, who trained immediately after the collapse of the KR regime shared: "The government set up training courses to increase our skills. I received very little training, only studying for two months during the vacations" (Principal-B). This story was reiterated by many older teachers. One explained, "I attended a three-month course, a fifteen-day course, and a two-month course over a period of a few years. My training was done bit by bit" (Teacher-B3), while another shared, "I began my pedagogical training in 1982. It lasted for nine months" (Teacher-A2).

The current pre-service curriculum is planned by the central MoEYS and disseminated to the PTTCs. Four components make up this curriculum:

Training on Professional Skills: allocated 525 hours. This covers: psychology, general pedagogy, CFS, school readiness programme, inclusive education, multigrade, academic administration, professional ethics, civilisation, environment, gender awareness, library, and human rights.

Strengthening Basic Knowledge: allocated 425 hours it is designed to develop students' content knowledge in Khmer, Mathematics, Foreign language and ICT.

Strengthening of Primary Knowledge and Methodology: allocated 1,209 hours and focuses on all the areas taught in the primary curriculum and how to teach them.

The practicum takes 552 hours and takes place for six weeks in year one and eight weeks in year two. (data - PTTC Directors)

Interestingly, there appears little time allocated to assessment practices. Given that training in the use of summative and formative assessments is considered vital for effective child-centred approaches (Harber & Davies, 2006), this has implications for the successful implementation of CFS. The MoEYS, recognizing that, for student teachers to gain in-depth understanding and more experience in each component of the pre-service programme, is seeking to introduce a four-year pre-service course from 2020 (MoEYS, 2014). That may mean giving greater time to teaching important areas such as assessment practices.

Learning about child-friendly schools is allocated 51 hours in the current pre-service programme. While all PTTCs have adopted the CFS concept, a recent study of teacher training centres in Cambodia found that many practices reinforced teacher-centred approaches to teaching and learning (Tandon & Fukao, 2015). In interviews with PTTC directors, for this study, the extent to which student teachers were exposed to child-centred practices at their PTTCs or able to use this approach on practicum was not uniform. Only one PTTC director shared how student teachers were given opportunities to incorporate child-centred approaches while on practicum at the practice school attached to the PTTC and at a local school sympathetic to this approach. Interestingly, this director shared how their teacher educators had benefitted from ongoing support from an NGO in training them to use child-centred approaches including how to model them to their student teachers.

Moreover, the CFS concept is a relatively new addition to the pre-service curriculum and, for older teachers, remains a foreign concept. This is compounded with teachers teaching to a changed curriculum with accompanying new textbooks and teacher books that incorporate CFS' child-centred approach to teaching and learning. As an experienced teacher explained: "the new textbooks given by the ministry focus on child-centred learning." The teacher candidly added: "I have difficulty in teaching this and I know others do as well" (Teacher-C2). A reason why teachers in this study found difficulty in implementing the new curriculum with its child-centred pedagogy was provided by an advisor:

> At the national level they will tell you this is what the new curriculum should look like, yet, when you ask teachers they say they have not received any training to teach the new curriculum. (Advisor-D)

Indeed, this need for further professional development (PD) training was articulated by teachers at each of the schools. In the survey data, teachers were asked to indicate those areas they considered PD input was necessary (Table 3). Respondents could select multiple needs.

Table 3: Professional development needs of teachers by age, education & training

AGE	Classroom management	Preparation of lesson materials/plans	Use of group work in class	Child-centred pedagogy
20-39	51.3%	48.7%	48.7%	97.4%
40+	65.5%	60.0%	61.8%	94.5%
EDUCATION				
Lower-secondary	56.7%	50.0%	53.3%	96.7%
Upper-secondary or higher education	60.9%	57.8%	57.8%	95.3%
TRAINING				
1 year or less	58.5%	56.1%	56.1%	95.1%
2 years or more	61.5%	55.8%	57.7%	96.2%

What is apparent from this data is that higher proportions of teachers in the 40+ age group identified the need for further PD training in classroom management, preparation of lesson materials/plans and in the use of group work, as opposed to those in the 20-39 age group who did request further training but not in such large proportions. Teachers with upper-secondary or higher education were also slightly more likely to identify these needs than teachers with lower-secondary education only. Years of training did not seem to impact on the needs they identified. One of the reasons for this may be that younger teachers have benefitted from comparatively recent changes to the pre-service curriculum that has incorporated a range of new topics such as group work.

However, what was striking from the data was that, regardless of age, training, or education level, most teachers from each of the three schools perceived a need for training in child-centred approaches, which requires very different skills than in a traditional teacher-centred pedagogy. Furthermore, what was marked in interviews with teachers was their uncertainty in how to teach using a child-centred approach as the following comments suggest: "I want to learn more about the new teaching methodology" (Teacher-A4); "I lack the knowledge and skills needed to teach using a child-centred pedagogy" (Teacher-B7); "What I need most is further training in the new pedagogy" (Teacher-C8).

What this suggests is that most teachers in this study had received little or no training in the use of child-centred pedagogies in their pre-service course. It also implies that whether any of the teachers had received PD training in this approach or not, they recognized the need for further training. This raises the question as to both the quantity and quality of PD that they had received, given that child-centred learning is ministry policy. Shedding some light on this, a senior official remarked:

> The notion of teacher PD is not quite on the radar, even though it is being discussed by the Ministry and its development partners; the Ministry's focus remains pre-service training. (MO-E).

While focusing on pre-service training is necessary, it neither addresses the needs of practising teachers, like those in this study, nor equips them to implement child-centred approaches in their classrooms. As a teacher articulated: "I lack experience in using child-

centred approaches and there is no-one able to provide the support and follow-up needed" (Teacher-A7). This point was reiterated by an advisor:

> Teachers need on the job support and someone to give them the confidence that they can implement policy changes. Providing more training is not the answer when it is not linked to ongoing school-based support to effectively implement policy at the classroom level. (Advisor-C)

Indeed, Beeby (1980, p. 466) posited that "[w]ithout continuing support and encouragement, the average teacher has a remarkable capacity for reverting to old practices under a new name." This point was illustrated by a teacher who openly shared how she resolved the issue of her lack of understanding in the use of child-centred pedagogies "by using the previous [teacher-centred] pedagogy and applying it to the new curriculum" (Teacher-A1).

What became apparent in information gathered from the survey and in interviews was teachers' perception that to effectively incorporate CFS' child-centred approach into their classroom practice, they needed to expand both their content knowledge and their pedagogical skills. Indeed, the overwhelming message from teachers in this dataset was their awareness of being unprepared to teach using a child-centred pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

Central to the introduction of any pedagogical innovation is that responsibility for its implementation rests with teachers. The introduction of the MoEYS' CFS policy and its child-centred pedagogy embedded in the new curriculum is no different. Using Beeby's Stages to frame this small-scale case study it became clear when mapping the teachers in each of the schools how closely they resembled teachers in Beeby's Stage III; teachers who had a secondary education and had received pre-service training. Also, this study highlighted that there remained teachers with only a lower-secondary education and the most basic of pedagogic training, whereas to effectively teach using a child-centred pedagogy requires teachers who have depth of content knowledge and comprehensive pedagogic training; resembling those in Beeby's Stage IV.

The key question to ask is whether the MoEYS, in asking teachers to implement a child-centred pedagogy in their classrooms, is placing unrealistic demands on them, given their levels of education and training. Indeed, interview and survey data would appear to show that, for teachers in this dataset, their content knowledge when faced with new subject material in the new curriculum was limited and their pedagogical training left them unprepared to use child-centred approaches in their classrooms.

If the child-centred pedagogy favoured by the MoEYS and envisaged in CFS policy, and embedded within the new curriculum, is to become widespread practice in the nation's classrooms, then serious attention must be paid to developing not only the pedagogical skills but also the content knowledge of teachers. This not only calls for the further development of the pre-service training course but also quality ongoing PD for all teachers to develop their requisite knowledge and pedagogical skills to effectively implement CFS. However, to do this effectively, this study suggests that incorporating the insights of teachers into future training programmes is crucial. Indeed, the importance of taking into consideration teachers' voices is highlighted in the literature (UNESCO, 2015b). In the Cambodian context, the potential role of the Cambodian Independent

Teachers Association (CITA), acting within the national education civil society organization, the National Education Partnership (NEP), may be a way to do this.

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Intercultural Story Sharing in Guam

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This paper evolved from an artistic residency entitled The Stories Within that took place at the University of Guam in February 2017. The Stories Within intercultural research was led by independent creative artist Sarah Jane Moore and represented a collaboration between Moore and Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Guam, Dr Dean Olah. Oceanic Comparative International Education Society (OCIES) Fellowships and Networks Program small grant, the University of Guam and Adjunct Professor Joseph Franquez, Professor of Education, Dr Una Nabobo-Baba, and Fine Arts and Education colleagues at the University of Guam supported it.

Keywords: *Intercultural story sharing, arts based methods, arts informed research*

Stories are transformative; they heal, connect, transmit culture, and embody personal and community power. Sharing stories nourishes us. It brings us together and connects the oceans within (Moore, SJ 'I am Mountain, re-thinking equity through the creative arts' OCIES Conference paper, Nov 2016).

INTRODUCTION

The case-study presented here investigated student understandings of the potential of story sharing in tertiary classrooms. It focused on the impact of an artistic residency that took place at the University of Guam in 2017. The residency introduced intercultural story sharing activities as vital curriculum tools to pre-service teachers in Guam. The research set out to discover whether involvement in story sharing through creative arts learning modes enhanced teacher training at the University in Guam. It encouraged higher education students to consider the activities modelled within the residency as an integral part of their teaching practise.

The focus on arts based innovation is growing globally. The recently published text Arts based methods and organisational Learning; higher education around the world by Chemi and Du (2018) mapped and explored a variety of arts based methods (ABM) and contexts. This study sits alongside Chemi and Du's mapping of the field and aligns theoretically with the understandings presented. Indeed, the intercultural story sharing modelled in the artistic residency at the University of Guam was based on participation in the arts, but not necessarily subject to professional or amateur art making (Chemi & Du, 2018).

The Stories Within intercultural research was led by independent creative artist Sarah Jane Moore and was funded by an Oceanic Comparative International Education Society (OCIES) Fellowships and Networks Program small grant. Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Guam, Dr Dean Olah, then Professor of Education Dr Una Nabobo-Baba, Adjunct Professor Joseph Franquez and the Fine Arts and Education Departments at the University of Guam supported the research.

The research focussed on a single case study that took place in Guam. In examining the ways in which intercultural story sharing could be used as a curriculum tool, the qualitative case-study approach (Tartaglia, 2011) was selected because it enabled numerous sources of data to be collected, analysed and represented (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995) and this approach gave opportunity for in-depth insight (Yin, 1989, 1993, 2003). This approach enabled data to be represented through narratives. The narrative format chosen was embedded in an arts-informed approach in all its messiness (Cole & Knowles, 2008). The artful representations discussed (Coles & Knowles, 2008) included images created in make-up, poetry, and paintings. Their inclusion allowed the case study presented to be enriched with arts-informed perspectives and characteristics.

BACKGROUND STORY: THE CONFERENCE SPARK

> Our imaginations are fired by a deep need that can only be satiated by being curious; by exploring, singing, dancing, creating and gathering together to tell our stories (Moore, 2016).

The research was sparked in November 2016 when Moore met Olah at the OCIES Conference at the University of Sydney. Olah attended Moore's performance art paper; *I am Mountain: Re-thinking equity through the creative arts*, that presented story telling as a transformative curricular tool in primary school contexts. Moore suggested that if education was to be equitable and transformative in nature then local community cultural funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, & Gonzales 1992) and their stories must be included. Bagnall's (2012) research argued that the need to belong is one of our deepest human needs; Moore suggested that our need to tell stories is deep too. Olah reflected:

> Dr Moore's presentation sparked an idea in my head with my Fine Arts Education course. What if we could collaborate and provide a cross-cultural perspective to teacher education students? I realised that if I could implement Moore's pedagogy into my educational methods course I could create a great opportunity for my students (Excerpt from personal email correspondence with Dean Olah, May 2017).

THE UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

The story sharing artistic residency discussion was facilitated by Moore in February 2017 and was based at The University of Guam.

> The university is an open-enrolment institution with the mission to educate students through the region and the Pacific. 60% of our students are the first members of their family to attend college. The demographic makeup of the students is largely Chamorro, Philippine, and various mixed races. As a cultural democracy, my students are aware of their roles both in their own cultural identity as it pertains to their family and as a part of the entire island identity. They know that once they graduate with their teaching degree, they will be serving children and families from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Some of their future students will not be native English speakers. Some may come from home without electricity or running water (Excerpt from personal email correspondence with Dean Olah, May 2017).

While the people of Guam have embraced the global community that has emerged from the rise of technology, many academics, parents, teachers, Elders and community members have vocalised their belief that it is increasingly important to preserve the culture of Guam's Indigenous Chamorro (Murphy, 2011, p 52). The story sharing focus of the research allowed contextual interaction with Pacific participants to occur, creating

a more authentic knowledge that has the potential to lead to solutions for Pacific issues (Vaioletti, 2013). Moore sought to acknowledge the importance of Guam's First Peoples within the research. Manåmko, Adjunct Professor, and Chamorro Language Teacher, Joey Franquez, assisted Moore to keep Chamorro stories present throughout her residency on Guam. Joey shared the Song of Sirena with her and told her the story of the beautiful, young Chamorro girl and her passion for swimming. Franquez spoke of how Sirena was tied to a forever life in the sea. Sirena was fun-loving and rebellious as a consequence of her reckless adventures and her family would always mourn her loss and lament her leaving her island home. In a welcoming ceremony at the University in 2017, Franquez shared insights into his childhood, his early life and the Chamorro stories that have sustained him throughout his life. He spoke of his deep regret that he let his language skills lie sleeping throughout his adolescence and urged Moore and the students, community members, teachers, and academics in attendance to keep seeking the Chamorro voice, to keep speaking the Chamorro language and to continue honouring the Chamorro through story. He implored those present to tap into Chamorro wisdom and connect to story, honour the wonder, acknowledge the joy, and persist with the pleasure of learning. He pleaded with those listening to his stories to resist the silencing of Pacific peoples and to gather together, connect, and continue *Talanoa* and its oral traditions. A digital version of Moore singing the Song of Sirena can be accessed at http://www.sarahjanemoore.com.au/si_sirena.mp3.

SEEKING *TALANOA*, STORY AND SILENCE

Moore's residency work was grounded in the theory that arts informed classroom practise has the potential to be transformational in classrooms and support cultural capacity in a Pacific context. *Talanoa* is traditional storying practise embedded in communities in Fiji and across the Pacific (Vaioletti, 2013). The objective of *Talanoa* is to share stories and build tolerance, compassion and understanding. In conversations in Guam, Nabobo-Baba (2006) communicated the importance of story in research involving Pacific worlds. She described, Indigenous Fijian silences that ran deep and were loaded in meaning. She encouraged Moore to seek out authentic Pacific stories in Guam but also to seek out silences. She described silence as a pedagogical response to learning and speech among Fijians (Nabobo-Baba, 2013). In discussions with Moore, Nabobo encouraged her to consider story telling as a mode of resistance to cultural silence. Equality in education is often based on the assumption that learners are homogenous cultural groups (Thaman, 2012). Nabobo-Baba emphasised the importance of resisting the collection of homogenous student stories in Guam. Moore wondered "could an artistic residency provide a culturally sensitive scaffold for teacher education students to share their stories?"

THE STORY SHARING ARTISTIC RESIDENCY IN GUAM

The artistic residency placed Moore as a lecturer, workshop facilitator, and artistic practitioner. It involved workshop sessions and lectures to pre-service teaching students, a public lecture, and collaborations between Fine Arts, Language, and Theatre students and staff. Olah noted:

> The experience of bringing in a visiting artist to the University of Guam expanded beyond my classroom. Guam is a small island with limited educational and artistic opportunities for students. There are   outlets here but they are not available to

everyone, especially in the public schools. Dr. Moore not only worked with my teacher education students, but also coached vocal lessons and worked with the visual arts students too (Excerpt from personal email correspondence with Dean Olah, May 2017).

The story sharing residency research plan drew heavily on the work of Kieren Egan, the developmental psychologist whose 2005 book, *An Imaginative Approach to Teaching,* explained how the imagination can function in learning. Egan linked imagination with individuality, originality, curiosity, freedom, and self-expression (Egan, 1990; 1998; 2005; 2006; 2010). Egan's writings proposed that cognitive tools are sometimes suppressed (1997) with the development of literacy and he suggested ways to introduce literacy so as to encourage rather than diminish oral competences. Egan emphasized the use of imagination and learning through storytelling and suggested that a narrative approach to teaching and learning engaged student imagination and led to successful learning (Egan, 2005). The imagination can also be seen as the internalization of play and a high mental function (Vygotsky, 1986).

Egan (2008) cited Vygotsky and referenced the mind as a socio-cultural formation. He (Egan, 1997) identified five distinct forms of understanding: somatic (pre-linguistic, bodily, and sensory understandings); mythic (the consequence of learning to use an oral language where stories give significance to proceedings); romantic (a result of knowledge within the Western, Anglo-centric realm); philosophic (an outcome of learning the fluent use of abstractions); and ironic (the result of learning how to use language's reflexiveness for complicated interaction).

Moore modelled imaginative teaching and sharing strategies and introduced herself as an artist, performer, and teacher by singing, reciting poetry and chanting, dancing and performing in front of the group. She told stories and asked the students to tell stories of their own. Egan (1998; 2005) defined the imagination as flexibility of the mind and an ability to think in ways that are not constrained and Moore's workshops modelled flexibility of mind and the ability to think in ways not constrained. One of the students reflected in their feedback

> It's always amazing when a guest speaker from a different part of the world comes in and teaches the class. We are able to open our eyed and minds to different perspectives of the world (Stories Within Student Evaluation Survey, March 2017).

One of the aims of the research project was to share learning and re-position the notion of a "content expert". Olah reflected on this after the project:

> No matter how effective a teacher may be, students always benefit from hearing a new voice. As an educator who has taught at every grade level across multiple US states, I know the vast cultural experiences that await future educators. Educating future teachers on cultural differences moves beyond textbooks into opportunities to learn from those with whom we would not normally associate. The artistic residency was a collaborative learning opportunity that allowed me to learn new methods of creative teaching. Being able to observe an educational colleague weave together a remarkable collection of lessons both inspired and challenged my students to move beyond the lesson plan and take creative risks (Excerpt from personal email correspondence with Dean Olah, June 2017).

Moore planned a project that students could make, create, listen, and perform in a safe space. She sought to include and embrace the perspectives within the community in which she visited. Rather than position herself as a "content expert", Moore sought to carve out

a space for her student voices to be heard, acknowledged, and respected. Olah reflected on the importance of this culturally and personally safe space with his words:

> Both Dr. Moore and myself have worked as professional artists at various points in our lives. We knew the dedication, struggles of the creative process, and preparation required to perform. I believe all performing artists share this connection. The challenge was how to provide opportunities for all students to experience this process. I found that my students were initially apprehensive about the creative process ahead of them. I prepared them for the activities ahead by modelling some activities. Once Dr. Moore arrived and they saw the ease at which she sang, chanted, and shared stories, the realization that this was a safe environment to perform without judgement (Excerpt from personal email correspondence with Dean Olah, May 2017).

The story sharing residency contributed specifically to creating wisdoms through stories for all parties involved. The students gained the experience of devising stories to share. Olah heard the hidden stories of his students and, in future, there is a possibility that the pre-service students will use the story sharing curricular tool within their primary and high school class rooms.

METHOD/ANALYSIS

The research plan focussed on strengthening creative teacher education and marked a change in the form of traditional research in education through a firm and focussed approach on story- telling and arts-based interventions. The case study approach gave the pre-service teachers the opportunity to engage in storytelling, visual arts making and writing. The research modelled ways in which creative perspectives and activities could foster wisdom within pre-service teacher training. It provided opportunities to develop networks, connections and audiences between students, researchers and educators across island cultures. It developed opportunities for safe, comfortable, and respectful collaborative art making and sharing.

Moore's premise that story had the power to transform the student learning experience was tested throughout her residency. She devised the project carefully and ensured that student stories, images, and writing were shared comfortably, safely, and respectfully. Some of the creative activities developed were designed to be experienced face-to-face and Olah documented and captured these workshops with a digital camera. The students were offered the opportunity to share the creative work that they produced for research and publication and gave verbal permission for this to occur. This data was stored for presentation, analysis, discussion, and sharing. Olah circulated a digitized, anonymized survey that sought student feedback from the residency. It was established that the participating students would own the creative copyright for their work and it was agreed that the digital images shared would not be used for profit, would be anonymized and that the students be given free and open access to the journal that their work was featured in. The students who wanted their work to be discussed and featured in future research provided digital copies of their images and written work to Moore and Olah.

Instructional settings characterized by frequent and meaningful instructor-student interactions have consistently been found to support student achievement and learning satisfaction (Cornelius-White, 2007) and Moore wanted to encourage authentic communication with the students that sparked their imaginations and fostered their

creativity. Moore shared resources and communicated electronically to students and staff through the University's Learning Management System. She wrote:

> Dear students,
>
> Next week I will journey the 6265 kilometres from Hobart, Tasmania to your beautiful island home; the island of Guam. I am excited for us to share, create, learn and explore together. Stories are transformative; they heal, connect, transmit culture, and embody personal and community power. Sharing stories nourishes us. It brings us together and connects the oceans within. The Stories Within project focuses on developing and sharing creative capacity and involves you participating in practical, creative arts lectures and story-sharing workshops. In preparation for our time please participate in at least one of the suggested activities and bring the materials that you generate to our sessions together;
>
> Create a self-portrait
> Write down a story that you remember from child-hood
> Storyboard a story that has been told to you
> Write a poem that explores your identity
> Develop an image that describes what is important to you
> Write a song that tells the story of you

Olah reflected:

> The letter to students was a perfect prelude to Dr. Moore's visit. She laid out a clear directive that allowed my students to prepare for the visit and begin the creative process (Excerpt from personal email correspondence with Dean Olah, May 2017).

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS THROUGH STORY TELLING

Throughout the fieldwork in Guam, Moore wondered:

> Could a case study research project that provided pre-service teachers with the opportunity to write, tell and listen to stories, grapple, address and talk to Nabobo Baba's cultural silences? Could stories provide a key for teachers to understand, interrogate and support diverse student perspectives?

Moore designed the learning activities to be mindful of oral pedagogies. She planned activities that encouraged students to tell their own, personal stories, to share elements of their personal thinking and understandings. She elevated these ways of knowing and placed them as an authentic and rich source of learning for self and community.

> We used dialogue and narratives to share our creative wisdoms. These individual narratives allowed the students to learn about family traditions, backgrounds, and how these differ among them yet also communicate universality. I found connection both personally and for my students through hearing and experiencing ways of knowing that I would not have otherwise had access to. I also found connection to my students through the work – in hearing personal stories and the emotional content within them. It heightened my awareness that my students have family histories and cultural backgrounds which greatly enrich the learning environment and that I can facilitate the opportunities for them to access and share this inner knowledge (Excerpt from personal email correspondence with Dean Olah, May 2017).

During Moore's weeklong residency, a number of students shared powerful insights into the issues that affected their lives. One student responded to Moore's request to write a

poem that explored identity and presented a monologue entitled *Word Vomit*. Performed in two parts, *Word Vomit* narrated the student's experience of being "othered" in her culture. She explained that she was "adopted and picked up like garbage from a neighbouring island". The poem described her feelings of not fitting in, of regarding herself as "different", "excluded" and "ugly". In the monologue, she shared her anxiety about not being an "exotic beauty" and her discomfort of being of Chinese descent. In the poem, the narrator grappled with notions of identity and sought answers from her mother with tears that "prickled at the corner of (her) eyes" and emotions that "choked up in (her) throat". In her monologue, she related her mother saying to her: "you are Chamorro. You are Pacific Islander. You are my China doll". She spoke of the shame that she felt about being of mixed race and of the "racially biting comments" that she endured. She explained "even though it might not be intended to be hurtful it still cuts deep". Her monologue repeated the questions "what am I?" and "why don't I look like you?" and pleaded, "I appeal to you all to be more sensitive".

Word Vomit 1 and 2 exposed the student's experiences of racism within her community on Guam and within her own family. The performing of *Word Vomit* 1 and 2 externalized her secret story and was witnessed by a supportive group of pre-service teachers who shed tears as she performed. She explained later to Moore that feeling different and like a "Chinese doll" affected her everyday life as a young adult on Guam, and thinking through these issues, writing them down and sharing them in performance had helped her better understand how to show care to students who may be experiencing similar stories and emotions. The knowledge that was shared in the workshop session through Word Vomit 1 and 2 transformed the understandings of those present. The poem enabled Moore to gain insights into the cultural practice of adoption on Guam, where islander children were informally adopted and raised with other families. Through the poetry curricular tool, insights into issues of adoption within Chamorro community were raised and racial inferiority complexes and racial anxiety explored. As a researcher, Moore's understanding of the dynamics within the racial groups living on Guam grew. The student filled the space with her inner dialogues and uncertain sense of belonging. The creative path that this student trod enabled her to describe her experience of living "between cultures" and strengthened knowledges and understandings of the difficulties of living within a "mixed race" family on Guam.

Alongside sharing stories through poetry, students were asked to develop self-portraits. Figure 1 was created by a student who had not had access to specific creative arts teaching in her own schooling. The student's experience of participating in visual arts practise was extremely limited; she created in makeup on paper because she did not own any art materials. She told Moore that she felt uneasy about her ability to complete the activity. Eventually, the student innovated and used blush, BB cream, lip stick, eye liner, eye brow pencil, eye shadow make-up brushes and sponges to blend, shade and contour and create her self-portrait. She stated that it was very important to her to depict her racial identity and the colour of her skin accurately. She told Moore that, through developing the work, she realized how important her identity was to her and how talking about it later to her peers helped her to understand how her cultural background could inform her future teaching practice. She commented that a visit from an outsider had given her the opportunity to reflect on her identity and the identity of others in her class. She felt awkward and ill-at ease with telling her story at first but gained an understanding of the importance of acknowledging the cultural backgrounds of her students.

Cultural wisdom is only obtained through experiences outside of one's own community. To grow individually as a culturally literate person, individuals must seek out opportunities, taking chances to grow through collaboration with others, and venture beyond their own comfort zone (Excerpt from personal email correspondence with Dean Olah, May 2017).

Figure 1: Student self-portrait – make-up on paper

CONCLUSION

Intercultural story sharing can spark imaginations, fuel the creative research space and inspire the curious. It can also empower silenced populations, dissipate ignorance and remove blocks to understanding.

> The island of Guam lay silent for me and I had no knowledge of Guam's Indigenous histories, cultures and stories (Moore's Diary reflections, January 2017).

The residency in Guam provided opportunities for Pacific cultural perspectives to be gathered and heard, and the arts informed research approaches modelled gave the participants the permission to share and the freedom to explore individual stories, approaches, and issues. It showed, too, the ways in which conferences and small network grants and exchanges can be transformational. The artistic residency carved out a research space for listening to local wisdoms and honouring local participants and stories. The intercultural story sharing project demonstrated the power of the creative arts to strengthen teacher education by empowering and listening to its participants. The approaches described can be replicated in variety of different higher education contexts and applied in different learning environments, including formal education and informal adult learning frameworks. The case study discussed contributes to the literature on Pasifika learners and ways of learning, and the intercultural story sharing approach can be explored with future case studies and partnerships.

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International programmes and research on effective activity-based learning (ABL): What can Ghana learn from international best practices?

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Despite tremendous success in improving access and enrolment of pupils in the Ghanaian basic education system in recent times, learning outcomes still remain below expected levels. Through a systematic review of literature on international programmes and research on activity-based learning (ABL), this article highlights exemplary practices which could help improve the quality of teaching, raise student learning and close achievement gaps for Ghanaian pupils. The article finds that Ghana has been the testing ground for many initiatives aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, owing to the litany of problems associated with these initiatives, the article forcefully contends that Ghana now needs to focus on drawing lessons from international best practices on ABL pedagogies to enable the country to see what is working and not working and to set the foundation for developing a new national approach to ABL, which should have the potential to transform the education landscape in Ghana.

Keywords: ABL; ABL pedagogy; active-learning pedagogies; Ghana's basic education system; teaching and learning; classroom practices

INTRODUCTION

While Ghana has impressively improved access to basic education rates, with an increase in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the primary level from 94.9% in 2008-09 to 96.4% in 2010-11 (Ministry of Education, 2012), trained teacher supply and educational quality in key subject areas remain alarmingly low. Ghana scored next to lowest worldwide on the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and, as recently as 2011, the National Educational Assessment (NEA) showed that only 35% of children leaving 6th Grade were proficient in English and only 16% in Mathematics.

One of the key reasons for Ghana's continued low learning levels is that time spent in school is not always productively used. For example, a 2008 study by the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) on teacher time on task in schools in the Ghanaian basic education system found that 27% of public primary school teachers were absent on any

given day and, out of 197 days expected for learning in the school year, only 76.3 days were actually used for learning (Abadzi, 2007, p. vi). To put this into context, teaching behaviour in Ghana over the past 15 to 20 years appears not to have changed nor improved remarkably. Specific issues pertaining to inefficient resource allocation within the Ghanaian education system include the challenge of information transfer between the District Education Offices (DEOs) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) central divisions. This is compounded by the fact that 97% of recurrent budget goes on salaries while the Annual District Education Operational Plans (ADEOPs) are not fulfilled owing to long time-lags between the beginning of the school year and when funding and materials are received by district officials, making it difficult for them to implement district level educational policies. In addition, training on ABL initiatives have largely receded after funding stopped, particularly as most funding came from donors.

As already noted, key challenges to education quality include: alarmingly low trained teacher supply and educational quality in key subjects; significant teacher absenteeism and high level of unproductive time use in classrooms; and inefficient resource allocation. Other challenges include: lack of sustained teacher training programmes in ABL; inadequate quality assurance systems; limited infrastructural facilities; low leadership commitment to ensuring quality; limited supervision of teaching and learning practices; ineffective assessment practices and lack of sustained monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning practices (Abadzi, 2007; Baku & Myers, 1994; CDD, 2008; Nudzor, Dare, Oduro, Bosu, & Addy, 2015).

Literature on "active-learning" pedagogies (for example, Barrow, Boyle, Ginsberg, 2010; Ginsberg & Megahid, 2008; Price-Rom & Sainazarov, 2009) suggest that ABL could have the ability to make a real impact on addressing some of the challenges. Essentially, 15 years after Ghana embarked on its major education reforms, the time has come to take stock of lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful aspects of reforms and previous interventions to determine what could feasibly be achieved to ensure that Ghana's children are placed at the centre of the approach to delivering quality basic education into the future. It is within this context that the study reported in this article was undertaken.

This article is based on a Department for International Development (DFID), Ghana sponsored research project undertaken by a team of international and local researchers (i.e. Coffey International Consultants and research practitioners from the University of Cape Coast) under the auspices of the University of Cape Coast between December 2011 and August 2012. The research project sought, generally, to provide a foundation for further research and policy for policy makers and implementers such as the GES and its relevant divisions (e.g. Basic Education Division, Teacher Education Division and Girls' Education Unit), to see how learning outcomes are or could be transformed through a learner-centred pedagogy based on ABL, and to enable a move towards a Ghanaian ABL approach and framework. Reviews of national and international literature, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with education officials and teachers, classroom observations, teacher surveys, and students' assessments were employed to examine the ways by which the quality of teaching and learning in Ghanaian basic schools could be improved through the utilization of ABL pedagogies.

Essentially, this article aims to identify lessons Ghana can learn from international best practices in ABL. Thus, the findings reported in this article are intended to enable leaders in the Ghanaian Ministry of Education (MOE) and GES to better leverage the existing

body of knowledge regarding ABL as a mechanism for improving teaching, learning, and achievement in schools in Ghana (Nudzor et al., 2015, pp. 438-439).

The article is organized as follows. The section following this defines ABL. The next section outlines the approach to the review of literature and research for the research project. This is done with the view to providing meaning to the many examples of ABL interventions and practices illustrated in this article. This is followed by a brief history of ABL implementation in Ghana to pave the way for the identification of ABL practices, issues, gaps and limitations in the Ghanaian pedagogy to teaching and learning. Thereafter, findings from reviews of international programmes and research on ABL are illustrated, and the lessons to be learned, particularly by Ghana, are highlighted before the concluding thoughts.

WHAT ABL IS (AND WHAT IT IS NOT)

The preponderance of available research evidence on ABL (e.g. Barrow et al., 2007; Cuban, 1984; Ginsberg, 2010; Ginsberg & Megahid, 2008; Kline, 2002; Kraft, 1998; Leu & Price-Rom, 2006; Megahid, Ginsburg, Abdellah, and Zohry, 2008) indicate aptly that ABL is very much about the whats, hows and whys of teaching and learning. Essentially, ABL is conceptualized, through an extensive review of literature, as an innovative, student-centred model of teaching and learning that encourages the use of multiple, small group activities that engage students in discovery learning or problem solving, and promotes frequent questions and discussion from students (Cuban, 1984, pp. 3-4; Leu & Price-Rom 2006, p. 19).

Typically, under ABL, learners are guided by their teachers to make their own discoveries and offer their own negotiated solutions through task-based activities which excite them and allow them to progress at their own pace in a safe, inviting, and stimulating environment. Similarly, ABL pedagogy encourages students from multiple grades and learning abilities to be taught in one room, by one teacher as they are empowered to learn and share with small groups of peers on a similar level to themselves. By this arrangement, the students do not get held back by slower learners, nor do they get left behind. Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) and curricula are developed at low cost, using the resources available (i.e. teachers develop their own posters, booklets etc.) and so even those schools in the most deprived areas can be enabled to deliver better and inclusive quality of TLMs1.

From the foregoing, it becomes immediately clear that ABL is not or has very little to do with traditional rote learning or "formal" or "direct instruction" which relies heavily on teacher lecturing, dictation and direct transmission of factual knowledge coupled with "recitation and drill" (Spring, 2006, p. 6). In this regard, we can identify both behavioural and cognitive dimensions by which active-learning, student-centred pedagogies can be contrasted with formal or direct instruction (see Barrow et al., 2007; Mayer, 2004). The behavioural dimension of active-learning pedagogies focuses on the degree to which instructional practices enable students to actively shape their own learning through their verbal and physical class participation, while the cognitive dimension highlights the degree to which teaching strategies enable students to engage in various forms/levels of thinking. Essentially, the behavioural dimension of active-learning pedagogies is differentiated from direct instruction (e.g., teacher lecture) in that it involves learning "by doing" or "through play", as expressed through action and verbal communication (Ginsburg, 2010). Practically, this is observed in a classroom where children work in

groups, teach and listen to each other, express themselves, learn to take turns, work independently on self-study guides and maths or science kits, play games and do role plays. It can also be seen in extra-curricular activities, such as children exercising leadership positions (e.g., as managers of school libraries or keeping school grounds clean).

The cognitive dimension, refers to students' mental processes of perception, memory, judgement and reasoning. With some variations, cognition is commonly classified into six levels: knowledge (ability to identify and recall information); comprehension (ability to organize, select facts and ideas); application (ability to use facts, rules and principles); analysis (ability to separate a whole into component parts); synthesis (ability to combine ideas to form a new whole); and evaluation (ability to develop opinions, judgements and decisions). Each of these levels of cognition may be stimulated by different kinds of "teaching talk" (Alexander, 2008), which progress from lower to higher levels. The lower levels comprise: rote (i.e., the drilling of facts, knowledge, ideas and routines through constant repetition); recitation (i.e., the accumulation of knowledge and understanding through questions designed to test or stimulate recall of what has previously been encountered, or to cue students to work out answers from clues provided in the question); and expository instruction (i.e., imparting information and/or explaining facts, principles or procedures). The higher level of cognition is stimulated mainly by two processes: discussion (i.e., open exchanges between teacher and student or student and student with a view to sharing information, exploring ideas or solving problems); and dialogue (i.e., using authentic questioning, discussion and exposition to guide and prompt).

It is important to note that, typically, activity-based learning promotes higher levels of cognition by promoting discussion and dialogue through question and answer with the teacher. Direct instruction used in traditional "chalk and talk" methods, on the other hand, tend to develop lower cognitive levels by emphasizing more passive, rote learning, and recitation through reading drills, for example.

Thus, activity-based learning is built on student-centred model of teaching and learning. As such, it is or can be differentiated from traditional teacher centres approaches to teaching in terms of both student behaviour and cognitive development.

APPROACH TO REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The sources of evidence for this article are based primarily on a systematic review of literature on international programmes and research on ABL. For purposes of clarity and succinctness of presentation, this article conceptualizes the review along the lines of two main themes: external and internal evaluations of research on ABL. Regarding external evaluations, a total of fourteen (14) international research projects were reviewed, with particular attention evaluations of research on four major ABL interventions based on their similarities with teaching and learning initiatives implemented or being implemented in Ghana: Escuela Nueva in Colombia; ABL in Tamil Nadu, India; Nueva Escuela Unitaria (NEU) in Guatemala; and Basic Education (BASE) in Nicaragua. Multiple criteria were used to make judgements about the quality of the findings on these four programmes/projects. Essentially, the evaluations concentrated on one or more components of these ABL interventions, sometimes utilizing approaches which looked critically at the control groups, but often the focus was on the assessment of the "pre" and "post" experimental designs utilized by the research reports on these interventions. The

typical evaluations of ABL interventions focused on the assessment of the set of ABL school or classroom observation instruments, teacher and administrator questionnaires, interview protocols, time-lines, reviews of national literature, checklists, attitudinal studies, field visits and focus groups employed by the researches, and how these helped in mitigating conceptual and contextual issues involved in implementing the ABL initiatives.

Reviews of research which utilized randomized evaluations were also sought and studied. These revealed a number of interventions effective in improving aspects of student performance and attendance, including: school feeding; scholarships; cash transfers; uniforms; health programmes; teacher attendance; teacher incentives; parental involvement; and locally recruited teachers. A few randomized studies were also sought and found that spoke directly to the efficacy of ABL in improving student attendance or learning achievements. However, the depth of information or ability for these findings to be generalized was a limitation. In light of this, the team focused "special" attention on two interventions: ABL in Tamil Nadu, and Escuela Nueva in Colombia, which had the most available and relevant/comparable data. These two key international primary school ABL models have progressed from "latent" to "advanced" ABL, and, as such, were deemed worth investigating further. The educational issues these two ABL initiatives attempted to address (i.e., low student learning outcomes, poor performing teachers, student dropout/repetition, etc.) were identical to the quality issues facing Ghana's education system, although repetition is not part of Ghana's education policy. There was thus a wealth of independently evaluated information from these two programmes which were judged by the research team to be highly relevant for this operational research programme. A number of other international ABL interventions were also reviewed, and lessons were drawn from the system and school level implementation of these interventions.

The internal evaluations focused primarily on reviews of data and research on ABL initiatives that were implemented or being implemented in Ghana. Interestingly, none of the literature identified and reviewed was experimental or quasi-experimental in terms of research design. This, however, did not surprised us, granted that another DFID-funded study (Foster, Addy, & Samoff, 2012, p. 712) found that out of 605 articles reviewed in four key international education journals over the period 2004-2008, only four used experimental or quasi-experimental approaches. Noting the dearth of national and international education research using direct observations and fieldwork interviews in this area, and given the context of the schools sampled in Ghana, the review focused on bringing together in a systematic way the major ABL interventions previously undertaken in Ghana which demonstrate ABL aspects. It analysed their strengths and shortcomings, to distil lessons learned and identify opportunities for improving basic education in Ghana through ABL. In all, 11 ABL interventions in the Ghanaian context were identified and reviewed. See Table 1 for the full list of both international and Ghanaian ABL research projects reviewed. Based on an analysis of each programme's incorporation of ABL characteristics, two of these programmes (i.e., School for Life and GES-MASHAV initiatives) were selected for additional research assessment as they included the greatest number and percentage of ABL characteristics of all the ABL type of programmes in Ghana. The proposal and rationale for the selection of these two programmes was discussed explicitly and approved by DFID, Ghana.

Through an iterative research process (Pettigrew, 1997) and emerging from a review of the literature on ABL, an ABL implementation classification framework was developed

as part of the review process to provide a framework for the analysis. The ABL classification framework was derived from a World Bank (SABER trust) programme which detailed what each criterion would look like along a spectrum from Latent through Emerging and Established to Advanced. A review of the literature further informed what the specific criteria or aspect of ABL should be for the ABL classification framework, and the details of how these criteria develop along the implementation spectrum. The draft classification framework, which was intended to guide the final analysis of data, was shared with a number of international and Ghanaian education experts and the criteria were modified accordingly.

Table 1: List of International and Ghanaian ABL Research Projects Reviewed

Number	International ABL Research Project	Ghanaian ABL Project
1	Escuela Nueva, Colombia,	GES-MASHAV
2	ABL in Tamil Nadu, India,	School for Life (SfL)
3	NEU, Guatemala	National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP)
4	BASE, Project I and II, Nicaragua	Molteno/Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL)
5	Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee (BRAC), Bangladesh	UCC/CoE Curriculum Reform
6	Friends In Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB), Bangladesh	Leadership for Learning (LfL)
7	Education Reform Program (ERP), Egypt	GES School Based Assessment (SBA) Reform
8	Basic Education System Overhaul (BESO) Project 1 and 2, Ethiopia	JICA/GES Nationwide IN-SET Programme
9	Managing Basic Education learning that is Active, Creative, Effective and Joyful in Indonesia (MBE), Indonesia	Untrained Teachers Training Programme: Untrained Teachers' Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE)
10	Creating Learning Communities for Children (CLCC) (UNICEF), Indonesia	Teachers for Africa (TFA) Programme
11	Education Reform for Knowledge Economy Project (ERfKE), Jordan	Community Teachers for Ghana
12	Malawi Education Support Activity (MESA), Malawi	
13	Literacy Enhancement Assistance Program (LEAP), Nigeria	
14	Primary Reading Programme (PRP), Zambia	

In addressing the issue regarding the characteristics of successful ABL and lessons learned from how they were implemented, the classification framework for purposes of review and analyses of literature (from both internal and external sources) focused on aspects of ABL at two levels: system and school level. The specific aspects at each of these two levels are set out in Table 2. As can be seen from Table 2, the system level aspects of analysis of literature focused primarily on systemic issues relating to policy making, programming, resource distribution, and reinforcement. The aspects of the school level analysis, on the other hand, related to school level practices denoting how policy is or needs to be implemented at the school and classroom levels. In order to assess

the intensity of effectiveness of the aspects of ABL at both the system and school level, each of the aspects of ABL interventions was classified into four degrees or "intensities" of ABL implementation: Latent, Emerging, Established, and Advanced. This served a useful role, particularly in distilling the characteristics of successful ABL and lessons that can be learned from how they were implemented.

Table 2: Aspects of ABL at System and School Level

1	System Level	2	School Level
1.1	Policy Formulation	2.1	Classroom Furniture and Layout
1.2	Programmatic Development	2.2	Teaching Methodologies
1.3	Resource Allocation	2.3	TLMs
1.4	Development of TLMs	2.4	Promoting Equality and Diversity
1.5	Pre-Service Teacher Training (PRE-SET)	2.5	Head Teacher Support
1.6	In-Service Professional Development (IN-SET/CPD)	2.6	Teacher Peer Support
1.7	Academic / Pedagogical Support	2.7	Student Arrangement
1.8	Teacher Assessment	2.8	Student Time on Task
1.9	Student Assessment	2.9	Student Engagement
1.10	Community/Parent Engagement	2.10	Classroom Atmosphere and Student Interaction
1.11	Evaluation Feedback Loops	2.11	Student Continuous Assessment

Thus, based on the objective of this article to unearth lessons that Ghana can learn from international best practices regarding ABL pedagogy, premium is placed on both the external and internal evaluations of research on ABL conducted vis-á-vis the review of national and international literature on ABL practices generally. The rationale for the review of ABL literature and research for the purposes of this article is grounded largely in the need to undertake analyses of what works and does not work in the Ghanaian context to identify the current capacity gaps to meeting basic education needs and the emerging ABL vision in the Ghanaian education system. The section following this presents a brief history of ABL in Ghana with the view to identifying localized ABL interventions that have gone to scale in Ghana and the gaps, limitations and/or challenges associated with these interventions. This is done against the backdrop that for any meaningful lessons to be learned regarding ABL and international best practices, the Ghanaian peculiar situations and experiences would need to be examined first to indicate clearly what is working or not working to warrant any kind of proposals for change. For charity, they say, begins at/from home.

FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW AND PRIMARY RESEARCH ON ABL INTERVENTIONS IN GHANA

The review of relevant education literature suggests that the principles underpinning ABL are not new to Ghana, although detailed accounts of ABL being successfully practiced in the Ghanaian educational context appears to be limited (Nudzor et al., 2015). For example, the literature suggests that Ghana has been the testing ground for many teaching and learning initiatives over the past 15 to 20 years. These initiatives, most of which are child-friendly, learner-centred, and involving ABL, are largely funded by donors and have sought to improve learning by introducing and reinforcing valuable teaching skills,

materials and approaches. To state this rather aptly, multiple studies on Ghana's education sector indicate that since the advent of the 1987 Education Reform Programme, many child-friendly policy interventions geared towards raising students' learning outcomes have been implemented, including but not limited to: GES-MASHAV project; Schools for Life (SFL) (Casely-Hayford & Ghartey, 2007); the National Literacy Accelerated Programme (NALAP) (Leherr, 2009); UNICEF's Child Friendly School initiative (Miske, Wilmont, Ntow, & Wiger, 2012; Mooijman, Esseku, & Tay, 2013); Whole School Development Programme (Baku & Myers, 1994; Curriculum Research Development Division (CRDD), 1994; Nudzor, 2012); and Leadership for Learning (LfL) (Macbeath, Swaffield, Oduro, & Ampah-Mensah, 2013).

The GES-MASHAV project, for instance, is a collaboration between Israel's Agency for International Cooperation Development (MASHAV), the Golda Meir Carmel International Training Centre (MCTC), the Millennium Cities Initiatives (MCI), and the GES. The programme targets kindergarten-age children in the Kumasi Metropolis. It aims to empower teachers to believe that Early Childhood Development (ECD) is the basis of further education and that the teacher's role is to mediate between the child and the world in order to create a rich and stimulating learning environment, build a flexible curriculum and daily schedule based on the child, and to provide opportunities for children to develop creativity and thinking skills. The programme commenced in 2009 with a pilot group involving five schools, 25 classes and 25 teachers and has now been extended to cover 10 schools, 50 teachers, and 75 teacher trainees. Among the many contributions of the GES-MASHAV project in terms of outputs and outcomes are: periodic and consistent training workshops organized for teacher trainees and their lecturers; significant changes in the learning environment of the pilot classrooms in Kumasi; and reduction in absenteeism of both teachers and pupils.

The SfL initiative, is a DfID-funded project which evolved from a friendship between Northern Ghana community-based organizations and Danish development activists. The SfL replicates aspects of the Education Quality for All (EQUALL) project which works to get out-of-school children in deprived areas between the ages of 8 and 14 years into formal school through a functional literacy programme. The programme began operation in 1995 in two pilot districts, Yendi and Gushegu/Karaga in the Northern Region, and works in close partnership with the MOE and the GES. Later, it expanded, first, to cover eight districts in 1999, and then, to ten districts in 2004 all in the Northern Region. The programme implements community-based, culturally-relevant functional literacy afternoon classes for children between the ages of 8 and 14 years who, for various reasons, have not had access to formal education. It started with service delivery; where functional mother tongue literacy was offered to children. An impact assessment of the programme conducted in 2007 showed that between 1995 and 2006 about 85,000 children were enrolled in the SfL functional literacy programme. Also, SfL is known to have benefited over 109,000 children who would otherwise have had no access to education. Similarly, research has shown that SfL graduates transit smoothly into the formal school system and that over 90% of children between the ages 8 and 14 who enrolled in the programme (at least 50% of whom were girls) graduated successfully (Casely-Hayford & Ghartey, 2007). SFL has also trained about 1,674 regular teachers and 7,000 community-based facilitators in the use of native language literacy methodology in the lower primary classes of the formal school and community-based literacy classes respectively.

Thus, the review of these and other ABL initiatives in Ghana suggests generally that these interventions have made some reasonable amount of contributions towards education provision and delivery amidst a litany of challenges. For example, the reviews indicate that many of these ABL initiatives have developed and revised ABL specific curricula, teaching guides, and other TLMs. Also, teacher training appears to have been part of the curriculum reform initiatives of such ABL interventions, along with curricular and teacher standards, alternative forms of assessment, out-of-school educational programming and mother tongue initiatives. However, concerning challenges, the review suggests that, in most cases, these new ABL initiatives were not adopted nationwide and sustained after donor funding ended; a major shortcoming which is also true of many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, the review finds that with various governmental and non-governmental organizations conducting interventions, there have always been challenges in coordination, information-sharing and consistent application of standards and curriculum. Besides these, little evaluation appears to have been carried out in many cases and, where it is has (for example, in the case of NALAP), the reviews conducted for the purposes of this study indicate that results were not widely known at either the school or national/system level.

Crucially, the review of literature and research on ABL conceptualizes the problems and weaknesses of Ghanaian ABL at two levels: national or systems level, and school level. The system level identifies issues relating to ABL policy making, programming, resource distribution, and reinforcement, while the school level addresses issues relating to ABL policy implementation at the school and classroom levels. At the system level, for example, the review of interventions suggests that ABL was "Emerging", meaning ABL has been introduced in Ghana but remains in the early stages. Through GES involvement in the various ABL interventions, it was apparent that there is some level of knowledge and buy-in into the concept of ABL but it is less clear that this has yet progressed to policy level. In other words, the review shows that ABL has not yet taken root in Ghana and that there is a high-risk of dissipation if not reinforced. (See Casely-Hayford & Ghartey, 2007; Leherr, 2009; Miske et al., 2012; Mooijman, Esseku & Tay, 2013; Macbeath et al., 2013 for detailed exposition on this.) Also, the review contends that the issue of sustainability of ABL implementation, particularly after donor funding ends, is an indicator that ABL was not embedded into both policy and the national budget. One of the key reasons why ABL may not have taken root in Ghana, according to the literature, is because ABL has not been sufficiently included in pre-service training, in-service training and continuing development programmes of teachers and, as such, its impact is limited. Some other weaknesses identified with ABL at the system level in Ghana include: lack of effective resource allocation systems; poor teacher and pupil assessment systems; lack of academic and/or pedagogical support for teachers to practice ABL; and the absence or lack of TLM development culture to support effective ABL practice.

At the school level, the review of literature identifies issues including, but not limited to: improper layout of Ghanaian classrooms and furniture; poor pupil assessment practices; and lack of community support for ABL. Other issues the review identifies include: poor classroom atmosphere and student engagement; ineffective use of TLMs; use of outdated teaching methodologies; and lack of teacher peer support. Owing essentially to these and other peculiar weaknesses identified, the literature review suggests that, overall, the practice of ABL in Ghana and at the school level was also "Emerging". In particular, the review singles out the uncoordinated nature of implementation, particularly where ABL is not properly integrated into the pre-service curriculum of Colleges of Education. The

review contends further that, in some other instances, newly trained teachers are posted to particular ABL intervention schools with little or no knowledge of the skills and attitudes associated with those ABL interventions. Again, the review observes that schools that participate in ABL interventions rarely get requisite support from communities, largely because there is limited information available to the communities about the processes and the performance of schools. As a result, communities lack appreciation of the benefits of ABL, which makes access to fundamental material support from the community challenging.

Thus, in all, the review identifies four main weaknesses with ABL practices in Ghana. First, the literature review reveals that, although there had been multiple attempts to transform teacher-led systems in Ghana, there has been limited follow-up/on-going support and training. As such, ABL implementation tends to dissipate over time. Second the review suggests that most ABL interventions in Ghana are largely externally funded and not coordinated, thus affecting sustainability. Third, it is also argued that ABL practices in Ghana do not appear to have been fully integrated into teacher training at either in-service training (IN-SET) or pre-service training (PRE-SET) levels. Fourth, and not the least, it is suggested that although there is evidence of some teachers practising ABL, there appears to be limited community support for ABL as yet.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE ABL

A number of international ABL interventions (a total of 14) were reviewed based on the general purpose and research questions that the original research project sought to answer. For the purposes of this article, two of these key international primary school ABL models that progressed to Advanced ABL are chosen and highlighted briefly based on their striking peculiarities with teaching and learning initiatives implemented or being implemented in Ghana in recent times. These two interventions in questions are: ABL in Tamil Nadu, India; and ABL in Escuela Nueva ("New School"), Colombia.

For purposes of clarity and succinctness, the review on these two ABL interventions are presented as case studies to help distil the key lessons either explicitly or implicitly from their contexts.

Case study 1: ABL in Tamil Nadu, India

The ABL initiative in the state of Tamil Nadu in India is being implemented in Grades 1 to 4 in both single-grade and multi-grade classrooms. For each subject in each of these grades (i.e. Grades 1–4), competencies are divided into learning units called "milestones". Clusters of milestones are linked together into ladders, which indicate students' attainment. Each milestone has different steps of the learning processes broken into six types of implementable activities: introduction; practice; reinforcement; self-assessment; remediation; and enrichment. Students are then organized into small groups by learning levels and use a variety of learning materials specifically relevant to ABL (e.g., high-quality learning cards, learning ladders, science and mathematics kits, and supplementary reading materials) to complete structured and logically sequenced learning activities. Student interaction is high, and teachers act as facilitators of learning, moving between groups and providing individualized attention as needed.

Supplementary learning materials to encourage individual and peer learning include low-level blackboards on all classroom walls for students to practice their work, displays of

student work, charts, puppetry, storybooks, and simple, movable class mats and writing surfaces. In all, children get support from peers, monitor their own learning, and progress at their own pace. Support for teachers is provided by a trained head teacher and sub-district teacher educators who are appointed – one for every 12 schools – and make two visits every month.

This ABL approach was piloted in 13 city (Chennai) schools in 2003, then expanded to all 264 city schools in 2004, to 4,100 schools in 2007 (10 schools in each sub-District), and to all 37,500 publicly supported primary schools in the state in 2008. The initiative is known to have transformed teaching and learning across the state in just a few years, and is now being adapted/adopted by several other Indian states (National Council of Education Research and Training, 2011). In relation to learning outcomes, for example, identical national achievement tests administered in Tamil and Maths in 2004 and 2008 indicated that Grade 3 language test scores improved from an average of 66% to 80%, while Maths test scores improved from 53% to 75%. Significantly, in these tests, rural students outperformed urban students, and girls outperformed boys. Regarding other student-related outcomes, teachers and parents reported that, as a result of the implementation of the initiative, students have: no fear; higher levels of self-confidence; increased creativity; increased ability and desire to learn independently; increased self-motivation; and increased responsibility. On the side of teacher-related outcomes of the implementation of the initiative, teachers reported a highly positive perception of ABL methodologies although they lamented the increased workload (i.e., having to check each student's work individually), difficulty in providing individualized attention, and challenges with parents who want their children to have homework. However, and more positively, teachers reported that their own involvement in student learning increased, and their relationships and cooperation with students improved (McEwan, 1998; McEwan & Benveniste, 1999; Rojas, 1994).

Case study 2: ABL in Escuela Nueva (New School), Colombia

The internationally recognized "Escuela Nueva" movement that began in Colombia in the 1970s has improved educational outcomes, and reduced achievement gaps between urban and rural youth, multi-grade and graded classrooms, and girls and boys. It has served as the example for similar programmes in countries throughout Latin America, the Indian Sub-continent, Africa, the Middle East, and the Central Asian Republics (Kline, 2002).

Escuela Nueva was initiated to address problems that multi-grade rural classes faced. Typically, students from these rural classes only got to spent 50 to 60% of instruction hours engaged in schoolwork. In 1983, before Escuela Nueva expanded, only 20% of rural students completed primary school in five years and 35% of rural students were dropping out in the first grade. Internal efficiency of rural schools was also affected by frequent use of a curriculum geared towards urban students, a lack of instructional materials, school buildings in disrepair, and teachers who usually employed passive methods of pedagogy. Parents and communities were also rarely involved in these schools.

Escuela Nueva was a refinement and expansion of the ideas from the UNESCO sponsored "Unitary Schools" project, designed in the 1960s to address the above-mentioned problems confronting rural primary schools in Colombia. Under this arrangement, Teacher support was viewed as a most crucial component of Escuela Nueva's success.

As such, the government provided teachers with educational materials, resources, and opportunities for capacity building, and trained local supervisors to serve as pedagogical advisors to teachers. Essentially, the initiative was based on a number of basic components: flexibility in learning; active student participation; individualized learning techniques; students working independently in a discovery approach; formative evaluation of student learning; and flexible promotion based on student self-guided workbooks. Other components on which the Escuela Nueva initiative was based are: participation of parents in the school; developing flexible curricula and calendars; bolstering parent and community involvement; and generating public-private partnerships. The programme was scaled up over a 15-year time frame. It was piloted in a few schools in 1973, and expanded to 500 schools in 1976, to 2,000 schools in 1982, and then to 18,000 schools nationwide in 1989.

Among the key outcomes attributable to the implementation of Escuela Nueva are improvements in pupils' learning outcomes vis-á-vis improvement in group work. For examples, in 1996, a UNESCO study found that Colombia was the only Latin American country where rural students outperformed urban students (McEwan, 1998). In UNESCO tests in 2004–2005, rural children achieved the highest test scores in Spanish and mathematics (14% and 17% above national averages, respectively), and had 100% attendance (McEwan, 1998; McEwan & Benveniste, 1999). Similarly, positive significant correlation between achievement at the end of 3rd Grade and participation in small group contexts in ABL programmes were found (de Baessa, Chesterfield, & Ramos, 2002; Mogollon & Solano, 2011).

As can be observed, the specific contributions of the two ABL interventions to raising pupils' learning outcomes are embedded summarily in the case studies themselves. Aside these specific findings from ABL case studies in Tamil Nadu, India, and Columbia, the reviews of literature and research on ABL from other countries generally catalogued a number of major findings worth emphasizing for the purposes of this article. Generally, these reviews suggest that, as a result of the implementation of ABL interventions in the countries concerned, students' learning outcomes had improved tremendously and this has had a "knock-on" effect on such other areas as group work, democratic behaviour, reduction in repetition rate, rural/urban and male/female gaps (see Craig, Kraft, & du Plessis, 1998; de Baessa et al., 2002; Kline, 2002; McEwan, 1998; McEwan & Benveniste, 1999; Mogollon & Solano, 2011 for further discussions regarding these findings). Taking the area of achievement and democratic behaviour as a case in point, the reviews found a positive significant correlation between students' achievement and their democratic behaviour (indicated in terms of characteristics such as "respect for one another", "directing lessons", "taking turns" etc.) in ABL programmes (de Baessa et al., 2002; Mogollon & Solano, 2011). Concerning repetition rates, the review findings showed higher rates of cohorts reaching 6th grade in 6 years for the ABL programmes in Guatemala (NEU) and Peru (AprenDes) as compared to non-ABL comparison schools (Mogollon & Solano, 2011, pp. 131–132). Also, the reviews suggested that ABL interventions have targeted and reduced significantly gaps in learning outcomes between boys and girls as well as between rural and urban children (Craig, et al., 1998; Kline, 2002).

So, while these findings are insightful, they beg the question, nonetheless, what Ghana can learn from international ABL interventions to be able to improve the quality of teaching, raise student learning, and close achievement gaps for pupils, especially those

from most deprived, marginalized and/or disadvantaged settings within the Ghanaian society. The next section of the article directly responds to this question.

LESSONS GHANA CAN LEARN FROM INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES ON ABL PEDAGOGIES

The two previous sections of this article illustrate, although implicitly, the differences in approach to ABL pedagogy in Ghana and internationally. This section attempts to crisply crystallise lessons that Ghana can learn from international best practice regarding ABL implementation strategy. This is particularly crucial as Ghana prepares to transform its basic education system with the view to raising the learning outcomes of Ghanaian children, especially for those from marginalized and disadvantaged settings. For purposes of brevity, precision, and succinctness, the lessons of successful ABL practices are looked at through the lenses of system level practices and school level practices.

At the system level, and as this article has illustrated aptly, the review highlights that achieving desired characteristics and implementation of ABL calls for formulating appropriate policies, developing and scaling up ABL programmes and projects, allocating resources to ABL, developing teacher-led TLMs, integrating ABL in pre-service teacher training (PRE-SET) and in-service professional development (IN-SET/CPD), and community/parents engagement. Taking integration of ABL into education systems as an example, the review shows that ABL is scaled up from pilot programmes or projects and incorporated into the education system over multiple years. In the case of the state of Tamil Nadu (India), ABL was formulated as a national programme and expanded over a from-year period from 13 city schools (Chennai) in 2003 to all 37,500 publicly supported primary schools in the state in 2008. By comparison, "Escuela Nueva" in Colombia was piloted in a few schools in 1973, with step-wise expansion to 18,000 schools nationwide by 1989 (a 15–year time frame). Generally, successful ABL programmes have found it of value to move the training directly into the schools. In one highly rated programme in the US, for instance, the review found that teachers never met at the university but rather spent their mornings in classrooms and their afternoons in the school setting with pre-service training instructors and classroom teachers discussing case studies and actual classroom events (Kraft & Haas, 1988). By contrast, in other countries (i.e., Colombia, India, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Cambodia, and Egypt) local and state government and/or international organizations organized school-based CPD, including workshops, supervised guidance, support for teachers, trainers, administrators, and/or supervisors, on a regular basis (multiple times per school term), such that after teachers obtained training they were able to apply what they had learned in classrooms, and obtained follow-up training to reinforce what they had learned (Mizrachi, Padilla, & Susuwele-Banda, 2010). Clearly, these are very important lessons Ghana can take useful clues from.

Regarding the specific issue of community/parents engagement, the review suggests a number of ways to do this. The review indicates that countries that have been successful in implementing ABL (e.g., Namibia, Nigeria, and India) are those that are able, among other things, to encourage their schools to develop cooperative relationship with parents, teachers, and other schools and communities such that they are able to involve them in planning, reflection, and evaluation, and not just requesting them to provide resources (Banerjee, Banerji, Duflo, Glennerster, & Khemani, 2006; de Laat, Kremer, & Vermeersch, 2008; Duflo, Dupas, & Kremer, 2007). Also, parents in successful ABL programmes are actively involved in assisting children with homework, reading to their

children, visiting and assisting in classrooms, positively monitoring teaching and providing more than just the usual financial support (Slocum et al., 2002).

In addition, the review also identifies other valuable learning points, such as taking deliberate actions to shift towards continuous student assessment, developing and implementing integrated curriculum, as well as integrating ABL into teacher and student assessments. Other useful lessons identified include: providing incentives for ABL, and developing evaluation feedback loops in iterative processes for ABL to become the norm in the educational systems.

At the level of the school, evidence from the literature reviewed shows that changes to structural school level factors bring about changes in teacher practices. Factors such as classroom furniture and layout, and student arrangement are shown to affect teaching practices tremendously. For example, in the Tamil Nadu ABL programme in India, rather than sitting at desks, teachers and children are observed in learning circles, using movable writing surfaces on floor mats, and children writing on blackboards lowered to their level, rather than copying words from the teacher's blackboard or from textbooks into notebooks. Also, student work is displayed in the classrooms, including on walls (NCERT, 2011). As the review suggests, these structural factors affect teachers' attitudes and beliefs positively because they see the effects of their practices. Teachers internalize evidence about what works in day-to-day teaching and student learning, further bringing about changes in their long-term attitudes and beliefs and practices as they see evidence of improvements in students' outcomes.

Besides this, the review suggests that the support that teachers obtain from their peers and head teachers also lead to changes in their practices. As the evidence suggests, teachers are most likely to change their practices based on the evidence they see from other teachers' teaching methodologies, their promotion of equality and diversity, their development and use of TLMS, and observing improvements in classroom atmosphere and student interaction, and students' engagement and time on task. As they see the benefits of changing their practices on student continuous assessment outcomes, they then become more open to the types of changes that are being promoted (Guskey, 1989).

Thus, overall, evidence from the review of literature and research at the school level highlights the need for a clear understanding and specification of key school-level characteristics for implementation, including: teaching concepts and methodologies; head teacher support; classroom furniture and layout; student arrangement; TLMs; promotion of equality and diversity; students' time on task; student engagement; student interaction; and student continuous assessment.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This literature review-based article provides insights into ABL practices and pedagogies with the aim of influencing education policy making with respect to ABL in Ghana. Drawing essentially on a nationwide DfID, Ghana sponsored research project and, in particular, the reviews of national and international literature and research on ABL, this article aims to unearth lessons Ghana can learn from international best practices regarding programmes and research on effective ABL pedagogies. Noting the dearth of articles of this kind, particularly in the context of Ghana, the review focused on bringing together, in a systematic way, the major ABL interventions previously undertaken in Ghana which demonstrate ABL aspects. It analyses their strengths and shortcomings to distil lessons

learned and to identify opportunities for improving basic education in Ghana through ABL. It takes stock of the current situation, benchmarks Ghana's experience with ABL against international best practice, and provides an evidence-based approach for education policy dialogue going forward. It provides a tool that will allow Ghanaian education policymakers to assess and accelerate progress in implementing ABL at system and school levels. In particular, it looks at the critical process of changing teacher behaviour with respect to ABL for improved student learning outcomes.

Internationally, evaluations of ABL research and programmes undertaken in this article, such as in the state of Tamil Nadu in India (NCERT, 2011) and Escuela Nueva in Latin American countries such a Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru (see, e.g., Mogollon & Solano, 2011; Kline, 2002) provide evidence to support the incorporation of their successful characteristics into ABL in Ghana. In particular, experiences from these and other countries suggest that the successful characteristics of ABL could be combined into a coherent Ghanaian pedagogy through pilot programmes that are then scaled up over 5 to 15-year timeframes (see e.g., Chesterfield, 1996a; Mogollon & Solano, 2011; Kline, 2002; NCERT, 2011; SSA, 2008 for more details). In the literature reviewed, such pilot programmes included system-wide changes to policies and practices that were then scaled up based on lessons learned, in particular, with continuous, school-based training and pedagogical support provided to enable and motivate teachers to adopt ABL methodologies. The review further suggests that the most successful ABL programmes take a holistic, comprehensive and synergistic approach through which each aspect of the educational process (such as curriculum, training, TLM, supervision, and assessment) reinforces the other.

In conclusion, this article has highlighted three key findings for incorporating into ABL to improve learning outcomes for Ghanaian children. First, international evidence, as seen in the article, points to the positive relationships between ABL and improved student outcomes, class participation and democratic behaviour, lower repetition rates, and narrowing of rural/urban and gender gaps. Second, and as the article highlighted, at the system level, achieving the desired characteristics and implementation of ABL in Ghana calls for formulating appropriate policies, developing and scaling up ABL programmes and projects, allocating resources to ABL, developing TLMs, and integrating ABL in pre-service teacher training (PRE-SET) and in-service professional development (IN-SET/CPD). Additionally, the article shows how ABL has developed in other countries by various stakeholders providing: academic/pedagogical support; integrating ABL into teacher and student assessments and providing incentives for ABL; engaging communities and parents in ABL; as well as developing evaluation feedback loops in iterative processes for ABL to become the norm in the educational system. Third, as the article shows, as is the case in other countries, for ABL to be successful in Ghana, there is the need for a better understanding and specification of key school-level characteristics for implementation, such as: teaching concepts and methodologies; head teacher support; classroom furniture and layout; student arrangement; (TLMs); promotion of equality and diversity; students' time on task; student engagement; student interaction; and student continuous assessment. As the article demonstrated, all of these school-level characteristics need to be implemented in a holistic and sustained manner. Each characteristic should reinforce the other (or at a minimum, not contradict the other). Addressing only one, or a few characteristics and expecting real change may be unrealistic.

So, clearly, while the primary purpose of this article is to glean insights into global "best practices" into ABL that can be applied within the Ghanaian context, it offers some transferrable implications beyond the specific programmatic documents it reviewed. Largely, and given this journal's (i.e., IEJ: CP's) association with OCIES, the article's message to comparativists and education development practitioners and policymakers, especially those in the Pacific context, is for education programme evaluation efforts and processes (particularly those related to aspects of ABL) to be focused on and conceptualized for rumination at two levels: system level and school level. The system level, as has been illustrated in the article, needs to focus on issues relating to policy making, programming, resource distribution, and reinforcement, while the school level should address school level practices relating to policy implementation at the school and classroom levels. The article's contention, although implicit, is that this binary way of conceptualizing programme evaluation takes care of the critical process of changing teacher behaviour with respect to ABL for improved student learning outcomes.

NOTES

It needs to be acknowledged that on a theoretical level that a wide body of research conceptualizes ABL widely to include and/or bring out interrelationships with such other notions, namely: learner-centred pedagogy, discovery-based learning, inquiry-based learning and child-friendly schools (see Brodie, Lelliot, & Davis, 2002; Croft 2002; Mtika & Gates, 2010; du Plessis & Muzaffar, 2010; Schweisfurth, 2013, 2015; Thomas & Rugambwa, 2011; Vavrus, Thomas, & Bartlett, 2011 for this additional conceptualization of ABL).

It is instructive to note that some scholars, including those identified in point 1 above, would contest this binary conceptualization of ABL suggested here and would recommend a more nuanced perspective of pedagogical practice. This is not discussed as it is not the focus of this article.

For purposes of assessment of ABL intensities, at both system and school levels, each of the aspects of ABL interventions were classified into four degrees or "intensities" of implementation: Latent, indicating no significant implementation (much less impact) of the particular aspect of ABL; Emerging: indicating that an aspect of the ABL intervention has been introduced, but remains in the early stages, and has not yet taken root; Established: indicating that the aspect of the ABL intervention has been introduced, understood, replicated and accepted by most schools and teachers into regular practice, however, scientism remains and the intervention could ultimately fade away if policy, programmatic and financial support are not maintained; and Advanced: indicating that the aspect of the ABL intervention has become the norm, embedded into policy, planning, resource allocation, MoE documentation, teacher training and behaviour, production of learning materials, design of assessment systems, etc.

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Teacher aides' views and experiences on the inclusion of students with Autism: Perspectives across two countries

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The human rights issue of inclusion in education has been the focus of numerous legislative and policy documents around the world. The right of a student with additional needs to access their local school and participate in mainstream classrooms has been mandated for numerous years across many nations. Increasing numbers of students with additional needs who are included in the regular classroom are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) but reports indicate the understanding of ASD students remains low. This study investigates the views and experiences of teacher aides (TAs) who support students with ASD in mainstream settings in two countries: the Cook Islands (CI) and New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The research addressed the growing international use of TAs and their roles in inclusive classrooms, and the need to understand contemporary practices from comparative global perspectives. Results indicate many similarities between TA views and experiences on the inclusion of students with ASD in NSW and the CI. The findings are discussed in terms of recommendations to enhance the efficacy and practices of TAs in supporting students with ASD in the inclusive classroom.

Keywords: Teacher aides; Cook Islands; New South Wales; Views; Experiences

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is part of the human rights agenda globally and supports full involvement of all students within the school community. Cologon (2013) defines inclusive education as a philosophy that embraces personal differences, and recognizes the rights of all people, regardless of race, gender, disability, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, to an education. Cologon's perspective of inclusion encompasses all within the education system who are marginalized, yet is most frequently associated with those students who have a disability (Dyson, 2001). Furthermore, the principle of inclusion has led to the belief that TAs are crucial to successful inclusive programmes where they "bridge the gap" (O'Rourke & West, 2015, p. 532) between classroom teaching and the needs of students with disabilities. TAs, also referred to as paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, paraeducators and student learning support officers, are increasingly employed to support students with disabilities, particularly in developed nations (Sharma & Salend, 2016). The role of TAs has, over time, evolved to include expanded duties that require them to demonstrate a higher level of content-specific knowledge as well as manage the

social interactions that occur between students, and between students and teachers (Yeigh & Evans, 2014).

The research presented here will explore the views and experiences of TAs who work with students with ASD across two countries. One group of TAs worked with students with ASD in NSW, Australia, and the other group of TAs worked with students with ASD in Rarotonga, CI. These two countries were chosen to explore perceptions from contrasting cultures with different developmental trajectories of individualized education (IE), including: IE policies, resource availability and history of IE. The findings from the research will provide not only a current snapshot of the perceptions of TAs who support students with ASD but also offer an understanding of contemporary practices from comparative global perspectives. The purpose of the current paper is to address the relative dearth of research in the area of TA perceptions of their work supporting students with ASD (Danker, Strnadová, & Cumming, 2016).

Students with ASD: A definition

ASD is a developmental disorder that impacts a person's communication and social interactions (Roth, 2013). It is characterized by impaired social interaction, impaired verbal and non-verbal communication, and repetitive behaviour (Stefanatos, 2007). Diagnosis is based on behaviour not cause or mechanism and the diagnostic criteria require that symptoms become apparent in early childhood, typically before the age of three (London, 2007).

Role of TAs in supporting students with disabilities and ASD

In providing for students with additional needs, such as ASD, in the regular classroom, a conventional method is to place a TA in the student's class to support the student (Symes & Humphrey, 2012). Studies of beginning and experienced teachers indicate that their greatest concern regarding IE was inadequate resources and a lack of staff (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Round, Subban, & Sharma, 2015). While the efficacy of TAs is controversial, (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2012; Rutherford, 2011; Sansotti & Sansotti, 2012), the presence of a TA is seen as the most desirable form of support by teachers at the beginning of their career, although reliance on TAs appears to be diminished as a result of additional experience and professional development (Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011). In a study conducted by Anderson, Klassens, and Georgiou (2007), TA time was identified as one of the main support structures necessary to implement inclusion successfully. This finding was supported by Kearney (2000), who noted that the majority of teachers identified TA time as the most successful form of assistance. The effects of TAs in the classroom was recently investigated in a study using randomized controlled groups comparing the impact on student learning outcomes. Results indicated that the use of TAs had a positive impact on test scores for disadvantaged students. The impact was most noticeable when sharing instruction responsibility in the classroom occurred (Anderson, Beuchert, Nielson, & Thomsen, 2018).

In an international analysis of the role and efficacy of TAs, Sharma and Salend, (2016) reported that, in addition to supporting teacher-directed instruction and performing a variety of non-instructional roles, TAs are shouldering significant instructional, classroom management and socialization roles, making important curricular decisions regarding the education of students with disabilities, and teaching them in separate locations. Further, while TAs have also been found by Butt and Lowe (2012) to support teaching and inclusive education along with students' academic, social and behavioural

performance, at times they experienced unclear professional roles. In addition, limited communication and opportunities for collaboration, training, supervision, and professional learning were reported as major factors hindering the impact of the work of TAs (Butt & Lowe, 2012). The importance of establishing clear roles and responsibilities for TAs is to ensure that the appropriate guidelines have been followed. Adherence to Australian legislation regarding the supervision of students (Gibson, Paatsch, & Toe, 2016) and to policies driven by the Cook Islands Education Master Plan (Cook Islands Ministry of Education, 2008) stipulates clear boundaries of the roles and responsibilities of TAs. However, the tasks and duties of TAs continue to vary widely across schools and communities, as schools have, in many instances, ignored regulations (Page, Boyle, McKay, & Mavropoulou, 2018; Gibson et al., 2016).

Overall, it appears that, in order for TAs to adequately facilitate the learning and social outcomes of students with disabilities, they require clearly stated definitions of their role that is then put into practice, support by the school in terms of supervision, and participation in a collaborative team, and training.

NSW historic and legislative context

Understanding inclusion makes it necessary to engage in the historical cultural value systems through which disability is viewed (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Barton, 2016). Students with disabilities have been integrated into mainstream classes since the mid 1970s, after more than 50 years of educating students with a disability in special schools (Konza, 2008).

Inclusion in the Australian context today is often used on a sliding scale of participation in mainstream classrooms from full participation to partial inclusion and separate special schools (Armstrong et al., 2016). A student's right to be educated at their local school in NSW is upheld by federal legislation such as the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Australian Government, 2016) and the Disability Standards for Education (Australian Government, 2005). The Department of Education NSW (2017) has recently moved to support more students with disabilities in the regular classroom with the provision of TAs in all schools.

The prevalence of students (aged between 5 and 14 years) with a disability in Australia is thought to be around to be around 7% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Within that figure, 13% were identified as being on the autistic spectrum, which is the most prevalent disability category. According to federal and state policy, these students are entitled to attend their local school. In practice, however, segregated schooling, either special schools or support classes, continues to be used to manage and exclude children considered too troublesome, difficult, and/or impaired (Lilley, 2015).

Slee (2016) argues that the Australian education system, with its myopic focus on competitive testing, means that not all schools recognize inclusion and include all students. Moreover, Hardy and Woodcock (2015) argue that this competitive individualism has lent itself to a persistent narrative of defect and deficit. Such a discourse has contributed to a conservative inclusive application of state policy in NSW in which inclusion is regarded in a narrow and cursory manner. New South Wales policy changes (Special Education Initiative, 2005) from special to regular classrooms were expected to impact on TA practice, such that classroom teachers were to take responsibility for all students in their classroom. In reality, teachers reported being ill equipped to deal with changing instructions to meet individual needs, leaving TAs to take care of learning and

all other needs of a student (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007). Eight years later, research, such as that conducted by Graham (2015), continues to report on the inappropriate use of TAs in NSW schools where mismatches are observed between state policies and practices of TAs.

Cook Islands historic and legislative context

Within its context as an emerging inclusive education provider, the CI contributes to the understanding of IE globally from a unique perspective. Situated in the South Pacific, the 15 islands of the CI, of which Rarotonga is the largest, reflects an intersection of the cultural context of traditional CI worldview and the Western influences that has served to create community perceptions of IE.

The CI sits within its own set of collectivist cultural values of participation, co-operation, discipline, community involvement, language and Western values (Te Ava, Rubie-Davies, Airini, & Ovens, 2013). Students are taught a curriculum that was initiated in New Zealand (Cook Islands Ministry of Education, 2002), which can, at times, create certain struggles and frustrations. Smith (2008), stated that one such struggle is the challenge that students with disabilities face because a common belief in the CI community that "generally people with disabilities do not have much potential for learning or change" (p. 22).

Notwithstanding the dilemmas involved in making sense of disability, the CI has made some gains and experienced some losses in its brief Individualised education E history. The *Convention for the Rights of person with Disability* (*CRPD*) came into force in 2009, promoting a barrier-free inclusive and rights-based approach for all in the CI. The *Disability Act, 2008)* was introduced to act alongside the *CRPD* to maintain a disability strategy as set out by the convention (Mourie, 2012). The CI has a current educational policy statement (Merumeru, 2011) that had been updated from the original document (Court, 2002) created a shift from "special needs" to "inclusive education" for all students. There are no special schools in the CI, although learning units attached to schools exist. The IE policy addressed the learning needs of students and also allows for the provision of TA support on the basis of need and not diagnosis (Townsend, Page, & Mccawe, 2014). In terms of practice, the availability of TAs helped to improve the predominantly negative attitudes of teachers having students with disabilities in their classrooms (Page, Boyle, McKay, & Mavropoulo, 2018). Despite Ministry policies for inclusive practices, what was commonly experienced was TAs left on their own to support students with disabilities so that teachers "can get on with the rest of the class" (Page et al., 2018, p. 9).

Sustainability of service provision, however, has proved to be a challenge. Teacher aide training has been inconsistent in its delivery, although currently available. Visiting Paediatric services are not always available, and CI doctors have not been trained in specialist diagnosis (Blattner et al., 2017). For these reasons, while there is sound policy addressing IE, delivery of programmes for students with disabilities and, specifically, ASD, must be sustained.

There are approximately 2% of enrolled students identified as having a disability or a significant learning need. Of that 2%, 17% are considered to have ASD characteristics, and constitutes the most prevalent disability category (Townsend et al., 2014). Given the numbers of students with ASD in schools both in the CI and, similarly, in NSW, it is

pertinent to explore what is working in the global field for TAs working with students with ASD so that delivery of services can be maximized.

The existing research in what works for TAs who support students with disabilities is extensive and findings report on the perceptions of TAs themselves (Butt & Lowe, 2012; Lehane, 2013), parents (Hamilton & Wilkinson, 2016), teachers (Carrington et al., 2016; Chung et al., 2015), and, to a lesser extent, students (Saggers, 2015). Much of the research, however, has been conducted within a limited range of countries. Sharma and Salend (2016) have called for further studies in other localities to extend our understanding. Additionally, the research has largely been confined to TA experiences supporting students with intellectual disabilities; therefore, perspectives from a wider range of disabilities would be useful (Danker et al., 2016). The current research is also particularly timely given research by Walker (2015), who reported that, in NSW, despite the growing prevalence of students with ASD in classrooms, teachers lack the knowledge to meet the social, communication, behavioural, and academic needs of these students. As a result, teachers reported relying on TAs for support. It is pertinent, therefore, to explore the perceptions of these TAs and their practices when supporting students with ASD in order to provide a way forward for both TAs as well as teachers. Further, this paper is the first to investigate TA's perceptions of working with students with learning needs in the CI and, because TAs work predominantly with students with ASD, TAs supporting this subgroup of students were the focus of the research. The growing international use of TAs requires an investigation of the experiences of TAs in various settings to fully understand their role from a global viewpoint. Thus, the research questions explored the perceptions of TAs from a region with very new inclusive education practices versus a country with a much longer history of students with disability in regular school settings.

Research questions

The current study contributes to the understanding of TA views and experiences working with students with ASD across different contexts. The study uses a qualitative design in order to meet the values of CI participants and to meet with a methodology that is "closer to Pacific ways" (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 23). The methodology expresses "the valued knowledge and ways of living in the Cook Islands world" (A. Te Ava, personal communication, July 30, 2017). The research explored the following questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences of CI and NSW TAs experiences and views towards the inclusion of students with ASD in mainstream classes?

2. What are the greatest challenges and benefits in working with students with ASD?

3. What are the perceived effective strategies for teaching students with ASD in inclusive settings?

METHOD

Participants

TAs from public primary schools in the Hastings/Mid North Coast NSW, were invited to participate in this research. Six TAs from public primary schools volunteered. All TAs in Rarotonga, CI, were invited to participate and eight TAs volunteered. All TAs were chosen on the basis that they worked with students with ASD and had at least two years' experience in this role. Ethics was approved by the university Human Research Ethics

Committee (HREC). In addition, the study was approved by the CI National Research Committee. All participants were female with experience ranging from 2 to 18 years.

Materials and procedures

A semi-structured interview schedule was used for the study. The interview schedule consisted of 17 questions exploring three thematic areas: a) personal experiences with teaching students with Autism, b) personal views about the educational placement of students with Autism, and c) personal views about the inclusion of students with Autism in inclusive settings. The schedule had been developed to explore TAs views and experiences of inclusion of students with ASD in a secondary setting (Blizzard, 2015) and the questions were modified to facilitate local language and context. The interviews were conducted in English; English is the language of instruction in schools in both CI and NSW. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour in length and took place in the school grounds where the TA worked. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

Data analysis

The data from the interview questions were coded and analysed according to the resultant themes using NVivo 11 qualitative data analysis software. Inductive reasoning using a thematic analysis approach considered themes based on the literature and data. The interviews were analysed and responses grouped into themes using the thematic analysis approach of Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012). An inductive approach was used, given the exploratory nature of this project. Themes were also compared across interviews to determine commonalities and differences between participants and their experiences. To maintain confidentiality, participants are referred to in the results by their transcription code: transcription number and country abbreviation (either CI for the Cook Islands or NSW for New South Wales, Australia). For example, 3-CI refers to the third conversation transcribed with a participant who worked with students with ASD in the CI.

RESULTS

The research questions examined the similarities and differences between CI and NSW TAs views and experiences towards IE in primary schools. Specifically, the first research question explored TAs' experiences and views towards the inclusion of students with ASD in mainstream classes. The second research question identified the greatest challenges and benefits in working with students with ASD, and the final question established the perceived effectiveness of strategies for teaching students with ASD in inclusive settings.

Five main themes emerged from the interviews. The first research question identified two themes; a) that inclusion is beneficial for everyone, and b) effective inclusion requires a supportive learning environment. The second research question identified the third theme in that behavioural challenges are a common issue. The third research question revealed a fourth theme: students with ASD require unique teaching strategies, and, additionally, a fifth theme identified that the TAs' role is to maximize social skills through scaffolded learning for students with ASD.

Inclusion is beneficial for everyone

All six NSW and eight CI participants considered inclusion to be beneficial for not only students with ASD but also for their classmates. Students were seen to benefit from the social modelling provided by students without disabilities. Participant 1-NSW reported that "I've obviously thought of the reasons that it's real life for these kids".

In regard to the benefits that inclusion provided for all students, these were two-fold. Participant 4-NSW described the development of tolerance in other students, "I've seen the students in her class grow, become more tolerant, understanding, willing to help". Additionally, Participant 4-NSW reported that academic adjustments provided for students with ASD met other students' learning needs as this provision "can sometimes assist other students who are at the lower level in the classroom and otherwise won't have access to that kind of help".

While inclusion was regarded as beneficial for all of the students with ASD, four TAs and one TA from the CI reported that students with severe academic or behavioural needs were more appropriately catered for in segregated settings. Participant 6-NSW stated, for example, that she supported inclusion for all, although, "I mean, if the child's throwing chairs and being violent I thinks that's different".

Nearly all TAs discussed the necessity of providing an environment that met the students' needs, which was described as individual or small group time either inside or away from the classroom. Participant 6-NSW reported that "I see the need for support units, I can see the need for mainstreaming and I think they both have benefits". The option of an alternate space for the student to go to when their sensory needs are overloaded was therefore favoured:

> Over here he's distracted, you know because of the children and he won't concentrate . . . I mean that's why I want a room for just him. (Participant 3-CI)

A particular difference was noted in the language and explanations used between the CI and NSW TAs when describing the benefits of inclusion for all students. Three participants stated that inclusion and the acceptance of disability in the CI was because, "we're in a Christian country and you do not treat people differently" (Participant 1-CI). The explanation based on religious underpinnings was reiterated by Participant 2-CI: "I try to teach the other children [respect for others] in our community and they ask me why I say to them well, in the Bible it says do unto others what you want done unto you". As well as Christian-based descriptions of the benefits of inclusion for students, from a religious standpoint of acceptance of all people, the importance of participation in cultural activities such as dance and local music performances was also reported ($n = 2$).

Effective inclusion requires a supportive learning environment

All TAs stated a close working relationship with parents and all school staff was necessary for effective inclusion: "If you've got the right support and the right environment, the child copes" (Participant 3-NSW). Good communication was a key element to a good relationship which involved, "constant updates with the teachers . . . [the teacher] converses with [the] parents and that can come back to me so I know where he's at" (Participant 2-NSW). Open communication allowed teamwork and collaboration to occur. Four NSW TAs reported that collaboration between staff and executive have improved support for themselves for example, one TA stated that "everyone

communicates. Any decisions are made together and I think that is the main thing" (Participant 3-NSW).

NSW TAs report that the school community is the most effective mechanism but CI TAs reported that successful inclusion involved the whole community rather than only strong school participation: 'Of course they may have their church people, but on the outside, they actually need the support from the community, friends, family' (1-CI).

Additional challenges faced by all TAs was a lack of resourcing and/or funding that impeded the ability to provide the supportive learning environment they spoke of. Further, there was a noticeable difference between the CI and NSW experiences of funding. Four of the eight CI TAs indicated that teaching programmes would benefit from additional resources while four out of the six participants from NSW mentioned funding as having an impact on the inclusion of students because TAs in NSW saw funding as useful for employment of additional TAs as well as resources. Additionally, TAs in the CI stated that the resources used in classrooms were often made locally and not purchased because resources were scarce. Participant 5-CI described:

> I make the schedules, all the visuals for [student]. We are making a book about planes, he loves planes, at the moment, and we are going to the airport next week. I only have one good book in our library for him. Not much.

Behavioural challenges are a common issue

At some point, all TAs had experienced or witnessed difficult behaviour. Of note, four of the six NSW TAs report the negative impact of managing behaviour. Participant 4, NSW, acknowledges that student behaviour management can "take up a lot of time and it effects the health of everyone" and became the "problem" for TAs themselves to manage. An example was given by Participant 5-NSW:

> We get asked to pick up the pieces an awful lot when there's been a meltdown . . . so, you know, sometimes that just gets to me a bit.

While TAs in the CI had experienced oppositional behaviour, CI TA interviews were absent of the same key words that were used by NSW TAs, such as "problematic" and "frustrating". Instead, CI participants reported these events in language that reflected that they were less concerned about it. Participant 3-CI, for example, stated that "we just manage anything as we go along in the day and we might go outside – I just do what he needs. I don't see it is a big deal". Moreover, five of the six TAs from NSW used antecedent strategies to avoid "meltdowns", "tantrums" (n = 2) and "lockdowns" (n = 1); these words were not used by CI TAs.

Students with ASD require unique teaching strategies

That NSW TAs perceived student behaviour as more problematic appeared to have an impact on their subsequent strategies in managing behaviour. Five of the six TAs from NSW used antecedent strategies, such as preparing students for transition that also served to avoid behavioural "meltdowns". Of note, seven of the eight CI TAs relied on the strategy of "taking a break" as an antecedent strategy, and physical breaks were commonly employed:

> He likes to . . . play with the ball and so I take him out for five minutes when he is disengaged . . . he has a short concentration span so getting him out of the classroom

and getting him involved in something like physical I think he responds well for that (Participant 7-CI).

In terms of learning, TAs used a range of common strategies within their repertoire. Strategies included providing: routines, structure, sensory strategies such as weight belts, modified work, a predetermined plan, various seating arrangements, feelings charts, time out to calm, varied expectations if the student is having an off-day, timers, visuals, pre-warnings, rewarding with computer time, giving choices, token systems, break-times, fidget toys, and reducing noise. Using students' special interests were often employed to teach new concepts.

In a further analysis of the differences employed by TAs of teaching strategies, it was found that NSW TAs used more concrete resources such as weight belts, timers, tokens and fidget toys. Teacher aides in the CI relied on strategies that did not require physical resources, such as modifying work, giving choices, break-times, teaching concepts, and routines. The introduction of iPads for students on the inclusive education register in the Cook Islands meant that time on the iPad was an exception of that tendency; six of the eight TAs reported computer time as a reward.

The TAs role is to maximize social and learning goals through scaffolded support

Commonly reported by TAs in both the CI and NSW (n = 9) were examples of their role to enable student independence. Support for learning was commonly achieved by scaffolding the student's learning in class with an overarching goal to increase independence. Participant 1-NSW described that "you feel good in yourself that they're learning to read, to write, to adapt". Further, all TAs perceived that another principal role was the development of social skills. Participant 2-NSW stated: "I just see the other side of it, if we didn't include [social skills] it would certainly be to their detriment in terms of their future".

However, a challenge in providing academic and social support was that, often, TAs were given responsibilities that exceeded their roles. In the CI, three TAs stated that they were charged with developing the teaching plan. In one case, the TA had never seen the student's individualized education program. As a result, TAs were required to accept the "extra burden . . . I get used to doing it, [the teachers] don't, that's not what they signed up for. I've been told before – that's not what I signed up for" (Participant 6-CI). NSW TAs also reported instances of working with teachers who would leave the TA to "deal with it" (Participant 3-NSW). Other participants (n = 3) reported that the TA is given extra responsibility as teachers or the school is "not set up and not capable" (4-NSW) to manage students with Autism.

DISCUSSION

The current research spoke to the growing global use of TAs and their roles in regular classrooms, and the need to understand practices from comparative perspectives. Students with ASD were the focus of the study as ASD is the most prevalent disability in NSW and the CI. Additionally, TAs are often given a disproportionate responsibility for the care of students with ASD. The results point out many similarities between TA views and experiences on inclusion for students with ASD in NSW and the CI.

The research questions examined the perceptions of CI and NSW TAs' views and experiences towards IE in primary schools and generated five themes; inclusion is

beneficial for everyone; effective inclusion requires a supportive learning environment; behavioural challenges are a common issue; students require unique teaching strategies; and, additionally, the TAs role is primarily to maximize social and learning skills through scaffolded classroom work, although at times this role can overstep stated boundaries. This section discusses the importance of identifying the different contexts in which TAs work to successfully support students with ASD given the reality of their role. The study findings highlight the significance that local meaning plays in understanding, relating to, and supporting students with ASD. Of note, the experiences and perceptions of TAs across these contexts provides a way forward to develop or grow alternative roles, and context-specific training to meet the needs of those roles for TAs working with students with ASD.

The first finding in the study showed that TAs all supported IE for the students they worked with although they worked in different settings across the day, including full participation, small group, and one-to-one settings within the classroom, as well as teaching in separate workspaces. These practices are supported by other research findings which note there is not one commonly appropriate site for learning (Simpson, Mundschenk, & Heflin, 2011; Roth, 2013). Additionally, five TAs considered that the needs of students with ASD who exhibited severe behavioural or academic challenges would be better served in special schools. This perception has been widely reported in the research showing teaching staff are less likely to want students with behavioural difficulties in their class because of disruption and time taken away from teaching (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Furthermore, students with autism are also more likely to be excluded or suspended than their peers (Roberts & Simpson, 2016) primarily due to challenging behaviour relating to their disability. Significantly, only one CI TA reported that a special school setting would be beneficial to students with appreciably challenging needs. This may be the result of the absence of such a resource available in that environment. Additionally, the difference in attitudes towards inclusivity and challenging behaviour may be an outcome of strong community ties and church influences that encourages participation for all (Te Ava et al., 2013). It is also likely that, given these cultural values and community perceptions of disability (McDonald, 2001; Smith, 2008), challenging behaviour is positioned differently.

Another theme from the results was that effective inclusion required a supportive learning environment. The findings showed that clear and open communication, facilitated team work, and the involvement of all stakeholders, including the family, was necessary for the successful implementation of planning and reporting. Research has shown that family involvement significantly improves student outcomes and inclusion is most successful when staff and parents work together (Fergusson, 2008). In the CI, community and church involvement were important and markedly different mechanisms that constituted TAs perceptions of a supportive environment. Close communication with communities and community groups is regarded as critical in Pacific contexts because this approach aligns with cultural values and expectations (Sharma, Forlin, Marella, & Jitoko, 2017).

One of the challenges faced by all TAs in providing a supportive learning environment, however, was a lack of resourcing and/or funding. The noticeable difference between the CI and NSW experiences of funding was that the process of resource allocation is centralized in the CI (Townsend et al., 2014). As a result, schools do not have the ability to be flexible with the allocation of resources, as is the case in NSW. In NSW, schools, funding is flexibly managed by the school (Department of Education, NSW, 2017). Further, TAs in the CI critiqued the availability of concrete resources. This, in turn,

appeared to impact on their choice of strategy, where it was apparent that CI TAs made use of what was available in their environment, such as using visuals they had made, or adapting the curriculum and making their own teaching resources to incorporate individual special interests. While NSW TAs used strategies that included the same ASD-specific techniques (Lindsay, Proulx, Scott, & Thomson, 2014) as the CI TAs had, they also used more strategies using specialized resources such as weight belts.

An additional difference was that NSW TAs appropriated strategies to alleviate the possibility of "meltdowns" which is a colloquial description of feeling overwhelmed with frustration and anxiety (Baker, 2014) "tantrums" or "lockdowns". In contrast, CI TAs did not use these words nor viewed oppositional behaviour as problematic, which may be accounted for in cultural values, as outlined earlier, as well as language differences (for example, there is no word for Autism ("Autism", 2016) in the Cook Islands language). The results also provided a strong theme that students with ASD required unique teaching strategies. Most TAs used a range of specific ASD approaches that included a range of antecedent strategies to maximize learning by encouraging appropriate classroom behaviours.

Finally, TAs considered their overarching role to be one of supporting the learning goals of students with ASD in both academic and social skills development. This was accomplished by supporting students in a range of strategies that involved one-to-one, small group work, as well as teaching individually in a segregated setting within the school. While TAs stated that a quiet space and one-to-one teaching is imperative, Giangreco (2013) and Butt (2016) claim that this model is the least inclusive model of support because teachers tend to disengage from the student and the student becomes an isolated island in the mainstream. In terms of teaching students with ASD, however, there is a body of evidence that supports individual teaching of specific strategies to be the most effective (Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber, & Kincaid, 2003; Parsons et. al., 2011).

However, a challenge in providing academic and social support was that TAs were responsible for a range of additional tasks that they were not expected to perform, such as teaching and duty of care across the school day. This finding is consistent with other research in which TAs were required to undertake extra work and obligations by the school administration (Howard & Ford, 2007). Teacher aides justified or accepted this role, suggesting that schools and teachers did not yet have the capacity or abilities to better manage the complexities of students with ASD.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

The literature reports that the basis of an inclusive education (e.g., Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2013; Merumeru, 2012), is the fundamental right of all students to access an education at their local school. Teacher aides across the two countries have provided a valuable insight into the similarities and differences of their views and experiences. Much can be learned for the global development of the TA profession from the resultant trending themes and nuances. Overall, TAs generally share similar experiences, cope with the same challenges, and have analogous approaches to inclusion. There were differences noted resulting from cultural and institutional contexts also. These contrasting points indicate a diversity of thinking and positioning in attitudes and practices towards students with ASD. Such differences show that one model of working with students cannot be transposed into different contexts; models of working

with students with ASD must be contextualized in order to maximize the successful learning for these students.

One of the future directions that arises from the results is to recognize the importance of ongoing ASD-specific training that reflects the local context. Teacher aides also need to be supported by school staff and, in particular, teachers, who need to take more responsibility for developing and monitoring learning and pastoral care; this appears to be a global and ongoing dilemma (Coates, Lamb, Bartlett, & Datta, 2017; Tones et al., 2017). Further, TAs stress the importance of adequate resource provision that they consider vital to successfully providing support.

To conclude, the perceptions of TAs within this study indicate that learning for students with ASD is most effective with situation-specific and context-appropriate support. TAs, in the current classroom climate of inclusive education, play a valuable role in the provision of this. The findings identified in this study can be used to address the critical issues to be considered in future directions and tailored ASD professional development that TAs have long requested (Groome & Rose, 2005) that will assist the educational inclusion of students with ASD internationally.

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Predictable pathways: Pacific Islander learners and school transitions in Melbourne's western region

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This paper tracks the education trajectories of a small group of Melbourne-based Pacific Islander (PI) learners who transitioned from secondary to post-school destinations, 2012 to 2015. Their school experiences were monitored over four years with the aim of identifying common pathways and underlying factors. The study found that the PI learners typically followed similar post-school pathways to non-PI learners. In all cases, they transitioned directly to higher or vocational education, non-school alternative settings or direct employment pathways. However, there was a consistent pattern of lower level academic achievement and, consequently, lower status post-school pathways. These low-level outcomes, whether directed by learners or schools, were often accepted even if inconsistent with initial learner or parental goals. While a direct transition from secondary school to university was the most desired pathway for many learners and their families, the study found that alternative school settings provided important spaces for learners to re-negotiate their school goals and return to university study. Acquiring employment immediately after leaving school was also perceived as an acceptable alternate pathway. Acceptance of these eventual but unplanned pathways helped reinforce a perception that school transitions of PI learners are typically low-level and mostly predictable.

Keywords: Pacific Islander migrant learners; school achievement and pathways

INTRODUCTION

The existing literature on Pacific Islander (PI)[1] learner migrants suggests that, even though the number of such migrant entering post-compulsory secondary school in Australia is increasing, the number completing such schooling remains proportionately low (Ainley et al., 2000; Chenoweth, 2014; Kearney & Glen, 2017; Rose, Moore, & Quanchi, 2009; Scull & Cuthill, 2008). The result is fewer PI learners enrolling in higher education and PI families' strong 'migrant dream' of achieving labour market success through education is lost.

Many PI parents and learners value education highly and view schooling as a realistic pathway towards achieving career success and wellbeing in a globalized world (Ravulo, 2015). Studies, however, consistently report that PI learners in Australia face challenges in terms of their school engagement and transitions into tertiary level studies (Chenoweth, 2014; Kearney, 2012; Pakoa, 2005; Scull & Cuthill, 2008). The inability of learners to overcome such challenges is

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[1] Pacific Islander (PI) refers to the diverse communities of people who originate from the many islands scattered across the Pacific Ocean, and who identity as ethnically Polynesian (from American Samoa, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Hawaii, Niue, Rapanui, Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu), Melanesian (from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) or Micronesian (from Banaba, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia).

concerning, especially if it leads to situations where they develop low perceptions about their own opportunities in education (Biddle, 2014) and, even worse, a situation where PI parents, families and school staff regard this low-level trend as the norm for PI learners in Australian school settings.

The concern with low-level success in education extends to and directly impacts employment opportunities and patterns for PI learners and even the broader PI communities who experience ongoing challenges with accessing and securing stable, long-term and career-related sustainable employment (George & Rodriquez, 2009; Vasta, 2004). When we consider the significant impact of educational achievement on employability and job market success, it becomes clear that PI learners in urban settings, such as Melbourne, are missing out on the opportunities to become active and engaged members of their communities in Australia, with limited access to higher education pathways and ongoing, long-term restrictions to professional and career-specific employment that can fulfil personal goals and respond positively to parental and community expectations from schooling.

This paper tracks the schooling trajectories of a small group of Melbourne-based PI learners who transitioned from secondary to post-school destinations from 2012 to 2015. It focusses specifically on the experiences of eight of the 14 learner participants who had left secondary school over this four-year period to identify common pathways in their post school pathways and the underlying factors. Personal, home and school factors are considered as contributing towards the shaping and influencing of their schooling trajectories. The paper argues that PI learner perceptions, experiences and approaches to schooling and further education pathways are determined through the course of schooling by numerous, varied and complex factors. Navigating these competing and sometimes conflicting situations may lead to achievement and transition patterns that do not necessarily reflect low motivation or poor academic ability on the part of these learners. But accepting these low-level and predictable pathways as the norm for PI learners may cause ongoing challenges for this group of learners in Australia.

PI SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA

Current literature on PI migrants and secondary schooling in Australia affirms that personal, home, school, and community factors all have negative impacts on the school experiences of PI learners (Anae, Anderson, Benserman, & Coxon, 2002). Studies have particularly focused on the home setting when exploring physical and cultural barriers affecting PI learners, including: time and in-home structures for completing homework (Anae et al., 2002; Mafi, 2005); cultural identity and responsibilities (Pakoa, 2005); 'collective cultural orientation' (Kearney & Glen, 2017); low levels of parental experience in education, compounded by limited English language (Mafi, 2005; Rose et al., 2009).

At a personal level, some PI learners have found the higher education (HE) setting to be too unfamiliar, particularly HE's emphasis on English language proficiency and formal academic communication styles and formats (Rose et al., 2009). In some PI learners' homes, English is not the main language of communication; thus, learner confidence to speak and write English to the required academic standards is compromised. This challenge also impacts on PI communication levels and relationships with school staff and peers, which affects PI learners' perceptions of identity and belonging within classroom and school settings (Nabobo, 2012; Thaman, 2008).

Lack of PI role models in these formal spaces further account for a sense of isolation and de-motivation, with some learners finding it difficult to maintain appropriate relationships with staff or peers at school. In addition, low family incomes experienced by most PI migrants means that they will be unlikely able to meet tertiary education costs, further compromising learner

aspirations to undertake tertiary study and thus meaningfully engage and achieve at secondary school (Chenoweth, 2014; Kearney, 2012). Some PI learners have dropped out purposely to find work and contribute to family finances (Ravulo, 2015).

At the school level, cultural distance was identified as a particular barrier for PI learners, especially where the social and cultural requirements of schooling were antithetical to Pacific "lived" experiences and cultural forms of learning (Gegeo, 2001; Sanga, 2013; Thaman, 2008). Many PI Indigenous researchers have highlighted the differences between Western and Pacific cultural forms of knowledge and pedagogies, and their effect on PI approaches to socialization, engagement, and relationships at school (Dooley, Exley, & Singh, 2000; Samu, 2007; Thaman, 2008). Some of these differences relate to ways of working, where PI are said to learn better using experiential approaches and working collectively in groups compared with the formal, theoretical and individualistic approaches that are emphasized in Western classrooms. PI are also known for placing emphasis on trusted relationships and meaningful connections with those around them, which may not be encouraged in today's classrooms (Samu, 2007; Thaman, 2008). The resultant, ongoing, low outcomes of PI learners resulting from these differences give both learners and teachers incorrect perceptions about learners' abilities and potential (Biddle, 2014).

At the community level, notions of citizenship, identity and belonging also affect PI levels of social and cultural integration and adjustment to broader society. Most importantly, these self-concept notions affect PI access to community and government services and benefits, with differences between and within PI groups, depending on migration background and visa status. For example, not having access to educational assistance such as HECS-HELP[2] for university studies may demotivate some PI learners from undertaking university studies. If they also come from low-income families that have insecure or intermittent employment, these learners may forgo HE studies to focus on family livelihood needs. For these learners, earning an income is viewed as a valuable contribution to family wellbeing.

METHODOLOGY

Much of the data for this paper was derived from semi-structured interviews conducted as part of the author's doctoral research, which was designed as a longitudinal case study with data collection spanning a four-year period from 2012 to 2015. Information sourced from 78 semi-structured interviews form the baseline data for this study's findings. Data gained from the interviews were analysed using an inductive and thematic analysis approach. NVivo was initially used to transcribe and open-code raw data into categories that were then related together to extrapolate common overall features and formulate over-arching themes. A process of constant comparison analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) then followed to identify the connections between various categories and to formulate recurring and pertinent themes.

 Employing a longitudinal study approach was necessary to cater for the generally small size of the PI population size and ethnic distribution in Australia, where New Zealand Maori, Polynesians, Melanesians and Micronesians account for approximately 45%, 38%, 15% and 0.4% of the PI population respectively (Ravulo, 2015). Efforts to recruit more Melanesians and Micronesians from selected and known community networks proved difficult, given the generally low numbers of these two ethnic groups in Australia and, particularly, in Melbourne. Nevertheless, this study's sample size reflects proportionately the national PI distribution.

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[2] Higher Education Contribution Scheme – Higher Education Loan Program (HECS-HELP) is a loan scheme for eligible students enrolled in Commonwealth supported places and studying a higher education qualification and is used to pay for their student contribution amounts.

There were 48 participants involved in the study; 14 were learner participants and the other 34 comprised 22 parents or guardians of the learners and 12 members of staff from their schools. The learners were recruited using a combination of purposive sampling and snowballing techniques (Merriam, 2009) and mostly identified through informal networks in schools, churches and the PI communities in Melbourne's western region. From an initial pool of 26 positive participant responses, 14 were selected on the basis of seniority at school, with preference for those already enrolled in Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Parents/guardians and school staff were recruited only after the primary participant (the learner) had agreed to participate and if they also agreed to their parents and/or school staff participating.

The 14 learner participants comprised:

- Nine females and five males, self-identified as PI from Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Niue and Papua New Guinea, all resident in Melbourne's western region.
- Twelve Polynesians whose parents or guardians had migrated to Australia from New Zealand.
- Two Melanesians who had migrated directly from Papua New Guinea.

All the learner participants attended one of seven secondary schools in Melbourne's west: five were co-educational Government schools and two were Catholic schools. All seven schools offered a full secondary school curriculum (Years 7 to 12) with a two-year post-compulsory option comprising the VCE and the VCAL. Of the 14 study participants, 13 were following the VCE option, the most popular pathway into university studies, and only one was doing VCAL studies, which provides a pathway towards Technical and Further Education (TAFE) studies.

The western region of Melbourne, which includes the local council areas of Brimbank, Marybyrnong and Wyndham, where the participants lived and attended school, is one of the more popular residential areas for PI as well as other migrants, all attracted to the area's industrial and manufacturing base with easy access to unskilled and semi-skilled employment, public transport and cheaper housing and rich multi-cultural vibe. This area is also known for having generally low levels of socio-economic status and lifestyle, high unemployment and crime rates, and poor education and health outcomes (Helme, Teese, Dulfer, Robinson, & Jones, 2009; Sheehan & Wiseman, 2004).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the participants' pathways over four years, with the shaded area demonstrating the trajectories of the eight participants who had left formal schooling during the research period.

Table 1: Pathways of study participants over 4 years

No.	Sex	Age	Year 1 2012	Year 2 2013	Year 3 2014	Year 4 2015
1	F	17	Year 12 VCE	University Degree	University Degree	University Degree
2	F	16	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCE Year 12 VCAL	TAFE Certificate	TAFE Diploma
3	F	16	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCE TAFE Certificate	TAFE Diploma	University Degree
4	M	17	Year 12 VCE	Employment	Employment	Employment
5	M	17	Year 12 VCE	Employment	Employment	Employment

6	M	15	Year 10	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCAL	TAFE
7	F	15	Year 10	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCE	University Degree
8	F	15	Year 10	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCE	University Degree
9	F	14	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCE
10	F	14	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11 VCE
11	F	14	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCE
12	M	14	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCE
13	F	14	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11 VCE	Year 12 VCE
14	M	13	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11 VCE

The school trajectories of the eight learners who had transitioned to post-school destinations during the study period are the focus of this paper because their pathways are more or less completed compared to the remaining six participants still pursuing formal secondary schooling. Their trajectories provide general but useful insights into the pathway patterns of PI learners and help provide the evidential basis for this paper's discussion and findings. The experiences of individual learners were initially assessed before being systematically mapped against the trajectories of the collective group to determine common factors influencing the group's post-school pathways.

Pathway options

The results for this group of PI learners show generally similar transition patterns as for non-PI learners, with learners transitioning from secondary- to post-secondary destinations using three common pathways: a direct transition to university or TAFE; a pathway to university studies through a non-school alternative education setting; and a direct pathway to employment. An interesting feature in this group's school pathways is that there was no disruption to their trajectories within the compulsory years of schooling (Years 7 to 10) but this trend changed when learners reached the post-compulsory schooling stage.

VCE was the most popular post-compulsory pathway selected, with 13 participants selecting this option at Year 10. However, not all of those who selected this pathway were able to successfully complete it. Of the eight participants who left school during the research period, only five successfully completed a senior secondary qualification (Year 12 VCE or VCAL) at their school: three were female participants (1, 7, 8) and two were male (5, 6). The female participants went directly to university while one male participant (6), who had selected VCAL studies at school, transitioned successfully to a TAFE course. The only male (5) who had successfully completed VCE took up employment directly after leaving school. Three participants did not complete VCE at school: two had been withdrawn from VCE studies at their schools but had continued their studies at alternative education settings, and a third participant, a male (4), took up direct employment.

An important finding is the importance of non-school alternative settings for learning, which provided a pathway for two participants who had been withdrawn from VCE studies at school. Although viewed by both sets of parents as a less desired pathway (compared to a direct transition to university), both learners accepted this pathway as a means to remain engaged in formal schooling, viewing it as a genuine pathway back into university study.

At a personal level, the pathways followed by each of the eight study participants somewhat reflected their initial school goals but consistently at a lower level than originally planned. For example, the three females who had transitioned directly to university were accepted into lower level courses than originally hoped. Participant 1, whose initial goal was to study medicine, achieved a lower than expected Australian Tertiary Admissions Result (ATAR) score, subsequently enrolled in a general science degree at a different university from the one she preferred. Similarly, participant 7 whose aim was to score an ATAR of 70, achieved a much lower score and had to enrol in a course different from her preferred choice. Participant 8, whose teachers, supported by her parents, had encouraged her to apply for a teaching degree, also achieved a lower ATAR score and enrolled in an Arts course. These examples evidence clear gaps in the preferred pathway choices and the consequent academic results achieved by PI learners and reveal obvious anomalies between the aspirations of learners in terms of school achievement and their subsequent pathways to post-school destinations.

This consistent, low-level pattern of pathways is also reflected in the trajectories of the two participants who transitioned to alternative education settings from VCE studies at school. Despite the opportunity to continue studying, thus keeping their dreams of university study alive, they had to defer their initial goal of transitioning directly to university from secondary school. Poor academic results and behaviour issues forced these withdrawals and both girls were steered by their schools towards certificate level courses. Although both learners were eligible for Commonwealth Support Place (CSP) support for their tuition costs, their roundabout pathway to university study meant that they would incur higher financial costs for their education in the longer term.

Only one participant (6) was able to follow his original choice of pathway, which comprised enrolment in a TAFE course, after successfully completing VCAL studies at school. His pathway was the smoothest but also most predictable. He had decided from an early age to become a tradesperson and both his family and teachers supported his choice. In his case, parental support for choice of course and flexibility to make his own pathway choice as well as support from teachers who knew his academic strengths helped to facilitate a smooth transition.

The pathways of the three participants who successfully transitioned to university are similar in some ways. All three females had experienced personal successes at school in the form of class prizes and good school reports (participant 1), satisfactory exam results and positive feedback from teachers (Via) and class prizes and a leadership position (participant 7) which motivated them to succeed at school. Each one had a parent or older sibling who had satisfactorily completed a university qualification in which they were currently engaged. All three were sufficiently supported with material and financial assistance at home. The main difference between them was their Australian citizenship status. While participants 7 and 8 had Australian citizenship, which meant they could receive Government support for their tuition costs, participant 1 did not have a similar benefit. As an Australian permanent resident, participant 1 was ineligible for a CSP and was also unable to acquire a HECS-HELP loan to pay for tuition costs. Her parents could not afford these fees but, due to a special arrangement with her enrolling university, participant 1 was allowed to enrol and encouraged to apply for Australian citizenship, which she did, preventing a premature withdrawal from her course. For these three girls, their personal motivation to succeed, their successes at school, the positive home support and high parental expectations, and the financial support to pay for tuition costs, all contributed towards facilitating their positive albeit lower level pathways to university.

The pathways of two females (participants 2 and 3) who moved to alternative educational settings are different in distinct ways. Before being withdrawn from school, each had experienced some successes at school (one had attended a prestigious leadership camp and achieved good results

while the other had been nominated for a sports scholarship after successful completion of VCE and had been getting good results). However, both were unable to sustain these positive results right through to school completion. While both girls were Australian citizens and eligible for Commonwealth support (CSP) for university studies, their personal and family circumstances triggered challenges that affected their school transitions. Their respective schools had been helpful in negotiating their subsequent pathways into alternative education settings but the immediate reaction from their parents to these decisions had been anger and disappointment. In both households, low family income, continued parental absence from home due to work responsibilities, and low levels of communication between parents and their children and their children's schools contributed towards distracting their personal motivations, learning interests, and school achievements.

DISCUSSION

Despite post-school transitions of PI learners following similar pathway patterns as for non-PI learners, their pathways are typically characterised by consistent lower than expected academic results, leading to general-based courses that are followed even when these do not match with their initial pathway goals, preferred courses, and institution choices. Such a negative pattern is concerning because it contributes to a perception that PI learners generally achieve low-level post-compulsory schooling results and outcomes, which inevitably lead to predictable low-level pathways. This is a serious concern for education providers and PI families and communities who want to see improvements in PI learners' school and employment pathways in Australia.

This study uncovered three dominant factors that influence PI learner pathways: student ability; school support; and parental expectations and support. A learner's school experiences and personal perceptions of their own abilities and performance had a significant influence on their actual post-school pathway. Some participants were quite self-aware of their abilities early on in their schooling and made decisions that matched these assessments. For example, those with less confidence in communicating in the English language would have realised early on that their academic work would be insufficient to acquire certain results or outcomes at school. Their self-concept, developed and informed by marked differences in their lived experiences and the unfamiliar requirements of formal academic settings may have affected their aspirations for further study.

School personnel and academic results also had a significant impact on pathway choices, and learners took school suggestions about possible career pathways very seriously. Some schools were quite influential in directing students towards certain pathways and a few learners benefited from the advice. However, this advice was mostly based on students' academic results. When students were doing academically well, staff generally supported their HE preferences of course or pathway. Interestingly, staff did not normally suggest "higher" options, even if some learners could have benefited from such advice. Generally, when learners showed poor effort or low academic results, they were steered towards lower level subjects or courses or withdrawn from school.

In some instances, school staff and learners worked together to facilitate the most suitable options. An example of this is where a student was kept at school until the VCE exams to appease a parent although the school had decided to withdraw him from sitting the VCE examinations. When possible, parents' views were considered but these had limited influence on final decisions about post-school pathways. Some parents were quite happy deferring to their children the responsibility for deciding school pathways if they were generally doing well at school. In these cases, learners mostly accepted school suggestions.

Parents, while being very influential at the goal setting stage of their children's development, became less instrumental in steering them towards certain pathways. More often than not, parents with the least amount of communication or interaction with their children's schools also had less knowledge of their children's interests, school progress or pathway plans other than what they learned from their children. In some cases, some parents were not able to communicate frequently with schools or their children about schooling issues due to work or other home commitments. In these circumstances, some learners tried to manage their own transitions to fit with parent's expectations but were also more likely to follow school suggestions even if these did not match with their preferred career goals. This situation often occurred if and when parents did not have the confidence to negotiate more favourable options for their children. For parents who did make the effort, they were sometimes deemed to have "too high and unrealistic" expectations if their children were not achieving good results at school.

Unsurprisingly, those learners who successfully secured places at university or TAFE generally accepted their pathways, even if these were offered at a lower level course or institution. A pathway to tertiary level education courses was seen as a benchmark of success for most learners and parents in this study. Where the choice of tertiary course or institution differed greatly from parental expectations (which was true for four participants), these disappointments were short-lived and the learners and their parents eventually accepted the outcomes. Gaining a university or TAFE place reflected a success in the children that many parents were proud of. However, the study also revealed that some parents held higher expectations for daughters to go to university and for sons to enrol in TAFE or take up direct employment. From the study findings at least, gaining entrance to university or TAFE for both girls and boys, and the ability to secure employment were acceptable benchmarks of success, with the capacity to earn considered as a positive second-option pathway for PI males.

The transition patterns of these eight learners were marked with both opportunities and challenges in the ways they navigated their secondary and post-secondary school experiences and trajectories. Concurring with past studies (Anae et al., 2002; Chenoweth, 2014; Kearney & Glen, 2017; Scull & Cuthill, 2008), these opportunities and challenges were facilitated and influenced by personal, home and school factors. These diverse spaces and the complexities of the relationships and experiences within them provided these learners with some positive trajectories but also many disruptions along the way. Some of these disruptions can be traced to ineffective strategies employed by learners, parents and schools in navigating the secondary school environment and its requirements.

Most noticeably, the post-compulsory level of secondary schooling was a particularly problematic phase for some learners, whose families struggled to provide the necessary resources and support required at this higher level. Characterized by more theoretical and formalised enquiry and instruction methods, some learners found it difficult to keep up with the academic requirements and standards, concurring with Pacific Indigenous researchers' views (Nabobo, 2012; Thaman, 2008) that the contradictions between a school's academic requirements and PI learners' cultural identities (Kearney & Glen, 2017; Pakoa, 2005;) and lived-in home experiences (Anae et al., 2002) present as critical challenges for many PI learners. For PI, too, there is a constant need to find place and fit within a harmonious setting and this can be difficult in spaces and with audiences that promote individualism and self-determination. Samu (2007, p. 21) refers to this concept as "I am part of a wider audience" where PI acknowledge that the choices individuals make can have significant implications on family and their wider community. Additionally, Gegeo (2001) and Thaman (2008) propose that PI learn best using practical, experiential and non-formal methods which are not typically catered for in urban Australian schools which focus more on formal, theoretical, and inquiry learning approaches.

This study also revealed some inter-generational gaps in terms of understanding the needs of modern day learners, particularly in new urban settings like Melbourne. Some PI families clearly did not have the necessary information to assist them in providing advice or support to their children at school. Insufficient information or advice about scholarship or career options caused some parents to have differing expectations about their children's opportunities and potential pathways. In some instances, some parents were so focused on their children going directly to university that they considered other pathways, such as TAFE or alternative settings, as less desirable outcomes from schooling.

For many PI learners, the home and the school presented as two important settings in which they reviewed, negotiated, and selected their educational goals and their consequent pathways (Paulsen, 2016). This supports the view that PI learners' identity and personal sense of concept is strongly connected to family, where giving support to family and upholding the "common good" (Samu, 2007; Sanga, 2013; Thaman, 2008) is a high priority. This belief both shapes and informs learner goals and priorities. For this group of learners, their families' cultural values, parental educational experiences, and financial situations played central roles in determining the support levels that a learner could access at home. The priority placed on upholding family and cultural values resulted in PI learners having to consistently negotiate personal and school goals against family needs and socio-cultural wellbeing. Sometimes, the pressure to do right by the family caused learners to put their own educational and career goals on hold, which ultimately resulted in a few learners' choosing to withdraw from school and find jobs to assist the family finances.

The need to please and appease parents was a huge motivating factor for some learners, and was often couched in a language of service, obligation, and reciprocity (Hau'ofa,1994). Due to having a strong "collective cultural orientation" (Kearney & Glen, 2017, p. 11; Samu, 2007), wherein school outcomes represent a whole family's success or failure, learners may feel pressured to display a positive front to their families about their school achievements when the actual results show otherwise. For some learners, the pressure to please parents drove learners to mask the realities of their performances and achievements at school which, when uncovered, caused frustration and disappointment for some parents. However, these parents mostly blamed themselves or their children for these shortcomings, concurring with Bronfenbrenner's (1996) theory that disadvantaged people often blamed themselves for their insufficiencies.

Sometimes learners who were not doing too well at school deliberately built walls between the home and school to prevent their parents from knowing what was truly happening at school, especially if they were not doing well. Similarly, school staff were sometimes kept in the dark about situations at home as a way to safeguard family vulnerabilities from being exposed. These strategies consequently led to further alienation of parents from the school or staff from the home context, causing these two parties to have incorrect or unrealistic perceptions of schooling or the home. Learners were found to readily apply such techniques on parents who had fewer experiences with education and fewer opportunities to communicate with schools.

Low parental income and education unaffordability also impacted on learner pathways, and sometimes learners were driven to find employment directly after leaving school to assist with family finances. This situation was common amongst those families whose citizenship status or socio-economic status restricted the opportunities to pay for university or TAFE studies.

CONCLUSIONS

The pathways of the PI learners in this study, whether forced or designed, caused them to encounter many obstacles along the way, including adapting school and career goals, courses

and institutions to fit with academic results, personal commitments, school expectations and family circumstances. Most pathways were taken up to fulfil a long-term goal to study at university or TAFE and to make families proud. The danger of these recurring pathway patterns is that schools as institutions have pre-conceived views about how PI perform. Schools may need to practice positive affirmation to encourage PI learners to excel both in class and out of class, and be understanding of their preferred ways of learning.

Within the home, there is a need for active engagement by parents with schools to learn about their child's whole of school experience, their strengths and needs, and practical strategies for supporting them more appropriately. Parents must be encouraged to communicate and collaborate better with schools about realistic academic potential, results and pathways for their children. Schools must also provide early and specific intervention to families to prepare PI learners for the post-compulsory stage of schooling. Career advice centres must engage actively with PI families to promote awareness about their children's abilities and choices at the post-compulsory schooling stage and provide adequate information and advice on scholarships, careers and pathway options that are relevant to learner' interests and abilities.

Finally, schools and other educational providers must develop a specific communication framework and toolkit for working more effectively with PI families and communities.

Acknowledgement

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Outcomes of a collaborative contextualised learning approach to teacher professional development in Papua, Indonesia

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The paper reports on a teacher professional development program conducted over two years in five different regions within the province of Papua, Indonesia. The goal of the program was to assist Papuan teachers to become more aware of and skilled in the use of interactive classroom pedagogies using local resources. The paper reviews the research around successful professional development programs in developing countries, and outlines the specific cultural, pedagogical, linguistic and resourcing issues encountered in this program. An effective response within the unique context of teacher professional development in Papua necessitated a process of ongoing collaborative inquiry between Australian academics, Papuan academic advisors, local Papuan master coaches and local classroom teacher participants. The paper evaluates the perceptions of participating classroom teachers on what was of importance in the program, gathered through the use of open-ended questions, researcher field notes and participant reflective responses.

Keywords: Papua, professional development, teacher education, collaborative inquiry

INTRODUCTION

This paper reports on a teacher professional development program conducted over two years in five different regions within the province of Papua, Indonesia. The program was funded by the Australian Government's Government Partnerships for Development (GPFD) program with smaller co-contributions by the Papuan Provincial Government Department of Education and Culture and University of the Sunshine Coast (USC). The program was designed to align with the Australian Government's stated commitment to "invest in better education outcomes for all children and youth across the Indo-Pacific region, to contribute to reduced poverty, sustainable economic growth, and enhanced stability" (DFAT, 2015, p. 3). One of the four strategic priorities which Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has identified is "improving learning outcomes and improving the quality of education" (DFAT, 2015, p. 10). Many international reviews have demonstrated that the quality of teachers and the effectiveness of their practices are highly significant predictors of improved learning outcomes (Chang et al., 2013; Naylor & Sayed, 2014; OECD, 2013; Vegas et al., 2012). Programs aimed at teacher professional

development continue to attract aid funding since in many developing countries pre-service and in-service teacher education is absent or inadequate (ACDP, 2014; Bett, 2016; Chang et al., 2013). However, the content and method of implementation of such programs have attracted increasing debate around issues relating to the cultural responsiveness and appropriateness of the training model, the curriculum content and pedagogical approach, and the resources used and generated.

Systematic reviews of teacher professional development programs show that an essential element of a successful program is direct relevance to the context of the participating teachers and their day-to-day experiences and aspirations for pupils (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2008). Programs that are developed independently of the participating teachers' practice contexts have less impact on student outcomes than approaches that are context-specific (Timperley et al., 2008). In contrast, context-specific approaches that assist teachers in creating practical applications of pedagogical principles to their own particular teaching situations empower teachers to solve identified issues affecting their students' outcomes (Timperley et al., 2008). Improved outcomes are also produced when the training approach recognizes differences between individual teachers and their starting points and provides opportunities for them to surface their beliefs and engage in peer learning and support in a positive, professional learning environment (Cordingley et al., 2015). One way to achieve this surfacing of belief is through collaborative inquiry. Collaborative inquiry is defined as "working with at least one other professional on a sustained basis" (Cordingley et al., 2015, p. 1). A collaborative inquiry approach assists teachers in reconstructing their knowledge in ways that are more likely to lead to transformative change (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid, & Mckinney, 2007). In keeping with this approach, successful teacher professional development programs will then be those in which the external facilitators act as collaborative coaches and/or mentors, treating teachers as peers and envisaging themselves as co-learners (Cordingley et al., 2015).

Successful programs also resist the urge to impose Western pedagogies on other cultures. While the knowledge and skills of Western pedagogies may be effective in Western contexts, they may be neither understood nor culturally appropriate in other contexts (Guthrie, 2011; McLaughlin, 2011). Notwithstanding such concerns, a focus in many teacher professional development programs in developing countries is to move teachers away from rote learning and transmission models towards more constructivist approaches, even as the details of how such an approach should be framed and constituted are debated (Di Biase, 2015; McLaughlin, 2011; Schweisfurth, 2011). In facilitating teachers to transition towards constructivist approaches, it seems logical that the professional development program must put into practice the message that it is seeking to convey (Schweisfurth, 2011). As Cordingley et al. (2015) conclude in their review of multiple examples of teacher professional development courses, "didactic models, in which facilitators simply tell teachers what to do, or give them materials without giving them opportunities to develop skills and inquire into their impact on student learning, are not effective" (Cordingley et al., 2015, p .8).

This aim of moving teachers towards more contextualized, constructivist approaches can also be frustrated by a lack of teaching and learning resources, particularly those appropriate to the local context (Agyei & Voogt, 2011; Di Biase, 2015; Guthrie, 2011; Schweisfurth, 2011). One reason that teachers may revert to "chalk and talk" teaching post-program is because schools lack the physical resources that would promote active engagement of learners (Chandra, Polzin, Medland, & O'Farrell, 2016; Gathumbi, Mungai, & Hintze., 2013). Unless the teacher professional development program takes

into account the resourcing aspect of participating teachers' contexts, the concepts successfully taught and applied during the training may fail when teachers return to their schools because the facilities and equipment provided in the training no longer exist (Bett, 2016). Teachers will then find difficulties in linking their training to their own contexts and applying new approaches in their classrooms (Kennedy, 2005). Appropriate resourcing also raises language and cultural issues. Materials and resources brought in and passed on uncritically by those who are outside the social and cultural context of the classroom are problematic in that they fail to help students connect their existing linguistic and cultural knowledge with the new knowledge being explored. Such resources position students as knowledge consumers, who will then struggle to understand and actively apply what is taught in schools to their own lives (Kalolo, 2015). By contrast, Moll and González (2004) argue for raising teacher awareness of the resources and opportunities for teaching and learning that are available through the "funds of knowledge" (FoK) of students and their families. For example, a FoK approach to teaching mathematics might demonstrate how everyday family or community activities, such as gardening, sewing, cooking, and playing, can be used to support mathematics learning (Aguirre & del Rosario Zavala, 2013).

By focussing on the issues of the cultural responsiveness and appropriateness of the training model, the curriculum content and pedagogical approach, and the resources used and generated, this article examines a two-year DFAT-funded program of teacher professional development conducted in five different regions in Papua Province, Indonesia. One of the main aims of the program was to improve teacher competency and effectiveness by empowering them to adapt constructivist pedagogical approaches to their specific teaching contexts, including the creation and use of contextualized learning materials and resources which support Papuan–centred pedagogies. This research investigates whether these aims were reflected in the participants' perceptions of the program.

PAPUA INDONESIA – THE CONTEXT

This study was set within the province of Papua, the easternmost of the 34 provinces of the Republic of Indonesia and one of the most geographically isolated. According to the Human Development Index (HDI) (a tool developed by the UN to measure and rank countries' levels of social and economic development), in 2012, Papua ranked 29th out of the 30 provinces in Indonesia in terms of three human development indicators: life expectancy, standard of living, and educational attainment (ACDP, 2014). Papua also has the highest rate of illiteracy (ACDP, 2014).

The province is divided into 29 political subdivisions: 28 regencies (kabupaten) and one autonomous city (kota), and responsibility for education is shared, sometimes uneasily, between the national government, the province, and the regions. This unease was apparent in the organizational difficulties encountered by the program's logistical team who often found regions did not send participants due to some difference between the province and the region.

The population comprises Indigenous Papuans, who either live close to their origin or who have moved in or come back from other regions in Papua, and "incomers", who have moved to Papua for entrepreneurship purposes or for government or private sector employment (Reality Check Approach, 2015). The official language is Indonesian but Papua Province has 271 distinct local languages, only half of which remain heavily used.

The ethnic and linguistic background of the program participants was, therefore, diverse: most—though not all participants—could read and write standardized Indonesian proficiently but many utilized a Papuan dialect of Indonesian for speaking and writing. While most Indigenous Papuan teachers are familiar with at least one local language at varying degrees of proficiency, incomer teachers from Java and other islands typically are not. Therefore, the many teachers teaching at schools away from their place of origin are faced with students' "mother tongue" and cultural background that differ from the teacher's own. Such linguistic and cultural differences not only disadvantage students from the outset, but may also frustrate teachers who have not been trained in how to create an inclusive learning environment for these students. Consequently, the program of teacher professional development at the focus of this research needed to address the challenges associated with the complexity of the sociocultural and linguistic contexts in Papua.

Another cultural factor impacting on the program was the expectations of the participants with regard to the professional development program. It became clear through conversations with participants that they entered the program with an expectation that program delivery would be transmissive and directive in nature, in keeping with their previous experiences of professional development programs led by national and sub-national institutions tasked to "deliver" messages from the central government or the province. This meant that participants tended to enter this program believing that the Australian academics possessed knowledge which was to be transferred and implemented without questioning. For the many reasons outlined previously, this belief had to be explicitly and implicitly countered in order for the program to be effective.

Teacher education and primary schooling

Teachers in Papua may have received their pre-service training in Papua or be an incomer, educated elsewhere. Pre-service primary school teachers in Papua typically receive their training through a Teacher Education College or Kolese Pendidikan Guru (KPG), an institution that is unique to Papua, established in 2002 by the Provincial Government of Papua to address the lack of training and education provision for teachers in a region which is socially, culturally, demographically, and geographically unique (ACDP, 2014). The KPG is an integrated senior secondary school in which a three-year SMA (upper secondary) program is integrated into a two-year teachers' college preparation program. Primary school teachers trained outside of Papua typically have a four-year Bachelor qualification from a university. Teachers in Papua are public servants who are remunerated regardless of their attendance at school, and this contributes to teacher absenteeism as an ongoing factor in educational disadvantage in Papua, especially in the remote regions, with the overall rate of teacher absenteeism in Papua assessed as 33.5% in 2012 (UNCEN et al., 2012). Teacher absences also impact on in-service teacher training, so for this program teachers were paid a small stipend to attend and attendance was monitored daily.

Education resources

Resourcing of education in Papua is delivered by a complex mix of national, provincial and regional bodies. A lack of alignment between these bodies can frustrate efficient change enactment. Furthermore, there is evidence that a lack of community ownership of education resourcing, especially in the rural and remote areas, has led to underuse of the infrastructure and education resources supplied by authorities (ACDP, 2014). Existing

resources and curricula in the KPGs lack reference to Papuan language or cultural traditions, and KPG-trained teachers are not trained in how to connect their lessons to local needs or culture or in making teaching materials using local resources (ACDP, 2014). Unpacking the definition of what is meant by teaching "resources" became central to the program. Participants initially understood only "learning and teaching resources" as "media" in Bahasa Indonesia, which refers to items such as computers, projectors, and textbooks. Teachers reported that these "media" could be difficult to access since they were often kept by the principal in locked cupboards for security. One of the features of the program was to focus on the role of "bahan bahan" (ingredients/materials) as central to the idea of educational resources. This incorporated not only the use of cardboard, string and pens, and other relatively low-cost materials typically used for student activities in Western classrooms, but also no-cost "found" materials in the local environment, such as stones, plants, and plastic bottles. This was important since the cost of even relatively cheap and common materials, such as paper and pens, is typically borne by the classroom teacher and may be difficult to acquire in remote areas.

DETAILS OF THE PROGRAM

Funding for the professional development program was obtained from the Australian Federal Government Partnerships for Development (GFPD) program by the University of the Sunshine Coast, in partnership with the Papuan Provincial Government's Department of Education and Culture. While the program addressed the needs of three separate groups of education professionals— primary school teachers, principals and pre-service teacher educators—the research reported here relates to the primary school teacher workshop program, conducted between November 2014 and September 2016.

The study was conducted at the conclusion of the two-year program. Participants in the program included:

- USC academics: education and subject area specialists from Australia, many of whom had been involved in previous professional development programs for Papuan teachers since 2009.

- USC alumni: seven Papuan classroom teachers who had also completed a Master of Education at USC prior to commencement of the program.

- Master coaches: 16 Papuan classroom teachers selected from the regencies of Jayapura, Mimika, Wamena, Merauke, and Nabire, where the workshops were held.

- Primary school teacher participants: classroom teachers selected by the regencies to attend one of the workshops. In total, these participants numbered 1,262 across eight workshops.

The program was designed to make use of the USC alumni's bilingual and bicultural skills and their knowledge of both Papuan and Australian pedagogical approaches. They were involved in the design and delivery of the program and provided invaluable ongoing feedback to the USC academics throughout the program from their observations.

Initially, sixteen master coaches were trained by a USC academic and a USC alumnus for two weeks in Bali, Indonesia, in November 2014. This training introduced the goal and aims of the course, modelled and discussed interactive teaching strategies, and produced

contextualized support material such as "big books" for later use. In March 2015, the 16 master coaches and a larger team of USC academics and alumni met again in Jayapura, Papua, for an additional two weeks of preparatory meetings, discussions, and training.

The next stage of the program, the eight two-week workshops, each for a new group of primary school teachers, began in April 2015 and concluded in September 2016. A typical workshop day ran from 8 am to 3 pm, with a half-hour morning tea break and a one-hour lunch break. Teacher participants were divided into four classes of approximately 25 people per class, with each classroom staffed by a team of three Master Coaches, one USC alumni and one USC academic. The workshops were held approximately three months apart, moving between the locations of Jayapura, Wamena, Merauke, Mimika and Nabire, with the first three locations hosting two iterations of the program.

One critical feature of this program was the long-term nature of the relationships that preceded and were built upon over the duration of this program. This allowed the USC academics to build trust with the teaching team, participants, and government officials, which also enhanced their professional understanding of the participants' context and pedagogical approaches.

THE RESEARCH STUDY

Methodology

This study took a constructivist approach which has been associated with qualitative methods (Punch, 2009) and was interpretivist in nature. The researchers sought to understand the meanings brought to the professional development by the participants. In this way, the researchers sought to understand the way they see the world (O'Donoghue, 2007). The methods chosen include a single-question survey, supplemented by documentation analysis (Scott, 1990). The simplicity of the survey design aimed to reduce the impact of language barriers and reduce interpretation anomalies so that the responses reflected the views of participants.

Methods

Data gathering was achieved through three methods: an open-ended, end-of-program survey question; reflective worksheets and journals completed by teacher participants during the workshops; and field notes made by the USC academics during the workshops reflecting on insights and lessons learned. Under the terms of the ethics approval provided by USC, it was communicated to participants in Bahasa Indonesia at the beginning and end of the program that if they chose to share such information to inform research it would be de-identified.

The first form of data collection focused on the qualitative method of open-ended questioning. Open-ended questions allow for an explorative and open means of response, in a manner that encourages participants to offer a full expression of an opinion rather than simply selecting an answer from a prearranged set of response classes (Popping, 2015). This promotes a response that is inherently more objective and less leading than closed-ended questions (Nesbitt & Cliff, 2008). Open-ended questioning was judged to be well-matched as a methodological tool in this investigation as it allowed investigators access to the respondents' true opinion on what they believed were the focus and key messages of the program.

The open-ended question response was obtained from participants on the final morning of the final Jayapura program, by asking them to respond in writing to a single question, in Indonesian: "What is the most important thing you have learned in this program that you will use when you go back to your school?" Respondents were asked to work independently of their peers and to provide their feedback anonymously. The responses provided in Indonesian were subsequently translated by a USC alumnus.

The second source of data used to supplement understanding of participants' responses to the end-of-program question was teacher participant feedback collected periodically throughout the workshops through reflective activities. These were introduced during the workshops for their learning value to participants, but also yielded interesting insights into participants' thoughts and feelings about both their usual teaching context and practice, and the professional development program. These responses, also in Indonesian, were translated into English by an Indonesian educator.

The final data set was field notes made by the researchers, who were also academics teaching in the programs. These field notes capture the development of the researchers' growing understanding of the Papuan context over the iterations of the program and their resulting adjustments to the program.

Analysis

The open-ended question responses were analysed using conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), which is regularly used for studies employing open-ended questions in situations where researchers allow the categories to emerge from the data in an inductive manner (Mayring, 2000). In analysing the responses to the open-ended questions, the texts were translated by a USC alumnus into English and then reread a number of times by two researchers to achieve immersion and understanding as a whole (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The two researchers worked in conjunction with the Papuan alumnus in a process of reflection on the key concepts emerging from the data. The researchers made independent written records of their initial impressions and the emergent categories that appeared within the data. From these reflections, initial codes were developed, following a process of cross checking with the Indonesian native speaker. To improve reliability, another pair of colleagues with an education background, one Indonesian and the other an Australian researcher familiar with the project, independently read the participants' responses to replicate the process.

RESULTS

Table 1 Teachers' responses to the open-ended question

Participant identified most significant learning	Number of responses
Making learning resources	25
Contextualised learning	13
Learning and teaching strategies	12
Student-centred learning/active learning	9
Use of mother tongue	8
Innovative and creative approaches	5

As indicated in Table 1, the teachers perceived that the most important transferable aspects of the workshop to their context were the making of learning resources, the

contextualization of learning, and new learning and teaching strategies. Active learning and the incorporation of mother tongue also ranked highly. Further discussion regarding how and why participants considered these aspects important has been provided using participant voice from the open response question data and the workshop activities data (aliases have been used), as well as reflections from researchers' field notes.

DISCUSSION

Making learning resources

From the outset, the GPFD program was designed to expose teachers to how low-cost learning and teaching resources could be made and used in the learning and teaching process. Over the course of the program, with the growing awareness of how even low-cost materials common in the West could still be difficult for teachers to procure, there was an increased focus on making best use of materials freely and readily available in the local environment. For example, mathematics sessions used rocks and sticks for hands-on demonstrations and whole class, group, and pair-work learning activities. This use of local, concrete materials helped teachers to move away from their usual practice of focussing only on symbolic mathematical meaning in their teaching towards a contemporary pedagogical practice that integrates representational, linguistic, and symbolic meanings for improved conceptual understanding by students (Rathmell, 1978). To provide a further example, local fruit was used to develop an understanding of comparative concepts such as "heavy", "light", "long",. and "short" both in Indonesian and the local "mother tongue" languages that teachers might encounter in their classrooms. Similarly, in literacy sessions, teachers worked in small groups using paper and pens to create "big books" with text and illustrations relevant to their contexts, so as to encourage children's participation in emergent literacy activities (Holdaway, 1979).

While teachers from Papua report a lack of learning and teaching resources, as well as lack of familiarity with how to use resources in the learning and teaching process (Werang et al., 2014), comments from the participants' reflection journals indicated that the workshop activities led to a growing awareness of the potential for local materials to be used as learning tools. One participant noted that the workshop activities "Provid(ed) stimulus for teachers to become more creative to use the materials around us" (Lambertus). Some of the comments linked the use of environmental materials to specific learning areas, such as mathematics: "Teaching by using tools/media that can be found around us such as stones, bottle caps, grass" (Marthen); "(We learned) how to use teaching resources from recycled materials, which is suitable for the context in Papua e.g. in Maths, counting by using shells" (Septiana).

Contextualized learning

The teaching team were conscious of the need to encourage and empower teachers to adapt learning strategies and resources to their local contexts. The concepts of "adopt, adapt, reject" were introduced to participants at the beginning of the program and practised throughout to undermine the perception that the strategies learned in the workshop should be applied uncritically in teachers' classrooms. The academic field notes of Academic 1 record that participants' responses in activities and discussions on how resources and activities could be adapted to their different teaching contexts generated many ideas beyond those imagined by the USC academics.

Academic field notes from two researchers (Academic 1 and 2) indicated an interesting phenomenon in the literacy section of the program when workshop participants favourably compared their own hand-created "big books" to books that had been produced in other parts of Indonesia and distributed as resources to teachers through aid agencies. Although the production values of the agency-produced "big books" were superior, the teachers indicated that they were confident that their students would prefer these self-created local, contextualized big books because of their use of local content and language. Some participants commented that an agency-produced, early years' factual text on the topic of vegetables growing in the garden displayed only two out of 12 vegetables familiar to their students. These observations indicate that context and language, both critical to the emergent reader, were perceived by the teachers as better served through the production of locally based texts.

Learning and teaching strategies

Over the course of the GPFD program, field notes indicate that the teaching team adjusted the content and focus of each progressive iteration of the program to build the pedagogy/resource link. For example, with regards to the "big books", the master coaches, alumni and USC academics modelled some strategies and activities for participants so that they could conceptualize how the "big books" could be used before construction of their own "big books" began. However, the initial time allocation for this activity resulted in hastily completed books and little time to practise these strategies. After one participant commented that she now understood how her students felt when they had insufficient time to do their work, the approach was changed so that the construction of the "big books" was begun in class but completed at home and brought back the next day. A longer period of time was then allocated to the modelling and roleplaying by participants of "big book" use in a classroom setting. This resulted not only in "big books" of higher quality, which the teachers were proud to share, but also increased opportunities to experience and practise a greater range of learning and teaching strategies associated with their use.

With the program's focus on creating and using learning and teaching resources from the local environment, comments from participants indicated that they perceived a link between using local concrete materials in the classroom and more collaborative and active pedagogies. As one teacher noted, they had learned to "create fun games by using cards or recycled materials" (Agus). This could be contrasted to the usual ways of teaching which focuses on the use of text book exercises and symbolic presentation (Academic 2 field note). Further evidence of participants' increased ability to use created resources in their teaching was demonstrated at what became a capstone event for later iterations of the program, an "expo" to which the school principal group and local primary school students were invited. For the expo, participating teachers worked in groups to create a learning and teaching resource from found materials with accompanying task card outlining the activity's aims and procedures, which they then used with their visitors. It was interesting to witness that many of the resources and activities incorporated traditional local knowledges and skills, which supports the contention of Aguirre and Zavala (2013) that "Funds of Knowledge" not only describes local ways of knowing but also "raises teacher awareness of the resources and opportunities for teaching" (Aguirre & Zavala, 2013, p. 164).

Student-centred active learning

Participants responded overwhelmingly positively to their own experience of engagement through active learning strategies, as reflected by comments in their learning journals. "I learned about active learning, participating in social activities. School is the place where learning happens when given opportunities to express opinions (and) build cooperation in the team. This approach is fun" (Petrus). The fact that the workshop itself employed the use of these target pedagogies was noticed by participants, apparent through teachers' comments that they themselves learned through an interactive approach: "I also learn a lot by playing games, singing, discussing, brainstorming, sharing our experiences, encouraging each other to learn" (Maria) and "The teaching in this workshop is very interesting because we learn how to teach using games and teaching resources" (Adriana). Specifically mentioned was the interactive nature of the activities and the opportunities to share and discuss; these were aspects that resounded with participants: "The teaching strategy that was used, such as working in a team, discussion, playing, singing, allow teachers/students to understand easily; it is not boring" (Jacobus).

The high profile given to active learning as an outcome of the workshop series indicates that the concept of students constructing knowledge through social interaction has been significant for participants. As Academic 1's field notes reflect: "The Papuan teachers take to group work so easily, it's sad and somewhat strange that it's not typically a part of the conventional schooling system".

Use of mother tongue

One of the aims of the program was to develop teachers' respect for the rich cultural and linguistic environment of Papua and to raise awareness of how difficult and alienating it can be for children to learn in an environment in which their mother tongue and culture are not represented. Built into the program were opportunities for the local Papuan teachers to instruct others about their local language and culture, which appeared to boost the self-esteem and confidence of these teachers and their engagement in the program (Academic 1 field note).

Participants' comments indicated a growing understanding of the significance of the role of mother tongue in learning: "I also understand now that teaching a mother language is important as the beginning step to teach Indonesian" (Mathilda); (I can see the importance of) . . . drawing and counting in our mother language" (Kornelius). Other comments indicate that teachers began to realize that creating "big books" with their students offered them the opportunity to develop "mother tongue" literacy resources for students, even when their own knowledge of the mother tongue was lacking, by allowing the students to "teach the teacher" (Academic 1 field notes).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Three implications for practice have emerged from the data in this study. Firstly, participants found useful the challenge of creating and using learning and teaching resources that were appropriate to the cultural context of their students. Secondly, participants enjoyed "learning by doing": learning about learning-centred pedagogies through active participation in those pedagogies. Thirdly, creating a program that promotes such engagement requires a program model that provides a number of

communication and feedback channels between all parties in the program and allows for negotiation of input.

Contextualized learning materials "beyond the textbook"

Participants gave top rankings to making learning resources and using contextualized learning as important learnings that they would take back to their schools. This is significant since, according to the findings of the meta-review by Westbrook et al. (2014) of research on pedagogical practices in developing countries, "frequent and relevant use of learning materials beyond the textbook" and "use of local languages and code switching" are two of six pedagogical practices which demonstrably and positively impact on student learning outcomes in developing countries.

The implication for teacher professional development programs is to avoid importing foreign learning materials into the program in favour of generating resources which reflect the language and culture of the local context. Lack of resources is often identified as a major contributor to ineffective teaching practices (Schweisfurth, 2011); so, in planning the resources for the training, the researchers became increasingly conscious of the need to use materials that participants could access in their own teaching contexts. However, it is not only a matter of possessing resources but also understanding their management and use (Di Biase, 2015). For this reason, there was also a focus on the use of active pedagogies using local resources.

Active pedagogies through active participation

The recognition by participants that "new strategies" of active engagement were significant for their teaching practice aligns with the findings of Timperley et al. (2008), who note that the effectiveness of teacher professional development programs is enhanced when participants are immersed in the actual pedagogies that are the focus of their study.

Negotiation of input from all parties

The final finding relates to the notion of "flux", or the ability to respond flexibly to the insights that emerge through the duration of a program. Within this particular program, such emerging responses included an evolving focus on linking resources to pedagogy and extending opportunities to incorporate mother tongue within program sessions. When lesson plans of workshop sessions are compared over various iterations of the program, it becomes clear that there were ongoing changes and adaptations. Underpinning all such changes to the program was the feedback received through multiple channels and then discussed thoroughly by the teaching team. The reactions and comments of the participant teachers were central, since teachers need to play an active role in recognizing and addressing common questions that arise from their context (Bett, 2016). However, the perspectives of the master coaches, alumni, and Australian academics were also thoroughly discussed in the daily debrief and planning meetings which all members of the teaching team attended. This points to program flexibility being dependent on effective communication and relationships of trust and respect among all parties to the program.

Directions for future research

A number of issues for future investigation emerge from this study. Further study is needed to investigate how successful program participants were in incorporating the

learning and teaching approaches they identified into their post-program teaching practice. The second issue relates to a deeper analysis of the model of teacher professional development used in the GPFD program.

The program appears to have encouraged many teachers to at least recognize the importance of moving from transmission models of teaching to more active and contextualized pedagogies. The model through which this was achieved required ongoing input and negotiation of approaches from academics, master coaches, alumni and participants. While detailing the nature of this collaboration is beyond the scope of this paper, it would be useful to further delineate this teacher professional development program model since it appears to demonstrate some capacity to respond to the unique cultural and social contexts of participants.

CONCLUSION

This research highlighted the critical and complementary roles of resource development and constructivist interactive pedagogies in contextualizing teacher professional development programs for participants. The role of local resources development is multifaceted: it allows for introduced pedagogical approaches to be embedded within the cultural and linguistic aspects of the local context; it facilitates opportunities for program participants to take ownership of these new learning and teaching strategies; and it appears to increase the likelihood that these strategies will be able to be used in participants' usual teaching contexts. This research indicates that a collaborative and contextualized approach to a teacher professional development program appears to have had some success in raising the awareness of participating teachers regarding the reasons and strategies for developing resources and pedagogies appropriate to their contexts.

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Teacher professional development at a tsunami-affected school in Banda Aceh

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The 2004 tsunami in Aceh resulted in significant post-disaster problems which extended far beyond the loss of possessions and infrastructure destruction. In addition to having to deal with their own problems as a consequence of the tsunami, teachers were faced with the additional problems arising from working with children who had been exposed to the traumatic event. Teacher professional development was regarded as an important support mechanism to help teachers in this period. Findings from a qualitative study conducted in one school affected by the tsunami in Banda Aceh provided evidence that teachers indeed needed professional development that went beyond enhancing their knowledge and skills to teach their subjects to working with young people affected by the traumatic event. This paper discusses teacher professional development, focusing on the five criteria for effective professional development proposed by Desimone.

Key Words: Teacher professional development; Aceh; tsunami

INTRODUCTION

At 7.58 a.m. on 26 December 2004, an earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter Scale occurred in the Indian Ocean. It resulted in a tsunami that produced waves of up to 30.5m high which impacted 11 Indian Ocean countries: Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Somalia, Myanmar, Maldives, Malaysia, Tanzania, Bangladesh, and the Seychelles (Jordan, 2006). The province of Aceh, which is surrounded by the sea: the Indian Ocean on the west and southwest, and the Malacca Strait on the north and northeast (Ananta, 2007), was the closest to the earthquake epicentre and suffered more than any other region. There was not only a significant loss of lives but also much destruction of private and public facilities, including houses, schools, health centres, and businesses.

There is much evidence that, in addition to casualties and damage to property, disasters often result in post-disaster problems (Freedy, Shaw, Jarrel, & Master, 1992; Leon, 2004; Lindell, 2011) that have a greater impact than simply the loss of possessions and destruction of infrastructure, especially for young people (Silove & Zwi, 2005). Severe impact, including symptoms of moderate to severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Agustini, Asniar, & Matsuo, 2011). For children, such events can have a profound negative impact many years post disaster (Walmer, Laor, Dedeoglu, Siev, & Yazgan, 2005). Specifically, students who have been exposed to traumatic events may have impeded classroom performance (Cole, et al., 2005) and behave badly; their behaviour

may cause them to be rejected by teachers and peers and even their caregivers, reducing their opportunities for positive social engagement, classroom participation, and supportive instruction and feedback (Harris, Putnam, & Fairbank, 2004).

Children may not recognize the nature of their own problems and seek help for themselves to address issues they are facing. It is, therefore, critical that adults from their social network do so (De Anstiss, Ziain, Procter, Warland, & Baghurst, 2009, p. 590). Because of the significant amount of time children spend at school, it is possible that teachers have a strong influence in children's lives (Russo & Boman, 2007). As adults, it is necessary that teachers understand children's emotional reactions and respond to them in appropriate ways (Fasler, n.d.; Mandel, Mullett, Brown, & Cloitre, 2006) to facilitate children's successful coping, adaptation and functioning, and their normal development (Walmer, et al., 2005).

However, many teachers in Aceh are the survivors or the witnesses of the tsunami themselves and may also have lost much in the tragedy, including loved ones and property. This could have an impact on their lives and role as educators and impose limitations on their performance at school as well as providing support for those in need, such as students affected by the tsunami. In addition, many people, including teachers in Aceh, may have a lack of natural disaster-related knowledge and be unaware of the possible vulnerability hazards caused by the disaster (Khairuddin, Zubir, & Kismullah, 2009).

Borko (2004) suggests that teachers should be given support and guidance to deal with the consequences of disasters. A possible method is through professional development (PD) programs that addresses teachers' perceived and current needs (Bissaker & Heath, 2005). However, as I reflect on my personal experiences as a teacher in Aceh and my current job as an instructor at a teacher training centre in Banda Aceh, I note that, in fact, teachers in Aceh have very limited opportunities and access to PD. Considering how important teacher PD is to improve teaching and learning generally, developing such programs is an important issue for teachers in Aceh. This paper highlights the nature of teacher PD and the need for effective PD for teachers, especially for those working at schools affected by a natural disaster, such as the school discussed in this article.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PD is a continuing learning process in which a person deepens their knowledge and skills, and stays up to date with important developments in the field, with the promise of improvement in practice throughout their career (Grundy & Robinson, 2004, p. 149). Specifically, Day (1999, p. 4) defined teacher PD as:

> [T]he process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives.

Vrasidas and Glass (2004) suggest that PD gives teachers opportunities to share expertise, learn from each other, and collaborate in particular activities. In this sense, teacher PD programs should not be simply about transferring knowledge and skills to teachers but allowing those who participate in it to develop the reflective skills they need to obtain new insights into their pedagogical approaches and teaching practices; to achieve a clear

view of the connection between what they learn during their participation in the program and the reality of their practices. Therefore, PD programs must be continuous, coherent, and consider the complexity of teachers' practices (Vrasidas & Glass, 2004). In other words, effective PD programs are those which consider what teachers learn in the programs, the circumstances in which it will be applied, deepen teachers' knowledge of the methods and contents they are teaching, and involve teachers in active and collective participation, and with the programs sustained over a period of time (William, 2006, p. 287).

Interestingly, while PD programs for teachers should be mainly based on teachers' needs, Gusky (2003) comments that, rarely, are teachers themselves able to articulate their needs. Therefore, "a well-planned, carefully organized collaboration between district-level personnel who have broader perspective on problems and site-based educators who are keenly aware of critical contextual characteristics seems essential to optimize the effectiveness of PD" (Guskey, 2003, p. 13).

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

In general, education, from kindergarten to university, in Indonesia, including in Aceh, is provided in either secular and religious institutions. They can be public or private. The Ministry of National education (MoNE) manages the secular educational institutions, which account for about 80% of schools in the country, while the remaining 20% religious schools are under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). Both secular and religious schools have the same general curriculum but additional religious courses are taught in the religious educational institutions.

The school which was purposively selected for this study was a public junior high school, located in a village located in an area identified as impoverished and socially disadvantaged. Many of the inhabitants worked as fishermen, pedicab drivers or sellers in the local market. The school was approximately three kilometres from the city of Banda Aceh in one of the nine sub-districts of the Banda Aceh municipality. The school was close to the sea; about 1.8 kilometres from the shore, less than half a kilometre from an estuary, and about five metres above sea level.

At the time of the study, there were 153 students enrolled, compared to about 500 before the school was totally destroyed by the tsunami. The study school lost nearly all students in the tsunami. When the school reopened three months after the tragedy, only seven students returned. There was no data on whether the students who did not return were killed in the tsunami or had moved to other areas; however, many people believed that the students were killed in the tsunami.

Teachers in the school characterized the currently enrolled students as troubled students either because of their academic work or behaviour. Most of the students so characterized were those who had been rejected by other schools in the neighbouring areas. Of 12 possible classrooms, only nine were occupied, with 15-18 students in each class. The teachers in the study school were locals who had graduated from universities in Aceh. Of the 27 teachers, 24 were employed by the government as civil servants who had passed a series of tests; three were non-permanent teachers who had been recruited directly by the school and had not been specifically tested because the school lacked a teacher for a particular subject. Teachers in the study school, as in Aceh in general, have very limited access to teacher PD programs. Most of the programs provided to teachers were those

merely related to subject content training or training related to teaching methods or instructional media.

METHODOLOGY

The study was a cross-sectional qualitative study using case study as the method of inquiry. Data were collected between April and October 2010 using semi-structured interviews with teachers and community members supported by observational data collected from classroom teaching of some teachers in the study school. Interviews took place for about one hour with each participant individually at a mutually agreed place and time; for example, at the participants' home, in a café, at the office or at the school.

Teachers in the school were invited to voluntarily participate in the study. At first, of the 27 teachers, only eight agreed participate. After spending some time at the school and as the teachers gained a better understanding of the merits of the study, all teachers verbally agreed to participate if required. Later, for the purpose of data saturation, another three more teachers were purposively selected for interviewing because of their role in the school: a teacher who was also the school counsellor; a teacher who served as the vice principal dealing with the curriculum; and the principal, who also taught classes. In total, six female teachers and five male teachers were interviewed.

Eight community members were also invited to participate in the study and all agreed to be interviewed, including the parents of two student, an officer of the local office of the Department of Education, the community leader, the youth leader of the village where the school was located, the leader of a teacher organization in Banda Aceh, the head of the school committee, and one community member who did not have a particular role in the community. There was considerable variation among the participants in the study, especially among the community member participants. It was expected that their different roles would provide rich information and different perspectives of the phenomenon under study.

Collected data were analysed through the process of transcribing interviews, and reading and rereading the interview transcripts in order to become familiar with and develop a deeper understanding of what I obtained in the field (Creswell, 2008; Liamputtong, 2009). I applied a coding process to break down data and conceptualize it, before organizing the emerging issues (Douglas, 2003). I used a constant comparison method where newly and previously coded ideas were continually compared within and across each source of data (Bowen, 2008; Lindlof, 1995) looking for commonalities and differences on the central issue to report as findings (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, & Coleman, 2000).

Liamputtong (2009, p. 277) contends that data analysis in a qualitative study is a process of turning raw data (all material obtained during data collection) into evidence-based interpretations that are clear, understandable, insightful, and trustworthy. Validity within this study can be viewed as the ability to fully represent the subjective reality of the people participating in the study (Rooney, 2005). Therefore, I use extensive quotes from participants to fully represent their perceptions (Bailey & Jackson, 2003).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

One of the important issues that emerged from the study was the need for quality teacher PD for teachers working at schools affected by a natural disaster, such as the case of the

study school. The study findings suggested that teachers not only had to copy with a lack of resources for teaching and learning but had been provided with little extra support as a result of the disaster. Teachers in the school lacked access to PD and, for a range of reasons, including in their subject specialisations, the opportunity available for PD programs among teachers was unequal. In particular, few opportunities were available for teachers in the school for training to enhance their knowledge and skills about students' social and emotional development and related issues.

Research suggests that teachers can learn and improve their knowledge, skills, and teaching practices through experiences embedded in their teaching work, from day-to-day activities at school, such as informal talks with other teachers, to formal structured activities, such as teacher training programs and seminars and teacher group study (Desimone, 2009). However, teachers in the study school seemed not to have access to such experiences. Jennings & Greenberg (2009) also found that, despite high expectations put on the teachers' roles for creating a positive classroom environment and improving students' achievement, there was a lack of training, particularly for specific programs concerning students' social and emotional development and how to manage social and emotional issues in classrooms. Unless the teachers received the support they required, they were unlikely to help themselves and provide support for others, such as for students. Moreover, they could experience greater psychological stress and, as Hobfoll (1989) has suggested, when people are in the position that they need support but are also required to provide support for others, they are likely to experience increased psychological stress.

Desimone (2009) argued that what matters most is actually not the type of activities in which the teachers are involved in their professional learning but rather the characteristics of the activities that determine whether or not it is effective. For understanding teacher PD in the study school, I focused on the five "critical criteria" for effective PD proposed by Desimone (2009), which are drawn from her extensive reviews of the literature on effective PD. They are "content focus", "active learning", "coherence", "duration", and "collective participation".

Content focus

Desimone (2009, p. 184) noted a link between effective teacher PD programs that focus on subject matter content and methods by which the content can be effectively delivered to students and an increase in teachers' knowledge and skills and their teaching practices of the subject teachers teach, as well as, to some extent, increase in students' achievement. In line with Desimone (2009), it was evident from the interviews that the provision of quality education in the school needed to be improved. Although they seemed to find it difficult to articulate their needs (Guskey, 2003), the teachers indicated that they needed opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, and the teaching methods directly related to the subject they were teaching in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the school (Thair & Treagust, 2003).

Borko (2004) claimed that many current PD programs for teachers in general, whether training, seminar or other forms, are "intellectually superficial" and do not consider how teachers can best learn from the activities. Moreover, Vrasidas and Glass (2004) argued that many existing PD programs are not those that teachers need or want; rather, very often, PD is something imposed on teachers by the local office of Department of Education, which decides what programs teachers need and how the programs will be delivered. Fullan and Hargreaves argued that:

> Many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done to teachers rather than with them, still less by them... ignore different needs among teachers related to years of experience, gender and stage of career and life (1996, p. 17).

This case was noted by one teacher participant who reported that "there should be more professional programs that focus directly on subjects we are teaching". And he quoted an example "when I participated in teacher certification training program, I learnt lots of new models for teaching and learning and that increased my knowledge in the area". Conversely, the teachers did not value another teacher PD program that he had attended because "there were no new teaching methodologies and how students can learn the content subject effectively was not taught in the activities".

Coherence

Guskey (2003) reminded us that the provision of PD for teachers should be based mainly on teachers' needs. What is taught in PD should also be consistent with the school and local context (Desimone, 2009; Thair & Treagust, 2003; William, 2006). In this sense, PD programs should have a clear view of the connection between what teachers learn during their participation in the program and the reality of their teaching practices (Vrasidas & Glass, 2004; William, 2006). Study findings suggest that much of what teachers learnt from the PD sessions they had attended did not match with the reality they were facing in the school. Thus, teachers would find it very difficult to implement what they have learnt from the program if the new skills and knowledge are inappropriate to their school context (Thair & Treagust, 2003). For example, a teacher in the study school commented that she could not incorporate what she had learnt from professional programs she had attended about using new teaching methods and using instructional media such as technology in the school because the school simply did not have those facilities. In reality, teachers in the school still continued to use out-dated teacher-directed teaching methods by which teachers lectured and wrote lessons on the blackboard for students to copy and memorise.

When asked about the need to have PD related to psychological knowledge, teachers in the school indicated that it was important to have the kind of training or PD program that could enhance their knowledge in psychological aspects, especially knowledge about young people. They believed it was even more important since they worked in a tsunami-affected school where students showed signs of behavioural problems. Although the officer from the local office of the Department of Education believed that all teachers from the school in the area had been provided with training related to how to address psychological issues after the tsunami, such as stress and trauma, many teachers in the study school noted that they had not attended any such kind of PD. Knowledge and skills about working with traumatised young people, especially to better understand those with behavioural problems, were perceived by teachers as important in order to improve the quality of education at the school. Moreover, the school counsellor, whose main role in the school was to deal with troubled students, did not have formal education in the field and had never had training to help her with her work as a counsellor. Her appointment in the role was only because of the absence of people with the expertise in the field and people's perception that she cared about troubled students in the school.

It is interesting that the officer in the office of the local Department of Education argued that such training had been provided to teachers in the early years following the tsunami and it was no longer needed. Part of the officer's argument was based on the fact that

there were no reports received by the office from schools about the existence of ongoing psychological issues in schools in the area, including in the study school, six years after the tsunami. It was concerning that the authority took for granted reports from a "Pengawas" (school supervisor) about what was happening at schools, including at the study school, while many teachers in this study reported that the work of the Pengawas was ineffective. This suggests that the authority needs to work more closely with the school to be able to identify the challenges and needs for teachers in the school. Better support and resources for teachers would, consequently, benefit not only students but the school as a whole.

The head of the teacher organization, in his interview, expressed his concern about the fact that he had seen teachers in the study school who did not seem to understand their students and acted inappropriately when dealing with students, especially when they were misbehaving at the school. He argued that, ideally, teachers who were teaching at tsunami-affected schools, such as the study school, should be those who had some sort of understanding about students, including students who were from poor families, were orphans or were having psychological issues that might be a result of the tsunami. Similar expectations were also expressed by other community members who expected teachers to understand young people and their problems after the tsunami.

Active learning

Research suggests that active learning is a characteristic of effective PD that involves more than simply sitting and listening to a seminar or a lecturer (Bissaker & Heath, 2005; Desimone, 2009). Based on observational data and from interviews and conversations with teachers, including the principal, it was evident that teachers at the school themselves were generally passive or not keen to improve their own knowledge and skills. What I observed was they did not learn on their own, with colleagues at school or seek knowledge such as through reading. For example, I observed that teachers rarely read or discussed topics related to their profession when they were in the teacher office during lesson breaks or on other occasions when gathered together. This was confirmed by one teacher's comments in the interview. She said, "I saw in other schools that teachers were sitting together discussing school issues such as how to make lesson plans. But here, teachers are only gossiping. None discussed lesson plans". Another teacher's comments in one interview, as illustrated in the interview excerpts below, also confirmed my observation:

> Fadliadi: There is a theory called lifelong learning such as teachers keep learning and learning. Is there anything like that here at this school?
>
> Teacher: There is not. There is not at all. There is not.
>
> Fadliadi: What about discussions with colleagues?
>
> Teacher: There is not. Even when I asked them to talk about something, about a particular thing related to education, they would tease me.

Desimone (2009, p. 184) pointed out that active learning also includes "observing expert teachers or being observed, followed by interactive feedback and discussion". During my fieldwork, some teachers in the study school were happy and welcomed me into their classrooms to observe what was happening during classroom teaching and learning at the school. The teachers and I then had opportunities to discuss what was happening in the classroom; we appreciated the classroom observations as mutual learning opportunities.

However, there were teachers in the school who were reluctant to make such observations when I asked them. In fact, some teachers from the school also commented that it was hard to encourage teachers in the school to share knowledge and skills in teaching practices through classroom teaching observations. For example, one teacher who had been to a number of PD programs, both in Aceh and outside Aceh, was disappointed that she had not yet had the opportunity to observe her colleagues' teaching practices as many teachers seemed to be reluctant. Although she wanted to share what she had learnt from her PD program, such as new teaching methods, some of her colleagues were reluctant to be involved. Moreover, no one took the opportunity to observe her teaching when she offered it so that they could discuss issues around teaching for better teaching practices. One teacher was cynical and said to her: "Oh come on, why are you so keen about that?" Another teacher observed the same about new teaching methods. He said that many teachers were resistant to new ideas, skills or knowledge about teaching. He had been to some PD programs and would have liked to share what he had learnt in the programs with other teachers in the school. Unfortunately, the responses from his colleagues were not very positive so he was reluctant to share new teaching ideas with others.

Duration

Desimone (2009) noted that highly effective teacher PD programs are those which are sustained, both in terms of the span of time for the program and the number of hours spent in the programs. Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000) also argued that extended PD programs will increase opportunities for teachers to engage in more active learning and focus on subject-area content and connect it with their daily practice more coherently than shorter ones. Henderson (2007) believed that PD program that were not sustained and were held as short, single sessions would have little impact on teachers' practices. Teachers in the study school commented that most of the PDs they had attended were one-off and not sustained. For example, programs related to managing psychological aspects after the tsunami, which were mainly provided by non-government organizations, had been mostly held only once or twice in the early months after the tsunami. Teachers no longer received invitations for such training since then making the initial training ineffective because of the limited scope and timeframe.

While many teachers in the school valued the importance of participation in PD programs to increase their knowledge, skills, and teaching practice to be better able to provide quality education in the school, they noted that opportunities for any kind of teacher PD programs were rare. Data revealed that there were some teachers from the school who had attended several training workshops or seminars but there was also a teacher who had attended only one teacher training workshop during his teaching career. The school itself sometimes sent the same teachers to attend a program thinking that it was a follow-up program because they had misunderstood the information from the Department of Education. Therefore, the same person attended the same program again and again while other teachers missed out on PD opportunities. As a consequence, the teachers who had attended one program and were sent to the same program again, would find it boring and be less engaged in the activities. The head of the teacher organization in Aceh argued that the local office of the Department of Education may not have good data about teachers attending PDs.

Moreover, even where there were PD programs offered to teachers in the school, the opportunities were unequal because the programs were mostly for certain subjects perceived as important subjects at school (e.g. natural science) and only certain teachers

in the school were invited to attend those programs. A social science subject teacher in the school commented:

> It has been six years after the tsunami already but the type of teacher professional development program provided to teachers either by the Department of Education or by other related parties remains the same. It was only for those subjects, again and again. And the same persons go to the programs, too. It was for subjects like natural science subjects and Math. For us who teach social science and other subjects, rarely do we get the opportunity for professional development. Maybe they think our subjects are easy. Since the tsunami, I have not seen there is a kind of training for our subject and I myself have never been to any kind of professional development program since then. On one hand we are expected to enhance the quality of education but our own quality as teachers has never been enhanced. What I mean is there are no professional development programs for us.

The teacher went on to say that there seemed to be unequal support for teachers for attending professional activities such as Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP or Teacher Education Consensus Points) or discussion among the same subject teachers. The teacher questioned why:

> There was funding from the Department of Education or the government for teachers teaching subjects like Math to participate in MGMP while there was no financial support for teachers who are teaching subjects like mine. Maybe, they think that our subjects are not important?

The teachers had to pay for all the expenses that occurred from the activity such as transport costs and photocopying the materials. For that reason and a lack of effectiveness in the MGMP activity, as mentioned earlier, the teacher seemed to be reluctant to participate in that program even though that program was actually compulsory for teachers.

Collective participation

Studies in PD have found that collective participation is a powerful form of teacher learning in which teachers from similar background or from the same school, department or grade get together for learning activities (Birman, et al., 2000; Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004; Desimone, 2009). The studies clearly show that, through such participation, teachers (e.g. teachers teaching the same subject) have the opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion, planning, and practice around issues they may have faced or are facing during their PD program activities or in their day-to-day work. In addition, through collaborative participation, teachers construct knowledge and develop language in common within the group when talking about teaching.

Teachers in the study school, like other teachers in Aceh and more widely in Indonesia, also had opportunities to get together to discuss issues around teaching and learning, including activities facilitated by the local Department of Education, such as MGMP or discussion among same subject teachers. The aim of the program was to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in the subject content area and teaching methods, in which teachers who taught the same subjects from a cluster of schools in one area could have a day off when they got together to discuss issues related to teaching their subject. The officer from the Department of Education of Banda Aceh, in our interview, believed that MGMP was an effective program to help teachers enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching their subjects. She asserted that:

> That program is very effective because teachers can discuss issues they were facing... Through that program teachers are helping each other to be better... we used it as a medium to improve teachers' knowledge, skills, and experience in teaching.

Research in this area suggests that such activity would give teachers opportunities to learn from each other, share expertise and collaborate in particular activities in the subject they were teaching (Birman, et al., 2000; Vrasidas & Glass, 2004). However, according to one teacher from the study school, this activity was not effective since teachers only met and discussed how to construct lesson plans. After a lesson plan was produced, each teacher then submitted the document to a person who acted as the instructor, and teachers did not even know what happened to the document after that. In addition, very often there were no experts present in the activity. It was just among teachers who actually had the same level of knowledge and skills in the area. Therefore, he argued, he had not learnt anything new from the activity that could improve his knowledge and teaching skills.

Moreover, the head of the teacher organization asserted that "The MGMP program is like a tree which grows in the jungle. It grows by itself. No one cares for it". He referred to a lack of attention and support from the local office of the Department of Education to the program. There was no supervision over the program either from the Department of Education through its Pengawasor, or from the school principal. As a result, particular teachers who were given days off to attend the program might not even attend and no one would care about it. In addition, there was no expert present in the session. He regretted that such a good program to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching subject through teachers' discussion among same subject teachers became ineffective because of those factors.

Further, according to the head of the teacher organization, there was no follow-up or evaluation of the effectiveness of a teacher PD run by the Department of Education. In this case, teachers were not monitored or supervised as to whether or not they implemented what they had learnt in programs they had attended. Therefore, teachers continued to teach the same way as before, regardless of new knowledge and skills they had obtained in their PDs. He was also concerned that many teachers attended PD programs because of the promised incentive they would receive at the end. It was common practice that teachers were given money to attend PD programs, such as for transportation, accommodation, and for personal costs during the programs. Therefore, "The first question teachers would ask was how much incentive they would receive including for transport expenses when they were invited to a teacher training program", stressed the head. "[I]deally teachers should pay for participating in training... But they already get used to that kind of practice". On this matter, Bjork (2003), in his three-year ethnographic study in East Java Indonesia between 1996 and 1998, also found a similar phenomenon: that teachers tend to invest their time to activities or tasks that bring them monetary rewards. Bjork (2003) commented that the "incentive most likely to motivate educators to carry out their professional responsibilities is the promise of financial compensation" (p. 206).

CONCLUSION

Considering the possible ongoing long-term impact of the tsunami on teachers and students, the study found that teachers in the study school were still in need of sustained training or programs to enhance their knowledge and skills. This is especially in disaster-related matters and especially to work with troubled students. In this sense, providing

teachers with training or PDs that enhance teachers' subject teaching related skills and knowledge is one important aspect in empowering teachers. The important message from this study is that, over and above the attention given to pedagogical content skills, teachers should be given support for developing their competence and confidence to manage socio-psychological issues at the schools while the community is in the process of adapting to its changed environment after the tragedy (Sahin, Yilmaz, & Batigun, 2011; Wolmer, Laor, Dedeoglu, Siev, & Yazgan, 2005). Teachers would thus be empowered to participate effectively as mediators and educators in the process of rebuilding schools and lives, especially of young people, after the disaster (Wolmer et al., 2005). "A well-planned, carefully organized collaboration between district-level personnel who have broader perspective on problems and site-based educators who are keenly aware of critical contextual characteristics seems essential to optimize the effectiveness of professional development" (Guskey, 2003, p. 13).

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Book review: *Approaches to Educational and Social Inclusion*

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In *Approaches to Educational and Social Inclusion: International perspectives on theory, policy and key challenges*, Gajendra K. Verma and Deborah Kalekin-Fishman provide an insightful overview of exclusion within the field of education. This book explores the theoretical framework supporting inclusion while presenting the diverse array of approaches towards addressing inefficiencies and inequities in education. For the most part, marginalized populations or those facing a variety of obstacles are the ones that are most excluded. Exclusion is described as not attending school, being segregated based on social, economic or disability measures, or lacking appropriate instruction to address a student's particular needs. This book aims to understand these challenges, describe specific educational policies, and illuminate the challenges faced in their implementation.

The conference that birthed this publication had two major themes: certain groups are unable to participate in the education or social arena, and marginalized youths are not able to access quality education. Throughout the spectrum of ideas and approaches presented, all participants agreed that "Education is the birthright of all" and inclusive policies should aim to improve access (Verma & Kalekin-Fishman, 2017, p. 1). These themes and ideas were collected in the formation of this book.

In the selection of texts, the editors aimed to introduce a number of broad questions regarding inclusive education. These questions covered the underlying theory of inclusion, challenges of both participants and providers of education, examples of inclusive education approaches and theoretical solutions as recommendations. Taking an international approach, examples are provided from a number of countries and levels of national development. The challenges range from country to country and are unique to the specific cultural context and education approach being used. Rather than providing definitive solutions to exclusion, the authors aim to contribute to the larger debate and provides a theoretical base for improving inclusiveness in education. The curation of texts in this book provide a variety of different approaches and contexts giving substantial depth to the topic being presented. Examples, such as the Indian and Greek education

systems, are returned to repeatedly providing different understandings and interpretations of related inclusive education challenges.

Verma and Kalekin-Fishman organise this book within three broad themes. The first part, *Theoretical and Conceptual Issues*, begins by presenting a number of motivations for promoting educational inclusion. A primary motivation is argued to be the moral obligation of the state to provide opportunities for its citizens. Yet simple inclusion is sometimes not sufficient, with cultural representation providing greater opportunities for both the marginalized and more advantaged groups. Particularly in times of social turmoil, such as the Arab Spring, an emphasis on citizenship education enabled inclusion across age, class, ethnic, and religious lines. In recent decades though, education priorities have moved further towards individualized measures of success and away from pluralism. Even an established inclusive plan may have failings when equality in policy is prioritized over equity in outputs. Successful approaches recognize the different learning needs and styles across the spectrum of abilities and development.

Part two, *Perspectives on Policy and Practice*, examines specific policies to better understand the realities of inclusive education internationally. In developing nations such as India and Bangladesh, inclusive education has different challenges than the developed world, with those most disadvantaged socially, economically, based on gender, or with disabilities being the most excluded. While attempts are made to address these issues, cognitive disabilities are largely ignored causing a high degree of exclusion. New Zealand has a history of education reforms aimed at improving inclusion but minority groups such as the Moari have been excluded at a far higher rate. An ability to adapt policy to changing educational realities provides an opportunity to build a much stronger inclusive education policy. A growing challenge in education, a prevalence of neo-liberal policies and rapidly changing production methods, have made lifelong learning (LLL) an essential priority of modern education policy. In the European Union, where countries face growing achievement discrepancies across identified groups, an education policy that prioritises LLL is shown to benefit the disadvantaged proportionally more. To successfully reform these education systems, the reforms must be introduced to education practitioners through professional development. In Greece, attitudes were influenced by cultural norms and preconceptions, limiting the effectiveness of professional development.

Finally, Part three *Challenges and Possible Responses to Inclusive Education*, explores some of the approaches and barriers towards implementing inclusive education. In India, enrolment has improved dramatically, yet improvements in quality have not been uniform across socio-economic groups. Learning disabilities, such as dyslexia are poorly understood by teachers, who do not have the training or knowledge to support students, particularly in poorer regions. While the most common practice of support for these students include segregation, their inclusion in a conventional classroom leads to a higher quality education for all students. Policy makers have begun to look at alternative schooling methods and to consider the dress and mannerisms of teachers to combat entrenched class imbalances.

To tie each of these sections together, the final conclusions of the book reference Marx in the reproduction of societal norms within education policies. Identifiable groups of disadvantaged students are facing an effective barrier to their inclusion in schools. This can come from a lack of suitable resources to meet student needs and the inability or unwillingness of educators to take the necessary steps to adjust teaching to help these students. As exclusion continues in school, so does the reproduction of traditional norms.

These exclusions at an early stage can prevent students from obtaining opportunities to learn or participate in society as adults. Inclusive education and active social participation provide the access and tools for social mobility. Their absence reinforces a reality where marginalized students remain on the margins of society. The book presents a final hopeful message saying that the failings of inclusion policies provide opportunities for improvement. As inefficiency and misguided policies are better understood, alternative approaches can be created and introduced. At the same time, successful policies can be celebrated and learned from for adaptation elsewhere. Through study and comparison, exclusion in education can be reduced, creating more equal societies.