

Sharlene Easthope-Harper



Culturally-responsive teaching, culturally-responsive practice, culturally-responsive pedagogy and/or culturally-relevant pedagogy are all terms for pedagogical practices which emphasise using the cultural background, knowledge, language and identity, characteristics, lived experiences, or cultural capital of ethnically diverse students to improve their educational outcomes. This paper reports on a professional inquiry which sought to identify how culturally-responsive practices are embedded in teachers' pedagogy and how I can, in my professional role as a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb), support teachers' cultural responsiveness to be confident and competent to improve educational outcomes for Pasifika learners in particular. Through the process of thematic analysis, three key themes emerged: cultural competence, cultural responsiveness, and beliefs and attitudes. The need for specific Pasifika professional development with an emphasis on culture, language and identity with Pasifika core values underpinning Pasifika pedagogy is considered as a future action.

culturally-responsive pedagogy; Pasifika learners

¹ The term Pasifika is unique to New Zealand and it describes migrants from the Pacific Region and their descendants, who call New Zealand home, who have come from Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau, Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and French Polynesia (Wendt-Samu, 2015).

How do teachers currently ensure that culturally-responsive practice for Pasifika learners and young persons is embedded in their pedagogy?

In this inquiry, the terms culturally-responsive practice and culturally-responsive teaching are used interchangeably.

THE LITERATURE

Understanding Culturally-Responsive Practice

Culturally-responsive practice is a pedagogical theory which emphasises the use of cultural background, knowledge, language and identity, frames of reference and performance styles, characteristics, lived experiences, or cultural capital of ethnically diverse students to improve educational outcomes for those students (Ballenger & Ninness, 2013; Billings, 2015; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2003; McGee & Fraser, 2012). This is true for Pasifika learners when Pasifika values, language, identities and cultural knowledge are acknowledged. As outlined in the New Zealand Pasifika Education Plan (Ministry of Education, 2013), “Pasifika success will be characterised by demanding, vibrant, dynamic, successful Pasifika learners, secure in their identities, languages and culture” (p. 3).

Culturally-responsive practice requires teachers to respond to the differences in the way students communicate and the way they learn, by altering their own ways and techniques of teaching, and by using different methods of classroom management and facilitation of learning environments (Billings, 2015). For example, teachers can use a range of instructional techniques such as differentiation, which allows instruction to be tailored to individual needs. Pedagogical strategies such as co-operative teaching and learning where students collaborate and problem-solve in groups and tuakana-teina (older, more knowledgeable student teaching younger, less able student) are also examples of teachers responding to the unique needs of diverse student populations (Rawlings & Wilson, 2013). Similarly, ako (reciprocity) - also defined as a range of strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships (Theobald, 2013) - and api (teaching and learning), (Te Ava, Airini & Rubie-Davies, 2011), varied culturally-sensitive curriculum content or reshaped curriculum (Billings, 2015; Madgwick, 2016) are also examples of culturally-responsive practice.

Culturally-responsive practice also requires teachers to inquire into their own cultural competency and to reflect on their own attitudes, beliefs, values and assumptions. It also requires that they are able to ask the tough question of how those attitudes and beliefs might have a positive or negative impact on their effectiveness as teachers (Howard & Ballenger 2003; Ninness, 2013). As stated by Irving (2013), teachers need to be wary of their own preconceived beliefs about cultural assumptions or stereotypes. For example, teachers need

to get to know their learners and not make assumptions about their culture or restrict their expectations as this can have an adverse effect on Pasifika students and limit their learning opportunities.

Culturally-responsive practice is having cultural competence and knowledge to be able to build authentic and effective relationships with students, getting to know who they really are and what they bring to the classroom. This can be in complete safety, where their knowledge is acceptable and legitimate (Bishop et al., 2009), as well as their prior knowledge and cultural beliefs and values (Fa’aoi, Fletcher, Parkhill, O’Regan & Taleni, 2009).

Culturally-responsive practice also involves teachers having high expectations and fundamental beliefs that all students can and must succeed, a belief in their students’ intelligence, and an environment where students are reinforced for academic development (Howard, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Smith, 2015).

Culturally-responsive practice is also evident where relationships between the teachers and students are fluid and equitable, where power sharing occurs, and when students are encouraged to act as teachers and the teachers as learners - tuakana-teina and ako in the classroom and beyond. In the classroom, a community of learners is encouraged and developed, students learn collaboratively, teach each other and are responsible for each other’s learning. Importance is placed on collectivism not individualism, and the development of students’ “agency, efficacy and empowerment” (Gay, 2013, p. 49). Students are honoured, affirmed and validated in their cultural connections (Billings, 2015; Bills & Hunter, 2015; Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995a). In Māori and Samoan culture and “within a Pasifika view, the success of a group is measured by the success of the collective as a whole” (Bills et al., 2016, p. 110); the good of the collective is considered before the needs of the individual - group and whanau kinship, known as whanaungatanga relationships, are imperative for the success of students (Howard, 2012; Luafutu-Simpson, 2011).

As Alton-Lee (2003) points out, to improve educational outcomes for ethnically-diverse students, quality teaching and a supported learning environment are essential. Quality teaching includes a culture of care and the creation of culturally-safe classrooms, making instructional changes to accommodate differences, flexible curriculum, differentiated classroom activities, co-operative teaching and learning, collaboration and problem solving. Central to effective teaching, students learn better when material and instruction are made culturally-relevant (Ballenger & Ninness, 2013; Billings, 2015; Smith, 2015). For Pasifika student success, having positive and respectful relationships is essential,

where there is empathy, caring, friendliness, warmth and connectedness (Hill & Hawk, 1998). The physical environment of the school and classroom may include a multicultural perspective through using ethnic and cultural materials such as pictures representing culture and diversity, flags of different countries, clothing, dance and musical items: inclusion of such things may be validating for those learners (Billings, 2015; Howard, 2012).

Positive relationships with families and the wider community are also critical elements of cultural responsiveness. Evidence shows that establishing and strengthening good relationships with families and the wider Pasifika community supports the educational outcomes of Pasifika learners (Gorinski & Fraser, 2006). The match or congruency between the culture of home and the culture of school has an impact on academic success as well. Positive relationships begin with the teacher showing respect and building trust with not only the students but with their families and communities - the in-school learning should be connected to the out-of-school living (Gay, 2013; Gorinski & Fraser, 2006; Villegas & Davis, 2007). Delpit (2006) takes this further and says that it is impossible for teachers to fully understand who their students are without the connections to families and communities from where their students come from. Suggestions for making these connections were for families to participate in a *fia fia* night (happy occasion) with food and drink, be invited to a show or dance or other such function or activity, and for teachers to attend community activities such as churches or sports events or use the shops and services in the community (Allen, Taleni & Robertson, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995a).

Critical Reflection and Teacher's Beliefs, Attitudes and Assumptions

The implications are that for successful educational outcomes for diverse students, teachers' own attitudes, beliefs, values and assumptions are critically important. One of the main goals of culturally-responsive teaching is to redress the achievement gap between minority students and the dominant culture of New Zealand schools. For Māori and Pasifika students, many teachers locate the problem of underachievement with the students themselves. This is what Bishop et al. (2009) call 'deficit theorising', and a belief that this underachievement is a product of poverty and unsupportive family lives. This is a definite barrier to educational achievement (Bishop, et al., 2009). According to Howard (2003), teachers need to critically reflect on their teaching, thinking and practices as this reflection can be used as a tool for creating culturally-relevant teaching practices. Personal reflection is a necessary component in seeing oneself as an agent of change (Nieto, 2003).

Teacher expectations play a major role in the achievement of Pasifika students (Rubie-Davies, et al., 2012). Rubie-Davies et al. report that "when teachers have low expectations for a particular group this can result in teachers providing less opportunity to learn for some groups who arguably need more" (p. 260). Low expectations from teachers results in them teaching fewer concepts, giving repetitive and non-challenging work, and providing work at a slower rate to students. However, the opposite occurs when teachers have high expectations of their students. They introduce more challenging concepts at a faster rate and provide challenging and non-repetitive work (Rubie-Davies et al., 2012). An evaluative tool, *Teacher Expectations Framework: Pasifika* (Rubie-Davies et al., 2012) has been designed to support teachers in schools and kura to identify their own beliefs and practices for Pasifika students. This tool is intended to improve teacher expectations of Pasifika learners. Teachers are able to identify practice requiring support, for example, the framework starts with low expectations, a continuum one to five to high expectations, and has various headings such as teacher beliefs, beliefs in action and social and emotional environment to name a few.

Another critical aspect to consider is that of tokenism. Culturally-responsive practice is more than just having the knowledge, awareness and respect for diverse students; it is being able to acquire detailed, factual information about cultural differences of specific ethnic groups. This is especially so for Pasifika learners. The term Pasifika is unique to New Zealand and it describes migrants from the Pacific region and their descendants, who call New Zealand home, who have come from Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau, Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and French Polynesia (Wendt-Samu, 2015). Each of these island nations has their own culture, language and identity. As Misatauveve Dr Melani Anae (Senior Lecturer, Director of Research, Pacific Studies, Te Wananga o Waipapa, University of Auckland) states - what is urgently needed are programmes that enhance the different ethnic groups, that is, there should be deeper learning around the socio-political and historical contexts of performing arts, cultural singing and dancing, myths and legends. A greater choice and valuing of Pasifika texts and heroes, deeply analysing of negative stereotypes and ensuring that Pasifika students can be proud of their cultural heritage, will undoubtedly have an influence on educational achievement (cited in Madgwick, 2016).

Summary of the Literature

When linking schooling and culture, Ladson-Billings (1995a) stated that "the difficulty in schools is that educators traditionally have attempted to insert culture into education instead of inserting education

into culture” (p. 159). This quote sums up culturally-responsive practice, culturally-responsive teaching, culturally-responsive pedagogy and/or culturally-relevant pedagogy in an attempt to close the widening gap of disengagement and underachievement of diverse students, including Pasifika learners in New Zealand mainstream schooling and improve the educational outcomes for these learners. Evidence-based research confirms the importance of home and cultural links, as well as home and school partnerships as supportive of culturally-responsive practice. When Pasifika learners feel affirmed and validated in their own culture, languages and identities, they are more likely to succeed in the New Zealand education system.

THE INQUIRY METHODOLOGY

The aim of the inquiry was to explore teachers’ perceptions and understandings of culturally-responsive practice and how that is embedded in their pedagogy. Through the process of this inquiry I wanted to understand how I can, in my professional role as a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb), support teachers to grow their confidence and competence in relation to culturally-responsive practice and, in particular, enhance their cultural responsiveness for the learning needs of Pasifika learners. This in turn could lead to understanding effective ways in which RTLb services can better support teachers to improve educational outcomes for Pasifika learners.

The inquiry was situated within a qualitative paradigm, and a case study methodology was employed. The data gathering tools used were semi-structured interviews. The rationale for using a case study was that it provided qualitative, in-depth information about the perceptions and understanding that teachers have for culturally-responsive practice (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin & Lowden, 2013).

The Context of the Inquiry and the Participants

Four teachers from primary, intermediate and secondary school settings took part in this inquiry project. Two female teachers were from an intermediate school - one teacher was experienced and the other had been teaching for five years. Both teachers were palagi (pakeha). One teacher was from a primary school. He was of Tokelauan descent and had had three years teaching experience. The fourth teacher was from a secondary school and he was of Kiribati descent and had five years teaching experience. The year levels that the participants taught ranged from Year 1 to 13 and all taught a diverse range of palagi, Māori and Pasifika students. For the purposes of this paper, pseudonyms are used: Tūa, Tasi, Fa and Tolu.

Data Gathering Tools

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. All interviews were digitally recorded and notes were also taken for the purpose of analysis. Interviews were conducted at a location chosen by the teachers, in a comfortable setting with food and drink, a normal part of manaakitanga (hospitality). The interview questions were sent to participants prior to the interview with a brief outline of the inquiry project, its aim and purpose. This meant that the teachers could familiarise themselves with the questions to help them feel comfortable and more at ease with the interview process. It also meant that the teachers had time to reflect and provide a more considered answer. An advantage of using semi-structured interviews was that they could be done individually, kanohi te kanohi (face to face) and also that I was being culturally mindful of providing a safe and culturally-appropriate way of gathering information. Reassurance was given that all information would be kept confidential and no names were used, only pseudonyms. All transcripts were made available to the participants to check that they were an accurate record of their interview prior to data being analysed. Consent forms were also signed prior to the interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the research being carried out, an ethical review was undertaken. The research was approved by a university Human Ethics Committee and was deemed to be low risk. Upon receiving the ethics approval, invitations were extended to the four teachers within the primary, intermediate and secondary sectors. The interviews were conducted over a month-long period.

Data Analysis

A qualitative analysis procedure was used. Themes were extracted by thematic analysis familiarisation of: generating initial codes, searching for themes, defining and naming themes and lastly, producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Three key themes arose out of an inductive thematic analysis. These were:

1. Cultural competence;
2. Cultural responsiveness, and
3. Beliefs and attitudes.

These are discussed below.

Cultural Competence

A key finding of this inquiry was that of cultural competence. For the teachers in the study, having

cultural knowledge and understanding of their Pasifika learners was very important because they wanted to know their students well, where they are culturally and socially located, and how the fanau (family) and community links enhance their teaching and students' learning (Bills et al., 2016). For example, one respondent stated:

If I have some knowledge about their child and I can show that I have some knowledge about their culture, then it is honouring and respecting those families. You know that just opens up dialogue and hopefully makes families feel confident in me that I will be able to do the best for their child. (Tasi)

For the participants in this study, having cultural knowledge and understanding meant learning about their students' backgrounds, their culture, language and identity. As reported by Ballenger and Ninness (2013), this can include teachers learning about their students' past experiences, their home experiences and community cultures, where they come from, their whakapapa and genealogy, as well as acknowledging their own culture. As one respondent pointed out:

By acknowledging your own culture this pays respect to your ancestors, family and yourself. It also gives a sense of belonging and pride. I've always been surrounded by proud Kiribati people and have carried that same pride since I was young. (Fa)

Two respondents felt that it is also important for students to understand their own culture because this in turn would help with understanding their identity:

Because this is where we are and who we are and where we come from and where our kids come from. If you didn't have cultural knowledge and didn't make an effort to learn it, then you've sort of ignored a huge part of who we are. (Lua) and, it is important people understand their own culture to help with their identity. (Fa)

According to Fa, having cultural knowledge and understanding is finding out about Pasifika learners' interests and strengths, their needs and aspirations. At the same time for these teachers, it was about acknowledging the bicultural environment and tikanga and the multi-cultural environment in which we live in New Zealand.

If you don't have cultural knowledge and all this you are not going to really learn about anyone outside your fence, in order for us, because we are multi-cultural country and that will help Pasifika learners to be more balanced. (Tolu)

By being culturally-competent, suggests Tasi, "My knowledge is important so that I can be effective and efficient in the day-to-day learning systems that I have put in place. I think that gives me a bridge to families" where the teachers, families and wider Pasifika community can connect on a multiple of levels such as formally in teacher/student progress discussions or fanau cultural evenings of their children "to share in their student's successes and their learning journeys and to share in the cultural festival focus" (Lua). These celebrations include performing arts, traditional dancing and singing, and meeting and greeting, culminating in a festivity of traditional food and drink:

Inviting whanau along to share in a celebration with having food and games, each group has to have a display of their work, displaying and presenting what they have learnt about each country and continent. (Lua)

Fa described a meet-and-greet evening about a new initiative, where the fanau and wider Pasifika community were involved:

I work with Pasifika students every day. I have a senior Pasifika house group which I see every morning Monday to Friday. We have implemented some of the Pasifika customs into our house group. Every Monday and Friday we get together with the junior Pasifika house group where we share a bible reading/quote followed by a church hymn. (Fa)

Fa also described how fanau had also been invited to come and watch the performing arts cultural group's practices for competition and to be a part of the noho (camp). "We encouraged our students to get their families to come along" (Fa). As Gay (2013) reports, to have cultural competence legitimises the cultural heritages and gives more meaning between home and school and the lived experiences.

Hearing that family voice was also important to Tasi who pointed out that to "hear that family voice, somehow it can make the relationship outside the school stronger not so much the student but outside the school, the stronger hierarchical Pacific Island community in general." The building of positive relationships with families and the wider Pasifika community supports the educational outcomes of Pasifika learners.

Cultural Responsiveness

Cultural responsiveness was another key theme in the findings of this inquiry. Culturally- responsive teaching uses cultural knowledge and prior experiences to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for

diverse students (Gay, 2013). For the teachers in this study, cultural responsiveness was evident in their day-to-day teaching, and their monthly and school-wide planning, with acknowledgement of varying levels of culture, languages, identities and values crucial to Pasifika engagement. It was very important for all teachers to know their Pasifika learners and to build good relationships with them:

To be culturally-responsive means having a holistic approach and getting to know the student better, finding out about their backgrounds, interests, culture to help with your planning and to help build robust relationships. (Fa)

This aligns with the literature from Ballenger and Ninness (2013), where they report that culturally-relevant pedagogy is responsive to academic, emotional and social needs of all students, including ethnically and linguistically diverse students.

As three participants pointed out:

Culturally-responsive practice means having some information about individual student's culture means that I can show respect, interest and consideration toward that student and I can incorporate aspects of that student's culture and allows them to work in a way that suits them. (Tasi)

To be culturally-responsive is to first of all to understand the cultures; if I am thinking from a teachers' perspective is to understand them at a base level to be able to say the kids' names right, to be able to pronounce names correctly, about making an effort, about trying to link in where we can with the cultures within our class (Lua); implementing culture into their daily learning and pedagogy. (Tolu)

For Pasifika students, academic success is more likely to be enhanced when Pasifika values, language, identities and cultural knowledge were made an implicit part of teaching and learning activities (Bills et al., 2016; Fletcher, Parkhill, Amosa, Leali'le'e & O'Reagan, 2009, cited by Smith, 2015, p. 88). According to Lua, "every whanau did Identity at the beginning of the year, their culture, identity and language, who they are, where they come from and how they are affected by their cultural values", whereas the focus of identity was focused for this respondent on their name:

My name is a key indicator of my identity, every time I introduce myself starting with my name, many people reply to ask where my name came from. From there sharing my identity and Pasifika culture begins. I have several Pasifika greetings with flags displayed in my classroom including my own culture. (Fa)

Fa also went on to say that the students enjoy doing fun, general knowledge quizzes on Pasifika culture, they get to learn about each other's cultures and that the "Pasifika kids in my class it makes them feel proud and acknowledged" (Fa). "When teachers exhibit an affirming attitude towards students with diverse backgrounds, they greatly affect their learning, belief in self, and overall academic achievement" (Ballenger et al., 2013, p. 2).

Other examples are evident through the pedagogy of Tolu, in the implementation of his monthly and yearly overview planning with a focus on Pacific Island culture:

It's there when you find opportunities within your overview, yearly or monthly where you can incorporate their culture, whether it be language such as counting such as story-telling, based on their legends, whether from Samoa or Tonga or Fiji, and it's great for our Polynesian kids and at the same time it is great for our non-Polynesian kids as well, who are learning a bit about their fellow classmates Pasifika background. (Tolu)

Wendt-Samu (2015) contends that "quality teaching for Pasifika learners requires the development of teachers' and educators' in-depth, contextualised knowledge and understanding of their Pasifika learners" (p. 130). She further adds quality teaching must be effective for all participants, and diversity and difference is at the heart of the meaning of quality teaching. Tasi suggests that:

The best teachers are the ones sitting beside them and around them, that when they, you know, challenge each other, they question each other, that is the best learning process. My perception is that Pasifika and Māori students work best in a collaborative and co-operative structure. (Tasi)

Lua describes collaboration as:

Massive not just in my class but across the whole school, very rarely are students working on their own, together we have more ideas than on our own, the kids really like working together rather than on their own. (Lua).

Three participants felt that by contextualising students' learning this would support their efforts to increase engagement and learning:

Another definition for me is contextualising your learning, for example, explaining how statistics and probability can be used to measure the All Blacks performance etc. It can be difficult at times to contextualise your learning in mathematics so it is culturally-relevant. Some topics are easier than others to contextualise the learning. I suppose it all

depends on the topic and what is relevant. (Fa)

A focus in maths is geometry; in a couple of weeks' time we are going to be doing looking at reflection and translation and we are going to be making tapa cloths. Trying to link it in that way, they can start sharing their thoughts and seeing tapa cloths at home and sharing their taonga. (Lua)

Culturally -esponsive practice means I have more insight into how they think and how they are going to respond and how they make decisions. It gives me some ideas about what they think about different situations and to some level about their beliefs in life and learning. It means I can respond to children in a differentiated way so that my response to them should hopefully come from a place of difference whatever their culture. (Tasi)

These teaching techniques embrace some of the core Pasifika values such as family, love, belonging, spirituality, service, respect, inclusion and reciprocal relations (Ministry of Education, Pasifika Education Plan, 2013-2017). Another teacher encouraged, in particular, one of the core Pasifika values, that of family; that is, that they were all fanau, whanau, family and that his learners were all encouraged to awhi (care) each other especially when it came to sorting issues or challenges:

I always say to them, this is what we do, what does whanau do, we look after each other and we awhi each other, it's whanaungatanga. What do we do if someone cries, we awhi each other. (Tolu)

This is in line with the research by Bills et al. (2016) that family is central to Pasifika peoples, including extended family members which can include neighbours and local members of the community. Embedded within the concept of family are core Pasifika values of reciprocity, collectivism, communalism and service (Civil & Hunter, 2015, cited in Bills et al., 2016) "valuing the strengths of many rather than it being about individual progress, working together so that they all make progress, not competition." (Tasi)

Beliefs and Attitudes

The importance of beliefs and attitudes and, in particular, teachers knowing and understanding their own identity, beliefs and attitudes and how that impacts on their teaching, was another major finding of this inquiry. Fa says, "It is important people understand their own culture to help with identity." He is from Kiribati and was brought up with the core Pasifika values which forms part of his pedagogy as well as being in a Te Kotahitanga school (Bishop et al., 2009). He adds that "From a school perspective we use the Te Kotahitanga

model to help our students who are predominantly Māori." Fa acknowledges that there are several positive similarities amongst Pasifika students such as having similar morals, spiritual beliefs, respecting elders and celebrating with big festive meals. However, he also believes:

... there are some stereotypes about Pasifika people that still impact on Pasifika learners. Some families can tend to have low expectations of themselves, which influences the next generation. I personally believe if Pasifika students are surrounded by several great role models, they are more likely to learn some of the traits and values that are needed to achieve certain aspirations; for example, my parents taught me to work hard and be respectful. Those two traits have enabled me to receive the support to help achieve several sporting and educational goals. (Fa)

Unfortunately, some Pasifika parents do not understand the education system in New Zealand and they may not understand English very well as outlined by Fa:

I think the ability to communicate in English fluently can be a barrier for many families which may influence Pasifika parents/caregivers' participation in relation to school, for example, parent interviews. The parents probably feel uncomfortable and don't want to go. (Fa)

This may affect teacher's attitudes and beliefs having "an assumption that the school and teachers may have about Pasifika parents/caregivers is that Pasifika parents do not care about their child or children's education" (Fa). This aligns with the literature that some Pasifika parents' lack of participation in school activities causes grief and misunderstanding between home and school (Bills et al., 2016). Some of the examples above illustrate the tensions that may be faced by Pasifika families in trying to balance fanau and work commitments. There is also sometimes a misunderstanding in language and whether the families have understood what the schools have been communicating.

Another participant believed, "It is part and parcel through everything, not just pedagogy; it is right across the board. Even behaviour we are brought up in a certain way" (Tolu). Some of his upbringing, his beliefs and attitudes have had an impact on the learning of his students including his Pasifika learners for example, in the protocols and ways that a Pasifika person is brought up. An example given was knowing that you had to behave well and be quiet in church, so your father only needed to look at you and you knew how to behave. Tolu can do this in his class with his students and they know immediately what that look means. "Just one glance from dad and you know that it is that hidden

spoken word, that language, that eye contact” (Tolu). In contrast to this, for example, one of the respondents says that her Pasifika learners “often come in with a sense of failure and a fixed mind-set” but her attitude is:

I definitely think it is all about the students’ confidence, self-belief and efficacy, that they can do things in a group with other people and also enabling them to do it themselves. Developing a mind-set, actually a growth mind-set, comes from their culture. (Tasi)

She goes on to say that some of them,

have two languages, how phenomenal is that to have two languages? In that respect they are cleverer than I am. A normal part of their lives is story-telling, dancing and music which is intrinsic in their lives and powerful strengths. (Tasi)

At this particular school the focus is making connections with fanau and the wider Pasifika community, where they can come into the school, and hopefully feel comfortable and be themselves, however one participant has found:

We’ve noticed that a lot of families didn’t have a positive view of schools, we are trying to change that, it’s not a scary place, it’s not negative, we want them to feel positive and comfortable for them to visit. (Lua)

This in turn can have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of Pasifika learners.

Implications

While this was a small-scale inquiry with only four teacher-participants, some important learnings and implications can be drawn. One of the implications was that, while Pasifika numbers are on the rise, the schools where the participants worked did not have a high proportion of Pasifika students, so the teachers felt that the pedagogy overall in the school was not specifically responsive to the needs of Pasifika learners. Because of high numbers of Māori learners in participants’ schools, this was embraced by them. However, as Wendt-Samu (2015) pointed out:

How can there be Pacific pedagogy in New Zealand schools when, in many instances, Pasifika students do not dominate the class or school composition in terms of numbers? [And] how can there be a Pacific pedagogy in the context of the New Zealand education system when there are such different ways of being Pasifika?” (p. 138)

While some of the participants in this study (being Pasifika or otherwise), had a very good understanding of

the importance of cultural knowledge and responsiveness, they found themselves in contexts where they felt acknowledging all cultural values of Pasifika students’ difficult at a deeper conceptual level of understanding. This was in the detailed knowledge of cultural differences and in being able to provide deeper learning around socio-political and historical contexts; for example, to teach the meaning behind the songs and dances, myths and legends (Madgwick, 2016).

For many Pasifika, “Language is a key aspect of cultural identity” (Bills et al., 2016, p. 4). In a study by Bills and Hunter (2015), the importance of teachers using the different Pasifika languages in an effort to deepen conceptual understandings was illustrated. However, in this inquiry only one of the teachers could speak their native language - Tokelauan. The other three spoke only English. As a consequence, recognition of Pasifika languages was minimal in day-to-day pedagogy of these teachers, in the form of language greetings and counting numbers.

Future Actions

From this inquiry, though small, it has been shown that teachers have a good basic understanding of culturally-responsive practice, however it was apparent that at a systems level, there was no specific Pasifika tool that was evidence-based and would ensure participation, engagement and achievement for Pasifika students. Schools may wish to consider use of the *Participation, Engagement and Achievement (PEA) Tool for Schools and Kura with Pasifika Learners* (Te Toi Teapu, Leading Learning Network, 2017). The purpose of this tool is to help schools determine their capability to support Pasifika learners’ success and achievement. By using this tool, schools can determine on a scale of one to four (one being basic, two developing, three consolidating, and four high), their strengths and needs in relation to meeting the needs of Pasifika learners.

While Pasifika peoples share a common set of values, which are, family, love, belonging, spirituality, service, respect, inclusion and reciprocal relations, as an RTLB I know that “Pasifika students come from a range of Pacific Islands each with unique cultural and language identities. Interventions involving Pasifika students must be appropriate for their unique cultures” (RTLB Service Professional Practice Toolkit, 2016, p. 14).

It cannot be assumed that appropriate interventions for one Pacific culture is appropriate for all Pasifika cultures. This is where RTLB can use evidence-based interventions, such as individual educational plans or individual behaviour plans to support classroom teachers, and also, for example, the use of The Pacific Model of Health, the Fonofale Model representing a Pasifika worldview, created by Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-

Endemann (1994, cited in Bridgman, Nonu-Reid, Lui, Maliago & Pulu-Endemann, 2000). Within this model are these core Pasifika values.

Three values that underpin fa'asamoa, the Samoan way, the roof representing the cultural values and beliefs that shelter the aiga (extended family) (Luafutu-Simpson, 2011).

- Alofa (love and commitment), this is the motivating factor behind all we do, the alofa we hold for our aiga and students, needs to be at the centre of our practice. The commitment implies that it is more than just alofa, it is about attitude of action, encapsulating compassion and care. And for true alofa to children and students is actioned in another of our Samoan values.
- Tautua which is the service and responsibilities we carry out as teachers. "To serve our children and students well we are role-modelling excellence that we aspire to see in them" (Luafutu-Simpson, 2011, p. 58).
- Lastly, fa'aaloalo which can mean respect, reverence, courtesy and politeness. The way teachers carry out service has a huge influence on how response and engagement comes from both the student and aiga. It is crucial that good and proper relationships are formed, they are also the basis of social and collective cohesion. Fa'aaloalo also means respecting the space between others and him/her.

In Samoan custom we have teu le va which is the taking care of spaces: they hold special significance especially "when spaces in between are not acknowledged or considered, relationships break down as does collective cohesion" (Luafutu-Simpson, 2011, p. 58). Pulu-Endemann's description of va extends further than just relationships: "va is the interpersonal relationships, cultural protocols, customs, traditions and obligations taught within the family across all Pacific Nations." RTLBs are able to provide this support through professional development and within their RTLB practice sequence caseload on an individual basis supporting increased teacher capacity for referrals of Pasifika learners to the RTLB service.

CONCLUSION

This professional inquiry set out to understand teachers' perceptions of how culturally-responsive practice is embedded in their pedagogy. Through this process of inquiry, I set out to understand how I can, in my professional role as a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), grow teachers' confidence and competence to enhance their cultural responsiveness towards Pasifika learners. While the participating teachers demonstrated culturally-responsive teaching

which aligned with the existing literature (e.g. Bills & Hunter, 2015; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2013; Wendt-Samu, 2015), they wanted more support to improve the outcomes for Pasifika learners. With the focus of the government and their Pasifika Education Plan (PEP) 2013-2017, to raise the learning outcomes for all Pasifika learners, RTLBs are ideally suited to provide that support. As the schools of the participating teachers had predominantly Māori students, their pedagogical context was predicated on Te Ao Māori practices such as karakia, waiata, kapa haka and tikanga. Similarly, the Māori language terms and concepts such as tuakana-teina, ako, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga were in common use rather than the equivalent in Pasifika feagaiga, api'i, sootaga and talimalo.

One does have to acknowledge our bicultural society and also the fact that there are many different Pasifika languages which teachers may not be able to speak. Nevertheless, the teachers valued diversity, respected culture, had high expectations, and built on student experiences where they were able to. Future actions would be for RTLB services to further support teachers with professional development using core Pasifika values to underpin their pedagogy. This could be in the form of professional development and the RTLB practice sequence caseload where RTLB can provide professional practice to individual teachers where there is a need.

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AUTHOR PROFILE

Sharlene Easthope-Harper



Talofa Lava, Malo e lelei, Kia orana and Warm Pasifika Greetings

I am currently employed as a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour in Te Ha o Te Manawa Cluster 20, based in Rotorua. I am now in my sixth year as an RTLb. Prior to that I spent many years teaching in the primary and secondary sectors as well as supplementary learning support. My passion and interests are Māori and Pasifika education, particularly in lifting educational achievement for our Pasifika people.

Email: sharleneh@rtl20.school.nz