



Training manual for teaching working with pacific students: Engaging pacific learners

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Preface

Pacific students' lack of engagement in classroom discussions and with the classroom curriculum has been identified as the result of many factors including the tertiary educational environment being a foreign place. Unfamiliar educational pedagogies and curriculum content often leave Pacific students feeling lost and alienated. Feelings of loss and alienation lead to missing classes, lack of engagement in class discussion and with class curriculum. The lack of attendance in class, the lack of engagement in class discussion and with the class curriculum results in poor achievement, low success and high drop out rates. It is therefore argued that appropriate teaching methodologies, and cultural contextualisation and customisation of teaching, will enhance Pacific learners' engagement in the classroom discussion and with the class curriculum.



It was in the context of our work with Pacific students at Unitec Institute of Technology that we identified the need to employ appropriate teaching methodologies, and use cultural contextualisation and customisation of teaching to respond to Pacific learners. This initiated the work around embedding Pacific knowledge, values and practices in the Unitec curricula in an effort to enhance Pacific learners' learning through engagement in class discussion and with class content. This included preparing student centred delivery which utilized specific teaching tools such as metaphors, stories as well as

creating positive learning environments through identifying and supporting cultural nuances, contextualisation and customisation of teaching of teaching content.

This training manual is prepared by Unitec's Pacific Centre for Teaching, Learning and Research and teaching staff from Unitec's Department of Community and Health Services. It comprises of a text based e-resource that is written to accompany video clips, pod-casts and photographs. The goals of this e-resource is to assist teachers that work with Pacific students in the tertiary environment by providing ways to enhance Pacific learners' ability to engage in class discussion and with class content.

The Pacific Centre for Learning, Teaching and Research

The Centre's vision is to "Embrace Pacific Cultures to enhance student experience through improvement of student engagement and achievement so that students become valued leaders and contributors to Pacific communities and New Zealand society". The main function of the centre revolves firstly, around providing academic and pastoral support for Pacific students. Secondly, through the provision of advise and support for academic lecturers. Finally, through engagement and working closely with Pacific families and communities.

The Nakuita, which is Fijian for octopus was developed by the Pacific Centre's Director, Linda Aumua in 2008, to inform the work of the centre. The octopus has one central body which metaphorically refers to the centre and its tentacles as the Pacific support provided through the learning development lecturers infiltrating the departments and services.

The concept started out with the centre employing learning development lecturers. The learning development lecturers are nurtured at the centre before they are placed in the departments, usually in the staff member's area of expertise. The idea is that the staff member will be able to provide content support and learning development support for Pacific students. The flexibility of the octopus framework enabled the centre to collaborate with departments to co-employ the learning development lecturers with the aim of the departments picking up full employment of the Pacific staff.

The success of the Nakuita has extended into the area of staff support. This include providing professional development workshops on understanding Pacific learners; engaging Pacific learners; providing input into curriculum development around embedding Pacific dimensions into the curricula and collaborating with staff on Pacific research. Through collaboration with the two lecturers in the Graduate Diploma in Not-For-Profit Management, Sandy Thompson and Fraser McDonald we are also able to produce this training resource. This collaboration started with the centre providing support for the Pacific students on their programme. This has extended to a co-employment of a Pacific staff member to provide focus support for students in this programme.

This manual is divided into five sections. Section 1 is the introduction and includes a triangulation of a literature review on engagement of Pacific learners, students' evaluation and tutors learning experiences. Section 2 draws on the experiences of the above Unitec staff and looks at meaningful ways to engage Pacific learners in classroom discussions and class content. Section 3 provides some

example of teaching plans and Section 4 consist of a list of references used in this work. Finally, Section 5 is a resource/information section that will provide additional information and resources to support the work of teachers.

Introduction

Theoretical orientation

In order to fully understand the concepts and approaches used in this Manual, it is important to recognise and understand the theoretical basis for the work. There are three basic theoretical approaches which underlie the concepts and approaches shared in this Manual. First, for Pacific learners to engage, a safe and supportive environment must be created to allow for this to happen. In this regard, several factors play equally important roles in the provision of a safe and supportive environment. Factors include building trusting relationships with learners, believing and feeling passionate about learners, showing learners you care so that they feel comfortable to communicate and join the discussion, talking with them and not at them, providing food and space. Secondly, it is about acknowledging the context of Pacific learners. This can include things such as identity, values, spirituality, family, friends and the community they belong to. The third factor involves the use of appropriate teaching methods.

Student engagement

Student engagement is widely perceived as an important part of learning and achievement and research shows that engagement declines sharply when students advance through to tertiary studies (Conner, 2006). If this is what the research tells us about the level of student engagement, it is fair, based on what we know from retention and achievement levels of Pacific students, to say that the level of engagement for Pacific learners is less than mainstream students. Engagement in relation to Pacific learners includes students' willingness to participate in routine school activities such as attending class, submitting required work and following teacher's directions in class (Gorinski & Fraser, 2006; Harkness, Parkin & Dalgety, 2005). Pacific educators further argue that appropriate teaching methodologies, cultural contextualisation and customisation of teaching also needs to be considered as they play an integral role in enhancing Pacific learners' engagement in the classroom discussion and with the class content (Manu'atu, 2000; Meyers, 2000).

Engagement of Pacific students in education has been identified as an issue that also links to student under achievement. Under achievement of Pacific learners in the tertiary sector is attributed to several factors which include academia being a foreign environment, with its language, tools and skills being foreign to Pacific students; the culture of the Pacific learner as being too demanding; Pacific learners tending to lack family support. Pacific families may not understand what is required to succeed in academic studies and the financial and social background of the student's further disadvantage them from succeeding.

Engaging Pacific Learners

While the focus here are the learners' weaknesses (cultural, social, and economic), the role of the teacher, the teacher's philosophies and pedagogies in engaging Pacific learners have been left unquestioned until very recently (Helu-Thaman, 2003). Ross (2008) supports this by arguing that the teacher's pedagogical practices may not be culturally responsive to the student's learning and achievements. Culturally responsive teaching has been shown to include validating student knowledge and prior experiences, using cultural references to impart knowledge and having innovative teaching and assessment strategies (Sheet, 2005). A culturally responsive pedagogy for Pacific learners is therefore built around core Pacific values such as spirituality, respect, metaphors, stories, humility, humour, affection and relationships.

Culturally responsive pedagogy

A culturally responsive pedagogy has been cited as important and provides teaching and learning methods that help students engage in their learning (Meyers, 2003). In a culturally responsive pedagogy, students come together to share their knowledge with each other and at the same time help other students learn (Samu, Mara & Siteine, 2008). Teachers and learners coming together should be built around mutual respect, relationship and rapport. Relationship building is the first step to enhancing engagement between teacher and student as this will lead to building Pacific learners' confidence to engage in class discussions.

As the Pacific population in New Zealand is growing and increasingly becoming younger, so will the demand for teachers to engage with Pacific learners. Whitinui (2007) in his work on engaging Maori learners suggests that an effective way to engage Maori students in their learning is for the teacher to understand their needs and cultural background. The same is true for Pacific learners. However, for Pacific learners to engage with the class content Pacific knowledge, values and practices need to be incorporated into the curriculum. Hawk, Cowley, Hill & Sutherland (2001), support this by arguing that engagement is not only about social involvement. It is also about achievement. Engagement enhances achievement. Jennings and Angelo (2006) have identified ways to engage Pacific learners in classroom learning. It includes consultation around appropriate practices, identifying culturally inclusive pedagogies that will inform and improve students' learning in the classroom as well as strategies for adapting and embedding concepts, models and practical elements of engagement into teaching and learning (View Video Clip 1).

Engaging Pacific Learners

Engagement leads to achievement

If engagement leads to achievement, then there are two levels of engagement that are important to understand when working with Pacific learners – 1) engaging Pacific learners in the class discussion and 2) engaging Pacific learners with the content of what is taught in the classroom. To engage Pacific

learners in classroom discussion, tutors must create an environment that is safe and supportive of Pacific learners. This can be achieved by building trusting relationships based on mutual respect; showing you care by believing in them; understanding and acknowledging what Pacific learners bring - their cultural background, values, practices, and life experiences (View Video Clip 2).

Engaging Pacific learners with the content involves acknowledging the value and contribution that Pacific knowledge, values and practices can add as well as customising teaching methods to suit Pacific learners. This can be achieved by building Pacific knowledge into content and delivery methods by using tools such as Pacific case studies, stories, role play and metaphors.

Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management (GDNPM)

Unitec has been delivering the Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management to Pacific students both in New Zealand and in the Pacific since 1999. Participants in the programme are mature students who have management roles in community based non profit organisations. The focus of the programme is on values based management training which empowers managers to work in a complex and dynamic environment.



The information provided in the table above comes from Unitec's annual programme report data generated in February 2011. The successful figures in Table 1 above are also supported by the 2008 course evaluation feedback provided by Pacific learners enrolled in the Unitec Not-For-Profit Management & Leadership courses. Students enrolled on Pacific based delivery of the Graduate Diploma were surveyed in 2008 and 2009 by independent evaluators to assess the relevance of the programme and delivery appropriateness.

In the first survey: (Unitec (2008) *Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management, Pacific Island Survey Results*. Auckland, NZ: Pat Ward), over 96 % of the respondents report personal benefits/value from the programme and organisation benefits/value from the programme. In the second survey, (Unitec (2010) *Graduate Diploma in Not For Profit Management Pacific Student Evaluations*. Auckland, NZ: David Haigh), students were asked to rate delivery and content on a scale of 1 to 7 (seven being excellent).

Table 1: Shows the course retention (RR) and success rates (SR) from 2007 to 2009, for the GDNPM Programme.

Course Retention and Success Rates for Unitec SAC Funded Pacific Students, 2007-2009 combined

Student Type	Retention	Success
GDNPM	84.8%	84.8%
All other programmes	82.2%	70.0%

Please note that courses with their main programme as GDNPM were aggregated to provide this data.

Course Retention and Success Rates for Unitec SAC Funded Pacific Students, 2007-2009

Student Type	Retention			Success		
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
GDNPM	86.3%	91.1%	79.7%	86.3%	91.1%	79.7%
All other programmes	89.5%	80.4%	76.2%	80.0%	65.6%	63.2%

Please note that courses with their main programme as GDNPM were aggregated to provide this data.

The ratings of tutors for all questions were excellent or close to excellent. Over 90% of all students rated clarity of communication by tutors; level of engagement in activities; tutor knowledge of subject; effectiveness of facilitation; appropriateness of training tools; and support inside and outside of the classroom, as 6 (nearly excellent) or 7 (excellent). Students rated course content and relevance as excellent (7) or nearly excellent (6) grade by over 90% of the students.

Over the years of delivery the programme has received consistently positive feedback from Pacific learners. It has demonstrated high levels of retention and success for Pacific students when compared to other data, including nationally collated statistics. In 2010 domestic Pacific students enrolled in courses with the GDNMP as their main programme had a 14% higher course success rate than domestic Pacific students in other formal Unitec courses. In addition, domestic Pacific students enrolled in courses with the GDNMP as their main programme had a course success rate 35% greater than the 2005-2009 national tertiary average for Pacific Students (Ministry of Education, 2011).

These ratings reflect the levels of engagement of students in the classroom process and content. Much of this positive feedback has been due to good teaching methodologies such as student centred teaching practices which work well to engage Pacific learners. Research supports the success of these methodologies with Pacific learners in the New Zealand context and elsewhere. Additionally, years of experiences working in the Pacific and in New Zealand with Pacific learners has provided valuable learning on the customisation of teaching to suit Pacific learners.

The following is a reflection summary from Sandy Thompson and Fraser McDonald, two of the tutors on the Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management. Sandy and Fraser have been co-teaching on the Pacific programme since 2006 and have captured their learning from their experiences.

Our learning – Sandy Thompson and Fraser McDonald

We believe the foundation of our success in the positive engagement of Pacific Learners is our underlying belief in the constructivist approach to teaching and learning which is well documented in education theory.

For us this means that:

- Individuals construct new knowledge from their own experiences. Acknowledging and accommodating those experiences is the first step to encouraging new learning
- Because learners are unique, complex and multidimensional, their cultural context has an enormous impact on them as a learner. Their cultural world view directs how they construct their own understanding and meaning
- Good teachers are facilitators who support the learning experience by ensuring it is student centred. To enable the guidance of the student's learning the cultural context of the learner needs to be understood or at least acknowledged
- Knowledge is first constructed in a social context and is then processed by individuals
- Learners construct understanding together that would not be possible alone. Social interaction, sharing and enjoying the company of others enables the understanding and application of the learning
- The context in which the learning occurs is central to the learning itself.



The other philosophy that we strongly adhere to is that to encourage and support learning, it is essential to create Cultural Safety for students. This means we need to not just be culturally sensitive to our students by acknowledging and catering for difference, but facilitate learning in a way that acknowledges and caters for the fact that the cultural values and norms of our students may be different from our own.



Our experience has taught us that there are three areas which when addressed create a positive learning environment that support students who come into our classrooms with a range of learning styles and a range of cultural backgrounds.



It is important that tutors:

1. Create a supportive & safe environment
2. Acknowledge the context of Pacific learners
3. Use appropriate teaching methods

1. Create a supportive & safe environment

In our role as teachers and facilitators we have identified two paramount barriers to full engagement by students and particularly students who have different cultural backgrounds and experiences from our own.

- Lack of trust in the teachers and other participants
- Lack of emotional /cultural safety

Our first steps in planning our work with Pacific students are to address the potential emotional responses of our students to entering a strange environment. In particular those feelings of insecurity that are associated with encountering the unknown: Will I understand what is going on? Will I understand what is expected of me? Will I make a fool out of myself? Will I be laughed at if I ask a question? To address these common responses and to make the students feel comfortable we have adopted a number of processes and facilitation tools to assist with the building of trust and to make the participants feel that they are in an environment that acknowledges their cultural background (View Video Clip 3).



Greetings Introductions and acknowledgements

To welcome our students and to make them feel accepted, acknowledged and comfortable we pay particular attention to the greetings and introductions at the beginning of new courses. This is achieved in our classrooms in a number of ways.

As they enter, on the board will be the traditional greetings of all the Pacific students we are expecting. In the opening welcome presentation we will also use these greetings and ask "have we missed anyone?". This often also warms the group up as it can lead to friendly discussion.

Additional warm up is achieved when we need to ask for help in pronouncing the greetings– being seen as trying to address the students in their language is usually viewed positively. Acknowledging that there are different cultures in the room helps us to build trust and rapport.

To acknowledge the different cultures in the classroom it is necessary to have some idea of who your students are and their cultural background. We ensure we have a comprehensive list of our students and gather as much information as possible on their background.

Further trust is developed by us giving full introductions which explain our experience in the Pacific as well our professional teaching and content expertise

Our next step is to have the participants introduce themselves by going around the room. Usually we ask them to share their name, where their family is from and their job roles. Not only does this facilitate the building of the relationships between the students but enables them to make connections to one another which in turn contribute to a sense of belonging and safety in the group.

Our tools for facilitating introductions:

- Start with pairs or a small group before asking individuals to stand up in front of the large group
- Acknowledge family origins
- Do not rush
- Acknowledge, welcome, and thank each participant individually

This development of trust is also supported by weaving rapport building activities into our teaching. A component of our course requires students to have a clear understanding of themselves and their place in the communities as well as awareness that others have different backgrounds and consequent different world views. To do this time is taken to explore family backgrounds and different values and cultures. An example of such a session can be found in the next session.

Names

Not all communities recognise the term surname and Christian (Christening) names are not suitable terminology to non-Christians.

Ask for the family name (instead of surname) and ask for the name they wish to be called by.

Some cultures use the personal name rather than the family name, or add names to honour particular individuals or historic events.

Ask how they wish to be addressed.

Try to pronounce the name correctly

For example: Viliami Tupou Tuihalamaka

- break down into syllables
- emphasise each vowel (try phonetic spelling)
- watch for accents on letters
- ask the student to help you and repeat it back

Acknowledge the order of the names. Do not abbreviate names as they may well be significant, chosen by family sages.

Ask the person before dropping off or abbreviating names.

A good icebreaker is to ask the students to explain to others the significance of their names.

If the training day falls on a National Pacific holiday we will also acknowledge this:

Independence and National Holidays:

01 June	Samoa Independence Day
04 June	Tonga Independence Day
12 June	Philippines Independence Day
07 July	Solomon Islands National Day
12 July	Kiribati National Day
30 July	Vanuatu Independence Day
16 September	PNG Independence Day
01 October	Tuvalu Independence Day
10 October	Fiji National Day
03 November	Federated States Micronesia Independence Day

Pacific symbols, artefacts and visuals

We utilize common Pacific artefacts and symbols that reflect the Pacific cultural environment.

For example, use of colourful flowers – on posters, tablecloths.

In our classrooms these also serve the purpose of engaging those visual learners who are stimulated by colour. Some times we also have wooden statues, waka, drums etc. on tables. Sometimes we will incorporate these as teaching tools. For example a double hulled canoe is used as a metaphor for describing the challenging journey while acknowledging both traditional and modern ways.

In an attempt to customise the information and to support the cultural safety of students, we use Pacific visuals on our flip charts, slide shows and training materials. For example: tapa, carvings and Island icons such as coconut trees and beaches.



Charts and Posters

Proverbs and quotes in Pacific languages that relate to the topic being taught are hung on our classroom walls. These are simply printed from the computer and enlarged onto A3 sheets and laminated. We usually add Pacific symbols or cultural art to add to their Pacific flavour. Experience has taught us to respect and understand the origins of Pacific art and the symbols we use. They will often come up in conversation.



Music

We use music as a facilitation tool to set the climate of a classroom. It fills an empty space for our students upon entering the classroom environment and we use it to soothe or invigorate energy levels during sessions. We often use Pacific music – both modern and traditional as well as indigenous music from other regions.

Singing is encouraged in our classrooms as a love of music is a core aspect of Pacific culture. Singing is included in the opening or closing of teaching sessions or as an energiser. Many of our students will sing each other traditional songs as an acknowledgement, to farewell them or to thank them for their support.

As tutors, singing is not our area of expertise (!), but in our sessions there is usually one person who will be able to lead others if there are more than three or so in the room from a particular Island group.

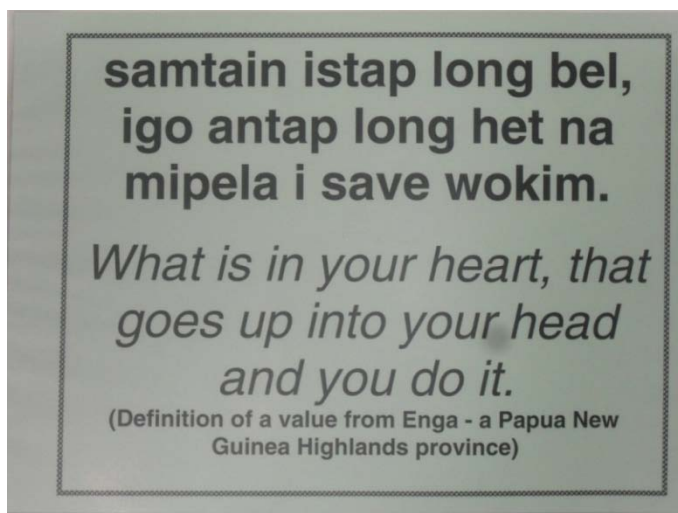
Appropriate dress

We have experienced that in many Pacific cultures the way someone dresses can be viewed as an outward representation of the respect they hold for others. As most Pacific cultures have a strong Christian tradition and tend to be conservative, modest and formal dress is appropriate. For men this means a button up shirt and long trousers, and a tie if it is a formal setting. For women this means covering up arms and wearing long skirts, Decorum is expected. In some Pacific cultures a women wearing trousers is not seen as appropriate by older Pacific people.

Our experience has been that younger Pacific students will dress more casually and as the days of a course go on we will also dress more casually. But the openings of courses are seen as formal and we will always dress appropriately for that first session.

Pacific language and context

We utilise the metaphorical elements of Pacific languages to not only define but to explore the deeper meanings of "Western concepts" in our teaching. We find this provides a rich discussion and greatly enhances the understanding of the content.



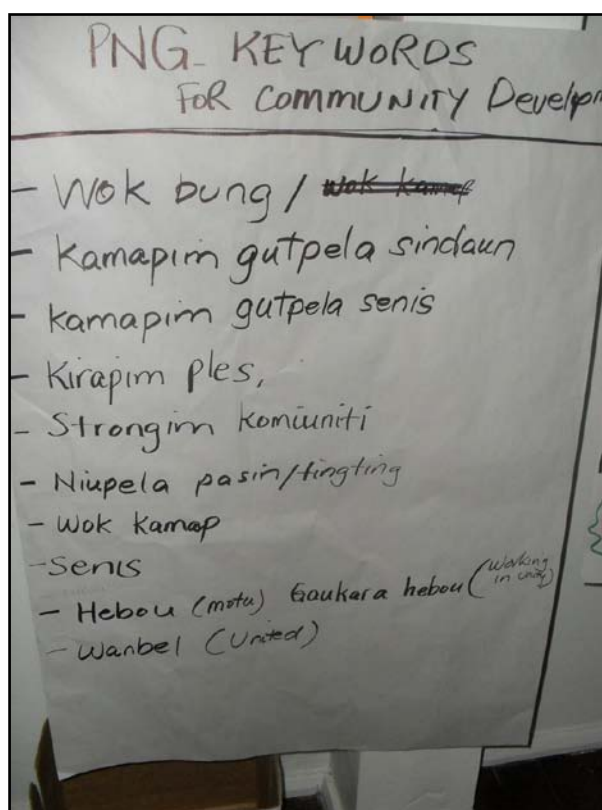
For example:

We will begin a session by starting with a “word web”. We ask what the Pacific words are for the concept we are studying and collect them onto flip chart paper. Constructing the technical term and discussing the meaning often results in a rich discussion of the concept we are attempting to define. Students’ discussing the similarities and differences in their Pacific languages has the same outcome.

Acknowledgement of spiritual dimension

Most Pacific nations have a strong Christian heritage which influences their daily lives and also the worldview they bring to their learning.

It is customary to begin and end gatherings with a prayer that acknowledges the participants, asks for divine support and also acknowledges those not present.



For us this is a facilitated intervention to assist transition. It not only acknowledges the importance of the spiritual dimension to our students, but enables them to fully engage in the learning ahead. In our experience there is usually a participant who is confident enough to lead a prayer on behalf of the group. We will approach someone before the session starts – usually an older person - and ask if they will be willing to do us the honour of opening on behalf of the group. If they would prefer not to they will usually nominate someone else to.

We are careful not to make anyone uncomfortable, if there are only one or two Pacific people in the group we will make an open invitation for others in the group to open with a prayer or lead the prayer ourselves.

Balance of authority and Mana

We deliberately consider the mana of both our co trainers and students in our classrooms.

Trainers:

Depending on the student body, if one of us or one of our colleagues is perceived as having a lot of mana or status, this may inhibit participation. We alleviate this by introducing ourselves or each other by telling personal stories about ourselves and our family. This supports us being seen as a facilitator rather than a person of authority which in turns helps us to develop our learning community.

Conversely, there have been situations where the mana of a trainer needs to be validated. For example, a young trainer teaching older participants, or a woman in a room full of male elders. A strategy we have utilised is to have a respected person introduce them and present their credentials.

Students

In our classrooms we identify and acknowledge individuals who hold positions of responsibility and are seen as having wisdom by their community.

These individuals can enrich our training sessions and if we build sufficient trust will provide leverage by encouraging others to participate and support their learning.

It is always a tension for us to know how to acknowledge inherent power dynamics that exist between the students but still ensure learning is not inhibited by such dynamics. Respecting mana is not only about power or prestige, but is also maintaining the inherent dignity of individuals.

We are always aware that our students will not put themselves in a position where they are seen to be open to ridicule or shame. We are careful not to single out individuals or to place individuals in a situation where they may feel foolish in front of others.

By contrast, while humility is considered a virtue, the ability to laugh at oneself is easily accepted. We try to be aware of cultural protocols between participants. For example, in some Pacific cultures elders speak for younger members of the community.

Likewise individuals of lower social standing will not speak up in front of or participate in interactive activities with those of a higher standing such those with chiefly status.

The development of our learning community to ensure open discussion which is essential for learning, requires us to ensure everyone feels safe to speak openly and honestly. The main tool we use to reduce power imbalances and potential barriers to full participation as discussed above is by individuals is humour and careful small group selection.



2. Acknowledge the context of Pacific learners

The cultural background of our participants strongly influences the extent to which they engage in a course of study such as ours. This is not only in a physical sense, for example how they are able to participate in the classroom and engage in self directed learning, but also how they identify with and intellectually engage in the content of our courses.

The tension between traditional and modern cultural values which can impact on participation in formal education mirror those we explore with our students when discussing working effectively in Pacific communities. In the next section we have included a training plan where this is explored (View Video Clip 4).

Cultural obligations

Pacific communities in New Zealand have a strong sense of cultural identity which is influenced by traditional practices. At the foundation of this is a society based on collectivism where individuals are recognised as such but always in the context of their family or community. This creates a specific dynamic in our teaching, which being based on Western management training requires us to encourage independent and individualised analysis and decision making. While we assess our students individually we make use of study groups and peer support in analysing concepts. We also utilise reflective journals to encourage individual analysis and application to students' specific work environments.

The priority to uphold cultural practices is a reality for most of our Pacific students. There is a high expectation that members of a family will participate in family and community events. These particularly include Church services such as funerals and christenings and welcoming senior family members arriving at the Airport, for example.

As part of a collective culture, individuals represent their families and communities and will sometimes be called upon to honour those roles which can have consequences on their ability to participate in training.

As extended family is at the core of the structure of our Pacific student's communities, the needs of their family take precedence over external needs. For our students, loyalty and service to extended family will always have a high priority. This includes caring for elders, looking after younger members of the family and providing support in any family situation. For example: an impending first birth may require the attendance of the whole family irrespective of other responsibilities.

This can impact on students' abilities to meet attendance requirements and deadlines for self directed learning and assessment tasks. Whilst we do not advocate lenience only for our Pacific students with regard to deadlines, these factors have to be taken into account. We are often told: "We can always get more training but we can't get another family".

We also find it useful to have a discussion with students engaging in the programme on how they will manage their time to ensure they are able to participate in study and still fulfil their family and community obligations.

As we work with adult students where obtaining family support is not required to complete courses, there are other programmes in our institution that will hold whanau evenings prior to the commencement of courses to gain such family support. For some of our programmes we do seek their organisations support through a letter to their employer asking how they will provide support to the student.

In our networking with Pacific communities we also promote the benefits to the community of supporting students to succeed in their studies.

People over task

We have often experienced in Pacific cultures that the needs of people will usually take precedence over the needs of the task. Our observation in the classroom is that this translates not only to the obligations discussed above but also to how group work is carried out and how time is managed in activities.

We find that group work with Pacific students requires plenty of processing time. This is for a number of reasons:

- Generally all individuals are given respectful time to have their say and express their opinions
- Decisions and outcomes tend to be based on consensus.
- Time is not seen as more important than the successful and full completion of a task.
- The process of analysing and applying learning is done collectively

Networking

A core component of our teaching programme is the networking done by the participants which provides them with support in their study and in their workplaces.

We believe and have experienced that for Pacific students, learning is best when it is a social experience. We utilise a lot of group work, with breaks and lunches allowing sufficient time for networking

E-mail lists are created and regularly utilised by students to support each other.

We have had limited success with social networking sites due to the range of technological access and experience of our participants but we are confident that this will grow.

Essential to the development of a social and relaxed atmosphere that supports good learning is the use of humour by the tutors and students.

We have experienced that a characteristic of many of our Pacific students is a love of fun and laughter which we do not interpret as frivolous or diminishing the content of the teaching but as creating an



enjoyable experience for the students. We know that those of our students who enjoy coming to class commit more fully to participating in their programme of study.

As part of our introduction process at the beginning of courses, as tutors we will make jokes which gives students permission to do likewise. We also ensure we joke and laugh along with the students in the classroom. In our experience this classroom climate is most effective. We make every attempt to not discourage humour through negative body language. Being open, relaxed and smiling even when we do not understand the joke or its context encourages a relaxed and jovial atmosphere!

Food

The eating of food together is an important aspect of Pacific culture. For some, sharing food has a spiritual significance and is also an acknowledgement of generosity, hospitality and sharing.

All are highly regarded values in Pacific cultures. We always coordinate shared lunches as part of our classroom protocols to foster this.

Encouraging the sharing of Pacific food is also an acknowledgement of the students' backgrounds as well as an invitation for them to join in with food that they are comfortable with.

The saying of Grace before eating is always significant.

3. Use appropriate teaching methods

In our teaching we place a strong emphasis on addressing the range of learning styles amongst our students. We would like to challenge an often quoted viewpoint that Pacific students are reflective learners. In our experience the proportion of reflective learners in our classrooms is the same as in our mainstream teaching. We suspect that the level of reflective learners found amongst Pacific learners is a result of traditional teaching practices in earlier schooling (View Video Clip 5).

For us, teaching tools that acknowledge the cultural context of Pacific learners and address issues of English as a second language have resulted in good learning outcomes.

The following are some examples of some of the teaching tools that we use that we have found particularly successful

Interactive activities

Interactive activities are a key aspect of our classroom work.

A simplistic explanation of how our sessions are structured is:

1. Defining concepts – utilising Pacific language if appropriate
2. An interactive game or activity that either provides an experience or explores the learning in their context.
3. A debrief or a mini lecture or explanation of the model/theory/concept using flipcharts
4. Application of the learning to the individuals' own context



Defining concepts, visual and images

Defining concepts using visuals and images is also key for students' engagement and learning.

Instructions written as well as spoken

As a practice to support learners who have English as a second language, all instructions are given verbally and then written on the board. However, in our experience this is also beneficial for English as first language speakers. Our students soon learn not to feel anxious when instructions are given as we will write them up as well.



Contextualisation and customisation of content

As mentioned above the application of the learning to the students' own particular context is a core component of our curriculum design. This is an essential acknowledgement of the context within which our students work and live. It is our belief that if a particular learning cannot be applied to their work (as we are involved in vocational training) then we question its validity and discussion is held as to why and how it does not fit. This serves to encourage the students to challenge their thinking and knowledge and to apply learning to their specific context.

Our programme has a core philosophy of 'if it is of no use then it is no use". The real world nature of our programme ensures that we deliver appropriate and applicable content to the participants' needs and context

Customising teaching materials for the Pacific context removes barriers for our students with regards to identifying with and applying the concepts we teach. We utilise a number of teaching tools to do this:

Pacific case studies

In our programme these serve a number of purposes:

- To provide scenarios that ring true in the participants' experiences for them to explore. This expedites the processing of the learning
- To acknowledge that the environments that our Pacific students work in can be unique
- To acknowledge the context they come from and to create cultural safety.

An example of the use of case studies is provided in the next section.

Stories

Traditionally stories play a central role in Pacific learning given the oral traditions. In our classroom, the use of stories provides a rich way to not only encourage understanding but to convey information and support retention of learning. It is an added bonus for us if we have a traditional story that supports the content, but often it is merely stories of experiences of others in situations relating to the content. To do this effectively we have a collection of stories we have gathered from our experiences working in Pacific communities, other Pacific students and Pacific colleagues. Often these are composite stories which we use to illustrate a specific point or to ensure confidentiality.

An example of the use of stories is provided in the next section.

Role plays

We have learnt that many of our Pacific students are very adept at role play and enjoy making presentations in the form of skits. This is strongly encouraged in our classrooms and we have yet to be challenged assessing a presentation that is given in this way. We ensure that there are clear marking criteria for group presentations and that they also contain an individual submission of work. Peer assessment of participation is also utilised.

In many of our classes we include role play as a teaching method by setting a scenario and having the students ad lib or by presenting them with scenarios and roles to play.

For us role plays also have the added bonus of creating an atmosphere of fun in our classrooms. An example of a role play activity is included in the next section.



Clear handouts/reading summaries

To support students for whom English is a second language and to provide a scaffold for learning, handouts are presented in a form that is clear and precise. The

use of bullet points, graphics and accessible language is not a means to diminish or demean the content or readers but to provide a basis for understanding which can be built on.

Often handouts have space for students to take notes.

Similarly, understanding is enhanced through providing brief summaries of required readings. We have found that if we provide a straightforward précis of a reading first then the students find getting started on the reading less daunting. Questions are often provided with readings to assist with the students' engagement and to support critical thinking while they are reading. In many of our courses we establish reading circles where small groups are set up and each person chooses a reading which they later share and discuss with the others. Again, in our experience this encourages the students to read thoroughly and the discussion then supports their understanding.

Glossary /wall chart

A glossary or dictionary is kept on the wall which is built up over the sessions.

These provide simple explanations for key technical terms that are introduced on the course and students are encouraged to ask for words to be added to the dictionary. In our experience Pacific learners, like many learners, are hesitant to interrupt a teacher to ask for an explanation for a word. We have noticed that not knowing the meaning of a word can seriously inhibit their engagement in the content. Creating an atmosphere where together we are developing a glossary is an interactive and safe way to address this.

Having two tutors delivering the training also enables rephrasing of concepts and explanations.

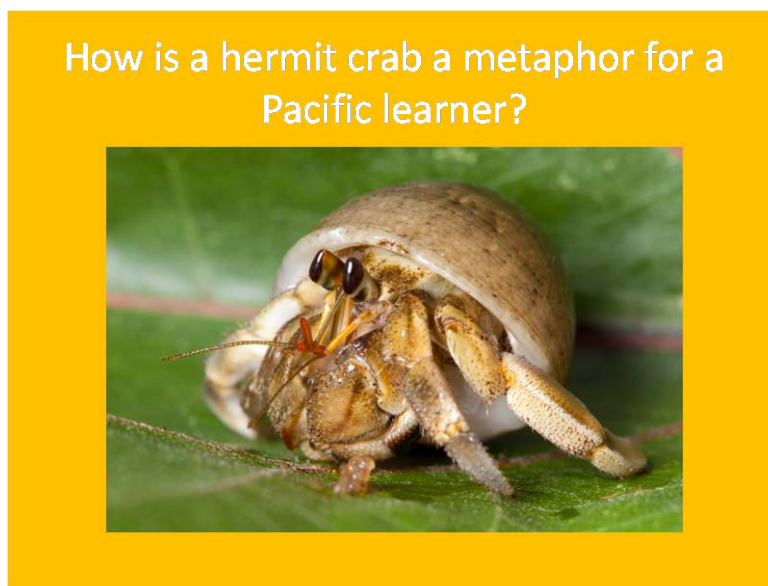
Metaphor

One of our key training tools is using metaphors for initiating discussion and also for the exploration of complex ideas. We have found that utilising metaphors from a Pacific context supports discussion and provides rich analysis and the drawing out of ideas.

Metaphors are presented in a number of different ways in the classroom;

This can be achieved through having an object up front. E.g. “why is this kava bowl a metaphor for a community?”

A picture on a power point e.g. ‘why is this island a metaphor for good organisational management



A laminated photograph e.g. “why is this picture of a dance group a metaphor for team building”

We often use the metaphor of a hermit crab when presenting to tutors on engaging Pacific learners:

Card Sort exercises

A tool we use in our teaching is to provide the students with a series of cards that they sort in pairs or small groups. We ask them to prioritise or sort them according to set criteria. For example, management tasks vs. leadership tasks, personal vs. organisation values, conventional vs. participatory meetings, prioritise coaching questions. An example of using values cards is found in the next section.



Interactive games and activities

We have had wonderful success with introducing active learning activities in our programme. These have clear learning outcomes which are reinforced through debriefs following the activity.

Examples of these include card games and simulations where the rules are adjusted so that each group or individual has different instructions or information leading to particular outcomes.

These games are excellent energisers and fully engage our active learners, but the real value is in the debriefs we facilitate following them. Examples of debrief question we use include;

- What helped/what hindered?
- What happened? What can we learn about ... from that exercise?
- What worked? What didn't work?

An example of an interactive activity can be found in the next section.

Teaching Plans

The following are examples of teaching plans that demonstrate some of our tools.

Session Plan Example 1: Sustainable Organisations

Learning outcome: To explore and apply the concept of a sustainable organisation.

(Example of use of metaphor)



Warm up	Word web	Small groups made up of students from different regions Question to class: what are some Pacific words for sustainability?
Exploring Sustainability	Chalk and talk	Simple house graphic on flip chart Question to class - If we have to build a sustainable house what do we need? – draw it as we go Foundations – strong; Walls; roof - infrastructure People; Skills tools; Leadership; Heart (people who care); Money; Plans; Networks (prompts – if you go away for a while who will take care of the house; how do we know what to do?); Ownership; Systems;
Organisation sustainability	Class discussion	How does this apply to organisation sustainability
		Look at picture of PNG rainforest on slide show – “why is this rainforest a metaphor for organisational sustainability” Small groups to present back discussion points to rest of class on flip chart paper
Theory	Reading	Small groups look at conference paper on sustainability. Each group take one section and identify key points in the sections and discuss if you agree or disagree with what is said. As a class prepare a slide show of the key points – print out as handouts. Share and debate discussion points.
Application	Work books	Thinking about the discussions– how sustainable do you think your organisation is? What might you need to put in place to make it more so?



Session Plan Example 2: Traditional – Modern Values

Learning outcome: Acknowledge and discuss the Traditional-Modern Continuum

(Example of exploring values concepts and a group card sort)

Warm up	Word web	Small groups made up of Pacific Island students Question to class: What are some traditional values and practices that you believe in?
Exploring the Characteristics	Characteristics on individual cards –see Hand Out	Start by discussing how Values lead to Attitudes which then are shown up through Behaviours. Individual cards given out-one per student Describe the meanings of each characteristic
Search	Class discussion	Students hold up cards. Instruction: Discuss and locate the characteristic which best describes the opposite meaning to your card. Pair up.
Activity		Place two Headings on the floor opposite each other: MODERN ----- TRADITIONAL Allow room to walk between. Invite students to place the pairs opposite each other, on the floor, under the appropriate Heading. Create two lists using all the cards. Provide the Hand Out.
Reflection	Facilitated discussion	Students into pairs. Instruction: Discuss how you would balance these often conflicting characteristics. Describe the tension this can create. Tutor walks down the middle of the two lists to demonstrate. Share and debate discussion points.
Application	Flip chart summary	Question: Thinking about the discussions– What might you need to put in place to minimise the tensions? List these on the flip chart.

Traditional versus modern characteristics (hand out)

Values, Attitudes and Behaviours

Traditionally raised Pacific peoples have to adapt to survive in new environments. This can create a state of constant transition between old ways and new.

Imagine a continuum.

Below are the opposing characteristics from each end of that continuum.

TRADITIONAL	MODERN
Emphasis on conformity and traditional behaviours	Emphasis on independence and innovation
Kin reliant and obliged	Self reliant
Family comes first	Individual motivation
Group orientated	Self orientated
Fatalistic and accepting	Belief in self ability to change
Extended family priorities	Nuclear family focus
Present day perspective	Future time orientation
Authoritarian upbringing	Permissiveness
Emphasis on company	Emphasis on privacy
Relatively fixed status	Socially mobile
Ascribed	Achieved
Socially dependent	Socially independent
Unused to ambiguity and abstracts	Able to cope with ambiguity and abstracts

Session Plan Example 3: Influence of Cultural Values

Learning outcome: Identify impact of own cultural background on professional practice

(Example of trust and rapport building activity)

Warm up	Large group	Share with the class the significance of your given name
Family History	Small group work	Share stories of your grandparents, especially where they were born. Debrief where and count up different cultural backgrounds Put pins on map

Implication on Professional Practice	Pairs Record in Journal	What I would like you to know about my cultural background How my cultural values affects my professional practice
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Session Plan Example 4: Social Capital

Learning outcome: To introduce and explore the concept of Social Capital

(Example of using case studies)

Warm up	Group discussions Feedback to others – compile a class list of healthy and unhealthy communities	One set of groups: Think of an unhealthy community you know – what does it look like? What's going on? Other groups: Think of a health community you know – what does it look like? What's going on?
Definition	Chalk and talk	Flip chart with definition on it Discuss and Q and A
Example of Social Capital	Case study: Small group discussions	In groups of four read the case study and discuss the following: What was it that created an initial connection between all of the characters in the story? What did all of the characters in the story do to build social capital? What long term outcomes can you envisage for that community, from that story?
Processing	Class debrief	What have we learnt about social capital from this exercise?
Theory	Presentation	Slide show review of findings of research on Social; capital in NZ
Application	Small group discussion	Discussion question: How my organisation builds social capital?

Case Study: Ainiusami II: When Manuia's house burns down

In the village of Ainiusami on the south east coast of Upolu, Manuia's family house got burnt down one day while Manuia had gone to her vegetable garden to get food for the day, and her children were at school. Manuia is a widow with four school age children. The alarm was raised by a neighbour who was at home, but because there was no fire service in this part of the island, all the family's property was burnt. The only things left were the clothes they were wearing while they were in the garden and at school. The rest of the village came when they saw the fire, but like Manuia's family, all they could do was stand and watch while the house and its contents burnt to the ground. Every member of the village was shocked and felt sorry for their family who had just lost everything.

The first person to recover from the shock was the President of the Women's Committee, Lototalofa, a very practical and kind woman. She organised some members of the Women's Committee, and they started walking along the village, calling in house after house asking for donations of anything that each family could spare. They soon had to ask some young people to come and help them carry the clothes, pots, bedding, clothing and foodstuff which members of the village had donated. Lotoalofa also went to the pastor and asked if Manuia's family could sleep in the Sunday school fale until a house was built for them. Then they went back to the site of the fire and kindly guided Manuia and her family away from the site of the fire to the Sunday school fale. Manuia was very grateful for the help she and her children received from their village members and especially for Lotoalofa for organising things for them when they were too numb with shock to do anything for themselves.

Early the next day, a village fono was called. The matai of the village discussed what had happened to Manuia's family home and they decided that the village tauleelea (untitled men) must start building a house for Manuia's family that day. Word was then sent out the different families asking the taulelea to come to the maota where the fono was held. The decision for the fono was relayed to the taulelea. Some were dispatched to the bush to cut down some poumuili trees for posts, and some fau for the rafters of the fale, while others were sent to ensure the fire was completely burnt out and to start building a foundation for a new fale where the burnt-out house stood. Word was also sent out from the fono to Lotoalofa to come. When she came, the fono requested her to organise the women to weave the thatch needed for the new fale. Lotoalofa went off the roundup the women to go looking for niupiu leaves to weave into thatch. Work for the fale for Manuia's family house started before dark on the day after the fire.

By the end of the fifth day after the fire, the fale was completed, and Manuia and her children were able to move in with the necessities that had been gathered up on the day of the fire by the efficient and kind-hearted Lotoalofa and her women's committee. Manuia and her family could not thank their co-villagers enough for their kindness, but as the tuua (oldest high chief) of the village said "What's a village for if they don't help their fellow-villagers in need?" The pastor was there to say a prayer in the evening Manuia and her family moved into their new fale. The rest of the villagers bought food to celebrate the new home for Manuia and her family. Manuia cried the whole night

Session Plan Example 5: Group Dynamics

Learning outcome: To identify typical group behaviours

(Example of role play activity)

Warm up	Class discussion	Use proverb on groups working together on chart – what does this proverb tell us about groups
Group Dynamics Definition	Chalk and Talk	Definition of group dynamics on flip chart - discussion
Activity	Role play	8 students given a role on a slip of paper. Asked to participate in a planning meeting for an upcoming Xmas party. Rule is - do not show anyone your piece of paper. Identify the chairperson for the group. Rest of group complete observation chart of what they see happening
Identify typical behaviours	Class debrief	What happened? What can we learn about group dynamics from that exercise?
Application	Ingrid Bens Handout on group behaviours	In pairs; which of these have you seen happening in the groups you work with? What are some strategies for encouraging effective behaviours
	Debrief	Collect strategies on a flip chart

Session Plan Example 6: Story Telling

Learning outcome: To explore the use of stories as a leadership skill

(Example of the use of stories)

Warm up	Role play	Tutor and volunteer role play a manager talking with a new enthusiastic worker who has an MBA and working out in the community with mixed success. On the way out from their meeting the manager tells the worker the story of the District officer
Story telling	Group brainstorm	Why are stories and effective way to reinforce messages?
Identifying moral of the story	Pairs then class work	In pairs talk about a movie you have seen recently. What was the fundamental message of the movie?

		Describe the movie to the rest of the class – class to guess the moral. Confirm or corrected by person
Application	Pairs/ large group	Think of some traditional stories or fables. What workplace lessons could you use then in as a story for your teams? Share with the rest of the class

Once upon a time there was a young District Officer in Fiji who was recently out of University.

He was an ambitious young man in a hurry, out to prove himself capable of greater things.

Unfortunately he moved so fast that he often did not consult the communities he served.

He did not even listen to the sage advice of the village elders.

Finally his own senior chief heard about this and summoned the young man to see him at noon the very next day.

The young man dutifully rushed in early-at 11.30 a.m. and immediately asked to be announced.

Then he waited. And waited. And waited some more.

First his chief had to offer hospitality to some visiting dignitaries.

Then he needed a traditional slow healing back massage.

Finally at 5 p.m. he called the young man into his office.

Turning towards him the chief said:

“You must learn not to eat your kumara too hot. It may burn your mouth for ever.

Good bye”

Session Plan Example 7: Values

Learning outcome: To identify the participants' organisation's core values and to explore the concept of values alignment

(Example of card sort activity)

Values	Presentation	Slide show on values and three ways to get compliance
Personal values	Card sort	Each given set of values cards (a pack of cards with different values printed on them) Select your top 10 personal values – if not there write on the blanks Write these down on worksheet

		Now select organisations top 10 values There has been a Board meeting – you have been instructed to reduce these down to 5 There have been budget cuts – you are only allowed 3.
Values alignment	Class discussion	Where do we get personal values from? Organisation values from? Were the personal and organisation values the same? What happens when they are not aligned – tutor to tell a personal story of when this happened. – gather other stories
Theory	Presentation	Slide show/lecture on values and management

Session Plan Example 8: Effective Teams

Learning outcome: To identify key aspects that support the development of effective teams
(*Example of an interactive activity*)

Warm up	In small groups identify the difference between a team and a work group	
Interactive activity	Team race. Tell group going to participate in an activity that demonstrates effective teams	Divide the group into two teams. Instructions: Each team has to get from point A to B standing only on newspaper; the ground in between is shark infested waters. All team members must stay out of the water – if anyone steps off the newspaper the whole team has to start from the beginning. First team back in the winner – you have 10 minutes planning time. Step back and do not provide any other instructions unless asked – be tough on time – no warning provided
Effective teams	Debrief	In teams discuss What happened and What helped and what hindered. As a whole class gather onto a flip chart.
	Handout	Discuss metaphor of raising a circus tent as a description of team work.
Theory	Chalk and talk summary of Readings	Refer to the Assessment tasks

You can also access a Pod-cast of the two tutors talking more about their experience.

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