

# Editorial

Talofa lava, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Kia orana, Malo e lelei, Fakatalofa atu, Ni sa bula Vinaka, Malo ni, Tēnā koutou. A very warm welcome to this issue of *Set*, where the teaching and learning journeys of Pacific peoples comprise our focus section. Each contribution gives insight into how teachers and schools can value the linguistic and cultural identities of Pacific children and communities. I hope that this issue will contribute to the New Zealand education system and its educators having an increasingly positive impact on Pacific students' success, with success being defined by Pacific peoples themselves.

The *Pasifika Education Plan* (Ministry of Education, 2013) and *Tapasā: Cultural Competencies Framework for Teachers of Pacific Learners* (Ministry of Education, 2018) provide a policy backdrop to the first article. Pacific values take centre stage in both documents. Fuapepe Rimoni and Robin Averill interviewed fourteen primary and secondary teachers who were nominated by their principal as making a positive difference for Pacific learners. Their article explores the value of respect, noting some subtle differences in the way that Pacific and non-Pacific educators understand and promote respect in their classrooms.

Reverend Pennie Vaione Togatama-Otto starts with “the premise that that while Pasifika students share some similar experiences and expectations, it is important to understand differences between Pacific nations communities and identities” (p. 13). She attends to the perspectives of Niuean boys in New Zealand secondary education. While their appreciation for some of their teachers shines, the boys' narratives paint a shadow picture of disappointments and disjunctures, suggesting that some schools could do more to support the tertiary aspirations of Niuean students and families. Possible strategies are offered under each theme.

Talitiga Ian Fasavalu, supported by lecturer and co-author Kate Thornton, shares an action-research project about a mentoring programme for Samoan secondary students. He designed, analysed and fine-tuned an approach based on curious questions, which stimulated “meaningful conversations to recognise and utilise their culturally embedded attributes to improve achievement in their chosen subject” (p. 22). The mentoring offset a stretched teacher–student relationship

and helped the students to gain NCEA credits “by activating the knowledge that is locked away in their minds” (p. 25). Taligata's gentle and generous retelling of his learning journey is threaded with his concern about the persistence of deficit theorising, which undermines Pacific students' ability to reach their potential.

Martyn Reynolds, prior author of a *Set* article about *vā*, a Pacific concept of relationality (2017), contributes a new article about how values entwine educational practice. He states that “for educational institutions to continue to evolve to meet the diverse needs of their communities, it is important to surface and make sense of the values different groups and individuals hold” (p. 29). As a teacher with an academic background, he draws teaching as inquiry together with research methodologies to report on school wide consultation towards a values framework. He argues that a critical and ethical approach to values consultation requires a careful selection of methods as well as “deep self-reflection by the inquirer” (p. 30).

He Whakaaro Anō presents two research-informed guides for teaching in areas where the authors feel that curriculum expectations may outstrip practitioner know how. In the area of *te reo Māori*, Chris Lowman draws from literature and experience to promulgate the deliberate acts of language learning method. The key is to support *ākonga* to take control of how they go about learning *te reo*, especially within an immersion environment, but also in non-immersion Māori language programmes. Within digital technologies, Megan Clune considers key literature and presents activities that will assist primary school teachers to embed computational thinking within mathematics. She explains how components of computational thinking can match against mathematical concepts in ways that are “meaningful and discourse rich” (p. 44).

Our next article is drawn from an evaluation of a new ACC-funded Health Education programme. Jade Speaks Up supports primary students to navigate issues related physical and emotional safety and wellbeing, including family violence. The programme is taught by classroom teachers and integrated into their drama curriculum, with background support from two programme facilitators (the article's authors Andrea O'Hagen and Elaine Dyer) and connectivity to other services.

Finally, Assessment News addresses the government's change package that is underway within the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA). Charles Darr sees it as an opportunity for teachers to revisit the intentions of standards-based assessment, and to consider the nature of validity in both internal and external assessments. Charles says "Perhaps the biggest assessment opportunity presented by the change package is the chance to reconsider what is at the heart of our learning programmes and to design approaches to assessment that recognise this" (p. 60).

For additional reading related to our Pacific peoples focus, please be reminded that *Set* 2019 issue 1 contained "Le Tuiga: Samoan constructs of giftedness and talent within a Samoan bilingual context" by Martha Aseta, Catherine Rawlinson, and Rae Si'ilata (2019). Two years ago, we presented a focus section "Palangi teaching Pasifika" including an article on Tongan boys' education by David Fa'avae (2017). Next year, within an upcoming mathematics and statistics focus, we plan to print an article by Sinapi Taea and Robin Averill (in press) titled, " 'Tu'utu'u le upega i le loloto—Cast the net into deeper waters': Using research and practice to rethink mathematics pedagogy: Let's dance!". *Set* will continue to offer Pacific perspectives and analyses on a variety of topics, and kindly welcomes future submissions or requests.

La soifua ma ia manuia, Kia monuina, Kia manuia,  
Faka'apa'apa atu, Tofa Ia, Ni sa moce.

*Josie Roberts*  
*Set Editor*

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## References

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