

## **NZARE Pasifika Caucus Report – Council Meeting 13 February 2014** **Rae Si'ilata and Tanya Wendt-Samu**

Two matters to report on:

1. Pasifika Research Symposium
2. Pasifika Caucus meeting

### **1. Successful Pasifika Research in Education Symposium – November 2013**

NZARE's Pasifika Caucus organised and held a one-day 'Pasifika Research in Education Symposium' at the 2013 NZARE Conference in Dunedin, sponsored by the Ministry of Education's Pasifika Research Advisory Group, and the Research Unit in Pasifika and International Education (RUPIE), Faculty of Education, University of Auckland.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the symposium was to provide a forum to review and critically reflect on the impact of the MOE's *Pasifika Research Guidelines* (2002), which were first presented by the MoE and RUPE (now RUPIE) at NZARE, Christchurch, in 2001. Subsequent documents such as *Teu Le Va: Relationships across research and policy in Pasifika education* (2010) and *Pasifika Education Research Priorities: Using research to realize our vision for Pasifika learners* (2012), are significant related developments.

#### **Attendees**

There were 14 people who attended from a range of education providers and research institutions.

#### **Programme**

The symposium began with a pese and tatalo (hymn and prayer), followed by 'feiloaina' /'whakawhanaugatanga' (Introductions, getting to know one another, making connections personally and professionally).

Dr Melani Anae (Centre for Pacific Studies, UoA) 'reflected on the journey'. She talked about 'Teu Le Va': Relational ethics from a Samoan perspective and 'the sacred and secular commitment to relational spaces'. She believes that Pasifika research has had a paradigm shift, from research as a means to an end, to a focus on the importance of the relationship between the participants. She related this to issues of social justice, stating that any Pacific research should make a difference to the Pasifika community on the ground. She talked about 'tidying up the spaces' and that it is the job of the Pasifika researcher to facilitate continued conversation between the research community and the 'researched Pacific'; that relationships are sacred and need to be nurtured and looked after. 'This evokes the need to attend to the art of relationships. Students can use any methodology (Western or Pasifika), but it is what you bring to the research that makes it Pacific. The Pasifika frame which incorporates Pasifika specific research methodologies are acting out the *teu le va*.'

There was general discussion and critical reflection from the attendees following Melani's presentation.

Two examples of Pasifika research were presented, followed by discussion:

1. Dr. Diane Mara: MoE Contract Research: 'Centres of Innovation, Aoga Faa Samoa' (2003-2006): Pasifika researchers finding a voice, explored in ECE settings.
2. Annie Siopoe: Post Grad Masters research), Waikato Uni: 'Children of the Migrant Dreamers': Values expressed by Pasifika participants in the Kotahitanga project.

Dr. Greg Barnett reflected on Pacific postgraduate research in education, based on his research project (described in "Research paradigm choices made by postgraduate students with Pacific education research interests in New Zealand", in *Higher Education Research & Development* 31 (4), 2012, 479-492). Critical reflection and discussion followed.

Dr. Tanya Wendt-Samu led a discussion on 'Where to Next'.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

- Thanks to RUPIE for financial support to fly in Dr. Melani Anae, and to provide dinner for all symposium attendees at the Asian restaurant.
- Thanks to Liz and Mary-Liz (council reps) for their visit during the symposium.

## **2. Pasifika Caucus meeting at NZARE**

Nine people attended:

### **Discussion**

Two key points:

1. Pasifika presence within NZARE, and at the NZARE/AARE conference in 2014
2. Communication/Membership/Website

### **Pasifika research presence in NZARE, and at AARE/NZARE conference – 2014**

- Numbers of Pasifika academics quite small, especially professors, associate professors, PhDs. Who is supporting our scholars in education and who is in charge of Pasifika contract research?
- How can NZARE support initiatives to build capability? Possibly have regional symposiums to support Pacific PhDs.
- Issues around NZARE Pasifika membership: How to make it an inviting proposition to be involved? For example: the Pasifika Symposium was useful in that there was worthwhile co-constructed conversation. Need more conversations around Pacific Research methodologies.
- Need to build a community where people can become part of a Pacific research community (for example the Pacific Circle Consortium is successful because of the relationships formed).
- Would like to have a strong Pacific/Pasifika Education presence (from NZ, Australia and Pacific Rim) at the AARE/NZARE conference in Brisbane in 2014.
- Represents an exciting opportunity for a 'conference within a conference': developing an International Pasifika/Pacific Education conference strand
- Can the Council suggest/provide guidance on how the Pasifika Caucus might go about doing this? (It would be good to be able to start promoting this by mid-March).

### **NZARE Pasifika Membership/Website**

Ideas:

- Discussion around how the new NZARE website might be used to build the Pasifika Caucus as well as enhance NZARE membership.
- Possible plan to send out an E-Newsletter to members.
- Possibility of developing a Pasifika Caucus blog, which Manu has offered to support us with.

Thanks to Caroline Strachan, NZARE Executive Officer, who attended and supported.