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Re-framing Pacific education, teacher knowledge and practice: innovations from within Aotearoa New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

In many countries including Aotearoa New Zealand, rapidly changing population demographics have led to increasing cultural diversity in classrooms. Developing equitable outcomes for diverse learners including those from indigenous and migrant heritage requires educators to both respect cultural diversity and enact intercultural understanding and capability. This has implications for both pre-service and in-service teacher education and more broadly educational policy. In this article, we draw on examples from New Zealand of shifts in Pacific education policy and practice related to teacher education. We track policy development over the past three decades that originated from concerns about inequity for Pacific students in schooling to more recent policy initiatives that engage deeply with Pacific learners, families, and communities. We illustrate the shifts in educational policy and teacher education by using three cases of the Pacific led initiatives to exemplify the reframing of Pacific education, teacher knowledge, and practice, by listening to and privileging the voices of Pacific people. We argue that to address equitable education for diverse student communities, teacher education needs explicitly to recognise and acknowledge structural inequities and racism inherent in education systems while providing opportunities for reflection and deep learning about differing knowledge systems and ways of being.

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Introduction

Internationally, there have been changing demographics with growing super diversity across populations, including in Aotearoa New Zealand. We use Aotearoa to acknowledge the Māori heritage of our country; however, we use New Zealand in the following references due to space limitations. Spoonley (2023) describes New Zealand as a classic settler society, which over the past three decades, through migration, has had significantly enhanced diversity. This is illustrated in Auckland, the largest city, which was named the fourth most diverse city globally with over half the population comprising either immigrants or children of immigrants (Spoonley 2023). Rapidly changing population demographics in New Zealand mirrors

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changes in other countries with accompanying impacts on educational systems given increasing cultural diversity in classrooms. Tualaulelei (2021) from an Australian study reports that teachers in super-diverse classroom contexts may experience 'culture shock'. As this researcher explains, a key issue in countries with growing super diversity is a lack of opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning related to teaching culturally diverse student populations. It is well documented across research studies and national and international policy documents (e.g. Smith and Heyward 2023; Song, Perry, and McConney 2014; Turner, Rubie-Davies, and Webber 2015; UNESCO 2021) that despite increasing access to education, many school students experience low quality or inequitable learning opportunities. This is particularly the case for those of indigenous heritage, migrant backgrounds, or from other marginalised groups.

Developing more equitable outcomes across a range of indicators requires educators both to develop respect for cultural diversity along with intercultural understanding and capability (Bell, Soslau, and Wilson 2022). This has implications for both pre-service and in-service teacher education with a need to consider how best to prepare teachers to build on the knowledge systems and ways of being of diverse groups of students to ensure that the UNESCO sustainable development goal four (SDG4) Quality Education to ensure that inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning for all are met (UNESCO 2024). As Smith and Heyward (2023) highlight, internationally, governments and those responsible for education have realised that meeting this SDG requires significant and meaningful changes to both policy and practices. This article will use examples from New Zealand of Pacific education policy and practice related to teacher education and including intercultural initiatives over the past 30 years. We present three recent cases of the Pacific led initiatives that are part of the Ministry of Education (MoE) *Action Plan for Pacific Education* (2020–2030) (APPE). These cases are used to show how policy and practice have evolved to reframe Pacific education, teacher knowledge, and practice, by listening to and privileging the voices of Pacific people.

We begin first by explaining the pre-colonial and colonial background of the Pacific region and giving an overview of the history of migration of Pacific people to New Zealand. We then map the shifts in New Zealand educational policy over the past 30 years before introducing the cases and discussing the key themes. We conclude with our collective wishes for teacher education related to Pacific education.

Pacific people in Aotearoa New Zealand

Moana-nui-a-Kiwa is the Pacific Ocean region which links the Pacific with New Zealand. Historically, Pacific people were skilled voyagers who used highly developed navigational systems to explore across the Pacific moana (ocean/sea), settling in different Pacific nations including New Zealand (Martins 2020). Following the pre-colonial history of voyaging, migration, and transnationalism, the colonisation of the Pacific region began from the mid-19th century with European countries, the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand colonising the Pacific. The history of migration of Pacific people is also interlinked with colonisation with both the USA and New Zealand giving pathways for migration to the Pacific nations that had colonial connections (Lee 2009). Although migration from the Pacific to New Zealand began in the 19th century, it was

from the post-war era onwards that significant migration began with waves of migrants over different periods.

Pacific people migrating to New Zealand were often economic migrants or brought into the country as a source of temporary labour (Lee 2009; Salesa 2017). From the 1950s and 1960s, the New Zealand Government actively encouraged Pacific migration to address labour market shortages in low skill and wage roles such as process work and manufacturing. However, with an economic downturn in the 1970s, Pacific migrants to New Zealand were discriminated against with a racist immigration policy, the 'dawn raids', which focused on identifying and deporting Pacific overstayers (Anae 1997; Salesa 2017). This positioning of Pacific people as a source of low-skill-and-wage temporary workers continues today with Pacific seasonal labour schemes to address shortages of unskilled roles such as fruit picking. We share this history of New Zealand's role in colonising the Pacific and the discrimination against Pacific people as this history has influenced the marginalisation of Pacific people in both the New Zealand education system and more broadly.

In recent times in New Zealand, Pacific people are recognised to have strong ancestral links with Māori people while being indigenous to the Pacific Island nations. Although umbrella terms such as Pacific Polynesian, Pacific, Pacific people, and Pasifika have been used, it is also important to acknowledge that this population of people is diverse with heritages from many different Pacific nations including Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau, Tuvalu, and beyond (Ministry of Pacific People Ministry for Pacific Peoples 2020; Teaiwa and Mallon 2005). Additionally, Pacific people in New Zealand are a group composed of multiple generations including recent migrants, those born in New Zealand of Pacific heritage and those with multiple heritages and identities (Salesa 2017). Despite these differences, Teaiwa and Mallon (2005) argue that Pacific people in New Zealand share a kinship relationship both to each other and their homelands given the similar historical experiences, values, and cultural traits. A key commonality is in cultural values that are shaped by a collectivist way of life with a strong emphasis on families extending beyond the view of a small nuclear group instead to include wider families and communities (R. K. Hunter et al. 2016; Kerr et al. 2018). Despite the contributions of Pacific people to the history and progress of New Zealand through significant economic, cultural, and political contributions, across educational institutions, Pacific school students remain underserved. This is reflected in ongoing disparity in achievement outcomes through schooling and lower proportions of Pacific students undertaking tertiary study (Anae et al. 2002; Education Assessment Research Unit and New Zealand Council for Educational Research 2022; Naepi et al. 2020). The next section maps development and strategic shifts of Pacific education policy in New Zealand over the past 30 years.

Pacific educational policy in New Zealand: strategic shifts and development over time

In the past three decades, there has been increasing importance placed on the education and development of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. Researchers (e.g. Samu 2020; Si'ilata, Samu, and Siteine 2019) have identified specific phases in relation to the policy response led by the Ministry of Education (MoE) at a national level. They describe the first phase as beginning in the mid to the late 1990s with Samu (2020) labelling this phase as *Grappling*

with high disparities. As Samu (2020) highlights, initially, the MoE response related to the identification of high levels of disparity and recognition of the impact this had on specific school communities and learners. Thrupp (1998) described the location of schools serving these communities as 'New Zealand's most entrenched areas of urban socioeconomic disadvantage and white/middle class flight' (p. 198). Correspondingly, these schools had high enrolments of Māori and Pacific students. The Education Review Office (ERO) identified several such schools as low performing, with issues relating to lo student academic attainment, chronic truancy, low teacher morale, and difficulties of teacher recruitment (Si'ilata, Samu, and Siteine 2019). National media reported on these reviews painting a damaging picture of a state-funded education system incapable of enhancing educational achievement of ethnic minorities. Resulting political and public pressure led to two of the first MoE funded significant research and development school and community-based projects involving Pacific students, *Achievement in Multicultural High Schools* and *Strengthening education in Mangere and Otara*.

The second phase of Pacific education policy progress between 2000 and 2010 is described by Samu (2020) as *Responding to diversity* both in relation to national policy and research development. In this phase, the MoE developed a closer systems-wide focus and interest in research intensified. This was influenced by the release in 2000 of New Zealand's results from the first Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) (Samu 2020). Analysis by the MoE of these results established Māori, Pacific, and students with special educational needs as national priority learners (Alton-Lee 2004). The main evidence-based causal factor was determined to be an education system that had inadequately served these learners and their communities (Si'ilata, Samu, and Siteine 2019). Namely, Alton-Lee (2004) acknowledged that demographic profiles in schools were rapidly changing and identified issues related to teacher and school responsiveness and capability in meeting the needs of diverse learners. During this phase, there was an emergence of national education strategies from the MoE such as the Pasifika Education Plan (PEP), the setting of targets and release of regular reports to monitor progress relating to targets. The first cabinet-approved five-year Pasifika Education Plan (Ministry of Education 2001) was released in 2001. It included four key goals related to early childhood education, compulsory schooling, tertiary education, and education sector wide. Examples of sub-goals within this document include increasing Pacific student achievement, reducing the number of school-age students out of school, and increasing school connections with Pacific parents and community. Subsequent PEPs were subsequent PEPs released over time with some rescinded and re-written due to changes in the government and the ruling political parties (Ministry of Education 2006, 2008, 2009).

Between 2011 and 2017, the third phase of Pacific education policy emerged, described by Samu (2020) as *Embedding system development*. There was a reduction in MoE investment in research and development in Pacific education and instead a focus on building from the wealth of evidence-based research that emerged in phase two. In this policy context, attention was given to strengthening the education system through the use of research informed professional learning and development programmes (PLD) for teachers of Pacific learners. An example of a Pacific led PLD initiative funded by the MoE during this period is the New Entrant Pilot Programme Gālulue Fa'atasi in which teachers were supported to use Samoan dual-language texts to support literacy learning at school.

In this way, Pacific home languages and oral practices were used as a foundation for learning. Building from this type of work, the fifth PEP (Ministry of Education 2013) refined and sharpened the strength-based orientation and organisational concepts such as Pasifika success, Pacific values, and the role of culture, language, and identity introduced in the prior PEP (Ministry of Education 2009). Additionally, in the PEP (2013), there was a notable shift from centring Pacific learners to centring both Pacific learners and their families/communities. This policy document directed teacher attention to culturally responsive pedagogy, and the significance of cultivating interpersonal relationships. Samu (2020) argues that the MoE funded PLD ensured a streamlined flow of ongoing teacher development related to understanding of Pacific learners and their families/communities.

The fourth phase of Pacific education policy from 2017 to current times is described as a phase of *Deeper engagement* (Samu 2020). In the early part of this period, several high-level developments occurred which reflected a shift to deeper engagement of the MoE with learners, families, and communities. This included a nationwide consultation (face to face and online) called the *Education Conversation* in 2018–2019 as part of the incoming government's three-year Education Work Plan (Ministry of Education 2018c). The Work Plan recognised that there was a 'specific need for deep engagement with Māori and Pacific peoples, the disabled, and those with extra learning difficulties' (Ministry of Education 2018a). To address this, a nationwide consultation was held with Pacific youth, families, and community. Secondly, the MoE released an important document *Tapasā: Cultural competencies for teachers of Pacific learners* (Ministry of Education 2018b). Alongside the document has been a significant investment since 2019 in PLD contracts related to *Tapasā* delivered nationally to early learning centres and schools. The Teaching Council of New Zealand describes *Tapasā* as the Pacific-lens on the standards for the teaching profession and the code of professional responsibility (Ministry of Education 2018c, 1). Third, the delayed replacement of the fourth PEP was released in 2020, renamed *Action Plan for Pacific Education* (2020–2030) (APPE) with a refreshed version released a few years later (Ministry of Education 2020a, 2023). This 10-year plan was significantly different from the predecessors with a longer-term outlook and the explicit identification of five key system (KS) shifts needed for Pacific education. The key shifts focus on the following: KS1: growing and supporting Pacific bilingual and immersion pathways, KS2: confronting systemic racism and discrimination in education, KS3: enabling teachers to become culturally competent with diverse Pacific learners, KS4: families and educators in partnership addressing aspirations for learning and employment, KS5: growing and retaining Pacific heritage teachers, leaders, and education professionals. We see the identification of these key shifts as evidence that the voices of Pacific people are beginning to be heard. For example, a powerful consideration emerging from the Pacific consultations during the *Education Conversation* was explicit concerns about racism in schools.

Difference, diversity and building a 21st century education system

We provide in this article, a critical reflection on the systemic accumulation of knowledge and experience in terms of Pacific education policy, research, and practice over the past three decades, and how this has influenced pre-service

and in-service teacher education. From the 1980s to 1990s, education policy focused on cultural differences in the classroom. This was an overtly multicultural education policy, as evidenced by the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education 1993), the blueprint for the development of school curricula. By the early 2000s this shifted to education policies that equated quality teaching with responding to diversity, prioritising specific learner groups, and extending understandings of diversity to recognise other forms of differences such as socio-economic background, gender, sexuality, and language (Ministry of Education 2013).

Taking a post-structuralist perspective of discourse (Samu 2020), argued that three types of diversity discourse were discernable during this period. This included *diversity* as a descriptor; *diversity in education* framing the implications of diverse learners in teaching and learning and the need to be responsive to diversity; and *education for diversity* focusing on reducing prejudice and enhancing understanding within and across social groups in a heterogenous society. Samu (2020) concluded that research, policy, and practice in New Zealand since the early 2000s have largely focused on diversity in education. As shown in the previous section, a consultative approach with the wider community undertaken in 2018 through the *Education Conversation* widened the voices influencing educational policy development by seeking the views of those not traditionally heard. Two of the strongest evidence-based outcomes from research on success factors for Pacific learners has been the importance of culture, language and identity and relationships between learners and their teachers (Averill, Glasgow, and Rimoni 2020; Fletcher et al. 2009; J. Hunter and Hunter 2023; R. Hunter and Hunter 2018; Pene, Taufe'ulungaki, and Benson 2021). This has shaped an influential discourse surrounding culturally responsive pedagogies that is now also being seen in policy documents and enacted in the education system.

We present in this article a diagrammatic display (see Figure 1) created by the second author that represents what we consider as the three most influential educational discourses shaping Pacific education in New Zealand: diversity in education; education for diversity (Samu 2020) and relationality (Reynolds 2018). These discourses frame what is currently known and understood about Pacific learner success and referred to, in this diagram, as components (the inverted triangles). The names of each component belie significant research and development considered key for Pacific success, via MoE endorsed PLD programmes (Ministry for Pacific Peoples 2018; 1993) including the three initiatives presented as cases in this article and ITE programmes.

The components are organised into three tiers of teacher learning: the personal; the immediate teaching context; and the broader systemic level. The six components or areas of knowing: teacher self (involving self-awareness and critical reflectivity); teachers' Pacific learners (including families); the school or ECE centre community (particularly Pacific communities); curriculum and other specialist content and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (with specific focus on the position of Pacific peoples in relation to Te Tiriti and Māori) as detailed in *Tapasā* (Pacific cultural competency framework, Ministry for Pacific Peoples 2018). Examples of how the diagrammatic display can be seen in practice and related research is highlighted in the following section.

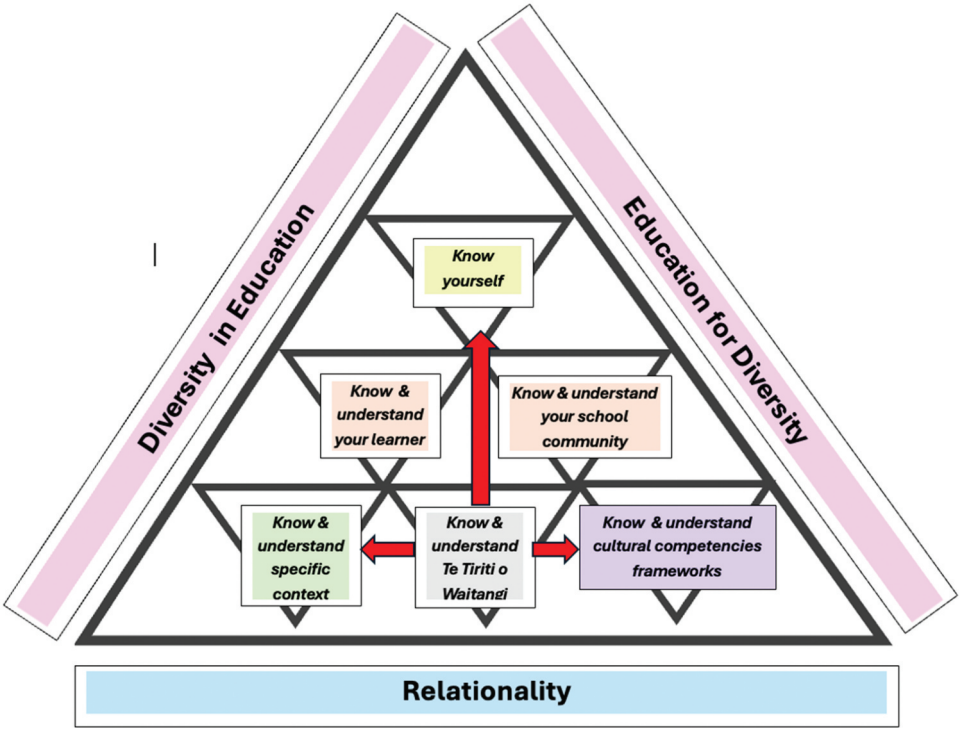

Figure 1. Educational discourses shaping Pacific education in New Zealand.

Illustrations of Pacific led educational initiatives

In this section of the article, we introduce three cases of the Pacific led teacher education initiatives from New Zealand to illustrate shifts in policy and practice that have moved to privilege and build upon the voices and strengths of Pacific people. All three cases were selected as they are part of the MoE funded initiatives or recommendations from the APPE 2020–2030 (Ministry of Education 1993, 2023). We use these cases to illustrate how the educational discourses shaping Pacific education presented in Figure 1 are enacted within teacher education.

Tapasā and the Tui Tuia Ki Tapasā PLD: cultural competencies for teachers of Pacific learners

Tapasā (Ministry of Education 2018b) identifies three sets of Nga Turu (cultural competencies) which are Turu one: identities, languages, and cultures; Turu two: collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviours and; Turu three: effective Pacific pedagogies. Each Turu outlines expected behaviours and understandings (indicators) over the four stages of a teacher's career. While *Tapasā* was released in 2018, associated PLD support commenced in 2019 with significant disruption due to the global pandemic, consequently 2022 was arguably, the turning point for settled, consistent provision. In this case, *Tapasā* is still a 'new' national-level MoE initiative, with approximately 3 years in the PLD space, and 5 years in the

initial teacher education (ITE) space. Resources have been developed by the Teaching Council, PLD providers as well as ITE providers to support engagement with *Tapasā*. ITE providers are expected to introduce students to *Tapasā* and support their development of the cultural indicators. A conceptual analysis of this framework illustrated how it could be used to decolonise literacy teacher education (Rubin and Fa'avae 2022). A further qualitative study by Dyck (2021) used *Tapasā* as an interpretive lens to show how visual arts education can authentically reflect cultural competencies for Pacific senior secondary students.

Tui Tuia ki Tapasā is a PLD initiative drawing on *Tapasā* (2018) and designed to support leaders, and Kaiako (teachers) to engage with Pacific learners, their families and communities in culturally sustaining ways. It is informed by Pasifika knowledge, ways of being, and approaches to practice that are research-informed, led by a teacher's strengths and empowering for all participants involved (Ministry of Education 2020a). The primary approach used is flexible, responsible, and reflective, in other words, 'one fits one'. Facilitators tailor the initiative to the strengths and needs of individuals and groups of teachers and leaders and their learning journeys. The exploration of practice is led by Gaugatao and Samu and connects to the programme's three overarching principles: building reciprocal relationships through Teu le Vā; deepening mutual self-awareness or the ability to critically examine and be attentive to personal thinking habits and how these influence decision-making; and centring Pacific knowledge, experience and worldviews in order to support the development of in-depth, more nuanced understandings of diverse Pacific learners, their families and communities.

Enacting *Tapasā* with teachers through ITE and PLD initiatives such as Tui Tuia ki Tapasā highlights some problematic aspects which require analysis and indicate the need for PLD to provide support frameworks for teachers. For example, Siteine (2024 – in progress) highlights Turu 2.14 which expects experienced teachers critically to reflect 'on and examine whose knowledge is being taught and valued in the early learning setting or classroom, to balance and enhance power-sharing collaborative relationships' (Ministry of Education 2018c, 13). Siteine (ibid) critiques this for potentially positioning teachers as having to choose between supporting their students' academic goals and honouring their sociocultural backgrounds. Instead, Siteine proposes that teacher education should support teachers to integrate a knowledge-based approach with a Pacific-focused approach. Similarly, Samu ((2020) – in progress) identifies another potentially challenging indicator, again for experienced teachers. Turu 1.15 states that a teacher 'ensures teaching colleagues, Pacific learners and their parents understand the position of Pacific peoples in the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi with tangata whenua' (Ministry of Education 2018c, 11). Conceptualising the specific relationship of Pacific heritage peoples with Māori as the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, New Zealand, is relatively recent. Conceptions of this relationship over time have evolved from 1990s notions of 'tuakana-teina' (older sibling to younger sibling, positioning the Pacific as younger sibling due to migrant history and recency of arrival and settlement) to current 'whanaunga' or family (in recognition of ancient genealogical connections). Support and professional learning are required for educators to understand this complex relationship.

Enacting Pacific values in education

Increasing calls in both policy documents and research (e.g. J. Hunter et al. 2016; R. Hunter and Hunter 2018; Ministry of Education 2013) have been made for the enactment of Pacific cultural values in teaching. This is due to the recognition of the positive impact that addressing values has on Pacific learner wellbeing, success and in nurturing links between schools and Pacific communities (Fletcher et al. 2009; Pene, Taufe'ulungaki, and Benson 2021; Surtees et al. 2021; Theodore et al. 2018). However, a prime consideration in this discussion is that most New Zealand teachers are not of Pacific heritage (Averill, Glasgow, and Rimoni 2020). Values play a fundamental role in the ways of life for Pacific people; however, there is not necessarily a shared cultural understanding of values between Pacific people and non-Pacific educators (Rimoni, Glasgow, and Averill 2022). The PEP documents (e.g. Ministry of Education 2008, 2013) refer to nine Pacific values (belonging, family, love, service, spirituality, reciprocal relationships, respect, leadership and inclusion). However, there is little evidence that these policy documents support teachers to delve deeply into how the values are considered, lived, shown, or nurtured by Pacific people or how these can be enacted in educational contexts. Given the growing proportion of Pacific ethnicities, this is relevant to all teachers and learners in New Zealand.

Building on Pacific values is fundamental to our education policy which demands improvement in educational opportunities for Pacific heritage learners (Averill, Glasgow, and Rimoni 2020). Increasingly, the MoE has provided resources to enhance learning opportunities for Pacific learners such as *Tapasā*. However, teachers also need pre-service and in-service learning opportunities that support them to develop stronger understandings of Pacific values and pedagogical practices that align with these. Additionally, this understanding needs to align with Pacific perspectives of the values. Such understandings will contribute to Pacific learners being empowered in their learning, achievement, and their wider education journeys.

A research and development initiative has been undertaken over the last few years by Associate Professor Robin Averill, Dr Ali Glasgow, and Dr Fuapepe Rimoni. This focuses on exploring perceptions of Pacific values because understanding of these can inform consideration of how they can be enacted and used within learning programmes in ways that align with Pacific learners and family understandings and are conducive to maximising learning and well-being. Over 30 Pacific educators from across educational setting types and across three urban centres were involved in our four-year research study. Some have contributed understandings across all values and others for some of the values. We interviewed the educators about their perceptions of the focus value and how they demonstrated and nurtured the value in their teaching. Both one-to-one interviews and talanoa, a culturally appropriate discussion method, were used (Vaioleti 2006). We observed the teaching of most educators, recording examples of the target values in teachers' practices, and interactions across the learning environment. We approach this work from our experience of working with student teachers, teachers/educators, and teacher educators, two of us with Pacific heritage (Fuapepe, Samoan and Ali, Cook Island and Tahitian) and one without (Robin, New Zealand, European). Collectively, we have experience teaching in early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary teaching contexts. As educators, we each bring our own understanding to how we interpret values and what may be needed to enact these, drawing from our own background and experiences.

Together we have explored answers to the research questions: What do Pacific values mean to Pacific children and families? How can learning environments strongly embody and nurture these values?

Pacific is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in New Zealand, with one in five New Zealand learners expected to be of Pacific heritage by 2050 (Ministry of Education 2018c; Statistics New Zealand 2013). However, there are a few New Zealand teachers with either Māori or Pacific heritage, approximately 11% and 3%, respectively, with particularly low numbers of these teachers at the secondary school level (Education Counts 2019). Given the current teacher shortages leading to bringing in qualified teachers from overseas, there are increasing numbers of teachers who have very little New Zealand experience at all, let alone experience of Māori or Pacific learners and communities. Understanding Pacific values well can help educators ensure their teaching is suitable for Pacific learners and their families.

This development initiative captures Pacific teachers around Aotearoa New Zealand who work with Pacific learners. These teachers share openly and whole heartedly about their goals and visions for Pacific learners and as explained by one of our Pacific educators teaching in a primary school in the Wellington region, her Talanoa was emotional as she reflects on her experiences and what she has seen over the years with non-Pacific teachers and what she believes is needed to capture Pacific learners and their voices

> Educators can demonstrate respect by being open to learning and immersing themselves in understanding the cultural space. This may mean moving outside their comfort zone. As Pacific people, we've had to do that, and we've taken on a lot of Western ways. So, one way of showing respect for Pacific people is for teachers to live in the Pacific space, to go and find out about this. You can't achieve authenticity and meaningful relationships until you've experienced things from another point of view, so teachers can demonstrate respect through looking for and using those opportunities to really find out about Pacific people's life experiences, by spending time in the Pacific community. When teachers build up this knowledge, they can pull on those ideas respectfully when they're working with students.

Developing mathematical inquiry communities (DMIC) PLD initiative

An important driver of policy development for Pacific education was in response to the inequitable educational outcomes for Pacific learners including within mathematics education. This was highlighted in PISA in 2000 with Pacific students being over-represented at the tail end. Funding for DMIC PLD began in the third phase of embedding the system development with Pasifika Success funding from the MoE and has continued in different precarious iterations throughout the fourth phase of *deeper engagement*. The case presented in this section is a large-scale evolving research-led professional learning and development initiative that is grounded in a Pacific worldview and led. The teacher education focus of this work is on professional development with practising teachers working in low socio-economic schools with high proportions of Pacific heritage students.

Underlying the development of the DMIC PLD initiative is the recognition that within New Zealand, there are structural inequities coupled with institutionalised practices across all levels of the educational system (R. Hunter and Hunter 2018). For Pacific learners, this results in mathematical learning experiences that are disconnected from their indigenous and local knowledge systems (including family funds of knowledge) and

ways of being (language, values, beliefs, and understandings). Additionally, teachers working in low socio-economic schools with Pacific students often come from different social or cultural backgrounds to the students or themselves have been schooled in an education system highly influenced by colonisation where knowledge systems that differ from the dominant Eurocentric perspective are invisible (J. Hunter and Hunter 2023). This type of disconnect results in deficit theorising both from educators and students themselves. For example, educators may lack awareness of the rich experiences and knowledge systems of Pacific students related to mathematics and instead focus on fixing the perceived 'gaps' in student knowledge (J. Hunter and Hunter 2023). Additionally, Pacific students themselves may view mathematics as lacking within their cultural context and believe that success in mathematics is contingent on assuming the mindset of the dominant culture (Milne 2013) and suspending their own cultural identity and values (J. Hunter and Hunter 2023).

In this PLD initiative to address the structural inequities and disconnects between Pacific knowledge and mathematics classrooms, there is a focus on developing culturally sustaining mathematics pedagogy (CSMP) (Ladson-Billings 2021; Paris 2012). Teachers are positioned critically to examine their own beliefs, expectations, and teaching practices by working collaboratively with a team of mentors in a relational approach where everyone is positioned as learning and developing together. Complementary forms of learning activities are used both outside of the classroom setting and through classroom mentoring during mathematics lessons. The PLD outside of the classroom offers teacher opportunities to explore, discuss, and reflect on pedagogical practices aligned with CSMP and begin to develop their understanding of Pacific knowledge systems and ways of being. An example of an activity in the first PLD session is for the teachers to reflect on what is valued in traditional mathematics classrooms before unpacking their understanding of Pacific values as illustrated in the PEP documents (Ministry of Education 2018c). The teachers are then positioned to consider pedagogical practices that align and build upon the values of their students. A form of relational practice-based pedagogy is used within the classroom where a mentor and teacher work collectively to co-construct mathematics lessons and critically notice, reflect on, and transform pedagogical practices. Deliberate pauses are used both by the mentor and teacher during the lesson to enable professional conversations focused on CSMP and ambitious pedagogy. A key element is supporting the teachers explicitly to notice a wide range of student strengths (mathematical, social, and cultural) and use this to create a classroom context where differing knowledge systems and ways of being are valued. Many of the teachers involved in the PLD identify the in-class dynamic mentoring and relationship that they build with the mentor team as a key support in their learning and development (R. K. Hunter et al. 2016).

A key desired outcome of teacher learning through the DMIC PLD initiative is for educators to develop their understanding of the culture and values of Pacific learners and recognise the strengths of the indigenous and local knowledge systems that Pacific students bring to the mathematics classroom. The importance of family and relationships are central aspects of Pacific ways of being, and this is utilised for teacher learning during DMIC PLD. Activities that bring family and educators together are used to bridge the gap between the experiences and knowledge systems of the Pacific school community and teachers. This includes inviting students, parents, and the wider community to meetings with teachers and school staff and positioning teachers as listeners rather than tellers. We

have found that having parents and their children develop brainstorms of the mathematics they engage in at home and talking to the teachers about these, provides rich learning for all involved (R. Hunter and Hunter 2019). More recently, we have worked with Pacific students and families and provided them with cameras to document activities and artefacts related to mathematics in home and community settings. We then engage in storytelling interviews with the students and their families and share the photographs and stories with teachers as the basis to plan and implement mathematical tasks. These types of activities broaden both Pacific students, families, and educators' understanding of Pacific knowledge systems and ways of being related to mathematics as well as broadening the view of mathematics itself (J. Hunter et al. in press).

Developing an understanding of knowledge systems and ways of being allows teachers both to recognise and build on these during mathematics lessons. Prior to a lesson, this includes the development of contextualised mathematics tasks that build on localised contexts relevant to students. For example, the mentor team and teachers work together to develop a set of linear growing pattern tasks focused on algebra which connect to traditional Pacific cultural patterns in craftwork. This could include tapa/siapo, a type of barkcloth from Tonga and Samoa which is decorated with painted and dyed patterns, tivaevae, a quilt sewn collectively by groups of women in the Cook Islands with decorative patterns from nature, or sasa, a seated slap dance where hand movements are used to depict everyday life (J. Hunter and Miller 2022). During this planning process, a launch for the task is also developed where purposeful prompts are planned to position Pacific students to share their understanding and experiences with the context of the problem and to connect to the cultural values and knowledge systems that underpin the development of the craftwork or dance. Both before the lesson and during in-class mentoring, teachers are then supported to use these as metaphors for how Pacific students can work mathematically in a way that maintains their cultural identity. For example, the teacher might describe how when you are learning to make a section of a tivaevae, sometimes the stitches might be uneven, and you will need to redo them but the women around you will support you to achieve this. In the same way, when solving a mathematical task, you might make a mistake, and other students can support you to correct this in a positive way (J. Hunter in press). In-class mentoring is also used to support the teacher to connect to both the context and values of the student throughout the enactment of the task. A key outcome of the development and enactment of tasks aligned with Pacific knowledge systems is supporting both teachers and Pacific students to see the mathematical strengths that already exist within Pacific culture. Ongoing research studies and evaluation of the DMIC PLD initiative highlight a range of positive outcomes both related to teacher learning and change and multiple-valued outcomes for students in relation to mathematical well-being, cultural identity and mathematical achievement (e.g. J. Hunter and Hunter 2023; R. Hunter and Hunter 2018, 2019; J. Hunter, Hunter, and Anthony 2020; J. Hunter and Miller 2022)

Discussion

In this discussion, we synthesise the key themes from the mapping of Pacific educational policy over the past three decades and analysis of the case studies of the Pacific led teacher education initiatives from New Zealand. We use these themes to identify the

implications for pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher education both nationally and internationally. We argue that although shifts in Pacific education in New Zealand have a specific context and history, there are broader lessons that are relevant to other settler societies and education systems in countries with similar histories of both colonisation and marginalisation of minority communities. Specifically, we see this article as adding to the body of work in teacher education focused on teacher preparation for equity and social justice in education.

Evident across the case studies is the need to reframe Pacific education by beginning from the standpoint of explicitly recognising and acknowledging the structural inequities, deficit theories and racism that are inherent in the education system for Pacific learners. As identified by Si'ilata, Samu, and Siteine (2019) when analysing the beginning of Pacific education policy, the impetus of the PEP (Ministry of Education 2001) was recognition of what was labelled as 'poor performing' schools in the part of Auckland where much of the Pacific community resided. This can be associated with an ongoing framing of a Tangata Moana (Pacific diaspora) 'achievement gap' in education as a widely accepted discourse across multiple communities. Within this storyline, Pacific learners and the broader Pacific community are problematised and framed as a group failing in the New Zealand education system who need to be 'fixed' (J. Hunter and Hunter 2023; R. Hunter and Hunter 2018; Peterson et al. 2016; Turner, Rubie-Davies, and Webber 2015). This ignores ongoing colonisation and discrimination which have rendered the knowledge systems and ways of being of marginalised groups invisible in classrooms and the wider educational system. Challenging deficit theorising in teacher education necessitates explicit activities to surface structural inequities which earlier studies (Bell, Soslau, and Wilson 2022) have shown to be difficult. In this article, we see across the case studies, different examples of how this can be achieved. A key aspect of this is reflection which can be seen across all three cases. For example, policy documents like *Tapasā* and related PLD provide cultural indicators to be used by teachers to support their practice in serving Pacific learners. To enact Pacific values, the research team supported Pacific educators to reflect and identify what these mean in practice. In DMIC PLD, teachers are positioned critically to examine their own beliefs, expectations, and pedagogy through purposefully constructed activities as well as in practice with in-the-moment pauses during dynamic mentoring. Policy documents could also be used to drive this type of change, for example, the most recent APPE (2023) explicitly states that a key shift needed is to 'confront systemic racism and discrimination in education'. This could be further extended by embedding reflective activities within the documentation needed for teacher registration.

A common thread across shifts in Pacific education policy and the three cases is the need for a collaborative approach to developing change. There is power in a collective approach to change, however this necessitates the commitment of multiple stakeholders across many levels of the education system. A key aspect of this collaboration is positioning Pacific people themselves to have influence in developing educational policy and directing the development of an education system that aligns with their aspirations and is based on the Pacific led approaches. As demonstrated, previously within Pacific education policy documents and in the phase of grappling with disparity and responding to diversity, Pacific people were positioned within advisory roles rather than having significant influence. More recently, by tracking changes to Pacific education policy, we can see a move towards privileging Pacific voices in consultation with associated policies (e.g.

Ministry for Pacific Peoples 2018, 2018; 2020a). Within each case, we see examples of how collaborative approaches have been enacted with the involvement of educators, students, family, and community members to develop change. In Tui Tuia ki Tapasā, facilitators work with groups of teachers and leaders to grow the Pacific aligned cultural competency, in values-oriented work, Pacific educators worked with the research team to unpack Pacific values in practice, and DMIC PLD provides opportunities for students, families, and teachers to highlight funds of knowledge related to mathematics. We argue that there is a need for teacher education that supports educators to understand how to work with communities and families in ways that support community empowerment. Likewise, policy documents should centre on the need for educational institutions to engage in genuine collaborative work with Pacific families and communities.

Extending beyond working collaboratively and supporting community empowerment, a key theme across shifts in Pacific education policy and the cases presented is the need for teacher education that provides opportunities for deep learning about different knowledge systems and ways of being. To achieve this, the voices of Pacific learners and their families must be elicited along with recognition that they, along with educators, can be agents of transformative change in educational settings by sharing and creating knowledge. Developing a deep understanding of knowledge systems and ways of being is a time intensive process and all three cases show the need for extended periods of teacher education through pre-service to in-service learning opportunities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article provides a contribution to the field of teacher education by presenting examples from New Zealand that illustrate the reframing of Pacific education from a policy-driven approach shaped by knowledge economy discourse to more recent innovative Pacific led approaches that privilege and build from the voices of Pacific people. We conclude by sharing our collective wishes for the future of both pre-service and in-service teacher education related to Pacific education in New Zealand and how we see this as informing a developing teacher education worldview.

First and foremost, developing an inclusive and equitable quality education system requires significant investment and long-term commitment by multiple stakeholders to educational policy direction. As illustrated in the overview of shifts in Pacific educational policy in the context of New Zealand, policy documents such as the PEP have been released or rescinded in response to a change of government. With the recent change of government in late 2023, as Pacific academics, researchers, and educators, we find ourselves once again wondering whether the deeper engagement reflected in the 10-year strategy APPE (Ministry of Education 1993) and the educational funding to support the Pacific led initiatives will be maintained. This leads to our first wish, for Pacific educational policy and teacher education to be maintained longer than the parliamentary term and instead to move to bilateral cross-party agreement on long-term educational policy with the aspirations of Pacific people at the centre. We relate this to developing teacher education and educational policy internationally that is removed from political influence or changes in government. We call instead for inclusion, equity, and respect for marginalised communities to be put at the heart of teacher education and policy.

Building on our first collective wish for the future of pre-service and in-service teacher education, we call for Pacific voices to be heard and for an agentic Pacific led approach to transformative change across the education system. This would involve system-wide connected development and redevelopment of both pre-service and in-service teacher education that continues the direction of building on community voice. Matapo and McFall-McCaffery (2022) challenge both the lack of recognition and value of Pacific indigenous knowledge across educational institutions. We argue that there are opportunities to further develop understanding of local and indigenous knowledge of Pacific people and the synergies between different knowledge systems, including those within curriculum strands. In New Zealand, we wish for teacher education that acknowledges, honours, and builds from Pacific indigenous knowledge and ways of being as strengths that Pacific learners bring to education. In a time where social justice and ecological crises significantly and unevenly impact indigenous and marginalised communities, we argue that the experiences, knowledge systems and values of Pacific people could be leveraged within teacher education to nurture community agency and to demonstrate care beyond individual needs to wider societal and environmental wellbeing. Taking a wider worldview of developing teacher education, we call for openness and opportunities to have the voices of marginalised communities at the forefront of educational change.

Disclosure statement

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