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Editorial

The articles in this special edition document some of the teacher education partnership story between the School of Education, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SOE) and the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato (UOW). This partnership was a professional development contract funded by the New Zealand Aid Programme. However, while researching the Partnership and publishing for a wider audience was not included in the contract, the experiences (including the learning for both institutional partners) were such a rich source of information that we felt it important to document and share specific aspects of this story.

Since contextually and culturally relevant Solomon Islands teaching and learning materials are difficult to find, an important goal of the Partnership was to build a research culture with staff at the SOE. Mentoring new researchers to build their research and writing confidence was therefore part of the professional development process. To that end, all but one of the articles in this special edition are co-authored between SOE and UOW staff. Included in this special issue of the *Waikato Journal of Education* is Kirsten Petrie's review of a book edited by Emeritus Professor Noeline Alcorn, which is another result of Partnership activity.

Writing with SOE colleagues provided UOW authors with some challenges. A key challenge was the difficulty of communications. Solomon Islands email and telephone services are not always reliable since the telecommunications infrastructure is not robust. Also, extensive travel is involved when SOE staff visit their teacher education students on practicum. This means they are out of contact for weeks at a time. Notwithstanding these difficulties, both partners persevered to develop the articles in this issue. To that end, we are proud of this collaborative publication, a result not only of the perseverance of all parties, but also of the mutually respectful professional relationships developed over the four and a half years of the Partnership. The importance of relationships is, understandably therefore, a recurring theme throughout the articles.

The first article by Clive McGee and Patricia Rodie foregrounds the partnership and establishes the how and why of the Partnership development, concluding with evidence from an external review that shows its value for money. Both of these authors were involved in planning the Partnership. Patricia Rodie was the Head of School at the SOE during the period in which the contract proposal was devised. Clive McGee played a key role in writing the contract proposal and was a member of the advisory committee for the Partnership.



The second article by Roselyn Maneipuri, Immaculate Runialo and Noeline Wright focuses on the development of the Preparation for Tertiary Learning (PTL) course for the teachers in training. These were those teachers who were already teaching without any prior teacher education preparation. Some of these teachers have been in schools for many years. This PTL course was not only the first course to be developed, but it was also the first course all of these teachers took within the newly developed programme, and provided a framework for the development of other courses.

The following three articles are curriculum specific. First, Kirsten Petrie and Mark Tehe worked together on the development of a new context-specific health course. They share how they developed common understandings of culture and content. Next, John Beuka, Nigel Calder and Calvin Ngatulu, all mathematics educators, developed maths courses for both the primary and secondary teacher education programmes. This development required a significant shift from “a focus on content knowledge and teacher transmission, to a more activity-based, problem-solving, learner-centred approach”. These authors chart this transition process and highlight both issues and rewards. The third in the curriculum-focused group is on science education. Richard Edwards, Solomon Pita and James Porakari describe the redevelopment of undergraduate science education courses for the SOE, identifying factors that supported the process and the changes and issues that were involved.

The seventh article in this issue is by Janette Kelly, Joanna Daiwo and Viola Malasa, who are all experienced early childhood educators. Their task was to develop a new early childhood teacher education programme, including a number of new courses as well as the review and revision of existing courses. This process involved working with many other SOE staff as well as extensively consulting with the wider community. In their work together, they “drew on the ‘funds of knowledge’ and expertise that each of [them] brought to the Partnership”.

Next, Barbara Whyte uses the metaphor of a “hybrid mat” to weave together stories from “[her] pre-partnership life and career events with narratives from [her] partnership experiences”. The journey Barb shares as she reflects on her life as a Samoan/Pakeha/Chinese woman and how that intersects with her partnership experiences is a very personal one. In many ways, it is shared by many of the UOW staff who worked in the Partnership.

The final Partnership article is by Jane Strachan, Susanne Maezama and Janine Simi. It is focused on the sustainability of the organisational changes that were needed to support the delivery of the new diploma programmes. They highlight three aspects essential to sustainability: relationships, leadership and cultural considerations.

The Partnership is committed to disseminating Solomon Islands research. While the final two articles are not strictly part of this ‘formal’ partnership, we thought it important to include them as they are specific to the Solomon Islands context. While a faculty member of the UOW, David Giles supervised the master’s theses of scholarship recipients and Solomon Islanders John Sisiolo and Samuel Aruhu. Both researched educational leadership in their home context. While both had been principals in the Solomon Islands, John was more recently a staff member at the SOE and therefore was part of the Partnership in its early stages.

Finally, Kirsten Petrie reviews Emeritus Professor Noeline Alcorn’s edited book on education in the Solomon Islands. This book was an outcome of the Partnership and features research undertaken while the Solomon Islands authors were studying at

postgraduate level in New Zealand. Noeline Alcorn's edited book, along with this special edition of the *Waikato Journal of Education*, make, we believe, a significant contribution to supporting the dissemination of Solomon Islands scholarship.

Jane Strachan and Noeline Wright
Editors



Jane Strachan is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato. Her teaching and research interests are focused on educational leadership, social justice, gender, women, policy development and Pacific education. She is currently supervising masters and doctoral students and teaching in the educational leadership programme. Jane was the Partnership Director for four and a half years



Noeline Wright currently teaches in an initial secondary teacher education programme in the Faculty of Education, The University of Waikato. She also undertakes contracted research within the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research. Her teaching and research interests include learning, pedagogy, secondary education, literacy and leadership. Her roles in the Partnership involved: developing the Preparation for Tertiary Learning and secondary English courses, working with the ICT committee, and facilitating some professional development on literacy across the curriculum to Partnership staff.

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