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Teaching and
Teacher Education in
American Samoa

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International Standard Serial Number
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- 3 **Editorial: Teaching and Teacher Education in American Sāmoa**
by Hunter McEwan
- 6 **Pacific Partnerships: The University of Hawai'i-American Sāmoa Cohort Teacher Education Project**
by Peggy A. Haleck
- 14 **The Cohort Program in American Sāmoa: A Teacher's Perspective**
by Paul Tauiliili
- 18 **Teacher Education at the American Sāmoa Community College**
by James Kneubuhl & Tupua Roy Fua
- 24 **Meeting the Challenges of Public Education in American Sāmoa—A Collaborative Approach**
by Donna Gurr
- 29 **Beliefs and Practices of Samoan Teachers: From BEd Cohort Program to Master's Degree**
by William L. Greene, Siamaua Ropeti, Lisa Vaivao Ino, Denise Ah-Sue, and Faleula Aoelua Sappa
- 35 **Educational Resources in the ASCC Library**
by Steven Lin
- 37 **Special Education in American Sāmoa**
by Kate Moran
- 41 **Lost in Translation: Transcending the Boundaries of Critical Literacy in American Sāmoa**
by Yuriko C. Wellington
Contributors: Denise Ah Sue, Donna Vaitu'utu'u Achica-Talaeni, Faleula Sappa, and Liza Sauni
- 47 **An Indigenous Approach to Teacher Preparation for American Sāmoa**
by Salusalumalo S. Hunkin-Finau
- 53 **Frank Brown**
- 55 **About the Authors**
-

Volume 39 ♦ Number 1 ♦ 2006

*Cover layout by Joy Hakoda
Cover photo by Kate Moran*



Editorial: Teaching and Teacher Education in American Sāmoa

by Hunter McEwan



Two years ago, Don Young, who is presently the interim dean of the College of Education, suggested to me that it might be useful to devote some space in *Educational Perspectives* to the partnership between the College of Education and the American Sāmoa Department of Education. He felt that it was regrettable that few people in Hawai'i, either at the college or at the university as a whole, knew much about it. He pointed out that the Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Project (TTTAP) represented one of the college's most long-lived contracts and that its accomplishments deserved more exposure than they had hitherto received. When I discussed his recommendation with Peggy Haleck, the current director of TTTAP, a little less than two years ago, she immediately embraced the idea. It quickly became evident that the topic of teaching and teacher education in American Sāmoa deserved a much more extended treatment when she pointed out that a number of new and important reforms had recently been instituted in the TTTAP and that other measures were under way to address teacher preparation and professional development at the American Sāmoa Community College (ASCC) and American Sāmoa Department of Education (ASDOE). During

a brief visit that I made to American Sāmoa in January 2005, Dr. Haleck and I were able to meet with Dr. Adele Satele-Galea'i, the President of ASCC, and members of the ASDOE, who offered their support for the project.

Peggy Haleck and I agreed that it would be useful to assemble a number of papers, which we would submit, as a first step, to the 2005 annual meeting of the Pacific Circle Consortium in Sydney, Australia. Thus, earlier presentations of the papers by Peggy Haleck, James Kneubuhl, Steven Lin, William Greene, and Paul Tauilili were given on July 29, 2005 in the very grand setting of the lower house chamber of the New South Wales Parliament House—one of the conference locales. Since then, we have been able to assemble a number of other papers from contributors representing the voices of teachers and educators in American Sāmoa, and members of the faculty of the College of Education.

But first let me offer some background on the connection between the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i and American Sāmoa. The college has played a large role for over 30 years in preparing teachers and educators in American Sāmoa. The connection may even extend as far back as 1961 when Dean Hubert V. Everly

was part of a US congressional study mission to American Sāmoa led by Senators Oren E. Long of Hawai'i and Ernest Gruening of Alaska. Everly (1962) reports in an article that summarizes the mission's findings that teacher training began in American Sāmoa in 1922 as a post-eighth-grade class attached to the Poyer School. In 1931 it became a post-ninth-grade class, and in 1946 it became established as a high school with an elementary demonstration school attached. It was not until 1956 that teacher training emerged at the post-high-school level at the Feleti Memorial Teacher Training College, first as a one-year program and finally as a two-year program. The mission, however, reported that these arrangements were seriously inadequate to meet future needs. As Everly (1962, p. 16) reports, "With only a handful of students enrolled, the College is not likely to make an appreciable impact on the total problem."

The principal aim of the mission, however, was to increase educational funding to American Sāmoa and "to remedy the effects of past neglect on a number of fronts" (Everly 1962, 17). This aim was most dramatically realized in 1964 when, with the help of Governor H. Rex Lee, an educational television system (ETV) was established to "improve instruction, enlarge educational opportunities for all the Samoan people, and upgrade the Samoan teachers in the schools and assist them in becoming qualified and competent in their special areas of education" (Bronson, 1964, p. 6). By 1970 the failure of ETV to deliver on these promises was increasingly evident and criticism began to mount (Southworth et al., 2004). Teachers were reduced to the role of television monitors; lessons were prepared with little attention to the needs of teachers and students; Samoan teachers were never involved in the planning of the system and the program was not evaluated until 1976 so weaknesses in the implementation of the system were not addressed.

The article by Peggy Haleck in this issue picks up where this narrative of the history of teacher education in American Sāmoa leaves off—with a description of Teacher Corp and the Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Project. Her article provides a detailed description of the new cohort program and shows how Samoan teachers have successfully adapted this collaborative approach to their own Samoan cultural practices. James Kneubuhl and Tupua Roy Fua describe recent developments at ASCC including efforts to encourage pre-service education majors from among its undergraduates, the creation of an early childhood education (ECE) program with a model ECE lab school, and future plans to establish a four-year program of teacher preparation at the community college. Steven Lin's piece describes the contribution that the new Educational Resources Room at the ASCC library makes to the professional development of teachers. Donna Gurr offers an account of curricular and instructional reforms in the ASDOE.

In keeping with *Educational Perspectives* aim of providing a platform for teachers' voices, three of the articles look at teaching and teacher education from the perspective of ASDOE teachers. Paul Tauiliili's contribution, for example, describes the impact of the cohort program on classroom instruction, on the schools, and on the community from the vantage point of teachers. William Greene in collaboration with Siamaua Ropeti, Lisa Vaivao Ino, Denise Ah-Sue, and Faleula Aoelua Sappa recount stories of their professional development journey from BEd students to graduate students in UH master's program. Yuri Wellington, Denise Ah-Sue, Donna Vaitu'utu'u Achica-Talaeai, Liza Sauni, and Faleula Sappa discuss the implementation of critical literacy curricula and the impact that it had on teaching and learning.

While most of the articles in this issue adopt a descriptive posture, two of the contributors—Salusalumalo Hunkin-Finau and Kate Moran—take an advocacy stance and argue for changes to the present system. Hunkin-Finau counts the costs to American Sāmoa of linking educational policies and actions so closely to US thinking. She argues passionately that Samoans must take a more indigenous approach to education and educational reform. Kate Moran takes a close look at the efforts to place qualified teachers in special education classrooms. She recounts some of the formidable challenges facing schools and educators and points to some of the measures that will have to be taken to meet them. Dr. Moran also gets credit for the photographs in this issue, including the image on the front cover which so effectively symbolizes in one image the twin faces of American Sāmoa.

The portrait of Frank Brown is a tribute to a man who was devoted to Sāmoa and who devoted much of his career to working with Samoan students. I thank Michi Brown, Tony Picard, Salu Hunkin-Finau, and Peggy Haleck for their help in writing it. Thanks, too, to Byron Inouye for performing Photoshop artistry on a larger picture and extracting Frank's image from it.

Editing this issue has been an interesting learning experience for me—one that has brought greater awareness of the immense challenges that face educators in American Sāmoa—particularly as it strives to maintain its unique culture identity and community values in the face of intense external pressure from the forces of globalization and Americanization. It has also been inspiring to learn that educators in Sāmoa are aware of the issues and that they are striving to address them in spite of the very great challenges. The articles in this issue, therefore, form an introduction to the work engaging educators in American Sāmoa and their efforts to bring about reforms that are both sensitive to its culture and responsive to the aspirations of its people.



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Pacific Partnerships: The University of Hawai'i-American Sāmoa Cohort Teacher Education Project

by Peggy A. Haleck



Cohort 13 teachers from top: Nerina Toeleiu-Iliili, Rosa Silao, Savliavali Vasega, Rhonda Logologo, Mabel Timoteo, Druscilla Tauiliili and Erolaine Luani (in back)

Early Partnership Efforts

For the past thirty-one years, the University of Hawai'i has worked in collaboration with the American Sāmoa Department of Education (ASDOE) and the American Sāmoa Community College (ASCC) to upgrade the professional level of American Sāmoa's elementary teachers. During these early years of the partnership, several University of Hawai'i professors served as consultants to the ASDOE in specific areas of curriculum and educational administration. These professors also provided in-service teacher training in the form of workshops during the school year and more extensive training programs in the summer. Typically, faculty members traveled to American Sāmoa for four to five weeks during the summer to teach two classes attended by 20–25 students at the community college. Beginning in 1975, the ASDOE began sending a small number of teachers to off-island universities in order to earn their degrees. Additionally, a government scholarship program supported Samoan students earning bachelor degrees in a variety of fields with the understanding that graduates would return to work for

the American Sāmoa government. Many of these graduates became teachers.

Teacher Corps

The first formal, on-island teacher preparation program began in the fall of 1979, under the auspices of Teacher Corps. Teacher Corps was instituted as federal legislation in 1964 as part of Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty and provided federal funds for the preparation of teachers. Teacher Corps trained teachers who were willing to work in regions of the country where there was a lack of qualified teachers. In exchange for a minimum of two years of teaching in schools with a large number of minority students, teachers were forgiven the cost of their education. Participants agreed that, after graduating, they would teach for at least two years in urban ghettos, migrant communities, or impoverished rural areas, or, in some cases, in Peace Corps assignments overseas.

The Teacher Corps project in American Sāmoa was established as a collaborative effort between the College

of Education at University of Hawai'i and the ASDOE. The Teacher Corps model was an intense program of courses leading to a bachelor of elementary education degree or a master of education degree for teachers in American Sāmoa. Samoan teachers in the Teacher Corps program first had to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in order to meet the admission requirements of the University of Hawai'i. Fifteen teachers were selected to be a part of this program. They were released from their duties for two years in order to pursue their studies full time. All the courses required of a bachelor's degree were offered, including the general education courses and professional education courses. Classes were taught at the American Sāmoa Community College (ASCC), where students studied full time during the academic year. Students took courses at the University of Hawai'i campus at Mānoa during the two summers of their program. Teacher candidates completed a total of 126 credits, or forty courses. This program culminated in a semester of supervised student teaching in American Samoan schools. In December of 1981, twelve of the original fifteen candidates graduated and went on to become teachers. Many are now serving as administrators and curriculum specialists for the Department of Education and the American Sāmoa Community College.

Dr. Frank Brown of the University of Hawai'i headed up the Teacher Corps project. Having worked since 1968 as a consultant to the American Sāmoa Department of Education, Dr. Brown was very familiar with the need for qualified teachers in American Sāmoa. He was therefore a natural choice in taking over the responsibility of planning a schedule of courses, arranging for UH faculty to come to American Sāmoa to teach, coordinating all of the physical arrangements for courses, and preparing for students to travel to Hawai'i for summer study. Dr. Brown also had responsibility for the supervision of these teacher candidates during their on-island student teaching semester.

Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Project (TTTAP)

Federal funding for the Teacher Corps model was terminated in 1981 and the Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Project (TTTAP) was created in its stead, again by federal legislation. The mandate of TTTAP was to upgrade the basic skills and instructional abilities of in-service teachers in the U.S. Pacific territories, including American Sāmoa. American Sāmoa chose to use its federal funds, in part, to provide a degree-bearing program of teacher education for its in-service teachers and the University of Hawai'i was chosen to assist in this work. Again, Dr. Frank Brown was asked to serve as principal investigator and project director of this program. While the Teacher Corps model had proved to be very successful, it served only a small number of teacher candidates and required that they be removed from classroom teaching

for the duration of their studies. Dr. Brown, in conjunction with the ASDOE, conceived of a teacher education model through TTTAP that would address these concerns by serving a larger number of teachers and allowing them to remain in the classroom during their studies. In the TTTAP model, teachers took courses after their regular working hours. These courses were taught at the American Sāmoa Community College with a larger contribution from ASCC in terms of course offerings.

In order to meet the admissions criteria of the University of Hawai'i, teacher candidates whose first language was not English also had to meet the English language requirement. This could be done in one of three ways:

1. earn a passing score of 600 or higher on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL),
2. pass the English Language Institute Placement Test (ELIPT), or
3. take the required ELI courses in the areas of listening, reading, and writing.

Most teachers took the ELI placement test, which was divided into three sections assessing listening, reading, and writing skills. On average, 17 percent of the individuals who took the ELIPT passed all three sections, while 15 percent who took the test earned partial exemption. Their scores on the placement test determined which ELI courses students would need to take. Five ELI courses were offered: two to build listening skills (ELI 70 and ELI 80), two to develop reading skills (ELI 72 and ELI 82), and one in writing (ELI 73). These courses did not count as credits towards the bachelor degree. The final writing requirement, either ELI 100 or ENG 100, was required for the BEd degree and qualified students to take additional UH courses.

In the beginning, the entire bachelor program was delivered by UH faculty who traveled to American Sāmoa to teach classes at the American Sāmoa Community College. These classes included the general education core courses, the professional education core courses, and courses in an academic minor. The degree required a total of 126 credit hours in the following

General Education Core

- 9 humanities courses
- 3 science courses
- 4 English courses
- 4 social science courses
- 1 math course

Professional Education Core

- 3 foundations courses
- 9 teaching methodolog courses
- student teaching

Academic Minor

4 – 6 courses in a subject content area
such as language arts or math, or in special education

Throughout the 1980s, the American Sāmoa Community College began to develop and take responsibility for teaching the general education core courses, matriculating their courses with the University of Hawai‘i and other mainland institutions. This effort was, for the most part, completed in 1986 with the matriculation of English courses as transferable courses to the university, but continues to this day as ASCC adds new courses. Today, most of the academic courses at ASCC transfer to UH. In order to better facilitate the completion of core courses, the American Samoan Teacher Education Program (ASTEP) office at the American Sāmoa Community College was established in 1989. ASTEP has an important coordinating function that serves to provide a comprehensive program of teacher education to meet the needs of the ASDOE and the community as a whole. ASTEP is responsible for keeping records and advising teachers who have completed the general education core. It also schedules general education core courses and organizes special courses and certification programs in areas such as counselor education and early childhood certification

In the TTTAP model, teachers attended classes after their regular workday—averaging two classes per semester. It took, on average, six years for teachers to complete their course of study, typically taking their general education core alongside their professional core courses. One difficulty that arose from this arrangement was that as soon as teachers had completed their ELI requirements, they tended to jump into the professional core courses, leaving their general education courses behind. This cart-before-the-horse strategy often resulted in teachers completing their professional core classes before completing their general education courses, thereby delaying their student teaching. Nevertheless, in the years between 1983 and 1999, 155 teachers graduated with BEd degrees. The vast majority of these teachers report that their primary incentive in seeking higher education was to fulfill their personal desire to excel and to become better teachers. Many of the graduates are now school counselors, vice principals, principals, and ASDOE administrators. As a matter of fact, up until 1995 nearly all of the teachers who completed their degrees were drawn into administrative positions within two years of their graduation.

University of Hawai‘i-American Sāmoa Cohort Teacher Education Project

In 1994, the College of Education instituted a cohort model in its elementary teacher education program as one of a series of reforms directed to making the teacher preparation programs at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa more field-based. Two concurrent events brought about additional

change. In July of 1994, Dr. Frank Brown retired from the university after working with American Sāmoa for twenty-six years. Dr. Brown’s work made a tremendous impact on education in American Sāmoa as he mentored many of the educational leaders of the island. Upon Dr. Brown’s retirement, Dr. Anthony Picard took on the role of principal investigator and project director of the American Sāmoa project. One of his first accomplishments was to establish the position of UH Coordinator to consolidate many of the on-island responsibilities of program implementation. The duties and responsibilities of the coordinator lie in six major areas:

- ♦ acting as the liaison between the college of education at UH-Mānoa, the American Sāmoa Department of Education, and the American Sāmoa Community College ASTEP Office;
- ♦ carrying out unofficial advising of students;
- ♦ registering student for UH courses;
- ♦ selling textbooks required for courses;
- ♦ acting as college coordinator for student teaching; and
- ♦ assisting in the coordination of UH-Mānoa ELI courses.

At about this same time, in late 1995, TTTAP funding expired. Since then, ASDOE funding for teacher education in American Sāmoa has been provided through consolidated federal funds, although the program continued to be referred to as TTTAP. Recently, however, it has come to be known as the UH/American Sāmoa cohort program.

In 1997, the American Sāmoa program adopted the cohort model that had been developed at UH-Mānoa elementary teacher preparation program. The decision was made to maintain alignment of the American Sāmoa program with the UH-Mānoa reforms and to capitalize on the strong field-based aspects of the degree. Cohort I was established in the fall of 1997 under the direction of Dr. Peggy Haleck. Dr. Picard retired in December, 1998. During his tenure as principal investigator and project director, Dr. Picard oversaw the implementation of the cohort program in American Sāmoa and established the summer professional development school. Prior to Dr. Picard’s retirement, Dr. Haleck took over as principal investigator and program coordinator. She also continued in her role as coordinator of the cohort groups. The first group of cohort students graduated with their BEd degrees in May 2000. The UH–American Sāmoa cohort Teacher Education Project has proven to be a very successful model for the teachers of American Sāmoa and new cohorts have been admitted every semester since then, including two cohorts that were formed in January 2004.

It should be noted that one of the reasons so many courses and services were able to be delivered in American Sāmoa is that professional educators in Sāmoa were nurtured to the point of being fully qualified to deliver those

courses and services. This is an important component of the program and one that allowed it to take on such a strong cultural quality unique to American Sāmoa.

The Cohort Model

The UH/American Sāmoa cohort program follows the same sequence of courses as the elementary cohort program in Hawai'i. Each cohort accepts between twenty-six and thirty teacher candidates (this number provides for economies of scale and anticipates a natural attrition rate of three to seven students per cohort). The degree requires a minimum of 125 credit hours, sixty of which may be transferred from the American Sāmoa Community College. A minimum of thirty-one credits is required for the pre-education core of general education courses. This is aimed at providing a well-rounded background in subject matter knowledge for prospective teachers. The pre-education core also fulfills the English proficiency requirement through successful completion of English 151, which is equivalent to UH-Mānoa's English 100. The current pre-education core requirements are:

English Language Proficiency

Successful completion of ENG 151

Pre-Education Core:

- 1 course in written communication
- 1 course in symbolic reasoning
- 2 courses in global/multicultural perspectives
- 2 courses in arts, humanities and literature
- 2 courses in natural sciences with 1 lab
- 2 courses in social sciences (including PSY 250: Human Development)

After verification of English proficiency and acceptance into the cohort program, students are permitted to begin their studies for the professional education core. This consists of fifty-one credits of course work in subject area methodology, fieldwork, and student teaching. The professional education core includes the following

Professional Education Core

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ITE 313 | Language and Literature, I |
| ITE 314 | Language and Literature, II |
| ITE 322 | Social Studies, Elementary |
| ITE 323 | Science, Elementary |
| ITE 324 | Mathematics, Elementary I |
| ITE 325 | Mathematics, Elementary II |
| ITE 326 | Creative Art, Elementary |
| ITE 329 | Performing Arts Expression, K–6 |
| ITE 343 | Personal and Social K–6 Health Skills |
| ITE 317 | Field Experience, 3 credit (students take this each semester of their program) |
| ITE 315 | Field Experience, 1 credit (students take this each of the two summer terms of their program) |

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| ITE 390 | Student Teaching |
| ITE 391 | Seminar for Student Teaching |

In addition to the education core, students must complete 18 credits in six different areas to fulfill their academic emphasis in elementary education. These courses are not considered to be a part of the cohort program and can be taken either prior to entrance into the program or during the program itself.

Academic emphasis in elementary education

One course in each of the following areas

- Educational Foundations
- Psychological Foundations
- Multicultural Education
- Creative Expression
- Educational Technology
- Special Education

Students may also opt to take additional courses for specialization in either special education or early childhood education. This entails twenty-four more semester hours of study. These specializations are also offered at the UH-Mānoa campus and are provided at the request of ASDOE in American Sāmoa to meet the needs of the teachers in both departments. The dual preparation degree in special education has been in existence since the mid-1980s. In American Sāmoa, early childhood education is provided by the ASDOE for children from the ages of 3 to 5 years. Teachers come in to the early childhood program with less college preparation than an AA degree. The early childhood education (ECE) department of ASDOE provides a rich offering of teacher workshops and training for these teachers, including an early childhood certification program awarded by ASCC. At the request of ECE, UH began offering courses towards the dual endorsement in early childhood education. Since that time, twelve ECE teachers have earned their BEd with a dual endorsement in elementary education and early childhood education.

Special Education

Five courses in Special Education

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| SPED 421 | Strategies for Reading Difficulties |
| SPED 425 | Partnerships with Families and Professionals |
| SPED 461 | Assessment, Planning & Instruction for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities |
| SPED 485 | Classroom Organization and Management |
| SPED 480: | Technology for Children with Disabilities (elective) |
| Fieldwork | |
| SPED 400a | Field Training in Special Education Co-requisite SPED 485 |
| SPED 400b | Field Training in Special Education Co-requisite SPED 461 |

Early Childhood

Four courses in Family Resources

FAMR 332 Childhood

FAMR 340 Family Development

FAMR 341 Parenting

SPED 425 Partnerships with Families and Professionals

Two courses in Early Childhood

ITE 415 Early Childhood Foundations and Curriculum, I

ITE 416 Early Childhood Foundations and Curriculum, II

Fieldwork

ITE 415L Early Childhood Lab

ITE 416L Early Childhood Lab

Finally, several of the professional and academic emphasis courses carry specific focus designations required to fulfill the university's graduation requirements. These focus requirements include Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues (H), Contemporary Ethical Issues (E), Oral Communication (O), and Writing Intensive (W). The number of required focus-designated classes is determined by the number of transfer credits a student brings into the program.

Conceptual Framework

The American Sāmoa cohort program embraces the conceptual framework of the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i in preparing teachers who are *knowledgeable, effective, and caring*. The program models these core values in its own content and structure. It offers courses in an established sequence that allows for mastery of both subject matter and teaching pedagogy. Student self-reflection is an important part of the process. The program encourages students to reflect on their teaching practice and integrate feedback from mentors and peers in relation to their academic and professional knowledge.

Academically, the primary focus of courses is on how educational theories and methods apply to the Samoan setting. Class discussions are devoted to the relevance and application of content being taught at the schools in American Sāmoa. Furthermore, a heavy emphasis is placed on putting theory into practice in the classroom. Through formal and informal observations, cohort students explore the potential value of principles being taught in their university courses.

The principles of teaching *effectiveness* are described in the document, *Standards of Accomplished Teachers*. These standards, based on the Hawai'i Teacher Standards, set forth ten major areas of teaching competency that include standards such as focusing on the learner and demonstrating professionalism. Every semester that they are in the program, through mid-semester to end-of-semester evaluation conferences, students are assessed on their competency in attaining these standards. Students prepare for these conferences by reflecting on, and providing evidence of, their work towards

meeting each of the standards.

The dispositions of a professional teacher focus on the characteristics of a caring and ethical professional. Caring is based on a knowledge and understanding of the mental, social, emotional, and physical needs of learners; skill in creating safe and equitable learning environments; and respect for human diversity and the value of each human being. Focus on these dispositions occurs in weekly seminars and in student-mentor conferences.

Characteristics of the Cohort Model

Three characteristics of the cohort model make it an effective approach in the preparation of teachers. First, the program provides education courses in an established sequence over a period of time. This model of sequenced courses has had a positive impact on the completion rate of students in the program. On average, students take two professional core courses each semester in addition to the field experience course, ITE 317. Students generally take these courses at the same time with other members of their cohort group. This approach has proved to be very effective in encouraging students to support one another through the program of study.

The second important characteristic of the cohort program regards its emphasis on collaboration. Students in the cohort program engage in collaborative learning as they share their experiences with each other and with the instructors assigned to the cohort. This arrangement promotes strong university and school personnel partnerships in planning and implementing the program, and providing support for in-service teachers. It also creates the conditions for productive mentoring relationships to develop between UH instructors and their students.

Thirdly, there is a strong field component tied to the coursework that students undertake each semester. This field component consists of a total of 120 hours of work in an elementary classroom under the supervision of the cohort coordinator and, in some cases, a field supervisor. Because students in American Sāmoa are already in-service teachers, students complete their field assignments in their own classrooms with the support of cohort coordinators who serve as mentors. Both cohort coordinators and field supervisors are in the field on nearly a daily basis, arranging school visits so that each cohort student should be seen at least once every two weeks. Following these field observations, the coordinator and field supervisor confer with the teacher candidates about their classroom involvement, professional development and performance. They assist the teacher candidate in identifying strengths and areas of concern, promoting reflective practice, and developing action plans for resolving difficulties.

In 1995, under the direction of Dr. Anthony Picard, the Summer Professional Development School was developed to provide guided mentoring of cohort students in an

elementary classroom setting. Because cohort students are practicing teachers, they do not have the opportunity to work in a mentor teacher's classroom during the regular school year. The Summer Professional Development School provides this opportunity. Its underlying purpose is to model interdisciplinary, thematic, and student-centered learning. It is organized around an overall theme, with each grade level applying that theme in its own unique way. Subject area focuses are most often a function of the combination of those professional core courses that a specific cohort group is taking during the two summer sessions.

During the regular school year, every effort is made to place several students from the same cohort group in a given school so that they have easy access to their classmates and so that they can provide support to each other. Students who are working towards the dual preparation degrees in special education or early childhood education complete four semesters of fieldwork in elementary education and two semesters of fieldwork in their area of specialization. Fieldwork encourages the teachers to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective in their work and put educational theory into practice. Students are given specific field assignments that relate to the courses that they are taking that semester.

American Samoan Adaptations

Certain adaptations to the UH cohort model have emerged over time as a natural extension of the setting in American Sāmoa. The idea of collaboration is a particularly important value in Samoan culture and our students are able to draw on this tradition of working together and put it to good use in supporting each other as they proceed through the program. Cohorts elect officers who serve for the duration of their cohort program. These officers play a vital role in helping the group stay organized. They provide motivation and encouragement for all students with the aim of achieving success in completing the program. They assist in disseminating information, in contacting students, and in building a sense of belonging to the group. In many respects, the class officers serve as the right arm of the cohort coordinator, providing valuable interpersonal and cultural assistance.

A number of traditions have quickly evolved among the cohorts. For example, group identity is an important value in the Samoan culture. The majority of families reside in villages where the traditional *matai* (chiefs) structure is still in place. Samoans highly value their village and family identity. Family and village life supports the values of interdependence (*felagolagoma'i*), collectivity (*fetufa'ai*), and unity (*au au fa'atasi*). These values are clearly in evidence in the degree of support that each member of the group receives, the emphasis placed on cooperation and cooperative learning, the use of consensual decision-making, and the role of the group in resolving problems. Each cohort designs its own

uniforms, adopts a motto, and creates a logo that uniquely identifies their group. Cohort mottos are expressions of unity and of their vision for the future. Examples include "Success through unity," "Teachers for a better tomorrow," and "Quality teachers make each day count." Cohort group meetings often focus on conflict resolution and on planning for how the group can assist each of its members to succeed in the program. Smaller groups within a cohort often meet in study sessions. Some cohorts have established meeting times on Saturdays when students can work together, sharing both material and technological resources in order to successfully fulfill their course requirements.

Cohorts are also very mindful of other cohort groups in the program and a tradition has arisen where the cohort that entered just before them welcomes the new cohort group into the cohort program. These welcoming parties can be very elaborate and are completely planned and funded by the host cohort. The purpose of this event is to help the new cohort feel integrated into the program and to offer advice and support to new cohort students. Again, these welcoming events are reminiscent of gatherings with visiting parties where familial and village ties are forged. The concept of the cohort as a family is very strong among the students and the ties of cohort membership extend years beyond their graduation.

Another example of support across cohorts occurs at the time of graduation. Because the American Sāmoa cohort program is conducted off-site, the university has agreed to allow graduation ceremonies to be conducted in American Sāmoa. Cohorts engage in detailed planning of these graduation ceremonies and elicit the assistance of the other cohort groups in their implementation. A new tradition has arisen where the cohort that will be the next to graduate serves as ushers, provides leis for dignitaries, and is responsible for the clean-up after the graduation ceremony. Other cohorts arrange the musical numbers for graduation, often composing original songs to commemorate the event.

Program Accomplishments

Teacher participation in the BEd program has increased dramatically in recent years. The implementation of the cohort model in the fall of 1997 has resulted in much higher enrollment and greatly increased graduation rates. New cohorts have been added each semester since then to the point that we now have five cohorts running concurrently and involving more than one hundred elementary teachers who are actively seeking their teaching degrees. In addition, the project delivers courses that are required of teachers who have academic degrees outside of education as a means of attaining ASDOE teacher certification.

Program Participation

Participation in the program has increased dramatically over the past fifteen years. In the 1990 calendar year, only

eleven courses were offered in American Sāmoa with a total enrollment of 182. By contrast, the 2005 calendar year marked sixty-three courses offered with a total enrollment of 1,120 serving 210 different individuals. Table 1 below summarizes the participation data between 1990 and 2005.

Predictably, as the number of students entering the program has increased, so has the number of courses and the overall enrollment. The cohort program began in the fall of 1997, with one cohort in place. Each semester since that time, a new cohort has been added. There are currently 104 students in the cohort program. The additional individuals are those who are taking courses for the purpose of teacher certification and those taking academic emphasis courses in preparation to enter the cohort program. The length of the program has varied between two and three calendar years, depending on whether the students are elementary education only or dual preparation and which semester they entered.

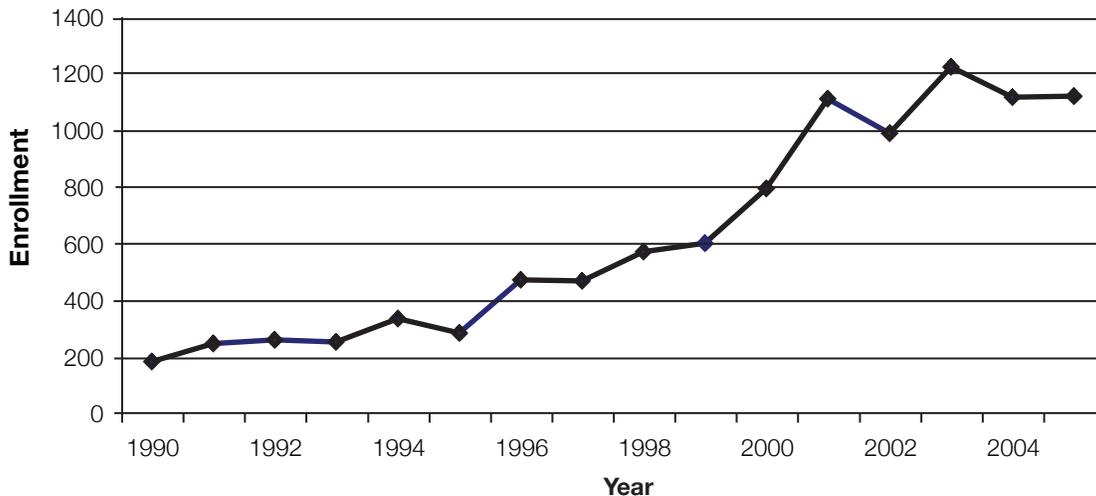
The dramatic increase in enrollment can most easily be seen in Figure 1.

Enrollment in classes has increased six fold over this fifteen-year period. This is largely due to the coordinated effort between the ASDOE Teacher Quality Office, the ASTEP office of the American Sāmoa Community College, and the University of Hawai'i.

Table 1: Participation Data 1990–2005

Year	Number Courses	Enrollment	Number Individuals
1990	11	182	N/A
1991	12	246	134
1992	13	260	117
1993	13	252	122
1994	16	334	131
1995	16	284	132
1996	22	472	118
1997	27	468	165
1998	30	572	149
1999	35	602	140
2000	43	793	170
2001	51	1110	206
2002	50	989	191
2003	59	1223	201
2004	58	1116	205
2005	63	1120	210

Figure 1: Total Number of Enrollments 1990–2005



Program Graduates

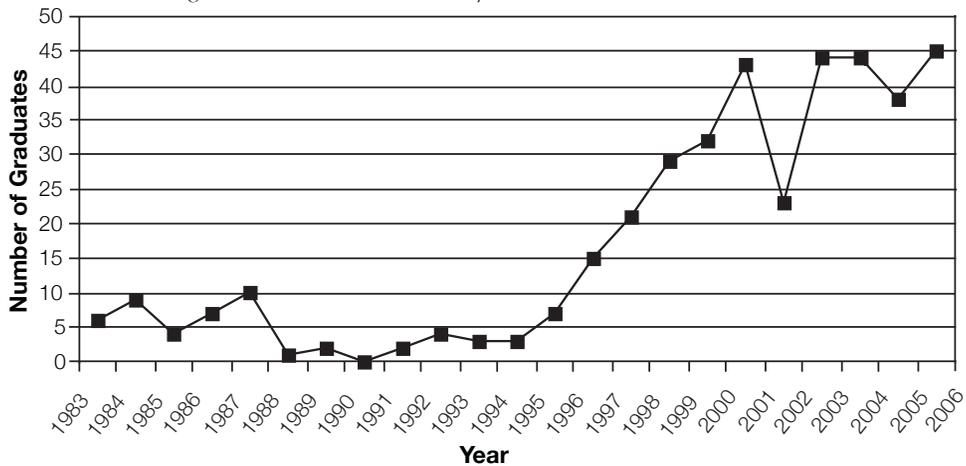
A second indication of the program's accomplishments is the number of students graduating with their Bachelor of Education degree. Table 2 shows the number of students graduating in each year since the inception of the Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Project in American Sāmoa in 1980. The first group of TTTAP candidates graduated in 1983. The TTTAP ran from 1980 until 1997 when the UH–American Sāmoa cohort program began. In the sixteen years between 1983 and 1999, 155 teachers graduated with their BEd degree. The first students in the cohort program graduated in May 2000. In the five years since then, eleven cohorts have graduated a total of 237 students. This marked increase in the number of graduates is attributable, to a great extent, to how well-adapted the cohort model is to the cultural context of American Sāmoa. The sequenced and structured nature of the program, as well as the strong collaborative elements, have led to a much higher level of participation and an increase in the graduation rate. In addition, the program has benefited from the strong support of the ASDOE, which has shown a strong commitment to teacher preparation by encouraging and enabling teachers to participate in the program.

Again, Figure 2 shows the increase in graduates from the program.

Table 2: Number of Graduates, 1990–2005

TTTAP		Cohort Program	
Year	Number of Graduates	Year	Number of Graduates
1983	6	2000	43
1984	9	2001	23
1985	4	2002	44
1986	7	2003	44
1987	10	2004	38
1988	1	2005	45
1989	2	Total	237
1990	0		
1991	2		
1992	4		
1993	3		
1994	3		
1995	7		
1996	15		
1997	21		
1998	29		
1999	32		
Total	155		

Figure 2: Number of University of Hawai'i Graduates, 1983–2005



The Cohort Program in American Sāmoa: A Teacher's Perspective

by Paul Tauiili



Introduction

A paradigm shift is occurring in the approach to teaching in the education system of American Sāmoa. This shift can be characterized as the movement from a traditional, teacher-centered approach to a constructivist, student-centered approach. One factor that has contributed to this shift arises from the training of teachers through the University of Hawai'i cohort program. Peggy Haleck describes this field-based teacher education program in some detail in her article on Pacific partnerships. My article will focus on the impact that the cohort program has had in American Sāmoa's elementary schools. While discussing the impact of the program I draw upon the discussions that I have had with teachers, administrators, and others who are most closely connected with the program.

The University of Hawai'i cohort program in American Sāmoa is a preparation program for the training of elementary school teachers. The program offers a bachelor's degree (BEd) in elementary education as well as dual certificates in either early childhood education or special education. The program provides the coursework necessary for in-service teachers who have completed their first two years of undergraduate coursework to complete the bachelor of education

degree and obtain initial teacher certification. The College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has been offering this degree route to American Sāmoa's teachers since 1979. It is the only program that currently offers the BEd degree locally. In the past, students took courses in a more piecemeal fashion. However the cohort program, as the name suggests, represents a rethinking of the BEd degree—one that has adopted a more field-based and collaborative approach in which students are organized into groups.

The first cohort started in 1997. Each year new cohorts are added so that there are now five cohorts of students enrolled in the program. A cohort is a group of approximately twenty teachers who take all their core coursework together. Their class schedules are predetermined and are taken mostly on the local campus of the American Sāmoa Community College. Classes run in the evenings to accommodate the work schedules of in-service teachers who are all employed by various local and private schools on the island. A new cohort is launched every semester.

In this article, I propose to discuss the impact that the University of Hawai'i cohort program has on teachers and their practice. I will also look at the contributions that the program and its graduates have made to their schools and

to their communities. My aim is to explain the important impact that the cohort program has had in improving the quality of education for the children of American Sāmoa.

During the 2005 annual summer laboratory school session, held locally in American Sāmoa, American Sāmoa cohort students meet for class sessions and fieldwork. During this time I conducted several interviews with cohort teachers, cohort instructors, school administrators, parents, and community leaders. These interviews provided me with insights into the different perspectives of each type of participant. Thus, this article offers a description drawn from several perspectives on the impact of the University of Hawai'i cohort program on classroom instruction, on the schools, and on the community in American Sāmoa.

The Impact on Classroom Instruction

Classroom Environment

I propose to begin my discussion in this section with a consideration of changes in classroom arrangement. The program has promoted a noticeable shift in teachers' views about how classrooms can be arranged. It has encouraged cohort teachers to take a fresh look at the classroom as a vivid and colorful gateway to student learning. Rooms are no longer arranged in straight rows of desks aimed at keeping students sitting in orderly columns facing the teacher. Traditional classrooms have now given way to more flexible groupings that make a wide range of cooperative and group activities possible. The rearrangement of desks has also left room for enrichment areas such as library centers, game centers, learning centers, listening centers, technology centers, and research centers. This new approach has also given cohort teachers opportunities to create a more robust learning environment that provides richer student learning experiences and encourages student engagement in multi-modal tasks. Many cohort teachers commented on how much this has impacted their teaching. Their rooms are more colorful and inviting, and they have noticed a change in students' attitudes. Bulletin boards have had a face-lift.

Traditional bulletin boards were divided by content area and were used primarily to display key terms and a few illustrations that pertained, for example, to a chapter of study. Items in content areas sections had little to do with each other and usually had been created by the teacher without any student input. Recently there has been a shift to create integrated bulletin boards that help teachers make connections across the curriculum. Teachers are now beginning to create larger-than-life bulletin boards that make use of integrated curriculum themes that help interweave essential understandings of a unit of study. These boards are also used interactively within lessons to help give children some input into the content and manner of each display. Cohort teachers are beginning to appreciate how the design of bulletin boards helps them organize information for learning and

enables students to make connections between content areas.

Classroom Management

Local teachers have an especially difficult challenge in dealing with overcrowded classrooms that have to accommodate as many as forty students in each class. The average teacher-student ratio in the public schools is approximately 28 to 1 in highly populated areas. In addition to dealing with the challenges of overcrowding, teachers have been discouraged in the use of various negative forms of punishment and have been encouraged to adopt more positive interactions with students. This has brought about a steady decline in the use of corporal punishment and more focus on the use of positive reinforcement. As a result classroom management has become an important topic of conversation among Samoan teachers. Cohort students report that the use of more positive methods of classrooms management has brought about a real change in how they interact with their students. It makes a difference in how well students respond, and it adds to a more positive climate in the classroom. Teachers are more likely to involve the students by creating a positive classroom climate. As one teacher stated: "I used to put up all the rules in my classroom but now I plan and discuss my classroom rules and expectations with my students." *Lisa Sauafea-Liufau, Teacher in Aua Elementary*

Lesson Planning

Throughout their period of study in the cohort program, each cohort teacher is required to have written and implemented four or five thematic unit plans integrating different content areas. Each unit plan is designed to give the teachers opportunities to expand their own content knowledge and practice in planning from an integrated and thematic perspective. When cohort teachers implement these units they become special highlights of their cohort experience. They start with an introductory lesson that helps set the expectations of the learning outcomes. Throughout the unit there is typically a project that students begin to put together and each lesson connects important learning concepts and skills that are needed to complete the project. These projects often rely on using community resources such as guest speakers and fieldtrips. At the end of the unit, which normally spans ten days, the teacher plans a culminating event that allows the administrator, teacher, students, and parents to celebrate the students' accomplishments. During their 16-week student teaching, cohort teachers create a fully integrated unit for their 4-week solo teaching period.

Several different models of lesson planning are now in use by cohort teachers. These approaches provide flexibility in planning structures and designs. The Understanding by Design (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) lesson plan and Orlich (2000) lesson plan are examples of some of the designs that are currently in use with cohort graduates. This variety allows teachers to take a broader perspective of the integral

parts of the lesson plan, and it allows them to make connections throughout the planning stage. Cohort teachers have commented that they have gained a better understanding of how to plan lessons that focus on the learner and that keep students engaged in meaningful tasks. They also report that the process of lesson planning helps them identify specific target concepts and skills that they want students to learn. One teacher wrote, "I have learned a lot of useful strategies that can be implemented in different content areas that I haven't used before, especially in helping with students writing composition." Another teacher wrote that the guided questions that they used in their lesson plans "helps students to build their prior knowledge, and I am able to make them think more critically."

Learning how to plan lessons and integrated units is an important part of any teacher education program. Lesson planning demands a sound base in content knowledge and skill, and in translating content knowledge into classroom actions—actions that are fitted to the ability levels of the students. One of the important areas of emphasis of the cohort program is that it teaches teachers to plan from a solid content base. It offers practice in developing lessons that play a critical role in creating richer discourse in the classroom.

Reflection

Reflection is now considered an important part of professional practice, not just in teaching but also in professional life in general. During their time in the cohort program teachers are asked to keep a reflection journal of their weekly teaching moments and their interactions with students. These reflections offer an excellent opportunity for them to record their professional growth and to evaluate their performance in the classroom. Cohort teachers frequently comment on how valuable it is for them to reflect on the new experiences and strategies that they are implementing in the classroom. They have found that it is a way to make critical decisions in their work and determine which strategies are effective in their local setting. Reflection, moreover, is an important tool in better understanding how students learn.

Instructional Practices

Traditional teaching as it is practiced in American Sāmoa views the role of the teacher as a giver of knowledge. Instruction is teacher-centered. It involves lectures from the teacher and demands little more than silent seatwork from students. The traditional classroom is often a quiet place of learning where students rarely interact with their peers and depend on the teacher or the textbook for information. Today's cohort classrooms are a contrast to this traditional way of teaching. Cohort teachers view their role in the classroom quite differently: "I have learned to be more patient in my teaching. I have always thought that I should do all the talking in the classroom but now I know that that is not always true." They are more likely to adopt the role of facilitator

or coach; and, at times, as learners, students, and audience. Cohort teachers are encouraged to keep students actively engaged with hands-on learning tasks, group-oriented projects, lessons that utilize a variety of learning modalities, and activities that require students to use critical thinking skills. Many of the classrooms that I have visited are active learning places that are bustling with lively discussions and student interactions.

Changes in Affect

One of the most conspicuous affective changes of the cohort program has been on the attitudes of cohort teachers. Two important comments on the program from teachers allude to an increase in their level of confidence in their teaching and in their sense of commitment to the profession. Cohort teachers, when they start out in the program, often betray a lack of confidence as in-service teachers and as college students. In contrast, these same teachers take away from the program a greater sense of confidence and pride in knowing that the program has equipped them with the necessary skill and understanding of how to grow professionally as a teacher.

The Impact on the Community

Parental Involvement

One of the major goals of the cohort teachers is to get parents involved in their child's education. Parental involvement projects take many forms. They require a special effort from each teacher. The projects range from sending out weekly newsletters to informing parents of their child's progress. Cohort teachers also create joint venture projects, which they organize with parents and their children. Facilitating parental involvement can be one of the most rewarding experiences that cohort teachers undertake. It allows them to establish meaningful relationships with students and parents. Parents often comment on how much they value the time and effort that teachers put into these projects. They also comment positively on how the cohort program has made them appreciate the value of their child's education. One parent made the following observation at an open house at a cohort summer laboratory school:

I really see a difference in my child's enthusiasm to come to school. Even though this is summer school, I have found that he talks about all that he has learned and the school activities more with me, and he was so proud to share his creations with me. I am really thankful for the cohort program. It really helps raise the quality of our local teachers.

Community Projects

Community projects are an important means of teaching children the value of community service. Community service projects that children and their cohort teachers conduct are often connected directly to the curriculum. Cohort teachers

are encouraged to integrate community service into their projects. They provide opportunities for using community resources for educational ends and are viewed as a way of giving back to the community. For example, in the spring of 2005 a cohort student arranged for his students to visit the local nursing home for children with disabilities. His students brought the children baskets of gifts. They also spent hours reading and visiting with them. The teacher later commented:

The kids really enjoyed making a difference and visiting with the children in the home. One of my students told me that she never understood how hard it was to live with a disability, and she is grateful for the opportunity she had to read to them and enjoy their company.

Grant Writing

Cohort students have also been involved in writing grant applications for federal and local funding. The grant writing began as part of an assignment during their last semester of student teaching. As a result of their success in this work, several students have received funding and carried out their projects in the schools. Two graduates of the cohort program recently arranged a summer digital arts program for local students interested in technology. This program was a great success. It taught students how to create I-Movies that helped disseminate useful information on community issues. During the culminating presentation of their videos, students invited parents and community leaders to a viewing in which they were able to participate in a celebration of the students' accomplishments. As a result of the success of this project, the cohort students plan to continue it on an annual basis.

The Impact on Schools

Collaboration

The cohort program's success at the school level depends to an important degree on collaboration among university faculty, school administrators, and cohort students. For this reason special attention is given to the cohort teachers' role in developing a special relationship with schools—one that emphasizes participation in school-wide activities and functions. Thus, cohort teachers are expected to exhibit a high degree of professionalism in their teaching duties and act as teacher leaders in working with the community.

These relationships often mature and provide an opening for cohort students and graduates to develop special responsibilities in their school—for example, to act as mentors of new teachers, presenters in staff development workshops, and potential school administrators.

Mentoring

The role of mentor in working with novice teachers in the local schools is critical in helping new teachers cope with

the struggles of lesson planning, classroom management, and curriculum. The relationship offers enriched opportunities for learning and practicing new teaching ideas and pedagogy. Mentors also serve as role models for other teachers. They make a direct impact when they serve on school committees and work as cooperating teachers.

Mentors take responsibility for helping the administration with day-to-day tasks such as providing instructional support to groups of teachers—usually in the same grade level. These groups depend on the mentors to offer guidance in the pacing of the curriculum, planning special highlights in a unit of study, and co-planning lessons. Mentors meet with teachers on a regular basis to discuss instructional activities.

Staff Development

All of the public schools in American Sāmoa require veteran teachers to help facilitate staff development. Staff developers are consulted early in the year to decide on topics and content areas in which to concentrate their developmental efforts. Each content area committee is then given a specific month in the year to plan activities that support a chosen theme. Cohort students and graduates of the program are increasingly filling these roles and helping to facilitate workshops, presentations, and seminars at the school level. At the island-wide level they have been involved in leading teacher orientation workshops, pre-service teacher training, content area seminars, curriculum development workshops, and many more activities. Cohort teachers report that the cohort program has given them experience in presenting in front of their peers. In addition, they feel that they have learned many useful ideas and strategies that they are eager to share with other teachers.

Conclusion

The impact of the University of Hawai'i cohort program on the teachers, schools, and American Samoan community is evident in the testimony of cohort graduates and other professionals who work with them. The program's aim of producing quality teachers who can act as role models—teachers who are reflective practitioners committed to making a difference in the lives of their students and contributing to the American Samoan community—is evident in their responses to my questions. The cohort program, now in its 7th year of operation, looks to build on its partnership with the American Sāmoa Department of Education to help meet the demand for qualified teachers for American Sāmoa's schools.

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Teacher Education at the American Sāmoa Community College

by James Kneubuhl & Tupua Roy Fua

While the American system of education may have been imposed on American Sāmoa, the basic value of education in contemporary life is accepted and appreciated by the Samoan people.

Dr. Richard H. Kosaki
Expanding Teacher Education Opportunities in American Sāmoa (1999)



Education in American Sāmoa

The only territory of the United States in the southern Pacific, American Sāmoa lies approximately halfway between Hawai'i and New Zealand. Consisting of five volcanic islands and two coral atolls, all of which cover a land area of only 199 square kilometers, American Sāmoa is home to a rapidly-growing population last estimated at nearing 68,000. The vast majority of this population resides on the main island of Tutuila, which is the territory's center of government, business, and education. American Sāmoa's student population is close to 17,000, accounting for about a fourth of the island's total population. The American Sāmoa Department of Education (ASDOE) oversees the territory's

twenty-three public elementary schools and six public high schools. A number of private schools on Tutuila also offer instruction at the preschool through grade twelve levels for approximately 3000 of the territory's students.

American Sāmoa also enjoys a far greater degree of federal funding for its public education programs than any of the other states or territories in the US. Recognizing that the American Sāmoa has not yet established an economy with a sufficient tax base to meet its educational needs, the federal government shoulders most of the cost for the territory's school system. As explained by American Sāmoa's delegate to the US Congress, Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin:



When it comes to public education, American Sāmoa gets more federal dollars per student than any other state or territory. In fact, the federal government gives American Sāmoa about \$2,800 per student while states get less than \$600 per student.

Across America and on average, states are paying for 93 percent of the costs associated with educating their children while the federal government pays for only 7 percent of their costs. In American Sāmoa, the federal government is paying for more than 76 percent of our costs for education. In other words, American Sāmoa is number one when it comes to federal funding for education.

Despite generous support from the federal government, the American Sāmoa public school system continues to produce students who have yet to catch up with their mainland counterparts when tested against the national averages in major subjects. Ninety-seven percent are enrolled in limited English proficiency programs. Ninety-five percent of local fourth graders lacked basic math skills in 2000. Figures from the same year were only marginally better with 93 percent of local eighth graders lacking basic math skills, while up to 95 percent lacked basic science skills. The average score of 157 for American Sāmoa fourth graders in math is a little more than one-half of the national average of 226 (on a scale of 0-500). Likewise, in fourth grade science, the state average of 51 (on a scale of 0-300) is a little over one-half of the national average of 148. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004)

With so much federal aid at its disposal, as well as the repeated statements of commitment to education by the local government, one could rightfully ask “What could be going wrong with the school system in American Sāmoa?” The answers are never as simple as anyone would like. The shortage of certified teachers holding advanced degrees factors in, along with other challenges. Perhaps more crucially, while most students have at least a basic proficiency in English, the majority of them speak Samoan as their first language. As a result, when local teachers conduct their classes or utilize textbooks and other teaching materials in English, many students face a challenge comprehending that material, a challenge which only increases as the material becomes more complex. Other factors add to the strain on the education system. They include a student population that has increased faster than the infrastructure can accommodate and a salary scale that does not match what the best teachers could earn if they moved to Hawai'i or mainland America. While a variety of challenges need to be met, local educators and administrators are in agreement that focusing on upgrading teacher qualifications is the most appropriate place to begin their efforts toward an overall improvement of education in American Sāmoa.

A number of circumstances make it difficult for aspiring teachers in American Sāmoa to earn certification and/or advanced degrees. Young men and women who graduate from the territory's high schools have two options available to them if they plan to continue their education. They can pursue a two-year degree at the American Sāmoa Community College (ASCC), or they

can enter a four-year program at an overseas institution. Unfortunately, the distance between overseas schools and American Sāmoa, as well as the expense and other complications involved with local students living and studying away from home, results in only a limited number of them having the opportunity to pursue their educational career as far as their abilities might merit. Of the students who do earn degrees overseas, some eventually enter the field of education in the territory, but many others choose to seek more lucrative opportunities away from home. With teachers' salaries in American Sāmoa substantially lower than in Hawai'i or the US mainland, few highly qualified teachers are willing to travel from off-island to work in the territory's schools. As a result, both the ASDOE and the private schools face an ongoing challenge in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. The Certification and Teacher Training Division of the American Sāmoa Department of Education found that in 2002, less than 30 percent of the teachers in preschool to grade twelve had teaching certificates. Sixty to sixty-five percent had not earned a baccalaureate (BA) degree. Figures from 2000 showed that of the 394 elementary school teachers in American Sāmoa, only 281 (71 percent) had degrees of any kind. Of these, 23 percent had BA degrees, while 77 percent had two-year AA and AS degrees. (ASDOE, 2002)

In May 2005, an article in the Sāmoa News, a local newspaper, reported on twenty-two graduates of the UH cohort program, a local teacher training initiative administered by the University of Hawai'i, receiving their bachelor of elementary education degrees. American Sāmoa Governor Togiola Tulafono, who provided the keynote speech at the graduation ceremony, announced that he had signed into law an administration bill to provide \$1.46 million to the local department of education to supplement funding for teacher scholarships. Togiola further remarked that the government's goal is "to see 500 teachers with certificates and degrees in five years." This pertains to a workforce of approximately 700 teachers in the government-run public elementary and high schools alone, and clearly indicates the percentage of teachers in American Sāmoa's classrooms who need higher credentials.

Teacher Education At ASCC

ASCC plays a vital role in the process through which both pre-service and in-service teachers in the territory can earn or advance their credentials. While it should be noted that the long history of teacher education in American Sāmoa pre-dates the establishment of ASCC, for the last three decades the community college has facilitated significant advancements in the training of instructors for the territory's schools.

The American Sāmoa Community College opened its doors in 1970, and since 1974 has earned its accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). ASCC currently offers two-year programs leading to associate of arts (AA) and associate of science (AS) degrees in liberal arts, business, trades and technology, nursing, criminal justice, and most recently, elementary education. Although the community college began as a division of ASDOE, partial autonomy was granted to ASCC in 1992, and a board of higher education was established as the institution's governing body. Enrollment figures at ASCC have steadily increased over the years along with the growth of the population. The community college student body has grown from 138 during the first semester in 1970 to a total of 1,352 in spring 2005. (ASCC Second Quarter Report, FY 2005).

In its earliest years, ASCC offered an AA degree in education, but this program was superseded when the college became the site of a federally funded teacher training initiative. ASDOE secured federal funding in 1979 to create the Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Program (TTTAP), which contracted instructors from the University of Hawai'i College of Education (UHCOE) to travel to American Sāmoa to teach courses for in-service ASDOE personnel. These courses led to a four-year bachelor of elementary education degree from UHCOE. This program used classrooms at ASCC for UHCOE teacher training classes. ASDOE teachers attended in the afternoon, at the conclusion of their own teaching duties. To supplement the credits earned in these after-school classes, the program also required that the participating ASDOE teachers spend 12 weeks in Hawai'i taking additional courses during the summer. This 1979 program yielded satisfactory results, and over the years the collaboration between ASDOE, UHCOE and ASCC has evolved into two separate but cooperative entities, the American Sāmoa Teacher Education Program (ASTEP), established in 1989, and the UH cohort program. Still funded by TTTAP, both programs continue to conduct their classes at ASCC during late afternoons.

As the initial component of the training initiative for in-service ASDOE personnel, ASTEP offers these teachers both the core curriculum required for the AA degree granted by ASCC, and the required classes for entry into UH cohort. Some teachers taking ASTEP courses have not yet completed an AA degree or its equivalent at ASCC or elsewhere, while others are graduates of the community college, now teaching in the public or private schools, who earned their AA in a programs which did not require specific classes necessary for entry into UH cohort. Subsequently, the workload required for an ASDOE teacher to complete the ASTEP program varies depending on each teacher's individual needs.

Upon completion of the ASTEP program, teachers receive their ASDOE certification, and also qualify to continue by enrolling in the UH cohort program if they so choose. The UH cohort program takes the teacher through a more academically rigorous round of classes, the equivalent of a third-and-fourth-year curriculum, culminating in a bachelor's degree in elementary education from UH COE. A "cohort" consists of a group of teachers who remain together from the beginning of the program till its completion. As with the ASTEP program, ASCC faculty teach some of the UH cohort classes, while some others are taught by UH COE instructors or specially-contracted local personnel. In recent years, the requirements of the UH cohort program have been modified so that American Samoan teachers are no longer required to travel to Hawai'i for any of the necessary classes. (For further discussion of ASTEP and UH cohort, see the article by Dr. Peggy Haleck in this issue.)

The ASCC Teacher Education Department

In addition to the ASTEP and UH degree tracks for in-service teachers, ASCC has recently developed a third program to cultivate pre-service education majors from among its undergraduates. A new division within ASCC, known as the Teacher Education Department (TED), has established a curriculum which presently enables undergraduates to earn their AA in elementary education. Although the new program is still in its early stages, data from the ASCC Admissions and Records Office shows that enrollment in the Teacher Education Department, which started with eighteen education majors in 2001, has grown steadily to approximately eighty in 2003. In 2004, enrollment stands at 160. (ASCC Admissions Office, 2004).

The current head of the Teacher Education Department at ASCC is Tupua Roy Fua, himself a graduate of ASCC during the late '70s. Fua went on to spend ten years working in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas in the field of teacher education before returning to American Sāmoa in 2000. After joining the ASCC faculty, Fua successfully applied for federal funding to launch the first TED classes in the spring of 2001. As the new program was unfamiliar to the ASCC undergraduates, Fua recalls that it had a rocky start: "During our first semester, the classes attracted only a handful of students. One section had only four sign up, and the registrar wanted to cancel it, but I thank Dr. Seth Galea'i, the Dean of Instruction at the time, for believing in the program and letting the courses continue despite the initial low enrollment (personal communication)."

Fua and his colleague, Dr. Vena Sele, designed the 100 and 200 level courses for the TED, while a council that included Fua, Sele, ASCC Vice President Dr. Seth Galea'i, Dr. Salu Hunkin-Finau, and Mrs. Tialuga Seloti

of ASTEP laid the groundwork to expand the program by developing 14 courses at the 300-level and 10 at the 400-level. In addition to the AA degree with an emphasis on education, the department offers an early childhood education teachers' certificate, and a childcare providers certificate developed in conjunction with the American Sāmoa Department of Human Services. It should be noted that the two-year TED curriculum includes the core classes required for an ASCC liberal arts degree, while integrating one course in education per semester.

In 2002, TED received a \$1.2 million US Department of Education Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) grant to improve the quality of the teacher workforce through training, certification, and a locally developed, four-year degree program. Key components of the project included the creation of an innovative early childhood education (ECE) teacher laboratory school and a state of the art teacher resource center.

The ECE lab school provides a model classroom setting for teachers in training. It is founded on the idea that novice teachers require ongoing support from experienced mentors and practical training in effective methodology. The lab school features developmentally appropriate learning centers as well as a kitchen, washroom, and play area. It is staffed with early childhood master teachers through a partnership agreement with the ECE Division of ASDOE (also known as Head Start). Additional support is provided through the ASDOE partnership including school lunch meals for participating children.

The practicum offers an additional feature incorporated into the 100–200 level TED courses that requires students to observe the learning process. Students visit the ASCC ECE Lab School for nine hours of structured observation to learn how an ECE classroom is managed. Thus, TED students gain firsthand experience of the responsibilities placed on the ECE classroom teacher. They learn how to develop and implement lesson plans, and observe a variety of teaching strategies used in teaching elementary students. TED students gain further instructional experience when they are assigned to work alongside a master teacher in a public school classroom.

In order to give students an intellectual foundation in the culture they will be serving, the TED curriculum includes two semesters of Samoan language. Most residents of American Sāmoa speak both Samoan and English, but their fluency in either language can vary a great deal. It comes as no surprise that some residents of the territory communicate better in Samoan than in English, but some find it shocking that a growing number of ethnic Samoans have a less than perfect proficiency in their indigenous language. This development, largely the result of the strong American influence on local culture

and the long history of travel and extended residency by American Samoans in Hawai'i and the continental US, has produced considerable concern among Samoan language educators. In local classrooms, teachers often deal with a combination of students, some of whom may not speak English proficiently, and others who may not speak Samoan. Given that most instructors at ASCC conduct their classes in English, the Samoan language classes required by the ASDOE provide a critical contribution in preparing teachers to develop the linguistic versatility to teach effectively in a bilingual society. Dr Vena Sele has expressed powerful reasons to support the Samoan language as a core subject: "I believe in the theory that a strong foundation in one's own culture makes it easier to learn about other cultures. A student's self-esteem, confidence, and learning ability all increase when they study their own society and history as seriously as they study the world beyond their shores (personal communication)."

Long Term Goals And Accreditation

The emergence of the Teacher Education Department is closely linked to the community college's longstanding aspiration to become a four-year institution. The vision statement in the ASCC 2004–2006 catalogue states that "The College realizes its potential by acquiring adequate resources to become an accredited four-year institution of higher education" (American Sāmoa Community College, 2004, p. 15). In the same document, the welcoming message from ASCC President Dr. Adele Satele-Galea'i gives a specific indication of how the institution plans to move in this direction. She writes

In early 2004, the Board of Higher Education and I set a number of goals that we hope to fulfill within the next five years. These goals include the continuation of our effort to establish a four-year Teacher Education program... Over the next several years, we hope to make some major improvements to ASCC, with our ultimate goal being to establish ourselves as a four-year institution. (p. 1)

The above summary statement by President Satele-Galea'i represents the culmination of years of discussion and planning towards the goal of ultimately making ASCC a four-year institution. These discussions involved a host of educators from different institutions—ASCC administrators, the Board of Higher Education, ASDOE personnel, and outside consultants, most notably Richard H. Kosaki, who was commissioned on two separate occasions to prepare reports on the viability of establishing a four-year program at ASCC. The first report was commissioned in 1987; the second, in 1998. In the later report, *Expanding Teacher Education Opportunities in American Sāmoa*, Kosaki (1998, p. 1) affirms that "there is a growing need for more educational opportunities at

the baccalaureate level ...the development of accessible opportunities in teacher education is the next logical step in the continuing expansion of public education in American Sāmoa." Kosaki's report proceeds to outline the challenges the community college will face in establishing its new program, and he suggests a number of strategies to confront these challenges.

It was agreed, following Kosaki's recommendations, that the creation of a new teacher education program at ASCC, separate from ASTEP and the UH program, would be the most practical first step in moving the community college towards its goal. The initial strategy involved the establishment of a two-year teacher training program for undergraduates. The program now in place leads to an AA degree in liberal arts with an emphasis in education. The TED has also prepared course guides for classes at the 300 and 400-level. Currently, the community college is seeking to have the third-and-fourth-year education curriculum accredited by WASC.

With regards to ASCC offering a four-year program, WASC policy states

For an institution which offers lower division programs but is adding one or more upper division baccalaureate degree programs and/or any graduate level work, the Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities will assume jurisdiction, consulting with the Commission for Community and Junior Colleges." (Kosaki, 1998, p. 13)

Kosaki describes the accreditation requirements of the WASC senior commission (ACSCU) as "more demanding," and he notes that if this senior commission were to assume sole accrediting authority over ASCC, this would place the community college in a position of having its two-year degree programs judged by the same standards as its four-year education program. For this reason, the community college has petitioned WASC to request "joint accreditation" status, whereby the senior commission would accredit only the education program, while the other degree programs at ASCC would remain under the purview of the junior commission.

Recent Developments

As of summer 2006, a number of ASCC graduates of TED have entered the local school system with their AA degrees, while others have opted to travel off-island in pursuit of even higher qualifications. ASCC is still awaiting an official response from the WASC Commission following a request for an official review of the TED, and of the college's plans to offer third- and fourth-year instruction in teacher training. The WASC response to the community college's request will have a major impact on the direction ASCC will take for the next several years.

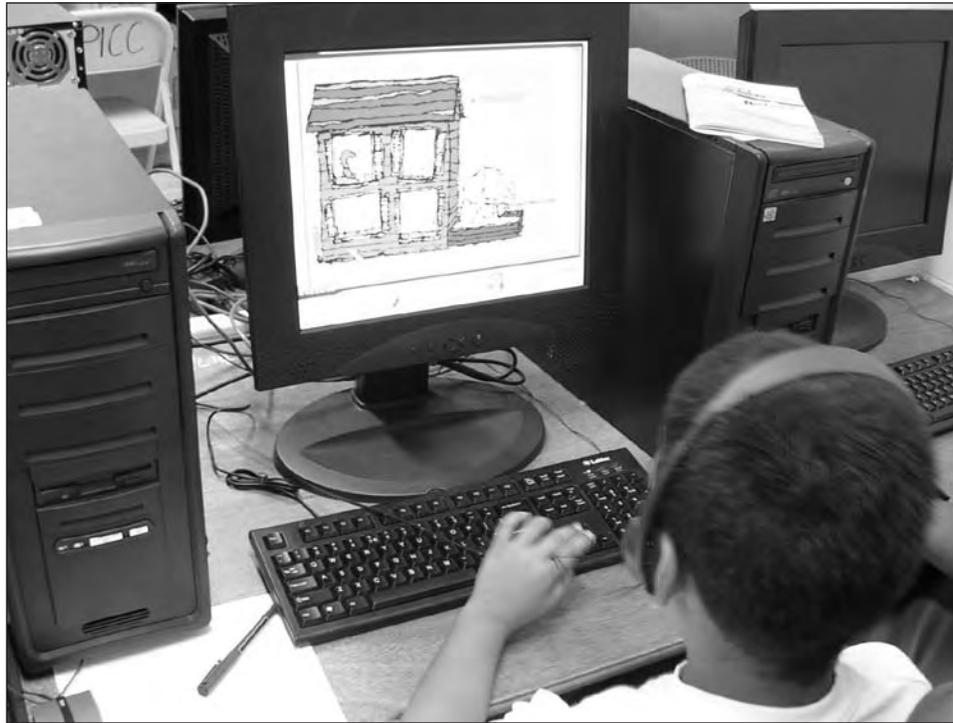
As developments unfold, ASCC will continue to offer opportunities in teacher training for undergraduates through its TED, and for in-service teachers through its affiliation with ASTEP and UH cohort.

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Meeting the Challenges of Public Education in American Sāmoa—A Collaborative Approach

by Donna Gurr



In this article, I propose to describe some of the developments that have taken place in public education in American Sāmoa in the past few years. This has really been a period of rapid change and although many challenges remain, there has been considerable progress on several fronts.

One of the fundamental organizational reforms that has taken place lies in the new management approach of the American Sāmoa Department of Education (ASDOE). This can be characterized as a move away from a top-down management style to a more shared-decision-making model. For many years, decisions have been made at the central office and then handed down to school principals who passed them along, in turn, to teachers. Our current director of education, Malaetele Dr. Lui Tuitele, however, has adopted a much more collaborative approach that is designed to be more inclusive. His leadership style is very open and accessible. He welcomes suggestions from educators locally and abroad, as well as from the community-at-large, and encourages individual initiatives. He understands the importance of educational partnerships and other collaborative endeavors in making change happen. Under his directorship, he has encouraged people to work together so that there has been a more widespread participation in educational decision-making

processes. He has been very supportive of the initiatives discussed in this article.

This new approach to management has resulted in a deliberate effort to involve teachers and school administrators in important decisions that affect their work at the school. Teachers have, as a result, been closely involved in the process of developing standards for their grade level and in the creation of new assessment measures. For example, in April 2004, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) conducted an external review of our English language arts and mathematics standards. During year one of our contract with Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), McREL was subcontracted to assist with the development of a pool of test items for ASDOE's Standards-based Test (SBT). During the 2004–2005 school year, the SBT's were developed for grades three and ten, in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics (this was the first time we had ever formally tested writing). PREL assessment staff, Dr. Don Burger and Jennifer Ryan, worked with a pool of ASDOE educators—predominantly teachers, the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability (OCIA) curriculum specialists, and the Testing Office personnel—in reviewing the test items selected by McREL. They altered items by localizing test items as much

as possible, using local nouns—places, names, etc.—as well as including other local examples. Next, McREL reviewed the revised test items for validity and reliability and forwarded the revised test for pilot testing in fall 2004. Once the initial pilot was completed, PREL and McREL analyzed the results, ASDOE educators were then given a further opportunity to make recommendations, and a second pilot was conducted in spring 2005, followed by a second analysis of the results. The final version of the Standards-based Test for grades three and ten was administered during spring 2006. The same process will continue throughout the five-year period of developing the Standards-Based Test for grades three through eight and ten in reading, writing, and mathematics. The OCIA feels that it is an important principle to involve teachers, as they are the ones who work with students on a day-to-day basis; and their cooperation is critical in the implementation of new initiatives.

In keeping with this more collaborative model, there is also some interest in giving schools more control over their school budgets. For example, schools are given opportunities to apply for school-community sub-grants geared towards improving students' academic achievement as indicated in their school improvement plans. School administrators have also participated in several professional development sessions on school budgets in an effort to encourage principals to take more control and be more responsible for their school finances.

Partnership is therefore an important value and commitment in how we approach educational change, whether it is our partnership with the USDOE, PREL, the University of Hawai'i cohort program, or one of the many local partners in education.

Current ASDOE Curriculum Initiatives

In terms of curriculum change, one of our most important initiatives has been the move away from textbook-driven curricula to a new standards-based system. Essentially, this represents a move from standards in grade-level clusters to standards for each grade level. Previously, we had grouped standards so that students were assessed only at the end of fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. Presently, our standards are more explicit and targeted to the end of each grade level—first grade, second grade, and so on to twelfth grade. This makes teachers more responsible for ensuring that standards are met at each grade level, rather than in the old system, which required a wait of four years before it could be determined whether students had or had not achieved the appropriate standard. Student progress can also be monitored more closely, using the Standards-Based Test discussed earlier.

In making this move, we have been assisted by McREL who have been conducting external reviews of our revised content standards in mathematics and language arts. In

April 2004, Dr. John Kendall of McREL presented the results to ASDOE educators in a series of professional development sessions in which central office personnel, principals, and teachers were given the opportunity to provide additional recommendations before the final mathematics and language arts standards were published. These sessions allowed local educators the opportunity to either accept or reject any of the recommendations provided by McREL. In April 2006, the process was repeated in the external review that McREL conducted of our science and social studies standards.

We are now in the process of reviewing our Samoan language standards. An internal review of these standards occurred during the 2005–2006 school year, with a local external review to be conducted during Summer 2006. In addition, during the spring 2006 semester, McREL conducted an external review of our social studies and science standards. The results of this review were presented in a series of professional development sessions by Dr. Kendall to social studies teachers and specialists, and other ASDOE educators.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has been the main driving force behind our decision in the ASDOE to move from standards in clusters to standards by grade level in core content areas. It has also been instrumental in the development of our standards-based tests and our decision to begin the work of breaking down our standards by grade level and to start assessing our students in grades three through ten in reading, writing and mathematics. American Sāmoa is not required to comply with all components of the NCLB Act under the time constraints required by the states. Nevertheless, our decision to seek compliance has brought about a strengthening in the partnership between the ASDOE and the US Department of Education (USED).

Several on-site visitations by USED staff to American Sāmoa as well as video-teleconferences, and conference calls have occurred during the past two years. These exchanges have resulted in the development of an accountability plan for our department as well as providing guidance on our work in areas such as English language proficiency standards and assessments.

Development of the New Standards-based Tests

We are currently in the process of developing standards-based tests in reading writing, and mathematics with the assistance of McREL and PREL. We have already made a start with grades three and ten, and we are just now finalizing our tests for grades four and eight. These new criterion-referenced tests, the American Sāmoa Standards-Based Tests (also referred to as the ASCRT), will soon be used to report student progress in the form of territory and school report cards and will most likely replace the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) which we have previously used to measure student progress. The disadvantage of the SAT

is that it is not necessarily aligned with our standards. It is a norm-referenced test that is used to compare students to each other rather than to see how they measure up to a standard. Our new ASCRT will be aligned with our content standards and should be a much better assessment tool. We are excited by these new assessments—especially as our teachers have played a role in their development. Previously, teachers have been discouraged with the SAT as a measure of student progress, as many of the test items are not aligned with the standards, and lack cultural sensitivity. With the development of the standards-based tests, teachers have been given the opportunity to review and write items that are directly aligned to the standards, and they have been able to revise items to ensure that they are culturally appropriate. Teachers have been empowered in the decision-making process to select standards and assessments that they believe are appropriate, thus, a sense of “buy in” is occurring for the first time. Our partnership with PREL and McREL has been helpful in validating the tests. This is a five-year project, but eventually we should have a complete set of tests for math, reading and writing in grades three through eight and ten, an accomplishment that will place us in compliance with the No Child Left Behind legislation.

Other Initiatives

During the 2004–2005 school year, we developed a new introductory course on Samoan language for high school students. Previously, we had offered only one Samoan language course and one Samoan culture course at the high school level. However, two years ago, after administering a Samoan language test to students at the end of eighth grade, OCIA Samoan language specialists, in consultation with high school teachers, realized the need to include, at minimum, two Samoan language courses in high school—one for students who possess limited Samoan reading and writing skills (and/or limited oral language skills), and one for students who are proficient in the Samoan language, but could benefit from a higher level Samoan language course. We continue to offer Samoan culture as an elective in the high school. These Samoan language courses are offered in an effort to ensure that all students graduating from public high schools in American Sāmoa are proficient in the Samoan language—one of ASDOE's educational goals. Eventually, we aim to have four years of Samoan language courses in high school, just as we do with English.

When high school graduates in American Sāmoa enter the American Sāmoa Community College (ASCC), a high percentage of them do not score high enough to enroll in for-credit English courses. As a result, they must first take preparatory English courses, referred to as English Language Institute (ELI) courses. This occurs for around 80 percent of students entering our local community college. In order to address this problem the ASDOE has been collaborating

with ASCC for the past two years to offer ELI courses to juniors and seniors enrolled in our public high schools. It is hoped that by interceding earlier in the students' education, more students will be qualified to enroll in for-credit English courses and that they will be better prepared to enter directly into the coursework leading to an associate of arts degree.

In terms of our work with teachers, an important development has been the creation of a number of cadres at the school level. Cadres are composed of experienced teachers who are selected by their school principal to act as curriculum leaders in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science in their designated schools. The OCIA content coordinators and specialists coordinate this effort, and serve as leaders on these cadres. During the year a selection of professional development opportunities is provided to cadre members, until members feel comfortable enough to offer professional development at their school site. In the past, schools relied solely on the OCIA for professional development, but with the cadres we have been able to target on-site professional development to the needs of each school. Cadre members receive special training for their role. They work in collaboration with the administration and teachers to offer on-site workshops. They also mentor other teachers, as determined by their school principal.

In a similar initiative, through a Reading First grant, we have hired five reading coaches to monitor and provide support to teachers and administrators in twenty-two of our public elementary schools in regards to Reading First activities. These coaches receive extensive training from off-island consultants, who visit American Sāmoa several times each year. They participate in weekly meetings and training conducted by our local Reading First administration staff. Stateside meetings and conferences also provide opportunities for coaches to learn how to more effectively monitor Reading First programs in the schools.

Another professional development project that the ASDOE started during the 2005–2006 school year concerns the creation of a Samoan language institute. It is imperative, if we are to strengthen our Samoan language curriculum in the elementary and high school, that we provide intensive training in this area to our teachers. These six- to eight-week courses are offered after school and are geared towards developing teachers' content knowledge as well as their understanding of instructional methods in Samoan language and culture. The project is coordinated by the Teacher Quality Office with support from OCIA Samoan language specialists.

The American Sāmoa Department of Education offers considerable onsite support for teachers. There are regular visits from members of the Instructional Management Team (IMT) as well as site visits from coordinators of the University of Hawai'i cohort program who provide field-

based support in the mentoring of student teachers. The IMT is made up of program, assistant, and deputy directors including the director of education. These educators are responsible for ensuring that schools provide instructional programs that are in accordance with the ASDOE's vision, mission, and goals. OCIA content area specialists and coordinators also accompany the IMT on school visits. These visitors help to facilitate school improvement efforts by offering feedback and working directly with teachers. The OCIA as well as school administrators are able to use feedback provided through these visitations, to tailor professional development opportunities to meet individual needs.

Future Plans

In addition to the above initiatives, either in place or under development, the ASDOE is strongly considering a number of new proposals to meet the needs of our students. In particular, there is a recognized need to develop English language proficiency (ELP) standards, as many of our children come to school with limited proficiency in English. This is an initiative that the USDOE has asked us to consider. We have already established content standards but the limited English proficiency of our students requires that we make a special effort to establish ELP standards as well. This would be achieved more effectively with better data on where our students are in terms of their knowledge of English. We continue to use informal assessments, but we are seriously considering developing our own ELP assessment measures once our ELP standards are in place. This would help us to determine students' levels of competence and identify more appropriate approaches to instruction. For example, what English Language Learner (ELL) model works best for our students? Should we adopt a bilingual model? What other models are available? We want to improve students' acquisition of English, but not at the expense of losing our Samoan language. We aim to make a careful assessment of these different models and proceed cautiously by implementing various pilot schemes to find out what works best in practice. Our goal, therefore, is to ensure that all students are proficient in English and Samoan by the time they leave high school.

With regard to Samoan studies, we plan to devote extra effort to the development of Samoan language curriculum materials including trade books. Although we have curriculum guides for teaching Samoan studies in the elementary grades and Samoan language and culture in the high schools, the availability of trade books is limited. OCIA Samoan curriculum coordinator and specialists continue to review and purchase available resources that conform to our standards. However, there is a manifest need to develop additional Samoan language materials at all grade levels. In summer 2006, a committee of educators from the ASDOE

plan to review the current standards and curriculum, and make recommendations for the development of additional resources needed in this area.

In addition to these developments, we propose to make some revisions to the Samoan history course in high school, and we are considering placing a Samoan or Pacific history course in the elementary schools. There used to be a Pacific history course in the elementary school, but it was replaced by an American history course over ten years ago. In order for our children to identify with others in the world—particularly the USA—they must first understand who they are, as well as have an understanding of the Pacific region which surrounds them. Without this knowledge, our students could likely travel to the U.S. mainland, without an understanding of their own heritage. It is important, then, that students develop a strong sense of their Samoan identity to form a basis on which to build a more extended sense of who they are and their relationship to the rest of the world. The high school Samoan history course is currently being updated in recognition of these needs.

It is widely recognized in the community that there has been an erosion of students' understanding of Samoan language and culture. There is a widespread fear that if we do not act now, we are in danger of losing something that cannot easily be replaced. It used to be the case that people expected the schools to teach English and that Samoan language and cultural understanding were best promoted at home. But this view has undergone change. This situation suggests an important role for the ASDOE in helping our community understand the complex issues regarding language instruction—that it is not simply a matter of the division of labor with schools teaching English and Samoan being learnt at home. As we consider the move to a more bilingual model in the schools, we need to engage the cooperation of parents and help them understand how language is acquired. Another thing we can do is to develop materials in Samoan. Libraries are full of books in English, but it is very difficult to find anything in Samoan.

It cannot be denied that some teachers are resistant to the idea of teaching Samoan language and culture. They do not feel as comfortable with the subject as they feel they should. One reason for this is the relative dearth of curriculum resources. In most subjects, such as English and social studies, the teachers can consult the textbooks, which often provide guidance on how to teach a lesson. In addition, such established curricula are often backed up with a great deal of supporting materials and a wide selection of ideas about what and how to teach a particular concept or process. Unfortunately, teachers are hampered by the lack of materials for Samoan language instruction. What can the schools do? One useful idea is to reach out to our local community resources, as well as to the larger Samoan community on the US mainland, Hawai'i, New Zealand, and in neighboring

Sāmoa. There is a rich diversity of knowledge and resources that is produced by our extended Samoan community, though it is very dispersed and may require some adaptation to make it available for instruction. For example, there are a number of Samoan language newspapers. Samoan poetry and other writings are produced in many places in addition to American Sāmoa. These resources could offer an invaluable basis for instructional materials in Samoan, especially if they were employed thoughtfully in the classroom and adapted to the standards.

Samoan is traditionally an oral language, and this raises the issue of the conventions of Samoan as a written language, especially as Samoan increasingly becomes a language of study in the schools. As new terms and usages continue to develop—for example, in technology and the sciences—who is responsible for translating this new vocabulary into the Samoan language? Not infrequently, American Sāmoa and Sāmoa have determined different translations for the same words. A welcome development would be if the Samoan community would unite and perhaps decide which Samoan language council should be responsible for translating new terms into the Samoan language.

The educational challenges that face the Samoan language and culture are considerable. An important step, however, has been taken in creating a Samoan language institute in response to teachers' requests for support in teaching Samoan language and culture. We have just completed our first language institute. Informal feedback from the first group of teachers has been very encouraging. In fact, some of the teachers from the institute have been selected to review our Samoan standards and curriculum during the summer months. In addition, these teachers have also taken the initiative to form a Samoan teacher's organization, whose first activity involved visiting the neighboring island of Upolu in Sāmoa, for professional development purposes (i.e., school visits and Samoan language workshops).

It is our hope that the current initiatives undertaken by our American Sāmoa Department of Education will move us closer to achieving our vision, mission, and goals. Collaborating with our educational partners both locally and abroad will help guide our work and ensure that our students are afforded the best educational opportunities possible through our public school system.

Beliefs and Practices of Samoan Teachers: From BEd Cohort Program to Master's Degree

*by William L. Greene, Siamaua Ropeti, Lisa Vaivao Ino,
Denise Ah-Sue, and Faleula Aoelua Sappa*

Four and a half years have passed since the following teachers from Cohort VI in American Sāmoa graduated from the University of Hawai'i with bachelor of education degrees and with teaching licenses from the state of Hawai'i. This article highlights changes and developments in the beliefs and practices of four teachers from Cohort VI who, in the midst of full time teaching, are now taking graduate courses in pursuit of master's degrees offered by the University of Hawai'i in American Sāmoa. Siamaua Ropeti, Lisa Vaivao Ino, Denise Ah Sue, and Faleula Sappa wrote reflections about their personal development as teachers based on the following prompts: (1) What were your early, pre-cohort, beliefs about teaching and learning? (2) What are your current beliefs or philosophy about teaching and how does that look in your classroom practice? (3) Describe some of the influences that have shaped your current approach to teaching. Their reflections and insights are included below. The article concludes with an analysis of how the voices of these teachers add to the literature on teacher preparation and the development of new teachers.

Four Teachers Siamaua Ropeti

When I started teaching eight years ago in the private sector, I thought I knew everything there was to know about teaching. I could read, write, and even speak English well. I thought that all it took to teach was to pass information on to students and they would immediately grasp the idea or concept the teacher wanted them to learn. After that first year of teaching, I realized the task was not as easy as it seemed. It frustrated me that my remedial students were still remedial, and many of them did not possess the interest or enthusiasm to learn. I used to blame them for their failure. I told parents that because their children didn't want to learn, they kept failing in my class and therefore needed to repeat the same class the following year. I always had a lot of excuses; none of those excuses had to do with me, the teacher. I didn't see myself as the one responsible for the daily learning that goes on in the classroom. I was the "giver of knowledge," and every student should show me courtesy.

I had a variety of students in my classroom every year. When they left my classroom, the smart ones remained smart and the remedial ones remained remedial. I told them that if they didn't do their work and their parents didn't show interest, they'd very likely remain as they were at the beginning of the year. I never saw myself as the one who

should play a huge role in the classroom. I was always right and the students were always wrong. I thought like this because I was older and I was the teacher. I grew up going to school where teachers were always yelling at students. I was yelled at every day of the week for such small things as breaking a crayon, for not doing my hair correctly, or for going to the bathroom too often. I got so scared sometimes that I wouldn't dare open my mouth to answer the teacher when he or she asked a question. I would rather play dumb than risk being yelled at if I said the wrong thing.

When I became a teacher, I started to do the same things to my students. I decided to join the UH cohort program three years later and my philosophy, ideas, and concepts completely changed. Being a teacher is a gift, and like all gifts, you need to work on it in order to perfect it. Teachers are not "better" than their students. If they were, students would have a hard time connecting and building relationships with teachers. Teachers must always be sensitive to students' needs because they all come from different cultural backgrounds. Every child in the classroom is different, and therefore every teacher must use a variety of instructional techniques to accommodate these fragile and sensitive individuals. Students must feel safe and welcome in the classroom. They should feel as though they belong in an inviting environment established by the teacher because that is where they will stay for the duration of their learning experience. When students are comfortable, they learn well.

Students must always be given the chance to express themselves. Teachers don't know everything; most teachers learn a lot more from their students than they might expect. It is crucial that teachers try to see things from the student point of view. They need to be assertive and show flexibility in the classroom. Teachers must always consider making learning practical by using lots of hands-on activities. Students tend to misbehave when they're bored or left with nothing to do. Teachers should always encourage students to work cooperatively. We live in a world that requires people to work together. It is essential, therefore, that students learn this skill at a young age.

My experience in the UH master's program has caused me to rethink what I learned in the undergraduate cohort. This rethinking has a lot to do with keeping in mind the characteristic of quality in teaching. After spending a lot of time learning about strategies and methods of helping students, it is extremely difficult to go back to the old, traditional way of teaching. For example, when I have students

read a piece of literature, I instinctively think of using reading strategies I learned in the cohort program that develop comprehension—ones that are fun, interesting, and make meaningful connections to real life situations. However, there are times that I feel tired, or stressed out. I know that I can always have students read the story and answer questions at the end of the chapter, but knowing what I've been trained and taught to do, my conscience keeps bothering me if I don't do the best I can for them. A small voice seems to say, "So what is the purpose of learning so much from the cohort if you're not implementing it in your classroom?" The masters program functions like that small voice that compels me to rethink what I'm doing and to remember what I learned in the cohort program—to start acting like a professional again.

After taking classes with off-island professors during my cohort experience, I saw that there was something completely different in the way the class was conducted. The instructors were friendly and teaching was delivered in a way that made us understand the content. There were plenty of opportunities for practice and lots of examples. Learning was fun, and best of all, students were encouraged to voice their opinions, and that made me feel very important. I no longer feel ashamed or scared when exchanging opinions in the classroom. I'm confident that I won't be penalized when voicing my views. I credit this to all the teachers that have helped me believe in myself.

I am in my ninth year of teaching this school year. Every new school year brings excitement. I anticipate meeting and getting to know each student in my class. When I come to the end of each school year, I am always filled with sadness because I will be saying good-bye to my students. I have had many chance encounters with former students. They come up to me and say "hi" or thank me for being their teacher. There is no greater feeling in the world than to be appreciated by your students.

In conclusion, I believe that teachers should be professionals in every aspect of their work—including the way they look, act, speak, and conduct lessons. I no longer see myself as the "giver of knowledge." Rather, I see myself as a "facilitator of learning." I try to make learning fun and interesting in my classroom because every one of my students is important. My beliefs as a teacher are always changing because times change and people change. One change I will never make, however, is to go back to my old ways of teaching. I am best remembered by many of my students for my Bible stories and my humor in the classroom. But more importantly, I hope to be remembered by my students as simply being a good teacher.

Lisa Vaivao Ino

Living on a tiny, isolated island with limited opportunities can either leave a person without hope of renewal or lead

them to pursue new goals. Picture yourself attending college with a dream of owning your own business or joining an expedition to some far away place. Think of becoming an astronaut or an oceanographer. Unaccountably, you find yourself on a career path you never thought you would take. A year later, you became a teacher. At the age of twenty-two, I became the thing I had least expected to become. The journey of my career began in early August of 1999. The idea of becoming an educator at that time was something I had never considered because my interests lay in a different direction. However, I became a teacher to make my mother proud, and it was the only job available at the time here in American Samoa.

I recall back in eighth grade when my teacher asked what it was that I wanted to be when I grew up. At that time, being a teacher was the best job there ever was. I had a perfect role model—my mother. She was a sixth grade teacher. I told my eighth grade teacher, straight up, that I wanted to be a teacher when I grew up. He said something that I would never forget. It was harsh and painful. "You'll never be a teacher with that slow, uneducated brain of yours." I felt like all my dreams had been scattered and had flowed down a thousand mile tunnel to a place where I could never reach them again. I went to high school with no goals or dreams. I attended high school because I needed to get a high school diploma. I was unsure what I wanted to be and where I would head to next. My dream had been completely destroyed with my eighth grade teacher's cruel response.

My eighth grade teacher had changed my mind and my goals in an instant. I looked elsewhere for another interest. It was my mother's love and everlasting support that got me into college. She had convinced me that once I got a college degree, life would be easier for me. I got into college still unsure that I might be wasting my parents' money. Because I was born in a foreign land, I was not eligible for financial support. Work-study wasn't an option for me because I was needed at home.

At a very young age, I became a mother to my family. As the eldest of my family, it was my duty to raise my younger brothers and sisters. Because my mother was a teacher and my father worked at an oil company, they were hardly ever at home. Mom stayed at school late to grade papers, plan for the next day, and attend workshops while Dad had to attend business meetings and complete paper work. So, I was the one who nourished and nurtured my younger siblings, took care of them, and made sure their needs were met.

In college I was required to have a major. I believed that most of the successful people in this world were business people who owned their own business and were their own bosses. This, I felt, was something that would result in a more pleasant and a successful life for me. With that in mind, I double majored in business management and accounting. I was confident that I was going to be the best Samoan

businesswoman on the island. I graduated and worked at a family bakery for about a year before I came to realize that things weren't going exactly as I had anticipated. Managing a business was a totally unfamiliar world. I recalled my earlier goals in life. I wanted adventure. Several people, my mother in particular, convinced me that I could have all the adventure I wanted if I became a teacher. The Department of Education had a desperate need for teachers, so I signed on.

My mother and her passion for the profession had prepared me for my first year as a teacher. My whole family, including my younger siblings had joined in with my parents to help me set up my classroom for the very first time. Throughout my first year, I had various downfalls. I tended to over-react at times and placed the focus of attention on me instead of on the students. Management was straight-forward: "You do what I tell you, or else." I wasn't educated on how to control the students. It all seemed very easy to blame them for anything that went wrong. "They're not disciplined." "They never do what I tell them." "They never seem to keep quiet." I employed several excuses to defend myself. I was fortunate however to have someone who could show me how and what I needed to do. The "why" part was left to me. It wasn't until after the first semester of my second year as a teacher that I was accepted into the University of Hawai'i cohort program. It was in this program that I learned to become a professional.

The cohort program taught me to believe in my students, my career, and myself. I learned from my second graders that being a teacher can and will take me along on that adventure I had longed for. I learned to love teaching. I learned to believe that children should be taught in a way that developed their natural desire, curiosity, and hunger for knowledge. Children should learn in classrooms where they are nurtured and loved by their teachers. Teachers and students can thrive together in an environment filled with talk. I learned to believe that the classroom should be an inviting and enriching place where students are motivated with a desire to learn. Now, before each lesson I think about how I can make learning relevant to my students' lives. The physical environment and daily routine should encourage children to actively participate in and take responsibility for their own learning.

I feel that teaching gives me much more than what I put in. I say this because the children are not only learning from me, but I am learning from them as well. I start out each day with smiling, excited little people who show greatness in life and learning. Teaching offers me the opportunity constantly to better myself, and at the same time, enrich the lives of a future generation.

I have learned to plan activities that offer rich literary, math, social studies, and science experiences. I facilitate each child's social, emotional, and physical growth by praising their strength and teaching them to believe in themselves.

I encourage my students to work together and respect each other's differences. I want them to think of learning as a way of sharing ideas, accepting different perspectives, and responding to each other with a positive attitude. How I teach depends heavily on these values. I must take into consideration that every child is unique and their future depends to some extent on decisions that I make and beliefs that I hold.

My focus is not only based on academics, but on values and attributes that each child needs in order to be a successful citizen in the world of tomorrow. I set goals for myself. Such goals involve striving to develop a broad range of teaching skills that can be adjusted to meet the needs of my students. I want to challenge my students and to evaluate them honestly and fairly—to foster students' mastery of material while at the same time helping them to develop practical skills such as effective communication and critical thinking. I try to motivate my students to believe in themselves, to set goals, and never to let anyone tell them that they can't reach their dreams.

What is rewarding to me is that each day is a new adventure. Each child comes with special needs, abilities, and infinite potential. As a teacher, I enjoy the challenge of helping children develop these needs to the highest degree possible. I am confident that every child who enters my classroom will receive the most I can offer. I am also confident that I shall continue to develop as a teacher.

The story doesn't end here. My aim is to continue my learning. I am now at work on my master's degree in elementary education. Putting into practice the ideas and concepts that I learned from the cohort program has led to greater awareness of my abilities as a classroom teacher. For example, the cohort program taught me to be more positive in commenting on my students' work. I saw this issue two ways at the time. It feels good to know that if we say something encouraging to the kids, they will be more willing to complete their task. But I felt unsure of myself in saying these things.

Now that I'm taking UH graduate courses, this issue has come up again. This time, I understand that positive reinforcement isn't the cure for all management problems. I view myself as a classroom facilitator—as someone guiding the students in the right direction and preparing them for the real world. Saying "good job" isn't necessarily preparing them for the real world. It may be regarded as insincere, especially when it is overused, and it could be divisive. "Wow, what a terrific job you did on that piece!" may send the message that the teacher values the work of one student over another.

In conclusion, learning to teach is a never-ending project. I still try to think about which teaching ideas work best. Even so, questions are left unanswered and facts about so many things are hidden. Nevertheless, I believe that I will improve with each day if I continue to search for new

knowledge and develop skills that will help me to become successful. I will always be a learner, and I will continue to look for answers in courses, workshops, and through interaction with my students.

Denise Ah Sue

My journey as a teacher started in August of 2000, five months before I entered Cohort IV as a BEd student with the University of Hawai'i. I still remember the very first day at school as I stood in front of my first group of pupils. Forty-six pairs of eyes were gazing expectantly at me, anxiously waiting for me to say something. I felt the sensation of sweat trickling down my back. My nerves held me in an unmerciful grip. It's a feeling I will never forget. All I had ever read about teaching had not prepared me for the reality of the classroom. Fortunately, I was assigned a teaching partner during the first semester. She played a major role in my decision to stick it out as a teacher. She instilled in me the passion for teaching. I believe, above all else, that a teacher should possess the passion to teach. I had the passion to teach, but I fell far short in the area of pedagogic skill.

In January 2001 I began a new phase of enlightenment regarding my career as a teacher. I had applied and had been accepted into the University of Hawai'i cohort program. The program offered courses that would fulfill the requirements for the bachelor's of education degree in either elementary education, early childhood education, or dual certification in elementary and special education. It is through the cohort program that my understanding of pedagogy started to develop. I began to learn some of the current teaching strategies and methodologies in different content areas. I developed an understanding of new teaching ideas such as inquiry learning, constructivism, and integrated curriculum. These ideas made their way into my classroom. I also came into contact with students, administrators, and fellow teachers who made an impact on my teaching.

I graduated with a BEd in elementary and special education. I am now pursuing a master's of education degree in curriculum studies with an emphasis on elementary education and specializing in literacy and educational technology. It has been a fulfilling learning experience thus far. It is said that those who dare to teach must never cease to learn. I do not intend to cease learning from everyone and everything I come in contact with.

Robert Maynard Hutchins once said, "The objective of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives." This quote best describes my philosophy of education. Students should be encouraged to become lifelong learners. The teacher's role in this endeavor is to be a facilitator and not a dictator. I believe a student-centered classroom that is inclusive of all learning abilities offers the ideal classroom setting to support this educational philosophy.

It has been five years since my journey as a teacher began. I feel that I have really grown professionally. The strategies and methodologies that I have learned throughout the years in my academic courses as well as from my colleagues has equipped me with ways to meet the needs of the different types of learners in my classroom. So the journey continues with new ideas to explore, new thoughts to process, and more students to reach out to and help.

Faleula Sappa

Becoming a member of the UH cohort made me feel like I was part of a team. We started the two years together, and we finished as one. The members of my cohort and I all had full-time jobs. Many of us have children and spouses. But being together and recognizing each other's struggles to stay the course gave me courage to keep going. It was a struggle because there were many new teaching strategies that were foreign to us. We had to try them out for ourselves to see if they personally worked for us or not. Some strategies worked for me better than others. For example, I used to write the kids names on the board if they misbehaved. I learned that if I focused on misbehavior instead of good behavior, misbehavior is what I would get from my students. I started giving praise more often and rewarding those who listened. This went a long way in changing the behavior of my students. It takes a lot more patience to teach this way, but it works.

The cohort structure of the program provided much-needed support in a number of ways. For instance, all of us had our own ideas about the portfolios that we were required to write each semester. Looking at my peers' ideas helped me improve mine as well. The cohort students were a creative group of people. They were organized and were very good at recording ideas. When I saw something good, I usually learned from it. Another example was that each of our professors had their own style of lesson plans they wanted from us. If there was a task I did not understand, it was easy for me to go to one of the members of my cohort for help.

Sometimes members of our cohort dropped out. However, we encouraged each other to keep going and for those who did not make it, we pleaded with them to come back and complete their education. Discipline had a great impact on me while in the cohort. Our coordinator was very firm with her words. Because of the standard set by this new coordinator, a few of my classmates and I did not graduate with our cohort. When she said she would not accept any assignments after the class had begun, she meant it. We begged her, but she wouldn't budge. It was painful, but we learned the hard way that when the doctor speaks, her words are law in the classroom. I signed a contract with her, and she would remind me whenever I started to slack. She was there at my side when

I graduated. We cried together and hugged each other. She knew that I knew that nothing comes easy. Hard work pays off.

After having taken many university courses in elementary education, I now know that teaching is not a chore but a blessing. To see the kids eyes light up when they understand how to do a math problem or figure out where water droplets come from on the outside of cold containers or compete to create the tallest building out of straws or compose songs and poems or make up a dance is a great reward. To me, all my students are winners. I have no doubt in their abilities. I have high expectations of them all. I know they need my assistance to grow intellectually, and I want to help them be the best they can be. If I see that one teaching strategy is not working with them, I will look for another avenue so they can continue to move forward. Children are young and innocent, and they need our guidance. I want my students to feel they are all competent. I try to build their self-esteem by praising them when they do what's right. I want them to know there is nothing they cannot do. Some of my pupils may have weaknesses or shy away from participation, but I try to focus on their positive attributes. They are all important to me, and they all have something to contribute to our society.

I would like to continue learning and complete my master's and doctorate degrees and maybe even become a professor in curriculum studies to improve myself in the teaching profession. It's not just the students I want to help; I want to offer my services to other teachers and administrators as well. I want to help others become better individuals.

Discussion and Implications for Teacher Preparation

Graduate level study of pedagogy and practice has raised some important questions for these four educators about what it means to be a teacher. Enrollment in MEd degree coursework offered them the opportunity to revisit some of the assumptions and beliefs about teaching that they acquired in their initial teacher preparation program. Their continuing education challenges them to grapple with some of the important issues that arise as they progress from novice to expert teacher. Rather than simply appropriate new instructional practices, as might befit a new or novice teacher, these teachers are questioning the nature of their work in a more critical and fundamental way. In effect, they are engaged in the process of evaluating pedagogical principles based on the interaction of theory and personal experience drawn from their teaching practice. At the same time, they have adopted broader conceptions of themselves as teachers and learners, and in the process, sculpted teaching identities more firmly grounded in conscious decision-making.

Modeling and Interaction in Teacher Preparation Programs

All four teachers referred to transformed ways of being in the classroom as a result of observing and interacting with other teachers and professors in the UH cohort program. Possibilities previously not imagined or experienced were introduced through modeled practice. Barth's (1990, p. 174) statement that "humans learn through reflection, pleasure, and interaction with colleagues" resonates in the developmental narratives of these four teachers. For instance, Faleula talks about finding meaning in the portfolio examples of her peers. Denise mentions the role of her colleagues in helping her understand the needs of her diverse learners. Lisa feels her cohort experience taught her to be a professional, and Siamaua refers to the "small voice that triggers me to rethink what I'm doing and what I learned in the cohort program and to start acting like a professional again." Darling-Hammond (1997) suggests that, like their students, teachers learn by studying, doing, and reflecting; "by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see" (p. 319).

Schön (1983) described one characteristic of reflective teaching as the willingness to articulate tacit beliefs about one's practice and to subject them to critique. This is similar to what happens when a teacher identifies a persistent teaching problem or question and decides to initiate a conversation about it. This kind of inquiry requires a community of learners with whom one can converse. The teachers in this study appear to understand that one of the benefits, or value-added aspects, of collegial interaction is the introduction of others' voices into their reflective moments—voices that seemed to reappear in self-talk. Interaction with colleagues played a part in choosing strategies to guide their thinking through challenging situations. In this way, teachers become conscious of earlier resolutions and agreements—an awareness of prior experience that can help convert feelings and emotions of the moment into strategies, goals, and, ultimately, understanding.

Sculpting Teaching Identities

Teachers need opportunities to redefine themselves in their professional roles and to construct their professional identities. Reflective practice and dialogue are essential parts of the evolution of constructing a teaching identity: the process of casting off, discovering, proclaiming, and changing one's ideas and values. The experiences gained in the cohort program, and, later, the network of associations within UH graduate courses, offered the participants a social context in which to become aware of who they are as teachers. As Danielewicz (2001) describes it, "creating identities is not an individual undertaking, but involves others, especially groups or collectives connected to social

institutions as well as the discourses associated with them" (p. 35). We see ourselves in terms of sameness and of difference to others, and those comparisons and contrasts can lead us to question who we are and who we want to become. We sculpt this identity of ourselves "through activity and practices like classification (she is a teacher), association (I am like her), and identification (I want to be like her)" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 35). The iterative nature of identity sculpting is, at least in part, what allows us to grow, to recreate and transform our fundamental beliefs and enactments as teachers.

All of this raises questions about the effectiveness of support systems for beginning teachers and challenges us to consider the important role that collegial mentoring has for teacher preparation and the professional development of teachers during their careers. Teachers find few opportunities to compare and validate their reflections with trusted colleagues. While feelings of doubt about teaching effectiveness are normal for many beginning teachers, opportunities to interact with colleagues and consult with supportive mentors can help build confidence and validate teaching strengths. Without such support, uncertainty and self-doubt may produce a diminished sense of self-efficacy in teaching effectiveness. For example, new teachers who collaborate regularly with colleagues reported greater confidence in their teaching abilities than those who did not (Chester & Beaudin, 1996). The perceived margin of safety in a school or department can shrink considerably if teachers feel that others are questioning the value and effectiveness of their work and when opportunities for professional growth and conversation are not readily accessible.

The personal stories shared by the Samoan teachers in this article offer valuable insights into understanding the professional development of new teachers. Support, feedback, and encouragement are essential to professional growth. Long term and personal relationships with cohort peers and faculty from teacher education programs do not tend to be the norm among newly licensed graduates; yet the teachers here offer testimony that there is a significant value in such relationships. As Danielewicz (2001) argues, "we ought to try making the model of sustained contact standard rather than anomalous" (p. 5). Similarly, Palmer (1998) reminds us, "If we want to grow as teachers...we must talk to each other about our inner lives" (p. 12). As teacher preparation programs and faculty induction models inevitably evolve, it becomes essential to remind ourselves of the malleability of teaching identities and of the ways these identities take shape in the social context of our school communities.

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Educational Resources in the ASCC Library

by Steven Lin

American Sāmoa Community College

After two years of construction, American Sāmoa Community College opened its new library on September 2, 2003. The library is located on the east side of campus, facing the island's main road and overlooking the ocean a short distance down the hill. The state-of-the-art, two-level building covers 9,960 square feet. The library is equipped with ten computer workstations, four online public access catalogs, three copying machines, and an elevator that is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

According to the Association of College and Research Libraries standards for community, junior, and technical college learning resources programs approved in 1994, student seating should be approximately 10 percent of the full-time enrollment. The library has a seating capacity for 132 students, which far exceeds the minimum requirements for our 623 full-time students. As a result, the library has been able to maximize its space usage to facilitate study.

The library provides an attractive, accessible, safe, and comfortable environment for its users. Six qualified professionals and support staff provide information and instructional services to the students. The staff assists students in the effective use of library collections and equipment, with a focus on user satisfaction.

Currently, the library holds approximately 25,000 volumes of printed materials, some non-print media and computer software. It subscribes to ninety periodicals and some online databases for full-text reference books, journals, and newspapers. With funding from the 2003 U.S. Jobs and Tax Reconciliation Act, the library is now in the process of updating its collection to support the college curriculum as well as to meet individual research and information needs of the campus community.

Educational Resources Room

The Educational Resources Room was opened to the public on May 31, 2005. It is on the library's second floor and is devoted to housing educational materials such as curriculum resources, reference works, and journals. A staff member has been hired to provide information services and support. The collection contains 1000 volumes of books in circulation focusing on, but not limit to, education and education related fields, i.e., foundations of education, research in education, curriculum and instruction, and teaching strategies. There is also a reference section with over 250 volumes including handbooks, directories, indexes and abstracts, statistical sources, encyclopedias, test books, almanacs, guides, manuals, workbooks, action tools, maps and atlases, globes,

dictionaries, thesauruses, teaching kits, standards for testing, training drills, and school laws. The library subscribes to forty-eight education periodicals and some non-print media.

A digital learning resource called the KnowledgeBox is also located in the resource room. The KnowledgeBox is a K-6 digital learning system for reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies that was designed and developed by Pearson Digital Learning to provide immediate and centralized access to a rich resource of digital media. The KnowledgeBox employs a powerful combination of broadband and server technology that integrates seamlessly with our local area network to deliver instructional digital media to student and teacher desktops on demand. It empowers educators to quickly and easily integrate technology and high-quality core instructional content into the curriculum.

Teachers use the KnowledgeBox to customize lessons and build their own lessons to meet the individual needs of their students. It also makes vibrant, full-motion video and other media available with little download time, and regardless of whether the Internet connection is up or down. In addition, this new technology updates and manages content to reflect current research and the most recent state and national educational standards.

The library also subscribes to Thomas Gale Access, a collection of online databases that include a student resources center and a testing and education reference center. Both centers provide full-text resources that include reference books, journals, magazines, and newspapers.

It is hoped that with the sufficient funding, the Educational Resources Room will be able to expand its collection to cover many more educational resources and materials.

Resources Sharing

Few libraries possess collections containing all the works on a specific subject. This makes it necessary to share material through inter-library loan agreements. Such programs make use of computer technology to make their services more efficient. Similarly, Internet access makes it much easier for library users to conduct online searches and gain access to other libraries' collections. With computer technology, information is rarely further away than our fingertips, and often at a much more reasonable cost.

ASCC library aims to keep up with these developments and is planning to enter an agreement with libraries in the Pacific region for sharing resources and exchanging duplicate materials. The Gifts and Exchange Program in the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawai'i, has also made it possible to expand the ASCC libraries collection.

The Future

The library staff is committed to aggressive acquisition, subscribing to more e-reference materials, maximizing library space for users, and providing more effective library services.

Some of the library's goals are based on the five laws of library science established by the great Indian librarian S. R. Ranganathan (1931):

1. Books are for use.
2. Every reader his or her book.
3. Every book its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. The Library is a growing organism.

Because most students come to ASCC by bus, and the bus stops running at 6:00 p.m., one of the long-range goals of ASCC library is to set up an educational resources room on the east and west sides of Tutuila, the main island. We also hope to create an inter-island service to the island of Manua. When ASCC begins to offer long distance education via televised courses and video teleconferencing classes, the library will be able to provide information service to end users in remote areas.

New technology and advanced tele-communications have transformed the world into a global village where boundaries no longer divide our schools and library services. In this age of information, librarians therefore need to keep pace with developments in information technology and provide effective information services to meet the educational needs of library users.

A high quality library plays an essential role in providing high quality education. The potential of the ASCC library is unlimited in terms of its collections, digital resources, Internet access, and information delivery services.

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Special Education in American Sāmoa

by *Kate Moran*

From Segregation to Inclusion

In the early 1970s, American Sāmoa's Department of Education (ASDOE), like many other public school districts across the United States, responded quickly to the federal government's initiative to support special education programs and provide services in the field of disabilities. The original program began in 1971 with services for deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, and hospital bound students. The program was a modest one with a total of seven staff who provided services for seven full-time and approximately thirty-five part-time students. Program growth has been consistent and as of last year the Special Education Division housed over two hundred staff to provide services to approximately 1,300 school age students identified with a disability.

The expansion of the Special Education Division over the past five years has been remarkable. Three special education program coordinators have been added to the special education administrative team that now totals four program coordinators and one director. Support services staff has also increased dramatically and last year a certified speech and language therapist, a certified school psychologist, a licensed physical therapist, and approximately twenty other support and related services personnel were on staff. The number of special education teachers assigned to classrooms, small groups, and individual students has also increased. Each elementary and secondary school now has a special education resource specialist housed at the school who is responsible for the coordination and delivery of special education services at the school site.

These changes from a small, centralized special education delivery system to a decentralized model has been prompted partly by the commitment of special education leaders and parents to an inclusion philosophy that supports the integration of special education students into the mainstream of their village schools. Many children who were previously bused to self-contained, centrally located classroom on the island are now schooled in their home village with family, neighbors, and friends. With the new model many more special education students now have access to the general education curriculum.

A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom

Dr. Lui Tuitele, director of education, has been diligent in leading the department's efforts to place highly qualified teachers in all classrooms, as recommended by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act. The department efforts have focused on financially supporting classroom teachers in obtaining an undergraduate degree and teaching certification as well

as ensuring that teachers are placed in teaching positions in which they are certified.

While some support has been provided for graduate level degrees in specialized areas, financial support has primarily focused on providing assistance to under-trained classroom teachers to obtain degree status and certification in their area of teaching. Each year the American Sāmoa government offers increasing amounts of scholarship funding for teacher training, especially in high-need areas such as math, science, and special education. In particular, special education teachers are encouraged to pursue teacher certification in specific disability areas.

A commitment of this magnitude is no easy task for an island without an accredited four year college within a radius of 2,600 miles, a government budget that secures only 37 percent of funding from local revenue and 63 percent from US grants, a school population that is 98 percent eligible for the free breakfast and lunch programs, and a teacher population with fewer than 50 percent possessing a teaching degree. Regardless of these obstacles, the government is determined to place a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. As a result, teachers who are currently employed by the ASDOE, and who have yet to obtain the necessary credentials have been put on notice to return to school and get a degree or run the risk of losing their job. The movement towards a four-year, teacher-training program at the local community college may help alleviate the teacher shortage in some areas; however, there has been no discussion of including training for special education teachers. This omission is alarming as the percentage of degreed teachers in special education is even lower than the percentage of degreed teachers in general education. Approximately one-third of the special education teachers in American Sāmoa possess a teaching degree and less than 1 percent of these teachers hold a certification in a specific disability area.

Special Education Teacher Preparation in the Cohort Program

Currently, the majority of credentialed special education teachers are graduates of the University of Hawai'i teacher training cohort program that offers a dual preparation strand. Approximately 20 percent of the cohort applicants apply for this strand and obtain a teaching degree and teaching certification in both general and special education. (For a more complete description of the cohort program, see the article by Dr. Peggy Haleck in this issue).

The cohort program requires students to complete fifty-one credits in professional education core courses and

eighteen credits in elementary education emphasis courses. Candidates in the dual preparation strand are required to take an additional twenty-seven credits in special education coursework. This coursework covers such topics as inclusive school practices, partnerships with families, classroom organization, behavior management, student assessment, reading strategies, technology, and disability awareness and policies. Dual preparation teacher candidates must also complete student teaching in both a general education classroom and a special education classroom.

While the dual preparation strand has helped increase the number of special education teachers considerably, other factors operate that add to the critical shortage of qualified special education teachers. Approximately forty teachers have graduated from the dual preparation strand of the cohort program but discouragingly only 46 percent of those trained teachers have remained in the classroom. As is the case in many developing education systems, American Sāmoa's new graduates are often recruited into newly created or "turn over" administrative and specialist positions, thus leaving many special education classrooms still without a qualified teacher.

Other systemic problems have an impact on the special education teacher shortages too. While there is minimal self-initiated teacher migration from special education to general education, special education teachers have been recruited with some reluctance to fill positions in general education-teaching classrooms. Additionally, American Sāmoa does not have a pool of substitute teachers and special education teachers are often drawn away from their classrooms for an extended period of time to meet the general education teacher shortage. Setting aside the illegality of this practice, such actions send a discouraging, second-class-citizen message to the community about students and individuals with disabilities. In the meantime, external factors such as population growth and higher identification rates continue to add to the critical shortage of qualified teachers in classrooms and programs.

Preparing Teachers of Students with Low Incidence Disabilities

While the dual preparation strand addresses the training needs of teachers working with students with mild to moderate disabilities, it is not designed to address the more specialized training needs of teachers who work with children with severe or low incidence disabilities. Overall there are thirteen recognized disability areas, each with its own specialized body of knowledge; specific teaching materials, equipment, strategies; and set of recommended practices. For example, students who are blind or deaf must have specialized equipment to read or obtain information from the printed page of a history or science book. In addition, they must have specialized equipment in order to demonstrate to the "seeing or hearing" teacher what they have learned. Curriculums also

must be adapted—obviously a reading program based on a phonetic approach is not the most beneficial curriculum for a child who cannot hear. In this case, adaptations may include different curriculums or reading programs that are based on a visual approach.

School districts also need credentialed support staff in related service areas such as physical and occupational therapy, assistive technology, health and medical services, psychological and assessment services, social work and counseling services, and speech and language services. Certification in each of these areas demands intensive training that the dual preparation strand of the cohort program is not designed to accommodate.

Good faith efforts have been made to recruit qualified personnel but the district is not competitive in compensation, and while the lure of island living does draw some certified professionals to American Sāmoa, their stay is often limited and the search for qualified staff must be resumed. Thus increased investment in local personnel living in American Sāmoa is preferred. Yet not all interested American Samoan teachers are able to leave their families to pursue lengthy specialized training in a specific disability area. As a result local, special education certification programs for special education teachers are being developed.

Currently there are three special education local certification programs in operation: one for assistive technology teachers, one for assessment specialists, and one for speech and language teachers. A fourth certification program for teachers of the blind has been implemented. Each program consists of one to two hundred hours of instruction with additional hours of fieldwork. The curriculum is organized into modules and is usually conducted on island, though some work has been completed in small classes in Hawai'i. Instructors in each of the certification programs must hold an advanced degree and national certification in the specific content area.

Local teacher certification programs are not meant to replace national certification programs, and graduates are encouraged to apply and supported through graduate programs that offer degrees and national certification in the specific disability areas. In the meantime, the local programs have been invaluable in providing selected teachers with a set of specific skills, instructional strategies, and equipment. They have also been a source of reassurance to parents that there are trained teachers available who do have specialized knowledge and understanding of their child's unique needs.

Effects of Using Untrained Personnel Over Time

Over an extended time there has been a consistent lack of trained special education teachers, related services personnel, and certified assessment personnel in the various disability areas. This has been a tremendous hindrance to the development of appropriate special education programming

in American Sāmoa, and for many the underlying causes of poor academic learning has gone undetected. For many years, with no credentialed assessment personnel to determine ability, achievement, and the extent to which the disability interferes with learning, special education placements were almost exclusively based on reading achievement. Typically a general education classroom teacher would identify students who were reading either one or two grades levels below grade level or who tested in the lowest percentile of their class in reading scores. These students were placed in a target group and were to receive additional assistance from their general education classroom teacher along with special education personnel support. If, after one year, the student had not improved, he or she was placed in a special education class. This singular diagnostic approach virtually established remedial reading as the predominant special education intervention for students with mild and moderate disabilities.

Even today, many students' Individualized Educational Program (IEP) written plans are weighted towards reading goals and objectives alone and are alarmingly similar for all students. Evidence of inadequate provisions is revealed in several federal monitoring reviews reporting that goals and objectives in academic areas other than reading were lacking. Furthermore, IEPs looked 'too alike' to suggest that they were actually individualized and targeted to address an individual's unique needs.

One devastating consequence of these generic assessment and placement practices is that, for many students, their special education programming is limited to remedial reading classes alone. For example, it is not beneficial to place a student with a short-term memory deficit in a remedial reading program where short-term memory skills are required. In this case, it is only the symptom that is being addressed (poor reading), not the disabling condition or underlying cause of the poor reading—short-term memory deficit. An even more devastating effect, particularly for high school students, is that these repetitive, unsuccessful reading classes are taken in place of other important classes such as English or electives. In some high schools, credits or units earned in remedial reading classes are used to meet the four-year English requirement for graduation. Thus, for many students, two hours of potentially beneficial instruction is lost to two hours of unsuccessful remedial reading instruction. Information and learning does not come from the printed page alone and to deny a student access to other classes where learning through discussion can occur in order to attend hours of remedial reading classes is irresponsible and ineffective educational programming.

While the ASDOE is to be applauded for introducing a comprehensive reading program that brings with it comprehensive teacher training and identical resources to village schools across the island, it should be noted that it is a single approach and there are no alternative approaches for students

who are failing in this program. Relegating children year after year to a remedial reading program as the predominate special education intervention fails to address any underlying disorders. Remedial reading classes alone are not the answer. Parents often ask, "Why do we allocate so many resources and spend so much money and time identifying students when what is offered to them is a remedial reading class?" They are right to ask this question. Good special education programming is not a double dose of remedial reading classes.

Inclusive education creates change

Setting aside for the moment the various acknowledged social, religious, educational, and cultural explanations for why a child has a disability, the truth is that there are children (as well as adults) who learn differently. One thing we do know for sure, however, is that children learn from other children—perhaps even more than they learn from adults. It is tremendously motivating—socially, emotionally, and academically—to look like your friend, talk like your friend, and be recognized by your friend. Separating children with disabilities from children without disabilities does a disservice to both and the special education division is to be applauded in its efforts to move from an educational model that isolated children to an inclusion model that brings all children together.

Of course, adults do have anxieties that the needs of a child with a different learning style may have a negative influence on classroom activity and learning. But not only has the multiply intelligence theory (Gardner, 1993) shown that all children have different contributions to make to classroom learning, the children themselves have learned, and have taught the adults that they do not change just because of who sits next to them in the classroom. The beliefs of a person who sits next to you in a meeting does not singularly change your beliefs and the child who sits next to your child in class does not singularly change your child's approach to learning. In fact, we find that children learn a great deal by helping each other. One of the most powerful learning tools, and a tool that is used in many educational settings to increase retention, is to teach another person what you know.

Research shows that placing children together who are at different levels of ability increases their chances of learning more than placing children together who are at the same ability level. We all learn differently, at different rates, at different times, and according to our different intelligences. Placing children in a classroom with age-appropriate peers, in spite of all the variety within the group, is self-affirming and educative. But inclusion inevitably places new demands on administrators and teachers.

Schools need to make structural adaptations such as ramps for wheel chairs, allow specialized equipment to be readably available in the classroom, or even accept books on

tapes in the classrooms for the non-readers. Personnel at all levels need to accept the challenge of making schools functional for all children. This may include new and sometimes expensive equipment that needs to be located in a secure place and made readily available. While the special education department is responsible for purchasing these items, all administrators need to offer their assistance in finding space for children to use the equipment and space to store the equipment securely when not in use. Available space for special education students becomes even more important as children with more severe disabilities are returned to their village schools. Not all of these children will be in full-time general education classes, and so the question becomes, "Where will their small group instruction be conducted?" The resource room at Matafao Elementary School has proven to be an excellent way to accommodate students who spend time in both general and special education programming.

Successful inclusion also requires training for general education teachers. The general belief that special education students are not members of their class and are the responsibility of the special education teacher alone is damaging and contributes to the students' sense of exclusion. General education teachers need training to understand the goals and objectives of placing special needs students in general education classrooms. It is important, for example, for them to understand that children are sometimes included in general education programs for socialization, while others are included for instruction. A child may not be able to read at grade level; nevertheless they may be able to comprehend the content discussed in the history class or the social studies class. Specialized equipment and personnel are available to assist non-reading students in obtaining the content from textbooks. Activities such as class projects, group discussions, plays, and field trips make important contributions to learning of all students. Schools and classrooms are already very accommodating of students with mild disabilities. However, the increase in numbers of students with moderate to severe disabilities returning to their village schools will create more challenges.

Successful inclusion also requires the community to change their thinking. To be excluded by your peers because of well-meaning, yet uninformed, adult perceptions that special education students should be protected effectively perpetuates isolation. Such thinking keeps the child from learning, from participating, and from coping with and adapting to their world. In the long run, it deprives them of some of the fulfillments of childhood and of the opportunity of learning to function as an adult with other non-disabled adults. Life long dependency can be eliminated with education and appropriate actions. Thus, if the inclusion initiative is to succeed, the special education division has an important role to play in educating administrators, teachers, and parents about the importance of inclusion for special education students as well

as other students and the community as a whole.

Questions of success and sustainability

Is special education in American Sāmoa failing? Not at all, and in fact when our service delivery system is compared to systems on other South Pacific islands, we excel. But can we improve? Of course! Special education procedures and policies that are clearly written and aligned to the newly adopted federal laws need to be available to families, teachers, and administrators. Also, the IEP process—the formal process that drives identification, placement, and services to special education students and their families—needs a thorough review. These two efforts alone will go a long way in assuring equity and quality across American Sāmoa for all children.

Much has been said about the influences of a mainland or "westernized" system on American Sāmoa's systems and culture. There is strong support for each side of the discussion about whether these influences are harmful or helpful—probably the real answer to this persistent debate is somewhere in between these extremes. But if we hold true the sociological theories that purport that the education system of a country is one of the most important systems to hold, to advance, and to pass on the culture in which it operates, then the debate is very important and needs to be taken very seriously. Yet where is a board of education that can help educational leaders hear what families, ministers, community leaders, and business people really want for our next generation? While a board of education to some may be yet another "westernized" construct, does American Sāmoa offer its families other options for developing an open forum for discussion, for real representation, and for some resolution of appropriate school policies and procedures?

More than any other group, families with individuals with disabilities need to have a voice, a voice that will be heard. Their interactions with the local education leaders are understandably different from families with children who are not disabled. Yes special circumstances are necessary, yes special equipment is necessary, and yes school buildings need some redesigning. Yet the federal government allocates additional funding for programming for children with special needs: money to pay for special education programming is not taken from the general education budget. With all this in place, it then falls on all people to consider different ideas, to consider a change in their perceptions, to consider changing their action, to consider changing their beliefs of who can learn and who cannot. These changes toward accepting all children equally into our schools, into our community, and into our culture speak to the integrity of the whole population.

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Lost in Translation: Transcending the Boundaries of Critical Literacy in American Sāmoa

by *Yuriko C. Wellington*

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Introduction

This article describes how four Samoan teachers used critical literacy in their classrooms after they first encountered the idea in a children's literature course that I taught over a five-week period in Sāmoa in 2005. My course description reads

This seminar will focus on reading adolescent and children's literature with a 'critical eye.' Texts encode cultural values, and it's possible for readers to step back, weigh those values on the balance of their own experience and knowledge, and to question, and sometimes reject, the version of the world encoded in that book. Our goal is to gain new understandings about these issues and to teach ourselves to see the political and ideological dimensions of literature.

In a routine typical of the first day of class, students took time to introduce themselves and share their goals for learning. They were all avid readers who looked forward to reading a wide variety of literature and engaging in classroom discussions. A short time after the first reading was assigned, students began to question themselves, their identities, their cultural norms around education, and their positions as teachers in a system that accorded them "residency" but not citizenship in the United States.

Analyses of student reflections and discussion transcripts show the conflicts encountered by American Samoan teachers when the ideological frameworks of the teacher education program and the professor challenge the accepted teaching and learning frameworks of the community and the institutions they work in. Findings strongly suggest that purposeful mediation of these conflicts is crucial to the continued success of these Samoan teachers.

Historical Background and Problem Statement

For the past three years a growing community of scholars around the country have engaged in research and dialogue about the pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices of pre-service and in-service teachers who have participated in a teacher education program where multicultural pedagogy is embedded in the university pre-service and professional development curriculum. The Multicultural Teacher Education Pedagogy Project (MTEPP) is a pan-geographic, multi-disciplinary dialogue initiated

to develop a network of educators and researchers who will engage in multi-site, longitudinal studies of the outcomes of multicultural teacher education on K–12 classrooms. The MTEPP initiative began as an email dialogue in response to shared concerns expressed by junior faculty of color across the country, and quickly grew to its current pan-geographic, multi-site configuration through grass-roots organization. The project facilitates cost-effective planning and development of multi-site collaborations by using existing educational organizations such as the American Anthropological Society (AAA), National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and American Educational Research Association (AERA) to bring together potential collaborators.

Since 2003, a total of eleven events have taken place at annual meetings of AAA, NAME, NCTE, and AERA drawing a combined audience of over 400 people. Sessions on research in multicultural education have included scholarly papers and poster presentations on related issues. This "conference within a conference" model has helped to promote cost-effective interdisciplinary networking and dialogue, and has facilitated the development of a pan-geographic meta-dialogue.

MTEPP appeals to a diverse group of scholars, with one common interest: the design and implementation of longitudinal research on the K–12 outcomes of multicultural teacher education. While these scholars maintain their allegiance to other research and professional endeavors, they are bound together by a commitment to discuss matters of common interest in the area of multicultural teacher education. Small and large group conversations have evolved that have stimulated the development of collaborative groups ready to explore a formal multi-site, cross-disciplinary, longitudinal research design. To date, seven multi-site, cross-disciplinary collaborative research teams have formed and, as a result of these dialogues, are in the process of implementing their respective longitudinal research projects.

MTEPP selects one topic each year from among several issues in multicultural teacher education as the subject for an interactive symposium designed to facilitate an interdisciplinary dialogue on multicultural pedagogy involving scholars from many different counties. This article draws on my interest in one of these focus topics—the

emerging issue of professional development programs for in-service teachers: What is the impact of multicultural teacher education pedagogy when professional development is taken “on the road?”

Increasingly the trend is for professional development courses for teachers to be offered in non-traditional settings. This is particularly the case for programs designed to be culturally responsive to specific groups and contexts within the U.S. Such programs are often created to provide constructivist, culturally responsive, and critical curriculums to countries like Mexico, Iran, American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Philippines. Thus, multicultural teacher education has come to encompass teacher education in multicultural, multilingual, multinational settings as well as working with immigrant and minority communities within the U.S. This raises the questions—“How are multicultural pedagogical practices such as constructivist teaching, inquiry groups, study groups, socio-cultural frameworks for teaching and learning, community-based schooling, action research, and critical literacy perceived? And what experience do teachers gain from these courses?”

Theoretical Framework and Connection to Literature

The increasing diversity in our nation’s schools highlights the importance of educating teachers for cultural awareness and sensitivity (Zeichner, 1999). National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards have also motivated many institutions to include some sort of multicultural perspective to teacher preparation to keep in step with the changing demographics of school populations in the U.S. Increasingly, teacher educators are adopting multicultural and social justice stances within their own curriculum. Cochran-Smith (2003) identifies three primary needs related to the future directions of scholarship in multicultural teacher education:

- ❖ the need for studies linking theory and practice in multicultural teacher education;
- ❖ the need for a cost-effective vehicle for multi-site research programs that capitalize on the natural laboratories of variations in courses, programs, and arrangements; and
- ❖ the need for outcomes research in multicultural teacher education—research that examines the links between multicultural teacher preparation and what prospective teachers learn, what they do in their classrooms, and what, how, and how much their pupils learn.

The call for outcomes research in multicultural teacher education has been made in many discussions of the literature (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Grant & Secada, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Sleeter, 2001; Zeichner, 1999). As a

result, it has become a major goal of MTEPP to encourage the development of formal research collaborations for cross-disciplinary, multi-site longitudinal studies of outcomes related to multicultural teacher education pedagogy.

This article explores the impact of multicultural pedagogical methods on teacher professional development and in-service teacher education. It offers documentary accounts of the experiences of four educators from American Sāmoa who implemented critical literacy units developed as part of a five-week professional development course. These educators created their own thematic unit plans with an emphasis on critical literacy. Their units explored the implications of literacy practices in their own classrooms and teaching. Each teacher describes her efforts to change the curriculum to include critical literacy and social justice issues.

Cultural Identity in a sixth grade classroom

Donna Vaitu’utu’u Achica-Talaeai is a sixth grade teacher at Matafao Elementary School in American Sāmoa. The following narrative describes Donna’s experiences in implementing a critical literacy (Shor, 1999) unit focused on identity.

First and foremost, as one of my culture’s strength is in its salutations, I would like to say a few words in the language of Sāmoa: Tālofa (Hello), Afio Mai (Welcome), and Mālō fai o le faiva (What a blessing that we are all here today).

My unit was implemented in a class of thirty sixth graders. These students are presently living in a Samoan society that is undergoing rapid change, and this is having a direct impact on their lives and surroundings. These students identify themselves as Samoans, yet they are still in the process of developing their sense of identity. Culture involves a specific pattern of societal lifestyles shared by many people, but these Samoan students need to learn the values of being an individual and of belonging to a unique people. The thematic unit that I developed engaged students in the exploration of Samoan and Hawaiian cultures. It looked at how life in both societies has changed over time. I chose these two cultures because of the various similarities that they share and the differences that make them distinct.

Initially, students had difficulty understanding some aspects of Hawaiian culture. Similarities between Sāmoa and Hawai’i interested them, but the differences confused them. At first, they didn’t believe the things they were being introduced to in the unit plan. For example, although both of these cultures use taro as a daily staple, Samoan students couldn’t understand how taro could be eaten as poi. The thought of poi wasn’t appealing at all to them because of the familiarity of how food is prepared in their own culture. On the other hand, the recognition of cultural similarities in clothing led to an understanding of possible connections.

Modern aloha wear seemed very similar to Samoan modern wear. Students began to see how fashions were connected, and they began realize that some of the styles Samoans have acquired are borrowed from Hawai'i.

Students' questions indicated that cultural sameness and difference were important in developing their understanding of Samoan and Hawaiian culture. For example, they asked, "Did Samoans and Hawaiians live together some time in the past?" "Do Samoans look like Hawaiians or do Hawaiians look like Samoans?" "Why is it that many of our customs are similar but our languages are very different?" "How come the Hawaiians are slowly losing their culture, can we help save it since we have similar customs?" In response to the final question, I asked my class how they might help support the survival of Hawaiian culture. This question has opened their minds to the issue of preventing the loss of a culture so similar to theirs and of the threat to Samoan culture.

One of the important lessons Donna learned as she implemented her unit was that the notions of sameness and difference were predicated upon prior knowledge. For example, when asked to draw pictures of Sāmoa and Hawai'i, students generally responded with stereotypical representations of Hawai'i.

One of the most valuable activities that I observed during this unit was a brainstorming activity that involved words and pictures. I would say Sāmoa and then Hawai'i and allow a few minutes for the students to draw pictures that they identified with each of the terms. For Sāmoa, the majority of the students drew pictures of coconut trees and Samoan fale (traditional houses), but for Hawai'i the majority of students drew pictures of pineapples, plumeria leis, and ukuleles.

As a result of this exercise, Donna decided to modify future instruction to include more opportunities for her students to engage in authentic activities to learn about Hawaiian culture. She considered student cultural exchanges, and extended cultural studies.

It is valuable for students to become familiar with the practices of other cultures so that they are able to appreciate their own culture and what makes it different. They also need to interpret relationships between various events in the past and present so they understand the forces that have shaped their identities and so that they can take this into consideration in making decisions about the future. Students need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of major ideas, people, events, and turning points in their own culture as well as in other places such as Hawai'i.

Exploring the theme of individuality with first graders

Faleula Sappa teaches first grade at Aua Elementary School. Her students come from a variety of socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. This narrative describes how Faleula used literacy instruction to help build on individual student strengths and support the development of positive self-concept.

My unit also focused on individuality. I feel each student is unique and has different strengths and faces different challenges. Over the years, I noticed that many students were unable to be successful in school because of their preoccupation with personal issues. Often, challenging experiences outside of school led to students' development of a poor self-image. I believe that it is my duty as a teacher to use literacy instruction to help students build on their strengths and bring out their good qualities.

My unit also focused on individual identity through reading, writing, language arts, and social studies with first graders. I chose the topic of divorce and single parenting because this was an experience that many students shared. Two stories from our local library at Utulei were used: "Arthur and the 1,001 Dads" (Brown, 2003) and "Mama and Daddy Bear's Divorce" (Parkinson, 1998). The class spent one week reading each story, and responding through literature discussion. Then, each student created a family album by drawing pictures and writing about them. On the final day of the unit, students shared their albums.

Through reading aloud and reading the text, the students were able to make personal connections with the stories and share their personal experiences in their journals, drawings, and paintings. Sometimes they created a diorama or poster; sometimes they engaged in role-playing. Because the majority of my students are Samoan first language speakers, I use a lot of visual cues, like pictures, models, and role-playing to help my students better understand directions and assignments. I often have to translate parts of the lesson into their native tongue. The students were able to relate these stories to other stories they had read in the past through classroom discussions and through sharing with a partner or in a small group. They connected the stories to events around the world by bringing in newspaper clippings and adding this to their timelines or presenting them in front of the whole class. They loved hearing their own voices as they read into a tape recorder or shared books they brought from home or from the library.

Parents and administrators were very supportive of the learning activities in our classroom. They visited when they could, spending hours reading aloud to my students, and helping them with their assignments. On one evening, the parents came and sat in the classroom as if they were

students while I taught. They enjoyed the lesson and gave me favorable comments.

Connecting with the stories and sharing their feelings made my students feel important. The highpoint arrived when they were given the opportunity to perform their ideas in front of the school—sometimes in front of other classes or in front of their parents. I put their writings up around the classroom for all to see. It made them feel proud of who they are. It also made them appreciate where they come from and gain an understanding of where they might wish to go in the future.

By incorporating reading, writing, and talking about personal experiences into the discussion of literature, Faleula provided students with the opportunity to connect their lived stories to the stories in books. Connecting with characters who have positive identities in books allowed students to see themselves and their circumstances in a positive light. By including parents and other community members in the unit activities, she provided opportunities to extend the discussion beyond the classroom. She allowed students to develop stronger and more lasting impressions as unique and valued individuals within the classroom, family, and community. At the same time, by engaging in discussions about social issues with her students, Faleula was forced to examine her own identity and self-image.

There are things in my life that I am not proud of, but I have come a long way. I have learned from my errors, and it has made me a better individual, a better teacher, a better parent, a better wife, a better daughter, a better sister, a better aunt, a better friend, and a better student. Likewise, every one of my students is unique. Regardless of their personal characteristics or circumstances, they are special. Connecting to personal experiences through critical literacy allows them to learn, to accept who they are, and to become successful in school as well as in life.

A Lesson in Racism

Liza Sauni teaches third grade at Coleman Elementary School. After reading a book about Jackie Robinson, students became concerned about the poor treatment that he had received as the first African-American to have the opportunity to participate in the major leagues when he played for the Brooklyn Dodgers. The following narrative describes how Liza introduced the topic of racism -- a term that is not used in Samoan culture.

My unit plan focused on having students understand the concept of racism through their reading of literature and storybooks. This issue captivated the students when they read "Teammates," a book about Jackie Robinson (Golenbock & Bacon, 1990). Students asked, "Why are people so mean?

Who gave them the right to treat others cruelly?"

I taught the unit to twenty-six third graders in Coleman Elementary School, engaging them in writing and reading reflections, group discussions, community book clubs, think/pair/share activities, and many other activities that connected them with problems related to the issue of racism. Technology was also used so that the students could do research and find information about the topic discussed. I designed an integrated unit so that in addition to reading and writing, social studies, art, science, health, and Samoan studies curriculums were also covered. By looking at the issues of slavery and racism within the context of US history, students were able to make connections with Sāmoa's history and tie these ideas to recent developments and with what is happening in the Pacific today. The goal was to provide students with the opportunity to make meaningful connections to self, text, and world.

The overall objective of Liza's unit was for students to understand the concept of racism. By exploring events in Samoan and world history, and comparing them to the events characterized as racism in the book about Jackie Robinson, students were able to develop empathy for injustice in Samoan society even though it was not characterized as "racism." The challenge for students was to critically examine their own culture and acknowledge the inequities that may exist.

Reading the Word and the World

When Aua Elementary School second grade teacher Denise J. Ah Sue incorporated critical literature discussions into her classroom, she was frustrated to find that students resisted the invitation to respond openly to questions and pose opinions of their own. The cultural expectation that children strictly obey the teacher and never disagree made it difficult for students to openly share their opinions and feelings, especially when there was the possibility of differing points of view. Using the frameworks developed by McDaniel (2004) and McLaughlin and DeVogd (2004), Denise developed a unit to build comprehension skills using specific critical literacy strategies.

My critical literacy unit was divided into three sections. The first section focused on building background knowledge by introducing four critical literacy strategies—alternative texts, character perspectives, setting switching, and gender switching. The second section focused on deepening students' understanding by having them use the critical literacy strategy of problem posing. This strategy helps students deepen their understanding by taking a critical stance towards issues of equity present in the children's literature. The third and last section focused on applying what was learned, by having students create their own class version of the story, *The Three Little Pigs*. The class-constructed

story aimed to highlight the lessons they had learned from the critical literacy strategies.

The main challenge that was faced during the implementation of the unit concerned the students' abilities and willingness to question, which plays a big role in taking a critical stance in critical literacy. The reason behind this difficulty is twofold—culture and lack of confidence due to low self-esteem. Children in the Samoan culture are usually expected to be “seen and not heard.” It is the belief of our culture, that this is one of the critical learning stages of a child where he or she is to observe and take in what is to be learned. Serving the elders without question is considered a form of respect. This aspect of the culture, I believe, plays a big part in hindering students' ability to ask questions. Lack of confidence due to low self-esteem also contributes greatly to the students' ability to question and take a critical stance.

Critical literacy versus critical consciousness

Critical literacy, as a multicultural pedagogy, holds much promise for enhancing the literacy skills of American Samoan students. At the same time, as American Samoan teachers begin to embrace new pedagogical practices, deep reflection about the impact of these new practices on the “culture of the classroom” becomes necessary. As Donna Achica's case illustrates, the development of multiple perspectives requires the development of multiple knowledge sets in order to accurately identify similarities and differences. At the same time, engaging in discussions about social issues with students forced Faleula Sappa to examine her own identity and self-image. As she expresses it in her own words

I was not expecting to think, write, and talk about these topics in a teacher education course, but now I realize how important it is to do my own reflection before I can help my students to reflect on the difficult issues in their lives.

The challenge for Liza Sauni's students was in critically examining their own culture and acknowledging the inequities that may exist within it. As one teacher education student in American Sāmoa wrote, “The word ‘discrimination’ is not used here, but discrimination is everywhere. It's hard to introduce a topic like racism into the curriculum when we don't have that concept in our culture.” For these teachers in American Sāmoa, successful curricular reform, as reflected in their students' increased participation and motivation to learn, was tempered by the ongoing challenges of discontinuity between the expected cultural behaviors children brought to the classroom and the new ways of interacting that the critical literacy units engaged.

Denise Ah Sue's experience highlights the challenges encountered when teaching strategies developed for one culture are introduced into the classroom settings of another

culture. Transcending the cultural boundaries embedded in traditional classroom expectations became the central component to the successful use of critical literacy strategies in her American Samoan classroom.

Critical literacy practices embody not only the inclusion of multiple perspectives toward the text, but also increased transaction between the teacher, the reader, and the text (Rosenblatt, 1978) in the co-construction of new knowledge. Each of the teachers profiled in this article embarked on the critical literacy units to expand their students' world perspectives and critical understanding of texts. However, as our study of critical literacy in the classroom proceeded, each teacher encountered conflicts and discontinuities in their own consciousness. As critical literacy students, they began to challenge their own culture, and question conceptions of authenticity as they became more and more adept at “reading against the grain” and resisting the culturally engrained impulse to accept all “teacher knowledge” as primary. They experienced the same challenges that led their students to open up issues of cultural authenticity. As they engaged in reflection and dialogue, they began to recognize the necessity of transforming their own perspectives as classroom teachers, and mediating their own cross-cultural conflicts before they could successfully integrate critical literacy into their classrooms.

Conclusions and implications

Teaching and learning is context-driven. The literature on this point is well established. As teacher educators seek to encourage the use of critical pedagogical practices in classrooms, it also becomes necessary to provide time and space for teacher self-reflection, self-examination, and the process of reconstruction of identity as self and teacher. These processes are the key to successful integration of the new pedagogy into the K–12 classroom. Classroom teachers need to understand the underlying knowledge required to engage in critical dialogue. They also need to learn that the development of these knowledge sets needs to precede the implementation of some critical literacy strategies. However, as teacher education becomes more and more global, it becomes critical to re-examine fundamental issues such as language as a hegemonic practice in schooling, the conflict between state and traditional policy, perceptions and beliefs about teaching and multicultural pedagogical practices, and the underlying value of social justice.

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An Indigenous Approach to Teacher Preparation for American Sāmoa

by Salusalumalo S. Hunkin-Finau



In his address to the annual conference of the International Samoan Language Commission held at the American Sāmoa Community College on June 2005, the deputy head of state of Sāmoa (previously called Western Sāmoa), His Excellency Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi, delivered a profound message to the people of American Sāmoa *“Ne’i vale tuulima lou tofi—beware that you do not carelessly lose your birthright or heritage.”* In the context of his message the word *“tofi”* was used to refer to language and culture—a God given gift that emphasizes the responsibility of every Samoan to their Samoan heritage.

This admonition, from an important government and culture leader from Sāmoa, was delivered in the face of increasing pressure on the people of American Sāmoa to become more and more Americanized. Sāmoa, once known

as Western Sāmoa, has been an independent state since 1962. In contrast, American Sāmoa, formerly called Eastern Sāmoa, was ceded to the United States in 1900 and is administered as an unincorporated territory of the United States. His Excellency’s message, however, suggests that there could be a heavy price to pay for the material prosperity that American Sāmoa enjoys as a result of its ties with the US. In addition, his warning reminds Samoans of their duty to preserve the unique heritage of Samoan language and culture.

Material prosperity is largely a result of Samoan participation in the United States cash economy and the life-style changes that many American Samoans have embraced—changes that include western attitudes toward work, leisure time, and vacation. The importance of this

economic value to the region is worth stating. The currency exchange rate between the two Samoas is approximately one U.S. dollar to three Western Sāmoa talas. Extensive inter-country travel confers some of the advantages of the high value of the United States dollar to Western Sāmoa. For example, the Sāmoa News (June 2005) recently reported that the Independent State of Sāmoa's economy plummeted when over 5000 potential travelers from American Samoa did not travel to Apia between April and May 2005. American Samoans did not travel at this time because of additional immigration restrictions set by the American Sāmoa government.

In spite of the changes which 100 years of Americanization have produced, the American Sāmoa people overwhelmingly identify themselves with their culture. They are proud to be Samoan; they are committed to the *fa'a-Sāmoa* or the Samoan way of life; they want to keep their communal land system and their *matai* system (chieftain kinship); they want their children to learn and perpetuate their language and culture; and they want to preserve their "*tofi*" and keep it alive and well for future generations. The desire to balance American ways with the unique values that make up the Samoan sense of identity presents important challenges to the people of American Sāmoa.

In this article, I wish to explore how this problem has permeated the educational system, especially raising important questions about how we should prepare teachers in our community. If one of the vital responsibilities of the public schools of American Sāmoa is to transmit the culture, language, and values of its society, then it is important that the people who teach in the schools are properly prepared to discharge this important task.

Data collected over the years on student academic performance in Sāmoa's schools, and the pressures placed on our indigenous way of life and language, warrant a renewed look at the process by which Samoan teachers are prepared. This is particularly important given the two-fold responsibility with which the American Sāmoa community has charged its schools: to offer all students rigorous academic preparation to access the American way of life locally and abroad; and to perpetuate Samoan language and culture. Over the years, the teacher training programs in American Sāmoa have attempted to provide for bits and pieces of these expectations. Given that the teacher training program had been conducted solely in the context of programs of education offered by U.S.-accredited universities, perhaps it is time for Samoans to rethink the ways that teachers are prepared. If Samoans are serious about preserving and not carelessly throwing away our "*tofi*," perhaps we need to recognize the important role that teachers play in the preservation of our Samoan heritage.

Brief Background on the Islands and People of Sāmoa

The eastern islands of Sāmoa, commonly called American Sāmoa or Eastern Sāmoa, are an unincorporated and unorganized territory of the United States administered by the United States Department of the Interior. American Sāmoa is the only United States territory in the South Pacific and has been since the late 1800's when the Samoan islands were divided into two political entities—the other larger islands of Savaii and Upolu being allocated to Germany.

The population of American Sāmoa is about 60,800 people, of which 89 percent is of Samoan ancestry. The median age is around twenty-one years and 47.9 percent of the population is under twenty years old. For most residents, Samoan is the native language and English is spoken as the second language. It is estimated that about 61 percent of the territory's residents live at or below the poverty level with 44 percent of households earning less than \$15,000 a year. Virtually all public school students (99.4 percent) are eligible for free/reduced school meals.

Some Background on Teacher Education in American Sāmoa

The American Sāmoa Department of Education (ASDOE), or the public school system, is comprised of six high schools, twenty-three elementary schools (K–8), and a pre-school division that serves three- and four-year old children. The ASDOE provides private and parochial schools with the federally subsidized school lunch program and transportation. The local department of education serves approximately eighteen thousand students from pre-school through grade twelve.

About eight hundred local Samoan teachers provide instruction for all of the school age children in American Sāmoa from the early childhood centers to high school. A handful of teachers are hired from other states such as Western Sāmoa and India. These foreign teachers fill the need in particular for science and math teachers. Persistently low achievement scores of students on standardized test has been blamed in part on the lack of qualified teachers in public schools. As Roy Fua (2005) points out,

The achievement gap between American Sāmoa students and their stateside counterparts continue to widen. Ninety-five percent (95%) of local 4th graders lack the basic Math skills in 2000. Only marginally better, 93% of local 8th graders lack basic Math skills and up to 95% lack basic Science skills.

In response to these years of low academic achievement in the public schools and the ongoing problem of the shortage of qualified and certified teachers, the American Sāmoa Community College has developed a new Teacher Education Department to address ASDOE's need for more teachers.

Directed by an experienced educator, Roy Fua, the American Sāmoa Teacher Education Department received a \$1.2 million federal grant to provide approved course work to develop teachers' skills in teaching methodology and knowledge in the content areas. However, the Teacher Education Department does not require teachers to be skilled and knowledgeable in Samoan language and culture.

Prospective teachers in Sāmoa, who wish to teach in the government schools and private schools, are generally required to complete a two-year liberal arts degree in elementary education through the American Sāmoa Community College. They then complete their third and fourth years in a program offered locally by the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa. Usually, teachers work on their program of studies in their spare time by taking their required courses in the evenings or during the summer months. Teachers who are employees of the American Sāmoa Department of Education receive free tuition to obtain their third and fourth years as University of Hawai'i cohort students. This teacher preparation program is a part of a three-way agreement between the American Sāmoa Department of Education, American Sāmoa Community College, and the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i. This program is known as the Territorial Teacher Training Administration Program or TTTAP and has existed since the mid-1980's.

According to the American Sāmoa Department of Education, less than 30 percent of public school teachers in preschool to grade twelve have teaching certificates. Sixty to sixty-five percent have not earned a baccalaureate degree. Of the 394 Elementary teachers, only 23 percent have baccalaureate degrees while 77 percent have only a two-year degree (Fua, 2005).

Thus, one of the critical problems in American Sāmoa, in addition to the shortage of teachers, is that a large percentage of those teaching have not completed a four-year degree. The shortage of fully trained teachers raises questions about quality in content area knowledge and level of understanding of teaching methods and pedagogy. To compound the problem, the program designed and developed to train local teachers makes no provisions for teaching Samoan culture, language, and values—an omission that is astonishing given the socio-cultural background of the students and the important role that culture plays in Samoan society. Although the TTTAP program is field-based and occurs within the familiar milieu of the school and community, the program focuses predominantly on providing student teachers with practical experience in the classroom. It is not designed to provide knowledge of, and pedagogy in, Samoan culture. Further problems arise because of the high attrition rate—teachers who have completed their 4-year program often seek work outside the teaching profession where they can find jobs with better pay and working conditions.

Essentially, the problem is one of divided aims. Although American Samoan society values the idea of bilingualism and biculturalism, its teachers are bound by an education system that promotes, and is heavily oriented towards, English and western values. Outside of their professional work, Samoan teachers live as Samoans in the community; inside the schools, they employ English and operate within a system that is tied to western values. This over-emphasis on English and western values can be resolved easily by amending local laws to ensure that Samoan language and Samoan culture have equal importance in our government and community. Secondly, ASDOE should revise its English-only policy to embrace bilingualism and biculturalism. This action would have a profound and beneficial effect. It would, of course, require considerable changes to be made to the system and involve reforms in curriculum, professional development, and teacher preparation.

Sāmoa is not alone in experiencing an absence of indigenous culture and values in its education system. Hosia and Penland (2005, p. 5) had this to say about similar education problems in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI):

Although community members in RMI have clearly articulated a desire for a balanced education...there continues to be a disproportionate emphasis on academic education... We have left behind a vast majority of our children who choose to remain in our communities. We have failed to provide opportunities for them to learn cultural knowledge that is essential for survival in this island community.

Samoan teachers who have been trained to teach western academics to Samoan students without first becoming proficient in the pedagogy of their indigenous language, culture, and history and who have not been trained to integrate their indigenous way of life into classroom activities only perpetuate Sāmoa's education problems—the achievement gap and the low level of academic scores of students.

Training Samoan teachers in exclusively western academics is likely to miss an important part of the education of Samoan teachers. It also teaches them implicitly if not explicitly, that indigenous ways are unimportant and that such subjects don't matter. This has the further undesirable consequence that teachers are not professionally prepared to help students learn, value, and come to understand their Samoan identity. Thus teachers are not equipped to help students explore the role that Samoans can play in a global world; they are unable to teach important Samoan values such as communalism, reciprocity, and mataihip. This is not to argue that learning western academics is unimportant, but that these goals must be embedded in and responsive to the goals of the Samoan community.

Bartolomé (1994, p. 230) eloquently expresses the danger of technical solutions to the problem of the schooling of

immigrant children—that finding a solution to problems of education is simply a matter of finding the right method.

The solution to the problem of the academic underachievement (of culturally and linguistically diverse students) tends to be constructed in primarily methodological and mechanistic terms dislodged from the socio-cultural realities that shape it.

The same point can be made of Samoan education—solutions to problems tend to be drawn from outside rather than inside, from the American system rather than from practices that embody Samoan ways of knowing.

Juanita Rilometo (2005, p. 14) argues that renewal is a matter of community involvement:

Education...is firmly rooted in the cultures of Pacific societies...The main purpose of education in the Pacific is the survival, transformation and sustainability of the Pacific peoples and societies. Teachers must recognize the importance of using learning outcomes firmly rooted in cultural identity and local knowledge.

In short, our local approach to teacher preparation has continued to replicate methods and systems of teacher education designed more for the residents of Orange County, Tacoma, and even Honolulu than Samoans. Konai Thaman (2005, p. 12) in her poem “Realities” describes the frequent disjunction that many Samoans feel about western education and Samoan culture:

I see my teacher
Sitting on a sterile rock
Near the beach
Selling green coconuts
What do I do now?
An old man close-by whispers,
“Come fishing with me today
For you have a lot to learn yet.”

American Sāmoa has dutifully followed the example of American education for over a century. As a result, the main thrust of education in Sāmoa has been directed to the Americanization of the islands, the people, and their way of life. Paradoxically, Samoans view being American as liberating, different, and yet disconnected from their day-to-day lived experience. Unfortunately, the local education system has not developed a well-organized and planned Samoan language and cultural curriculum to teach many of the essential skills required to function fully in Samoan society. For example, they do not teach the Samoan oratory skills required to become a talking chief. They do not teach the leadership skills and performance expectations necessary to become a

chief’s wife—someone who will be responsible to lead the village women in carrying out the customs and traditional ceremonies important to the *fa’asāmoa*. These are the realities for Samoans that Konai Thaman alluded to in her poem.

Samoan students have not learned how to read the same stars that our ancestors once used to navigate their voyages in the Pacific. They have not learned how to fish the Samoan way, weave mats, build canoes, or identify the correct leaves for making Samoan medicines. Sadly, many Samoan students are illiterate in their indigenous language and ignorant of many of the important practices and values of their culture. As Juanita Rilometo (2005, p. 14) points out

Traditional Pacific island societies’ ways of teaching and learning are integrated within family and community life. Youngsters learn through listening to words from the mouths of their elders—observing, imitating, and engaging actively. Through active engagement, we learn and internalize...a child having firm cultural connectivity has a good self-concept and the confidence needed to perform well in school and in life, no matter where he or she goes...this is the desired learning outcome of...education.

Dr. Hilda C. Heine (2005, p. 4) reminds us of the importance of providing an indigenous education for Pacific islanders:

The focus on creating ownership and making education an integral part of families and communities cannot be overlooked in Pacific communities. That ownership starts with schools and teachers building on the knowledge learners bring from home, honoring the language they bring to the school, and connecting learning to contexts familiar to them...Across the region, schools are experiencing high student absenteeism and high drop out rates. Students seem to be disconnected from the schooling process. The value of relationships, which has such an important place in the livelihood of Pacific people, is ignored in school.

Perhaps it is fair to say that the experience of American Sāmoa over one-hundred years of following the traditional pattern of American education, aimed at replicating what is the norm in the United States, has failed to produce the kind of Samoan students that our community so desperately needs today—those who can face the challenges of Sāmoa in the twenty-first century. The education system in Sāmoa has essentially alienated Samoans from their indigenous ways—the values, language, culture, and sense of Samoan identity—by excluding indigenous knowledge from the curriculum and from the preparation of Samoan teachers. For this reason, I believe it is important to restore a more indigenous approach to the preparation of teachers in American Sāmoa—one that builds on Samoan values, language, and perceptions of the world in their relation to western academics and thinking.

Samoan teachers should be proficient in English but they should also be proficient in their indigenous language. They should be familiar with Samoan cultural practices and have an understanding of local needs. Programs of teacher preparation, then, should make a substantial commitment to teach Samoan language and integrate indigenous ways of knowing into the teaching of the arts and sciences. This would be the most straightforward approach to making this important change for local teachers. However, we also need to re-think the content, structures, and requirements of teacher preparation to reflect a sense of Samoan ownership and community and to include Samoan ideas and aspirations.

I believe that it is important that Samoan teachers should spend part of their first year of teacher training learning their language as a language of instruction—especially for those who teach children in preschools and elementary schools. Teachers should also learn how Samoan children are raised and socialized in the Samoan community as part of their coursework in psychology, human development, and theories of learning. Samoan teachers should learn the traditional Samoan arts as well as Samoan views on the environment, politics, and social issues as a foundation on which to build other subjects that are taught in the schools. Values unique to Sāmoa, such as the Samoan ideals of communal living, mataiaship, kinship, and reciprocity, should be taught as part of the coursework of teacher preparation programs. In addition, Samoan role models should be invited to participate in the schools with the aim of developing closer ties between the school and the community.

Ignoring the importance of Samoan culture and language and its contribution to the preparation of our public school teachers is a serious omission. It excludes vital elements that should be a part of our indigenous reforms that are vital in determining their own future—the demand for educational relevance, individual self-worth, community support, and the self-reliance of the Samoan people. Samoans should not be educated in isolation and apart from the rest of the world, nor should they continue to be educated as if they were not Samoan. The failure to integrate Samoan values, traditions, and needs into the education of teachers is completely contrary to the conviction that Samoans, with their unique cultural traditions, are also a part of the global world.

Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2005, p. 6) insists on the need for local solutions and a plurality of approaches in the processes of teacher preparation:

“Teacher preparation” and “teacher education” are neither monolithic nor unitary pursuits. To the contrary, even in the face of tightly specified policies, teacher education is enacted in ways that are highly local—embedded in the multiple and changing context of the local institutions and regions and subject to the interpretation and social interactions of the individuals and groups.

Similarly, Judy Abrams and Julia Ferguson (2005, p. 64) affirm the importance of cultural sensitivity and an understanding of home cultures in the knowledge base of teachers and other educators, particularly those concerned with teaching ESOL students, who comprise the vast majority of our public school students in Sāmoa: “Cultural values are part of every language learners’ profile...when teachers and administrators acknowledge, understand, and value different cultures, they can help ESOL students adjust without losing the home culture.”

If American Sāmoa wants to educate globally-minded, productive, intelligent, and committed Samoans who are prepared to successfully navigate their community through the complex shoals of the twenty-first century while remaining firmly grounded on their “*tofi*,” teacher preparation must adopt elements essential to an appropriate indigenous teacher preparation program. Varghese and Stritikus (2002, p. 84) make the case for “culturally responsive instruction, which focuses on creating conditions in classrooms and schools that integrate students’ needs and culture; and a critical pedagogy, having students raise questions about their own immediate conditions and identify ways to transform these conditions.”

As His Excellency, Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese, stated in his 1976 address at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji

I am convinced that for far too long we have imitated and inherited imported forms of development, life-styles, ethics, dress, thinking...Over the years these have taken a heavy toll of the vitality of our own ways, of our pride in our inheritance and of our self-confidence and self-respect...I am equally convinced that...we must rediscover and reaffirm our faith in our values—the vitality of our past, our culture, so that we may develop our own uniqueness, our own ways of doing things, our own solutions to our problems.

I firmly believe that Samoans want to keep their “*tofi*,” and I also firmly believe that an important step that American Sāmoa can take to preserve this heritage is to prepare teachers to become stewards of our culture.

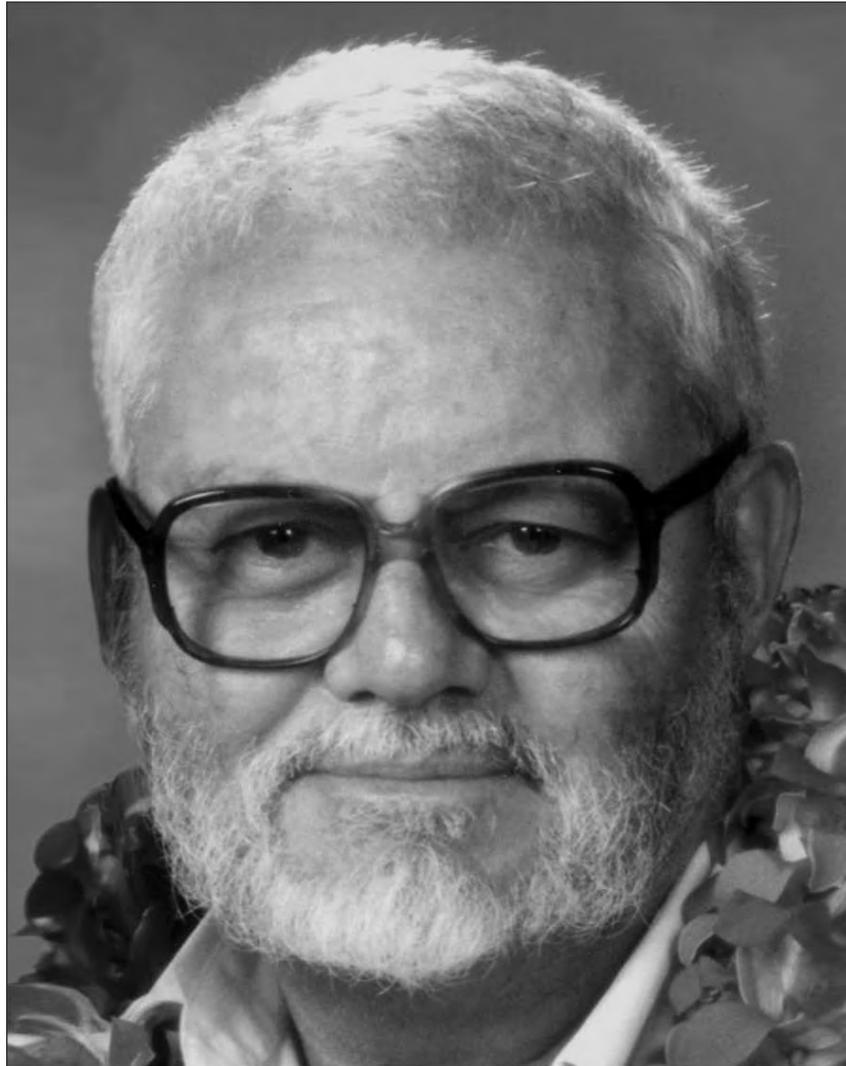
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Frank Brown 1929 – 1998



Frank Brown served as a faculty member in the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa from 1967 to 1992. Frank was born in Boston, Massachusetts on May 29, 1929. After high school he enlisted in the US Marine Corp and saw service in Korea during the Korean War. After a period in the marines, he returned to full time education as a student of American literature and history at Boston University, receiving his BA in 1957.

Frank arrived in Hawai'i in September 1957 with the intention of pursuing a master's degree in English. However, he took on some part time work as a substitute teacher at Waipahu High School and enjoyed the experience so much that he decided to change his major to education and become a teacher. While working at Waipahu as a long terms substitute teacher he met Michi Okinaka, who also taught English, and they married in June 1958. As they were living

in Kaneohe at the time, Frank and Michi transferred to the Kailua High School English department. In 1963, he obtained his MEd in secondary curriculum and social studies education. Frank and Michi moved to the University of Indiana in Bloomington in 1965 so that he could pursue his doctoral studies in curriculum theory and social studies education. At the same time, Michi completed work for a master's degree in education. He successfully defended his dissertation in 1967. Frank and Michi then returned to Hawai'i so that Frank could take up his duties as an assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education.

Frank brought a strong sense of commitment and dedication to his work with beginning teachers. As a university instructor he became closely associated with teaching one of the college's foundations courses (EDCI 312) to prospective secondary school teachers. He viewed this course as an important introduction to the profession, and he aimed to give it his special attention and effort. As an experienced secondary school teacher, his approach to college teaching was eminently practical. He quickly began to change EDCI 312 from a lecture format to one that enabled students to experiment in small groups with a variety of teaching strategies. In this class they learned to prepare and implement lessons, evaluate lesson plans, and offer constructive critiques of lessons taught by classmates. Frank took every opportunity to involve his students in realistic, practical settings, and he taught EDCI 312 for several years at Kaimuki High School and Farrington High School so that his students could connect college theory with classroom practice. He remained committed to field-based teacher education throughout his career and in his final years in the college eagerly embraced the opportunity to help launch the new Master of Education in Teaching (MET) program with a group of students at Kailua High School—one of the first MET partner schools. This gave Frank the opportunity to do what he loved to do—work closely with student teachers in the field.

Frank served from 1985 until his retirement as the graduate chair in the field of secondary education. His dedication to university and community service is seen in the numerous committees that he served on and frequently chaired. He volunteered regularly to serve on accreditation teams for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Frank is probably best remembered for his work as the college's director of American Samoan projects. He began working in partnership with the American Sāmoa Department of Education (ASDOE) in 1970. In 1978 he was appointed as the director of the American Sāmoa Teacher Corps Project. As the director of the Teacher Corps Project, he coordinated all the necessary paper work for teachers who had completed their two years at American Sāmoa Community College (ASCC) and were ready to complete their third

and fourth years to obtain BEd degrees from the University of Hawai'i. His duties involved reviewing transcripts, getting applications for admission, lining up a schedule of required courses and coordinating the summer session for the cohort at Mānoa. He also had to coordinate courses for teacher corps students at ASCC. From 1981 till 1994 Frank administered the teacher education contracts funded by Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Program (TTTAP). He set up the original program and provided it with its organizational structure. The purpose of TTTAP has been to upgrade the quality of teachers in the ASDOE, and the success of the program is evident in the hundreds of Samoan teachers and administrators who have been assisted by it.

Frank had a great deal of love for the people of American Sāmoa as well as a great love of teaching, and he indulged both in his frequent visits to American Sāmoa in his capacity as director. Always innovative, he set up the very first lab school where teachers could work with and observe children and then discuss their observations in their teacher education classes. He truly loved Sāmoa and had many close friends there. He also supported the Samoan community in Hawai'i. On one occasion he was called by one of the schools in Hawai'i about a 'problem student' who happened to be Samoan. He worked with this student over many years and became an adopted member of his family in Sāmoa.

Frank mentored most of the MEd candidates who earned their degrees in the curriculum and instruction program. He also served as chair for four doctoral students—Salu Hunkin, Seth Galea'i, Trudie Iula Sala, and Faauma Seui. Salu Hunkin, who was his graduate assistant, writes that "In Samoan, when we make friends and those friends become like family, we use the expressions *uō māmāe* and *uō pele* which mean beloved friend—Frank was an *uō māmāe*, *uō pele* to his Samoan students." She felt privileged to have worked with him in setting up the Teacher Corps Project and the first TTTAP cohort. Frank had a high regard for Samoan culture. He encouraged his students to excel in their academic work, but he also looked for ways that Samoan students could share their culture and traditions with others. Moreover, he helped them adapt what they had learned in their college classes so that it could be more effectively translated into the Samoan situation.

After Frank retired, he continued working with children in Hawai'i, by representing the interests of children involved in judicial proceedings, many of them the victims of abuse and neglect, as their guardian ad litem.

The Frank Brown Scholarship Fund has recently been established at the College of Education with a generous donation from Michi Brown. The aim of the scholarship is to support graduate students in education, particularly Samoan students in recognition of Frank's love for the Samoan people and culture and his work to support teacher education in American Sāmoa.

About the Authors

Donna Vaitu'utu'u Achica teaches at Matafao Elementary in the central area of American Sāmoa. She has been a teacher for 10 years. She loves to work with the community and is presently the secretary for the Board of Directors of the American Red Cross American Sāmoa Chapter. She teaches part-time at the American Sāmoa Community College. She has a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Hawai'i and is currently enrolled in the UH MEd program.

Denise Ah-Sue is a demonstration/mentor teacher for the University of Hawai'i Summer Lab School in American Sāmoa. She has taught at Aua Elementary School since August of 2000. She was recently admitted to the UH PhD program in curriculum and instruction and will start this coming fall. Her interest lies in teacher action research with respect to critical literacy and its place in the primary classroom.

Tupua Roy Alo Fua is department chairperson of the Teacher Education Department at American Sāmoa Community College (ASCC). He has BS and MEd degrees from Oregon State University. He spent ten years working in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) where he was appointed the Northern Marianas College Provost of the School of Education. In 1999, he returned to American Sāmoa and was hired by ASCC to help launch the Teacher Education Program. In October 2002, he was awarded a U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) Grant.

William Greene is an associate professor of education and department chair in the School of Education at Southern Oregon University. His current research focuses on teacher development, middle level education, and exploring spiritual and dimensions of teaching and learning. He has taught education courses for the University of Hawai'i in Hawai'i and in American Sāmoa. Greene co-directs the Teacher Education for the Future Project in the Pacific Circle Consortium.

Donna Gurr attended Fia Iloa Elementary and Sāmoana High School in the village of Utulei, until her family moved back to Redondo Beach, California in 1974. She graduated from Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, California. She has a BA in liberal arts, an elementary teaching credential, and an MA in education with an emphasis in curriculum and instruction from California State University, Long Beach. She began her teaching career in American Sāmoa in 1983 at Pava'ia'i Elementary School. She has also served as a teacher resource center coordinator, an elementary vice-principal and elementary principal. She was principal of the University of Hawai'i's Laboratory School in American Sāmoa. She currently heads the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability.

Peggy Haleck is the principal investigator and project director for the Territorial Teacher Training Assistance Project (TTTAP) in American Sāmoa. She began teaching in American Sāmoa in 1973 as a social studies teacher for the educational television (ETV) system. In 1975, as the ETV system was being dismantled, she began working as a curriculum specialist in the area of elementary social studies education. She received her PhD in educational psychology from the University of Hawai'i in 1996. Upon her return to American Sāmoa, Dr. Haleck joined the TTTAP team as a cohort coordinator, leading the first cohort through their studies.

Salusalumalo Hunkin-Finau is the former president and dean of academic affairs of the American Sāmoa Community College. She was recently contracted by the American Sāmoa Department of Education to direct the Language and Literacy Unit of the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability. Hunkin-Finau received her EdD from the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa. She worked for the Hawai'i Department of Education for a number of years and currently serves as an adjunct graduate faculty for the College of Education, UH-Mānoa, and Chaminade University.

Lisa Vaivao Ino teaches in a self-contained fifth grade class at Matafao Elementary School in American Sāmoa. She earned her bachelor of education degree from the University of Hawai'i and plans to complete her master's degree in curriculum studies from UH in the fall of 2006. Her professional and research interests include integrating technology for struggling readers and writers, and conducting professional development for language arts teachers.

James Kneubuhl received his MA in English at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Since 2000, he has lived in American Sāmoa, where he currently serves as communications officer at the American Sāmoa Community College.

Steven Lin is the library director at American Sāmoa Community College. He is interested in research on library planning and the new technologies that apply to information delivery services. Dr. Lin currently serves on the of board of directors of the American Sāmoa Feleti Barstow Public Library, the ASCC President Advisory Committee, ASCC Land Grant Program Advisory Council, and the ASCC Staff Development Review Committee.

Kate Moran is a graduate of Michigan State University with a PhD in special education administration. For the past five years she has been a consultant to the Special Education Division of the American Sāmoa Department of Education helping to develop school and community programs. She also works with the cohort program teaching, advising, and supervising special education teacher-candidates who are enrolled as dual preparation students.

Siamaua Ropeti is a fifth grade teacher at Masefau Elementary School in American Sāmoa. She graduated with a BEd from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She is currently a graduate student in curriculum studies, and she hopes, once she completes her master's degree, to be admitted to the PhD program and conduct research on students' first language use in the American Sāmoa educational system.

Faleula Aoelua Sappa teaches at Aua Elementary School on the east coast of American Sāmoa and is chairperson of the social studies committee. She is a graduate of the University of Hawai'i and is currently a graduate student in the MEd program. Her research interests focus on ways of helping elementary school readers and writers who are struggling.

Liza Afaese Sauni teaches eighth grade at Lau'ii Elementary School located in the eastern district of American Sāmoa. She is currently enrolled in the MEd program at the University of Hawai'i, where her research focuses on multicultural education. She has been the social studies chairperson in the last two schools she taught at.

Paul Tauiliili is a field supervisor and cohort coordinator with the University of Hawai'i cohort program in American Sāmoa. Before working in the cohort program he was a classroom teacher of mathematics. He taught at Marist Brother's High School, a catholic all-boys school, and for a short period also served as career counselor. After that he taught middle school mathematics for 4 years and served as the mathematics curriculum committee chairperson for 2 years.

Yuriko C. Wellington is an assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of Hawai'i. She teaches graduate level courses in qualitative research methods and undergraduate courses in multicultural education and English language arts. Her scholarly research focuses upon anti-racist, multicultural education and social justice.

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