Toward a Theoretical Framework for Educational Aid and Teacher Education within the Pacific Region

Greg Burnett[1]

Abstract

Educational aid projects delivered into the Pacific region from a rim country such as Australia are commonly informed by a range of competing discourses including: altruism, need, self-interest and accountability. Drawing on one example this article critically reflects on how educational aid might ethically position itself in relation to these discourses as well as respond to criticisms of aid from within some sections of the Pacific education community. Reflections include the importance of: quality relationships; negotiation of epistemological, cultural and other differences; self-determination; globalisation; and quality teaching and learning. Possible metaphors to guide educational aid towards its goals are suggested. Reflections cover two dimensions: the administrative aspects of partnering and other relationships contingent on successful educational outcomes; and quality teaching and helping students to arrive at a self-determined approach to teaching congruent with local identity and aspirations. Overall, a framework emerges that may provide guidelines for further educational aid delivery in the Pacific region.

Keywords: aid; consultancy; education; Pacific; teachers

---

[1] Senior Lecturer, School of Education, The University of the South Pacific, Fiji, email: burnett_g@usp.ac.fj

Educational Aid, Self-interest, Altruism and Need

The aid project under critical reflection was designed to deliver an initial teacher education (ITE) programme in Nauru in the Central Pacific (Serow, Taylor, Burnett, Sullivan, Smardon, Tarrant, & Angell, 2014). From its planning and inception stages in 2013 the initiative has been influenced by a number of discourses typical of educational aid projects in the Pacific region. An Australian university, operating in an extremely competitive Australian tertiary education market contingent on international student enrolments (Marginson, 2011) has entered into a relationship with the Nauru government's Department of Education. Emerging from this relationship has been an identified need for localised Nauruan teacher preparation to off-set very high numbers of expatriate teachers (Collingwood, 2014, p. 28; Republic of Nauru, 2009, p. 31 and 2011a;), as well to meet the requirements of a recently introduced teacher registration process with a view to higher levels of quality teaching (Government of Nauru, 2011). To conduct the project the university and the Nauruan government have obtained funding from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which has not long absorbed Australia's foreign aid initiatives (AusAID) into its sphere of influence, thus aligning aid more closely with foreign policy. Accordingly, more than ever before self-interest sits awkwardly alongside altruism in Australia's aid program. Evidence for this can be found in the "four tests that guide strategic choices" (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2016) for delivery of aid stated by Australia's DFAT itself. Australian development assistance must not only "impact on promoting growth and reduce poverty", but "pursue our national interest and extend Australia's influence"; "reflect Australia's value-add and leverage"; and "make performance count" (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2016). This move by Australia to align its aid programme more closely with its own self-interest is likely linked in this case to Australia's very controversial ties with Nauru as a site for its own offshore refugee processing (Gleeson, 2016; McAdam, 2014; Triggs, 2014; among many others); relatedly, Nauru's own economic fragility after the depletion of its phosphate reserves and diminishing investments in which Australia has been implicated (Cox, 2009); and a degree of Nauruan political instability in close geographical proximity to Australia's often called "arc of instability" to its northeast (Anyon, 2007).

Towards a Framework

A nuanced framework, therefore, is needed in response to the complexities of the educational aid delivery environment marked by the mixed discourses of altruism, self-interest and need outlined above both in Nauru and in the wider Pacific region. Certainly projects such as NTEP find a mandate in the very recent UN *Sustainable*

Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015). SDG Four, for example, specifically states "the need to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers … through international cooperation for teacher training … especially in … small island developing states". However, much more needs to be done to anchor such projects amid the competing discourses identified as well as negotiate a long history of what critics from within the Pacific regional community argue have been aid projects that disempower (Sanga & Taufe'ulangaki, 2005). Educational aid, nearly always from Australia and New Zealand has been criticised specifically from within the Pacific region for its tendency to disengage recipients through its densely bureaucratic processes and accountability regimes and, as mentioned above, to serve donor economic and security interests (Sanga & Taufe'ulangaki, 2005).

A framework is needed that also sets educational aid within the complexities of a Pacific education policy debate that has long emphasised the centrality of cultural difference and scepticism of exogenous educational influences in the region for the disruption they bring to local knowledges and ways of knowing (Petaia, 1980; Taufaga, 2007; Taufe'ulungaki, 2003; Teaero, 2007; Thaman, 2009; among others). See for example, the many expressions of Pacific education and epistemological reclamation such as Thaman's *kakala* (Thaman, 2009), Maua-Hodges' *tivaevae* (Te Ava, 2014) and others within the *Vaka Pasifiki* collective (see, for example, Toumu'a, 2014) and its previous iteration, the *Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative* (see, for example, Pene, Taufe'ulungaki & Benson, 2002). See also the *Pacific Education Development Framework 2009-2015* (Forum Ministers, 2009) and its "Cross Cutting Theme: Language and Culture" (p. 16). Based on *Pacific Plan* objectives this theme seeks to ensure "the cultural values, identities, traditional knowledge and languages of Pacific peoples are recognised and protected" (p. 16).

Closely related is the fraught nature of quality teaching in the region and what that might look like specifically in Nauru. Gaiyabu (2007) notes Nauruan learners' "individualism submerged by the need to respect authority" (p. 258) and how from a "Western view this inhibits children's capacity to take responsibility for their own learning" (p. 258). Individualism and learner responsibility are key elements in constructivist views of learning widely embraced in Australia and New Zealand. Gaiyabu (2007) argues that "If individual responsibility for one's own learning is considered a valid direction in which to move in Nauru", then it will need to be via a "slower process, which respects for cultural traditions … with support from critical friendship … by those who have a deep knowledge of the culture" (p. 258). A framework for ethical educational aid such as NTEP needs to carefully respond to Gaiyabu's (2007) "if" as well as show sensitivity in leading quality teaching in this direction should it be deemed appropriate.

Critiques of Aid within the Pacific Region

Emerging from the above discursive aid environment is a set of counter discourses authored within the Pacific education community that has critically responded to dominant Australian and New Zealand aid initiatives. This resistance culminated in a landmark 2005 conference on educational aid in the region hosted by the *Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative* (Sanga, Chu, Hall & Crowl, 2005; Sanga & Taufe'ulangaki, 2005). Key requirements of aid emerging from this conference include: the capacity of aid project personnel to speak the Pacific vernacular of the place the aid is delivered in; a deep understanding of the culture of the site the project is implemented in; the employment of people with familial or friendship connections with the site the project is implemented in; among other similar traits all hinging on cultural difference between donor and recipient. However, while there is much from Sanga et al's (2005) critique to heed by aid project designers, there is also an element of culturalism that needs to be considered when re-formulating how educational aid in the Pacific should be delivered. Culturalist discourse, in its more extreme manifestations, hinges on monolithic and reductive views of Pacific cultural difference (Burnett, 2007, 2008, 2009) and tends to resist expressions of culture that are evolving, dynamic and socially constructed (Doherty & Singh, 2005; Llohsa, 2001; Meredith, 1999; among others).

Educational aid in the Pacific, such as the current example, needs to recognise Pacific cultural difference without essentialising it. Provision of aid needs to concede to a dynamic, constructed sense of Pacific culture but at the same time, enable local self-determination over the direction in which both the aid relationships go as well as the notions of what quality teaching looks like in a Pacific context, and more specifically in this case the Nauruan context.

Additionally, provision of aid must recognize a level of resentment and scepticism among Nauruan teachers resulting from what Gaiyabu (2007) argues, has been constant change and instability in the education sector over time. This resentment arose in the mid-1990s primarily due to political instability in Nauru rather than any real sense of cultural incongruence felt among Nauruan teachers over outsider involvement. Indirectly, as a result, through constant change in government, there has been a steady stream of "outside experts" (p. 256) encouraging the adoption of new educational initiatives. Project personnel are mindful that their presence in Nauru is merely the latest in a very long line of nearly always Australian and New Zealand aid and consultancy organisations and individuals seeking to provide educational solutions. Since 2013 when the project started, there have also been substantial undertakings in schools by a range of Australian and New Zealand

education-related organisations (These include Cognition NZ, the Queensland Educational Leadership Institute, Connect Settlement Services, Brisbane Catholic Education and Save the Children) in the areas of: teacher professional development; leadership advising; curriculum area advising and a range of smaller short term consultancies by individuals in areas such as: teacher well-being; child protection; TVET strategic planning and sector-wide education planning.

Project Relationships and Quality Teaching

A framework therefore is required to address at least two dimensions of the project. Firstly, the way in which the project enacts its multi-faceted relationships (Sullivan, Serow, Taylor, Tarrant, Angell, Burnett, & Smardon, 2017) in response to the competing discourses of educational aid mentioned earlier. These relationships are between the Australian university and Nauru's Department of Education; between both and the schools that are needed to partner with to deliver ITE; as well as between these and other educational projects and initiatives in-country. The set of relationships also incorporates: Nauruan students (both pre-service and in-service) and their families with academic support; particularly but not confined to the unique supports provided by the project on the island. Secondly, is the way in which the project addresses the perceived disruption to local knowledge and ways of knowing mentioned earlier. A framework is needed to guide what quality teaching might look like on Nauru, including the students' responses to the educational ideas, particularly the socially constructivist views of teaching that flow into the project's study centre via the units and the academic supports they receive. This dimension needs to also address the "Pacific Focus", so named and central to the teaching degree the Nauruan students are completing.

Educational Relationships

Anae (2010), in the context of Pasifika education research in New Zealand, has proposed the Samoan concepts of the *va* and *teu le va* to guide the development of quality relationships between all involved in the research process. The *va*, meaning "the sacred space" (p. 12) that exists between researchers and researched and *teu le va*, meaning "to nurture" and "to tidy up" (p. 12) that space, can also be applied to educational relationships more generally, including those of teaching and learning at all of its levels. In terms of quality teaching and learning relationships in the specific context of Nauru, the terms *amen bwiõ* (relationship), *egade* (culture) and *aeo pwidu* (contribution) best approximate the Samoan *va*. These concepts form the basis of the *Nauruan Social Science Syllabus* (Republic of Nauru Education Department, 2013) strand of learning called "social living" (p. 4) but can be applied more widely to the

sorts of relationships the project has sought to foster. A mindful attempt has been made to develop and nurture the *va* in its multi-faceted relationships primarily between in-country and on-campus lecturers and the Nauruan students, but also between the various interest groups such as student families, the Nauruan community, key personnel in the Ministry of Education, schools, their principals and staff. The "weddings, funerals everything" support role of the two in-country support lecturers has been crucially important in this regard. This support has ranged from explicit teaching in some units of study through to facilitation of learning in others.

This role has extended far beyond that of standard tertiary teaching and learning relationships to encompass much in the personal lives of the Nauruan students, including the birth of children, marriage, the death of family members, key milestones such as first birthdays of children, first communions, and 21st birthdays. It includes participation in community events along with everyday car conversations, whilst transporting students to and fro – largely facilitated by Nauruan student generosity and through living together in the very small island community over the more than two years of the programme.

Closely linked to quality relationships mentioned above is the possibility of openness to new understandings – about teaching and learning and how to teach well. As mentioned before, there is a long running scepticism in the Pacific region of outsider educational ideas, especially as they come through consultancies and aid. Dening (2004), however, in the context of his work as a Pacific historian, explains to his postgraduate research students that they should not consider footprints in the sand of their beach as evidence of "trespass", but instead "signposts" to be read and interpreted (p. 259). In response to this explanation, the Nauruan students have been encouraged to be critical as they encounter signposts about teaching and learning – adopting, modifying and rejecting ideas they meet in the programme. The project concedes that the students, especially those who are in-service, know closely the aspirations of Nauruan families and their community, and are thus in a position to decide critically on the value of what they are learning to meet those aspirations.

Indeed the beach as a metaphor for educational aid more generally is apt. The beach has long been a place in the Pacific region where locals meet strangers and where the new and the pre-existing meet. The beach, as metaphor, helps explain the complexities of people's lives in globalising times and the necessity and desire to engage with difference. Dening (2004) argues that the beach symbolises the 'edginess' of identity construction and reconstruction whenever Pacific peoples meet strangers and strangeness – often European strangers and strangeness. The core of

the aid project beach has been the designated study centre, a spare classroom at the Nauru Secondary School. In this space daily for the two and a half year duration of the programme, encounters with differences have been played out. These differences include but are certainly not limited to those between: *Iburbur* lecturers and Nauruan students; English and Nauruan languages; social constructivist pedagogies and more directed local pedagogies; the rigid structures and efficiencies of an Australian tertiary institution and the relative looseness of Nauruan sociality and time management.

The ideas of Thomas (1991) further elucidate the beach metaphor and help theorise what the project has attempted. Thomas argues that objects that have always crossed the Pacific beach are "entangled objects" meaning they never come with their purpose inscribed (Thomas, 1991, p. 108). We might also include here: values, dispositions, and from an educator's point of view, knowledge, skills, pedagogies and epistemologies. Certainly, education is not a material object in the sense that Thomas would have it, but the point is the creative response of Pacific people who engage with it – a response that is not always in the spirit in which it is authored by non-Pacific providers. As the Nauruan students have encountered new learning about teaching, there has never been any guarantee as to how that learning has been received and incorporated into existing or emerging personal philosophies of teaching. The project has needed to accept a Nauruan autonomy to either accept, reject or modify ideas as they crossed the study centre as the beach.

In constructing Nauruan students as critical consumers of educational ideas, the project moves beyond the culturalism that tends to bind Pacific learners to either being colonised or re-indigenised. The ideas of Pacific sociologists Hau'ofa (2008), Herrman (2007) and Teaiwa (1995) form a useful basis for the way the project has attempted to frame its students. In terms of Hau'ofa, the Nauruan students take on a role resembling Hau'ofa's Tongan friend flying high above the lines of latitude and longitude between multiple homes in Fiji, Tonga and the US, resisting the deadly discourses that bind him to just one place or another. Similarly, the project has attempted to enact relationships with the Nauruan students that do not bind them to an overly simple choice between being advocates for a re-indigenised Nauruan identity as some Pacific commentators have stressed or uncritical receivers of Western educational ideas on the other hand. In terms of Teaiwa (1995), the distinction she makes between her own Pacific *roots*, meaning a sense of place (elsewhere in the Pacific the *vanua, whenua, enua, fonua, etc.),* and *routes,* meaning an engagement with the world and its diversity (socio-cultural mobility and globalisation), offers a loose framework for the Nauruan students to base their personal philosophies of teaching on. In the Nauruan students' case, an education

where the knowledge, values and dispositions of *bwiδ*, a concept relating to land and belonging, very similar to concepts like *vanua* and *whenua* in the Pacific, sit alongside those of the global and the transformative historically attributable in the main to wealth from mining. In terms of Herrman (2007) there is resonance with the notion that education is for "all times" where the past and future are considered equally important in the identity formation and development of children through formal schooling. Herrman's point is that outsider interventions into Pacific education often over-emphasise technological futures at the expense of the identity affirming past, evidenced in the often heard catch-cry of education for "new times" particularly in relation to literacy teaching (see, for example, Luke, 1999 and in the Pacific region, Low, 2007).

Quality Teaching and Learning

What then are the teacher preparation practices that emerge from a theoretical base that emphasises such elements as: the liminality of the "beach"; roots and routes; Nauruan teacher agency and self-determination; and critical engagement with new ideas? At the project's most basic, there are a number of key elements at this level of the framework. These include the importance of Nauruan language in both the learning of the students and the emphases on language the students make as teachers of literacy in their own classrooms. A number of key Nauruan education documents support the teaching of Nauruan language (see, for example, Republic of Nauru Education Department, 2012). However, as Barker (2012) outlines, a full embrace of Nauruan language in schools on the island and in the wider community is fraught for several reasons. The first is related to agreed upon language conventions and an inability of successive language boards to implement a unified Nauruan orthography. This long running problem has meant that very little Nauruan literature exists apart from the Bible. The second is the continued encroachment of English language into spheres of Nauruan social life that were once the preserve of Nauruan language only such as the courts and church life. Barker (2007) argues that English as "bully" has caused further decline in Nauruan language, a charge that can be levelled at many communities across the Pacific region (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003).

The Despite these challenges, including an inability to function using Nauruan language, the project team has encouraged the use of both languages in class discussions within the programme itself, utilising a form of what Baker (2013) terms "translanguaging" (p. 288). This has involved high levels of educational trust between non-Nauruan speaking in-country lecturers and Nauruan speaking students in working together toward learning goals. As a result, this goes some way towards

addressing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (United Nations, 2008) when it asserts that "indigenous individuals, particularly children … have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language".

In terms of "Pacific Focus" the project has also sought to initiate its students into particular Pacific education debates involving distinct Pacific perspectives on: pedagogies of cultural difference; views of the child; metaphors for teaching; schooling's colonial roots and self-determination; education policy responses and research outcomes; and the ways in which Pacific neighbours enact schooling. Key figures in Pacific education research and debate are also examined alongside the many non-Pacific educational ideas, including the communities of Pacific education and research practice at *The University of the South Pacific*; the *Institute of Education*; the *Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative* and the more recent *Vaka Pasifiki* collective. The on-island academic support role has been instrumental in this regard by integrating the Pacific focus within the pre-existing degree content. An attempt has been made to blend university programme content, which reflects local desires for students to attain an Australian tertiary qualification but at the same time recognise Pacific epistemological and contextual difference. At times this has been a challenge and so has become a key area of the project's ongoing reflection on its own practice.

More substantively, however, the project takes as its starting point Gaiyabu's (2007) assertion that Nauruan learners' "individualism is submerged by the need to respect authority" (p. 258). This is consistent with Pacific learner subjectivity across the region, that is, that notions of the individual are subsumed by the collective. This can be seen in debates ranging from human rights (Qarase, 2004) through to debates specific to Pacific learners and education generally. Conflating learner centred pedagogies with quality teaching in the Pacific is problematic in a number of ways. O'Sullivan (2004), in the context of a UK led Namibian teacher in-service programme seeking to change pedagogical practice, could not have put it any clearer in terms of possible incongruence between learner-centredness and local culture and sociality.

> We need to bear in mind the general child rearing practices considered appropriate and legitimate by the culture in which the teacher works: For it may be we are asking a society to change its general attitude to the way all its adults interact with the children for whom they are in some way responsible. (O'Sullivan, 2004, p. 596)

This has also long been the criticism of non-Pacific educational interventions in the region by many Pacific educators (see, for example, Teaero, 2007; Thaman, 2009 and the *Vaka Pasifiki* and *Rethinking Pacific Education Initiatives* research

collectives). The project resists essentialised Pacific or Nauruan identities but concedes to Gaiyabu's (2007) "if-then" reservations concerning learner-centredness. Certainly, the university's preferred pedagogies, through its various teaching programmes, tend to be liberal-democratic and learner centred in orientation. But the Nauruan students have been urged to take a critical view of what constitutes quality teaching as they meet with these ideas. The students have been exhorted to constantly question the ideas they are being encouraged to adopt and to draw on their own intimate knowledge of adult-child relationships in the Nauruan families and communities they are integral to as teachers and, in most cases, as parents also.

There is a view also that learner centred pedagogies are more than just culturally incongruent with local sociality, but deeply geo-political also. Tabulawa (2003) argues that learner centred pedagogies, particularly when backed by formal educational aid from other governments, act as a form of democratisation of gerontocratic, chiefly or patriarchal indigenous community relations by stealth. Certainly, in the light of Australia's fears concerning the nearby arc of Pacific instability, there might be an element of truth in Tabalawa's claims. Additionally, in comparative and international education research and debate, links have been drawn between learner or child centred pedagogies, constructivism and the global spread of neoliberal ideology (Carter, 2009, 2010; Cobb, 2003; Egea, 2014; Rodríguez, 2013; Schweisfurth, 2013). There is a body of critique that likens the agential independent learner/child's relationship with the teacher/facilitator to the relationship between the individual and the state in neoliberal society more generally. In both the classroom and society, the individual becomes self-maximising in relation to a non-interventionist teacher/government. As Carter (2009) suggests, learner centredness is linked not so much to research evidence supporting claims for more meaningful and effective learning, but more so to the sort of future societal relationships advocates wish to create. Learner-centredness merely "reflects the social norms of the Western liberal democratic capitalist systems in which they arose" (p. 58).

One of many examples to illustrate, is Sims (2011) "hierarchy of rights" based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs that has at its pinnacle an individual child's right to self-actualisation, seemingly free of any social connectedness to others (see Bouzenita & Boulanouar, 2016; Gambrell & Cianci, 2003; Hanley & Abell, 2002). In other words, when constructivism and learner centredness are taken across borders of indigenous difference, the educational endpoint becomes the creation of entrepreneurial individuals for the global marketplace and a potential dismantling of long standing communal and familial ways of knowing and being. A Pacific response to the individualization of Sims' (2011) self-actualisation might be Alofa's comment to US Peace Corp teaching volunteer Miss Cunningham in Sia Figiel's (1996) *Where We Once Belonged* – "'I' does not exist, Miss Cunningham. "I" is "we" … always'"

(p. 136). To persist in Nauru schooling with an unuanced learner centredness or "liberal progressivism" as Kemmis et al (1991) have called it, might ultimately, through Nauru's future citizenry, only draw the country further into the global/capitalist orbit that historically it has fared so badly in.

In response to the above criticisms, educational aid projects might instead take a "learning centred" approach (Dyer et al., 2004; O'Sullivan, 2004; Schweisfurth, 2011) as opposed to a "learner centred" approach. Here the focus is on choices for learning itself rather than the learner. A learning centred approach (Dyer et al., 2004) grants higher degrees of autonomy and agency to Nauruan students and allows them a chance to link their future pedagogical choices with consequences based on the insights into family, community and national aspiration that only they can have as local teachers and members of the Nauru community. Reflection and discussion between lecturer and student then becomes based on a principle of: "If I teach like this then that might happen"; "If I teach like that then that might happen"; and finally "How then will I teach?". Students need to be exposed to multiple orientations to teaching and be allowed to draw conclusions as to the consequences of each in terms of not only children's learning outcomes, but the way various orientations constitute children, social relations and society generally. The multiple perspectives on teaching here reflect Kincheloe and Steinberg's (1998) "post-formalism" (p. 7) where student teachers embrace ambiguity and reject formulaic approaches to teaching. A number of typologies exist to facilitate this approach. Examples include Jones, (2013) – conservative, liberal, critical, postmodern; Kalantzis and Cope, (2012) – mimesis, synthetic, reflexivity, and Kemmis, Cole and Suggett, (1983) – vocational neo-classical, liberal progressive and socially-critical. In terms of the project's own approach to the way pre and in-service teachers learn this ushers in a socially-critical element, including degrees of "conscientization" (Freire, 1970), to their own learning and teaching and addresses any concerns that might exist over both conservative rote and liberal individualist alternatives.

The recommendation for the project then is to bring Nauruan students to a point where they make pedagogical choices knowingly based on their intimate knowledge of the Nauruan or broader Pacific community within which they live and work (Burnett & Lingam, 2007). This approach finds resonance in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, for example in Article 14 which states: "Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, *in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning*" (United Nations 2008, emphasis added). At this point Nauruan self-determination is acknowledged and affirmed in much the same way Graham Smith (2000) describes the re-assertion of Maori control over education in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the early 1980s. "Teaching and learning

settings and practices are able to connect closely and effectively with the cultural backgrounds and life circumstances (socio-economic) of Maori communities. These *teaching and learning choices are selected as being culturally preferred"* (p. 67, emphasis added). Likewise, Nauruan students, particularly the in-service students, are acutely aware of issues pertaining to Nauruan identity, culture, and family and community aspirations and so are best equipped to make a similar set of pedagogical choices. It is fundamentally important that educational aid interventions in the Pacific constitute their students as active, professional and knowing participants in the development of their own teaching and learning repertoires. In-country lecturers and other project support staff struggle to understand the important issues of Nauruan identity, aspirations and sociality to the same degree. These ideas find resonance elsewhere in the Pacific in Gegeo & Gegeo-Watson's (2007) "critical praxis" in the Solomon Islands where children are prepared for either village or modern post-school life chances "whatever the outcome of their schooling may be" (p. 322). There is also resonance in Willinsky's (1998) orientation to education more generally in a former Empire that affords learners "a view in the rear-view mirror" (p. 251) of learning that has divided the world. Put more simply, this means critically reflecting on the past and/or commonly accepted approaches to teaching and then making links with potential consequences for teaching in that way.

Figure 1. Quality Educational Relationships and Teaching – a Framework for Educational Aid in the Pacific Region
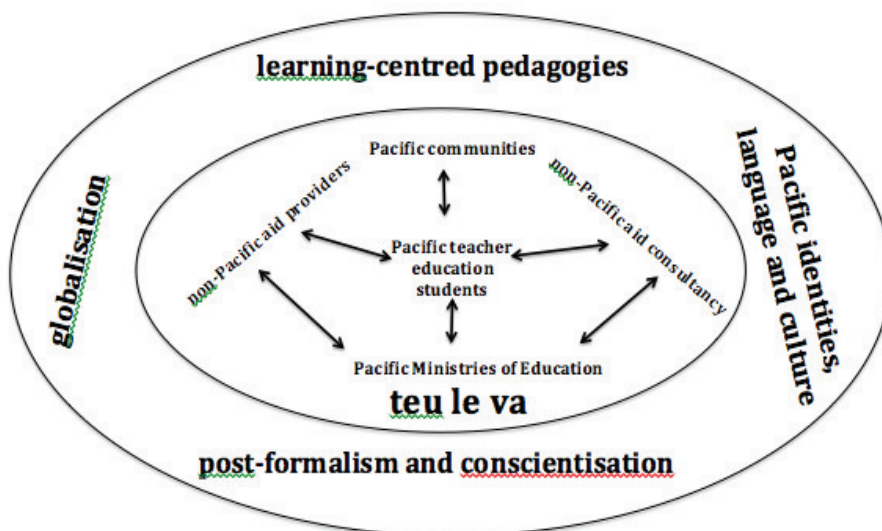
Source: Author

Conclusion

The role of teacher in Nauru is critical for an uncertain future where phosphate mining has long since ceased to sustain the country economically and Australia's off-shore refugee detention centre can only ever be a short term economic fix, an ethically dubious one at that. It is this uncertainty and the competing discourses of altruism, need and self-interest that have initially influenced the formation of the project. The two-part framework discussed above (see Figure 1) that places emphasis on educational relationships and critical approaches to pedagogy makes it possible to work within such discourses. The framework encourages a critical perspective from Nauruan teachers as educational ideas have "crossed the beach", including both Pacific and non-Pacific ideas and theorists. Such ideas and theorists are Thomas's (1991) "entangled objects". Without purpose inscribed, Nauruan students invariably accept, reject or modify ideas as they are encountered, thus working toward their own unique repertoires of teaching. These repertoires are based on local teachers' intimate knowledge of Nauruan family, community and national aspirations. The framework outlined above for educational aid seeks to promote teacher self-determination through a "learning centred" philosophy or orientation. The project has also sought to initiate teachers into the debates and research, in particular Pacific education debates and research, which in turn encourage an agential teaching self. This will enable Nauruan teachers to continue working toward an effective set of local pedagogies consistent with UNDRIP's (United Nations, 2009) Article 14 which asserts the right of Indigenous people to teach and learn in a first language and in a manner consistent with local cultural practices and values. Such a set of pedagogies can only emerge in the light of local teachers' intimate knowledge of family, community and national aspirations. This in turn affirms Nauru teacher professionalism.

References

Anae, M. (2010). Research for better Pacific schooling in New Zealand: Teu le va: A Samoan perspective, *MAI Review, 1*, 1- 25.

Anyon, R. (2007). The 'arc of instability' and Australia's strategic policy, *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 61*(2), 215-231.

Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (5th edition). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Bouzenita, A., & Boulanouar, A. (2016). Maslow's hierarchy of needs: An Islamic critique, *Intellectual Discourse, 24*(1), 59–81.

Burnett, G. (2007). "Culture Isn't What It Used To Be": Problematising Pedagogies of Cultural Difference in Pacific Education, *Social and Economic Studies, 56*(1&2), 261-276.

Burnett, G. (2008). Language Policy Work and Teaching: Complicating Pacific Language Communities. In J, Dorovolomo, C.F. Koya, H. Phan, J. Veramu, & U. Nabobo-Baba, (Eds.), *Pacific Education: Issues and Perspectives* (pp. 180-195), University of the South Pacific, Lautoka.

Burnett, G. (2009). Critically theorising the teaching of literacy and language in Pacific schooling: Just another Western metanarrative?, *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices*, *3*(2).

Carter, L. (2009). Globalisation and learner-centred pedagogies. *Journal for Activist Science & Technology Education 1*(1), 58.

Carter, L. (2010). Neoliberal Globalization and Learner-Centered Pedagogies: Posing Some Different Questions, *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education, 10*(3), 223-231.

Collingwood, I. (2014). *Education Sector Review, 22nd May*, Education Resource Facility

Cox, J. (2009). Nauru's phosphate mining policy, *Pacific Economic Bulletin 24*(1), 174-186.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2016). *Australia's Aid Program*. Retrieved from: http://dfat.gov.au/aid/Pages/australias-aid-program.aspx.

Doherty, K., & Singh, P. (2005). How the West is Done: Simulating Western Pedagogy in a Curriculum for Asian International Students. In P. Ninnes & M. Hellstén (Eds.), *Internationalising Higher Education: Critical Explorations of Pedagogy and Policy*, (pp.53-74), Comparative Education Research Centre: University of Hong Kong.

Dyer, C., Choksi, A., Awasty, V., Iyer, U., Moyade, R., Nigam, N., Purohit, N., Shah, S. & Sheth, S. (2004). Knowledge for teacher development in India: The importance of 'local knowledge' for in-service education, *International Journal of Educational Development 24*, 39–52.

Figiel, S. (1996). *Where We Once Belonged*, Auckland: Pasifika Press.

Forum Ministers. (2009). *Pacific Education Development Framework 2009-2015*.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum.

Gambrell, P., & Cianci, R. (2003). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Does It Apply, In A Collectivist Culture, *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship, 8*(2),143- 161.

Gegeo, D., & Gegeo-Watson, K. (2002). The critical villager: Transforming language and education in the Solomon Islands. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language policies in education: Critical issues*. (pp. 309-326), Mahwah: Erlbuam.

Gleeson, M. (2016). *Offshore: Behind the wire on Manus and Nauru*, Sydney: NewSouth Publishing.

Government of Nauru, (2011). *Education Act*.

Hanley, S., & Abell, S. (2002). Maslow and Relatedness: Creating an Interpersonal Model of Self-Actualization, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 42*(4), 37-57.

Hau'ofa, E. (1993/2008). Our Sea of Islands, In *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii.

Jones, T. (2013). *Understanding education policy: The four education orientations framework*, Dordrecht: Springer.

Kalantzis, M., & Cope, B. (2008). *New Learning: Elements of a Science of Education*, Port Melbourne: Cambridge.

Kemmis, S., Suggett, D., and Cole, P. (1983). *Orientations to Curriculum and Transition: Towards the Socially-Critical Schoo*l, Melbourne: Victorian Institute of Secondary Education.

Kincheloe, J., & Steinberg, S. (1998). Students as Researchers: Critical Visions, Emancipatory Insights. In J. Kincheloe & S. Steinberg (Eds), *Students As Researchers: Creating Classrooms That Matter* (pp.2-19). London: Routledge.

Llohsa, M. (2001). The Culture of Liberty, *Foreign Policy*, Jan/Feb, 66-71.

Low, M. (2007) Living (in) literacy(ies) in new times. In P. Puamau & F. Pene

(Eds.), *The Basics of learning: Literacy and numeracy in the Pacific* (pp. 1-18). Suva: Institute of Education.

Luke, A. (1999) Education 2010 and new times: Why equity and social justice still matter, but differently. Paper prepared for Education Queensland on-line conference 20/10/99.

Marginson, S. (2011). It's a long way down: The underlying tensions in the education export industry, *Australian Universities' Review*, *53*(2), 21-33.

McAdam, J. (2014). *Refugees: Why Seeking Asylum is Legal and Australia's Policies are Not*, Sydney: NewSouth Publishing.

Meredith, P. (1999). Hybridity in the third space: Re-thinking bi-cultural politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *He Pukenga Korero*, *4*(2), 12-16.

O'Sullivan, M. (2004). The reconceptualisation of learner-centred approaches: A Namibian case study, *International Journal of Educational Development, 24*, 585–602.

Pene, F., Taufe'ulungaki, A., & Benson, C. (2002). *Tree of Opportunity: Re-thinking Pacific Education*. Suva: Institute of Education.

Petaia, R. (1980) Kidnapped, In R. Petaia, *Blue Rain*, Suva: Mana.
Qarase, L. (2004). *PM's remarks at the 4th Pacific human rights award*. Retrieved from http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/page_1991.shtml

Republic of Nauru, (2009). *National Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005 – 2025*.

Republic of Nauru, (2011). *Education Strategic Plan 2011- 2016*.

Republic of Nauru Education Department, (2013) *Social Science: Prep – Year 10*. Yaren: Government of Nauru.

Rodríguez, E. (2013). Child-centered pedagogies, curriculum reforms and neoliberalism. Many causes for concern, some reasons for hope, *Journal of Pedagogy, 1*, 59-78.

Sanga, K., & Taufe'ulungaki, A. (2005). *International Aid Impacts on Pacific Education*, He Parekereke, Institute for Research and Development in Maori

and Pacific Education, Victoria University, Wellington.

Sanga, K., Chu, C., Hall, C., & Crowl, L. (2005). *Re-thinking Aid Relationships in Pacific Education*, He Parekereke, Institute for Research and Development in Maori and Pacific Education, Victoria University, Wellington & Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

Schweisfurth, M. (2013). Learner-centred education in developing country contexts: From solution to problem? *International Journal of Educational Development 31*, 425–432.

Serow, P., Taylor, N., Burnett, G., Sullivan, T., Smardon, D., Tarrant, J., & Angell, E. (2014). One Size Doesn't Fit All: Teacher Education, In Developing Pacific Island Countries. *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education,18*(2), 18-28.

Sims, M. (2011). *Social Inclusion and the Early Years Learning Framework: A Way of Working*, Mt Victoria: Pademelon.

Smith, G. H. (2000). Maori education: Revolution and transformative action. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 24*(1), 57-72.

Sullivan, T., Serow, P., Taylor, N., Angell, E., Tarrant, J., Burnett, G., & Smardon, D. (2017). Supporting families: A nurturing teacher education strategy in Nauru. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *45*(1), 39-52.

Tabulawa, R. (2003). International Aid Agencies, Learner-centred Pedagogy and Political Democratisation: A critique, *Comparative Education, 39*(1), 7-26.

Taufaga, L. (2007). Between two worlds: Taking control of our destiny through relevant literacy. In P. Puamau & F. Pene (Eds.), *The Basics of Learning: Literacy and Numeracy in the Pacific* (pp. 19-31). Suva, Fiji: Institute of Education.

Taufe'ulungaki, A.M. (2003). Vernacular Languages and Classroom Interactions in the Pacific. In K. Thaman (Ed.), *Educational Ideas from the Oceania* (pp. 13-35). Institute of Education: Suva.

Teaero, T. (2007). Eutia moa mai nanoa: Navigating currents of literacy and numeracy in the Pacific. In P. Puamau & F. Pene (Eds.), *The basics of learning: Literacy and numeracy in the Pacific* (pp. 154-176), Suva: Institute of

Education.

Te Ava, A. (2014). *Initiating a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Historical Shifts in Health and Physical Education in the Cook Islands*, a paper presented at Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Brisbane, 30th November-4th December.

Thaman, K. (2009). Towards Cultural Democracy in Teaching and Learning With Specific References to Pacific Island Nations (PINs), *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning 3*(2), 1-9.

Toumu'a, R. (2014). *Proceedings of the Vaka Pasifiki Education Conference 2014*. Tonga: Institute of Education, The University of the South Pacific.

Triggs, G. (2014). *The Forgotten Children: National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention*, Sydney: Australian Human Rights Commission.

United Nations, (2008). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

United Nations, (2015). *Sustainable Development Goals*, Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics.

Acknowledgements