



OCIES newsletter No. 3, 2016

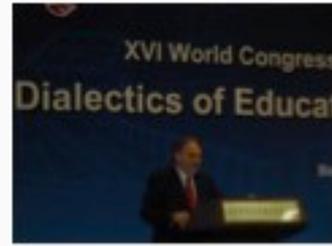
From the president

Even Warmer Oceanic Greetings to you all, now that we in the southern hemisphere are approaching summer!

Much of this newsletter is dedicated to the forthcoming conference at University of Sydney. You will recall that in the last newsletter you were able to read the responses of Frances Vavrus, one of our keynote speakers, to questions posed by OCIES Secretary, Matthew Thomas who is also one of the conference convenors. Below you can read what the other keynote speaker, Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, has to say in response to the same questions. Knowing her as I do I have no doubt that her participation in our conference will be both "awesome and jolly"! Another conference-related item included below is the names and presentation titles for the six postgraduate/emerging researchers and two established researchers whose applications for scholarships to enable their participation in the conference were successful. To all members who intend being there, do check the website for further conference information.

Also below is information about the OCIES Fellowship and network program (the first grant allocated having been reported in the last newsletter). A review after the first round led to revision of some of the criteria for applications and revisiting of dates for the next rounds.

Another achievement worth noting here is the publication of a further issue of our journal, *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* Vol 15 (3). This is a Special Issue entitled 'Strengthening Educational Relationships in Oceania and Beyond', which many of you will recognise as the theme of our first conference under our new name, held at University of the South Pacific in Vanuatu last year. The five articles in this special issue draw on papers presented as keynote addresses or as panel contributions. Collectively they respond to OCIES's vision for a revitalised society encompassing: the diversity of contexts, issues, interests and perspectives represented in Oceania, and collaborative research relationships that strengthen CIE interconnectedness within the relational space of Oceania. They also informed a further exposure for most authors by way of a panel presentation at the 2016 World Congress of Comparative Education Societies in Beijing (July 21-26) which aligned with the general theme of the conference, *Dialectics of Education: Comparative Perspectives*, in addressing the need to explore the dialectics through which CIE can strengthen its work in Oceania. As reported in the previous newsletter, OCIES was well represented at the World Congress with two panel presentations consisting only of members and a number of individual members presenting papers. The intention of an OCIES get-together became a most enjoyable reality with approximately 20 conference participants, largely members supplemented by a few from our region who are now seriously considering becoming members. Special thanks to past-President Brian Denman for his contribution to our refreshments, a very "interesting" bottle of wine distilled from ewe's milk which he had carried all the way from Mongolia to share with us!!



A further OCIES networking activity occurred when Treasurer Rebecca Spratt and I recently were in Noumea. We felt very privileged to be hosted for a very pleasant and productive day by colleagues from the Faculty of Education, Universite de la Nouvelle-Caledonie. We are very happy to report that three of them are OCIES members and will be joining us in Sydney.

WCCES update

As indicated in the previous report, associated events during the World Congress included World Council Executive Committee meetings (the OCIES President is one of the 40+ members of the EC) at which the three lead positions of the WC - President, Secretary General and Treasurer – were decided for the next three years. The President and Secretary General positions were both contested and those who won the vote (from the 39 Executive Committee members who voted) were both quite strongly supported. The treasurer position was not contested.

The new President is N'Dri T. Assié-Lumumba, Professor of Africana Studies at Cornell University, previously president of CIES and WC Bureau Member-at-Large. The Secretary General position has been filled by Lauren Ila Misiaszek, Associate Professor in the Institute of International and Comparative Education, Beijing Normal University. Kaniskka Bedi, President of the Indian Ocean Comparative Education Society (IOCES), was confirmed as Treasurer.

Also voted for and decided by vote of the World Council Executive Committee members was the location of the next World Congress in 2019. The two contenders were Dubai, UAE, and Cancun, Mexico. The latter won by a very narrow margin.

As a first time participant in a World Council Executive Committee meeting I found it interesting but disturbing. The tensions evident over the time I have been an EC member, and previously as reported by others, were very much at the fore during the approximately 14 hours of meetings held during the World Congress. Since then three European-based societies (NOCIES, CESE, SIIVE-DGfE) have withdrawn their membership in protest at the unresolved tensions of the past three years.

How OCIES responds to the current situation will be an agenda item for the AGM to be held during the Sydney conference.

2016 OCIES Conference, Sydney

We asked some questions of Dr Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, a keynote speaker at the conference.



Dr Unaisi Nabobo-Baba Professor of Education, University of Guam, Northern Pacific

1) Tell us about your recent teaching, research, or practitioner work and why you're excited about it.

2016 Books/Teaching and Summer School

One of the gaps we have in the curriculum in the Northern Pacific that we may have to continue to address is the documentation of heritages, indigenous and tribal stories in order to produce culturally responsive school materials and pedagogy. This is much in the same vein as the design, vision, policy and practice that has informed the work of the Rethinking Pacific Initiative in Pacific Education (RPEIP) - (largely a Southern Pacific Initiative) as well as the Funds of Knowledge Research (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti,(2005).

So in the last 5 years working between Pohnpei and Yap in the Summer schools, I have tried to get teachers to collect heritage stories and make curriculum resources out of these –exciting work –where teachers research their heritage stories and utilize these in terms of different ideas and pathways to infuse and enhance classroom learning.

Teaching in the region is so stimulating. The University of Guam commits to its regional neighbours even though it is a national institution. The College of Micronesia (COM) has campuses in all its 4 states: Kosrae, Yap, Chuuk and Pohnpei and its main national Campus is in Palikir in Pohnpei. The Summer school allows the University of Guam-Com students (in their 4th year at COM) to complete their Bachelor degrees while being in the region much in the same vein the University of the South Pacific does in its regional campuses...Students of Com and the faculty are some of the best one can work with...it is an opportunity at closing “some gaps”-and for me it is an opportunity in addressing my own “gap of professional /contextual knowledge” as faculty operating out of Guam and serving similar populations here (migrant Micronesian from Guam’s Northern Pacific island neighbours).



Dr Dean Ollah and I are farewelled by our College of Micronesia students in Pohnpei one last time-summer school –A few hours before we flew back to Guam

In terms of the Realities we have to work in as Teachers- I share here a blog page from my Colleague Dr Dean Ollah –Dean and I spent the last summer teaching the Pohnpei COM Campus in June this year.

Teacher

Salary

Only two of my students have cars. All the others take a taxi or bus to school. Also, only about 1/3 of my students have laptops and very few have internet access in the home. They can get online while on campus using their smartphone (if they have one). This has made it difficult for me to implement many of the lessons I have prepared because they simply cannot get the online resources. There is no internet in the public schools either. Only in the main office. There are also no computers or projectors in the public school. Sometimes the media center has one that teachers can borrow.

For one of my other courses there is a required textbook which cost \$143 in the bookstore. So far only 4 of the 20 students have purchased the book. The others say they can't afford it. I didn't choose the text or content for the course as it was predetermined before I was assigned the class. The director here said they need to get it and their Pell grant should cover the cost. I'm still working on this. So, what does a teacher here on Pohnpei and the surrounding islands make per year? Good question!

So I asked my students who are currently teaching and they said \$290 plus \$30 per month. OK, but

\$290 what? Per week I asked. No, \$290 every two weeks, and once we complete our BA degree we'll make \$441 every two weeks

(by Dr Dean Ollah, Una's Colleague for Summer school)

2) *What books/ news are you currently reading (or what podcasts are you listening to)?*

I am following closely the debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump as well as the local election speeches in Guam. This is getting exciting in the sense of the different platforms that particularly promise to address equity gaps in society. As I write this, my close colleague is being prepared by us here at SOE as she is to leave to support her uncle-one of the presidential candidates in Palau. Yes interesting times for us in terms of how the local, regional and international current affairs, debates and platforms as promised will inevitably affect real lives of our people and equity gaps here in the American Northern Pacific. One of the latest theses I have just completed marking is a PhD on Appropriation, repatriation and ownership in Museums in terms of Fiji-interesting stuff in terms of the gaps we intentionally create in order to build empire and more so the efforts at redress that we collectively as indigenous/local owners of knowledge must now come to terms with or have to think through.

Just finished (yet again) reading Steven Covey's "The 7 habits of Highly Effective People"-this book reminds me to take small steps and to review my own pace of life and work consistently...it is a challenge for me and I like the book (page 37: talks about the "POWER OF PARADIGM SHIFT"...)

3) *What advice would you offer early career researchers and students in our field?*

Be open to different knowledge systems and frameworks, perspectives and philosophies...This comes from reading widely and travelling places. There is a "balance" in life that is part of how the world is...as scholars we have to admit that we can ONLY really learn up and change our frames to see better and clearer -one day at a time - and to try achieving some sort of balance, Be alive! stay excited with your work and infuse, INSPIRE others if and when You can!

4) *Can you tell us one fun fact about yourself?*

I like to garden and do interior design...I also like a glass of red wine preferably daily...someone told me that I still laugh like a "farmer's daughter???"...wait till the conference to get this defined! Just realized that I like to be with quieter company ... surprising?-Yes I am surprised myself...

5) *What most excites you about the 2016 OCIES Conference?*

Meeting like-minded scholars, policy makers, practitioners. It will be jolly and awesome! I so look forward to sharing my story in the hope that the layers within it will address some of the society's focus this year! I always look forward to other interesting developments in our work that I can learn about to inform my own work too...I will come to LISTEN!

And "Addressing, Framing ...of Equity Gaps"- It is the ONE thing we all have to deal with in life and education-what an opportunity to be with all of you while we explore this together in the hope that the "Oceanian child and her people and lands", gets more out of life - Qualitatively and quantitatively!!! In my own work, my people refer to that desired life as "Na Bula Sautu" (Nabobo-Baba, 2005, 2006)

Vinaka

vakalevu!

Thanks for the Opportunity to speak with you and to be one of your Keynote Speakers for this year!

Scholarships winners

Congratulations to the winners of scholarships to support attendance at the 2016 conference. They are listed below with the title of their paper.

Grants for **emerging** **researchers**
Dr. **Mousumi Mukherjee,** University of Melbourne:

“Inclusive Education for Inclusive Society: Tagorean Analysis of a Case Study”

Janet Akeripa, Auckland University of Technology:
“O a’u o le Tama Toa: Investigating influential factors for Samoan men entering university and the impact of Fa’ a Samoa and Masculinity”

Donella Cobb, University of Waikato / University of Auckland:
“Examining equity gaps in ‘digital aid’: The case of open education and the recontextualisation of pedagogy”

Daniel Couch, University of Auckland:
“Framing the Gender Gap? Women and Afghanistan’ s Higher Education Strategic Planning”

Chris Henderson, University of Sydney:
“On unstable ground? Teachers’ work in a context of policy reform and disaster vulnerability in Yogyakarta, Indonesia”

Hannah Clarke, Flinders Christian Community College:
“Localized or globalized curriculum? What is needed for students in emerging and developing economies to best prepare for the challenges of the twenty first century?”

Grants for Established Oceania Researchers

Peter Barcinas, University of Guam:
“Youth learning begins with supportive strategies that address preparatory best practices: A case for a regional youth monograph”.

Suzanne Bells McManus, Republic of Palau:
“A comparison of policy and practice of special education delivery in the American Northern Pacific with a focus on Freely Associated States of Palau and Guam”.

Fellowships and networking grants

The OCIES has long promoted important exchanges of ideas and work between educators, researchers and education policy actors. It has served to bring together our contributions and develop our roles within the wider field of comparative and international education, and in doing so to link these with the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES).

The purpose of the OCIES Fellowships and Networks grants is to support this role by providing the institutional and financial support to OCIES members to extend and increase the frequency of these endeavors. The grants will enable individual researchers and/or groups of researchers to undertake collaborations or networking initiatives between institutions and OCIES members, thereby deepening these exchanges and relationships. Funding for the Grants are sourced from OCIES conference and membership fee surplus.

The next funding round for the Grants closes 10 December 2016 and another round will be held in the second quarter of 2017.

Grants of up to AUD \$5000 are available and must be used within a year of receiving the grant. Applicants must be current members of OCIES. Application criteria, process and examples of eligible activities are provided below.

Application Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The proposed activities directly contribute to strengthening relationships, awareness or understanding between CIE researchers/practitioners/students within Oceania.
- Activities are achievable within the proposed timeframe, are relevant to the proposed aims and expected outcomes, and have clear outputs specified.
- Benefit to OCIES as a society is demonstrated
- Budget is reasonable and represents value for money
- If research is involved, the application explains how ethics approval will be sought and/or provides evidence of ethics approval.

Application Process

A written proposal of no more than two pages that includes:

- names of all participants, their institutions, their positions
- aims and expected outcomes
- proposed activities and expected outputs, including time-frames
- if research is involved, confirmation that ethics approval will be/has been sought
- detailed budget including details of any other funding sourced for the activity or in-kind support (e.g. free venue hire from the applicants' institution)
- expected benefits to OCIES and specifically the contribution the activity will make to strengthening networks and relationships between CIE researchers/practitioners across Oceania

Applications should be submitted to r.spratt@auckland.ac.nz by 10 December 2016.

Applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of OCIES Exec members and representatives of the wider OCIES membership.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by mid-January 2017.

The funds must be used within the year of approval, and a brief summary report submitted on completion.

Some examples of eligible initiatives

- Seminars or workshops that promote CIE research involving a range of participants
- Visits of CIE researchers from one institution to another within the region, during which the visiting fellow may deliver presentations, take guest lectures etc.
- Research into CIE teaching within the region
- Collaborations of CIE researchers from different Oceania institutions to produce collaborative research, discussion papers, edited volumes, Special Issues of IEJ, course development etc.

We welcome any other ideas that fit with the above criteria. If you have an idea but are unsure as to whether it fits the criteria, please get in touch with the OCIES Executive to discuss it further.

Join and renew

Please see details on the membership area of the website under [Join and renew](#).

Contribute to the next newsletter

The first newsletter for 2017 will be disseminated in early March.

Please consider sharing your news and ideas with the OCIES community.

Send contributions to helen.benzie@unisa.edu.au by March 1, 2017.