Session 2


A proposed strategy (Marat, 2008) for raising and sustaining achievement of students across diverse cultural groups, including Pacific Islands students:

1. Statements of intent on learning strategies to be used by students to be articulated in the planning documents of Schools / programmes

These include culturally appropriate strategies for goal setting, self-regulation, revision, and review which facilitate development and application of metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies.

2. Statements of teaching strategies used by the teacher and critical review

Well qualified teachers with subject specialisation, sound cultural understanding of indigenous and minority communities, ongoing professional development, teaching for understanding and mastery, and deeper understanding of their role, beliefs and attitudes towards students and teaching is the need of the hour. A schedule for self-appraisal and performance feedback by the teacher which is related to the set goals, and strategies used, and focused on efforts made by the students, their achievement data, and collegial feedback will enhance the teaching-learning process to promote and sustain student achievement.

3. A responsible and collective approach to students’ achievement

Bandura’s (1994) recommendations which calls for a collectivistic school cultural orientation merits consideration here. Very similar to recommendations by Bishop et al. (2009), these include, among others:

- High academic standards and firm belief in students’ capabilities to achieve them;
- Teachers with high instructional efficacy and mastery-oriented instruction;
- Teacher acceptance of responsibility for students’ progress;
- Student-control over their academic performances.
4. Empowering parents through partnerships - Whānau relationships between home and school.

As proposed by Biddulph, Biddulph, and Biddulph (2003), encouraging parental and community involvement in programmes that aid in their understanding of how to help their children. An important aspect to be considered is that these programmes add to the existing repertoire of strategies of the parents, and respect the dignity and cultural values of the parents.

1. Culturally responsive assessment practices

Klenowski (2009) suggests adoption of a culturally responsive approach to assessment which values cultural differences and ways of being. This will enable learners to develop new insights, teachers have to distinguish the funds of knowledge that students draw on and adopt a culturally responsive pedagogy that opens up the curriculum and assessment, and in so doing allows for different ways of knowing and being (p. 90). Such pedagogical practices will help maintain culturally sound self-identities, in a challenging and increasingly global world.

…people have to navigate through complex environments of innumerable variations, novelties, ambiguities, and unpredictability … requiring adaptive flexibility in multiagent transactions in which the participants are both actors and acted upon. …In even more consequential exercise of agentic capability, individuals create environments not simply react to them in programmed ways. Being a self-governing human is a quite different matter from being a self-regulating thermostat. (Bandura, 2008b, pp.88-89)