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Call for papers

The Waikato Journal of Education provides an avenue of publication for quality articles on education. This peer-reviewed journal welcomes a range of topics including interdisciplinary, philosophical and applied research approaches.

Submissions are now invited for consideration for publication in the November 2012 issue. Please submit an electronic copy and a separate page with author/s contact details by **30 April 2012** to WMIER Research Manager, Carolyn Jones (cjjones@waikato.ac.nz), Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand.

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Fa'afatāmanu talafeagai mo lesona fa'asaienisi: O le tu'ualalo mo a'oga a faia'oga saienisi fa'aōliōli. Culturally appropriate formative assessment in science lessons: Implications for initial science teacher education.

Unpublished Ed.D thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Waikato.

Desmond Lee Hang

The University of Waikato

This study set out to find the views of Samoan teachers on formative assessment, which has been shown to improve learning, and to document any cultural aspects of the fa'aSamoa (or Samoan culture) that could hinder the use of formative assessment in science classrooms. One cultural practice mentioned by the teachers was lē-tautala, which refers to the silence of students in the classroom. If students are silent, the teacher cannot orally find out what the students are thinking and have learnt so as to give feedback and feedforward. Lē-tautala or silence is a cultural practice to communicate several meanings, including mā-gofie (easily embarrassed), leiloa le tali (lack of knowledge), fa'amanaia (shyness), matamuli (shame-faced), and fa'aaloalo (respectful). The consequences of a teacher asking the student to speak, when their cultural knowledge tells them to be silent, include fefe i sēsē (fear of mistakes), fefe i iloa le vaivai (fear of people knowing his/her weakness/stupidity), fefe i pona/gao (fear of labels), fefe i ulagia (fear of being ridiculed/mock), and fefe ne'i te'i ua mā (fear of being embarrassed). In addition, pupils who tend to ask too many questions will be labelled as valea (stupid), fiapoto (want to show off), or lē fa'aaloalo (disrespectful). Students are silent to avoid sēsē (seen as making a mistake), ulagia (being mocked), mā (embarrassed). If these are not avoided, the student will be musu (withdrawn), lē fia-iai (not wishing to participate) and tia'i aoga (absent).

Written worksheets from this study seemed to be culturally appropriate for doing formative assessment because it provided a way to overcome lē-tautala, since the worksheets elicited responses from all pupils. At the same time these written formative assessment worksheets have the potential to enhance Samoan pupils learning of science concepts because of the opportunity provided for the teacher to give written feedback and feedforward. The advantages and limitations of written worksheets are discussed. In addition, the research was an opportunity for professional development of teachers on doing formative assessment.

