

South Pacific Nazarene Theological College  
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Culture's Educational Method:

In the South Pacific context, particularly in the small island setting, life is very much open and generally communal. These small island nations have traditions and cultures that are very closely related which even in their languages have words with same spelling and same meaning.

The traditional method of teaching that is still effective in the village setting is following the leader, watch and listen very carefully with your leader and do not ask the "Why" questions until later when the session is over. You can ask "How" question during the session but not many, two how questions is enough, more than that is considered too much and you will be told to keep quiet but watch and listen. The why question is considered rude and disrespectful and to the point of rebelliousness. That is the general attitude of the students from that part of the world. Being friendly is the general rule for the relationship of the leader and the followers. The teacher is a leader and the students are followers. Leaders are expected to know it all, or at least twice than what the followers can do and know.

That is the basic awareness for any lecturer from outside of the South Pacific Island nations. Although, I must admit that there are slight differences in these island nations that are always there just as in any country and cultures, but the commonalities is great and unique. I believe that is also what a visiting teacher must know.

Some visiting teachers failed because they were not able to connect with the students especially in the language. Language is the major area in teaching where visiting teachers failed greatly due to various reasons such as speaking too fast, or using vocabularies that are not familiar to the settings, using idioms, illustrations and jokes that are not understood in their culture and way of thinking.

Most of the visiting teachers to our college who stayed long enough were able to sense and adapt to the way of thinking in the island setting. Most of whom were missionaries and generally missionaries were well prepared to adapt and adjust to whatever setting they settle with. But as things change with missionary status, more attention must be given to this need of visiting teachers.

We have one that is struggling to adjust and adapt due to the lack of preparation as what the missionaries had before going out. So the failure is in relating to the students as according to their way of thinking, especially with the language. This particular teacher is treating the students as if they are from the place where he originates. He must be aware and willing to accept the difference in the way of thinking and adjust the way he relates to them in classroom and outside of classroom. Insisting on the otherwise would be a chaos and destructive.