

Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards

2013

Nomination for Professor Alison Jones

Te Puna Wānanga, School of Māori Education

Faculty of Education

The University of Auckland



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1. Values

I am driven by an interest in social justice, and in how education can contribute to this ideal. At the same time, I am very pragmatic. I am cautious about high ideals – and I am positively allergic to empty political rhetoric unconnected to good evidence and argument. In university education, evidence and argument rely on excellent research and writing skills. What I teach, and how I teach, reflect my belief in these things.

My approach to tertiary teaching developed through observing my best university teachers. They were animated, engaged with their students, knowledgeable about their subject, and driven by a fierce commitment to the university as a site of social change. They created an environment where difficult social debates could take place with a respect for evidence.

I found I was attracted to ‘difficult places’ in teaching and learning – to the debates that are complex, interminable, and ‘political’. I chose to work in the fields of philosophy and sociology of education: initially in feminist theory, and Pacific Education, and then in Māori Education. I take a *critical* position with regard to these areas of study, stimulating thought rather than encouraging easy opposition. It is in ‘difficult places’ that my teaching comes most alive.

2. My tertiary teaching history

My university teaching began in 1986, when I initiated a new Stage Three course at The University of Auckland entitled *Feminist Perspectives in Education*. It was the second feminist theory course taught in Education at any New Zealand university and I argued to get the idea accepted amongst my colleagues. With a sense of real enjoyment and purpose, the twelve students and I developed the course curriculum together. Amongst the students were three women who went on to have significant impact on Māori and Pacific education in New Zealand: (now) Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Professor Kuni Jenkins and Associate Professor Eve Coxon. From that stimulating and idealistic course, my lifelong love of university teaching started.



Alison (left) in discussion with her Feminist Perspectives students in 1986.

For the following 14 years, I taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and supervised theses, in Sociology of Education. I was Acting and then Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equal Opportunities) at the University, from 2001-2003. When I returned to Education in 2004 - following amalgamation of the Auckland College of Education with the University of Auckland - I joined Te Puna Wānanga, School of Māori Education, in order to focus on doing research in this field, and teaching Māori students. In Māori Education, I again faced opposition, this time as a Pākehā. Some generous Māori colleagues steered me through. Then, in 2008, after cancer treatment, I reduced my teaching workload permanently to part time.

Throughout each of these periods, over 26 years, my enthusiasm for teaching, for social change, and for helping my students become the best thinkers and writers they can be, have been a source of real pleasure, and a powerful force in my life. As a Pākehā, I find my teaching and supervision work with Māori students deeply rewarding and interesting – largely because I can never get complacent! And it puts me in a fairly unique position of being able to work deeply, as a Pākehā, in the territory of Māori-Pākehā educational relationships.

In the most recent years I have focused on research supervision – the focus of this portfolio.

I count myself as fortunate to have been able to spend my life teaching university students in the field of Education, and thereby to have a positive impact on New Zealand society.

3. How I teach

My university teaching is both practically- and emotionally-based. On the one hand, I am guided by what I have learned *works* in practice to get students – particularly Māori students – to do powerful intellectual work, and on the other hand, my teaching is based in the establishment of a warm, engaged, and productive relationship between me as a teacher, and my students. I emphasise three things to describe how I approach teaching:

- The centrality of *positive feeling* (aroha) to learning
- The importance of the *collective* to the development of researchers and thinkers
- The idea and practice of students / researchers as *writers*, and writing as an object.

a. The centrality of positive feeling

The idea: I learn best from people I like – or, at least, from people whose teaching generates a *positive feeling* in me. Whether that person is a lecturer in front of a large audience, or my individual supervisor, when s/he moves me with her passion and the beauty of her argument (with its insight, logic and evidence), what I call ‘good learning’ occurs. Good learning is not only learning *about something* (like a theoretical approach, or facts) but also learning *how to be* in relation to knowledge: to be openly and critically curious about the world.

Aroha – a spirit of generosity, empathy, affection, and expectation – is at the base of all ideal learning. Whether as a tertiary classroom teacher or in research supervision, my challenge is to discover how best to ‘hook’ the students into a relationship that is not overly dependent, but is supportive and inspiring enough to demand – and get – their very best intellectual work.

I sent Professor Jones my draft expression of interest to consider and when I arrived at her office to discuss it I found her glued to her computer screen reviewing doctoral regulations - on my behalf. Exercising what might be described as a duty of care, she welcomed me into the University, the Faculty and the School of Māori Education as if she was waiting for me to come. At 51 years I had taken my time getting there. Such manaakitanga is beyond words and one could never refuse it especially when it is exercised by a truly great scholar and a genuinely humble human being.

Beginning doctoral candidate, 2012

I first met Alison when I took a paper in 2010 concerning research methodologies in Māori education. Alison challenged me to think critically about my role in, and understanding of, education. Her teaching style is clear and direct but is underpinned by an obvious care and aroha for her students. ...What I most appreciate about Alison’s supervision is her understanding of my needs as a Māori student. She is interested in my family and interests, even attending a raranga (flax weaving) workshop that I facilitated. She continues to mentor me as I progress with my career as an aspiring academic.

Colleague and PhD student, 2012

The practice: Engaged feeling does not *alone* lead to good learning. A clear-eyed pragmatism must be tightly interwoven with the feelings generated in a teaching relationship. In establishing a supervision relationship, I ask the student to give me one page of initial writing. This reminds both of us that writing is the key conduit of research. Good ideas are not enough; well-written ideas are what count! If, at the end of our initial conversation, which is often over coffee at the café near my office, we can ‘see’ a project that will work, and think we can work together, we proceed. In other words, from the outset there has to be a viable relationship and a viable project – an engaged combination of ‘heart and mind’.

I extended my interest in controversial affective aspects of teaching (attraction, seduction) – and where it can go wrong – in two research articles that contribute to international debates on the presence of the teacher’s body in the university classroom (Jones, 1996; McWilliam & Jones, 1996).

Alison is the tough critical friend, guiding and driving my content, as well as my academic writing. She pushes me when I need to be pushed, and she holds a soft safety net when I am falling down. She gives me freedom to write, to publish, to research, and shows me the boundaries when I get off track. Without Alison, I would not trust myself to think that the story of my thesis is valuable to research and write. Without her, I would not be planning to submit my thesis in the next months, on time.

International student, 2012

b. The importance of collective learning

The idea: Working in a Māori educational context for more than a decade has reinforced for me the importance not only of *feeling* to the teaching-learning relationship, but how feeling results from *being with* people, an element commonly called whanaungatanga. This concept names qualities such as enduring care, interest, discipline, love and loyalty as dependable and shared characteristics of a group within which one can positively learn.

The practice: As a supervisor of Māori, Pacific and Pākehā thesis students, I ensure that my students not only get to work with me individually, but also form a collective whanau group that meets monthly to share progress, ideas, problems and encouragement. These meetings (which have always characterized my supervision pedagogy) centre around food and talk, and include a writing exercise, a focused discussion, or a seminar presentation. They are not primarily social gatherings; they are carefully and firmly focused on research progress.

...Those meetings kept me going in all sorts of ways, not the least of which was the sense of being in a queue heading for the hand-in date. About once a year or so, someone would complete and I would feel a bit closer to doing so myself. When you’re doing a thesis while working full-time, having a sense of being pulled to the end is incredibly helpful. Under Alison’s leadership, the group did this for me – as well as being fun.

Colleague, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, 2012

I have long been convinced of the significance of collective learning, particularly for Māori and Pacific students. In 1979, as a tutor, I was an early instigator of group-based learning at an undergraduate level at the University of Auckland. As a member of an informal Faculty of Arts group, Tuia, I helped pioneer what was then a novel approach to teaching: Māori and Pacific Island student tutorials. These tutorials – now commonplace – proved popular and effective because of their collectivist elements, where ‘being Māori’, for instance, is taken for granted as a shared and valued characteristic.

Nearly 20 years later, as Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor (EO), I was proud to be able to establish the Tuākana Programme at the University of Auckland, a mentoring programme for Maori and Pacific students throughout the university.

In 2012 I initiated in Te Puna Wānanga, School of Māori Education, a School-wide cohort approach to both postgraduate and doctoral studies. Breaking with traditional models of individual supervision, the cohort approach brings together supervisors and students for regular meetings. Our School currently has a cohort of 12 mostly Māori doctoral candidates and, separately, about 15 postgraduate Māori thesis students, who meet monthly to develop their research questions, their writing, and their ability to argue. The intention is that they will all go through their respective programmes at about the same pace, providing each other support and encouragement along the way.

The cohort structure means that the students:

- benefit from the input and interest of several academics
- learn about university research procedures
- develop their thinking and research plans in an environment characterised by whanaungatanga (ethic of care)
- enjoy positive, encouraging, supportive relationships with others (manaakitanga)
- share their reading and thinking with peers, particularly in relation to Māori-centred research
- write proposals for conference symposia
- practice oral research presentation in small seminar-like settings
- access excellent 'one stop shop' online support which I have developed for the cohorts.

In 2013 I plan to work with the doctoral cohort to develop an online video relationship with the aboriginal doctoral programme in Education at the University of British Columbia, through a partnership with a Distinguished Visitor to the Faculty.



Part of the beginner doctoral cohort in Te Puna Wānanga, 2012.

Alison's group supervision meetings were very powerful in creating a community of novice scholars, in providing opportunities to appreciate the diversity of approaches people took in their work, and to learn from those who were a little further down the track. I recognize now how carefully Alison read my work and how comprehensive and insightful her comments were. From the outset I really respected her judgement, valued the opportunity to work with her, and took her suggestions very seriously.

Colleague, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, 2012

c. Students as writers

The idea: Academic writing has a poor reputation, because it is often bad writing. There is little point in doing good research if you can't report it in a way that people can understand and enjoy reading. University students get no routine writing training, and very few think of themselves as writers.

The practice: I emphasise in every supervision session, and in every class I teach, that researchers and university students are *writers*, and that good academic writing does not need to be an oxymoron! I spend significant time with students (in groups and as individuals) studying their individual paragraphs and argument structure, and giving feedback. I stress the idea of writing as *object*, not merely process – that an essay or a

thesis is a crafted thing and not merely a record.

I habitually adopt five pragmatic strategies of practice to ensure that my thesis students' written work develops in a timely and effective fashion.

1. *Monthly face-to-face meetings*: The next meeting is always scheduled at the end of any meeting.
2. *"No writing, no meeting"*: Each meeting must be focused on some writing, which the student has previously sent for feedback.
3. *Feedback*: All submitted writing is returned to the student, marked with comments using Track Changes, within seven days of their submitting it to me by email.
4. *Keeping a record*: Minutes of the meeting are recorded by the student and sent to me within 24 hours of the meeting so we are both clear that we are 'on the same page'.
5. *Constant reference to structure of argument*: The student and I together go through a table, which is updated for each meeting:

Chapter	Chapter title	Main points Key concepts	Word length	Date of completed Sections
1				
2				
3				
4				
...				
			Total	

Alison taught me how to write. She was a firm, focused, committed and supportive supervisor. When I started to expound on my ideas for the thesis rather than having produced any work, she would tell me to 'write it down, I'll read anything you write'.

Former student, Victoria University of Wellington, 2012

Academic writing workshops

As an expression of my enthusiasm for good writing, and for developing my students' writing skills, a significant feature of my academic work is convening academic writing workshops for doctoral, postgraduate and undergraduate students, as well as academic staff – something I have now done since 2004, throughout New Zealand.

The two most popular workshops are: 'How to write better for academic purposes', and 'How to structure an academic argument'. I also offer workshops on 'How to get your work published' and 'What counts as a good research question'. What makes these workshops successful is that I deal directly with the participants' own topics and writing projects as exemplars.

My workshops include many unique features, and aim at both demystifying academic writing (increasing student confidence) *and* making academic writing 'good writing'

(increasing student competence):

- I use an 'organic' presentation approach, with whiteboard and pen only, no pre-prepared slides;
- I demystify basic questions such as: what does an academic argument have to include, and in which order?
- I foreground the significance of a good research question and the work that must go into finding it;
- I have devised a simple P.E.R.L (Point/Elaboration/Relevance/Link) paragraph rule which is very popular;
- I insist that participants bring a one-page sample of their current writing for group analysis;
- I provide a useful 10-page handout that reflects my experience of marking theses and reviewing academic articles;
- I encourage participants to contact me by email if they want further assistance or feedback for their writing or publication.

I present these workshops in a number of settings.

MAI is a national academic support programme for Māori and indigenous doctoral students. Over the last 8 years I have provided workshops for MAI groups (attendance ranges from 10-30 participants) at all of the universities and wānanga in New Zealand. At the residential summer doctoral writing retreats I have presented group and individual workshops to assist Māori doctoral students completing their theses.

In the summer of 2007, I attended a MAI doctoral writing retreat at Hopuhopu with several other Māori doctoral candidates. I had been working on my thesis part time for some 10 years, had reached an impasse and was struggling to bring closure to the study. After just a one-hour meeting on a one-to-one with Alison Jones, this impasse was broken and I went on to complete my thesis within weeks.

Workshop participant, 2012



Māori Doctoral and Masters thesis students. MAI ki Waikato, November, 2012

At the University of Auckland, I take writing workshops for numerous postgraduate and doctoral groups, and for Tai Tokerau campus staff and student groups. In 2006-7, my Faculty writing group (N=18) published a total of 20 peer-reviewed articles, which they worked on as part of a year-long workshop series. I am invited every year to contribute to University of Auckland Pacific Graduate Students' Writing Retreats.

Each year ("due to popular request", according to the conference organisers) at the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE) Annual Conference I convene a pre-conference four-hour workshop on academic writing for academics, doctoral, and postgraduate students from throughout New Zealand. Between 15 and 20 participants each year pay a fee to attend.

I don't think that it's a stretch of the imagination to suggest that Alison is legendary amongst my generation of Māori scholars for her doctoral writing workshops. To put it simply, she taught us how to write.

Workshop participant, 2012

In response to a large volume of writing enquiries from students, from 2006-2008 I published five articles under the title 'Ask the Professor...'" in the online refereed journal *MAI Review*, e.g.

A JONES 'Ask the Professor... about good academic writing' *MAI Review*, 2006

... All at: <http://www.review.mai.ac.nz/index.php/TK/issue/current>

I am currently working with colleagues at the Faculty of Education Centre for Educational Design and Development to record my writing workshops in an innovative video format, responding to videoed questions from Māori students about academic writing. Our immediate plan is to make this on-line workshop available via YouTube in 2013. The longer-term plan is to use a high-quality digital teaching format for the workshops, using a whiteboard, and ideas from RSA Animate.



Alison and M Ed student, 2012.

Alison is formidable when it comes to assisting Māori students in postgraduate work. She works tirelessly to ensure that Māori postgraduate students are cared and provided for. The time that she offers to promoting Māori academic writing is both valued and necessary. Having people like Alison who assist you to develop your confidence in writing is amazing. Many Māori do not feel that they are bright enough to complete postgraduate studies. I was definitely one of these individuals. But with the support and guidance of a committed teacher like Alison, many Māori students will be able to develop the skills to enable them to successfully complete postgraduate work.

Masters student, 2012

4. My contribution to university teaching

I have taught and coordinated a number of graduate and undergraduate courses during my career but I have progressively focused more on graduate research supervision and teaching in response to the need for recruitment of Māori (and Pacific) students into graduate level work and on to pathways for advanced engagement as researchers and academics in education. This is to meet a pressing need – the general preference of Māori and Pacific communities to have research led by their own people.

a. Undergraduate teaching

The main junior undergraduate courses I have developed or/and taught are:

Stage One	14.100 Schooling, Education & Society	1989-2000
	EDUC 116 Introduction to Educational Thought	2007-
Stage Two	14.206 Sociology of Education	1990-2000
	EDUC 207 Decolonising Education	2004- 2007

The **Stage One** Education courses in the 1980s and 1990s attracted 400+ students, and the large lecture theatres provided an opportunity to perform as someone passionately interested in my topic – thereby inviting the students to be the same. Before the invention of PowerPoint, I used slides to illustrate my lectures, with simple overhead projector images to indicate the structure of the lecture. Often the slide images were from photographs I had taken of, for instance, sexist billboards and children's games.

I always encouraged questions during large lectures, before this approach was widely accepted. To get engagement in the large **Stage Two** Sociology of Education classes (100+ students), I encouraged the students to write and speak about their 'educational autobiography', related to the lecture material. For both Stage One and Two, I wrote textbooks, some with my colleagues: (e.g. Jones, A., 1991; Jones, A., *et al.* 1995; Marshall, J., *et al.* 2000).

I am impressed with the way she stimulates the students to think, making them question and recognize the complexity of the concepts under discussion. Class discussions are interesting and she demonstrates respect for her students as they do for her.

Colleague, 2013

Alison Jones' part was the best, excellent, straightforward, bright and modern. Humour played an important part and the variety of the material past and present and the slides etc.

Thought Alison Jones' section was excellent. She used a down-to-earth way of teaching and related it back to things we could all relate to.

Course evaluations, Stage One students in Schooling, Education and Society, 1996

Feedback on my teaching was obtained via student evaluation forms, which I used to modify my teaching. Each year I would explain to the next cohort of students some of the feedback from the previous year, and what I had done in response. One year, for instance, I had a number of complaints about the amount of required reading. The next year, I reduced the required reading, but explained to the students that their grade would benefit if they read from the general list in addition to the required list. On another occasion, following students' confessions of confusion, I revised my teaching of a theoretical notion (subjectivity) which resulted in more positive feedback.

b. Senior undergraduate and postgraduate teaching

The main senior undergraduate and graduate courses I have developed and taught are:

Stage Three	14.328 Feminist Perspectives in Education	1991-2000
	EDUC 360 The Treaty and Education	2004 – 2007
Masters level	14.710 Feminist Theory in Education	1991-2000
	EDUC712 Race Ethnicity and Education	2004 – 2011
	EDUC 787 Research Methodologies in Māori Education	2010-

In 1986 I enrolled in her 300 level paper Feminist Perspectives. Unusually for an undergraduate paper at that time, class sessions were structured in such a way as to break down the teacher/learner and theory/practice divisions. All participants were required to engage in critical dialogue with the ideas, readings etc emerging from explorations of topics identified by class members as relevant to their lives, and shaped by the theoretical framework underpinning the course. It was my first exposure to a critical pedagogy in practice – while at times discomfiting it was always provoking and often quite exhilarating, as learning should be. Although a very young academic at the time, Alison's ability to draw on and share her theoretical knowledge/understanding, and her skills as facilitator of often very robust and lively class sessions already marked her out as an outstanding teacher.

Colleague, University of Auckland, 2012

At **Stage Three** (50-100 students), the focus was on the relationship between the arguments of the theorists we studied and the everyday lives of the students or members of their family.

By 1997 I had invited my now-colleague (and former student, Kuni Jenkins, Ngāti Porou) to teach with me my renamed Stage Three course, *165.305 Feminist Perspectives in Education/ Mātauranga Wāhine*. It attracted about 100 students, 50% of whom identified themselves as Māori or Pacific. My research addressing questions of Māori-Pākehā educational relationships and my experience in the course by this time led me to be critical of the desire for ‘dialogue’ between cultural groups in educational settings. This is a desire indigenous students do not always share – they regularly do not seek dialogue or learning collaboration with their Pākehā peers, but prefer their own cohorts and caucuses as most useful to their learning.

Following suggestions from students in this class, Kuni and I developed an innovative and risky programme of teaching the Māori and Pacific students separately from their Pākehā peers. As part of a research project, I asked the students to reflect on the pedagogy of the course. Their vivid narratives were divided along ethnic lines: the Māori and Pacific Islands students generally loved the divided classes; the Pakeha students generally disliked them. The Māori and Pacific students’ relatively good grades reflected their positive response to the pedagogy.

My resulting arguments about cross-cultural teaching attracted significant attention because I criticised the commonly accepted idea of ‘cross-cultural dialogue’ in classrooms, arguing controversially that dialogue means different things depending on your social positioning. As well as publishing internationally on this topic, I was invited to contribute articles on the subject of dialogue and cross-cultural teaching to two quite different books published in New York (Jones, 2001b; 2004; 2007).

Alison was also a pedagogically innovative teacher. She recognised that university classrooms can at times be challenging places for Maori students and in one course provided a parallel stream for Maori and Pacific students. This course offered students the space to engage freely with the course themes as they connected to their own experiences of gender and race and proved both highly popular and controversial!

Colleague, 2012

Masters classes (10-25 students) were closely focused on in-class debate. At this level my interest was in assisting the students to develop independent research questions, and to find relevant research and texts for their studies. As a postgraduate teacher I became a leader *within* the group (‘the guide on the side’) rather than the teacher at the front of the group.

In order to ensure that Māori (and other) graduate students were well prepared for thesis research I undertook to teach the graduate course *EDUC 787 Research Methodologies in Māori Education* in 2010. It had been attracting only a small handful of students, but by 2012 had 21 annual completions. I focus not only on teaching robust *content* (What are research methods?), but also on encouraging the students to understand that research *can be* a tool for Māori aspirations rather than something merely to be criticised. I encourage the students to think creatively and positively

about educational research questions and not get stuck on the negative and the obvious – usually some version of ‘Māori educational underachievement’.

I really enjoyed Alison’s style of lecturing. She was always clear, gave good examples and pitched what she said at the level and relevancy of the students. As a lecturer she was supportive, patient and positive.

Supportive, knowledgeable, & approachable, she is always willing to assist and help the students and is very positive about class accomplishments throughout the course.

EDUC 787 Research Methods in Māori Education, 2012

Assessment: Assessment both of student progress and my own teaching effectiveness at Stage Three and Masters levels has always focused on:

(a) *reading responses*: students are expected or invited to submit to me for feedback by email each week no more than one page on a given topic. I provide individual written feedback before the next class. The quality of this regular writing tells me a lot about the effectiveness of my own pedagogy, and allows me directly to assist students become better writers;

(b) *feedback*: I regularly end my classes five minutes early and invite students to write one paragraph of anonymous feedback about that day’s class. I read these later, and give a response at the next class;

(c) *external moderation*: I have always asked other academic peers (often Professor Sue Middleton at the University of Waikato) to comment on a sample of my senior students’ essays, and my assessment standards and methods. By taking this exercise very seriously, I check my own fairness, my standards, and my clarity of feedback to my senior students.

c. Student evaluations

	2012 EDUC 787	2010 EDUC 360	2007 EDUC 116	2006 EDUC 207	2005 903.702
Responses/ Enrolled	16/17	12/13	51/78	20/24	132/*
Statement	% who Agree and Strongly Agree with the Statement				
Overall, the lecturer was an effective teacher	93.8	91.7	96.1	100	95.5
The objectives of the lectures were clearly explained	87.5	100	94.1	90.0	95.4
The lecturer was enthusiastic about the subject	Not asked	Not asked	98.0	100	97.0
The lecturer responded to students' questions in a constructive way	93.8	91.7	98.0	95.0	93.9
The lecturer stimulated my interest in the subject	100	100	96.1	95.0	95.5

*not stated.

d. Thesis supervision

My interest in advanced research training in education was intensified by my experiences on the first PBRF Education Panel, and on the Marsden Fund Social Sciences Panel which afforded me an excellent overview of the research-preparedness of New Zealand educationists. It was clear that development in educational research would only come through the highest-quality teaching and supervision at the doctoral level. Because I am determined to enable more Māori to become national leaders in education, and to encourage better Māori-Pakeha educational relationships, my major recent contribution to university teaching has been through doctoral research supervision, focusing on Māori (and Pacific) students and others working in Māori-Pakeha educational relations. I have supervised to completion 25 masters and 19 doctoral students, and I currently have six doctoral students and four masters-level research students. Of the completed and current doctoral students, seven are Māori, three are Pacific students, and two are international scholars.

Alison saw the potential I brought to researching Pacific education. She was able to identify something I had which to her would be beneficial to Pacific education and to education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Alison did not want me to replicate any of her ideas in Pacific education, rather she encouraged me to do the intellectual work and to think as a Tongan, not pālangi. To me, this is the most important wisdom and influence made by Alison during her supervision of my thesis.

Former student, 2012

I stay in touch with most of my doctoral graduates, and provide them with publication advice and writing feedback – and I take a lot of pride in their careers. All of the completed students have gone on to have significant careers, mostly as academics in education, health and social science fields. At least 46 academic publications have been produced from student research I have supervised, and one thesis was published by Routledge. I have published with three of my doctoral students.

I experienced Alison as a superb postgraduate teacher and supervisor. My most intoxicating intellectual and theoretical experiences at university occurred in her postgraduate classes. It was an absolute luxury to be taught by someone with such an expansive analytic range, but who was also addressing concrete contemporary questions and problems.

As a supervisor (both Masters and PhD) Alison is superb. She is thorough, timely, critical, structurally and editorially masterful, and always encouraging. I now teach postgraduate classes and supervise Masters and PhD students, including co-supervisions with Alison. I continue to learn from and model my practice on her example. She has been particularly committed to and successful with Māori post-graduate students, supervising and supporting many to completion.

Colleague, 2012

Alison is a wonderful writer and thinker. This was one of the reasons I asked her to be my supervisor. She took what I was trying to do seriously and genuinely engaged with it. My thinking and writing improved enormously as a result and I'm eternally grateful because those are now the cornerstone of my own professional life.

Former student, 2012

Alison was my PhD supervisor and she has been critical to my academic and professional development. I was at her inaugural speech as a Professor of the University of Auckland. The topic of her talk, its intellectual, cultural and spiritual content, the way in which it was delivered brought me to tears. It was at that lecture, in that moment, that I decided that an academic career was worth sticking with if it produced people like Alison. She exemplified for me what it was that I was searching for in the academic world - a model of how one can combine the heart and the mind!, a model for how we can live, write, teach and share our values as Māori, Pacific, Pākehā and so on, and one that does not compromise on the value of intellectual integrity, hard work, and straight-talking but done with much aroha. Ia faamanuia e le Atua ou faiva Alison (May God bless you and your work Alison)!

Former student, 2012

5. Mentoring and leadership

Writing workshops for academic staff: I have provided writing workshops for academic staff in a number of institutions: the Faculty of Education, for 16 AUT staff in 2011, and in Pacific universities. In August 1999 and in September 2010 I convened a day-long writing workshop for staff at the National University of Samoa (NUS) enrolled in research degrees. There were more than 20 attendees on both occasions. Plans are underway for a repeat in 2013. In 2011, I presented a half-day workshop on academic writing for about 30 Faculty staff at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva, Fiji.

Establishing the Tuākana Mentoring Programme at the University of Auckland: During my period as Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor (EO), I established (working with (now) Professor Michael Walker), and funded, the Tuākana Programme at the University of Auckland. This programme, based on older-younger peer tutoring and mentoring, is now firmly part of the structure of successful undergraduate experience of Māori and Pacific students. At the same time, I established the Chancellor's Award for top Māori and Pacific undergraduates, and the MATES programme which peer-mentors promising Māori and Pacific school students into university study. These have been leading student equity initiatives at the University.

Development of the Doctor of Education (EdD) in the School of Education: Because the new professional doctorate in Education (the EdD) at the University of Auckland was not growing, I independently initiated and led the restructuring of this degree in 1998-9, resulting in a new programme that started in 2000. I recommended a two Part structure: a part-time Part One based on a cohort model with regular meetings, and the development of a four-part research portfolio (a literature review, methodology, a paper submitted for publication, and a proposal). The completed portfolio was presented at a public seminar, and assessed publicly by an external examiner. The structure reflected my philosophy about doctoral pedagogy: that many candidates require a carefully scaffolded programme to develop the skills required for high-quality research and writing – a point of view that has now become popular.

In 2002 I was a consultant for the development of professional doctorates in Nursing and Engineering at AUT University. In 2003 I developed the EdD webpage that, at the time, became a model for the development of other School webpages. In 2004, I initiated and convened the first Doctoral Conference in Education at the University of Auckland. A biennial Doctoral Conference remains a feature of the life of the Faculty. In January 2005 I was invited to address senior management at Canterbury University on the Auckland EdD. When I relinquished the EdD co-ordination in 2005, 32 candidates were enrolled, six under examination and one had graduated.

The Auckland EdD stands out as a very innovative design that has been carefully and thoughtfully implemented in the School of Education. The structure of the programme clearly supports students as they develop their thinking towards a thesis proposal. This structured development is evident in high-quality research proposals.

Comments from the EdD Part One external examiner, 2003

A leader in doctoral supervision: As a senior academic, an important aspect of my teaching is mentoring others into good teaching and supervision practices. To this end, I contribute to the University's doctoral supervision training programmes run by the Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education; I often co-teach with junior colleagues; and I always work as an equal with co-supervisors. I am asked for, and give, honest and positive feedback on teaching and supervision, as well as attempt to model best practice in interacting with students.

He aha rā ngā kupu e tika ana mō te wahine nei? Alison has been my personal mentor within the School of Te Puna Wānanga since I was appointed to the Faculty just over two years ago. This has been my great good fortune, to be able to ask Alison for support and advice on just about anything, as finding answers to the myriad questions I have had as a novice academic staff member of a large university can be a real challenge.

Colleague, 2012

... it is a one-on-one context of not teacher-student but colleague-colleague relationship that often places the less academically experienced colleague in an emotionally vulnerable situation. This context requires extreme care and support. I have seen many colleagues seek [Alison] out to act as their mentor because of her reputation in this area.

Colleague, 2013



Alison at 2008 celebration of graduation of Jenny Lee, EdD (left), with another of her students, Te Kawehau Hoskins, PhD.

6. Concluding thoughts

As Bill Tierney, the President of the American Educational Research Association, said

recently: “My academic life has been one long disagreement and I have been enriched because of it”. I have always taught in ‘difficult places’ and felt stimulated by it: by the challenge of developing interesting curricula, of enhancing manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, of helping Māori students to be the best scholars they can be. Teaching in Māori Education grips my active attention: the questions my research students develop, the theses they write, and the essays and questions of the students doing course work are never predictable, always fresh, and engage our creative as well as intellectual energies.

I enjoy my relationships with all my students. The process of debating ideas, asking questions, talking about writing, as the student’s work develops from the beginning when their aspirations to solve the world’s problems are huge, to the end when they are satisfied they have made at least some contribution to the important educational debates of the day, is immensely energizing. I would not want to do any other work, and feel genuinely privileged that I have been able to spend my life doing it.

Alison can see already what I can do, I’m confident of that; even though I have no idea how to do what it is she can see. If, as I hope, my thesis achieves a measure of originality and is finely crafted, which is what I want, it will be because she has shown me how to diligently go about it and more than that, burnish its shine. Whatever way it goes, I will be forever grateful I climbed on board her waka because I know already it will be some ride.

Beginning PhD student, 2012

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Alison teaching - 1986 and 2012

