

of literature citations will be of great value to scholars wishing to delve more deeply. The maps, drawings, and photographs are well chosen to familiarize readers with the places and animals described. I highly recommend *Isles of Refuge* for everyone who wants to learn more about these fascinating but underappreciated islands.

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*Distance Education in the South Pacific: Nets and Voyages*, edited by Richard Guy, Toshio Kosuge, and Rieko Hayakawa. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, in association with Pacific Islands Nations Fund, Sasakiwaka Peace Foundation, 2000. ISBN 982-02-0143-8; 315 pages, maps, figures, tables, photographs, abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index. Paper, US\$10.00.

*Distance Education in the South Pacific: Nets and Voyages* is a comprehensive description of distance education practices in the South Pacific (Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia) in historical, geographic, economic, political, and technological contexts.

This book is a gem. The authors' distinctive styles and backgrounds reflect the great diversity of the region. Each of the seven chapters is a polished facet. Themes introduced in one essay are elaborated and extended in others, combining to both define specifics and encompass the larger issues. It has application beyond the limits of the region.

The volume came out of a conference of educators at the University of Hawai'i held in 1995 to consider how distance education could be used collaboratively in the Pacific. Distance education provides an opportunity for Island nations, particularly those with scarce natural resources, to strengthen their political and economic bases, through developing the skills and knowledge of their people in this information age.

Guy sets the stage by giving the background history of the South Pacific. Much of the variation in current educational practices is due to legacies of suzerain countries, whether British, New Zealand, French, Indonesian, or American. However, institutions such as the University of the South Pacific and University of Papua New Guinea advanced in response to regional needs. Collaborations in educational programs are important for developing a sense of regionality and addressing the complex issues of Pacific Island identity.

Matthewson, through research and poetry, relates the history of distance education in the region and particularly at the University of South Pacific. Supported and governed by twelve nation states, the University of the South Pacific is one of few universities in the world that is truly regional. It functions in a vast area, reaching small islands with hundreds of languages. It is also remarkable because distance-learning classes use the same faculty, "without prejudice" (63), and at the same pay, as for conventional courses.

The University of the South Pacific supports a centralized model of distance education including administration, curriculum development, and

course delivery. Other institutions with successful distance programs include Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, Pacific Theological College, Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Fiji School of Nursing, and Commonwealth Youth Program.

Guy presents a comprehensive review of distance education in Papua New Guinea. He details the history and operations of University of Papua New Guinea's Department of Extension Studies, College of Distance Education, the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education, Pacific Adventist College, and the University of Technology. Successes are many, including improved quality of courses and learning outcomes, study centers and residential schools, telephone counseling, and local tutoring. Although distance-education enrollments are high, funding is low. The result is overworked staff, poor student service, high dropout rates, and a system working far below its potential in a country where educational opportunities are greatly needed.

Wickham reviews the use of radio and television, while Okamura and Higa explore the digital interactive technologies. The technological differences lead to geographic differences: radio and television are used primarily in the southern islands; digital technologies are used in the western islands, more under US influence.

Radio has an established record in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. As broadcasting is privatized and public funding cut, the future of educational broadcasting is bleak. Wickham recommends cost-effectiveness studies for radio broadcasts. Televi-

sion, now ubiquitous in the Pacific, is seldom used for education. Satellite communication links, specifically PEACESAT, devoted to education and public service in the region, is being used. Beginning with voice teleconferencing services, PEACESAT has expanded to include email, fax, and other digital communication capabilities.

Okamura and Higa highlight innovative applications such as audio-graphic software and video exchange at the University of Guam, medical technology training through the University of Hawai'i; and American Samoa's Distance Education, Learning, and Telehealth Applications Consortium. However, the infrastructure required for interactive instruction is expensive.

Unfortunately, across the different technologies and regions, the potential of technology for education is minimally realized today. Policymakers seem unwilling to give resources for educational technology; educators seem unsure of how to use programming; and administrators seem unable to provide leadership for infrastructures and logistical support.

Crocombe describes new trends in distance education and sees diversity as of primary importance, including diversity in institutions offering courses (business, religious, and educational); frameworks for academic standards (varying with metropolitan influences); and formats of delivery (print-based, electronic media). She concludes that computer-assisted programs and the Internet are the biggest sources of new learning in the Pacific. She is concerned that high technology is outside the grasp of many people

in the region, and that divisions may widen.

McMahon ties the development of distance education in the Pacific with major trends in nineteenth- and twentieth-century education in England and North America. He identifies six specific trends affecting the Pacific: (1) opening access to higher education (ancestry in Birkbeck College and in US land grant colleges), (2) course development via teams (from Open University); (3) promotion of life-long learning (articulated in the Carnegie report of 1960s); (4) flexibility through use of technology to support learning away from campus; (5) use of information technology for development and delivery of materials (print, audio, video); (6) reduction of difference between distance education and traditional forms of education.

McMahon details two international cooperative programs, Consortium International Francophone de Formation à Distance and Commonwealth of Learning, both originating in Canada. Consortium International Francophone is concerned with improving French language instruction. Commonwealth of Learning was developed to help commonwealth members provide higher education and has significantly supported education in the Pacific region.

Distance education has different meanings for different people. For future editions of the volume, I would suggest articulating a definition, including the distinction between asynchronous and synchronous modes of technologies, to help unify discussion.

The current volume is timely. Globally, distance learning is an important

topic for research and discussion. This excellent book contributes to that body of knowledge. This work also may be a doorway for applications of further research and discussion that will enhance education in all modes for Pacific Islands peoples.

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*Weavers of Song: Polynesian Music and Dance*, by Mervyn McLean. Auckland: Auckland University Press and Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999. ISBN 0-8248-2271-4, cloth; x + 543 pages, tables, maps, figures, photographs and drawings, music notations, appendixes, glossary of western musical terms, notes, references, index, audio CD. NZ\$79.95, US\$42.00.

Following just three years after Mervyn McLean's *Maori Music* (1996) presented the culmination of the main focus of his distinguished research career, another major work, his *Weavers of Song*, presents the culmination of his studies in the music and dance of Polynesia at large. In contrast to *Maori Music*, a work informed by both extensive fieldwork with Māori bearers of the tradition and published sources, *Weavers of Song* relies almost entirely on the latter. McLean became well acquainted with works on Oceania through his extensive bibliographical research that previously led to *An Annotated Bibliography of Oceanic Music and Dance* (1977), a supplement (1981), and a revised and enlarged second edition