

Facilitating Transfer of Training for Sāmoan Student Teachers: An Exploratory Investigation

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Abstract

Initial teacher education is complex and one important component is the transfer of learning to the classroom. Minimal attention has been directed to using the transfer of training (TOT) research findings relating to the teacher educators work that facilitates student teachers' implementation of ideas into the classroom. In this exploratory qualitative study, 6 teacher educators were interviewed to ascertain their knowledge and use of ToT when preparing student teachers for teaching practice. The findings indicated that teacher educators understood transfer as an important process, identified key players but could not specifically link their approach to transfer theory, systematic approaches or strategy use. They were also unaware of the impact of transfer and how systems of evaluation could assess what was transferred. Barriers to transfer were recognised but they were unaware of the literature or the need to plan for these. Implications for practice and recommendations for future research were outlined.

Key words: teacher educators, student teachers, transfer of training, initial teacher education

Introduction

Successful transfer and maintenance of ideas and skills is the major purpose of professional learning experiences and, if transfer is not achieved, professional learning is meaningless. There is evolving research in this area but, in teacher preparation, little is known about how teacher educators, student and the associate (supervising) teachers can work together to transfer knowledge and skills to the classroom by the student teachers. Accordingly, this research is focussed on how such transfer occurs with the purpose being to provide insight into the what and how of the transfer process and consideration is given on how this may be further enhanced for classroom application. The interaction between the teacher educator and student teacher is the prime focus. A key concept in this research is transfer of training (ToT) as it applies to professional teaching and learning contexts, teacher educator strategies, sources of strategies, evaluation as well as the barriers to ToT. The extensive literature on ToT is analysed and the evolving research concerning its application to initial teacher education is related to the teacher educators' knowledge and practices.

This paper is organised as follows: the first section will discuss teacher educator and transfer issues followed by a section on theory and the nature of transfer of training. The methodology considers the qualitative research approach and the findings summarises the teacher educators' responses. In the final section there is a discussion of the findings, some concluding comments and several implications outlined.

The Teacher Educator and Transfer of Training in Sāmoa

In Sāmoa, as in most countries, teacher preparation consists of a university (or post-school training) programme interspersed with practice in the classroom. Although there are varied learning activities and opportunities for the student teacher, a significant component is the teacher educator interacting with the student teacher to facilitate the use of learned knowledge and skills in the school classroom. Indeed, the practicum is highlighted in the Sāmoan National Teacher Development Framework (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 2011) indicating that the teacher educator has a pivotal role to prepare the student teacher for classroom practice. It is noted that an "appropriate teaching practicum will be provided, and this will be used as an indicator of teaching success and as demonstration of professional commitment and responsibility" (p.6).

ToT is a western concept and consideration needs to be given to its use in the Sāmoa context but, in essence, many policies, ideas and educational practices are imported into the country, albeit with some modifications (McDonald 2016). However, the importance of incorporating culturally appropriate ToT practices has also been noted (McDonald 2014). Never the less, many questions remain about the teacher educator's role in ToT such as the choice and source of theory-practice guidelines and strategies, the applicability of the training literature to professional learning, the interactions with other key players and assessing what is transferred. Considerably more evidence-based practice is needed, although there is now an emerging understanding of professional practices that can support the teacher educator to achieve effective ToT.

In a significant set of studies, Scheeler and colleagues (Markelz et al. 2017; Scheeler 2008; Scheeler et al. 2009; Scheeler et al. 2016; Scheeler et al. 2010) undertook surveys of the literature and research and identified the central concern of a lack of generalisation tactics for the professional learning of student teachers for use on the teaching practicum. But as Kretlow and Helf (2013) noted, even if transfer occurs, there is a fidelity problem in the implementation. In addition to this, Markelz, et al., (2017) has identified a mismatch between university programmes and the reality of school context which contributes to generalisation problems, whilst Gable (2014) notes the predominance of the 'train and hope' paradigm in place of ToT generalisation procedures. This is confirmed by Zeichner (2010) who states that teacher educators are often "not aware of what is known from research about how to support teacher learning and its transfer to the early years of teaching in the context of a university-based teacher education program" (p.481) and instead there is a focus on content and subject specialization. To facilitate better generalisation, Scheeler et al (2016) has endorsed a 4-step generalisation model—immediate feedback, mastery training, use of generalisation stratagems and performance feedback in classroom settings—as a means of preparing teacher educators to transfer their learning more effectively.

It is evident that the (multi-discipline) ToT literature has often been overlooked by educators and yet, it has promise for effecting considerable impact. With this knowledge and the evidence that is accruing about how to improve ToT for professional teaching and learning, there is the beginning of an understanding about ToT for student teacher preparation.

What is Transfer of Training?

There has been considerable discussion about the terms transfer of learning, ToT and generalisation but confusion has arisen as the terms, although having specific meanings, have been used interchangeably or as synonyms. This has partly arisen because of evolving understandings and differing discipline epistemologies in experimental and organisational psychology, education, and human resources. In the contemporary literature, this anomaly persists. For example, some (e.g. Haskel, 2001) use an all-encompassing definition of transfer of learning (incorporating ToT and generalisation), Scheeler (2008) considers generalisation and ToT as the same process whilst Broad and Newstrom (2001) define ToT as *planned* learning which is transferred. This confusion extends back to the theoretical beginning at the beginning of the 20th Century when teaching 'practice' (transfer) was explored experimentally with two differing approaches evolving—an identical elements approach (noting the importance of similar elements in training and application contexts) was promoted by Thorndike (1933) and Judd (1908) proposed a gestalt approach (emphasising transfer of general skill from one context to another). During the latter half of the Twentieth Century, ToT was related to the work setting and the seminal work of Baldwin and Ford (1988) developed the three-phased organisational model: inputs—learning and retention—outputs. This rekindled an interest in transfer and a vast literature has evolved. The behavioural psychology of B.F. Skinner emphasised a generalised process defined as "as a procedure that increases the likelihood of

a target operant response [causing] an increase of other responses that resemble the target response” (Phelps 2011: 1255). More recently, the developments in the cognitive paradigm have expanded knowledge and understanding of ToT with mental models (of the real world) and comprehension/retention processes being emphasised as key components (Royer et al. 2005).

Blume, Ford, Baldwin and Huang (2010), in considering transfer and generalisation, adopted a cognitive definition of ToT, explaining it as a process of generalisation *and* maintenance of knowledge and skills acquired from *formal* learning. On the other hand, Billett’s (2013) cognitive social cultural perspective definition of ToT adds more meaning and defines it as “individuals construing what is experienced, aligned and reconciled with what is known and then constructing a response, which is mediated inter- and intra-psychologically.” (p. 6) It is a learning process mediated by social and cultural contributions and is embedded systems of communities of practice as discussed by Lave and Wenger (1991). The first definition implies a cognitive process ensuring the sustained transfer whilst the second approach the activity theory emphasising the accommodation of the experience internally and socially to enact a behaviour. Both definitions are fruitful for understanding ToT in professional learning. In the literature, however, there have been debates and controversies surrounding TOT including its definition, conceptual clarity, theoretical underpinning, characteristics and value/utility, likelihood of occurrence, enablers and barriers, and evaluation approaches (see McDonald 2016). One notable issue, diminished now in importance, was whether ToT could ever be achieved. Detterman (1993), for example, argued ToT was almost impossible to realize but today positive transfer is accepted by many commentators (e.g. Daffron and North 2011; Haskell 2001) and realizable if evidence-based practices are implemented within an overall logical and coherent strategic plan.

The theory-practice link is central to discussions on ToT and, although cognitive science has a predominant role, other theories can still make contributions to practice (Haskell 2001) implying that trainers/facilitators have a vast and diverse range of potential strategies to include in a strategic plan. For example, both the similar elements and gestalt approaches can be utilised whereby the reflexive low-road transfer can draw upon routine-based learning approaches (similar elements) and the mindful high-road transfer involves abstraction and connections of learning activities (gestalt approach) (Salomon and Perkins 1989). A further theory-practice consideration relates to whether ToT is an event or a process but mostly it is recognised now as a process. Foxon’s (1997) research made a strong case for this and numerous practice approaches have, for example, discussed the pre-, during and after phases of ToT (e.g. Broad and Foxon 2001) whilst Joyce and Showers (2002) outlined that an effective process for teacher learning consists of discussion, demonstration, practice and feedback and classroom coaching.

A ToT strategic approach is integral to several evidence-based approaches and some have emphasised that the science of learning already exists for ToT, but needs operationalising. For instance, Halpern and Hakel (2003) urge tertiary educators to utilise the key research on learning to facilitate student transfer whilst Haskell’s (2001) transfer of learning approach contains nine principles generated by cognitive science research. In the professional learning arena, Gegenfurtner (2011) discussed a strategic approach for ToT professional learning and Daffron and North (2011) demonstrated, via case studies of professionals, that transfer can occur if consideration is given to seven interactive factors - conceptual clarity and value, theoretical foundations, utility, how to achieve and measure it and identification of enablers and barriers. Furthermore, usually the research reviews of the literature consider three key predictors—trainee, training design and work

environment impact factors.³ Grossman and Salas's (2011) review is typical and considers how trainee characteristics (cognitive ability, self-efficacy, motivation, perceived utility of training), training design (behavioural modelling, error management, realistic training environments) and the work environment (transfer climate, support, opportunity to perform, follow-up) influence ToT. Such analyses of the research have provided detailed information about ToT impact factors providing guidance for best practice frameworks.

Another debated issue concerns ToT outcomes. It has been accepted that transfer rate has often been less than desired and Georgenson, 1982) hypothesized that it was as low as 10 percent, although this has been disputed by many. Never-the-less, there remains a problem. In a study, based upon sound research methodology, Saks and Belcourt (2006) found that 38 percent of the content (etc) of training personnel was not transferred and similar results were identified by Clarke's (2002) examination of a range of professional learning workshops. Engelmann (1988), some 30 years ago, noted that less than 30 percent of the STs training transferred and frequently, when it becomes apparent transfer has not occurred, Vaughn, Klingner, and Hughes (2000) indicated that a blame game occurs directed toward the other significant players. Further to this, little is known about what has been learned and transferred and the causes of low incidence ToT (Daffron and North 2011). Research endeavours are sorely needed and even though there are evaluation frameworks to identify outcomes which could provide insight into what is occurring, most facilitators use incomplete evaluation measures, such as simple satisfaction scores (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick 2006). In advancing the idea of more expansive measures, the model of evaluation advocated by Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick has often been considered as a benchmark and Guskey (2002) has adapted it for teacher professional learning with measures of satisfaction, learning outcomes, school support and change factors, use of the knowledge and skills and school student outcomes. Both models provide a holistic integrated account of the ToT process.

Often overlooked in the research and literature commentaries is the role of (national) culture in ToT. Sarkar-Barney (2004) noted the importance of organisational climate and cultural factors but mostly it is only local contextual issues investigated in ToT. There is, however, a small literature base being established. For example, Lim's (1999) research promoted the development of an international ToT model highlighting language, social value differences, technical issues (such as training design) and learning style as significant factors. McDonald's (2002) study of transfer in the Cook Islands found that the international literature findings were generally applicable to this setting but with an added emphasis upon support, relationships, collaboration and resource availability. In a later survey of the literature, McDonald developed a training audit which contained a specific set of cultural factors. Overall, these studies are limited, but as communities become more diverse, it is clear that additional research is urgently needed to investigate the role of culture in ToT.

Another key dimension that has assumed increasing significance is the key roles (learners, trainers/facilitators and work colleagues) in ToT. For example, Broad and Newstrom (2001) outlined a Role X Time model identifying how the different roles, pre- during and after training could be

³ The training/human resource literature uses these terms, but in other contexts alternative terms are preferred. For example, in education, terms such as learner, facilitator and educational setting/centre are often preferred because of the emphasis upon importance of student-centred learning. However, according to the research literature, regardless of the terminology many of the findings in both of the theoretical domains (technical training and professional learning) are applicable to each other. For example, Haskell (2001), a highly-respected psychologist and specialist in transfer of training and learning has identified research and key principles of learning and transfer common to all instructional approaches and methods. Another example, and a common message in professional learning transfer studies can be found in the work of Daffron and North (2011) who use the literature of the training domain to inform their applied research on professional groups.

utilised for maximum benefit. Berry's (2015) survey of the literature discussed roles and identified the trainer/facilitator as being particularly important but noted that many had limited theoretical and strategy knowledge. In addition to this, Cheng and Ho (2001) identified that trainers/facilitators often adopt tactics from trial and error, overlooking a strategic approach. They identified that one of the reasons for this was that many trainers/facilitators used colleagues, web-sites or light-weight journals to gather ideas rather than evidence-based practices. As Baldwin, Ford and Blume (2009) note, it is important that trainers/facilitators develop an integrated theory to practice orientation to maximise ToT effectiveness.

In this study, informed by the literature, Sāmoan TEs were surveyed to gather information about their knowledge of ToT and practices to further understanding and create additional opportunities for future learning.

The Methodology

This survey study examined ToT knowledge and use of strategies by a small number of Sāmoan teacher educators preparing student teachers to engage in teaching practice. The six female teacher educators were involved in teaching years one to three of the pre-service Bachelor of Education programme which consisted of student teaching programmes and varying periods of teaching practice. Purposeful sampling was used to select the teacher educators who had a teaching qualification as well as a minimum of a Master's degree and at least six years each of school teaching and teacher educator experience. The teacher educators prepared students for primary and secondary contexts and there was a range of subject specialisations taught. The participants were voluntary, selected on availability and were interviewed for 20–40 minutes by the two interviewers. One face-to-face, semi-structured, audio-recorded individual interview survey was conducted in English. To gather the data, the following questions (provided a few days before the interview) were asked:

1. What is your understanding of 'Lecturer's strategies that promote STs application of ideas during teaching experience?'
2. What is transfer of training? (Probes—definition, significance, key roles, theories, outcome literature)
3. What strategies/approaches do you use to promote the application of skills, knowledge and practices of student teachers when they are on teaching experience?
4. Where did you learn about these strategies? (Probes—colleagues, trial and error, research findings, other)
5. How do you know if the ideas are implemented? (Probes—student self-report, report of others, observations, assignments, others)
6. Can you identify barriers preventing student teachers' implementation of ideas during teaching experience (with probes if necessary) relating to the nature of ToT, its importance, strategies used, sources of knowledge, evidence of implementation and identification of barriers. ?

The data were categorised into themes using procedures recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2013). Trustworthiness was obtained by a range of procedures, such as, utilisation of the researchers' academic, experiential and research backgrounds, the researchers' familiarity with the educational contexts, employment of a range of volunteer expert teacher educator informants,

linking of previous research and the evidence of descriptive dialogue. Anonymity, confidentiality, right of withdrawal and agreement for publication were outlined in the ethics procedures adopted for the study.

Findings

This research was concerned with teacher educators' knowledge of ToT and strategies for preparing student teachers' for teaching practice. There was no wide divergence of responses. It was indicated that all had a knowledge of ToT, recognised its significance and the main sources being their own experiences and professional development. Theoretical knowledge of ToT was limited with only one teacher educator identifying support as a key principle. Key role players were identified but knowledge of outcome literature was mainly unknown, as was knowledge of evaluation frameworks with observation and anecdotal reports relied upon mostly. A range of strategies and barriers to ToT were identified but not connected to any strategic ToT understanding.

ToT Identified as a Fundamental Concept

Understanding ToT was considered an important issue if teacher educators were to appreciate its fundamental role in professional learning. Essentially, all participants understood it, although two of them had to be prompted to remind them. The idea of application was clearly identified and one teacher educator stated it as the real drive for meaningful training. Examples of activities were used by another to explain its nature and one provided a technical definition. Typical comments were:

..... everybody needs to understand that concept,.... that's the whole purpose of our training, able to learn, get the ideas and apply (TE1)

..... lecturers prepare the students in terms of strategies, pedagogies and content to be appliedin the schools..... (TE2)

...how you teach and you know apply what they already learnt on campus when they go out to the schools (TE 5)
Key Players Identified

The players in the student teachers teaching practice have an important role to play—each one, and in a collective sense, promotes transfer. This is because they become a general stimulus for ToT by the student teacher. There is of course a range of roles to consider but the key ones are the learner, teacher educator and teaching supervisor/colleagues. Participants did identify this range of the key players, but some emphasised some roles (e.g. student teachers) as having a particularly significant contribution. A couple recognised the key role of the teacher educator in the transfer process.

Well I'm one of them as a lecturer, I need to help them so that they're able to understand, make it simple.....because they do not know....if it's too complicated.....then they may not be able to transfer it (TE3)

I think first most important person is the student. (TE5)the main person they're getting feedback from is in fact the AT. (TE1)

Well, most of all the children[are important]..... the consumers (TE2)

Related Theories and Principles Identified

The ToT literature has had significant theoretical developments, particularly in the past 20–30 years and an extensive documentation of related ideas. Nevertheless, even though ToT is one of the most important issues in professional learning, the teacher educator participants were unable to provide much insight into these developments as most participants simply acknowledged that it was an unknown. However, one teacher educator made pertinent comments significant for ToT

.....it's a fusion of a lot of theories (TE3)

The underlying principleis the notion of being supported (TE3)

Additional probing about support provided further information such as teacher educator and AT guidance given to the ST and clarifications sought from other student teachers. Another participant in discussing the theoretical background indicated that she hadn't done any research into the area but did understand the concept.

... I haven't done any formal research on it, all I know is that it's to do with the trainees taking what they have learnt during their training, and using it in their own teaching. (TE4)

Effectiveness of Transfer Mainly Unknown

The outcome ToT literature has indicated that often transfer does not readily occur (i.e. it is something that is not acknowledged or is it a 'blame game?'). Although one participant stated that transfer did occur, some stated they were unaware of the outcome literature and two indicated their problems. None of the teacher educators had familiarity with specific ToT research studies concerning outcomes.

I used to be involved in facilitating teachers, you know the in-service teachers, so we discuss here and then they transfer it, but when we come to visit, little bit or nothing happens (TE2)

it's an important idea however it's not really effective in a sense that most people, when they go out to the workplace, it's not really happening (TE3)

yeah most of the ones I've talked to say they are using some ideas that they've learnt here, and it's working (TE4)

Strategies Identified but Emphasis on Learning

When ToT is discussed, the strategies of teaching are readily identified. But to ensure learning, retention, implementation and sustainability, identification of transfer-oriented strategies is necessary. The teacher educators could certainly identify a range of learning strategies but moving to the higher level of transfer was not made obvious in their descriptions—the strategies were not necessarily related to the high-leverage evidence-based strategies that promoted ToT. However, one teacher educator mentioned the importance of bringing the class to the university and the value of modelling.

.....hands on experiences with a lot of group work, peer work, practical..... (TE1)

.....develop unit plans then demonstration (TE2)

the content of the courses needs to beunderstood by the students,they need to know how to apply that course, because if it's too complex it's unlikelyRelevant, that's a key thingand the student needs to be motivated [to transfer] (TE3)

we make sure they are familiar with the formal lesson plan templates,so that it's not a new thing to them associate teachers out there are supposed to help them plan their lessons.... (TE4)

Invited children coming in, and so they use some of the activities that we discuss in class,....., they actually see the effect of the resources, and the activities that they have learnt here (TE4)

The source of the teacher educator's ideas was considered an important issue as the quality of ToT approaches is likely to be dependent upon validity of sources. None of the teacher educators, however, could link their sources to the research literature or experts. Mostly the sources were related to their personal experience, reflection strategies or professional development learning (which may have been research based).

.....through my own experiences in the classrooms as a student, because I remember some of the really active teachersand then it's just mostly my imagination going wild (TE4)

.....some of the things I read aboutmy plan for this lesson doesn't work so I try to redo itrevise it (TE5)

In my training as a teacher, during professional development within the staff (TE6)

Evaluation Tactics used but no Systematic Evaluation Framework

To assess the impact of the transfer process, teacher educators were asked how they knew transfer was successful. Most responses related to the observation visit and the discussions held with the associate teacher. There was no detailing of any systematic assessment of the overall training effectiveness.

I will find out when I actually go supervise them, assess their lessontheir display, and get the feedback from the AT..... (TE4)

I talk to the students in the classroom, once the STs have gone off (TE5)

I talk to them when they return here (TE2)

I set the tasks and when they submit it I know (TE6)

I assess their displays, and get the feedback from the associate teachers (TE4)

Barriers Recognised but No Management of Risk

Understanding ToT barriers is particularly important as they can thwart implementation or make it less effective. Planning to overcome barriers is therefore an important consideration for teacher educators as a preventative tactic. The responses centred around school issues, student teachers, or the understanding of English language and is therefore consistent with the ToT literature on barriers. None of the participants discussed the anticipation of barriers or the need to develop plans that prevented or overcame them.

...school principals, it's a common experience here, that our teachers aren't able to perform as they want because of them (TE1)

The school practices and arrangements also made it difficult (TE6)

.....its lack of resources in the school (TE2)

.....ST lack of understanding of the content(TE3)

.....the people who are in the field, or support from me, if I'm not there to support them or mentor themit can be a barrier (TE3)

These findings indicated that teacher educators had some knowledge about the nature of transfer and its significance. However, little was known about the theories or principles of implementation or the outcome literature never-the-less examples of learning strategies could be delineated. Barriers to transfer were perceived to arise from others, the school context and the student teachers themselves. Essentially, evidence based practices were not identified and the understanding and use of practices seemed fragmentary. As one teacher educator explained:

I think, people need to know the importance of ToT, the importance of not only learning the ideas but at the same time how to transfer,there needs to be some workshops and maybe more research in this area, so that people are aware of the importance..... (TE3)

Discussion, Conclusions and Implications

This research considered Sāmoan teacher educators' knowledge of ToT and strategies to facilitate student teachers' application of knowledge and skills to the classroom. The participants understood ToT, its significance and acknowledged there was a range of key players. Theory knowledge was limited to appreciating that it was multi-theory in nature with the key concept of support being recognised by one participant. Feedback on outcomes was mixed with some believing it was positive and others indicated difficulties in transfer. A range of strategies were discussed but were founded on experience and professional development and not evidence-based practices. Barriers were readily identified but mostly were considered to arise in the environment of the school. These findings were significant but, in many respects, operationalisation of transfer was somewhat shallow because knowledge and application of theory/principles, tactics, strategic approaches, outcome data and barriers was either limited/unknown or mostly not induced from the literature. Nevertheless, some valuable knowledge/tactics were obtained from the teacher educators and this can be used to benefit. However, the existing evidence-based approaches could be useful to develop more knowledge and skill in the area.

This research has highlighted that the ToT for preparing student teachers to use knowledge and skills in the classroom is a complex issue. Schools are complex places, as are universities, and bringing the two systems together adds extra complexity. It is at least a three-way interaction and accordingly, processes and interactions need to be built on clear understandings and the use of evidence-based practices for the realities of the school and university systems. An effective, informed and collaborative relationship between the players is desirable but this is not always achieved and it is possible that unintentional subversion of the transfer process by the range of individuals is occurring. Friesen, Kaye and associates (2009) noted that a disconnection between key players was a serious barrier and accentuates the need for true partnership between key actors. There are approaches that could be modified to meet these requirements such as that discussed by Daffron and North's (2011) in their consideration of the case studies on professional transfer of training. Furthermore, approaching the issue using the effective and specific generalisation tactics (Scheeler et al. 2016) would promote and validate strategies for improved ST performance. One difficulty to change however is the adoption of a university-large-lecture approach to prepare student teachers and the difficulty of developing more clinically-oriented programmes. Active and meaningful learning opportunities incorporating ToT processes within the lecture format would be useful to consider, rather than the 'chalk and tell' approach.

ToT is a western concept adopted by many developing nations and this is the case in Sāmoa. Adaptation and modification of approaches need to occur because of the cultural imperatives and so it was surprising that few cultural adaptations had been made in this setting. The research of McDonald (2002) in another Pacific nation indicated that for effective ToT, a change of emphasis was likely to be beneficial with increased attention to be given relationships and support as vehicles for transfer effectiveness. Lim (1999) also considered social values as an important component of international transfer as was the need to make accommodations for language issues. In this study, language was considered as a potential barrier and it was recommended that strategies (e.g., student teacher peer buddies) needed to be developed to overcome the difficulties—this could also be beneficial in Sāmoa.

Several implications arise from this study. A re-think of the partnership model of the student teacher—teacher educator—associate teacher is important. McDonald (2016) noted the complexity of interactions and potentiality for problems in the New Zealand setting and recommended that action be taken to promote a less adversarial approach. The parties should at least negotiate how best to utilise ToT approaches so that the student teacher is not disadvantaged in implementation of

ideas and skills in the classroom. More professional learning opportunities need to be made available to key parties (i.e. teacher educators, associate teachers and principals) to inform about transfer of training approaches and the need for coordinated action. This exploratory research is based upon a very small group of TEs and generalisation of findings is limited and therefore additional research would be beneficial for adding to knowledge. An expanded group of lecturers from the Faculty, as well as gathering data from other key players could provide a more valid response and add to the understanding. Furthermore, quantitative research concerning ToT impact and the identification of the most beneficial strategic approaches would be valuable.

This study concerned Sāmoan teacher educators' ideas and practices about ToT. Although limited in scope and relatively few participants, a tentative conclusion is that experience was championed over theory and evidence-based practices. This is similar to the international findings indicating that overall trainers/facilitators have an incomplete theory/knowledge base for ToT practices. There is a need for teacher educators to have a broader and refined approach to build upon their expertise. A rethink of how best to facilitate ToT so that student teachers implement the curriculum/skills in the schools is required—if these findings are characteristic of the approaches used, then teacher educators are disregarding evidence-based practices that could assist student teachers to become more effective teachers.

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