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The Good Teaching Project

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Executive Summary

Background

In 2016, a group of five staff involved in teaching, research and student support at the University of Otago, established a research project to explore students' conceptions of good teaching and effective learning at university. The group included staff based in the university's Higher Education Centre who work in academic development and student support (Vivienne, Rob and Clinton); and staff from the university's Humanities Divisional Office, who oversee Māori and Pacific student support programmes across the division (Ana and Esmay). We also recruited an international PhD student based in the College of Education as a fifth team member and Research Assistant (Rafaela).

The study rationale was practical, theoretical and methodological. Practically, we aimed to develop a network of staff researchers that spanned the university's Māori, Pacific, international and academic development portfolios. Theoretically, the project was a response to literature calling for university teaching (and research about teaching) that is responsive to the ''complex, fluid, and changing voices of students'' (Doherty & Singh, 2005, p. 69), and not grounded in culturalist assumptions about their sameness, difference or learning styles (Anderson, 2014; Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo, 2009). We wished to explore diverse students' perspectives as a basis for rethinking our teaching, student support provision, and staff development programmes. Methodologically, we wanted to compare three approaches to eliciting students' tacit ideas about teaching and learning: focus group discussion based on open-ended questions (Keeffe & Andrews, 2014), critical incident technique (Curtis, Townsend, & Airini, 2012; Flanagan, 1954), and 'photovoice' (Wang & Burris, 1997).

The study

The study drew on a qualitative, interpretivist approach to explore high- achieving university students' conceptions of good teaching and effective learning in university lecture and tutorial settings. Specifically, we were interested in: (1) what we could learn from students' conceptions as a basis for further research, student support provision, and staff development; (2) which data collection approach elicited the richest insights into students' conceptions, or how the insights offered by each approach were different/complementary; and (3) which data collection approach the students preferred. In mid-2016, we recruited 33 students to participate in the study, including 17 undergraduate and 16 postgraduate students, enrolled at all levels from first year to doctoral study. All of the students had attained a B+ average or higher in their university studies to date. The participants met together twice over two weeks in August 2016, in seven focus groups: a Pacific combined (postgraduate and undergraduate) group; and Māori, international and local postgraduate and undergraduate groups. Ana and Esmay facilitated the Māori and Pacific focus groups respectively; Rob facilitated the local student focus groups; and Rafaela facilitated the international student focus groups. The first focus group session involved discussion based on open-ended questions and the use of critical incident technique, and the second used photovoice to elicit students' ideas. In the week between the two focus group sessions, we set the students a photography task: to take four photographs that represented good teaching and/or effective learning for them. Our discussion in the second focus group session revolved around the photographs.

Findings

The findings were remarkably uniform across the four cohorts of students, with students identifying both *attributes* and *actions* that they saw as characterising good teachers. The students identified good teachers as passionate (or enthusiastic), approachable, and both knowledgeable and able to communicate knowledge effectively. Students acknowledged that some teachers may find it harder than others to convey a sense of passion, and that large classes can make it difficult to demonstrate approachability, but noted that passion can be exhibited in a range of ways, and that small actions demonstrate approachability regardless of teaching constraints.

Actions that students associated with passionate teachers included speaking in an animated (rather than "monotonal" way), relating content to personal stories and experiences, asking questions, proactively inviting discussion, providing comprehensive written material, taking time to consider new concepts from a range of angles, and using different examples to explain ideas. Students identified these actions as helping them to focus, actively participate in class, "go deeper" in their learning, and engage with and understand course content. Actions that students associated with teachers' approachability included proactively initiating communication, creating opportunities for interaction regardless of class size, affirming students' contributions, and being explicit about preferred avenues for student contact. The students also described approachable teachers as fostering relationships, inviting diverse viewpoints, treating students as equals, using student questions as a teaching tool, and taking the stance of both learner and teacher. Actions that students associated with effective communication included having a clear 'storyline' to engage students, linking content to 'real world' examples, using humour genuinely and appropriately, providing a range of learning opportunities, using questions to promote discussion and debate, and linking content to the 'big picture'. The students also identified teachers who communicated clearly as providing constructive and explicit feedback; articulating realistic expectations; and providing clear explanations, access to materials that support students' study, and guidance on how to learn.

The photovoice data was qualitatively different to that generated through the 'talk only' data collection approaches. Students focused on effective learning in more depth in reference to their photographs than in response to the critical incident and open-ended interview questions, and in the photovoice discussion, students drew on symbolism, simile and metaphor to articulate their ideas about good teaching and effective learning. Also, the photovoice focus group discussion was more affectively laden than that generated through open-ended questions and critical incident technique.

In the photovoice discussion, the students conceptualised good teaching and effective learning as a partnership where teachers and students work together. They suggested that recognising and catering to students' diversity is central to good teaching, and that valuing diversity is central to effective learning. The students highlighted working with others (e.g. discussing ideas and hearing others' perspectives) as an important aspect of learning at university, but stressed that learning effectively also requires recognising (and doing) what "works for you". Finally, the students conceptualised good teaching as challenging students to see things in new ways, and starting students on "journey". They suggested that effective learning involves seeing learning as a journey - recognising learning as "much more than marks", and developing everyday practices that sustain and enable learning over time.

Notably, Māori students in our study commented on the impact of role models on their learning - senior Māori staff who are well respected by all students, and able to challenge dominant ideas. International students stressed the impact of clear communication on their learning, noting the importance of access to recorded lectures, particularly when teacher communication is not clear.

Feedback on the study

The students were overwhelmingly positive about their involvement in the study, and remained engaged throughout the process. While some said that they found the photovoice task "challenging" or "difficult", they also described it as "creative" and "fun", and as prompting them to reflect on and 'notice' teaching and learning. Students highlighted the value of running repeat focus group discussions over two weeks, although some suggested that a longer duration for the photovoice task might have been helpful. Recommendations included that we repeat the study with students in other academic divisions, and that in future, we endeavour to recruit students representing a wider spectrum of diversity (for example, including LGBTI, disabled, and distance students).

Recommendations from the study

For university teachers

Diverse teachers are needed to teach diverse students. There is no one way of being a 'good teacher' but our project findings suggest some principles that are likely to make teachers more effective when working with students. These are:

- Good teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for their subject area, and for working with students. While not everyone is funny, animated, or entertaining in the way they teach, students find it easier to engage with teachers who seem to be personally invested in their subject area and in teaching. They notice when teachers seem happy and interested in their work!
- Good teachers demonstrate approachability, or a willingness to engage with students. Small acts make a teacher seem approachable, even in very large classes. Examples include: introducing oneself to students, inviting and affirming teacher-student and student-student interaction during class, explaining how and when you can be contacted, and explicitly acknowledging and inviting diverse viewpoints.
- Good teachers show competence and proficiency in their teaching. Students appreciate it when teachers have a 'clear storyline', link content to 'real world' experiences and examples, explain things clearly, provide a range of learning opportunities, and challenge students to explore ideas and see things in new ways. Good teachers can be seen as 'translators', who communicate effectively so that students understand, and engage in learning.

For university students

There are many ways of being an effective learner, and it is important to figure out (and do) what works for you. Our study findings suggest that:

- Effective learners recognise their role in the teaching-learning partnership, and know what works for them. They prepare for and engage in class in ways that allow them to learn (for example, by reading course material and choosing to sit in a place that helps them stay focused). They also experiment with note-taking approaches to find what 'works' and feels comfortable, find and create study environments which allow them to both relax and focus, and actively seek out discussion and interaction as a strategic learning approach.

- Effective learners focus on learning, rather than marks for their own sake. Effective learners conceptualise university study as a starting point, not an endpoint – as a 'journey' of discovery and exploration. Effective learners recognise the importance of *time* in the learning process. They understand that learning involves 'sitting on' information and ideas, and taking time to rest and to do things other than studying.
- Effective learners remember where they have come from and where they are going. They keep their short and long-term goals in mind, and stay connected to people who can encourage them in the learning journey, including family, friends, classmates and teachers.

Study outcomes

Impact on learners

- This project involved the development of a student advisory panel, with input into teaching and learning at the University of Otago. Students expressed appreciation for the opportunity the project offered to have their voices heard.
- Two thirds of our project participants attended the end-of-project Celebration Hui. The students were highly engaged in the project throughout, and expressed an interest in being kept informed of the ongoing outcomes of the project. Some participating students have registered their interest in being physical panelists at staff and student workshops based on the project.
- The Pacific student focus group was the only one that included both undergraduate and postgraduate students together. These students decided that they wanted to keep meeting regularly, and become a source of mentoring support for other Pacific students in Humanities. As an outcome of the project, in 2017, a Humanities Pacific Students' Association was developed, under Esmay's guidance. (Such a group already exists for Māori students).
- Students and staff at our initial student and staff professional development workshops based on the project indicated that they found the workshop content helpful. We anticipate further impact on learners as we continue to disseminate our research findings.
- Our research findings are informing the re-development of the 'My Otago First Year' (MOFY) website, an informative website for first-year students.

Impact on the team

- We have now established an interdisciplinary network including academic and student support staff working across academic development, student learning, and student support portfolios. We are keen to continue working together as a team to develop staff and student workshops based on our findings.
- We have gained methodological and substantive insights through undertaking this project that will inform our future research, and student support and staff professional development programmes.
- Our research findings have already informed our work with colleagues and students, and will continue to do so.

Impact on practice

- Preliminary research findings have been disseminated to University of Otago staff through the Celebration Hui (October 2016), a workshop for new teachers offered through the university's 'Introduction to University Teaching' course (February 2017), and Pacific and Māori student support team meetings.

- We are currently developing a further workshop based on our research findings to be offered through the professional development programme for university teaching staff.
- We shared methodological insights from the project at the 2016 TERNZ (Tertiary Education Research New Zealand) conference, and substantive insights on good teaching and communication at the 2016 ISANA (International Education Association Inc.) international conference.
- Our 'findings' will also be presented in two sessions at the HERDSA international conference in July 2017.
- We have developed a workshop for students based on the project, and we hope to develop more, targeted workshops to be offered across the university.
- Our project findings have informed the University of Otago tutor-training programme.
- We anticipate that there will be further impacts on practice as we disseminate our research findings across the university, and beyond.

Background

‘Good teaching’ in higher education (HE) is generally understood as involving a focus on students and students’ learning, requiring particular (communicative and pedagogical) practices, and addressing the needs of the context in which it occurs (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). Although, as Devlin and Samarawickrema note, what constitutes ‘good teaching’ may depend on the specific teaching context (also see Wu, 2015), HE literature highlights multiple characteristics of ‘good teachers’. These include the ability to be professional and organised; communicate clearly; build rapport with, challenge, and engage students; explain ideas; provide constructive feedback; learn from students; and affirm diversity (Lee, Kim, & Chan, 2015; Parpala, Lindblom-Ylanne, & Rytkonen, 2011). In a Singapore based study, Lee et al. (2015) explored 122 students’ ideas regarding what ‘good teaching’ looks like in five areas: “preparation and organisation, knowledge, learning and thinking, enthusiasm, and delivery” (p. 108). Students identified good teachers as those who paced lessons well; used teaching aids effectively; communicated with confidence; used questions and humour effectively; established rapport with students; offered an “open and accepting environment”; were enthusiastic, confident, and engaging; and supported students’ capacity to understand content (p. 108). This study highlighted the importance of both “teaching *strategies* and teacher *attributes*” (p. 108, emphasis added), although the authors noted the need to explore students’ understandings of good teaching in relation to non-lecture (less teacher-centred) environments.

Previous New Zealand based, Ako Aotearoa funded research has elicited the perspectives of particular groups of students in relation to university teaching. Research with Pacific and Māori students has highlighted the importance of the teacher-student relationship in fostering positive educational outcomes, and reiterated the importance of teachers recognising and valuing student diversity (Airini et al., 2009; Chu, Abella, & Paurini, 2013; Curtis, Wikaere, Lualua-Aati, Kool, Nepia, Ruka, Honey, Kelly & Poole, 2012). Airini et al. (2011) explored factors that promoted Māori and Pacific students’ success in degree level study, using Critical Incident Technique in interview conversations with students. The study report identified nine “promising practices” (p. 77) likely to nurture students’ success. These included: using effective adult teaching approaches (e.g. working to foster students’ self-motivation and demonstrating a level of flexibility); demonstrating content expertise; using “culturally-appropriate practices, content and staff”; fostering students’ “confidence, mana, and empowerment”; promoting students’ capacity to learn independently; fostering peer interdependence; promoting professional relationships; providing quality teaching; and creating a place of belonging (p. 78). Research with Pacific students and their lecturers and support staff at a New Zealand university identified similar factors as promoting students’ success (Davidson-Toumu'a & Dunbar, 2009). These included staff being approachable and available to students; providing useful resources to support students’ learning (e.g. clearly laid out course outlines, and assignment exemplars); validating students’ cultural identities; and cultivating a sense of enthusiasm and fun.

Based on their study with Māori students in undergraduate health professional programmes, Curtis et al, (2012) developed a ‘Quality tertiary teaching profile’. This positions ‘good teachers’ as maintaining a student-centred focus, and incorporating Māori content and values into their teaching in positive ways; actively provide culturally appropriate support, including fostering student-student interaction; providing culturally appropriate pastoral care by being role models and acting professionally; providing a ‘culturally safe’ learning environment; and encouraging a sense of ‘cohort’, or connection between students and staff.

Literature on HE internationalisation suggests that international students' cultural backgrounds and previous teaching/learning experiences may shape their perspectives of what constitutes good teaching in a new place (Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Wu, 2015). However, as some scholars have also noted, a focus on 'culture' in relation to international students' understandings of teaching and learning, also risks promoting stereotypes about students, failure to recognise (local and international) students' diversity, and absolving teachers of the pedagogical responsibility to teach all students well (Anderson, 2014; Beaver & Tuck, 1998; Bullen & Kenway, 2003; Mayuzumi, Motobayashi, Nagayama, & Takeuchi, 2007). Research exploring international university students' understandings of good teaching has highlighted the importance of teachers' openness to students, capacity to engage students, and ability to communicate clearly and effectively (Anderson, 2014). In a critical ethnographic study, international and migrant women students at a New Zealand university stressed the importance of lecturers clearly articulating key ideas, being explicit about their expectations, using an engaging delivery approach, and supporting their teaching through the use of visual aids (Anderson, 2014). The women also stressed the importance of feeling socially connected in order to thrive in a new learning context. Like the Māori and Pacific students in the studies described above, they suggested the value of lecturers working to foster peer interaction, including in large classes.

Wu (2015) conducted a qualitative interview-based study with 14 Chinese learners in a British university. Wu's participants reflected on how they had adapted their learning approaches in the British context, noting that what constitutes 'good teaching' and 'effective learning' in HE is highly contextual. They explained that teaching approaches deemed effective in Britain, may have been seen as appropriate in China, and noted that 'effective learning approaches' may not be transferable across contexts. Wu highlighted the importance when students are new to a context of explicit guidance around assessment tasks, formative feedback, and lecturers' openness to diversity (e.g. use of resources from a range of different contexts). Wu noted the value for students of access to online learning tools (e.g. PowerPoint slides) and of an atmosphere of safety, including lecturers' tolerance for "slow learning" while students adjust to an unfamiliar learning environment (p. 764, also see Skyrme, 2010).

Studies of student learning in higher education associate effective learning with student engagement (Zepke & Leach, 2010), and stress the need to see 'learning' as more than knowledge acquisition (Brownlee, Walker, Lennox, Exley, and Pearce, 2009). Zepke and Leach (2010) note that, although student engagement (and "success") is often 'measured' in terms of "'hard' quantifiable outcomes" such as retention, completion, and employment, these do not give a full picture of students' success in HE (p. 662). Zepke and Leach suggest a need to attend to "soft outcomes" as markers of effective learning, for example, the development of relationships, wellness, self-awareness, and the ability to work with others (p. 665). They also highlight the role of both institutional and non-institutional factors in shaping students' success. Brownlee et al. (2009) highlight the role of students' epistemological beliefs, or beliefs about the nature of knowledge, in shaping their approaches to learning. Brownlee et al. argue that good teaching involves inviting students to wrestle with complex ideas, associating this with deeper learning.

Internationally, relatively little research on university teaching and learning has drawn on student-centred approaches to foreground diverse students' voices without the use of pre-determined response categories. In the New Zealand context,

research exploring students' understandings of good teaching in HE have tended to focus on Māori and Pacific students, and to a lesser extent, international students. While this has resulted in useful recommendations for how best to offer meaningful and targeted support to particular students, attention to students as isolated groups has also, arguably, reinforced assumptions of (some students') 'difference' (Anderson, 2008; Anderson, 2014). Critical scholars stress the importance of remaining open to both commonalities and differences in diverse HE settings, and recognising the responsibility of HE teachers to teach well (Bullen & Kenway, 2003; Madge, Raghuram, & Noxolo, 2009; Sidhu & Dall'Alba, 2012).

Some literature associates a focus on students' 'safety' or wellbeing in HE with "pedagogic frailty", marked by a reluctance to introduce students to "knowledge that is uncomfortable, challenging and troublesome" (Land, 2017, p. 179). Other literature bemoans a focus on 'what students want', or the positioning of students as consumers in HE (Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2009). However, in contrast, other literature recognises students as "chief partners" in the teaching and learning process (Mortier, Desimpel, De Schauwer, & Van Hove, 2011, p. 207), and/or suggests that close attention to their (diverse and complex) voices is an ethical and pedagogical obligation for enrolling educational institutions (Bullen & Kenway, 2003; Kenway & Bullen, 2003; Madge et al., 2009). These concerns informed our study, as we explain below.

The study

Our study was grounded in a view of students as key stakeholders, or partners, in the teaching-learning process (after Mortier et al, 2011). It was also informed by critical literature which calls for university teaching (and research about teaching) that is responsive to the ''complex, fluid, and changing voices of students'' (Doherty & Singh, 2005, p. 69), and not grounded in culturalist assumptions about their sameness, difference or learning styles (Anderson, 2014; Madge et al., 2009). We sought to foreground diverse students' conceptions of good teaching and effective learning at university without assuming students' difference or similarity to each other. We also sought to explore the connections between teaching and learning that students' understandings revealed. Our study rationale was also practical and methodological. Practically, we sought to develop a network of staff researchers who spanned the university's Māori, Pacific, international and academic development portfolios. Previously, we had tended to work independently of each other (for example, providing professional development for staff, or supporting particular groups of students), without identifying common challenges and successes, or exploring the synergies that might emerge if we worked together. Methodologically, we wanted to compare three approaches to eliciting students' tacit ideas about teaching and learning, to inform the future development of a larger study involving a wider group of students.

Specifically, the study involved a qualitative, interpretivist exploration of high-achieving undergraduate and postgraduate students' conceptions of good teaching and effective learning in university lecture and tutorial settings. Our data collection methods included focus group discussions based on open-ended questions (Keeffe & Andrews, 2014), critical incident technique (Curtis, Townsend, & Airini, 2012; Flanagan, 1954), and photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997). We established the study as a small pilot project involving students studying Humanities papers, but we hoped it would inform the development of a larger, future study. Our aims were to explore: (1) how students' conceptions could inform student support and staff professional

development programmes at our university; (2) which data collection approach elicited the richest insights into students' conceptions (or how the insights offered by each approach were different/complementary); and (3) which data collection approach the students preferred.

Our study built on previous Ako Aotearoa and NZCER funded research exploring Pacific and Māori students' perceptions of higher education (Davidson-Toumu'a & Dunbar, 2009), practices that support their learning in tertiary settings generally (Greenwood & Te Aika, 2008; Ross, 2008), and factors that help or hinder their learning in university foundation studies and degree-level programme non-lecture contexts (Airini et al., 2009; Curtis, Wikaire, et al., 2012). However, our study was unique in that we focused on successful students (with a B+ average or above); and explored Māori, Pacific, and international students' perspectives alongside those of (non-Māori, non-Pacific) local students. In specifically recruiting successful students we took a 'positive deviance' approach (Marsh, Schroeder, Dearden, Sternin, & Sternin, 2004). This allowed us to focus on the creative ways students make sense of and cope with their teaching and learning environments (after Madge et al., 2009). We wanted to explicitly contest deficit discourses about students or particular groups of students, and to avoid placing additional pressure on students who may be struggling with their studies. We explored students' understandings of 'effective learning' alongside their conceptions of 'good teaching' since students' understandings of each are closely intertwined (Parpala et al., 2011).

Following ethical approval from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee, we recruited 33 students to participate in the study. These included 17 undergraduate and 16 postgraduate students, enrolled at all levels from first year to doctoral study. We recruited the students through the university's student learning support programmes, the Humanities Division Māori and Pacific student networks, the International Office, and directly, through departments. The students fit four broad cohorts: seven identified as Māori, six as Pacific students, nine as 'international', and 11 as 'local' (non-Māori, non-Pacific) students. There was notable fluidity across these cohorts, since the 'international' student group included two students who had recently gained Permanent Resident visas (so were technically 'local'), and the Pacific students included both 'local' and 'international' students. We did not set out to exclude Māori or Pacific students from the 'local student' group, however, we intentionally used multiple recruitment pathways to ensure that students could participate in a group with whom they felt comfortable (Pratt, 2002). For ease of explanation, we refer to the four cohorts in the remainder of the report as Māori, Pacific, international and local; however, we recognise these descriptors as an over-simplification of the students' identities (Hall, 1996).

The participants met together twice over two weeks in August 2016, in seven focus groups: a Pacific combined (postgraduate and undergraduate) group; and Māori, international and local postgraduate and undergraduate groups. Group facilitators each had a close connection to the groups they were facilitating: Humanities Division Māori and Pacific support staff (Ana and Esmay) facilitated the Māori and Pacific groups, a lecturer in student learning (Rob) facilitated the local student groups, and an international PhD student studying education, who was also the project Research Assistant (Rafaela) facilitated the international student groups.

Prior to data collection, we piloted all three approaches as a research team, with Clinton acting as facilitator. This resulted in some adjustments to our interview and critical incident questions, and photography task instructions. We then collected data with each cohort of students through two focus group sessions, run a week apart.

We provided food for the students during each focus group session, and audio recorded the students' discussions, with their consent. In the first focus group session, we explained the project, sought students' written consent, and asked them to complete a brief demographic questionnaire. We then prompted focus group discussion using critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) and open-ended questions (Kvale, 1996). Our use of critical incident technique involved asking the participants to recall a lecture and tutorial that stood out in their minds for any reason - good or bad, and to describe the situation – what happened, how it affected their learning, and why they remembered it. Our open-ended questions asked the students to reflect on what came to mind when we used the terms 'good lecturer' and 'good tutor'; to discuss the lecturing and tutoring approaches that most helped them learn and stay interested, and that they most enjoyed; to identify any other things that helped them to learn in lectures and tutorials; and to outline what they did to learn effectively in each context.

'Photovoice' is a participatory data collection approach. Participants take photographs to capture their ideas about a particular phenomenon, and engage in analysis through selecting what to share, and explaining the image and why they took it (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 2006). In our study, we used photovoice as follows. At the end of the first focus group session, we set the students a photography task: to take four photographs over the next week that they could then share with the focus group. We asked them to take photographs that represented: (1) what they thought of as good teaching in a university setting, and/or (2) how they learnt effectively at university, or what they thought effective learning looked like. We also discussed with the students some ethical considerations around taking photographs in a university setting, including how they might use photographs of things or places to represent ideas (not just people); whether and in what ways they might include people in photographs without asking their permission; how they might take photographs of people while maintaining their anonymity; and how they might choose which photographs to share (after Wang & Burris, 1997).

The second focus group session focused on the photographs. We began by asking the students how they had enjoyed the photography task, and then invited each student to share their photographs with the group, explaining why they took them, why they chose to share them, and what the photographs showed about good teaching and/or effective learning. The students were also encouraged to respond to and ask questions about each other's photographs. During the final focus group session we also asked the students some open-ended questions about the project as a whole (how they had found the process, and what they suggested we change in future).

At the end of the semester, we invited all participants to attend a catered Celebration Hui, along with senior academic and support staff from across the Humanities Division and university. This was an opportunity to present our initial analysis to the students; share the students' responses with the participant group as a whole; and invite students' feedback on both our interpretations of their ideas, and our use of the data moving forward. On this occasion, we also presented the students with a certificate of participation, acknowledging their contribution to the project as 'Good teaching project advisory panel members'. In total, 21 students attended this event, along with nine staff. The students expressed their appreciation at the opportunity to participate in the project, and expressed a willingness to participate as 'live panellists' in future student and staff workshops. The students also made some suggestions for future projects, which we discuss in the following section.

In line with an interpretivist approach, we analysed the data inductively and thematically. We were interested in identifying emergent themes in relation to our research aims and existing literature on teaching and learning in HE. Following transcription of the audio recordings, we coded the focus group transcripts for both dominant themes and 'outlier' data, or contradictory evidence (after Fine & Weis, 2005). Initially, we coded the data manually, and then electronically, using Hyper Research data management software. We 'checked' our interpretations by:

1. dual coding of the data (by both Vivienne and Rafaela);
2. looking for contradictory evidence and 'alternative readings' (Fine & Weis, 2005; Kvale, 1996), and coding the transcripts in multiple ways to reflect these (Thomas, 2006);
3. drawing on multiple data sources – different cohorts of students, and both 'talk-only' and photographic data, and
4. sharing our preliminary analysis with the research team and our participants, and inviting alternative interpretations.

As noted, our analysis of the photovoice data was also participatory in approach, since the participants selected which photographs to share in their group, and interpreted their photographs as part of the focus group discussion (Wang, 2006).

We turn now to our research findings.

Findings

Students' conceptions of 'good teaching' and 'effective learning' were remarkably similar across all four cohorts. Students expressed a deep appreciation for passionate, caring, approachable teachers who seemed genuinely engaged in their areas of expertise, and interested in both students and their learning. Like Māori and Pacific students in previous New Zealand research, our students stressed the importance of teachers relating to students positively (see Airini et al., 2009; Chu et al., 2013; Davidson-Toumu'a & Dunbar, 2009), however, they also suggested that 'good teachers' communicate passion for their subject area and challenge students' thinking.

The students in our study identified both *attributes* and *actions* that characterised good teachers. In this, they echoed students in Lee et al.'s (2015) study, who associated good teaching with specific attributes and strategies. However, unlike Lee et al., we did not ask our participants to respond to predetermined categories. Perhaps for this reason, students' responses differed in that they placed primary emphasis on the personal attributes of good teachers, identifying actions to illustrate how teachers' attributes were revealed in practice. Also, our students drew explicit links between teachers' attributes and actions, and students' learning and affective responses.

The key attributes of good teachers that emerged across all four cohorts of students were (in descending order of frequency) passion; approachability; knowledge and the ability to communicate it; humour; availability; friendliness; and openness to students' diversity, ideas and questions. Two groups also identified good teachers as people who are encouraging (Māori and local students) and humble (local and international students). Some local students who were enrolled in professional programmes described good teachers as having had recent professional experience.

The critical incident discussion, open-ended question, and photovoice data aligned and were complementary, but the photovoice data were notable for its affective 'slant' on students' conceptions of good teaching. In their photographs and associated discussion, students noted that good teachers made them feel confident, motivated, engaged, encouraged, valued and inspired. Also, students' conceptions of effective learning were more clearly articulated in the photovoice than the 'talk-only' data. 'Good teaching' and 'effective learning' emerged as deeply intertwined. The students associated teachers' attributes and actions with students' affective and pragmatic responses, noting that passionate, approachable teachers who were both knowledgeable and able to communicate effectively, engaged them in the learning process; making it easier to listen, participate and understand, even if the subject was difficult or "dry". Conversely, teachers who seemed disinterested in their topic, teaching or students, or who were ineffective communicators, made it difficult to both engage and learn. Echoing Zepke and Leach (2010) and Brownlee et al. (2009), the students saw good teachers as promoting students' wellbeing, interest, and capacity to grapple with new or challenging ideas. They also highlighted working with others and caring for oneself as central aspects of effective learning.

In this section, we provide a broad overview of our findings. We begin by considering the attributes and actions our participants associated with good teaching. We consider three attributes in depth: passion, approachability, and knowledge and the ability to communicate it effectively. We group knowledge and communication together, since the students stressed that unless teachers can communicate well to students, there is limited value in being knowledgeable. We focus on these attributes specifically, because the students referred to all other attributes and actions in relation to them. After considering three key attributes (and the associated actions) of good teachers that emerged in our study, we highlight some alternative conceptions of good teaching that also emerged in our focus group discussions, and then discuss how the students represented good teaching and effective learning in the photovoice data. When considering the photovoice data, we highlight three key themes that emerged in relation to both good teaching and effective learning: partnership, diversity, and the learning journey. Finally, we discuss students' feedback on the study, before identifying the implications of participants' ideas for institutional policies, and pedagogical practice.

Notably, although initially we set out to explore teaching and learning in both lectures and tutorial settings, most of the focus group discussion related to university lectures, or to university 'teaching' generally. Therefore, in the remainder of this section, we refer to university teachers and university teaching generally, but we identify where students referred specifically to tutorial contexts, or tutorial teaching. Also, although we distinguish between the attributes listed above, and describe actions associated with each, the students in our study described the attributes of good teachers as intertwined rather than separate. For example, they highlighted humour and using questions as helpful communicative approaches that also communicated teacher approachability. We recognise that there are multiple ways in which we could have read and represented our data, and that, in practice, good teachers exhibit multiple attributes and actions that together engage and affirm students, and help them to learn.

Good teachers are passionate

In our study, passion emerged as the foremost characteristic of good teachers. The students used a range of synonyms besides "passion" to describe passionate teachers, including "engaged", "enthusiastic", "interested", and "into it". In some respects, students' emphasis on passion aligned with the findings of earlier studies,

which associated good teaching with enthusiasm and the ability to build rapport with students (Airini et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2015; Parpala et al, 2011). However, the students in our study revealed a broader conception of passion than is evident in the literature cited earlier.

All four cohorts of students referred to passion in relation to a teacher's stance towards their subject area, teaching, and students. For example, here, a student described a teacher's passion as revealing his or her 'personal relationship' with a subject area, in the form of a longstanding research interest and a personal/political commitment:

> It might be it's their research interest and it has been for years or they've got a personal commitment to it … They're promoting their material, you know in a way … because they're personally invested into it and they may not be theatrical about it but … they're just like, I'm really passionate about this … and even … an attempt [at] engaging with the material is just a plus for me. (MFGU 1)[1]

Students described teachers' passion as revealing their personal investment in a subject area, and as eliciting students' interest and engagement. Students in the Pacific focus group described teachers' passion as both engaging them as learners, and mitigating other difficulties with course content. For example:

> I think what I appreciate about or what I look for in a lecturer is that they're passionate about their subject. I can think of one lecturer in particular, I found his course a little bit overwhelming, the content thrown at us … mind boggling. But his enthusiasm kept me interested, where I would've been like, this is just a bit too much for me. So yeah, when they're passionate that … is engaging and I appreciate being engaged. (PFG 1)

Students suggested that teachers' passion tends to be mirrored in students' responses.

Macfarlane (2012) argues that the ideal university professor (academic) is an intellectual leader, who can "mobilise others through inspiration" in ways that change society for the better (p. 11). Across all four of our student cohorts, our participants described passionate teachers as irresistible and influential - engaging, entertaining, interesting, memorable, inspiring, and sometimes, funny - because they were "into" their subject area, and teaching as an opportunity to share it. Students described passion in teaching as exhibited through specific actions (see Table 1), but also as a stance, or a way of being. One student drew a distinction between teachers who show passion, and those who seem to be teaching out of obligation:

> Some of them are really passionate about what they do and some just do it because it's their job, like they were researchers and now they're lecturers and I think that makes a huge difference … But I think the way the teacher

[1] Excerpts from focus group transcripts are identified as follows. The letters identify the group being cited: LFGU is 'Local focus group undergraduate'; LFGP is 'Local focus group postgraduate'; MFGU is 'Māori focus group undergraduate'; MFGP is 'Māori focus group postgraduate'; IFGU is 'International focus group undergraduate'; IFGP is 'International focus group postgraduate'; and PFG is 'Pacific focus group' (since the Pacific postgraduate and undergraduate participants worked together in one group). The number refers to whether the excerpt comes from the first or second focus group discussion (for example, MFGP 2 refers to the second Māori postgraduate student focus group discussion).

> engages people has to do with how they live their profession …, because either they walk the talk or not. So I think that makes a huge difference. (IFGP 1)

In our study students drew a clear connection between teachers' passion and students' learning, for example:

> I had some very brilliant lecturers who, their intrinsic motivation in education triggers mine … I think it goes back to the passion, you know of the lecturers … I totally think they can stimulate that. I remember [that] in teachers since I was a child. Like I was really inspired by teachers. I look at them now and I want to be like him when I grow up. I wanted to, to do that and it's not only what they know. It's what they are, what they show, … I think they can totally inspire that. (IFGP 2)

In the quotes above, students echoed Macfarlane's (2012) construction of 'good academics', associating passion with authenticity – the ability to "walk the talk" or "live their profession" as researchers *and* teachers.

Some students suggested that passionate teachers prompted 'deep' learning in their students. For example an international undergraduate student described a 'good teacher' as:

> … a lecturer who's really inspiring, like, really provokes you to think hard, … [who can] ask you a lot of questions and really inspire you to think … make you want to dig down into a topic … you know, and … who are also kind of enthusiastic, so they are really interested in what they are talking about, so that makes … you interested in the topic more. (IFGU 1)

In the statement above, a student identified pedagogical strategies that passionate teachers use to actively engage students. These included asking questions, and showing a genuine interest in students' ideas. In our study, students' evident appreciation for passionate teachers who challenged and inspired them contested representations of students as strategic learners who are more interested in having a degree than in learning (for example, see Molesworth et al., 2009).

As noted, previous New Zealand research with Māori and Pacific students highlights positive teacher-student relationships as fostering student success in HE (Airini et al., 2011; Curtis et al., 2012). Māori students in our study talked explicitly about teachers' passion as facilitating positive teacher-student relationships and their own engagement in learning. They described passionate teachers as role models who shape students' aspirations, as well as their learning. One student commented:

> I find that lecturers are quite influential in kind of who we aspire to be. Like for example, a lecturer who's mundane and who looks like they don't like their job and explains the content in like a monotone … That doesn't make me want to be like them when [I'm] older, whereas someone who's passionate about … their job, how, [it applies] to their life, they tell us of all their experiences and stuff, it's like wow. I want to do that with my life. I want to change the world like that. That's kind of, I think they need to realise how influential they really are. (MFGU 1)

In the undergraduate focus group, Māori students acknowledged the significance of well-respected and experienced Māori lecturers, describing them as inspiring role models who were able to influence others by challenging dominant ideas. For example, one student reflected:

> I think for me as a, as a young Māori person, like having somebody who, not only is a really successful Māori person herself but someone who manages to articulate a history that is sometimes kind of ignored or dismissed by other students. I don't know, I find that quite inspiring to me. (MFGU 2).

Māori students suggested that the influence of passionate teachers' inspired students' aspirations to positively influence others.

Students acknowledged that some teachers may find it harder than others to convey a sense of passion, but noted that passion was not only conveyed through a high level of exuberance. In addition, they hinted at the importance of learning spaces being 'safe' (Curtis et al., 2012), alluding to the possibility that passion without reflection may have a negative influence on students. In the second undergraduate local student focus group, students highlighted the need for teachers to reflect on their "positionality", or the ways in which their teaching affects students' thinking.

> Lecturers have to be aware that what they teach us really does affect us … they need to be aware of their positionality because everything that they are teaching us … [has] been drilled into us and so we are going to become, you know in some cases, mini versions of them (laughs).
>
> They influence the way that we grow.
>
> Massive influence, and so … sometimes I think they just need to be more aware of their positionality. (LFGU 2)

Echoing Curtis et al., (2012), these students stressed the importance of teachers showing passion while recognising their position as role models who shape students' thinking and "grow[th]" as people.

The students in our study drew connections between passion and knowledge, but also distinguished between the two. For example, a local postgraduate student described as "entertaining" good teachers who were invested in "really dry" content in ways that made it "memorable" for students. She said:

> [Good lecturers] entertain you almost because they have this *huge* amount of interest and appreciation for the subject and you sit there and you're thinking, I know this is *really* dry stuff, you know. You're drawing some weird mathematical formula on the board and yet, at the same time, this lecturer's … really into it and really involved and engaged with it and … that makes little elements of it humorous and it makes it a bit more memorable. Sometimes … it's them being happy to say … I know most of you don't care about this and it seems tiny and insignificant but I find this incredibly important or I find this valuable or, or whatever they say and something of that is amusing as a student and it keeps you engaged which shows their interest and that hooks you in a different way that is entertaining. (LFGP 1, emphases original)

To this student, teachers who convey enthusiasm for their (apparently boring) subject area "hook" students into learning. Similarly, another student implied that teachers' enthusiasm with a subject area elicits students' fascination:

> We have a … lecturer, and he always relates it back to his own experiences. … He tells about his time in the Cold War and whatnot… and it's quite funny

> … when you see someone who's so like passionate and so excited about what he does. (MFGU 1)

The two students above suggested that their teachers' passion was "funny" and "entertaining" in a way that provoked both students' amusement and interest, sometimes *despite* the course content.

Curtis et al. (2012) suggest that small class sizes are likely to be more effective for Māori students. However, first-year classes at university are often quite large. Interestingly, undergraduate Māori students in our study noted that a teacher's passion could make up for lack of personal connection, or foster a sense of connection (between the lecturer and student, student and topic) where it was otherwise difficult to develop due to large class sizes, or despite students' initial disinterest. Here is an excerpt from the first focus group conversation:

> It's not always possible for them to have a personal connection with you if it's a lecture that's got 200 people in it, but when the lecturer's real animated … it helps you keep your attention on them rather than if they're just … reading off a piece of paper in a monotone and you're like, oh okay (laughs). I'm going to fall asleep. But when they're … real enthusiastic and passionate, it helps focus too.
>
> Yeah, when they're engaged with their material and you know that they're personally engaged with it …
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> … In a way that they're connected to it because then they can impart that to you and make you, and … sort of like try to infect you with their enthusiasm (laughs) … you appreciate the attempt (laughs)… You at least appreciate, well they're passionate about this and, you know … there must be something about it rather than being monotonal, as you say in how they deliver it, yeah. (MFGU 1)

Here, students linked passion with a communication style that showed the lecturer's connection with their topic, and enthusiasm for sharing it with students. The students conceptualised good teachers as having a personal investment in both their field of interest, and in communicating it to students, suggesting that this elicited students' investment in learning.

An international student suggested that teachers' investment in their subject area, and ability to convey it well, differentiates face-to-face teaching from online teaching where actual 'teachers' are not present.

> Just parentheses regarding teaching nowadays that I think it's different from in the past, when you, you needed a teacher to get access to knowledge. Now you don't need that any more. So I would say that … we have the internet or we can just go to the knowledge, information much easier and so I would say that all those other things that we are saying about being an example or feedback or inspiration or passion, in my opinion, they've just become more important because we don't need the teachers anymore just for information. So but I think we still need them for inspiration and for passion and for motivation and for feedback so we can't get that somewhere else. So I would say probably this still needs lots of focus. (IFGP 2)

To this student, in our contemporary 'knowledge society', where knowledge is easily accessible, teachers are not needed for imparting knowledge (since "we can just go to the knowledge"), but they *are* needed for "inspiration", "passion" and "feedback".

Like passionate teachers generally, in our study, passionate tutors also emerged as supporting students' engagement and learning. The Māori undergraduate students in our study described the impact of passionate tutors at length, but unlike in Curtis et al.'s (2012) study, they did not mention the importance of including Māori-specific content. One student described a particular tutor whose passion for the content material and capacity to share it led to new learning beyond the lectures, saying:

> I think it's like having … a bit of connection with the tutor. Like you find them interesting and if they're passionate about it, … like I had one tutor and he … had done all this kind of stuff and so he had lots of background knowledge so the discussions would be amazing with him because he would just know so much other stuff about it really and he'd … prompt you and … it was just really good. (MFGU 1)

Echoing other students' comments about passionate teachers generally, this student described the tutor's passion as letting students "find him interesting" – as leading to a sense of connection with the person, and therefore, with what he had to share. The student noted specific strategies the tutor used to build a sense of connection with students, such as sharing ideas or personal stories, and prompting discussion (see Table 1). Another student in the same focus group also expressed appreciation for passionate tutors, but associated passion with support, highlighting the affective impact of passionate tutors on students:

> It was really good to bounce ideas off senior students who are PhD students … somehow they manage to source really good tutors as well who are high quality and who are passionate about the subject and they're quite happy, and they've been students and they are students, so … they can relate to you. Like hey, look honestly, this … is difficult material and it's difficult for everyone. You just need a bit of extra time with it. So being encouraging, I think. Developing a sense of confidence that you will get there (laughs). (MFGU 1)

This student again stressed a sense of connection as facilitating an effective learning environment, but associated passion (in the case of tutors) with encouragement, as well as engagement with course content. For this student, passion about content was powerful alongside empathetic reassurance that strengthened their confidence. The student's comments align with Airini et al. (2011), who suggest that good (passionate) tutors foster students' confidence and sense of empowerment.

Although all four cohorts of students identified good teachers as passionate teachers whose actions helped them learn, they also acknowledged that passion can be shown in a variety of different ways, and that demonstrating passion outwardly might be more difficult for some teachers than others. Some students associated passion with humour – noting that teachers could be "funny" through using jokes or telling stories, being "animated" in the lecture, and/or because of their own enthusiasm for apparently "dry" content (see earlier). However, the students noted that passion could be conveyed by overt actions, *and* by simply seeming happy to teach, as is evident in the discussion excerpt below:

> But even a simple thing … like, my … lecturer, … we walked into the lecture before it started and she was playing, you know Guns and Roses or something, just some sort of music. It was sort of getting people amped up and ready to go but she looked enthusiastic and … the audience looked fairly enthusiastic as well.
>
> In all fairness, that might be harder for some. You know … it's a very personal thing …
>
> You can't just … expect everyone to…
>
> …Suddenly become charismatic
>
> … Not even charismatic, but like at the same time, … it's not too hard to do it in your own way, just getting across that general vibe that you like what you're doing.
>
> …And students will appreciate if you're trying. (MFGU 1)

Previous studies have suggested that good teachers are open to students' diversity (Airini et al., 2009; Chu et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2015; Parpala et al., 2011), and this emerged as a finding in our study (see later). However, our participants also revealed an awareness of, and appreciation for, *teachers'* diversity, expressing appreciation of charismatic or entertaining teachers, teachers who simply seemed happy to be teaching students, and teachers who were "trying" to convey enthusiasm for teaching.

Students indicated that passion goes a long way in engaging students and facilitating their learning, but some also suggested that passion on its own does not make a teacher 'good'. For example, a Māori undergraduate student stressed the importance of teachers being passionate about teaching, not just their subject area, and showing this passion through close attention to "practicalities", such as accurate course information. This student associated poorly constructed (out of date) course material with a lack of care for students, a failure to honour their economic investment, and a lack of passion for teaching:

> They've got to be passionate about teaching as well. And like they can engage with their own material, … but they also have to be passionate about teaching and treat students like a customer. I get really irritated when I get an outline but the dates haven't been changed, you know, so you go up to them and go, it says 2015. Oh, that was because I printed off from last year. Right, … so you haven't taken the care to go through your own course outline and I'm having to correct it … You know, it's the practicalities involved in teaching. So … I know you might have a gazillion journal articles but I just want … to feel like I'm valued and so lecturers who are good will make sure that … the stuff they put out, their outlines, their assignments are clear, precise, what they want, you know because … at the end of the day, we're paying fees to get a service and part of a good lecturer is that they're able to meet that and they're able to make sure their outlines are accurate … So having a passion about teaching itself and the practicalities involved in that. (MFGU 1)

Similarly, an international postgraduate student noted that teachers may be passionate, but technically weak. They remarked, "I would say that there are some people that … are passionate but they still can't give a good lecture. So they are

passionate. They are committed but they still don't know how to prepare a good PowerPoint or to give a, a reasonable lecture" (IFP 2). A Pacific student, who emphasised the value of teachers' passion, also reflected on a passionate teacher who was a weak communicator, due to his inability to structure the content effectively or concisely. The student recalled:

> A lecturer that I struggled with, I know he loved his content. But I think he … came about communicating that in a very roundabout way. He wasn't concise, and I felt like the lectures could've been 25 minutes instead of 50. So that's really difficult, when you feel like they're repeating the same content and they're talking for the sake of talking. I was just like send me out early… kind of thing (laughter). So, yeah, that's engagement and enthusiasm. (PFG 1)

While acknowledging that ideally, good teachers demonstrate communicative and technical expertise as well as passion, students also acknowledged that a lack of passion may be harder to "fix" than teachers' technical limitations. One student remarked, "It's easier to fix how to give a good lecture and prepare a better PowerPoint than to like build passion in someone that doesn't have [it]" (IFGP 2). Similarly, in the first Māori undergraduate focus group discussion, a student noted her preference for passionate rather than knowledgeable teachers, saying, "I think the key is to kind of remember you're teaching students … I feel like I'd get more out of someone that's passionate than someone that's just got knowledge" (MFGU 1).

The students identified a range of specific actions that good teachers used to convey passion. These are outlined in Table 1, along with the responses that students associated with each action, and illustrative quotes. The students identified passionate teachers as speaking in an animated (rather than "monotonal" way), relating content to personal stories and experiences, asking questions, proactively inviting discussion, providing comprehensive written material, taking time to consider new concepts from a range of angles, and using different examples to explain ideas. Students identified these actions as helping them focus, actively participate in class (by asking questions and engaging in discussion), "go deeper" in their learning, and engage with and understand course content.

Table 1. Actions teachers use to convey passion in teaching

Actions	Effects	Illustrative quotes
Speaking in an animated way	Students are focused and attentive	Most people when they think of accounting would think, there's nothing more boring than just straight numbers but I think the fact that … if she's amped up and ready to go, even if … the students just can't be bothered doing it, like that enthusiasm does feed through, even if she looks you know, a little bit silly (laughs) at the start but it's far better to listen to someone who's … happy while they're lecturing and … I think another thing too is like that they're not monotonal. You know, that they've got some tonal variety, … I think skilled speakers just make it so much more interesting to listen to. (MFGU 1)
	Students can recall content Students engage in discussion	When they're really into [it], it sticks in your mind as well. Like … when I used to have exams, I'd remember the stuff that that lecturer that was like dancing around the front of theatre … was talking about … You remember it and even when you're revising, you go, oh that's right, yeah … It's really hard to remember and to recall the monotonal ones because you really have to focus a bit more (laughs). I think … Those animated type of lecturers are the ones that you would want to contribute to discussion with … as opposed to those that are monotonal. (MFGP 1)
Relating content to personal stories	Students are emotionally invested in course content	I find lecturers engaging when they're passionate about what they're talking about, like in humanities … I find lecturers are amazing at relating personal stories to the content that they're teaching and I find it's so much more, … touching, … it makes you feel emotion for what you're learning which I really like because I like engaging in that sort of way. (MFGU 1)
	Students make links between ideas	I suppose like some … may not physically … show … passion but through their words, … they can kind of tell a narrative about what they're teaching … They make you … put the links to the different points of information … They'll like tell a big story to get you to the conclusion. (MFGP 1)
	Students can recall key concepts	[A good teacher] does not only read the slides ... He will refer to the slides and he will tell you a story about that because what you're going to memorise is not the slides, [but] the story he told, and then when we remember the story he told, you are going to remember the slides. (IFGU 1)
Asking questions	Students think more deeply about the topic	[A good teacher is] a lecturer who's really inspiring … really provokes you to think hard, … [who can] ask you a lot of questions and really inspire you to think … make *you* want to dig down into a topic … you know, and … who are also kind of like enthusiastic, so they are really interested in what they are talking about, so that makes you interested in the topic more. (IFGU 1, emphasis original)

Proactively inviting discussion	Students respond to questions and express their views	I think that you can actually tell if the lecturer … has a passion in what they're doing, rather than when the lecturer [is] just like reading from the slides … You can totally tell by … their movements in class and how they go to each student and really like ask for their opinions and all that … letting the students also engage and give their opinions. (IFGP 1)
Providing comprehensive written material Taking time to consider new concepts from a range of angles Using different examples to explain ideas	Most students understand the course content	One lecturer who was really, really passionate about … the subject and who had lots of really good notes, he had awesome examples and if he, started teaching on a particular … principle or idea, he would … really … dwell on it for a while and look at it from lots of different angles so that if you didn't pick it up from one angle, you could understand it from another example. So he'd like use three or four different examples just to dwell on that single point, so that he would know that he would get most of the class, which I thought was awesome teaching skills … and, yeah, he was really, really passionate about it. (PFG 1, emphases added)
Communicating clearly Providing comprehensive course material	Students find the content easy to follow and understand	This one lecturer that I had early on in the year, she was really passionate about the subject and she explained all the content in general terms, … she explained it really plainly and really easily. So it was really easy to follow and the content was so much easier to understand. And yeah, her slides were really good as well, very comprehensive. (PFG 1)

Good teachers are approachable

All four cohorts of students also identified good teachers as approachable. Students described approachable teachers as able to connect with students, and as making students feel able to relate to them, whether inside or outside of class. The students talked about approachable teachers in relational and affective terms. They described what teachers did that made them approachable, and how they (as students) felt in response. Students associated teachers' approachability with feelings of comfort and safety; a sense of enjoyment; and a willingness to take risks, share divergent opinions, and come to/engage in class. Students' comments echoed research which suggests that approachable teachers are open to students, willing to engage with them, and able to provide a 'safe' learning environment (Curtis et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2015; Parpala et al., 2011). In our study, students acknowledged that 'being approachable' is more difficult in large classes, but indicated a deep appreciation of teachers who took the time and effort to demonstrate approachability to students, regardless of class size.

The students described approachable teachers as creating a teaching/learning environment where students could ask and answer questions, share ideas, disagree, and seek help if necessary, and linked teachers' approachability to students' willingness to learn. In this, they reflected Curtis et al.'s (2012) suggestion that quality teaching in HE involves actively fostering student-student and teacher-student interaction, providing a 'safe' learning environment, and fostering a sense of cohort. Here, a Pacific student describes approachability in terms of the teacher "paying attention" and taking a "personal" interest in students:

> For one of my lectures, it was a smaller class so it was, easy to do this, but … he got us to introduce ourselves and then he actually asked a question about the information that we said. And I was like, oh, he was actually paying attention. Like he was actually listening and, at times, he would bring

> that up over the course of our class and stuff. He'd be like, oh that relates to you, or you guys know each other because of this kind of thing. So again that whole personal atmosphere where you feel known and stuff. (PFG 1)

Students acknowledged that approachability may be costly for university teachers, given the size of many undergraduate class sizes and teachers' other responsibilities besides teaching, but suggested that approachable teachers communicate a sense of *care*. In turn, this promoted students' willingness to seek help if necessary, and motivated them to engage with the course. Here is an excerpt from the first local undergraduate students' focus group discussion, where they discussed the relationship between care and approachability:

> Something I really appreciate …[is] an open door policy. Like you can always go and knock on the door and be like, hi. I have this question kind of thing and to me, that's insane because if you're trying to write and do all the other things that lecturers are expected to do and people can just come in and knock on your door at any time. I don't know how you do that.
>
> Well maybe it's even just like the attitude of them saying that, *hey*, you can come any time. That means, hey, this person cares about me. I'm engaged. I'm going to work hard. I'm going to work harder…and I might not even need to go and see them but even just saying that at the start of the year, you'll get the people like me coming (laughter).
>
> But if people *feel* like this person is an open, caring, considerate …
>
> Because like if they … set it up as like, you're really welcome and I want to help you, then it starts to feel like they're not there to spit a lecture out at you and then leave. Like they actually care about your learning beyond just like going to lectures. (LFGU 1)

Students described teachers' approachability (or demonstration of care for students) as deeply connected with both student engagement and student learning:

> I was also thinking about how, it's quite hard to delineate what happens in lectures from what happens outside, at least with the lecturers that I've had who I think are doing a really great job, is that it's all connected and so yeah, the lecturing experience is informed by the way they treat us outside of the lecture and stuff. So I go to all the lectures for this class because … I know I can go and chat to my lecturer after class about issues or …
>
> … So the relationship is *so* important.
>
> Exactly, and that makes like talking in class really easy. (LFGU 1)

In the excerpt above, students highlighted the centrality of teacher-student relationships to student engagement and student learning, stressing a connection between students' classroom behaviour and teachers' demeanour towards students "outside of the lecture". This links to the suggestion noted in the previous section that good teachers "walk the talk", or demonstrate authenticity in their work with students. It also aligns with the suggestion by Curtis et al. (2012) that quality teaching involves showing support for students beyond the classroom or lecture theatre (also see Madge et al., 2009).

The students in our study acknowledged that some environments make teachers seem more approachable than others; for example, large class sizes may limit teachers' capacity to engage with students personally, or to be available to students outside lecture times. However, they stressed the centrality of the "lecturer's attitude" in indicating approachability. Here, two different focus group conversations draw a sharp contrast between how teachers communicated approachability versus unapproachability to students in large classes. First, from the Māori postgraduate focus group discussion:

> Teaching is different to research … like being able to teach people and being approachable, you know, like as though we're not wasting their time (laughs). Some lecturers give you that feeling, I'm here for the lecture but that's it. Don't talk to me after, after that … Yeah, and that's all part of that teaching skill … I think …
>
> Some lecturers [are] like, … don't email me. They'll say it on their outline. Don't email me. Don't … give me any questions. You've got to save it for the tutes … so they're very clear about their expectations, whereas some lecturers are like, hey, look, if you can grab me in the corridor, I'm quite happy to talk to you. (MFGP 1)

And from the local undergraduate focus group:

> The attitude of the lecturer is very, very important.
>
> Yes, because if they present, hey guys, if they're totally calm and if you've got a question da da da and even people that might feel introverted and challenged in a situation like that…
>
> …Yeah, I think the way the lecturer establishes things as far as making it clear that they're very open to that and that they will be sort of friendly and respectful of any sort of queries you have, then I think the students who are a bit anxious or shy or whatever, they're more likely to feel comfortable doing that and that's going to benefit their learning.
>
> And they're going to yeah, come to class and enjoy it more, I suppose…
>
> Yeah, because they'll be more comfortable. (LFGU 1)

In their discussions above, students highlighted how teachers could communicate approachability (or otherwise) in multiple ways, including in their course material, the expectations they established at the beginning of a course, and their (calm, friendly, respectful or closed) demeanour. These students noted that for students who may be more shy or reticent in large lectures, the lecturer's cues were crucial. They associated teachers' approachability with students' comfort, willingness to come to class, enjoyment and learning.

Some students alluded to the teacher-student hierarchy as making it difficult for students to approach teachers or speak up in class. One student expressed deep appreciation for lecturers who take the time to respond to individual students' specific questions:

> There's nothing that helps me more and, and at the same time feels more honouring to me than when a lecturer actually sets aside time to bring you

> into the office and to sit down and talk in detail over a large assignment that you've requested help for. (LFGP 2)

Similarly, a local undergraduate student recalled her surprise and joy at an informal interaction that took place in a lecturer's office, where she recognised the lecturer as "a person" and felt recognised in return, as both a person and an adult (rather than "just a student"):

> I think we forget that they're people and I think sometimes they forget that we're people and we do, we've got those backgrounds and those stories and I was in one of the offices and one of them had all these beautiful photos of all of her grandkids and everything and I was, like well this is really, really nice … Like actually, yeah, you're actually a person. You're speaking to me, like we have this great conversation and it actually went completely off topic, miles off course advice and just went into like our passions for various social issues and I was treated like an adult and she recognised that I was actually like a person. I wasn't just a student and she was my superior and I … think that's a really awesome thing when you're like, that's right, you're a person. (LFGU 2)

The student highlighted the value of informal one-to-one interactions between teachers and students, suggesting that opportunities for teachers and students to share/learn about each other's backgrounds and stories allow new understandings and relationships to emerge. Although the students above were not talking about 'culture' specifically, their comments can be read as echoing suggestions in earlier work with Māori and Pacific students about the importance of teachers recognising, respecting, and affirming students' cultural backgrounds (Airini et al., 2011; Curtis et al., 2012).

As noted, Curtis et al. (2012) argue that small class sizes are a marker of quality teaching for Māori students in HE, but in our study, students expressed a deep appreciation for staff efforts to create interactive opportunities *despite* large classes and institutional hierarchies. Like Curtis et al. (2012), students stressed the importance of having a sense of relationship with the lecturer, and linked (positive) teacher-student relationships with feelings of motivation, encouragement, and success. For example:

> I appreciate it when a lecturer is approachable and you can establish a relationship with … them and even in some of the bigger classes, … there's always opportunities to talk to the lecturer afterwards. And when I've taken that up, I feel more motivated to attend their class when I've got a relationship and stay awake as well, when they sort of see me afterwards. Getting that relationship and lecturers, … they *want* to hear from you. Like that's always really encouraging like you know, like no one wants to be a hassle or a bother. And there are some lecturers who, it's not that they make it seem like it's a trouble that you're emailing them or whatever but they don't really give you the time of day, as much as other ones [who] are like¸ '*oh* I'm so glad you're interested. Here, let me help you out with this', kind of thing. Yeah, so I think that whole relationship and dynamic is really important for successful learning. (PFG 1, emphases original)

Specifically, students suggested that teacher approachability breaks down the teacher-student hierarchy, including in large classes. They linked approachability with recognition of teachers' humanness - that teachers are *people*, and potentially "friends".

> I find the lecturers really approachable too.
>
> But that is that feeling that I have. I don't know if everybody though. I can't take too much of their time because they are such important people.
>
> So … you feel there is like a big hierarchy, like a big
>
> …gap
>
> Between us and them (laughs).
>
> But actually, I just recently found … they're really just friends. They're really just really approachable. Like they, they are just really nice … I just feel like they can, they can just be friends … Yeah, I guess if you just take the initiative to, to actually talk to them, they are really nice people. (IFGU 1)

Notably, the students above highlighted how students may need to "take initiative to… talk" to university teachers, in order to discover teachers' approachability. They suggested that teacher approachability helps students overcome the "big … gap" between students and teachers in university settings, but pointed to the power of perception in structuring teacher-student relationships. Specific actions that students identified as demonstrating teachers' approachability (and thus, diminishing the feeling of there being a "big hierarchy") are outlined in Table 2.

Some students indicated that they found tutors more approachable than lecturers, since tutors are closer to students in the institutional hierarchy. For example, here, an international undergraduate student distinguishes between lecturers and tutors, and describes a tutor's proactive efforts to demonstrate approachability:

> [The tutor] gives you all the information, the contact information like again, again, again, again. So like a lot of people would be shy or whatever, they actually don't want to contact you first. He will instead like go contact you first which is great and, I think [the] tutor can just be friends instead sort of being a lecturer because lecturers are kind of higher up than like tutors here. Maybe tutor can be friends. That would be great. (IFGU 1)

Another student highlighted the power of perception. She articulated a preference for engaging with tutors, but admitted that her reluctance to approach lecturers had been caused by her assumptions, and not a lecturer's actual failure to be approachable:

> I prefer, more prefer interaction with the tutor personally … I have never initiated with my lecturer. I never talk to my lecturers. I always think they are in a hurry or that they are too busy for me, but they *never* told me that, that's something that's in my mind. (IFGU 1, emphasis original)

Students noted how the teaching/learning environment can shape students' perceptions of teachers' approachability or otherwise. They expressed a sense that it is easier to 'get to know the lecturer' in small classes:

> Usually it's a very massive class so it's sort of hard for you to sort of have some sort of personal engagement. So I found over the years, as classes have gotten smaller, I've tended to enjoy them more. I found them way more

> engaging … [I] tend to enjoy them more and yeah, just getting to know the lecturer, the teachers is a huge thing for me. (PFG 1)

Students also suggested that the formality (or otherwise) of class settings may shape students' perceptions of teachers' approachability, hinting at the value of offering learning support opportunities alongside formal lectures (Curtis et al., 2012). Some students described occasions when lecturers gave tutorials rather than tutors, noting that lecturers seemed more relaxed and approachable in more informal settings. For example:

> I remember in my first year when I was taking … tutorial … and even though our tutor was our lecturer, the way that he was tutoring us was a more casual atmosphere … it was just that different atmosphere and … the different types of expectations of the tutorial, so … he wasn't perceived as the formal lecturer anymore. So he was more, more relaxed, yeah, more relatable. (MFGP 1)

Curtis et al. (2012, p. 34) argue, "It is not enough to create safe havens for Māori students within the faculty; the faculty itself must become safe for Māori students". The students in our study highlighted the important role approachable university teachers play in making university a safe place for all students, not just for Māori. Students associated approachable teachers with students' sense of comfort, and willingness to contribute to discussion in class.

Although the students in our study highlighted approachability as the second most important attribute of 'good teachers', they also noted that someone is not necessarily a good teacher, simply because they are approachable. Reflecting on her own work as a tutor, a postgraduate Pacific student referred to the importance of not being "too friendly" with students, highlighting the need to maintain professional boundaries. Other students stressed that approachable teachers who did not have sufficient knowledge or were not sufficiently prepared to teach students well, did not help them learn. Here, an international undergraduate student describes her experience with approachable but unprepared tutors:

> The ones that have a few problems are the ones that don't know what to answer you, so they will answer anything … So then they want to help, they are approachable but they don't actually know *how* to help you. (IFGU 1, emphases original)

Elsewhere in the same discussion, a student suggested that approachability without knowledge reduces students' confidence:

> When a tutor does not know what he is talking about and you can see that the tutor is very confused, it is, it makes you feel *very*, very low confidence because this is the person that you know that's going to be marking your work. (IFGU 1, emphasis original)

Students emphasised approachability *and* preparedness (or proficiency) to teach as key qualities of good tutors. For example:

> If I have a tutor who says, okay, no wrong answers or … I'm happy about that, but then there's also the … setting up a comfortable environment … I think my best ones are the ones who are really well prepared to deliver what they need to deliver. (PFG 1)

In the next section we discuss how the students identified good teachers as not only passionate and approachable, but also knowledgeable, and able to communicate knowledge effectively.

The students identified a range of specific actions through which good teachers demonstrate approachability. These are outlined in Table 2, along with the responses that students associated with each action, and illustrative quotes. The students identified approachable teachers as introducing themselves to students and proactively initiating communication; creating opportunities for, and welcoming, interaction regardless of class size; affirming and welcoming students' contributions and questions in class; being explicit about when they were available and how they preferred students to contact them; fostering teacher-student and student-student relationships; acknowledging and inviting diverse viewpoints; treating students as equals; using student questions as a teaching tool; and taking the stance of both learner and teacher.

Table 2. Actions teachers use to demonstrate approachability

Actions	Effects	Illustrative quotes
Introducing oneself and communicating proactively with students	Students develop a sense of connection with the teacher	I really like it when [lecturers] introduce themselves … Usually it's a very massive class so it's sort of hard for you to sort of have some sort of personal engagement … Just getting to know … the teachers is a huge thing for me. (PFG 1)
	Students feel reassured that it is acceptable to ask questions or seek help	It's like that personal contact as well, like through email or Blackboard or whatever … it's so much easier if a lecturer can communicate appropriately … Because you can depend on it, can't you? Yeah, like I know that if I email a lecturer or a tutor a question … [the answer is] always comprehensive and it's always helpful and, and always at the end, it's if you have any more question, please, come see me and so … it really shows that they care which is really reassuring. (LFGU 1)
Initiating, creating opportunities for, and welcoming, interaction regardless of class size	Students develop a sense of relationship with the teacher Students feel that they can ask questions and seek help Students are motivated to attend class and engage with course content Students' learning is enhanced	I appreciate it when … a lecturer is approachable and you can establish a relationship with them and even in some of the bigger classes, there's always opportunities to talk to the lecturer afterwards. When I've taken that up, I feel more motivated to attend their class when I've got a relationship and stay awake as well, when they sort of see me afterwards … they *want* to hear from you. Like that's always really encouraging, … no one wants to be a hassle or a bother… [They] are like¸ '*oh* I'm so glad you're interested. Here, let me help you out with this', kind of thing … So I think that whole relationship and dynamic is really important for successful learning. (PFG 1)

Affirming students' contributions and questions in class	Students want to contribute to class discussions Students feel safe contributing	In terms of like lecturers engaging in discussions with the audience, those animated type of lecturers are the ones that you would want to contribute to discussion with … And they do it in a safe way. You really do feel like that nothing is a silly, like no comment you're going to come up with because they really go, oh yeah, never thought of that, you know like that, I've found that. (MFGP 1) He'll present heaps of material and theories and stuff but he'll also be open to people's experiences and perspectives too, instead of like just being this one way kind of thing … … And just more open to discussion rather than just … a one way thing of we talk at you, you listen to us. (LFGU 1)
Explicitly telling students how and when teachers can be contacted	Students know how to approach the teacher Students feel comfortable approaching the teacher Students attend class Students enjoy class	Some lecturers are like, hey, look, if you can grab me in the corridor, I'm quite happy to talk to you. (MFGP 1) If you're a lecturer and you've got a busy week, then you know, like communicate it with your students. (LFGU 2) I think the way the lecturer establishes things as far as making it clear that they're very open … and that they will be sort of friendly and respectful of any … queries you have, then I think the students who are a bit anxious or shy or whatever, they're more likely to feel comfortable [coming to the lecturer] and that's going to benefit their learning. And they're going to yeah, come to class and enjoy it more, I suppose … Yeah, because they'll be more comfortable. (LFGU 1)
Fostering teacher-student *and* student-student relationships	Students feel comfortable approaching teachers Students feel safe exploring ideas openly Students feel comfortable about expressing their opinions and making mistakes	I think it's that personal relationship … with the people, the lecturers … it's a two-way street. They ask us if [we] need any [help] … and we feel that we can come to them. And it means that you're able to explore, because I mean part of learning is about making mistakes and feeling comfortable to make mistakes and that's a process of learning in itself … And so if you're comfortable with your fellow students and with your lecturers, you can explore your ideas openly. (LFGU 1) I definitely found like from first year, no one talked … it's bigger classes and you're scared, … [but] second year, … it's definitely opened up a bit more. I suppose you know people more … Yeah. It's just that safe space thing. … Yeah, the relationship's not just with lecturers but with fellow students. (LFGU 1)
Explicitly acknowledging and inviting diverse viewpoints	Students feel comfortable sharing divergent viewpoints	There's one lecturer … [who] starts every course she does with like two or three lectures on ideas about what knowledge is and the fact that it's situated and constructed and that everyone's perspective is … [their own] knowledge; it's valid; you can share that … A lot of people find it quite heavy and don't necessarily understand it the first time but once you do get it, it helps you … …see the relevance …… be comfortable … sharing any ideas. (LFGU 1)When you first gathered, creating that atmosphere, … like there's no wrong answers and all that … sort of setting up a comfortable environment. (PFG 1)
Treating students as equals	Students feel that their viewpoints are respected	I think by third year, there's much more a sense of treating you as equals as well. Like my lecturers are *very* open, … they're quite open to you challenging them

	Students contribute their ideas Students engage in class discussion	and I really have enjoyed being treated like an adult. That's been quite a nice shift in learning … Because it's valuing your perspective, like valuing that … it's not just them. Like they want to hear it. Yeah. I definitely engage more as well when I'm being treated like an adult. When it's very condescending, like you guys know nothing (laughs). (LFGU 1, emphasis original)
Using student questions as a teaching tool	Students link questioning with learning	Some really, really good lecturers will actually say, hey look, [I] got these questions. You might all have them, so this is what I'm going to talk about with the last material. So they'll do a recap. … So they'll find ways to engage with you … in a controlled way. (MFGP 1)
Taking the stance of both learner and teacher	Students feel that their contributions are valid and valued Students are more willing to contribute	So it's not, I am an expert and I have the answers … For me, he was displaying humility but it wasn't the all knowing, all seeing … deity at the front of the classroom. It was … about, I'm here to learn with you. I have knowledge that I want to share with you and I have ideas that we're going to throw about … but …I'm here to learn at the same time … and that's what I appreciated. (LFGP 1)

Good teachers are knowledgeable and able to communicate their knowledge effectively

Passion and approachability emerged in our study as key attributes of good teachers, but alongside, the students also highlighted the importance of teachers' knowledge and ability to communicate knowledge to students.

Students stressed their appreciation of teachers who could teach students well, but who also positioned themselves as *learners* (see Table 2, above). Our findings were similar to those of other studies, which highlight the importance of teachers demonstrating content expertise (Airini et al., 2011), challenging students, and communicating effectively (Lee et al., 2015; Parpala et al., 2011).

Students in our study provided detailed reflections on the attributes and actions characteristic of knowledgeable, or "proficient", teachers. They described such teachers as responsive to students' learning needs, able to explain complex ideas, and flexible, or not bound by pre-prepared course materials. As one international postgraduate student explained:

> If you have an in-depth concept of that particular subject, when you are delivering, you feel much ease, so [you are] flexible in the classroom and that draws you to the student more. However, if your content is a bit shaky, then … you'll be so rigid in the classroom, you don't want to go off tangent from the very point that you have prepared and you're also very cautious. (IFGP 1)

This student drew connections between teachers' in-depth knowledge, confidence, flexibility, and approachability to students. Other students made similar observations:

> I've noticed that … the ones who really have got an understanding of their topic can do like, … [skip] over these five slides and I can tell you in two sentences what they are and you can read this … It seems like the higher up they are …, the better they are at summarising something or, and getting it

> across and … perhaps the less skilled they are, the more dependent they are on every PowerPoint. (LFGP 1)

> The lecturers that I look back on, it was great that you know they can have visuals but didn't rely on them, so you had some confidence that they knew what they were talking about (laughs), basically. (MFGU 1)

Students associated teachers' knowledge and proficiency communicating with confidence, clarity, and an ability to respond to students' needs, questions or discussion.

International students in our study linked knowledge (or "wisdom") to experience, and "knowing how to put it":

> More experience gives wisdom to the lecturer, I think … I like the lecturer because he is very knowledgeable and he knows how to put it, and he knows exactly what he is talking about …
>
> > Yeah, so maybe not having the domain of the total subject may be a big barrier, you know …
>
> Because I think when you have the domain, like you can just play with it and [you can] answer questions and even look at [them] from another perspective. (IFGP 1)

The students noted that teachers who were knowledgeable and experienced were able to shape their teaching so that students could understand. They described such teachers as able to "play] with" content, or to adjust their communication approach and take "another perspective" seriously. Students suggested that where teachers have a high level of content expertise, they may be better able to focus on the process of teaching. For example, they noted that knowledgeable teachers could "manage" discussion, or facilitate student interaction *and* return to key points, rather than leaving discussion "float[ing]".

> I both appreciate that to an extent that it opens up the class to be able converse and to have discussions but I've had some classes where you get to the end of the lecture and you think, I want to know where you stand on this. I want to hear from you. I didn't want to just hear from everyone else in the class that must have a big discussion that sort of floats around and doesn't get grounded. (LFGP 1)

The students associated knowledge with an understanding of "the total subject" (or a 'big picture' perspective), *and* the ability to link discussion back to the big picture, rather than leaving it decontexualised.

In our study, students associated teachers' knowledge with their "authority" to teach, and with students' feelings of respect, confidence and "safety". As one Māori undergraduate student stated:

> > I think there's sort of like that respect … if they are authoritative, like … for example, my … lecturer who's … just about finished his PhD, you have complete confidence in him because you know that he knows his stuff. (MFGU 1)

Similarly, a local student commented, “I want to feel safe in a way and I want to trust that person’s knowledge and authority” (LFGP 1). This comment can be seen as contrasting with recent literature that attributes concerns about students’ ‘safety’ to a kind of “pedagogic frailty”, marked by a reluctance to introduce students to “troublesome” knowledge (Land, 2017, p. 179). To the students in our study, knowledgeable teachers could confidently take risks in their teaching, and their confidence inspired students’ confidence (or sense of safety), even if the content was challenging. We discuss these ideas further in the following section.

Notably, the students stressed that knowledge without the capacity to communicate it effectively did not necessarily help them learn. An international postgraduate teacher recalled a “brilliant” teacher, whose teaching was extremely hard to follow, and therefore, who left students feeling “clueless”:

> I had a lecturer and he’s just brilliant. He’s amazing, the amount of information he can process, and he … knows a lot about research. His lecture was like an exciting journey, like but it was full of surprises. You didn’t know where he was coming from or he was going to, what was his point, what he wanted to show you, what he wanted you to know and … it feels like a waste of time … From a learner’s point of view, it was really difficult to follow … He said lots of interesting content, but you didn’t know what to do with that and … I quit the paper and nobody knows what he will do in his exam … Like, curiosity is good but leaving you clueless is not something good. So I think that’s not effective. (IFGP 1)

To this student, the “brilliant” (knowledgeable?) lecturer was ineffective as a teacher due to his communicative style.

As noted, some students suggested that passion could make up for a teachers’ lack of knowledge, but students also suggested that knowledgeable teachers who communicated effectively, could engage and teach students well, despite a lack of “charisma” (passion?). One student put it this way: “If you’re not charismatic, then just absolutely knowing your stuff and like just being really clear and concise about it [makes up for it]” (MFGU 2). Another student suggested that good tutors exhibit a “balance” between knowledge, and the ability to communicate it well to students:

> I mean I guess from a personal perspective many tutors, it’s kind of like going back to that balance of like being able to get it across to the students versus having all the knowledge but can’t get it across as well. (MFGU 2)

Many students stressed the importance of teachers’ being both knowledgeable and able to communicate well, but some also highlighted *relevance* as fostering students’ engagement and learning. In the first Pacific focus group, one student argued that ‘good teaching’ involves “keeping it fresh”, or updating one’s teaching approach (or course materials) for each new group of students:

> …making stuff relevant, you know … to the here and now. You know, bringing something that’s relevant, something that’s happening right now is really good. It just really makes it interesting to me because then I know that they’re just not reading straight off notes like from three or four years ago but they’re actually, you know keeping it updated, keeping it fresh, making it relevant for every year, as they come in sort of. I think that’s good. (PFG 1)

Another student argued that relevance also involves teachers remaining 'in touch' with the course materials. She bemoaned teachers who require students to read particular work, but fail to stay up-to-date with it themselves:

> Sometimes the lecturers, they're sort of out of touch with all the readings that they've put and it's like, well if you don't know what you've gotten us to read, how can we even have a conversation about this? (LFGU 2)

A further student associated a teacher's lack of relevance to students' loss of respect, saying:

> [If] a lecturer will just tell you all about their research experiences, their research trips, … and fail to draw it back, I guess you could make the connections if you were trying, but … You'd have to try really hard, … then I start losing respect for that person because I'm like well, like I'd love to chat to you about this but also … I don't want to learn about your personal life (laughs). (LFGP 1)

In this instance, the teacher shared his knowledge, and perhaps told interesting stories, but lost students' respect as they drew no connection between these stories and the course content.

Some students suggested that 'good teachers' are humble as well as knowledgeable (also see Table 2), or open about the limits to their knowledge. When asked to recall 'good tutors', students stressed the importance of tutors acknowledging what they did not know, if necessary, and seeking out further guidance or information. Here, an international student describes such a tutor, using the word "humble" in reference to the tutor's refusal to project an 'all-knowing' persona:

> He's really humble … he's that kind of person that he will give it back to you later … There have been times … like he didn't know the answer … but … he would give you his extra hours, so like he would contact you, like … give you a call or like text you, say … that time I'm free and I have the answer for you. Come over to my office and I will help you … get through it. (IFGU 1)

For this student, tutors' honesty about not knowing, and willingness to seek out answers in response to questions, commanded students' respect, and was a marker of good teaching.

Although, in this report, we consider a range of 'good teacher' attributes in isolation, in focus group discussions, students frequently highlighted good teachers as revealing multiple, intertwined characteristics. For example, some students noted that knowledgeable teachers who can communicate well, and who are approachable ("relatable") are rather unique:

> [It] is always tough to find that balance between … someone who's got the skills and then someone who's got the knowledge base but not quite that same level which is why, you know you will see a few lecturers who … struggle to kind of convey it in a more relatable way rather than just … say it in the way that they understand. (MFGU 1)

Other students argued that imparting knowledge without passion does not necessarily equate with teaching students well. Students described the need for a "balance" between teachers' knowledge and ability to actively engage students. For example:

> I do feel short changed if someone doesn't sort of lecture with some measure of authority on a subject that they know … that's one of the things I want to know their, the content they have to teach, as well as feeling like I could push them a little bit … and the good lecturers do that by that sort of combination and allow you to go off on a tangent for 20 minutes and bring in another topic and see if their argument still stands or not. (LFGP1)

For the students in our study, 'good teachers' were knowledgeable, able to communicate effectively with students, able to teach in ways that were relevant to students, and easy for students to relate to.

Students described specific communicative actions that facilitated their learning. These included having a clear 'storyline' that engages students; linking content to 'real world' examples; using humour appropriately and in genuine ways; providing a range of different learning opportunities; using questions to promote discussion and debate; linking content to the 'big picture'; providing constructive and explicit feedback; having realistic expectations of students and helping students prioritise; explaining things clearly and without jargon where possible; providing access to materials that support students' independent study; and providing students with guidance on how to learn/what is expected.

In Table 3, we outline the actions students associated with teachers who communicate effectively, the effects of these actions, and illustrative quotes.

Table 3. Actions teachers use to communicate effectively

Actions	Effects	Illustrative quotes
Having a clear 'storyline' that "takes students along with them"	Students engage with, understand, and remember key concepts	The most effective ones were ones where they just didn't sit there and read off a PowerPoint or something. … [They] … were quite fluid in their kōrero so it was as though they were having a conversation, although there were points they were covering and you knew that, but you could just listen to them and actually understand it in a story. (MFGP 1)
Linking content to 'real world' experiences & examples	Students make links between theory and practice	It makes such a big difference, having someone who's actually in the industry at the moment and they can say, look these are the struggles we're having … This is like what we actually do. (LFGU2)
	Students make connections between course content and their own lives, and are willing to share their ideas	He'll really allow for students to … include their personal experiences and personal observations and … instead of kind of having this sort of hierarchy where he's the teacher and he'll say whether or not it's accurate, it's kind of leveled out to like this thing where everyone's … experiences and observations tend to be taken as like valid … He's really interested by what other people have noticed and experienced, and also he's helpful at showing how these sort of personal experiences and observations do link up to the theory … He'll always be interested and … thankful for people's contributions. (LFGU 1)
	Students can relate to the topic	I just like … the presenter's way of personally relating what they're talking to, to yourself as an individual. So a lot of … applicability … They could be talking about something, you know, like asking you to think about it through your own experiences - being able to relate to what their topic is. So even though they're saying one thing, the amount of people in the room are all thinking differently but along, but they can all be tied back to the same … core message. (MFGU 1)

Using humour appropriately & in a way that is genuine	Students want to come to class Students are entertained and engaged Students feel comfortable asking questions and challenging ideas	We were doing the grammar at the time and grammar can be so deadly boring and … there was just stuff in there that he would then have a good old laugh about or he'd mispronounce something and then he'd have a laugh about something or other … There was nobody in the classroom who wasn't getting it or who … didn't appreciate his sense of humour … So he made the whole thing incredibly memorable and grammar is so *not* memorable (laughs). So you'd remember little phrases because he'd kind of play with them in some way … [He] just made two hours of grammar lecture go so much faster and *everybody* wanted to be there … It had that kind of energy that was gentle so that you felt you could ask a question … [he was] open … being challenged about stuff as well. [He] made it fun and funny … He wasn't an entertainer, … but he was entertaining … in the sense that it was fun … and made you giggle for the rest of the day too (laughs). (LFGP 1, emphases original)
	Students feel a sense of connection to the teacher Students stay alert in class Students remember content	It's a full lecture so it was pretty intense but … it was like talking to someone like one on one because she just would casually make a joke or she'd relate it to your own experience as a kid … (MFGU 1) Humour… is really good …it just makes you laugh and keeps you awake during the class. (PFG 1) [Good teachers have] a personality. Like … which comes from having a sense of humour, … I find that *really* helps motivation to go to class. Like you like associate their personality with the paper and it just sort of helps you learn. (PFG 1) [A good lecturer] makes the context really funny for you to remember … It really helps you to remember. (IFGU 1)
Providing a range of different learning opportunities	Students' specific learning needs are met	She also had a lot of photos or lots of written stuff on the slideshows and I'm not much of an oral learner. I like to see it and be able to write it down and copy so I think it's important that she still talked and you got more information from listening to her but the basis of it was on the slideshow. (MFGU 1) He has a particular way of just making everything so engaging, you know and, whether that be through humour or, I think one of the most important things is actually he doesn't have a lot on the slides … They don't actually spell the whole thing out for you and so what that does is, two things, it makes you listen when he's explaining what that point means and second is that … requirement that you do have to go to lectures because you can't just rely on going on Blackboard and look at the lecture slides because looking at two words doesn't explain the full point that he's trying to get across … The highlight of the lecture that I'm thinking of now is when he brought in some of the tutors to sort of act out the situation which is … putting a situation across in different mediums … is like a really effective way of being able to get it through to people's mind and just getting them to grasp all the facts. (MFGU 1)
	Students share their ideas, and learn about other viewpoints	One of my lecturers, … at the end of each module, she would create scenarios so … go … split up into groups and this is your scenario ... So you can kind of tell that there is a lecturer who [is] actually looking, okay, so what type of things do I want to come out of this group? (MFGP 1)
	Students learn from each other, not just	A tutorial that really stands out to me … pretty much the whole tutorial was just you had a problem that you were in a team in the class, … and it was a debate over the problem … The way that it was held was really good

	the teacher Students learn a range of skills, not just content	because … usually you're writing down your issues but it was like a different learning style, … it was more … team work and you were discussing like the issues that you'd usually just have to think about yourself and write down. So you were actively learning and listening to other people's ideas of how you could form an argument, the same problem, but from many different viewpoints … and it was just really relaxed. (PFG 1) I think I like when the class like makes you think more, basically, if you can structure your class to have people get more than just what you provide. You know, I think that's a good class … I think that's very good to discuss with each other. It works for me a lot … see different points of view and study hard (laughs). (IFGU 2)
Using questions effectively to promote discussion and debate	Students have a sense of self-discovery Students feel free to learn in a way that works for them Students are actively engaged in the learning process	We have a two hours lecture with this lecturer and … there is a structure to the lecture and, and it's very deliberately planned and you know this because there are slides that sort of go along with it … But the lecturing weaves in between the lecturer conveying information to us and, and pausing and saying … What are you thoughts on it? … It kind of opens it up to us to discuss different things and we sort of go off on what we think are tangents and you try and bring in different things … and then we've been discussing things … and he says, oh this is a good time to wrap it together and these are the three ideas that you've managed to bring out and he'll go on to the next slide and it's exactly that … and I'm just amazed at that because it brings you into this process and it almost makes it this process of self-discovery and he leaves you the freedom to sort of find out these things yourself. (LFGP 1) So in some cases, the lecturer's authority comes off their skill and their ability to read that reading and know the broader context as well and what other resources should be brought into it; to then sort of provide us with almost a conclusion to our discussion … The conclusion alone without the discussion isn't meaningful but the conclusion is meaningful after we've done the process of discussion and the lecturer's helped us to tie it together. (LFGP 1)
	Students are challenged to rethink their assumptions	I got that general sentiment that, you know, people would get to it and be like, oh this is pretty boring, you know … Yeah, Treaty. I'm sick of it, you know, blah, blah, blah. … Yeah, but she does just a good job of keep pushing through that and just emphasising because it's, you know it's a lot more closer to home than … … she really gets across that sense of importance, relevancy. (MFGU 2)
	Students can understand and engage with the provocation	I have some really *brilliant* lecturers that just can't make it accessible and, on the other hand [there are] like lecturers with two professors … [who] are really, really high level and they make it sound so simple and they are really interested and they really want to make it easy for you to follow, so it's a totally opposite attitude, I would say. So I think making the right question has to do with putting themselves into, in your position before asking the question. (IFGP 1)
Linking content to the 'big picture'	Students understand the links between ideas	At the beginning of every [lecture], she outlines the topics [we are] going to be discussing in like some sort of order and then the objectives of that lecture and … you know what you're trying to achieve, … I think it just helps you … see where everything sort of fits. (MFGU 1)
	Students can follow the 'logic' of the	At the beginning of each lecture, I really appreciate it when the lecturer does like the whole purpose and then what

	course Students can remember content	we're going to talk about and then we're going to bring in case studies afterwards, because that really sort of helps give you like an overview and [it] … puts a map in your mind … So I really appreciate that because it sort of just makes it stick much more in your mind of how the course overall would relate to … what happens. (PFG 1) I think a good lecturer would be someone who organises their lecture material in a logical way … if they can kind of organise information [in] a well presented way, it's easier to kind of remember. (MFGP 1)
Providing constructive and explicit feedback	Students understand the justification for specific grades or comments Students understand 'next steps' and can work towards them Students can focus on improving their work	When you receive good feedback … it makes total sense. That would be much better if I had done it like in that way. Like you, you almost agree with [it], when it's well explained. (IFGP 2) I think it's really important to focus on what [a student has] done right and reinforce it, but regarding the things that he still doesn't know how to do yet … give him hints or pathways for development … Be clear enough so the person knows exactly what she needs to develop and how are the possible ways of developing that. (IFGP 2) Feedback is about the person's work and not the person him or herself. [They] are two different things. This is my work. This is not who I am. So maybe approaching the work and not the person, right? (IFGP 2)
Having realistic expectations of students Helping students prioritise tasks	Students feel supported Students know what to focus on	I also appreciate when lecturers acknowledge that grades are important because of the system. You know, they'll say like … these are the readings, this is the assessment. This is what I want for you to tick the boxes. I get that's probably what you're going to look at but also … in case you do have time and energy, here's this other stuff that you could look at … Because otherwise you can feel overloaded if they start to share with you too many things. (LFUG 2) If a lecturer was to say, oh, for this assignment, if you want to do well, this a really great article to have a look at or this will open up more ideas or whatever, I will prioritise it and also, like okay, like I will note it down. (LFGU 2)
Explaining things clearly and avoiding jargon where possible	Students can follow and understand content	[Avoid] jargon, especially if you have international students. (IFGP 2) She explained it really plainly and really easily. So it was really easy to follow and the content was so much easier to understand. (PFG 1)
Providing access to materials that support students' independent study	Students can follow the 'logic' of a course Students understand the teacher's expectations Students know what is required, and can organise their own time Students can go on learning beyond the course itself	It was the course outline from the very start and it's just each kind of lecture was already kind of signposted out and what would be covered, just kind of the main points. So this idea, this particular story, and so you could follow it … It was just kind of reassuring every now and again to see, okay we're starting on this and when this lecture, doing this topic … especially if you were getting a bit lost. (MFGU 2) Having a good course outline is really important, I reckon … Because more often than not, in a first year class, you'll spend more time with your course outline than the actual lecturer, so yeah, if they put a lot of effort into that, yeah, add a bit of their personality into it would be good, and just be really clear. That's a big thing for me, just sort of laying out what to expect, when your due dates are ... (PFG 1) If they've mentioned something like that seems really relevant and sounds really intriguing then it's nice to be able to have them sharing things with you beyond just like, this is the course material (laughs) … because then it

		seems like they are thinking and caring about your learning beyond like your grades for the paper and meeting those requirements and stuff. It's like about your kind of holistic learning, just in general … They're going beyond the assessment or whatever. (LFGU 2)
Providing students with guidance on how to learn/what is expected	Students understand, and can meet, expectations Students can manage their own learning	[Good teaching is when] the lecturer just tells you what they want from you over the next week and lets you know what they expect of you and how, how you can prepare yourself for the next week because for me, that's what I like. I like knowing what I'm going to get into for the next week because I don't want to get caught off guard, you know? (PFG 2)

Outlier conceptions of good teaching

The three tables above outline key actions that the students in our study most commonly associated with good teachers: teachers who were passionate, approachable, and effective communicators of knowledge or ideas, and who engaged students in learning. However, some students provided slightly different understandings of what 'good teaching' looks like. These included teachers clearly articulating their own perspectives rather than relying on student discussion, avoiding the use of humour (or engaging students in "serious" learning), and focusing on detail instead of (or as well as) the "big picture". Here, a student links discussion to uncertainty:

> As soon as someone says like their opinion, then it's like oh, because … I really want to know what a lecturer thinks but as soon as they say it, I'll believe that as well, just because [of] the person it is. So if they say, like I don't think that, I don't know, something should be banned, then I'll agree with them. (LFGP 1)

To the student above, it is preferable for university teachers to be explicit about their own positions, rather than simply letting a range of ideas circulate uncontested. Another student expressed a dislike of humour, saying:

> I like lecturers without humour at all. Lecture is beautiful, yeah … [it] motivates me … because I like it so I can paraphrase, like I'm interested in the lecture. What makes me interested, I have no idea. Some lecturers … can define clearly. (IFGP 2)

This student articulated a preference for lectures that are *not* funny. Elsewhere the same student associated seriousness with adult learning, and activity (or humour?) with being "treated like kids".

> Some students want a very serious atmosphere … In Korea, I teach Korean language to the foreigners, as well as to the freshmen in Korean universities and … I found out that for the adult students, … they don't want to be treated like kids. They want to learn something. They're very serious … But students are young, like high school students, they want to do some activities and so they want to learn from the activities. In that case they really need to change the way they teach and so in sum, I think good teaching can be achieved by choosing the right form and right content. (IFGP 1)

The comment above can be read as evidence for Wu's (2015) contention that what constitutes (or is seen as constituting) good teaching may be culturally, or

contextually, grounded. The student recalled her own teaching experiences in South Korea, where students seemed to associate activity-based learning with being "treated like kids", rather than "learn[ing] something". At the same time, in her remark " what makes me interested, I have no ideas", she also hinted at her recognition that a preference for serious lectures was perhaps unusual.

Finally, although most students appreciated university teachers who linked lecture content with "big ideas", one student suggested that some students prefer a focus on small-scale detail. They said:

> I noticed some other people who'd tune out in the first five minutes as the lecturer explained the big picture and the context that they were in and then as soon as they started putting in the individual steps, they'd be like right (claps), these are the steps … so [good] lecturers … managed to recognise there were those two different types of people in their classroom. (LFGP 1)

When read alongside the dominant conceptions of good teaching identified above, these alternative perspectives can be seen as suggesting the value of students having access to diverse teachers in order to meet their own diverse needs and learning preferences.

Good teaching and effective learning in the photovoice discussion

The students in our study engaged enthusiastically with the photovoice task. All except two students came to the second focus group session, bringing photographs with them, and both students who missed the second focus group session forwarded photographs to their focus group facilitator with written explanations.

The photovoice data (or the second focus group discussion) differed from the 'talk-only' data in four main ways. First, students focused on effective learning in more depth in reference to their photographs than in response to the critical incident and open-ended interview questions. Second, in the photovoice discussion, students drew on symbolism, simile and metaphor to articulate their ideas about 'good teaching' and 'effective learning'. Their discussion in the second (photovoice) focus group sessions was qualitatively different to their discussion during the initial focus group sessions, when they tended to describe their ideas and illustrate them through the use of concrete examples. Third, the students' discussion in the second focus group session was more affectively-laden. We use the term affect here in reference to feelings or emotion (after Ahmed, 1999). Students used their photographs and accompanying explanations to articulate how particular teaching approaches made them feel, and revealed their agency and intentionality as learners in a university environment. Also, in the photovoice discussions, students explicitly highlighted the connections between good teaching and effective learning.

In this section, we consider the photovoice data in relation to three dominant themes that emerged in the students' discussions about good teaching, effective learning, and their photographs. These were:

1. Good teaching and effective learning is a partnership where teachers and students work together;
2. Good teaching involves recognising and catering to students' diversity - effective learning involves working with others *and* recognising what "works for you"; and
3. Good teaching starts students on journey - effective learning involves "much more than marks".

We also consider a fourth theme, which is more descriptive and utilitarian in focus: specific strategies students used to learn effectively. In relation to this final theme, we consider the specific actions students took to learn effectively at university.

We could have 'read' the photovoice data differently, for example, in relation to the attributes and actions of good teachers described above. However, the four themes below more usefully capture the complexity of the photovoice data, the interconnected ways in which students reflected on good teaching and effective learning in the photovoice discussions, and their emphasis on affect (or emotion) alongside teachers' and students' actions.

We turn now to the photovoice data.

Good teaching and effective learning is a partnership where teachers and students work together

In the photovoice discussion and across all four cohorts, students emphasised the teacher-student relationship as key to both good teaching and effective learning at university. In this, they echoed earlier research with Māori and Pacific students (Airini et al., 2011; Curtis et al., 2012). Students used the idea of "teamwork" or "partnership" to convey an idea of teaching and learning as a joint undertaking, identifying actions that good teachers and effective learners take to work together constructively.

Two photographs captured the idea of teaching-as-teamwork. The first portrayed a piano lesson, and the second, an archeological 'dig'. In the first image the student portrayed teamwork in affective and professional terms. She said:

> It's not a lonely process … I need to learn and he needs to teach or she needs to teach. It's like teamwork … It can be a partnership and I think from a learner's point of view, for me, it is much more meaningful when it happens that way and again, it has to do with … the humility of the [teacher] … What I wanted to show with that picture is that some things are really difficult, are not easy to teach and [you] need to be able [to] put yourself into someone else's shoes sometimes and even to have the same perspective the student has … because I think sometimes the learner doesn't have the ability to put himself into the teacher's level but … sometimes I think it's much easier for the teacher to go … one level or two or three … to take the learner from that point. (IFGP 2)

While suggesting that, ideally, good teaching and effective learning are a partnership, rather than a "lonely process", this student also noted the hierarchy implicit in the teaching-learning relationship. She suggested that good teachers are mindful of this hierarchy, identifying teacher humility as an important precondition to student learning. Using a second metaphor ("put[ting] yourself into someone else's

shoes”) the student argued that good teachers adjust their teaching to meet students’ learning needs and existing knowledge, rather than expecting students to adjust their understanding to meet “the teacher’s level”. A second student referred to such adjustment in terms of teachers “getting [their] hands dirty”.

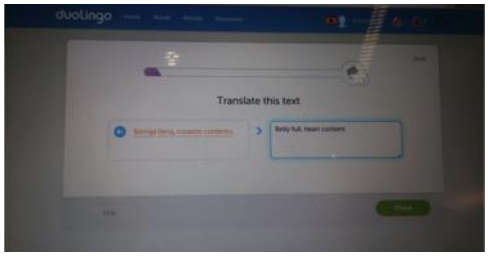
He said, “Good teaching is being willing to work alongside a student as opposed to simply instructing … and getting your hands dirty sort of thing” (PFG 2).

Students identified a range of ways in which teachers and students can work together to facilitate learning. Here, a student used an image of a staircase to capture the role of teachers in reminding students of “where they’ve come from”, or affirming students’ learning both in class settings, and through one-to-one feedback:

> A good teacher will also take time to … acknowledge where you’ve come from. So in these last few weeks we’ve gone from this to this because otherwise you get a bit, oh my god, this is just too much! Whereas if you go, actually yeah, I didn’t even know about that when we started this course, and I do know that stuff and I understand that concept now or I understand what this means … I think a good teacher actually does that … and just takes time to stop and think about, you know the achievements, and also on a one to one basis, … if you’re getting essays back or you’re talking about an essay, that’s a real beautiful opportunity to just do that … one to one with students and just say … you’ve made amazing progress this year. (LFGP 2)

This student can be seen as suggesting that university teachers can be affective as well as intellectual leaders, people who not only “mobilise others through inspiration” (Macfarlane, 2012, p. 11), but also, through encouragement. In the statement above, the student acknowledged that encouraging students takes time, and as noted, elsewhere, students recognised the challenges large classes present in this regard (see Table 2). However, in the quote above, the student highlighted both a teacher stance (or demeanour towards students), and relatively simple practices that affirmed students’ learning, such as revising content in lectures, and providing explicit written feedback that acknowledges students’ progress and understanding.

Another student conceptualised the teacher-student partnership in terms of translation.



> Sometimes I feel like a good teacher … knows how to talk your language, knows how to speak to you and … then you can understand. So I just thought that was quite a good thing where a teacher would take time to really think about and consider … could I do this in a different way so that my learner will learn? (LFGU 2)

For this student, good teachers translate ideas for students, and are committed to promoting students' learning. They "know how to talk [students'] language", and are willing to adjust their communication approach if necessary. The teaching-learning interchange is a communicative partnership, but the teacher has the power to help (or hinder) students' learning. Once again, the student highlighted how good teachers promote effective learning by taking a stance that centres the learner. Elsewhere, students also hinted at the role of students in translating knowledge, ideas and concepts for each other. We consider this further below.

Some students suggested that teachers are obligated to work with students as a way of honouring students' investment in education. One used a photograph of letterboxes to portray her expectation that teaching support should be available when needed, given that students pay to attend university. She said:

> We are paying to be here. We are paying a lot of money and … we don't want to think about it like that but … if I don't understand this, I need to come and see you to talk to you about it to go further and, you know, seven, six thousand dollars a semester, … there needs to be, you know, wifi that works and there needs to be teachers that are available for us. (LFGU 2)

Another student linked the idea of investment to joint student-teacher responsibility, saying:

> We're paying to be here so … we've got this responsibility to like put in work but at the same time, we're paying the lecturers, so they've got like a responsibility to us to help, like complement what we're doing. (MFGU 2)

Good teaching involves recognising and catering to students' diversity - effective learning involves working with others *and* recognising what "works for you"

In the photovoice discussion, students described recognition of teachers' and students' diversity as a marker of both good teaching and effective learning. Teachers' role in welcoming and affirming students' diversity is noted in the literature cited earlier (Airini et al., 2009; Chu et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2015; Parpala et al., 2011). However, our students also drew connections between students' effective learning and openness to diversity, while noting that effective learners know 'what works for them'. Notably, earlier New Zealand research has focused on diversity in terms of 'culture' (for example, see Airini et al, 2011; Curtis et al., 2012). In our study, students highlighted the need for university teachers to be mindful of multiple forms of diversity, including different cultural identities, life experiences, learning preferences, and personalities. Students stressed the importance of teachers using a range of teaching approaches to engage diverse students effectively (see Table 3). Alongside, they described effective learners as open to working with others.

First, as in the initial focus group discussions, students portrayed good teachers as recognising and open to differences amongst students, and as crafting their teaching with difference in mind. A postgraduate local student used a photograph of spices, and an accompanying cooking metaphor to articulate this idea. She said:

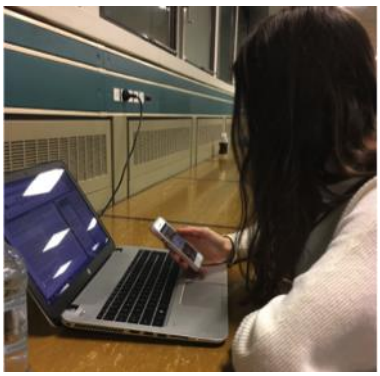
> It's very much about … getting to know each individual student and what they bring to the flavour of the classroom … because if you get to know them really well, then you can actually … get the most out of them. Like you … get your most out of your spices and your flavours if you actually know how to use them well. I'm not talking about using students but (laughs), like you know drawing out the best of them … Also, variety … within … the process and the content of courses, lessons, … lectures. So not always the same thing every single time, … but just kind of spicing it up every now and again … and also kind of knowing … that sometimes, some things go with other things … So let's say … paprika and cumin seeds. So those two might go quite well together in something but you wouldn't necessarily put turmeric and basil together in the same thing. So kind of knowing the dynamics of your group as well … So … you might want to kind of mix things up a bit sometimes but, but also knowing … what works well together and what doesn't … And what might be the kind of clashing flavours and what might be the things that work well together … Too much of any one thing can be bland … or overwhelming and put us off trying something again. So if you put too much pepper in something, I'll just go ooh, not having that again whereas other people might love it. (LFGP 2)

Using an image of spices, this student sought to convey the idea that good teachers know both how to “get the most out of” diverse students, and how to vary their teaching to keep diverse students engaged. She suggested that, ideally, university teachers get to know their students, or at least, are open to cues from students, and to students’ learning preferences and needs. Once again, the image above portrays a teaching stance, alongside specific actions: a willingness to try things out and ‘see what works’, or an openness to adjust one’s teaching in response to students’ diversity.

Across all four cohorts, students stressed the value of teachers recognising diversity by using a range of delivery approaches rather than assuming that all students learn effectively by listening. Many students highlighted the value of teachers providing visual information alongside ‘talk’. One student referred to an example where the provision of visual information made up for a teacher’s lack of explanatory clarity:

> This one was just of kind of reinforcing the idea of teachers using images to break up like slide after slide of words … and also like using diagrams. He … drew diagrams to kind of show visually what he meant because he wasn’t very good at explaining it. So I thought that was really effective. (MFGU 2)

Another student suggested the value of teachers using a range of communicating modes, not only inside, but also beyond the classroom. Here, she explains her photograph of a student multi-tasking with technology:



> This is kind of my way of just emphasising communication, I think for teaching … it’s not just talking at you. It’s multiple forms of communication. So her using her phone and her laptop … [represented] lots of other aspects of communication … you can reach students on so many different platforms and … there’s so many different kind of learners and so to get into that is really important, I’d say, to really grasp knowledge and engage students. (LFGU 2)

For this student, good teachers think creatively about a range of ways to engage and communicate with students.

Students revealed the diverse ways in which they utilised communication tools in order to learn effectively. In the international student focus groups, EAL students (students for whom English is an additional language) discussed the value of having access to recorded lectures. They described how they used lecture podcasts to play back, slow down and pause lecturers' speech, enabling understanding despite lecturers' fast speaking pace, unfamiliar accents, or lack of clarity. One student shared an image of Blackboard (the university's online learning platform), describing how she used multiple teaching resources in order to learn effectively:

> This is my, tool, it's the engine for me … [The lecturer has] a podcast and so you can watch and you can pause it and you can go back again because her lecture … I don't know if it's just me but she's really fast … She changes the slides really quickly and, and like I haven't even read that slide. So podcast is amazing … and here is the Blackboard as well … I have everything that I need in that. I have all the lecture notes … the slides, assignments, everything is on Blackboard. (IFGP 2)

Another student shared an image of her mobile phone, as a key organisational and a learning tool (PFG 2).

Students in all four cohorts highlighted attention to other students' viewpoints as an effective learning approach, again reiterating earlier research with Māori and Pacific students (Airini et al., 2011; Curtis et al., 2012). A local undergraduate student described learning to value others' perspectives as a key outcome for her of a university education.

> You know, you've got to give way to … the other traffic but … in terms of the learning aspect … you've got to give way to other people's ideas and perspectives … There's no one perspective that's right, so … I know what I've learnt through university is you've got to respect other people's opinions … before you can forge ahead with yours. (LFGU 2)

Other students used images of round tables and group learning arrangements, to portray similar ideas, stressing the value of discussion-based approaches in helping them learn. Students described collective learning approaches as providing access to new knowledge, providing multiple 'ways in' to knowledge, and supporting students' capacity to understand and remember. A Māori undergraduate student shared a photograph of a slide used to prompt discussion in her lab, and said:

> If you have like a whole class worth of like definitions of one thing, sometimes it … really sets it in your mind how to understand something compared to if

> one person says it … It just really helps me, hearing other people's … definitions of ideas or concepts … It helps … it sink into my mind more … Everyone else is trying to work it out as well so you're all in there and can kind of like collectively do it together. (MFGU 2)

A Pacific student shared an image of a mixing desk, highlighting the role of discussion in catering to diverse students' needs:

> Good learning is actually learning with other people and learning together and so you might not pick up stuff on your own but you might pick up … something from someone else that might add to your learning experience because … we human beings, we're all different … We're all individual and we pick up things in different ways and learn things [in] different ways and so … you might not learn something in one particular way but someone else might and you can learn things off each other. (PFG 2)

Another student suggested that small group discussions outside class are indispensable approaches to learning:

> Tutorials [and] lectures are all very well … but when it comes to kind of honing that fine learning, the little gaps you might've missed, the questions you have, I really feel that nothing really beats … a small group of even four or five of like-minded individuals who will work together to kind of complement each other's knowledge base, so whether it be … in a small study room like this or one of the study rooms on campus … the rooms you can book here on campus are really helpful for those small groups who get together, even in those hours between lectures and kind of hammer out a certain area of a course that they're taking. (MFGU 2)

The students' emphasis on discussion as a means to both learn from and cater to diverse learners revealed a view of students as both learners and teachers, and of learning as a deeply social process. The students' reflections highlighted a need to think about how university teachers might create space, both in class and beyond, for students to 'teach' (learn with) each other (Airini et al., 2011; Curtis et al., 2012).

While stressing the value of working with others, the students in our study also portrayed effective learning as involving recognition of one's own learning preferences. The students revealed a diverse range of learning approaches that they had identified as working for them. Here, a Māori postgraduate student articulates his preference for visual learning approaches, using cultural reference points to aid his understanding, and working in a "safe" or "peaceful place":

> I'm a visual … person. I need to see things in order to learn. And also like the picture's taken in a safe place or more peaceful place to learn. I kind of went away from my office to work in a more comfortable area … The content … I've drawn up is … my research but the way that I interpret my work, so having the opportunity to … learn something and then portray it in a way that … connects to you … being able to apply it in a way that … [is] more understandable for yourself, I think that's a … key way of effective learning … I've interpreted it from … a Maori perspective … I'd say like my culture … encourages that type of lens. (MFGP 2)

Other students used images of bedroom study spaces to highlight "comfort" (safety?) as central to learning well.

Students identified teachers as having a key role in "creating safe [learning] spaces" where students are able to learn. The student below used an image of a tree and small succulent plants as a metaphor for good teaching.

> So these little succulents are actually quite vulnerable and quite fragile and it's very easy to trample on them as it is very easy to trample on … us as students by being authoritarian or … kind of judging [our] ideas and things … I also wanted to bring in the … cultivating side of things that with a little bit of care and some nutrients, then these things will proliferate. The strong, solid tree trunks in the middle are there to support and to kind of to protect really, to create a kind of … safe space to be in … All the succulents look similar but some are … tiny, little kind of things that are just starting to grow and others are kind of quite established size. So it's that kind of people at different stages. (LFGP 2)

To this student, a teacher's role involves "cultivating" students by showing "care" and "support". By referring to "protect[ion]", the student conceptualises teachers as advocates – people who recognise students' vulnerability and fragility, providing strength, safety and affirmation. The following image from another student can be read as expressing a parallel perspective:

The student explained the photograph, saying, “Being close to the lecturer helps me stay more engaged” (PFG 2). While engagement rather than “safety” was the student’s focus here, she nevertheless portrayed ‘staying close’ to the teacher as a key strategy for effective learning.

In contrast with those who link the desire for safety with pedagogic frailty and a desire to avoid difficult learning (e.g. Landers, 2017), students in our study described constructing and seeking out ‘safe’ (or comfortable) spaces as an active learning approach. Students positioned themselves as, in some respects, vulnerable in the teacher-student hierarchy, while suggesting that good teachers challenge students, or push them to see the world in new ways. We discuss this in the following section.

Good teaching starts students on journey - effective learning involves “much more than marks”

Students in our study conceptualised good teaching as allowing them to see things in new ways, challenging their ideas, and equipping them for a lifelong learning journey. Conversely, the students also conceptualised effective learning as involving creativity, going beyond course content, and thinking ‘beyond the marks’. Students highlighted the value of teachers adjusting their teaching to meet students’ learning needs, and using a variety of teaching approaches to maximise student engagement, but they explicitly rejected a view of good teaching as ‘spoonfeeding’ students, or ‘dumbing down’ content. Our findings exceed those of earlier international and New Zealand based research, which highlights the role of good teachers in fostering students’ independence and understanding (for example, see Lee et al., 2015; Parpala et al., 2011; Airini et al., 2011), not *challenging* students’ thinking.

The students in our study described good teaching as involving connecting new knowledge to existing ideas, but as a starting point, not an endpoint. In their photovoice discussion, students described good teachers as inspiring and equipping them to see things in new ways, and to keep learning beyond the course itself. A local postgraduate student used an image of a dartboard to portray how, for him, good teaching promotes the ability to see things differently:

> One of the things that always strikes me about darts is my natural instinct is to want to go for the very middle. I'm like, that should be the most important thing, shouldn't it? … But actually after having that explained to me, the most important part is the small red one below where the dart is in the 20. Not the top one because that's double, but the one below because it's triple … and so there's something about a lecturer who presents you with something and gives you space to observe it yourself but then actually teaches you and shows you, this is more important than what you originally thought …, so the focus for me is trying to show how a lecturer re-shapes my focus on what is or isn't most important because of their experience or their understanding of this … topic. (LFGP 2)

For this student, good teachers explicate the connections between ideas, and give students space to "observe" or make their own connections, while prompting them to see things differently than previously. Another student articulated similar ideas by portraying good teachers as promoting students' growth. Echoing the image of good teaching as "cultivating" students (see above), she suggested that good teachers not only 're-focus' students' attention, but create space for students to see things in their own ways.

> I think the one aspect of teaching is that it promotes growth, so the teachers promote growth in the students but at the same time, they're not stifling their creativity, … so it's important that teachers are like here's the resources, go for it, but are not prescribing one single way for students to be thinking and not saying, well this is the only way that you can think about it … They can still go off in lots of different directions but still having the support of the lecturers. (LFGU 2)

In their photovoice discussions, students suggested that good teachers balance support or guidance with freedom. They conceptualised good teachers as giving students "space" while remaining engaged in students' thinking journey – providing a sense of context, and "support" with the learning process. The students' respective comments above again highlighted students' diversity. While the first student appreciated being shown which ideas are "important", the second suggested that good teachers allow students to make such judgments themselves.

Students who referred to good teaching as "start[ing] a journey" drew a clear link between teaching with learning, suggesting that the ultimate outcome of good teaching is to equip students to learn *without* the teacher. Here, a student uses an image of her feet on a beach to capture this idea:

> I think good teaching … starts a journey, so I don't think it's useful to be spoonfed and again, to be told exactly how to think, but to be given the tools and resources necessary to continue your learning so that you can use what you've learnt in some classes, transfer skills into another class, into your job, and so you can then go for a run or whatever you want to, like … start that journey. (LFGU 2)

However, students also noted that learning journeys are not straightforward, and that for this reason, support is important, along with the development of personal practices that support students' wellbeing. Students stressed that (non-linear) learning journeys take time, and that allowing *time to learn* is crucial both in good teaching and effective learning. Here, a student refers to her image of a clock to articulate a view of effective learning as an (inefficient?) non-linear journey of discovery:

> If you ever follow a child, you will find that they're not linear. So they'll go over here and then they'll go over there. But they'll always get to a destination but they do it in a very interesting way and if you take the time to spend with them and just … follow from behind or just, … where are you going to take me today? I used to do that with my children. We'd go to a park and I'd just follow them, where are we going, you know? It's interesting where they take you, which is how I like my learning journeys and I've been studying for a very long time so … I look at time as … a lifelong thing for me and I think if you can embrace it like that, it really enhances your learning. (MFGP 2)

Another student articulated a similar idea, using a 'race' metaphor. Her image was of a boy who was proud at having completed a race, despite coming close to last.

> I think it, it's all about effort and doing the best you can regardless of the marks … I see people really, really focussing on marks and, and because everything is quite driven by marks and the scholarships are driven by marks

> … I think … it makes the learning process really poor and really superficial … it takes richness from the learning … We're at university, so we are talking about what we are going to do as professionals. It's not about marks. It's much more than marks … We need to be good professionals. We need to understand. We need to be inspired. We need to try to do our best, not only here but we should keep doing that when we are out there and I think that's not emphasised … It's all about marks … and I think it's really a limited view of teaching and learning. (IFGP 2)

The student above reiterated the concerns expressed by Molesworth et al (2009), who suggested that a focus on degree acquisition or 'having' represents an impoverished view of learning. To this student, effective learning involves thinking in terms of the journey, and not just in terms of quantifiable outcomes. She positioned learning in terms of professional development, understanding, inspiration, and human 'becoming' (Walker, 2008).

The students highlighted key practices that supported and sustained their (non-linear, sometimes difficult) learning journeys. The first related to time - teachers giving students time to 'sit on' information, and students taking time to learn, and time out from learning. One student used an image of a staircase alongside a cooking metaphor to emphasise her view of good teaching as allowing students time to learn:

> It has to be taught in a way that you can understand it before moving on to other parts … It's like sitting on the information, because ... once it's new to you, you kind of need to like just sit there for a while ... I think of it as like marinating ... for the flavour to be good, you can't just chuck sauce on top of it and then eat it straight away. You've got to let it soak. (LFGU 2)

This student conceptualised good teaching as ensuring students understand key information before moving on, and allowing time for students to consolidate new concepts or ideas. Another emphasised the value of teachers recognising that learning occurs outside the lecture theatre or classroom, proactively encouraging students to "take the time out" both to rest, and explore:

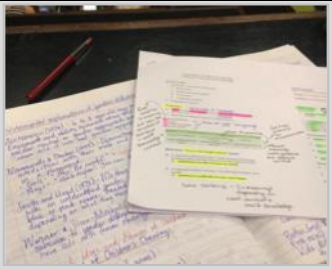
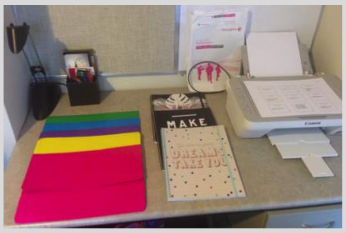
> I think it's really good for students to be encouraged … to take the time out they need and that that can be part of the process of learning, having that time for the information to sit with you before kind of going further with it … I like the idea of like teachers having the attitudes of accepting and encouraging students to take the time that they need because like pretty much all of us will have a lot going on … It's really upsetting to hear that like, like when they're talking about like, oh like students not coming to class or like students like not doing readings and … that happens to nearly everyone at some point and it's not laziness … there's a lot going on. We have a lot to be tired about. And so just being respectful and understanding of students taking breaks whether that means not going to class once or whatever because it's about their overall commitment, not so much the like rigid, 100 percent attendance and 100 percent completion of everything, because it's about the learning, not about perfection. (LFGU 2)

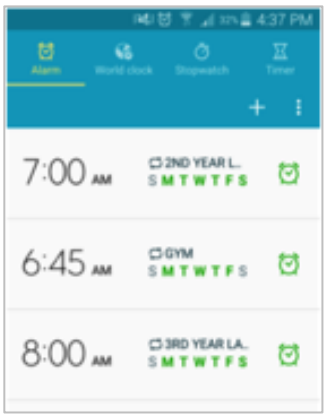
Like the student above, this student refers to 'sitting with' information, or to *time* as part of learning. In her comment "it's about the learning, not about the perfection", the student suggests that teachers, like students, need to think beyond marks and measurable outcomes, or to recognise students not just as learners, but as people with physical and psychological needs.

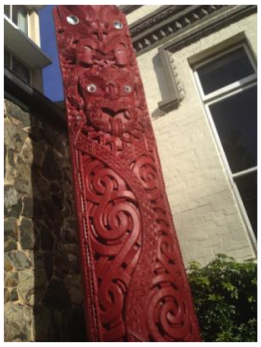
Effective learning strategies

Finally, the students across all four cohorts identified specific actions they adopted to meet their own cognitive, physical and psychological learning needs over time. These included revising content and finding note-taking approaches that worked for them (for example, using unlined paper, online revision tools, and/or listening rather than writing everything down); using university resources; being organised and prepared; practising for assessments (for example, setting up mock exam conditions before the exam); and trying out different learning approaches to see which works best. The students also described how they kept their goals and 'drivers' in mind, in order to motivate themselves to study, and highlighted 'taking breaks' as crucial in order to learn effectively (see Table 4, below).

Table 4. Students' effective learning strategies

Effective learning strategy	Image	Explanation
Revising content and developing note-taking approaches that work for me		Sometimes I have to go back and go over stuff. Like I'll miss some of the end stuff but … I don't write it full out anymore. I just do it, just main points and … I more listen to what the lecturer's saying now because they go the lecture slides anyway. But now it's just not like copy and paste from the slide to the computer. (MFGU 2)
Making use of university resources		I think just making use of the resources at the library has been really, really helpful and I think it's definitely, like learning to reference, books and stuff and make use of the resources that has bumped up my grades significantly …, so that's something that has helped me learn effectively, is learning to also navigate. It took me a while to … figure it out. (PFG 2) I use the [Pacific Island] Centre a lot and I think it just offers so much for students and we just need to take up all their opportunities and use it and that's one way of effective learning. You just need to take hold of all those opportunities. (PFG 2)
Being organised and prepared		I personally can't write essays the night before and get As the next day, so for me it takes kind of a couple of weeks or as soon as they give me the essay topic, for example, I have to start then, otherwise, I can't just whip out an amazing essay overnight. So for me, organisation and prioritising what needs done is really important … so that's what I was trying to show with this picture. (MFGU 2)
Preparing strategically for (stressful) assessments		… With exams and tests … I've found … the best way to prepare is to kind of place yourself in that kind of same physical environment and at least mental environment in a way as well. So in this case, you know that kind of individual desk, you know pretty just straightforward, bare necessities … I feel you'd … perform so much better in that kind of test environment if you'd studied like that compared to if you'd … spent all day in the sun … on a lawn, just studying like that … as fun as that is and as great as that'd be. (MFGU 2)

Trying things out to see 'what works'		[This is] a shot of what we call a snake and it's … an audio thing where you plug cables and stuff to connect instruments or mikes or, or other sound capturing devices to a mixer which connects to a computer and I just thought it was like … good learning because you take a whole lot of different things and you kind of plug things in and you sort of test it out. Does this work? No, it doesn't, so it's just kind of like taking everything that you're getting in [and] sort of figuring out what works and what doesn't for yourself. So … I just thought that represented good learning to me. (PFG 2)
Keeping goals, supports, and 'drivers' in mind	 	This is just a screenshot of my alarm in the morning and … last year it was second year law in capital letters, for me because that was my end goal and every time my alarm went off, I saw it in the morning and I'm like, okay, I need to get up because I want to … get this done and … this year, it's third year law (laughs) on my alarm title and I just feel like it helps me a lot in the morning when it's the hardest to get out of bed. (PFG 2) That's just a photo of my wall. As you can see, it's got the calendar … that's just to show like … deadlines of assignments and things like that but then I also wanted to show what was alongside it. So there are things to help you out … I've had to put those on just to make sure that if I'm having trouble with any … learning [or] assignment things, I just refer back to that. And at the bottom is the worry-free sheet. I have really bad anxiety towards my work and so I just refer back to that and it really helps me to calm down and just move on. And next to it, is just my goals. Like you have a picture of the … Pacific Island scholarship thing and so that was my goal when I was thinking, okay, I need to get good grades so I can qualify for it. So that really pushed me to … get to the deadlines and … push through the worry and just try and get it done … That's what that picture means, for effective learning. So it's not only … knowing where deadlines are, but it's also setting yourself goals so that … when you're so worried about something, you just have to focus on what's ahead of you and … just get past it. (PFG 2)

		This kind of represented like motivation because I think an effective learning tool for me is remembering why I'm here, especially when … say you got like a bad grade and your lecturer or your tutor told you, you did something really wrong, it can kind of bring you down and like you get in a slump. Sometimes for me, just stepping back and remembering why I'm here, where I come from, even just calling up my Nan or like a family member to catch up, it just reinforces why I'm here and gives me more motivation to kind of carry on. So I find that, for me is an effective learning tool. (MFGU 2)
Developing healthy routines and taking breaks		I think that's very important to take breaks … Because I think that we get to a point that you just don't learn any more, if you just keep going and going, you stop learning. So take a break and then go back fresh to it. (IFGP 2) This is my bed ... I was going to bed like between midnight and two … but I've changed my schedule. I am in bed by 10. I read for half an hour and it's the highlight of my day. I look forward to it … and then I'm up anywhere between 5.30 and 7.30 … and I exercise in the morning, and I used to have to take like two hour naps during the day, just to stay awake. I was just really worn out stuff but since I've started going to bed at 10 and sleeping like at least eight hours a day, my learning has definitely improved or I've been able to focus a lot more, and been less grumpy, been able to last the day. … So that's something that I found as … helping me learn more effectively is setting good sleeping patterns. (PFG 2)

Student feedback on the study, and recommendations for future research

Since this was a methodological pilot, in the final focus group discussion, we asked the students for feedback on our data collection approach.

Overwhelmingly, the students indicated that they had enjoyed being involved, noting that repeat focus group discussions had allowed more ideas to 'surface' in relation to good teaching and effective learning, and that the photovoice task had prompted them to reflect in unexpected ways. At the end of the first Māori undergraduate focus group, students suggested that aspects of the study could provide a model for eliciting course-related feedback.

> I think also this … small kind of focus group, … I can see it having a role in just any paper, say … halfway through the semester … I think the problem with mass reviews is you just, me personally, I just feel like my voice is going to get lost amongst everyone else who's there so I don't … a *real* benefit in offering my thoughts through that forum but I mean the problem with small groups is you might not cover … every single issue and they might have their personal issues but I think if there's *real* general problems then those small groups would definitely, definitely cover them or definitely address them.
>
> And a lot of the time, you know if you're just given a sheet, you know here's the course evaluation, just sort of become something you just sort of tick boxes, you know.
>
> I mean how, I mean how do you rate performance on numbers? Like it's much easier to offer your thoughts about, you know how it can go.
>
> Yeah. Like discussions like this, … I thought two hours talking about this kind of stuff would be … dragging it out, but I'm finding, as we go along, there's more and more that it's easy for me to express a lot more. (MFGU 1)

Students described the photovoice task as "hard", "challenging", "fun", "easy", "creative" and "active", and as prompting a different kind of reflection to the 'talk only' focus group questions. Some students found the one week timeframe quite tight for completing the task, while others found it long enough. Some of the local postgraduate students said that initially they felt "anxious" about the task, but that they had "relaxed" into the idea. Students commented on the task as prompting them to "notice things" that they might otherwise not have noticed. For example, students commented, "Having to go and do it ourselves was so active and it made us think within ourselves and have that experience of all week noticing things and thinking about things all the time" (LFGP 2), and, "I was kind of looking for things, yeah, I think I probably took notice more … noticing what the lecturers did" (MFGU 2).

The students described a range of personal responses to both the actual photovoice activity, and the kind of thinking it elicited. One student felt that avoiding faces had limited their photographs, while another described this as having allowing them to "think in different ways". A postgraduate student described the creative aspect of the project as especially enjoyable, saying:

> I really liked … being tasked with this because it is a creative and sort of metaphorical journey and all that and … I've found, predominantly just the scientific feel of the university, it's not the greatest place for me and so it was nice to discover that there's creativity out there in it. (LFGP 2)

Two local undergraduate students indicated that they forgot about taking photographs initially, but that the task had prompted their thinking (for example, "I spent most of the week thinking about this stuff and I didn't actually get around or I kind of forgot about the photo part of it [initially]"). One student echoed the suggestion that our project provided a model for eliciting students' feedback, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to give verbal feedback, and then further feedback "in a different way":

> I think it was like a nice way of asking us for like a different way of giving feedback like, because I don't know, I feel like getting just verbal feedback is one thing but then to ask for, to get feedback in a different way is kind of

> interesting and it kind of opens it up a bit more which I kind of appreciated yeah. (LFGU 2)

Another student described the photovoice task as allowing them to think “outside the box” (IFGP 2).

Students’ primary recommendations for future studies were to include students from other academic divisions (in particular, high-stakes courses in Health Sciences), and to purposefully recruit students representing a wider spectrum of diversity. In particular, our participants suggested ensuring that we recruit LGBTQI and disabled students to any future study, and one noted that distance students can be seen as another “marginalised group” who would likely provide other, different, insights into good teaching and effective learning. Students in the Māori postgraduate focus group made some further recommendations: extending the time allowed for taking and selecting photographs; and providing an opportunity for “real time” data collection (for example, through texts and snapshots) that capture the “fleeting” aspects of students’ learning journeys. One student highlighted the importance of ‘feeding back’ to students the outcomes of the project over a longer duration than the actual data collection period.

Discussion

This study sought to explore: (1) how students’ conceptions of ‘good teaching’ and ‘effective learning’ could inform student support and staff professional development programmes at our university; (2) whether focus group discussion using open-ended questions, critical incident technique, or photovoice elicited the richest insights into students’ conceptions (or how the insights offered by each approach were different/complementary); and (3) which data collection approach the students preferred. In this section of the report we consider the answers to each of these questions, and reflect on our research findings as a whole.

In response to the first question above, students’ conceptions of good teaching and effective learning were rich, nuanced and complex. Our participants were critical and generous in their reflections on teaching and learning, and offered pragmatic solutions to factors that may limit teachers’ capacity to teach students well. Our findings both aligned with, and exceeded, earlier international and New Zealand based research that explored students’ conceptions of good teaching. Like Māori and Pacific students in earlier New Zealand studies (Airini et al., 2009, 2011; Chu et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2012), the students in our study conceptualised good teachers as passionate, approachable people, who were knowledgeable and could communicate effectively. Like the students in a survey-based Singapore study (Lee et al., 2015), our participants described specific attributes and actions of good teachers. Like some other education scholars (e.g. Mortier et al., 2011), the students conceptualised teaching and learning as a partnership, which although inherently hierarchical, requires teachers and students to work together. Some students suggested that expectations of teachers’ proficiency, engagement in teaching, and preparedness are ‘fair’ given students’ positioning as ‘customers’ in user-pays HE (after Molesworth et al., 2009), however, the students also spoke about learning as “more than marks”, contesting the suggestion by Molesworth et al. that students’ positioning as consumers necessarily promotes a focus on “having a degree” rather than “being a learner” (p. 277).

In our study, students positioned effective learning as both a cognitive and an affective undertaking, noting that safe or comfortable spaces promoted their capacity to learn. However, interesting tensions in the data confounded simplistic perspectives of students as 'frail', vulnerable, needy, or demanding (Land, 2017; Molesworth et al., 2009). Students conceptualised good teachers as both knowledgeable and humble, affirming and challenging, and open to students' diversity but confidently themselves. Similarly, effective learning emerged as more than a matter of knowledge accumulation - as requiring time, rest, and freedom, alongside explicit guidance and clear communication. Students conceptualised learning as an ongoing, non-linear journey that is best conducted in collaboration with others. The students revealed their agentic use of strategies to sustain themselves over the 'long-haul'.

Although, in many respects, our findings aligned with the findings of previous research exploring similar questions, our study also offers some valuable, additional insights. On the whole, students' conceptions were remarkably uniform across the four cohorts, suggesting that what is good for one group of students, is likely to be good for others. In this regard, our study supports the need for "an acceptance of the possibility of both commonalities and differences at all times" in HE (Madge et al., 2009, p. 43), rather than assuming particular students' difference (or deficiency). For example, while communication may be a particular concern for students who are learning in a second, third or fourth language, our study findings suggest that clear communication enables all students to learn. Our findings problematise simplistic stereotypes about particular groups of students, for example, the claim that international students have 'language problems' (see Anderson, 2014). Our study participants positioned teaching and learning as a *partnership*, and good communication as involving both clear delivery methods and specific learning techniques. Students' reflections suggested that tolerance for 'slow learning' is important for all, not just EAL students (Skyrme, 2010); and that students besides Māori and Pacific students benefit from positive teacher-student relationships and opportunities for peer learning (Airini et al., 2009; Airini et al., 2011; Chu et al., 2013; Davidson-Toumu'a & Dunbar, 2009).

While overall, the four cohorts revealed remarkable similarities, two points of difference are worth noting. The first was that EAL students in the international student focus groups emphasised the value of being able to revise and slow down recorded lectures. The second was that Māori students stressed the value of role models - senior Māori staff who are respected by all students, and able to challenge dominant viewpoints. Also, the students in our study revealed the importance of recognising diversity in HE, and revealed how diverse students benefit from diverse teachers. Students noted that, in isolation, passion, approachability, knowledge, or communicative prowess do not make teachers 'good', and that individual teachers' personalities may make it more or less easy for them to demonstrate such attributes. The students' reflections revealed how diverse students benefit and enjoy learning from teachers who approach teaching in a range of ways.

Interestingly, the students in our study demonstrated clear recognition that teaching occurs within a broader institutional context that constrains teachers' work. For example, they acknowledged that demonstrating approachability is much harder in large than in small classes, and that passion may be difficult to demonstrate in relation to certain "very dry" content. At the same time, they identified specific actions 'good teachers' use to demonstrate passion and approachability and communicate well despite institutional or content-related constraints. These were mostly simple and attainable, and noticed and appreciated by students. Also, the

students highlighted how, in the absence of a particular teaching attribute, teachers may be able to develop *actions* that are helpful in promoting students' learning. We anticipate that attention to these actions (see Tables 1 to 3) will be very helpful in staff professional development programmes, and that teaching staff will appreciate knowing that teacher diversity and teachers' 'small steps' to engage students are noted and appreciated.

Students in our project highlighted the value of recognising diversity in teaching, for example, by providing students with a range of ways to access course material. However, they also suggested that appreciation of diversity is a key marker of effective learning, suggesting the value of university teaching that provides opportunities for discussion, peer learning, and student-student interaction. Students' emphasis on the value of peer learning reflects the findings of earlier studies involving Pacific, Māori and international students in New Zealand (for example, see Airini et al., 2011; Anderson, 2014; Curtis et al., 2012), however their positioning of diverse teachers as an asset in HE provides a new contribution to existing literature.

We were very interested in students' emphasis on *time* in both the focus group discussions, and their responses to the photovoice task. In this regard, our study findings support the contentions of the emerging 'slow scholarship' literature, for example, that "the freedom and time to engage in thinking, to immerse oneself in experiential encounters, to synthesise information and reflect upon it … is how new ways of knowing are formed" (Hartmann & Darab, 2012, p. 59; also Harland, McLean, Wass, Miller, & Kwong, 2015). In our study, students noted that all learning takes time, suggesting that good teachers and effective learners recognise learning as a journey (a process involving time). In this regard, and institutional and structural constraints aside, students highlighted actions that both teachers and students can take to allow time for effective learning. In regard to teachers, these included revisiting ideas, moderating one's teaching pace, and creating opportunities for teacher-student and student-student discussion. For students, time-honouring actions included taking breaks, revisiting and discussing content with peers, and actively seeking teacher guidance when necessary. Students acknowledged how attention to extra-institutional factors could help them sustain their 'learning journeys' over time. These included recognising and addressing personal circumstances and preferences, recognising and addressing one's own physiological needs, articulating and reminding oneself of both short and long term goals, building strong social networks, and staying connected with family (see Table 4).

In response to our second research question, the students' very insightful discussion highlighted the value of foregrounding students' voices in matters that concern them (Bullen & Kenway, 2003), and to this end, the photovoice approach was particularly powerful. Although all of the data collection approaches yielded rich and nuanced insights into students' conceptions of good teaching and effective learning, the students' responses to and reflections on the photovoice task highlighted how it had positioned students as partners in the research process, as well as in relation to teaching and learning at university (Mortier et al., 2011). Overwhelmingly, they expressed their enjoyment of the photovoice activity – noting that it had prompted them to think in new ways, and more deeply, about teaching and learning at university. Through the photovoice activity the students were able to take control of the research process, to articulate ideas that were not accessible through talk-only methods (in particular, affective responses to particular teaching approaches), and then explore each other's ideas in the resulting discussion. The students expressed appreciation of the way in which they were positioned throughout the research process, and some suggested that our focus group approach could serve as a model

for more genuine and student-centred course evaluation than is possible through pre-set questionnaires.

In response to our third research question, the students did not express a clear preference for a particular data collection approach, but noted aspects of the data collection approaches that they appreciated. For example, they highlighted how the use of repeat focus group sessions allowed time for them to “notice” things that they may otherwise not have noticed, and enabled ideas to surface prior to the second focus group session. Also, they felt that while, initially, the photovoice task had seemed daunting, its creative aspect allowed them to access and express ideas that would not have emerged through focus group discussion alone.

Limitations of the study include its small size and scope, along with its sole focus on Humanities students. Our findings cannot be generalised in a statistical sense, and our participants were in no way representative of university students generally, or University of Otago students in particular. However, our study offered rich insights into teaching and learning from university students’ perspectives, and into the kinds of actions likely to support their engagement and success. As such, it provides a basis for ‘logical generalisations’ (Patton, 1990), which will inform professional development and student support provision at our university moving forward.

In future research, we hope to explore students’ conceptions of good teaching and effective learning across a wider range of academic disciplines, and a wider spectrum of diversity. We would also like to explore university teachers’ conceptions alongside. Methodologically, we wonder how teachers would engage with the photovoice task, and whether mixed teacher-student focus groups might also allow new understandings to emerge. In terms of staff professional development, our findings allow us to challenge simplistic constructions of students (as necessarily different to each other, demanding, outcomes-focused etc). We suspect that the actions students associated with teacher passion, approachability, expertise and communication will be very helpful in prompting teachers to reflect on their own work, highlighting how they might adapt their practice in simple ways in order to more effectively engage with, and teach, students (see Tables 1-3). Our study findings will also inform the development of materials for students that highlight specific study ‘tips’ while encouraging students to confidently do ‘what works for them’ (see Table 4). Overall, the study offers rich conceptual insights that align with and exceed existing scholarship on teaching and learning in HE, while identifying practical steps likely to promote good teaching and effective learning in university settings.

Recommendations

Recommendations for university teachers
Diverse teachers are needed to teach diverse students. There is no one way of being a ‘good teacher’ but our project findings suggest some principles that are likely to make teachers more effective when working with students. These are:

- Good teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for their subject area, and for working with students. While not everyone is funny, animated, or entertaining in the way they teach, students find it easier to engage with teachers who seem to be personally invested in their subject area and in teaching. They notice when teachers seem happy and interested in their work!

- Good teachers demonstrate approachability, or a willingness to engage with students. Small acts make a teacher seem approachable, even in very large classes. Examples include: introducing oneself to students, inviting and affirming teacher-student and student-student interaction during class, explaining how and when you can be contacted, and explicitly acknowledging and inviting diverse viewpoints.
- Good teachers show competence and proficiency in their teaching. Students appreciate it when teachers have a 'clear storyline', link content to 'real world' experiences and examples, explain things clearly, provide a range of learning opportunities, and challenge students to explore ideas and see things in new ways. Good teachers can be seen as 'translators', who communicate effectively so that students understand, and engage in learning.

Recommendations for university students
There are many ways of being an effective learner, and it is important to figure out (and do) what works for you. Our study findings suggest that:

- Effective learners recognise their role in the teaching-learning partnership, and know what works for them. They prepare for and engage in class in ways that allow them to learn (for example, by reading course material and choosing to sit in a place that helps them stay focused). They also experiment with note-taking approaches to find what 'works' and feels comfortable, find and create study environments which allow them to both relax and focus, and actively seek out discussion and interaction as a strategic learning approach.
- Effective learners focus on learning, rather than marks for their own sake. Effective learners conceptualise university study as a starting point, not an endpoint – as a 'journey' of discovery and exploration. Effective learners recognise the importance of *time* in the learning process. They understand that learning involves 'sitting on' information and ideas, and taking time to rest and to do things other than studying.
- Effective learners remember where they have come from and where they are going. They keep their short and long-term goals in mind, and stay connected to people who can encourage them in the learning journey, including family, friends, classmates and teachers.

Impact of the study

As noted, our rationale for the study was multi-faceted. This included to develop a network of staff researchers that spanned the university's international, Māori, Pacific, and academic development portfolios; to inform the development of staff development and student support programmes; to foreground student success; and to foster university teaching that is responsive to students' diversity. We outline the study's impacts to date below.

Impact on learners

- This project involved the development of a student advisory panel, with input into teaching and learning at the University of Otago. Students expressed appreciation for the opportunity the project offered to have their voices heard.
- Two thirds of our project participants attended the end-of-project Celebration Hui. The students were highly engaged in the project throughout, and expressed an interest in being kept informed of the ongoing outcomes of the

project. Some participating students have registered their interest in being physical panelists at staff and student workshops based on the project.

- The Pacific student focus group was the only one that included both undergraduate and postgraduate students together. These students decided that they wanted to keep meeting regularly, and become a source of mentoring support for other Pacific students in Humanities. As an outcome of the project, in 2017, a Humanities Pacific Students' Association was developed, under Esmay's guidance. (Such a group already exists for Māori students).
- Students and staff at our initial student and staff professional development workshops based on the project indicated that they found the workshop content helpful. We anticipate further impact on learners as we continue to disseminate our research findings.
- Our research findings are informing the re-development of the 'My Otago First Year' (MOFY) website, an informative website for first-year students.

Impact on the team

- We have now established an interdisciplinary network including academic and student support staff working across academic development, student learning, and student support portfolios. We are keen to continue working together as a team to develop staff and student workshops and learning support materials based on our findings.
- We have gained methodological and substantive insights through undertaking this project that will inform our future research, and student support and staff professional development programmes.
- Our research findings have already informed our work with colleagues and students, and will continue to do so.

Impact on practice

- Preliminary research findings have been disseminated to University of Otago staff through the Celebration Hui (October 2016), a workshop for new teachers offered through the university's 'Introduction to University Teaching' course (February 2017), and Pacific and Māori student support team meetings.
- We are currently developing a further workshop based on our research findings to be offered through the professional development programme for university teaching staff.
- We shared methodological insights from the project at the 2016 TERNZ (Tertiary Education Research New Zealand) conference, and substantive insights on good teaching and communication at the 2016 ISANA (International Education Association Inc.) international conference.
- We have developed a workshop for students based on the project, and we hope to develop more, targeted workshops to be offered across the university.
- Our project findings have informed the University of Otago tutor training programme.
- We anticipate that there will be further impacts on practice as we disseminate our research findings across the university, and beyond.

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