



PRESS RELEASE

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UOG publishes book for educators, by educators: “Teaching & Learning in Micronesia: Reflections on Island Centered Pedagogy”

What do you get when you collect the thoughts of dozens of new and seasoned teachers whose experiences range from middle school to high school and university classroom settings?

Nearly two years in the making, the collective effort has produced the 310-page book “Teaching & Learning in Micronesia: Reflections on Island Centered Pedagogy.”

A product of the University of Guam, it offers a collection of essays by teachers about their vast and rich classroom experiences, offering uniquely Guam and Micronesian perspectives and interactions between students and teachers.

The book is available for free starting this week and will be distributed through UOG’s network of teachers across the island.

Copies were also gifted on Thursday, August 24, to future teachers attending classes at the UOG School of Education.

Dr. Kirk Johnson, UOG professor of sociology, facilitated the book project with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The book is the outcome of a series of seminars held in 2022 with some 60 educators in Guam who gathered to reflect and learn with each other about how their classrooms could truly be transformative spaces where students from diverse backgrounds take ownership of their own learning. A grant from the National Endowment for the

Humanities helped to facilitate the seminars with the overarching title: “Towards a more perfect union: Teaching and Learning in Micronesia.”

Sharing diverse insights in a Micronesia setting

“When teachers share their diverse insights within the context of the Micronesia setting, it becomes a convergence of experiences from both new and veteran educators that has contributed toward a very rich published volume that we hope will inspire many others here in Guam and throughout the region,” said Dr. Johnson.

Dr. Clare Ann Camacho, a UOG consultant and retired UOG faculty, who co-wrote the grant with Dr. Johnson, said the book can provide guidance for teachers to reflect on how to provoke thinking and learning in their classrooms.

The project drew inspiration, in part, from the island concept of setting sail on a canoe.

“During this voyage, we came to discover certain foundational concepts that we feel are important and can act as a rudder and guide for our canoe. As teachers in Micronesia, we appreciate the importance of embracing a humble posture of learning in all that we do,” according to Dr. Johnson.

The educators also produced a set of ideals to strive for.

“Faith in the capacity of every student will prove essential if we are to elicit from them wholehearted participation in the learning process,” Dr. Johnson wrote in the book’s introduction.

UOG President Anita Borja Enriquez noted that the University’s values, embedded in Inadahi and Inagofli’e, are reflected in the book. Inadahi advocates for taking care of oneself, of others and the environment around them. Inagofli’e promotes harmony in the way we live and interact with people around us.

“Cultural competency” to support students

“Written by educators for educators, these reflections on island-centered pedagogy offer insights into the cultural diversity among our student populations and their perspectives,” said President Enriquez. “The more we share the uniqueness of island wisdom and our diverse cultures, the more educators are equipped with knowledge and cultural competency to support our students.”

In the book’s foreword, Interim Senior Vice President and Provost Dr. Sharleen Santos-Bamba described the topics and essays in the book as inspirational.

“Explore this text. Soak in the narratives. Share the stories. Advocate for change. Live and be kind,” Dr. Santos-Bamba wrote.

To learn more about how to get a copy of the book, contact:

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Photo captions:

2023-teaching-book

Newly launched: University of Guam President Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez, first from left, holds a copy of the new book “Teaching & Learning in Micronesia: Reflections on Island Centered Pedagogy.” President Enriquez is joined by Dr. Kirk Johnson, center, UOG professor of sociology who facilitated the book project, and Interim Senior Vice President and Provost Dr. Sharleen Santos-Bamba.

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Dr. Kirk Johnson, front, fourth from left, facilitated the “Teaching & Learning in Micronesia: Reflections on Island Centered Pedagogy” book project. Some of the educators who contributed essays in the book are pictured with Dr. Johnson.

Photos courtesy University of Guam