

**A qualitative investigation into the
significant achievement of Pasifika
students in one New Zealand school**

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of Teaching (Honours)**

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been submitted previously for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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Dedication

To my Grandfather – Peter Leslie Brungar

~ You were always my biggest inspiration in life – I miss you. ~

Abstract

This qualitative case study aimed to investigate why Pasifika students at one school in New Zealand were exhibiting higher levels of achievement than students in schools nationally were on average. The research was conducted through a variety of data collection methods – interviews, questionnaires, documents, observations and journals. The interviews were conducted with three staff members and three students – two current students and one past student and formed the base for the data collection process. The questionnaire was distributed to the general population of Pasifika students while the observations and journaling formed part of the ‘teacher-as-researcher’ aspects of the research. The underlying reason found for the academic achievement of the Pasifika students appeared to be the authentic relationships formed in the school. These relationships extended throughout the school and included the student-teacher, student-student, student-school, student-family and student-self relationships. The small size of the school, the boarding department and the Christian ethos of the school drove these relationships to thrive within the school context. In turn, these relationships based on qualities such as acceptance, belief in each other, care and understanding enable students to belong, be who they are and become more.

Keywords: Pasifika, education, relationships, family, achievement

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Prologue

To understand the context, and indirectly, the purpose of this thesis one must first understand part of my background. This will be depicted in narrative form as I will be telling my story (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Basit, 2010; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010).

For two of my high school years, in 2006-2007, I attended a Methodist Boarding school that up until the 1980s was a boys-only school. The school roll was made up of 97% Pacific Islanders or Maori students. Therefore that made me part of a significant minority in my school. Although it was not the most pleasant experience of my adolescence, due to the challenging environment of the school, it did give me valuable insight into the educational trends of Pacific Island students in New Zealand schools. During my time there I constantly struggled with the lack of motivation students had for their studies. This was manifested in the behaviour and attitudes of the students in the classroom. This in turn was made evident in the overall academic achievement of the school.

Further investigation showed the academic trend of these students is not limited to the school which I attended. In fact Pacific Islanders have consistently been achieving at lower levels than most other ethnic groups in New Zealand (Education Review Office, 2012c; Ferguson, Gorinski, Wendt Samu, & Mara, 2008; Harkess, Murray, Parkin, & Dalgety, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2010a; Nakhid, 2003). Ultimately it was from this personal experience that my research interest developed. As a curious and reflective person, I wanted to discover what could help these students achieve better academically.

Initially the research project aimed to answer the question ‘What effect does the transition from the Pacific Island education system to the New Zealand education system have on students’ academic achievement?’ which was identified by Amituanai-Tolosa, McNaughton, Lai and Airini (2009) as one of the issues that needed to be addressed in Pasifika research. However through the process of emergent design (Ary et al., 2010; Lodico et al., 2010) my research project changed. At the school chosen for this research project I was informed by a staff member of the incongruous academic success of the students compared to national statistics – the Pasifika students at this school were achieving significantly better. After reading a significant amount of research on the struggles of Pacific Island students I was very intrigued and simply put, I *had* to know why this school in question was different. Therefore, unexpectedly, I had a relatively different research project on my hands, but ultimately a very interesting one.

With such strong claims, I needed evidence to show that these claims were actually correct. Consequently I received a report written by the Deputy Principal of the school which showed these results as well as a brief description of the possible reasons for the notable academic achievement of Pasifika students at this school. This report stated that 72.7% of Pacific islanders enrolled at this school in year eleven were achieving NCEA level three two years later. In comparison, the national average for Pasifika students was 23.8%. Clearly this indicates a significant difference between Pasifika students at this school and Pasifika students on average. In addition this report stated several reasons for this academic trend (these will be explored in chapter four). Interestingly, the majority of these reasons are not derived from the government’s Pasifika Education Plans where they encourage primarily

pedagogical changes (Ministry of Education, 2009b). Consequently this created an interesting focus for my study.

As this research project is grounded in cultural nuances, terminology from Pasifika languages will be used to illustrate each chapter. This terminology together with its link to the purpose of the particular chapter is explained on the cover page of each chapter.

Chapter One

The Usuga – Welcoming Ceremony

The usuga or welcoming ceremony is used in this chapter to illustrate the process of welcoming the individual to the setting in which they find themselves. This involves giving each new individual a lei or flower garland.



Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce or welcome you, as the reader, into my world – this thesis. This chapter will provide an overview of the research project as a whole and will also provide an overview of the structure of this thesis.

As mentioned in the prologue, through the process of emergent design (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010) the focus of my initial study changed. I wished to investigate the claim that this school was not like most other schools largely populated by students with Pacific Island heritage as the students were achieving excellent academic results. The report by the Deputy Principal backed up these claims and it was ultimately from this document that my main research question and sub-questions were derived.

Research questions

The driving question at the core of this research project is:

Why are Pacific Island students at one school in New Zealand achieving at a substantially higher level than the national average?

In particular, this research project aims to discover:

1. What are the enablers at this school which facilitate students' academic achievement?
2. How do the perceived facets arising out of question one affect students' academic achievement?

Definitions of terms

For the purpose of a culturally sensitive research project, the following terminology will be used:

Pasifika

Used interchangeably with Pacific Islander, it refers to a Pacific Island person or a Pacific Island country in Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. Although there is an extensive list of countries that are officially included in the term Pasifika, in this context Pasifika will mostly refer to people from the six Pacific nations of Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands, Tokelau and Fiji as outlined by Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu and Latu (2001) and the Ministry of Education (2010a). The Ministry of Education (2009b) and Ferguson, et al. (2008) add that it is a collective term used to describe people of Pacific heritage or ancestry who have migrated or been born in New Zealand. When collectively speaking of the people in any of the above regions, they are referred to as *Pasifika peoples*.

Palagi

In comparison to Pasifika, Palagi (pronounced paa-lung-ee) refers to the European or ‘white man’ (Anae et al., 2001), although according to Amituanai-Toloa (2010) it refers to a ‘non-Samoan’. In this context Palagi will refer to the European culture in New Zealand.

Whānau

One of the fundamentals of a Pacific Island social organisation is the whānau (pronounced faa-no), or family (Anae et al., 2001). In traditional Pacific Island culture the whānau or family can refer to several types of kin groups; a nuclear

family, members of a household or all residents of a single block of land (Kick, 2001). In addition, the Ministry of Education (2009b) states that one's connectedness to family defines one's well being. Although the word whānau originated from the Maori language however it is, in general, accepted in New Zealand as an idiomatic term for family.

New Zealand Certificate of Educational Achievement

The New Zealand Certificate of Educational Achievement, or NCEA, is the official secondary school qualification in New Zealand (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.). It consists of three levels corresponding to the levels within the National Qualifications Framework and is usually completed in the three final years of secondary schooling; years 11-13. To achieve each NCEA level students have to gain a certain number of credits, which are allocated to each assessment within every subject. In a student's final year of the NCEA system, they are required to achieve a set number of credits in various compulsory and chosen areas to gain what is known as University Entrance or UE (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2012). This is required to attend universities in New Zealand.

Rationale

This research project has significance to two separate areas; education and the Pasifika peoples within New Zealand. The special significance to each of these areas will be explored now.

Significance to education

The purpose of this research project is twofold. Firstly, although Pasifika students constitute a large number of the students enrolled in New Zealand schools, there is

insufficient research regarding these students in the New Zealand education system (Amituanai-Tolosa et al., 2009; Harkess et al., 2005; Nakhid, 2003). In addition Nakhid et al. (2007) suggest the research methods used in Pasifika research need to be reviewed to produce more significant findings. Therefore this research project will aim to provide vital information to increase the level of understanding of Pasifika educational issues in New Zealand as a whole. Secondly, Education Review Office (2012c), Ferguson, et al. (2008), Harkess, et al. (2005), Ministry of Education (2010a) and Nakhid (2003) have all expressed their concern regarding the underachievement of Pasifika students in the NCEA system. Therefore this project will also aim to give additional insight into this issue, particularly taking into consideration methods that are successful in the school in question.

Significance to Pasifika peoples

This research project will also provide significance to the Pasifika peoples. According to Anae et al. (2001), in order for research involving Pasifika peoples to make meaningful contributions it must, among other objectives, use research to improve their lives. In addition the Ministry of Education (2009b) suggests that the success of Pasifika peoples is critical for the future of New Zealand. This research will provide vital information for schools to help raise the achievement of their Pasifika students and therefore create a better future for them.

Research Design

Creswell (2008) suggests that research problems which need to be explored to acquire a deep understanding are best suited to qualitative research. Therefore this research project will be in the qualitative paradigm (Creswell, 2008; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). This allows the researcher to gain the views of participants, ask

broad general questions, collect data consisting largely of words, describe and analyse the text for themes and conduct an inquiry in a subjective manner (Creswell, 2008). Within the qualitative paradigm, the research project will consist of elements of a case study, narrative inquiry, teacher-as-researcher and will work towards a grounded theory (Ary et al., 2010; Basit, 2010; Creswell, 2008; Lodico et al., 2010). Case studies allow the researcher to gather extensive information from multiple sources and participants which in turn will provide the researcher with a full understanding and an in-depth study of the case (Bell, 2005; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Lodico et al., 2010; Punch, 2009). In addition, Ary, et al. (2010, p. 456) suggest “case studies provide a detailed report that may build on narratives...and provide both an emic, or insider, perspective... as well as etic, or outsider, perspective”. To enable the emic voice to come through, this research project will also include elements of a narrative research design (Ary et al., 2010; Basit, 2010; Creswell, 2008). Ary, et al. (2010) suggest that narrative research provides accounts of human experiences. As this research project is exploring the experiences of students at one school in relation to their academic achievement, narrative research will allow me to tell ‘their story’. The teacher-as-researcher aspects included in this research project are minimal but will add quality, as it adds another layer to the methodology. Finally, with these methods combined, this research will work towards a grounded theory (Basit, 2010; Creswell, 2008).

Location

The case study in this research project consists of one school. Initially, the chosen site for this research project needed to fulfil two requirements. It needed to be a school in New Zealand and it needed to have at least a moderate proportion of Pasifika students. For convenience, the school chosen was a Seventh-day Adventist

school. However, as the research project changed through emergent design (Ary et al., 2010; Lodico et al., 2010) the project was found to suit the school. The school is located in the southern part of the North Island in a city with 82,000 inhabitants. The school roll in 2010 was 294 and consisted of 64% Palagi, 12% Pacific Islanders, 12% Maori and 12% other ethnicities; however, the current demographics are approximately the same. The school campus is located on the outskirts of the city in a country environment and includes a main school building, a gym, a cafeteria, an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) block, two dormitory buildings and a school chapel.

Participants

The cohort of participants chosen consists of staff members, current students and past students. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms will be used in place of their real names. The staff members – the Deputy Principal (Mr Lewis), the Director of Boarding (Mrs Latu) and one teacher (Mrs King) – were selected based on their familiarity with the research topic. Their suitability to the research project was revealed through brief conversations in the staff room during recess at the beginning of my research project. The past and current students were selected based on their willingness to participate. However the length of their enrolment at the school and year level also played a role in their suitability. Clearly students who were new to the school would have little experience in the school and would therefore provide limited relevant information. The cohort is balanced in terms of age and gender. The majority of the student participants associated themselves with the Samoan ethnicity, while the staff members were a mixture of Pasifika and Palagi.

Data Collection

As mentioned by Creswell (2008) qualitative research aims to acquire a deep understanding of a situation. To gain a comprehensive understanding of why this school is different, data must be collected, analysed and synthesised. As this research project is founded on case study research, the data collection tools used will enhance the quality of the data. Creswell (2005), Fraenkel & Wallen (2006) and Yin (2009) list several sources from which this rich data may come from:

- Documents
- Archival records
- Interviews
- Observations
- Physical artefacts
- Audiovisual materials
- Questionnaires

Interviews will be used because of their ability to provide depth, valuable insights and thick descriptions through a small number of focussed sessions (Burton, Brundrett, & Jones, 2008; Lodico et al., 2010). To ensure authenticity and truthfulness of the data information will be obtained from multiple sources. This process is known as triangulation (Basit, 2010; Creswell, 2005; Drew, Hardman, & Hosp, 2008; Lodico et al., 2010). Therefore data will also be obtained through observations, questionnaires, journals and documents. According to Lodico et al. (2010) journals used in research are often from participants. However they can also include the researcher's journal which is the case in this research project. Together with the journals, questionnaires will be distributed to all participants which will

allow them to indicate whether the conclusions drawn from the initial data reflect their views (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). The observations will be part of the teacher-as-research aspects of this research project and will enable me to observe whether the views of the participants are reflected in the school environment. As mentioned previously, the report regarding the results of Pasifika students at this school formed a basis for the research sub-questions. However this document will also be part of the data collection methods as it has insights regarding factors that facilitate the achievement of Pasifika students at this school.

During and after the data collection phase, as part of the research project, the data collected will be transcribed, coded and will be constructed into a big picture of the situation in focus. This analysis process will be completed inductively (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

Assumptions & limits

It is assumed, in the context of this research project, that the Pasifika students at this particular school represent the typical group of Pacific Island people. It is also assumed that participants will openly share their experiences and be completely honest.

The limitation that is most significant to this research project is that of interpretation of the data from academic results. As the school in question does not have a significant percentage of Pasifika students, the results can therefore be skewed. For example, if one year level only has two Pasifika students and both of them pass, that puts the pass rate at 100%. However if a third Pasifika student enrolls in that year level and does not pass, that heavily affects the overall pass rate and puts the average

down to 67%. From this example it is evident that individual results heavily affect the overall academic results of Pasifika students.

Thesis structure

The structure of this thesis is based on the five-chapter model. However within each chapter, the structure veers away from the traditional model (Perry, 1998). In addition, terminology of different Pacific cultures as well as indigenous idioms will be used to illustrate the concept explored in each chapter. These will be explained in each subsequent chapter

Chapter outline

This chapter is an introduction and outline of the thesis. It establishes the context and introduces concepts vital to the understanding of the issue in question.

Chapter two will discuss the literature and analyse how it applies to the situation of the school in question. This chapter will also contextualise the background to this topic and prior attempts to answer the question ‘How do we raise the achievement of Pasifika students?’ It will be split into three sections – discussion of the literature, discussion of government documents and voices of educational experts – to provide a holistic overview of the research topic.

Chapter three details the process which was undertaken to gather data. It outlines the paradigm in which the research takes place as well as each individual data collection tool and how they work together to create a thorough and in-depth understanding of the research question.

Chapter four will present the results in three sections. The first section will depict the responses from the staff members, the second section will show both the present and past students' views and the final view will be the teacher-as-researcher view. This chapter will also draw correlations between staff responses and student responses to give a comprehensive understanding of the results. This will be in the form of a mini-analysis at the end of each section. This will help to guide the way to the discussion in chapter five.

Chapter five will then discuss the students', staff and teacher-as-researcher perceptions in relation to the literature mentioned in chapter two. It is in this chapter that the research question is fully answered.

Chapter six will draw conclusions and provide suggestions for other schools to implement. It will also discuss suggestions for further research in this area.

Chapter Two

The Aiga – Extended Family

As the aiga in Pacific Island cultures incorporates the extended family, such as uncles, aunties and cousins, it will be used to illustrate the related literature associated with this research topic.



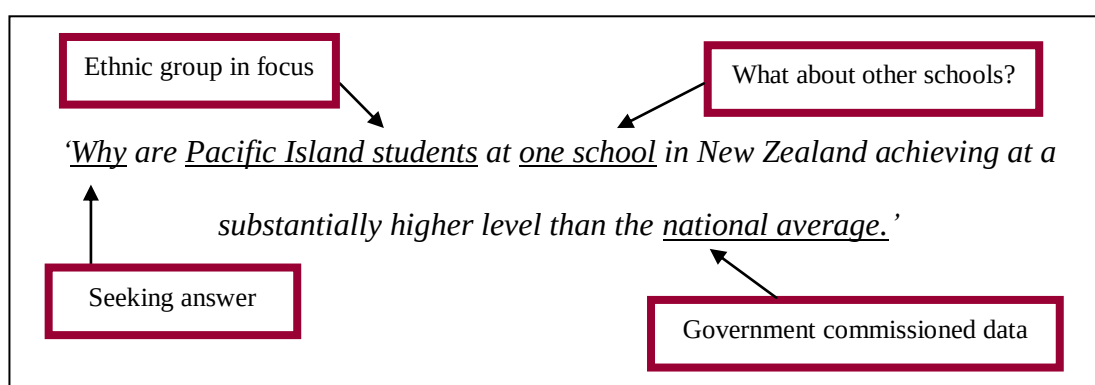
Introduction

The typical model of this chapter, the literature review, synthesises all the relevant literature and establishes a theoretical framework in relation to the focus question (Hart, 1998; Lodico et al., 2010). However, in order to provide a comprehensive background and educational context for this research project, the structure will veer away from the typical model of a literature review (Perry, 1998). This chapter will be divided into three sections, each which will be explored later in this chapter.

The complexity of this question and the connotations associated with it leads one to speculate whether perhaps an atypical model would form a tighter framework.

Looking in detail, this question highlights four aspects, which can be seen in the underlined sections in diagram 2.1.

Diagram 2. 1: Unpacking of the focus question



First, 'Why are Pacific Island students...' emphasises the ethnic group associated with this question and the literature describes the educational circumstances of these peoples and suggests causes and solutions for Pasifika underachievement. Thus, so far a 'standard' literature review would suffice. However, when looking at 'one school in New Zealand', it is clear the school in question is different than others. So what are other schools doing? This is where the change in model occurs. Also

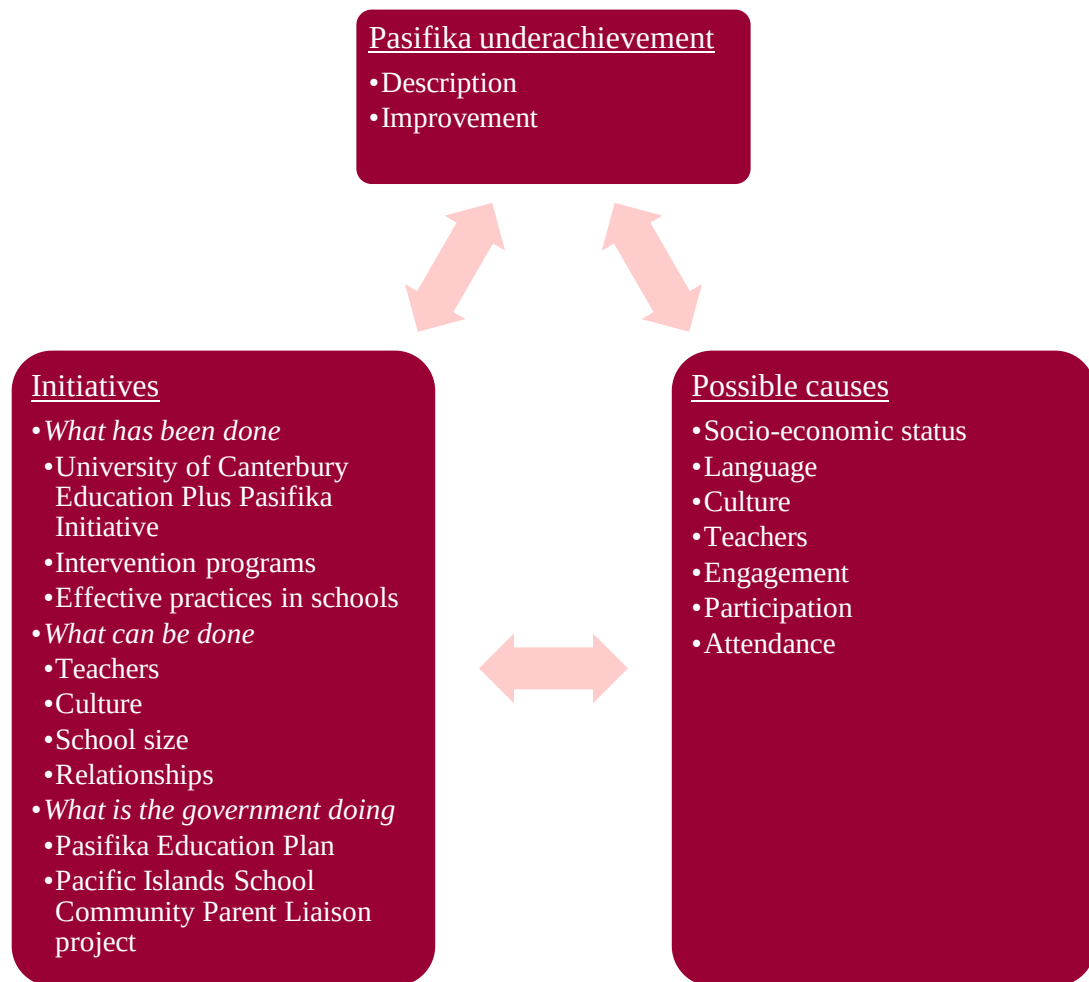
‘national average’ implies a governing body has determined what average is for this group of students through analysis of data. However, one cannot be certain about how the results are calculated and thus one can speculate whether ‘improvements’ are made in order for the results to appear better than they are in reality. In addition, Nakhid (2003) suggests a large proportion of the literature is commissioned by the Ministry of Education (this will be expanded on later in this chapter). Therefore to ensure a range of viewpoints, sources independent of the Ministry of Education will be considered and explored in regards to Pasifika underachievement.

In order to convey the full range of literature in a systematic and logical manner, to provide a holistic understanding of the topic and to create a theoretical framework for this research project, this chapter will be divided into three sections:

- » Section one: Journey through the literature
- » Section two: Discussion of Education Review Office reports
- » Section three: Voice of educational experts

Section one will include the conventional aspects of a literature review and will describe, compare, contrast and evaluate the theories and arguments presented in the relevant literature (Hart, 1998). However as the Pasifika culture is characterised as being spoken rather than written (Anae et al., 2001), the style of this section will include aspects of a narrative, hence the title ‘Journey through the literature’ (Creswell, 2009). As can be seen in diagram 2.2 on the next page, the literature in section one will provide an overview of the extent of Pasifika underachievement, such as status and improvement. It will also evaluate some possible causes for this underachievement and the practices and initiatives already implemented in the New Zealand Education System to overcome this issue.

Diagram 2. 2: Literature themes



The three subheadings within section one interlink as the status of Pasifika underachievement and the improvements made often indicate possible causes that are relevant and initiatives that are effective. In addition, these possible causes and initiatives need to complement each other in order for change to occur in Pasifika achievement.

As mentioned previously, this research question investigates one school in New Zealand in regards to their academic achievement. However, although this is the case it is valuable to explore practices of a number of other schools in New Zealand in regards to *their* Pasifika education. In light of this, a discussion of a selected number

of Education Review Office reports will be included to provide a comprehensive view of the different educational contexts of Pasifika peoples. These Education Review Office reports will give insight into methods and approaches other schools within New Zealand are implementing to facilitate Pacific Island students. The Ministry of Education reviews all schools in New Zealand on a tri-annual basis and report on the quality of education provided for children and students (Education Review Office, 2012b).

When considering and reflectively conjoining section one and two of this chapter, one acquires a reasonably detailed understanding of the context of Pasifika Education. However, as mentioned, a significant proportion of the literature is either government commissioned reports or reviews and articles written by Ministry of Education associates (Nakhid, 2003). Appendix A, which is drawn from the reference list, illustrates the extent of the government's monopoly in this research field.

As a result, it is reasonable to suggest literature could be skewed to one perspective. In fact, Nakhid (2003) and Nakhid, et al. (2007) suggest that this literature reflects a 'taken for granted' acceptance of the researchers perceptions and prefers the traditional and established types of research rather than a culturally appropriate methodology. One would assume research methodologies would be appropriate to the research context, so why is this not the case, especially in such a large scale endeavour?

Therefore in order to construct a tight, concise and balanced context, independent sources will be consulted and asked to share their findings on Pasifika Education. These will be in the form of voices of several educational experts. As the opinions of

these experts are both relevant and authoritative their input will be valuable and justified in this research context (Andersson, Beveridge, & Singh, 2007).

Section I: Journey through the literature

One aspect of modern society that is vital to its progress and advancement is education. Ferguson, et al. (2008, p. 1) state that ‘all learners need to be well served by their education to develop the requisite capabilities and sense of belonging and wellbeing to succeed and contribute to wider communities’. Harkess, et al. (2005) agree and suggest that achieving at school gives students a strong foundation for life-long learning and increases their opportunities for tertiary education and employment. Therefore when a specific approach to education is not suitable for all different groups within that education system, an issue arises.

In New Zealand there are considerable disparities between various ethnic groups within the NCEA system, in particular between Pasifika and Palagi (Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt Samu, & Finau, 2002; Dickie, 2003; Education Review Office, 2012c; Harkess et al., 2005; Lai, McNaughton, Amituanai-Toloa, Turner, & Hsiao, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2009a). The full extent to which Pasifika are underachieving will be discussed later in this chapter. Therefore the notion of Pasifika success increases in importance in relation to the future of society and the Pasifika culture. The Ministry of Education (2009a) states that the education system must work for Pasifika peoples so they can gain the knowledge and skills required to do well for themselves, their communities, New Zealand, the Pasifika region and the world. Furthermore they suggest that Pasifika success is *critical* for the future of New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2009b). Consequently, this issue is one the government, administration, educators and researchers should continue to prioritise.

The idea that education will provide more opportunities and open pathways for success is not limited to the government or solely Palagi citizens. Bedford (2009, p. 40) suggests that ‘the desire to provide children with a sound education, with a view of improving chances for employment outside of village agriculture, has long been and remains one of the main reasons for Polynesian migration to New Zealand’.

Siope (2011) agrees and states that this migrant dream is not reflected in the reality of Pasifika students’ experiences in secondary schooling. In addition it was *expected* that this educational advantage would improve their children’s life chances. So is the New Zealand education system letting these groups of people down? If that is the case, this problem is not likely to disappear anytime soon.

The current trend in the Pasifika population is that of increase. Pasifika peoples already make up a significant proportion of the population (Amituanai-Toloa, 2010; Bedford, 2009) and Dickie (2003), the Ministry of Education (2009b) and Nakhid, et al. (2007) all state that it is growing fast. Dickie (2003), Kick (2001) and the Ministry of Education (2009b) add that the Pasifika population in New Zealand is a young population. This places extra emphasis on finding a solution to the underachievement of Pasifika in New Zealand.

Moreover, Nakhid, et al. (2007) warns that the rapid increase of the Pasifika population is likely to have adverse effects on Pasifika communities if the educational needs of these peoples are not adequately met. In fact, this concern for Pasifika achievement is expressed by multiple authors. Allen, Taleni & Robertson (2009), Alton-Lee (2006), Coxon, et al. (2002), Ferguson, et al. (2008), Ministry of Education (2009a) and Nakhid (2003) all highlight the importance of solving the issue of Pasifika underachievement (see table 2.1 on the next page).

Table 2. 1: Research relating to Pasifika underachievement

Author	Concern
Allen et al. (2009)	The ‘at risk’ label frequently attached to our Pasifika students suggests that we are not yet achieving these aims effectively. (p. 47)
Alton-Lee (2006)	Indicate a need for community and system development to be more responsive to diverse learners.
Coxon et al. (2002)	The depth of concern from both Pacific and non-Pacific researchers to explain the patterns... from our education system for Pacific peoples. (p. 137)
Ferguson et al. (2008)	A need for some reorientation in terms of meeting the needs of this diverse group of learners. (p.1)
Ministry of Education (2009a)	Of concern are the considerable disparities between Pasifika and [Palagi]. (p. 33)
Nakhid (2003)	Of increasing concern...is the situation of Pasifika students in education. (p. 297)

Notions such as ‘at risk’ labels, responsiveness and reorientation are discussed in relation to the increasing importance of a solution. The urgency and sincere call for a solution revealed in these comments leads one to wonder how critical this situation actually is. So to what extent is the New Zealand education system failing to meet the needs of the Pasifika peoples in New Zealand?

Underachievement

The state of educational underachievement for Pasifika peoples is not limited to the secondary school setting – the realm in which this research project is based. Coxon, et al. (2002, p. 137) states that ‘these patterns persists from early childhood through to tertiary education’. Evidently the academic achievement of Pasifika children in early childhood centres is difficult to monitor, however at a primary school level

there are more figures available. Phillips, McNaughton & MacDonald (2001) suggest that Pasifika children, on entry to school display low achievement in conventional school literacy and this disparity in literacy continues through schooling. In addition, studies have shown that Pasifika students reach secondary school having achieved less in primary school in comparison to Palagi (see chapter one for definition) students (Harkess et al., 2005). In light of this, perhaps the government should spend more time focusing on raising the achievement of primary school students?

Returning to Pasifika students and literacy, this is expanded upon by Dickie (2003) and Lai, et al. (2009) who suggest Pasifika children score lower in reading comprehension measures and literacy than children from other ethnic groups. Furthermore, schools with primarily indigenous and ethnic minorities (Pasifika) in low socio economic areas have long been associated with low levels of literacy (Lai et al., 2009). Such disparities in lower levels can have detrimental effects that extend to high school if not dealt with early. In fact this lack of literacy skills has been shown to extend into secondary education and NCEA. The proportion of Pasifika students achieving the literacy requirements for NCEA level 1 is relatively low (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Overall this means Pasifika students are lagging behind other ethnic groups in terms of reaching the requirements to ‘move on’ in their education.

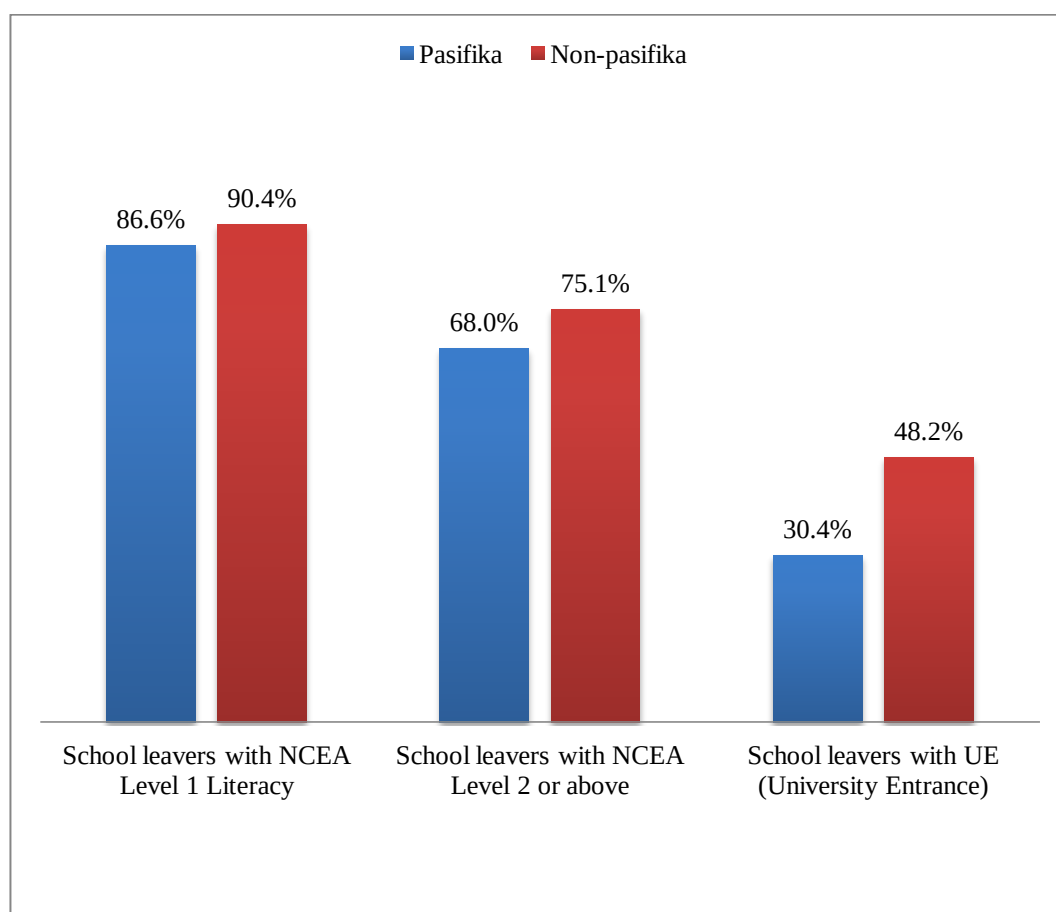
Harkess, et al. (2005) mention that many Pasifika candidates are not reaching levels of achievement needed to gain access to higher level tertiary courses. In addition, in any given year Pasifika students are less likely to gain NCEA qualifications and therefore less likely to attain University Entrance (Harkess et al., 2005). University Entrance (UE) is the minimum requirement to go to a New Zealand university (New

Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2012) and therefore this disadvantages Pasifika students. One could ask whether this is a recent trend. However these considerations and results are not merely recent findings. Reports published in 1981 and 1993 (see Ramsay, Sneddon, Grenfell, & Ford, 1981, and Openshaw, Lee, & Lee, 1993, as cited by Lai et al., 2009) identified these disparities; the report in 1981 calling the situation a crisis in urgent need of a solution. This leads one to wonder what has actually been accomplished since 1981 if this is still a current and urgent issue?

Improvement

One could deduce from the previous literature that no effective solution has been found as it is still a relevant research area; however some progress has been made since 1981. The Education Review Office (2009) and the Ministry of Education (2010a) are both in agreement that Pasifika students continue to increase their rates of attainment in NCEA. In particular, percentages of Pasifika students meeting the literacy and numeracy requirements has increased and the number of Pasifika students leaving high school with NCEA level three has increased while the amount of Pasifika students leaving high school having achieved UE has stayed relatively even (Education Review Office, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2009a, 2010a). Despite some improvements, there are still considerable amounts of work to be done before the gap in achievement between Pasifika students and Palagi students is eliminated. The most recent figures show that Pasifika students are still lagging behind other ethnic groups (see graph 2.1 on the next page) (Ministry of Education, 2011d).

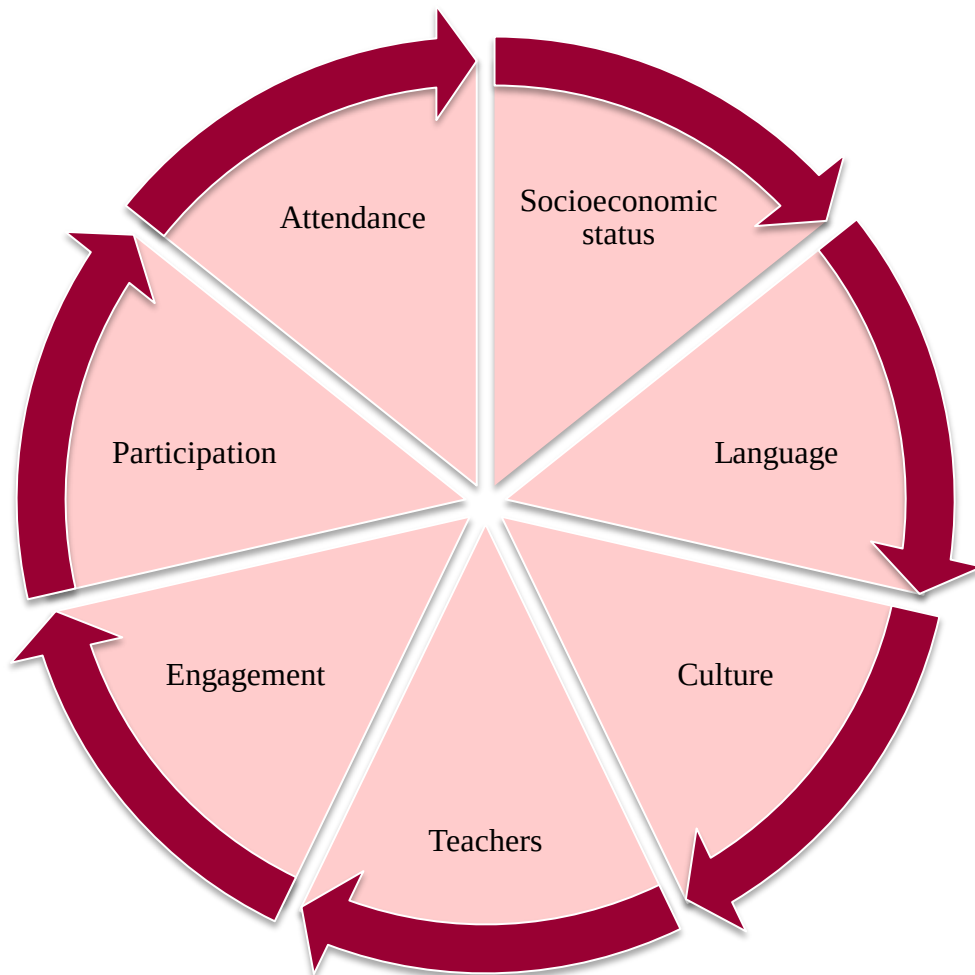
Graph 2. 1: Statistics of achievement for Pasifika students and non-Pasifika



Possible causes

A multitude of factors have been cited as reasons for the underachievement of Pasifika students (see diagram 2.3 on the next page). Most recently Coleman (2011) has summarised what she considers to be factors in Pasifika students underachievement into three points: barriers of language, barriers of culture and lower socioeconomic status. There is some agreement among authors regarding these factors. However there are a number of additional factors that other authors have also suggested could have an effect on Pasifika students. But first let us look at socioeconomic status.

Diagram 2. 3: Suggested causes for Pasifika underachievement



Socioeconomic status

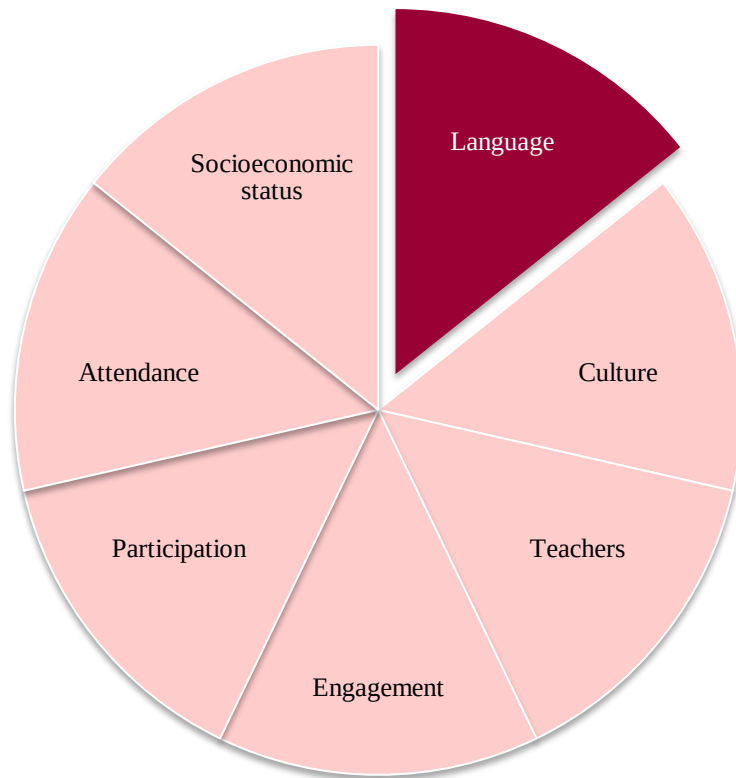
As mentioned previously, Coleman (2011) suggested that socioeconomic status has an impact on Pasifika students' achievement. In 1991, a study by Fergusson, Lloyd and Horwood indicated that socioeconomic status was linked to lower scores in achievement of Pasifika students. More recently, Bishop (2005) and the Ministry of Education (2009a) also indicated that this might be the case. Bishop (2005, p. 113) suggests that Pasifika students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were 'receiving

less value from education and being over represented among students who underachieve’.

Another aspect of the literature deals with the link between academic achievement and decile ratings. A decile rating is based on the socioeconomic background of all students at one school and is based on household income, occupation, household crowding, educational qualifications and income support (Ministry of Education, 2011a). The higher the decile, the fewer students a school has from low socioeconomic areas and families. The Ministry of Education state that in 2009, students from schools in the highest deciles were three times more likely to leave school having gained UE than students from schools in deciles one and two. On the other hand, research conducted by Nakhid (2003) argued that Pasifika students did not see their socio-economic background as being a determining factor in their educational experiences.

With two conflicting views, it is no wonder a solution is yet to be found. However, the literature does not go into further detail about the full effects of socioeconomic status. Nevertheless, research does indicate that Pasifika families are often larger in size and generally live in smaller houses (Kick, 2001). Therefore, one can speculate whether socioeconomic status perhaps does have an effect as Pasifika families are often found in lower socioeconomic areas due to the nature of their family environment and therefore they are more likely to be found in lower decile schools.

The distinctive family arrangements of Pasifika people are only one of the characteristics of Pasifika cultures. Language is another. Let us look at the effect language has on Pasifika achievement.



Language

To suggest that language is separate from culture is somewhat elusive. As Amituanai-Tolua (2010) states culture without language is naked. Conversely, language does not stand alone and its importance cannot be understood without culture (Amituanai-Tolua, 2010). However, as language and culture are explored separately in other literature, language will be considered separate from culture which will be explored in the next subsection.

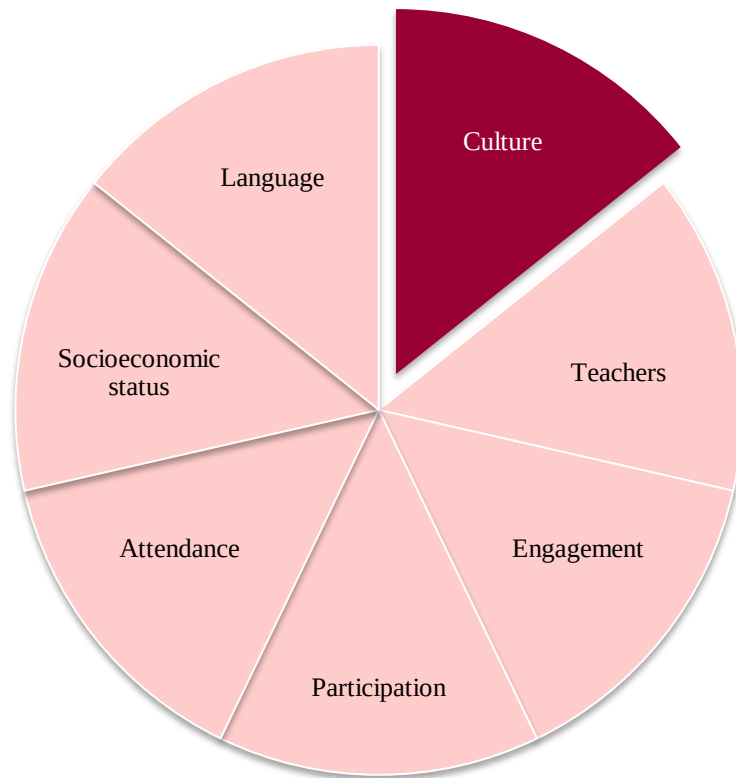
The link between language and educational achievement is explored by several authors. Most recently, Amituanai-Tolua (2010) conducted research on the status of Pasifika languages in New Zealand, in particular that of the Samoan culture. She suggests that Pasifika peoples within New Zealand are losing their languages. This claim is supported by Statistics New Zealand (2006) who state that only half of

Pasifika peoples in New Zealand speak their own native language. In addition they state that Pasifika persons born overseas were more likely to speak their own language than those born in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

Taking into consideration this information and the facts about the continued migration to New Zealand (see Dickie, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2009b; Nakhid et al., 2007) one can deduce that if language has an effect on learning it is imperative to embrace any solutions to loss of language.

So does language affect educational achievement? Amituanai-Toloa (2010) continues to suggest that a major challenge of language loss is its impact on schooling. One reason for this is the concept of bilingualism. According to Marian, Farooqi-Shah, Kaushanskaya, Blumenfeld and Sheng (2009) and Tochon (2009) students who are bilingual have a cognitive advantage over students who are not bilingual. However, the key lies in the proficiency of the child's first language.

Romaine (1995) states that the lack of fluency in a child's first language can have detrimental effects on any other subsequent languages learnt. Therefore if Pasifika students are losing their first language, this only has negative effects on their English and subsequently their academic achievement. Ferguson, et al. (2008, p. 33) agree and argue that 'Pasifika learners may need to practice their language skills in order to expand their vocabulary and deepen their understanding and comprehension of texts so that they can engage with them in a critical way'. However, cultural diversity may prevent a full and comprehensive understanding of often culturally biased Palagi texts.



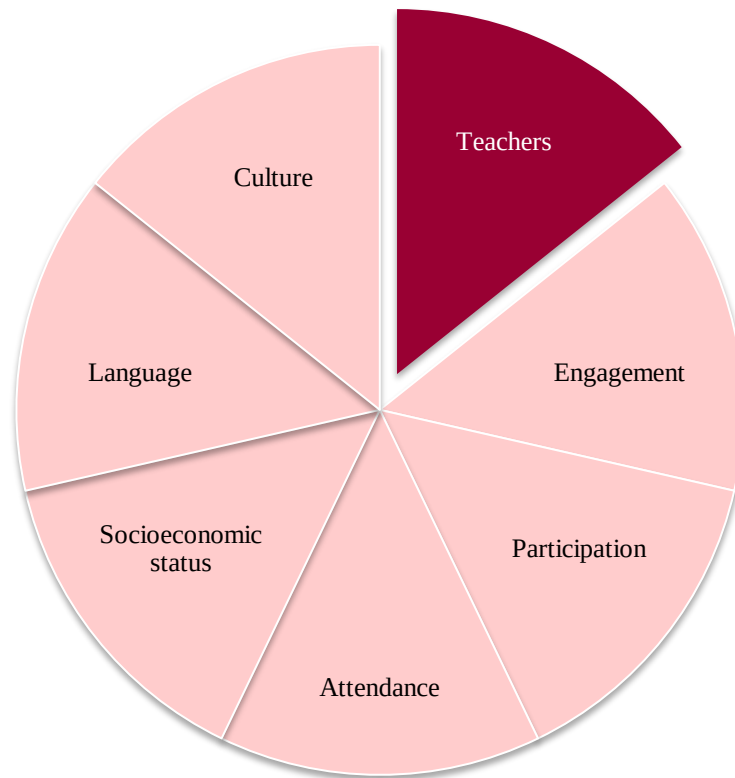
Culture

Although one could never fully describe the Pasifika culture as a whole, each specific culture within what we label ‘Pasifika’ has different traditions and customs and can often be generalised. One aspect of the Pasifika culture as a whole that is distinctively different to Palagi culture is that of authority. Coxon, et al. (2002) and Macpherson (2001) believe that the New Zealand educational processes are focused on individual effort and designed to reward individual brilliance and favours those who challenge and question their teachers. However these values are contrary to the belief systems of many of the Pacific Island communities. In agreement Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa’afoi, Taleni and O’Regan (2009) and Nakhid, et al. (2007) state that ‘asking questions’ is symbolic of the difference between the Palagi way and that of Pasifika peoples (and this encompasses both students and parents). Prior to this

reports by Furneaux (1973) and Bell (1998) (as cited by Nakhid, 2003) and Jones (1991) all present similar ideas. Furneaux and Bell proposed that failure and underachievement of Pasifika students came as a result of their inability to come to terms with the culture of the European education system while Jones (1991) claimed that the schools in their (then) existing states favoured the white, middle-class students through institutional practices. This suggests that this approach to education was not only unsuitable to Pasifika students, but it appears that this approach would have been unsuitable for a number of different marginalised groups, even lower-class Palagi students. However, these Palagi practices are still not always suitable for Pasifika students.

This is evident in a statement by Dickie (2003) where he suggests ‘[Pasifika] children may have engaged in literacy and language activities that are different from mainstream children. This means that their knowledge may not be well represented in tests of conventional literacy practice especially when they begin school.’ Since then, the Ministry of Education has identified cultural inclusion as being one of the catalysts for increased achievement among Pacific Islanders. This cultural inclusion will be explored later in this chapter.

In 2009 the Ministry of Education (2009a, p. 61), in their report on New Zealand schools, stated ‘A key part of improving the educational success of... Pasifika students is acknowledging, valuing and incorporating their culture and identities into the classroom and teaching programmes’. This indicates that one of the primary facilitator for Pasifika students’ achievement is teachers. On the contrary, some literature has suggested that teachers could be hindering Pasifika students in their pursuit for academic achievement rather than assisting them.



Teachers

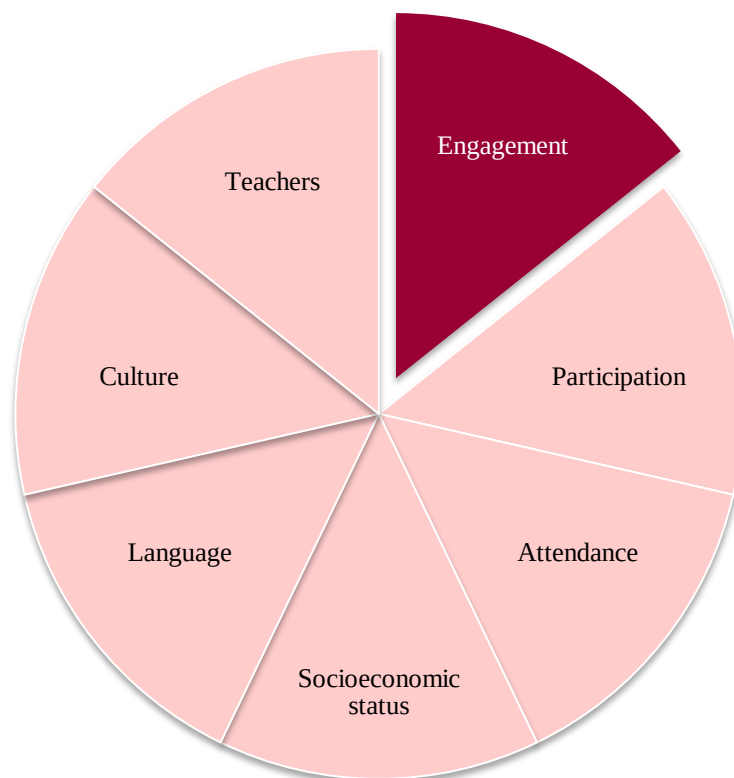
The thought that teachers could be impeding student achievement is sobering and should not be taken frivolously. Ferguson, et al. (2008) and Alton-Lee (2003) believe there are in fact still examples of teacher behaviour, attitudes and skills that negatively impact upon Pasifika students social, cultural and academic achievement outcomes. Alton-Lee (2003) believes that educators in New Zealand have inappropriately low expectations of particularly Pasifika students. She adds that having high expectations is necessary, however if not supported by quality teaching it can have an adverse affect (Alton-Lee, 2003). It could be possible that these low expectations come from a stereotyping of Pasifika students that is based on the sustained underachievement over many years. In terms of stereotyping, Nakhid (2003, p. 314) goes so far as to suggest Pasifika students' presence in the New

Zealand education system appears to be ‘little more than intrusions into a system’ which holds very little benefit for them rather than as participants in an educational process. These radical views of Pasifika peoples are extended beyond the educational setting. A comment made by de Bres (2008) (as cited by Bedford, 2009) suggests Pacific migrants were ‘a drain on the economy’, Pacific Islanders were becoming an underclass in New Zealand and they were displaying significant and enduring underachievement. Teachers need to be wary that they do not adopt this view or prejudice could easily become manifested in the classroom and school environment.

In addition teachers need to be wary if they are not familiar with the students’ backgrounds. As the Education Review Office (2009) points out, teachers need to have sufficient background knowledge, skills and awareness to make meaningful connections between curriculum content and the life experiences of the students. Nakhid (2003, p. 307) extends this idea and reports that Pasifika students were repeatedly perceived by their teachers as ‘newly arrived immigrants with poor English skills that detracted from their learning’. If this is the case, it could have a detrimental effect on their academic achievement as they will be treated accordingly.

Similar to the misconceptions of Pasifika students’ backgrounds is that of class streaming. In general streaming is intended to cater for different levels of ability, however Oakes (1985) and Simon (1993) (as cited by Nakhid, 2003) challenge this idea and suggest it informs racial and social class differences instead. In addition Nakhid (2003) cites Bell (1990) as saying students who are streamed upon entry into New Zealand schools often remain in the same stream for the remainder of their schooling. Could this mean schools are setting Pasifika students up for failure? This idea is supported by the Ministry of Education (2009a) who state that Pasifika

students are more likely to be directed by teachers, deans or guidance councillors into courses that do not lead to higher-level study options. If this is the manner in which Pasifika students are being guided, it is not surprising they lag behind their peers. Another way in which teachers can have an effect on Pasifika students' achievement is their level of engagement in the classroom.



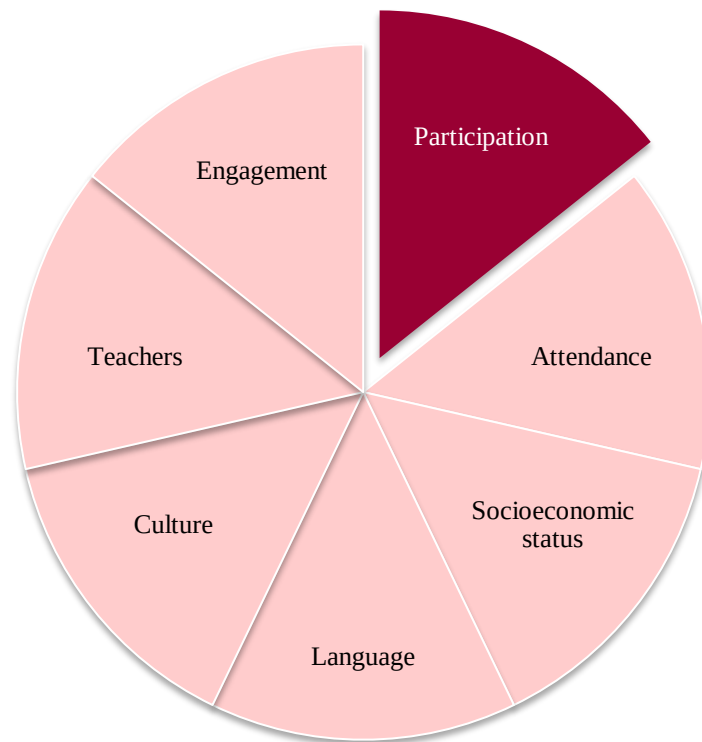
Engagement

There are a number of facets associated with engagement with learning and within the classroom. Dickie (2003) suggests that a student's cultural values and knowledge will affect how engaged they are in their learning. Coxon, et al. (2002) add to this and state the learning styles of Pasifika students often differ from that of Palagi students in general. Therefore, this implies that teachers need to take into consideration these different values and styles in order to engage all of the students

in their class. This is particularly important to secondary teachers as the Ministry of Education (2009a) suggests disengagement is amplified in high school. So are Pasifika students engaged in their learning? The Ministry of Education (2009a) argues they are. In report on New Zealand schools they claim that these students show *good* levels of engagement in school. However they go on to say the achievement levels do not reflect this. On the contrary, Harkess, et al. (2005) argue they are not. In a report on Pasifika students' engagement and choice in learning, they state that the Pasifika students' engagement in learning is rather concerning despite high participation rates. One can ponder whether this implies student engagement is a factor of Pasifika underachievement or not, even though their culture (as suggested previously) may not be integrated into the classroom. Either way, student engagement is important. This is supported by the Education Review Office (2009) who and state:

Critical drivers for the success of all students are their presence at school, their engagement and participation in learning, and their success in achieving good educational outcomes. Being at school, and participating in learning that is both tailored and relevant, are precursors for students' achievement and success, whether they are at primary or secondary school. (p. 3)

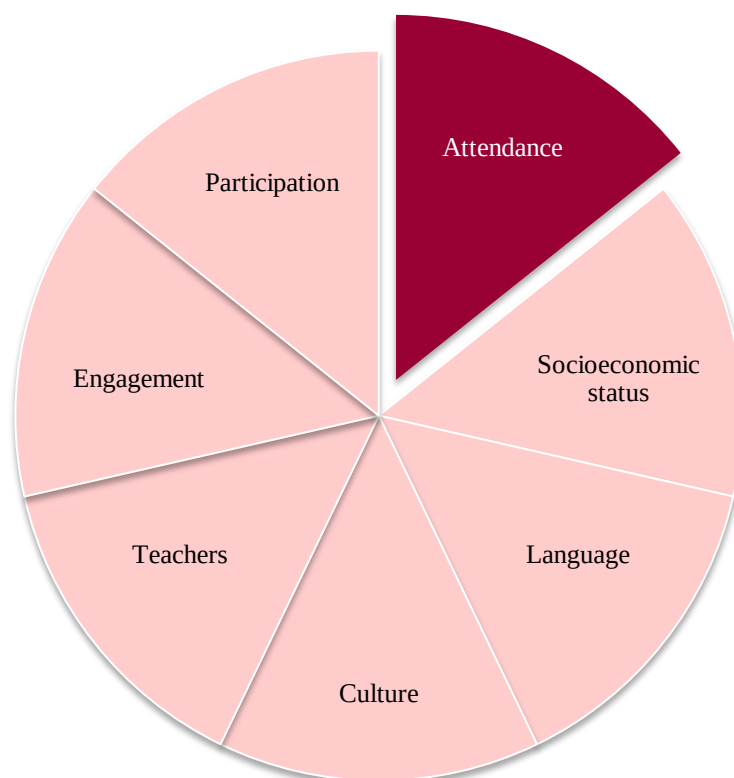
From that statement we are informed that participation and attendance are also critical to students' achievement. An exploration of the impact of participation will be explored on the next page.



Participation

Although participation can be split into two categories – participating in classroom activities and participating in the overall school system – the research available only discusses school participation. However, despite the small amount of research available, the research that does exist shows positive outcomes. Harkess, et al. (2005) claim that low participation levels are not preventing Pasifika students from achieving qualifications. In fact, Pasifika students who achieve NCEA level one credits are just as likely to continue with their studies as their peers (Harkess et al., 2005). The downfall comes when looking at tertiary participation. According to Ministry of Education (2009b) only 27% of Pasifika youth are enrolled in tertiary education but although Pasifika underachievement at a secondary level has an effect on the opportunities for tertiary studies, this thesis is not primarily concerned with Pasifika tertiary education and therefore the discussion of this will not go any further.

However, if we go back to the quote by Education Review Office, it stated participation and attendance as two critical aspects of Pasifika achievement. So let us now look at attendance.



Attendance

There are contradicting views on the status of Pasifika attendance in schools. On one hand the Education Review Office (2009) suggest attendance of Pasifika students at school is not a concern. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education (2009a) claims the rate of unjustified absences was double that of Palagi students. The most interesting aspect of those contradictory allegations is that they were published in the same year. This means there is obviously some discrepancies within the government's data. However, the importance lies in Pasifika students actually attending school. As the Ministry of Education (2009a, p. 54) notes 'attendance at

school is a first step to ensuring student achievement.’ They add that if non-attendance becomes a habit, it can limit students’ educational success and reduce the chance of gaining valuable qualifications. Therefore, if there is an issue with Pasifika absences in any school, it is worthwhile looking into possible solutions.

So reflecting on these possible causes for Pasifika underachievement, one is led to ask three questions:



Initiatives

To answer these three questions, the following sub-sections will discuss the literature relevant to what has been done, what can be done and what the New Zealand government is doing. In terms of what has been done, the literature explores a number of initiatives aimed at finding a solution to the causes previously mentioned. In addition there are initiatives evident in the literature for which a cause has not been identified, merely a solution. The section answering ‘what can be done’ identifies research where suggested solutions are given. Finally, to answer what the New Zealand government is doing there will be a discussion of the Pasifika

Education Plan 2009-2012 and its many prior versions. But first let us answer what has been done.

What has been done

There are a number of initiatives that have been implemented around New Zealand that deal with some of the issues associated with underachievement of Pasifika students. However, according to Ferguson, et al. (2008) previous attempts to improve Pasifika education have primarily focused on increasing Pasifika curriculum content in schools rather than changing the pedagogy used and identifying cultural limitations of the New Zealand education system. One could argue that in fact this is the case as a large amount of the literature suggests cultural inclusion would enhance Pasifika achievement. However, one of the initiatives implemented is a professional development programme which aims to change pedagogy so perhaps some educators have taken on board claims such as Ferguson et al.'s and is taking a new approach. The initiative that follows will confirm or refute that statement.

University of Canterbury Education Plus Pasifika Initiative

The professional development initiative mentioned previously is one that focuses on cultural immersion. This idea of experiencing culture rather than simply learning about culture was taken onboard by the University of Canterbury (UC) in the South Island in New Zealand and in 2001 they created the UC Education Plus Pasifika Initiative. The basis on which the programme is founded, the purpose of the programme and the implementation method is outlined by Allen, et al. (2009) and University of Canterbury (2009):

What?

- The UC Education Plus Pasifika Initiative is a programme that seeks ways to more effectively meet the professional development needs of teachers who teach in culturally diverse classrooms and who wish to improve the achievement of their students.

Why?

- The purpose of the UC Education Plus Pasifika Initiative is to support teachers to create culturally appropriate contexts for learning in their classrooms; to develop, support and strengthen effective teaching practices that are responsive to Pasifika learners and their families; to improve teacher knowledge of Pasifika culture and to challenge and support teachers to bring about change in educational achievement.

How?

- This program is offered to teachers within the UC Education Plus region (Canterbury, New Zealand) every two years. As part of the program teachers are taken to Samoa for 10 days where they are expected to respect, take part and contribute to the village life in which they find themselves.

The location of this programme means only a limited amount of teachers will have the opportunity to participate. In addition, one can wonder whether such a programme would perhaps be more beneficial in areas with higher rates of Pasifika peoples as only seven percent of Pacific Islanders live in the South Island (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). On the other hand one could argue that teachers in areas with significant Pasifika populations would have more exposure to Pasifika cultures in general. Either way, it is positive to see opportunities such as this being implemented, whether they are in the ideal location or not. In saying this, it appears this initiative is providing a good solution to a given problem. Nevertheless, Allen, et al. (2009) state that the outcomes of the first two trips were not tracked or recorded. This implies that there is a lack of follow-up in terms of examining whether this programme is in fact effective. In addition one could argue that being submerged into

one culture does not mean a teacher would understand the culture of a student from a different culture. However Allen, et al. (2009) challenge that concept and suggest that being immersed in one Pasifika culture will act as a cultural sensitizer and raise the teachers awareness of the needs of diverse students.

Therefore, programmes such as the UC Education Plus Pasifika Initiative are in need. In agreement, Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007) state that there is a lack of research completed in New Zealand that looks specifically at promoting professional development of teachers of Pasifika students. Therefore, this UC Education Plus Pasifika Initiative should be viewed as a guideline for other regions within New Zealand to aid teachers in gaining a *real* understanding of Pasifika cultures. However it is important to realise evaluations of such programmes are still essential as ineffective practices would be squandering funds that could be applied to more effective practices.

Intervention programmes

Another initiative that has aimed to improve the achievement of Pasifika students in New Zealand is based on the idea of an intervention (intervening students in a school environment to provide extra support). Gavet (2011), in a study evaluating the effectiveness of this invention programme, states that this programme ‘claims to adopt a holistic approach to enhancing academic success of Pasifika male high school students by completing the teaching at the host high school [school in which the intervention programme was implemented]’ (p.1). Gavet (2011) continues to write that this programme aims to maximise academic achievement through the means of pastoral care, extra academic support and mentoring. Evidently, these means of intervening do not sound all that new and innovative. In fact, provisions for

pastoral care was listed as one of the initiatives implemented by schools where the Pasifika students are achieving well (Education Review Office, 2009). The suggestion that this initiative is perhaps less of an intervention was supported by the findings in Gavet's (2011) study: 'Rather than viewing the programme as an intervention it is instead an initiative that complements the academic syllabus. Interestingly enough, Gavet (2011) adds that aspects of the initiative have yielded development in many areas and would benefit not solely Pasifika youth, but youth in general (this idea will be addressed again at a later stage). One concern voiced regarding intervention programmes is the long-term effect. Lai et al. (2010) claim that there are limited studies that show the improved results continuing after the programme has finished. This suggests that while interventions are not the *best* solution they would certainly be a part of the overall solution.

Effective practices in schools

In a larger scale study, the Education Review Office (2009) outlined a large number of practices specific schools are employing to, in essence, improve the academic achievement of Pasifika students at their school. Table 2.2 below identifies the areas in which the practices are aimed at as well as specific examples. (Education Review Office, 2009)

Table 2. 2: Effective practices implemented in schools

Education Review Office (2009)	
Academically	» Communicating high expectations » Introducing Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings in homes » Establishing bilingual options/classes » Specifying achievement targets for Pacific students » Developing school-based Pacific Education Plans

Cultural inclusion	» Running multicultural days and events » Establishing bilingual options/classes » Incorporating Pacific contexts and perspectives in classrooms and learning programmes » Maximising opportunities to celebrate Pacific cultures and identities » Using Pacific languages in school and classroom activities
Promoting community	» Establishing and maintaining close relationships with all parents » Communicating regularly with parents » Encouraging parental involvement in clubs and performance groups » Establishing community and parent liaison networks » Developing close liaison with sponsors and churches » Establishing parents' room at the school » Encouraging family lunches
Socially	» Providing decision making opportunities » Increased student leadership » Providing training for Pacific students to take on positions of responsibility such as becoming a peer mediator or school councillor
Support	» Introducing a school social worker » Designating a staff member with specific responsibilities for Pacific students' wellbeing, progress and/or attendance » Using Pacific staff as role models and resources people » Increased student leadership » Enhanced pastoral care » Making 'Ready for School' kits for all new students and their families » Minimising perceived barriers such as no fees, stationary provided and food where needed » Appointing Pacific staff wherever possible and appropriate » Using Pacific staff as role models and resource people
Teacher development	» Implementing professional development for staff on Pacific protocols and values » Professional development trips to the Pacific Islands » Conducting research into aspects of Pacific Education

To summarise the report, the Education Review Office (2009, pp. 32-33) propose that if schools want to make a difference in the achievement of Pasifika student they need to:

- » Know who their Pacific students are;
- » Know about parental and student expectations;
- » Place a strong focus on progress and achievement;
- » Collect and analyse achievement information on Pacific students as a group, and where appropriate, separate ethnicities;
- » Create an inclusive school environment (physical and social) in which Pacific as part of all cultures are recognised, respected and valued;
- » Help teachers develop teaching practices that engage students; and
- » Adopt strategies to engage Pacific parents and communities.

Evidently, the Education Review Office (2009) claim that the schools which had implemented practices such as those mentioned foregoing had shown improvements in the academic achievement of their Pacific Island students. However with such promising results one must wonder if it is too good to be true. The Education Review Office (2009) in fact admit that overall, most of the schools did not systematically evaluate the impact of the practices and as such, these results are in a sense somewhat speculative. Despite this, any positive impact however small is a step in the right direction.

Considering all the strategies and initiatives previously mentioned, in a rather controversial statement, Amituanai-Tolosa and McNaughton (2008) argue that while a range of strategies have been employed there is little evidence that the problems have been solved. In light of this statement we now turn our focus on what can be done.

What can be done

As can be seen in the previous section about what has been done, there are a number of unsolved issues. It can be daunting to know where to begin, however Harkess et al. (2005) state that although, underachievement needs to be addressed at an early stage, potential solutions could include developing learning programmes that focus on students in their final years of the secondary education. In contrast the Ministry of Education (2009a) suggests that the process of rectifying the disparity in the educational system begins with building strong learning foundations. This indicates a need for solutions in the earlier years of schooling. However, what these potential solutions actually are is not disclosed by either Harkess et al. (2005) or the Ministry of Education (2009a). To identify what can be done we look at numerous authors who identify possible ways of addressing this current issue.

Teachers

One area for possible further improvements for teachers is professional development. The importance of professional development practices, such as the UC Education Plus Pasifika Initiative, is highlighted by the Education Review Office (2009) and Timperley et al. (2007) who state the substantial impact they can have on student learning and teachers' understanding about Pasifika peoples and Pasifika issues in education. Nakhid (2003) agrees and suggests that this professional training targeting the teaching of Pasifika students should begin in training colleges. She adds that these training colleges should ask a number of questions to identify the college's perception towards Pasifika cultures. If in fact the pedagogy at tertiary level teacher training is not embracing the Pasifika culture then it is no wonder teachers, when they are instated into schools, do not reflect a culturally diverse educational philosophy.

Professional development in this context is not only focused on cultural sensitivity but also on quality teaching. Alton-Lee (2003) argues that ‘quality teaching is identified as a key influence on high quality outcomes for diverse students’. This may lead one to ask ‘What is quality teaching?’ In response, Alton-Lee (Alton-Lee, 2003) identifies ten characteristics of quality teaching developed from research:

1. Quality teaching is focused on student achievement and facilitates high standards of student outcomes for heterogeneous groups of students
2. Pedagogical practices enable classes and other learning groups to work as caring, inclusive and cohesive learning communities
3. Effective links are created between school and other cultural contexts in which students are socialised, to facilitate learning
4. Quality teaching is responsive to student learning processes
5. Opportunity to learn is effective and sufficient
6. Multiple task contexts support learning cycles
7. Curriculum goals, resources including ICT [Information Communication and Technology] usage, task design, teaching and school practices are effectively aligned
8. Pedagogy scaffolds [supports] and provides appropriate feedback on students’ task engagement
9. Pedagogy promotes learning orientations, student self-regulation, metacognitive strategies and thoughtful student discourse
10. Teachers and students engage constructively in goal-oriented assessment

When comparing these quality characteristics of teaching to Cambourne’s (1995) conditions of learning – immersion, demonstration, expectation, responsibility,

employment, approximation and feedback – there seems at first to be a mismatch between the two. Cambourne’s (1995) conditions of learning suggest that students need to:

- » Be immersed in their learning (Immersion)
- » Receive many demonstrations (Demonstration)
- » Have high expectations placed on them (Expectation)
- » Be given responsibility for their learning (Responsibility)
- » Be given opportunities to use and employ their skills (Employment)
- » Be free to ‘approximate’ the standard model (Approximation)
- » Be given feedback (Response)

However, as can be seen in table 2.3, each condition of learning can related to characteristics of the quality teaching model.

Table 2. 3: Comparison of Alton-Lee’s and Cambourne’s models

Alton-Lee’s (2003) quality teaching model	Cambourne’s (1995) conditions of learning
3. Links created between school and other cultural contexts	Immersion
2. Classes work as a community	Demonstration
1. Focus on student achievement	Expectation
9. Pedagogy promotes self-regulation	Responsibility
10. Engage in goal-oriented assessment	Approximation
5. Opportunities to learn is effective and sufficient	Employment
4. Teaching is responsive to students learning	Feedback

What is interesting about these two models is that although they appear to link, one is aimed at diverse students such as Pasifika students and the other at the general student. This brings me back to the statement from Gavet (2011) where he claimed initiatives would benefit all students not simply Pasifika students. This leads me to question whether perhaps teachers need to develop quality teaching skills in general rather than special skills for Pasifika students only. Either way, in this instance the responsibility is placed on the teachers and their pedagogy.

There is a range of research that identifies numerous approaches teachers can take to attempt to raise the achievement of students in their class. Amituanai-Tolosa et al. (2009), through their research on Pasifika students ascertained a list of attributes of teachers that would enable the students to be more successful:

- » Believing in students and their ability;
- » Providing clear instructions and challenging academic work;
- » Making use of their background knowledge;
- » Providing opportunities to discuss and express ideas;
- » Taking time to more clearly explain new conceptual ideas and breaking these down for understanding;
- » Listening to students; and
- » Expressing positive affect (p. 19)

Siope (2011) on the other hand wrote:

Teachers, who taught from their hearts, rather than from obligation or duty, were the ones who made a significant difference. Often these teachers were secure in their cultural identity and willing to encourage the same from their students. These teachers became the ones students felt engaged with and hungry to learn from. It was these 'responsive, readily accessible, reasonable adults' whose collective wisdom recognised and then activated [the Pasifika students] potential for learning. (p. 15)

This quote highlights the importance of simply being genuinely caring when teaching these diverse students. A poem written by Emma Kruse Va'ai (as cited by Siope, 2011, p. 15) conveys this ideology in a creative manner.

*Listen teacher
Listen to me
Don't look away
See my eyes they hold messages
that can make you understand me
Hold my hand and your heart
will warm towards me.
Let me dance and sing you
my own songs which you don't know,
and you might smile
as you've never smiled before
Let me tell you a story
of my ancient past
and then, maybe, you will see
another person in me.*

Emma Kruse Va'ai

Culture

As indicated in the literature, cultural inclusion has been identified as a catalyst for Pasifika achievement. Therefore the idea that *teachers* could revolutionise Pasifika education through cultural inclusion in the classroom is crucial. This idea is supported by a number of authors. Allen, et al. (2009) quote a Samoan saying that highlights the teachers role in cultural inclusion:

O tu, aganu'u, ma agaifanua a le tamaititi o le a le mafai ona ulufale atu i le potuaoga sei vagana ua fa'atauaina ma faaulufaleina muamua i le loto ma le agaga o le faiaoga. (The culture of the child cannot enter the classroom until it has first entered the consciousness of the teacher.) (p. 49)

Wendt Samu (2006) agrees with this view and adds that quality teaching for Pasifika students requires teachers to develop an in-depth and contextualised knowledge and understanding of their Pasifika learners. From this it can be clearly seen that in

teachers do play a large role in the advancement of Pasifika achievement, particularly in the area of cultural inclusion.

There are varied views on how a teacher might acquire this knowledge and understanding in order to better facilitate for Pasifika students. Allen, et al. (2009) believe that experiential learning is the way to go. The notion of experiential learning is supported by a number of authors who suggest it enhances the education of culturally responsive teachers; it is more beneficial to learning as they are engaged and involved in the situation and they can make cultural connections and links between school and cultural contexts (Helu-Thaman, 2000; McNaughton, 2002; Robinson & Timperley, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Wilson, 1987; as cited by Allen et al., 2009; Alton-Lee, 2003). Clearly if teachers could *experience* a Pasifika culture this would enable them to be more responsive, better engaged and educated and critically reflect and create connections between the school and the cultural context.

In terms of cultural inclusion there are, however, some issues related to culture that have not been dealt with. As stated previously, Dickie (2003) suggests that a student's culturally based values and knowledge will affect how engaged and interested students are in their learning and if we draw on from previous claims, engagement can have an effect on learning. Therefore, increasing the levels of student engagement within a classroom may require teachers to be more culturally inclusive and culturally responsive (this is even more important when the teacher's culture is different from that of the students). The Education Review Office (2009) supports this idea but insists teachers need sufficient knowledge, skills and awareness to make *meaningful* connections and as a result engage students in their

learning. However, according to the Ministry of Education (2009a) very few schools had implemented initiatives that focused on increasing engagement of their Pasifika students. This indicates a gap in potentially beneficial initiatives.

Another area of development for teachers in terms of cultural understanding is based on out-of-school experiences. In a study conducted by Dickie (2010) looking into out-of-school literacy experiences, it was found that church had a huge impact on students understanding and learning of literacy. Students were not only exposed to English literacy, but, in this case, Samoan literacy as well in the form of religious texts (Dickie, 2010). However, some may question the depth of the literacy students are exposed to in church. Dickie (2010) assured, although a number of authors had expressed the same concerns, that the examples of literacy that were described in his study were similar to those used in a standard school environment. In fact, Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi, Taleni and O'Regan (2009) state that the Bible was seen as a key text for learning to read. So what implications could this have for schools? There are several outcomes. Dickie (2010) suggests that first of all it would be beneficial for teachers to develop an understanding and respect for the Church perspective. In addition, incorporating these literacy skills derived from church experiences into regular school settings would ensure that the students' strengths were used as a basis rather than being viewed as a deficit (Dickie, 2010). Similarly, Siope (2011, p. 10) points out that 'Pasifika students live in 'siloe'd worlds in which their school, family and church lives are kept separate' and therefore merging the school experiences with out-of-school experiences such as church may be highly beneficial for the educational experiences of Pasifika students in our schools. It could have even greater benefits due to the role church plays in Pasifika communities (Fletcher et al., 2009; Siope, 2011). This leads to another area of possible improvements.

Christian ethos

The notion of religious inclusion in the school environment is embraced by some schools more than others. In particular, state-integrated schools in New Zealand are schools who are required to demonstrate a special character which is primarily religious (Ministry of Education, n.d.). Although Dickie (2010), Fletcher et al. (2009) and Siope (2011) suggest that including religious aspects in the learning environment may help Pasifika students, there is other research that discusses the implementation of the ethos rather than simply the religious instruction.

The special character of the case study school, a Seventh-day Adventist school, is defined as ‘the reasons, the vision, the aspirations and the values that are important to Adventist educators’ (Don, 2003). Don adds that this special character or Christian ethos means individuals within the school are equally valuable in the sight of God and individually unique beings. This Christian ethos also has other implications. As Don (2008) suggest, the Christian ethos provides an emotional space that is caring, safe and supportive which in turn inspires assurance and confidence. In addition, the Christian schools provides a relational space where ‘a pervading ethos of agape [love], mutual respect and acceptance emulates the way Jesus modelled and related to others as people of value’ (Don, 2008, p. 43).

Extending beyond the Seventh-day Adventist system, other schools with special character also stated their Christian ethos viewed everyone as equal in the eyes of God (Hemming, 2011). Having such a view of everyone within a school will potentially contribute to less stereotyping that may occur. In terms of the impact of schools with a Christian ethos on Pasifika students in particular, there is very limited

research available. Thus, perhaps this research project could give insights into this area.

School size

One other aspect of a school which could have an impact is the constitutional make up of the school or simply put the size. This is an aspect which often is not drastically changed over a short period of time and therefore it is with hesitation that school size is placed under ‘what can be done’. However, in the report by the Education Review Office (2009) identifying effective practices, they question the impact of school size. The conclusions suggest that irrespective of schools size, the schools with a large proportion of Pasifika students showed the most effective practices (Education Review Office, 2009). However, the Education Review Office (2009) does identify the differences between small and large schools with relatively small Pasifika percentages (see table 2.4 on the next page).

Table 2. 4: Differences in schools with small percentage of Pasifika students

Small schools	Large schools
In smaller schools with a Pacific roll of less than 10% it is very difficult for school leaders to monitor achievement and progress as a group (Education Review Office, 2009, p. 29).	In the largest schools, a roll of less than 10 percent of Pacific students could be a significant group... the needs of [a large number of students] could go unmonitored if the school does not have the systems to identify how effectively they are learning. These students may be scattered throughout the school, but this should not be a reason to allow them to become invisible, or to only be noticed when they... truant, misbehave, or fail to achieve (Education Review Office, 2009, p. 29).

One aspect the Education Review Office does not discuss is the possible correlation between school size and academic achievement. In fact there is very limited research regarding the possible relationship between school size and academic achievement of Pasifika students in particular. One study that did suggest a relationship between the two factors was conducted by Phillips, McNaughton and MacDonald (2002). The research project's primary aim was to 'boost new entrants' literacy achievement in low decile schools'. However one of the findings of the project indicated there existed a relationship between class size and gains made in their achievement levels (Phillips et al., 2002). Clearly changes involving school size would pose major organisational challenges to schools, and this was recognised by Phillips et al. (2002).

To find research relevant to the age group of this research project, one must branch out to the general population (not exclusively Pasifika students). In addition, much of the research in this area was conducted over a decade ago and as such could be considered outdated. However, studies by McMillen (2004) and Gardner, Ritblatt and Beatty (1999) do identify links between school size and factors such as lower absenteeism, lower dropout rate and higher parental school involvement while other research indicates there exists a direct relationship between smaller schools and superior academic achievement (Bates, 1993; Eberts, Kehoe, & Stone, 1982; Fowler, 1995). Now, whether these results, primarily from schools in the United States, can be extrapolated to New Zealand schools is left for further research to verify. However, in general, research does appear to support the idea that smaller schools are better for a wide range of reasons (see table 2.5 on the next page).

Table 2. 5: Why smaller schools are better

Author	Key features of small schools
Bates (1993)	» Caring staff » Flexibility » Close relationships with its community
Burke (1987)	» Better attitudes » Better behaviour » Teacher and parent satisfaction
Kershaw and Blank (1993)	» Personal environment » Structured environment
Raze (1985)	» Multi-age grouping » Team teaching » Experiential learning » Parent participation
Rutter (1988)	» Interpersonal support » Individualised attention
Schoggen and Schoggen (1988)	» Higher participation rates in extracurricular activities

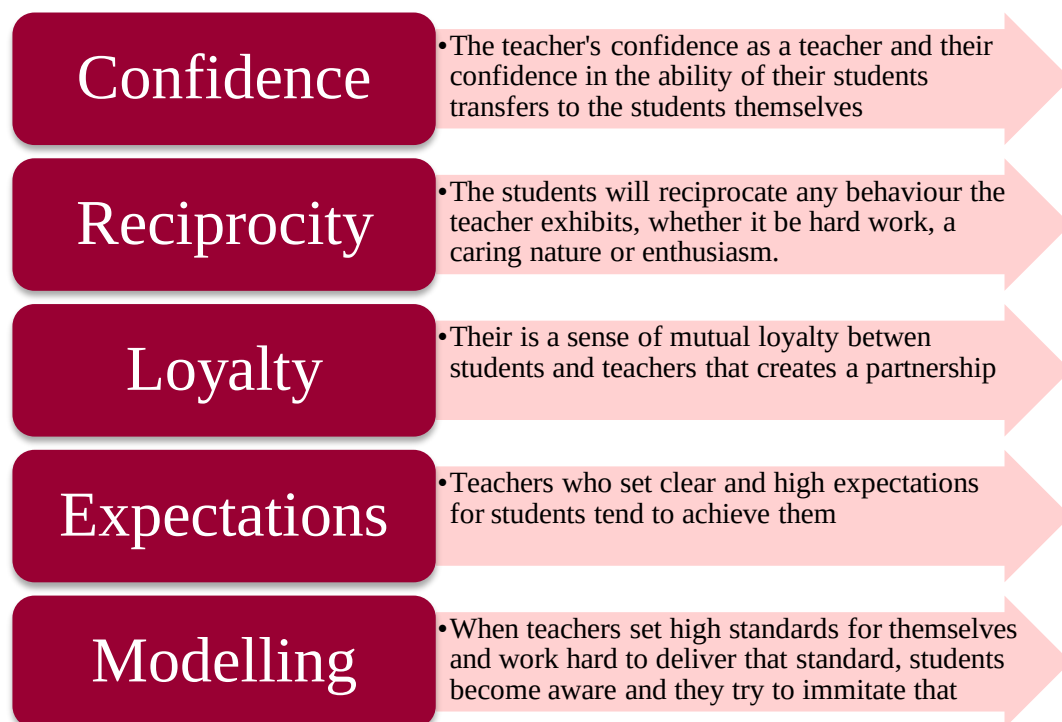
Although a number of the authors touch on the concept of smaller schools enabling closer relationships in the school, this link has not yet been fully developed in literature. Despite this, relationships are worth considering on their own for their impact on achievement.

Relationships

The notion of particularly student-teacher relationships has been explored in research in more recent times and more locally than school size. Allen et al. (2009), Hawk, Cowley, Hill and Sutherland (2002) and Nakhid (2003) all identify student-teacher relationships to be *critical* in improving educational achievement of Pasifika students. Other research has also come to the same conclusion (see Averill, 2011; Carpenter, McMurchy-Pilkington, & Sutherland, 2001; Cowley, Dabb, & Jones, 2000; Hawk & Hill, 1998). Evidently a student-teacher relationship is constructed of numerous facets. According to research literature, acceptance, belief in themselves,

caring, connecting, empathy, going the extra mile, knowing your students, passion, patience, perseverance, respect and trust are all characteristics of effective relationships (Allen et al., 2009; Amituanai-Tolosa et al., 2009; Carpenter et al., 2001; Education Review Office, 2009; Hawk et al., 2002). Amituanai-Tolosa, et al. (2009) go to the extent of suggesting that effective teachers are like family. The outcomes of such rich relationships are also widespread. Hawk et al. (2002, p. 1) suggest that ‘when positive relationships exist, students are more motivated to learn, more actively participate in their learning and the learning is likely to be more effective’. These outcomes, according to Hawk et al. (2002), are cultivated through five points; confidence, reciprocity, loyalty, expectations and modelling, as can be seen in diagram 2.4.

Diagram 2. 4: Cultivation of positive relationships according to Hawk et al. (2002)



Despite these apparent positive results indicating the vast benefits of positive student-teacher relationships, Ferguson et al. (2008, p. 32) argues ‘there needs... to be

more school-based, in-depth research that explores and analyses Pasifika students and their personalised interactions and relationships with their teachers, particularly in terms of how such relationships affect their academic engagement and success'. Thus perhaps, this research project will provide further enlightenment into this revolutionary concept.

In regards to relationships as a whole, student-teacher relationships are not the only type of relationships that appear to have significance. Family relationships also play an important role in this area. As revealed by the Education Review Office (2009), engaging Pasifika families in their children's learning proved successful. In addition, Ferguson et al. (2008) insist that it is critical for schools to commit to nurturing relationships with families, caregivers and communities if the education system is to be successful for Pasifika students. Surprisingly enough, Nakhid (2003) suggests that teachers sometimes stereotype parents and deem them uninterested in their child's learning. If schools are to embrace the families of their Pasifika students, such perceptions must be removed. In addition, as Amituanai-Toloa (2009) point out, there is a consensus among parents that schools simply do not provide parents with the information or practices they need to best support their children. Consequently, this places even more importance on creating better family-school connections as it suggests parents in fact *do* desire to help their children.

Another aspect of family relationships is the impact family has directly on students. Amituanai-Toloa et al. (2009) suggest that success for Pasifika students was being able to serve family and country. This places incredible pressure on students who may have parents with high expectations. In addition, as mentioned previously by Bedford (2009) and Siope (2011) Pasifika families often send their children to New

Zealand to gain a better education. Therefore if they do not succeed in their education they may feel they are letting their family down. The full extent of the links between Pasifika students and their parents is not evident in much literature as the majority of literature in this area focuses on the family-school links.

One particular environment in which family relationships thrive is in boarding departments. As the school in focus in this research project is a boarding school (see chapter three for more details) considering research regarding the impacts of boarding schools seems reasonable. However, there is a significant lack of research identifying any impacts of boarding schools on achievement of students, not to mention Pasifika students in particular. Perhaps the findings from this research project can provide insights into this new area as well.

Now that current initiatives and potential initiatives have been identified, it is important to consider what the New Zealand government is doing about this important issue.

What is the government doing

There are a number of government funded initiatives that are currently in place however in past years there have been even more initiatives implemented. Perhaps the largest and most ongoing initiative is the Pasifika Education Plan however prior to that and since the first plan was initiated several other projects have emerged from this central education plan, such as the Pacific Islands School Community Parent Liaison project (PISCPL), Pasifika Schooling Improvement and Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara (SEMO) (Amituanai-Tolosa et al., 2009; Gorinski, 2005; Robinson et al., 2004). Following will be an exploration of the government's Pasifika Education Plan.

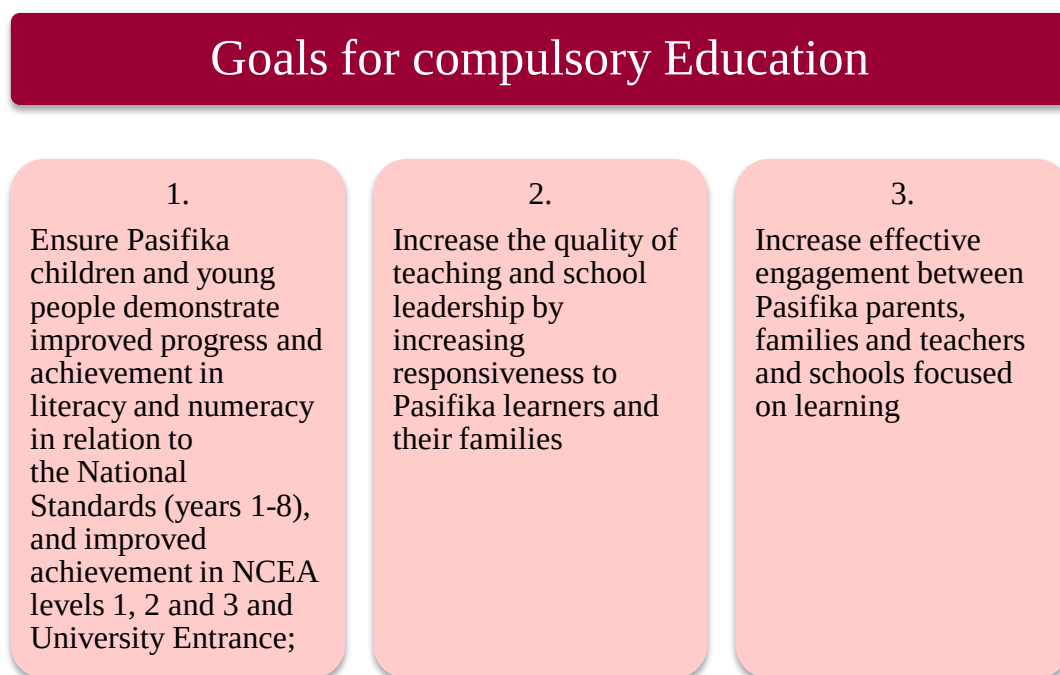
Pasifika Education Plan

Before the current Pasifika Education Plan, there were several prior versions. The first Pasifika Education Plan was published in 2001 with the aim of ‘providing a coherent and integrated approach to coordinating all policies which aim to improve education outcomes for Pasifika peoples’ (Airini et al., 2010). This version was followed by the Pasifika Education Plan 2006-2010 in 2006, the Pasifika Education Plan 2008-2012 in 2008 and an updated version – the Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012 in 2009 (Airini et al., 2010). In addition, the Ministry of Education (2012b) reveal that the plans for the Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017 are already in progress. The Pasifika Education Plan encompasses not only the secondary sector of school, but the full range from early childhood to tertiary as well as Ministry of Education itself (Ministry of Education, 2009b). However, because this study is centred on compulsory sector which encompasses secondary education, only that section of the Pasifika Education Plan will be explored in detail.

In the Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012 the Ministry of Education (2011c) outline three goals for the compulsory sector as can be seen in diagram 2.5 on the next page.

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Diagram 2. 5: Pasifika Education Plan's goals for compulsory education



Within those goals are a number of specific targets which the Ministry of Education can measure their progress against. In the secondary education sector, these targets are:

- » Increase the proportion of Pasifika school leavers achieving NCEA level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements from 84 percent in 2008, to 93 percent by 2012.
- » Increase the proportion of Pasifika students leaving school with at least NCEA level 2 or equivalent, from 63 percent in 2008, to 75 percent by the end of 2012.
- » Increase Pasifika students leaving school with a university entrance standard from 23 percent in 2008 to 30 percent by the end of 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2011c).

Evidently, without guided action there will be no progress and as such the Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012 also lists a number of actions that will be taken to reach these targets (see Ministry of Education, 2011c). In addition, the Ministry of Education also outline a number of featured stories that identify practices working towards the goals in the Pasifika Education Plan 2009-201 (see Ministry of Education, 2009b, these will also be explored later in this section).

With such a comprehensive plan in place, it is important to regulate how it is progressing, because clearly if there has been no progress the plan has been to no avail. The Ministry of Education acknowledges this and provide regular monitoring reports. Since the Pasifika Education plan 2009-2012 was published there have been three monitoring reports (Ministry of Education, 2010b, 2011b, 2012a). These reports identify the progress made towards the targets outlined in the Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012 and can be seen in detail in table 2.6.

Table 2. 6: Progress made towards the targets of the Pasifika Education Plan

Target	93% of Pasifika school leavers achieve NCEA level 1 literacy and numeracy by the end of 2012	75% of Pasifika students leaving school with at least NCEA level 2 or above by the end of 2012	30% of Pasifika students leaving school with university entrance standard by end of 2012
Progress as of 2009	Reached a rate of 86%	Reached a rate of 66%	Reached a rate of 28%
Progress as of 2010	Reached a rate of 87%	Reached a rate of 68%	Reached a rate of 30%
Forecast	Target of 93% will be met	Target of 75% will be met	Target of 30% already met, new forecast is reaching a rate of 35%

Clearly, these are positive results and it appears there is progress occurring. In terms of specific schemes designed to work towards these goals, as mentioned previously, the Ministry of Education (2009b) outline a number of programmes and resources they have initiated:

- » National Standards
- » Pasifika language resources
- » Publications to provide additional support for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes
- » Advice for parents regarding parent-teacher interviews
- » Assessment guidelines for teachers
- » Information regarding the NCEA system
- » Student Achievement Function (approach to improve student outcomes)
- » Aspire Scholarships for students from low socio-economic backgrounds

Obviously these are not all of the initiatives; however they represent a portion of what the government is going.

When comparing these resources and programmes with the research on what can be done, we can identify a number of links. Cultural inclusion is addressed through Pasifika language resources, teacher development is assisted by guidelines and information, barriers to learning such as financial support is supported by scholarships and the need for further parent-school connections through advice for parent-teacher interviews. On the other hand, despite evidence that perhaps smaller schools would benefit Pasifika students, there is no mention of that in the Pasifika Education Plan. In addition, the idea that teachers can radically change the achievement of their students through relationships is not encouraged either.

However, referring back to the government's aid with parent-school connections, the Ministry of Education has implemented a special programme aimed at particularly supporting schools in creating better relationships with their Pasifika communities.

Pacific Islands School Community Parent Liaison Project (PISCPL)

This project could be considered one of the first attempts to strategically deal with the underachievement of Pasifika students in our education system. This project originated out of another project that was aimed at improving Pasifika people's employment and participation in the labour market and was officially launched in 1996 (Gorinski, 2005). However, now it has been successfully implemented in school cluster groups throughout New Zealand. The manner in which the programme was implemented in each school varied. Gorinski (2005) reports that:

Each school initiated practices that were contextually relevant and specific for their community needs. These initiatives ranged from curricular based activities, social service support, culturally based programmes, to relationship support for Pasifika parents and students. They also included professional development activities, communication enhancing programmes, and networking within and amongst cluster schools to support teachers. (p. 10)

In terms of the outcomes of this project, they appear optimistic. The critical aspect of the programme was the support and from all stakeholders which was shown to impact the long-term sustainability of the project (Gorinski, 2005).

Reflections

Reviewing all the research regarding causes and initiatives, we can see that although there appears to be some progress, there is still a significant inequality in the education system. This is supported by Education Review Office (2012c) in their most recent review, where they claimed that there is *minimal* progress and schools are not sufficiently focused on improving the performance of Pasifika students.

However, although no significant system-wide changes were found in the way schools were responding to Pasifika students, some schools were identified having positive practices (Education Review Office, 2012c). Therefore, as mentioned previously, following will be a review of specific schools within New Zealand in regards to their progress towards a more equitable school environment.

Section II: Discussion of Education Review Office reports

It is evident that the New Zealand Ministry of Education is endeavouring to improve the experiences as well as educational outcomes for Pasifika students in New Zealand schools. While the Ministry of Education is responsible for the policies and funding of the New Zealand education system, the Education Review Office is responsible for the evaluation of all the education procedures, programmes and institutions (Education Review Office, 2012a). These reports have dual purpose; both for external individuals to assess suitability of the school and to provide accountability for the schools.

To provide an overview of the different practices in a variety of schools, an attempt will be made to consider both large and small schools, high and low decile schools and schools under different authorities (integrated or semi-private and state schools). However, in order for the information to be most recent and relevant information, only reports regarding secondary schools written in the last three years will be considered. In addition, because the schools in these reports are to remain anonymous the only reference given will be for the Education Review Office's website where all reports can be found (Education Review Office, n.d.).

Schools

Table 2.7 on the next page will explore the different schools and effective practices identified to aid the success of Pasifika students at each school. It will also show details about the school associated with different aspects of the literature review such as decile rating, proportion of Pasifika students and school size.

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Table 2. 7: Schools in the Education Review Office reports

	About the school	Effective practices
School A	» Integrated boys school » Boarding facilities » Roll of 712 » Roll of 10% Pacific Island students » Decile 9	» Goal setting » Mentoring students » Initiating achievement learning milestone meetings » Pasifika achievement is a focus of professional development » Success in areas such as Pasifika choir, chapel service and involvement in sport and leadership roles
School B	» Co-ed state school » No boarding facilities » Roll of 808 » Roll of 19% Pacific Island students » Decile 3	» Pacific Pride programme to support student leadership » Teachers have high expectations for their Pasifika students
School C	» Co-ed state school » Boarding facilities » Roll of 2289 » Roll of 19% Pacific Island students » Decile 7	» Pasifika representatives on the school board » Initiatives to support engagement » Improved systems to track students' progress and achievement
School D	» Integrated girls school » No boarding facilities » Roll of 302 » Roll of 27% Pacific Island students » Decile 5	» Culturally inclusive learning environments » Pasifika representatives on the school board » Strong home-school partnerships
School E	» State girls school » No boarding facilities » Roll of 887 » Roll of 45% Pacific Island students » Decile 3	» Pacific nation classes in senior school » Participation in the PISCPL project [see page 63] » Improved monitoring of students' progress and achievement

Reflections

Reflecting on these five different schools, many of the initiatives identified are related to closer family-school relationships, cultural inclusion and leadership. It is encouraging that these areas are being addressed in some schools. What is also interesting to notice is that there appears to be positive results for Pasifika students in a range of different schools, both high and low decile schools, large and small schools and schools with high and low percentages of Pasifika students. Therefore, although there may not be a wide-spread improvement there are schools who are adopting initiatives to address this issue of educational disparity for Pacific Island students and this is encouraging.

Again, despite such positive information, the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office are both departments of the New Zealand Government and as such the view is somewhat restricted. That is where the next section takes its place.

Section III: Voice of educational experts

As a large proportion of the literature in this area is reports or documents commissioned for the Ministry of Education this suggests the literature could be biased if the government is wanting to share only the ‘success’ stories. By expressing the voices of educational experts this will provide a point of view which is external and neutral. As this section is solely experts’ opinions, it will be presented in narrative form to fully allow their voice to come through (Lodico et al., 2010). Each individual’s responses can be seen in table 2.8 on the next page and will be followed by a discussion.

Table 2. 8: Voices of educational experts

Ms Turner <i>Former Deputy Principal of a school with large proportions of Pasifika students</i>	
1. What do you believe are the main factors that inhibit Pasifika students from achieving better?	There are many factors that inhibit Pacific Student's achievement; I will only mention a couple... 1. Stereotyping by leaders within the classroom and students search for where they fit in. 2. The disconnect between teaching & learning (teacher & learner) 3. Disconnect between home & school 4. Identity and sense of belonging
2. What do you think could be done to help these students achieve better?	What could be done would be an improvement in the areas mentioned as issues... (see above)
Dr Kilgour <i>Head of School of Education at Avondale College, Lecturer in Multicultural studies</i>	
1. What do you believe are the main factors that inhibit Pasifika students from achieving better?	The main blocks to Pasifika students achieving at school from my perspective is firstly family. Anything to do with family seems to take precedence over study. It could be looking after the siblings, moving uncle's furniture, a whole weekend church camp, a week-long funeral etc. Because [this school] is a boarding school, Pasifika students who board get away from the family pressures. I think they carry the Pasifika day students along with them. I don't think the issues are with the education system at all... I was merely suggesting that in many cases family seems to take precedence over the education system. It doesn't matter how good the classroom teaching is, if the students are not given the opportunity to attend consistently or to do their assessments at home, the quality of the education system is irrelevant. The education system makes provision for all teachers to be creative and in NZ in-service is regularly given (or at least available) to help teachers understand how Pacific Island kids learn.
2. What do you think could be done to help these students achieve better?	Making school more like a good family is the key to Pasifika success. This means good strong boundaries, fair and approachable teachers and lots of positive strokes for any sign of success. Having said all that, the teaching strategies that work well for all students, work extra well for Pasifika students: visuals, activities, variety etc.

Conclusion

In light of the literature, Education Review Office reports and educational expert opinions there is already substantial amounts of research in the area of Pasifika research. However, as highlighted by numerous authors there is still a significant need for further research to provide insights into effective practices and better research methodologies. The next chapter will unpack this research methodology that will aim to provide these vital insights.

Chapter Three

The Ola – Woven basket

The ola or woven basket is used to illustrate this chapter as how different methods can be interwoven to create a strong supporting basket that can be used to carry the research project on a journey.



Introduction

In light of the theoretical framework presented in chapter two, it is evident that the research question guiding this thesis is important:

Why are Pacific Island students at one school in New Zealand achieving at a substantially higher level than the national average

Not only did we see that effective practices operating in individual schools as a whole need to be communicated (Harkess et al., 2005), but Pasifika education is an urgent issue that needs careful consideration and appropriate research methods to reach its full potential (Anae et al., 2001).

The purpose of this chapter is to therefore unpack a culturally sensitive and appropriate methodology that will aim to add to the existing bank of research in this area.

Before we embark on identifying this methodology we must acknowledge the presence of ‘tacit knowledge’ and its importance in a research project (Niedderer, 2007). Tacit knowledge refers to what we know but cannot express (Sternberg & Horvarth, 1999; The London School of Economics and Political Science, n.d.). So in this instance, the change from ‘tacit knowledge to propositional knowledge’ (Niedderer, 2007) comprises clarifying all the details regarding this research project that I made as a researcher and now need to be made transparent to the reader. These shifts in researcher clarity are needed in order for the reader to be fully immersed into the research project. The significance of these shifts and choices are highlighted by McKenzie (2008) who suggest access to a researcher’s tacit knowledge is a vital

tool in understanding and unlocking the means by which they develop and explore their research project.

Returning to the research project at hand, the first aspect of this research project that needs exploring is the ‘culturally sensitive approach’.

The notion of weaving together methods is used in place of the research concept of bricolage (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Kinchloe, 2005) to allow the cultural context of this project to guide the research process. To become immersed into the ‘Pacific way’, as outlined by Crocombe (1975), one has to step into the world of oratory and verbal negotiations, adaption, compromise, extended kinship, generosity and Pasifika ‘time’, thus sharing knowledge verbally and in narrative. As will be indicated later, McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010) state that this communication process in Tonga and Samoa is referred to as *Talanoa*. Therefore, in the true Pasifika way, through narrative (Ary et al., 2010; Basit, 2010; Lodico et al., 2010), this chapter will take us through the *Talanoa* process in identifying our research methodology.

Let us begin, as I dialogue with you, the reader and tell my story as negotiated with the respondents.

Paradigm

Before we begin to step into the realm of qualitative research, let us discover where we find ourselves.

In the vast space of research lies the area we call educational research. The reason we conduct educational research and the importance of it is outlined by Creswell (2008) who states:

- » Research adds to our knowledge;
- » Research improves practice; and
- » Research informs policy debates

In light of the educational disparities of Pasifika students evident in the literature, research will add to our knowledge regarding this issue, it will help improve practices to help raise achievement, and at a fundamental level, it can help inform those in charge of creating policies regarding Pasifika education. As Gay et al. (2009) write, educational research asks a question and seeks an answer.

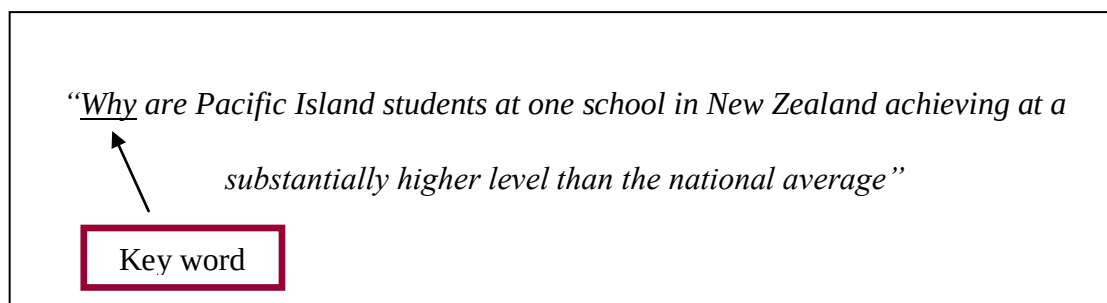
When approaching any question in educational research there are two directions one can take; qualitative or quantitative (Bell, 2010; Creswell, 2008; Gay et al., 2009; Punch, 2009). We are now ready to explore our research paradigm – qualitative research.

Qualitative research

There are distinguishing features between quantitative research and qualitative research. Therefore, to be sure that we are in fact in the appropriate paradigm let us explore these features. Creswell (2008), Gay, et al. (2009) and Punch (2009) all state that quantitative research is research where the data are in the form of numbers and seeks to measure. On the other hand, qualitative research is the collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest (Gay et al., 2009). Creswell (2008, p. 46) adds that in the qualitative paradigm “the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyses these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry

in a subjective, biased manner”. Thus, when we examine the research question, the question itself gives hints as to which paradigm we ought to be in.

Diagram 3. 1: Examination of research question



The critical word in the research question is ‘why’. When we look at the definitions of this small but important word it helps to see the links to qualitative research.

According to Dictionary.com (2012) the word why has several explanations (see table 3.1). The definition we are interested in is the adverb ‘why’. *For what reason, cause or purpose* are the Pasifika students at this school achieving so well?

Table 3. 1: Definition of ‘why’

Why (adverb)	Why (conjunction)	Why (noun)	Why (interjection)
For what? For what reason, cause, or purpose?	For what cause or reason For which; on account of which The reason for which	A question concerning the cause or reason for which something is done, achieved, etc. The cause or reason	Used as an expression of surprise, hesitation etc.
<i>‘Why did you behave so badly?’</i>	<i>I don’t know why he is leaving</i> <i>The reason why he refused to go</i> <i>That is why he returned</i>	<i>A child’s unending hows and whys</i> <i>The whys and wherefores of a troublesome situation</i>	<i>Why, it’s all gone!</i>

When we talk about ‘for what reason, cause or purpose’ clearly numerical answers do not suffice. The ‘why’, on the other hand, indicates that we require descriptive narrative answers instead. *Why are the Pasifika students achieving at a higher level? Why do the students think they are achieving better?* Thus, qualitative research is the appropriate choice.

Similar to the two paradigms within educational research, qualitative research is also divided into smaller divisions. However, the way in which qualitative research is ‘partitioned’ varies between research theorists (as can be seen in table 3.2 on the next page). Creswell (2008) suggests that qualitative research is divided into three types which are, in themselves, divided further, whereas Gay, et al. (2009) suggest qualitative research is constructed through a number of individual research designs. The most common types of qualitative research are case study, ethnography, action research, grounded theory and narrative (Basil, 2010; Creswell, 2009; Lodi et al., 2010; Punch, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, the woven basket signifies the use of bricolage or multi-method mode (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Kinchloe, 2005), allowing us to see data from different viewpoints. In light of this, the design within the qualitative paradigm will not be limited to only one ‘type’ of qualitative research. Instead several qualitative methods will be interwoven to create an appropriate research design for this research project given that Anae, et al. (2001) argues, Eurocentric or Palagi research designs are not always beneficial in Pasifika research. This innovative and multi-faceted research design will include aspects of a case study, narrative inquiry, teacher-as-researcher and grounded theory although the foundation of the project will lie in a case study.

Table 3. 2: Types of Qualitative Research

Author	Types of Qualitative Research
Basit (2010)	» Case study » Ethnography » Action research » Life history » Narrative
Creswell (2008)	» Grounded theory ▪ <i>Systematic design</i> ▪ <i>Emerging design</i> ▪ <i>Constructivist design</i> » Ethnographic ▪ <i>Realist ethnography</i> ▪ <i>Critical ethnography</i> ▪ <i>Case study</i> » Narrative ▪ <i>Autobiographies</i> ▪ <i>Biographies</i> ▪ <i>Personal accounts</i> ▪ <i>Narrative interviews</i> ▪ <i>Oral histories</i> ▪ <i>Ethnobiographies</i> ▪ <i>Autoethnographies (et cetera)</i>
Creswell (2009)	» Narrative » Phenomenology » Ethnography » Case study » Grounded theory
Gay, et al. (2009)	» Case study » Ethnography » Ethology » Ethnomethodology » Grounded theory » Phenomenology » Symbolic interaction » Historical research » Narrative » Interpretive research
Lodico, et al. (2010)	» Case study » Ethnography » Phenomenology » Narrative
Punch (2009)	» Case study » Ethnography » Grounded theory » Action research

Case study

The choice of a case study is clear when considering its definition. In Stake's (1995) book *'The Art of Case Study Research'* he portrays the philosophy behind case studies:

For the most part, the cases of interest in education... are people and programs. Each one is similar to other persons and programs in many ways and unique in many ways. We are interested in them for both their uniqueness and commonality. We seek to understand them. We would like to hear their stories. We may have reservations about some things the people... tell us, just as they will question some of the things we will tell about them. But we enter the scene with a sincere interest in learning how they function in their ordinary pursuits and milieus and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while we learn. (p. 1)

From the research question, *'Why are Pacific Island students at one school in New Zealand achieving at a substantially higher level than the national average'*, we can clearly see the focus of this research project is on people, namely Pasifika students. As such we are seeking to understand them; we would like to hear their stories about their experiences at this school. However case studies are not limited to this description. Basit (2010, p. 19) states that a case study 'provides a unique portrayal of real people in a real social situation by means of vivid accounts of events, feelings and perceptions' while Lodico, et al. (2010) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) suggest that case studies generally focus on an individual, small groups, or individuals within a group and record, portray, and analyse their experiences within a specific setting. In this instance the focal 'case' is individuals within a group, as established through the question. We can also deduce from the question that this case in itself is of interest as this school seems to veer away from the typical pattern of Pasifika achievement. This type of case study is labelled an intrinsic case study (Creswell, 2008; Stake, 1995).

As mentioned previously, the case study design will form the foundation for this research project, however, interwoven into the case study design will be elements of narrative inquiry, action research and grounded theory.

Narrative inquiry

The narrative inquiry process is one that could add substantially to the quality of this research project. Creswell (2008), Gay, et al. (2009) and Lodico, et al. (2010) write that narrative research allows individuals to tell their stories and their experiences. The notion of stories is vital to understanding an individual's experiences and situation. Connelly and Clandinin (2006, p. 477) claim a story 'is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful'. This explanation places huge importance on stories as means of understanding Pasifika students' experiences at the school in focus.

The choice to include aspects of a narrative research design is also directly related to the cultural nuances of this research project. As Anae, et al. (2001) suggests, the Pasifika culture has a oral communication style and according to McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010) the term for this communication style is *Talanoa* (in both Tongan and Samoan) – talking, dialoguing and discussing in a culturally appropriate way. Therefore the notion of a methodology that incorporates verbal communication seems appropriate. In fact, McFall-McCaffery (2010) suggest the *Talanoa* process is a good example of methodology for Pasifika research. So where does the link between *Talanoa* and narrative inquiry occur? Czarniawska (2004) argues that narration is in fact a common form of communication while Creswell (2008) states

that telling stories is a natural part of life. Thus using a narrative research methodology draws on cultural views as well as educational benefits.

The purpose of including teacher-as-researcher (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004; Mitchell, Weber, & O'Reilly-Scanlon, 2005) is emanated from the context of the research project.

Teacher-as-researcher

For an extended period during the research project I was on a teaching placement at the school in focus, which will enable me to be fully immersed into the school environment. This is where the 'teacher-as-researcher' aspect originates. Although Loughran et al. (2004) and Mitchell et al. (2005) suggest that carefully examining one's own practice to develop deeper understandings of practice is referred to as 'self-study' in this research project I will refer to it as 'teacher-as-researcher'. This is because the primary purpose of this research is not to study my own practice; it is simply another layer of the research methodology where I am the researcher while taking the role of the teacher.

With all of these methods combined – case study, narrative and 'teacher as researcher' – this project will aim to provide a generalization for the unique situation of the school in focus. This concept is known as grounded theory (Basit, 2010; Bell, 2010; Burton et al., 2008; Creswell, 2008; Punch, 2009)

Towards a grounded theory

As there are limitations to the project, such as a time frame, consequently this means a full grounded theory cannot be developed within the time frame of this research project. Basit (2010), Burton, et al. (2008) and Creswell (2008) all claim that

grounded theory is a ‘process theory’ and thus it is understood that grounded theories are developed over several years. Therefore, as the length of this research project (which will be discussed later on) does not allow for a full grounded theory to be developed, this project will simply *work towards* a grounded theory. The rationale for working towards a grounded theory comes from the elements of grounded theory as expressed by Basit (2010, p. 188); ‘The significant features of grounded theory are that it emerges from the data, instead of the data collection being dictated by the theory’. Therefore this project will aim to let the data guide the direction of the theory rather than vice versa. This process was undertaken through ‘inductive coding’ (Ary et al., 2010; Basit, 2010; Fraenkel et al., 2012) and will be explored later in this chapter.

With all of these methods combined, this research project will not only produce a ‘sound and appropriate’ methodology (Anae et al., 2001), it will also take into consideration the cultural nuances (as mentioned beforehand).

Culturally appropriate methodology

To assist in making a culturally appropriate research methodology, advice has been sought from a wide range of literature that discusses Pasifika research. Anae, et al. (2001) write that:

‘Research proposals concerning Pacific peoples and education must go beyond assumptions which underpin Eurocentric Western structures, institutions, and knowledges, and develop research which reflects Pacific worldviews underpinned by Pacific values, belief systems, and ways of sharing knowledge’ (p. 13).

Anae (2010) adds that new theories of research must be developed to challenge existing theories and convey how culture fits in the larger picture of research praxis.

Thus, this research project aims to incorporate the ‘Pasifika Way’ (see Crocombe (1975)) in every way possible. This means incorporating Pasifika values (see diagram 3.2). Values such as respect, service and love are easy to incorporate in the data collection process (this will be explored later in the chapter). Reciprocity is a value that acts as an umbrella for this research process. It conveys a sense of ‘give and take’. The process of ‘giving and taking’ is suggested by Taufe’ulungaki (2000, as cited by Anae et al., 2001) to be a process where, among other things:

- » The research increases the Pasifika peoples understanding of the issue
- » The research is educative in nature and practical in its usage
- » The research is used to improve the lives of Pacific people.

Diagram 3. 2: Pasifika values



Thus I, as the researcher, ‘take’ information and in return ‘give’ vital information that could help the Pasifika people in their pursuit for parity within education in general and school settings in particular. Additional endeavours to create a culturally appropriate methodology will be explored as they come.

Now, we have extensively explored the paradigm in which we find ourselves. The next stage is where we embark on a discovery of the research setting.

Research Setting

The research setting is important to the research project in that it can often have an impact on the data itself. As Anderson and Arsenault (1998) suggest, case studies are a valuable way of analytically looking at a specific case, collecting data, analysing and interpreting findings within their context. Cohen, et al. (2000) and Stake (1995) argue that the situation or context affects behaviour and perspectives and that uniqueness and complexity is embedded within the context. Therefore a description of the context or setting is valuable to the overall research project. In fact, Stake (1995, p. 64) writes that ‘the more the case study is an intrinsic case study [which this research project is based on] the more attention needs to be paid to the contexts’. The context in this instance is the location and respondents of the research project.

Location

The location of this research project was at a secondary school in New Zealand; however the choice of the school in question came about for several reasons. Initially the school was chosen to answer a different research question however through the process of emergent design (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010), the research question changed (see chapter one for more details). The new research

question was in fact derived from the school context and in the position of teacher-as-researcher I discovered this fascinating situation where the Pasifika students were achieving exceptionally well compared to the national average. As such the school was never chosen to suit the research question; the research question was chosen from the school. The account of this can be seen in appendix B where I as ‘teacher-as-researcher’ reflected on information received that guided the process of a new question. The important aspects of this excerpt are highlighted in table 3.3.

Table 3. 3: Reflective journal excerpt #1

Reflective journal <i>8.26pm 25 January 2012</i>	
#1	Through discussions with staff at the chosen school, I have acquired information that suggests the academic results of the Pasifika students at this school are well above the national average. This has caused me to totally rethink my whole project...
#2	...Question has also changed... what makes this school different? Why are they achieving at a higher level? Is the boarding facility theory supported by differences in achievement between Pasifika boarding and day students? (These questions will most likely be my underlying driving force for my research)... The underlying question is 'What makes this school different?'...

Thus, the project took a new turn and the school evidently fitted into that research project as the question emerged from the school. The chosen school will remain unnamed to retain anonymity however a description of the setting will attempt to portray the school context.

The school is located in New Zealand in southern parts of the North Island. This means the presence of Pasifika peoples is higher as the majority of Pasifika people live in the North Island (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). The city in which the school

is based is located in the southern part of the North Island and has 82,000 inhabitants. The school campus is based in a rural setting about ten minutes outside of the city which facilitates an apparent relaxed country atmosphere. The school roll in 2010 was 294, with the majority of students coming from a Palagi background. However the current demographics are roughly the same. The school campus has a wide range of facilities which include a main school building, a gym, a cafeteria, an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) block, a chapel and two dormitory buildings.

The boarding department at the school appears to play a significant role in the lives of the Pasifika students at this school as a large proportion of the Pasifika students reside in the dormitories. The physical aspects of the school are not the only elements of the overall school milieu. The Education Review Office describes the school in their latest Education Review Office Report (tri-annual school review reports conducted by the government) as having Christian values that underpin the caring, family environment of the school. The Christian values are based on the Seventh-day Adventist church values, as the school is administered by the Seventh-day Adventist church organisation.

Participants

For this research project the participants include both students and staff members. This is to gain a wide range of viewpoints. The staff members provide an overview of the situation as they teach and interact with the full range of students. In contrast the students provide the personal experiences and stories within this school.

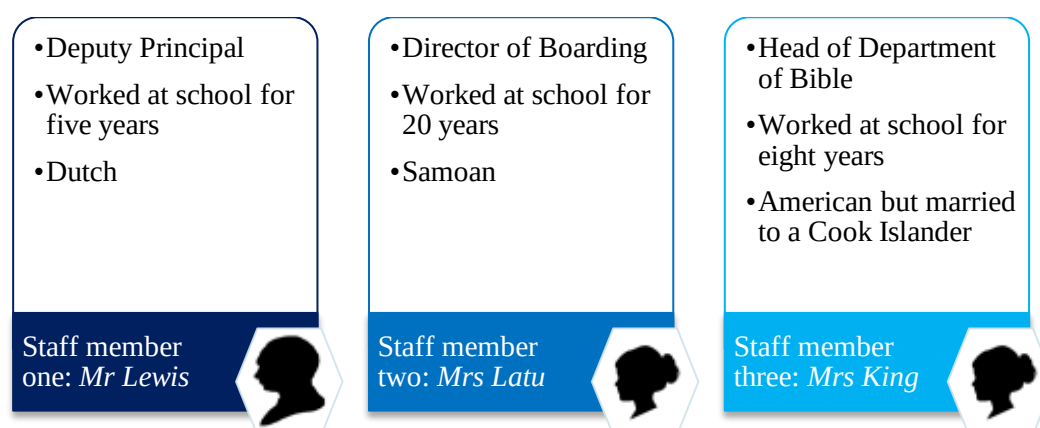
Just as a description of the school in focus was necessary for an understanding of the research context, so is the description of the cohort of participants. In order to retain

anonymity the staff members and students real names will be replaced with pseudonyms.

Staff

The staff members were selected based on their status within the school as well as their familiarity with the issue of Pasifika students in education. The first staff member was chosen because they informed me of the situation of the Pasifika achievement at this school (see diagram 3.3). The second staff member was chosen because of their nationality (see diagram 3.3) and the third staff member was chosen because of their connection to the Pasifika culture (see diagram 3.3).

Diagram 3. 3: Staff member profiles



The first staff member, the Deputy Principal Mr Lewis, has been working at the school for five years. He is responsible for all discipline at the school and, although he is not in charge of collecting academic data, he is responsible for the analysis of the results. This makes him aware of the positive situation of Pasifika students at the school. He was also responsible for the making of a report which looked into the academic success of Pasifika students at this school.

Staff member number two, indirectly, has a significant role in the lives of the Pasifika students at this school. This staff member, Mrs Latu, is the Director of Boarding at this school and also the Head Dean of the Girls dormitory. She has been in this role for over twenty years and so has an extensive understanding of Pasifika students and the struggles they face at school. The nature of her position means she acts as a parent or caregiver on behalf of the students' real parents thus giving her insights into their personal lives. In addition, this staff member is Samoan and is married to a Cook Island man who is the Head of the Boys Dormitory. Therefore she has a very good understanding of the Pasifika culture.

The third staff member, Mrs King, is the Head of Department for Bible at this school. The choice for this staff member was made due to her connection with the Pasifika culture – her husband, a Cook Islander man. This means she also has a thorough understanding of the Pasifika culture. She also knows many of the students well and their progression at school due to her management and teaching position. She has been teaching at this school for eight years, but only recently taken up the role of Head of Department.

Students

The cohort of students is slightly more varied than that of the teachers. The whole student cohort is made up of twenty-seven students. However the vast majority of the results were obtained from only three of the students (this will be explained in further detail later on). As the question states, the persons of interest in this research project are from the Pacific Islands. However, as noted in chapter one, it is important to realise the Pacific Islands are made up of several different countries. Therefore, when selecting the students, an attempt was made to get a range of ethnicities. Due to the

limited number of Pasifika students at this school it was not possible to obtain students from all countries that are considered part of the Pacific Islands. The range of ethnicities within the student participant cohort is represented in table 3.4. It is important to note that the figures do not add up to the total as some participants identify with several ethnicities and therefore are counted more than once.

Table 3. 4: Ethnic spread within student participant cohort

Samoa	Tonga	Cook Islands	Fiji	Papua New Guinea	Other
11	8	7	5	1	3

Samoans make up the biggest group within the cohort, followed by Tongans. However, as mentioned above, many of the students identify with several ethnicities. The results of this is a merge of cultures and consequently each individual culture is not as evident as the Pasifika cultures as a whole.

A large number of the participants are at a NCEA level however upon reflection, it was decided to include a number of students from the younger levels (see table 3.5 on the next page). It was also decided, after a discussion with a staff member, to include past students. This is because it was suggested that students do not think about their experiences until they are removed from the situation. Despite this, the majority of the students are in year 13, the last year of high school in New Zealand.

Table 3. 5: Year level spread within student participant cohort

Year 7/8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Past student
4	4	3	4	4	7	1

Even though the students might be in their last year of high school it does not mean they have attended this school for an extended period. Therefore, when selecting students it was preferred that students had been at the school for at least one whole year prior to the point of selection. The length of students' enrolment at this school can be seen in table 3.6. The majority of students have not been there for their entire high school years, but they have been there long enough to know what impact it has had on them.

Table 3. 6: Length of enrolment spread within student participant cohort

< 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	5 + years
7	7	4	4	5

The status of the Pasifika students is largely skewed towards boarding in the primary cohort however in the secondary cohort it is skewed towards day students. In the primary cohort, two of the students were in boarding while the third student spent time both at home and in boarding. The spread in living status in the collective cohort (all student participants) can be seen in table 3.7. It would have been

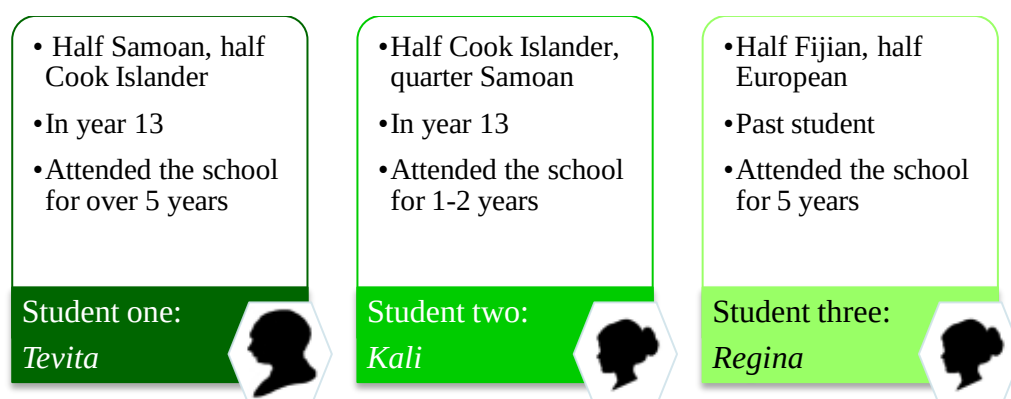
beneficial to have at least one student in the primary cohort who was not in boarding to identify whether there is a difference between boarding students and day students. However because participation was voluntary the primary cohort had primarily boarding students.

Table 3. 7: Boarding status spread within collective student participant cohort

Boarder	Day student	Both
11	15	1

As mentioned above the majority of the data were collected from only three of the participants. As the information about the participants above was presented as a collective cohort, it is beneficial to identify the three students who make up the primary cohort. Diagram 3.4 portrays the three students, their gender, ethnicity, year level and length of enrolment at the school. The students' pseudonyms are also given in the diagram – Tevita, Kali and Regina.

Diagram 3. 4: Primary cohort of students



Ethics

One important aspect of the research project is ethics. Creswell (2008) argues that ethics is a complex matter than involves much more than following a set of static guidelines produced by professional associations. He adds that in order to conduct research ethically, these guidelines need to be tailored to suit the unique context of the research project (Creswell, 2008). Thus, ethics is a primary consideration and not an afterthought. Drew, et al. (2008) and Lodico, et al. (2010) suggest ethics mainly focuses on establishing safeguards that will protect the rights of the participants. Therefore, one of the requirements for ethics approval is that students are required to sign a consent form verifying their participation in this research project (see appendix C) (Ary et al., 2010; Basit, 2010). Due to the nature of this research project and the emergent design process, some of the details on the consent form have changed slightly. However, the participants have been made aware of any changes that affect them and were given the option to opt out if they wish.

In addition, as Creswell (2008) suggests, permission must be given by the institution to conduct research in that setting. Thus permission was sought from the principal of the school (see appendix D).

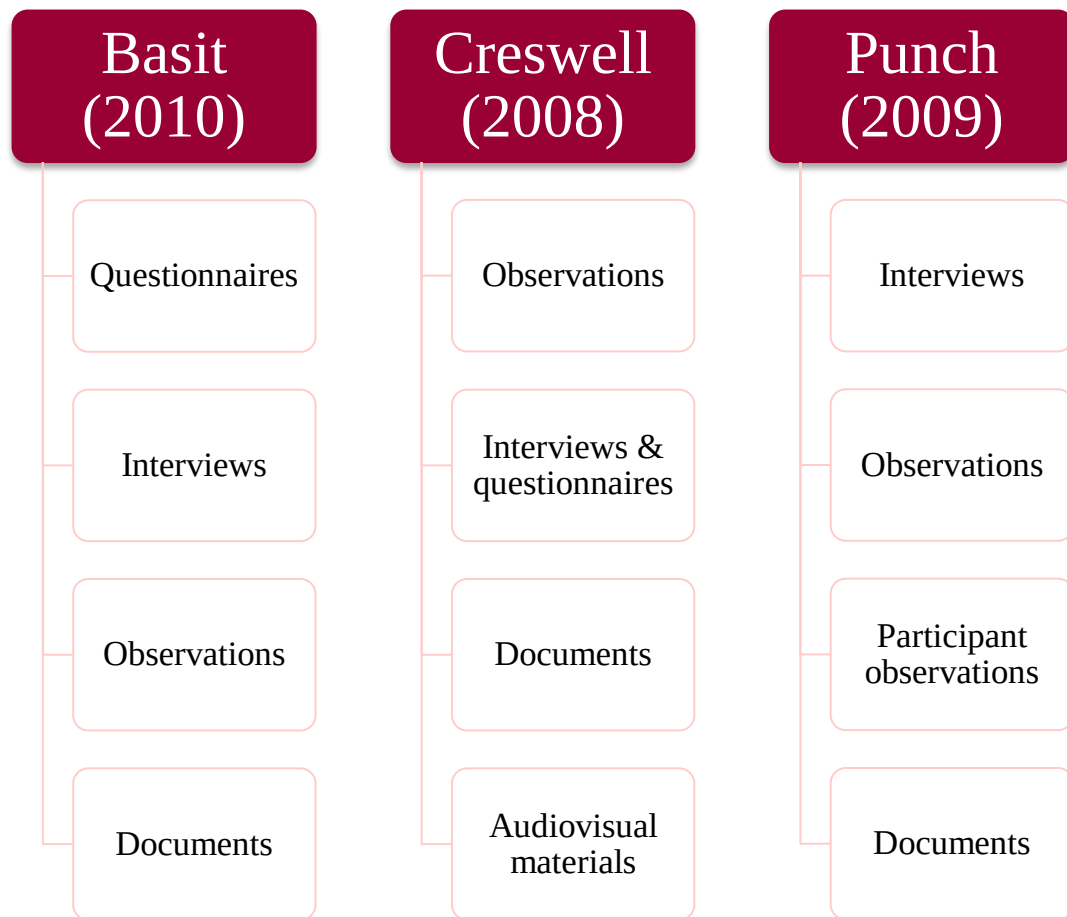
Now that we have explored the paradigm, the setting and the participants we are ready to embark on the next stage of this research methodology – the data collection process. This next section describes the different methods used to collect the data for this research project.

Data Collection

The choice of methods for data collection essentially emerged from the paradigm of this research project. As described previously, this research project is built on a case study approach but also includes aspects of narrative and teacher-as-researcher while working towards a grounded theory. In light of this, Punch (2009) argues that multiple sources of data and multiple data collection methods are very likely to be used within a case study. Thus, the choice to include several data collection methods and data sources is appropriate. The facets of narrative and action research play a role in the data collection methods as well. Narrative research tells a story (Creswell, 2008; Gay et al., 2009; Lodico et al., 2010) implying the need for a method that will allow stories to be told. Teacher-as-researcher can broaden perspectives and understanding of classroom issues (Loughran et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 2005). Therefore, the data obtained through a teacher-as-researcher' (Loughran et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 2005) perspective will be in the form of self evaluations and reflections. The grounded theory aspect of this research project guides the analysis of the data more so than the data collection methods and procedures themselves. This is because grounded theory is a process that can take a long time (Basit, 2010; Burton et al., 2008; Creswell, 2008) implying the methods of grounded theory data collection extend the timeframe of this research project.

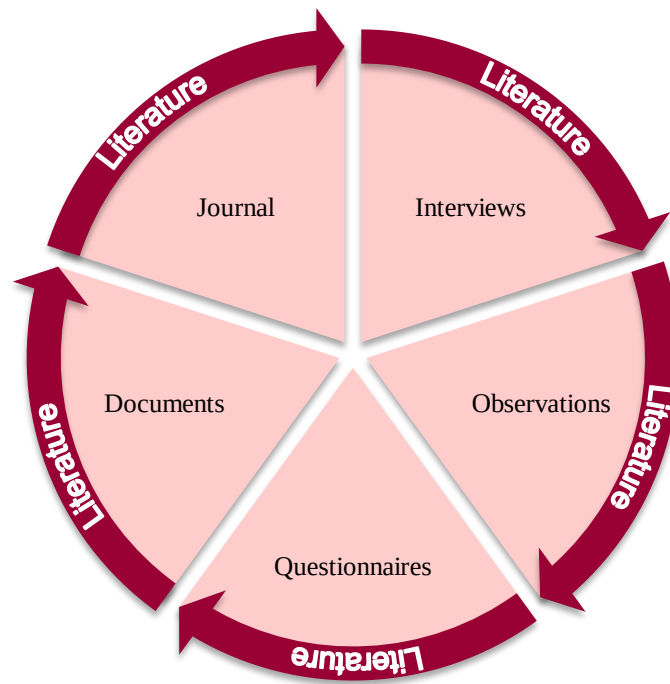
Now that we know what type of methods we should use to collect our data, we can look at our options. Once again, there is no unanimous conclusion regarding qualitative data collection methods. Basit (2010), Creswell (2008) and Punch (2009) suggests there are four categories of data collection methods used in qualitative research, however these categories vary between authors (see diagram 3.5).

Diagram 3. 5: Data collection methods according to Creswell, Punch and Basit



To gain the best understanding of this research setting and to best answer the initial research question I used a number of data collection methods: Interviews, observations, questionnaires, documents, and journals (see diagram 3.6 on the next page). These methods were conducted over an extended period of time and took place in two primary phases. The initial phase included conducting interviews and observations while the second phase included further follow-up interviews, observations and a questionnaire (the time-frame and the data collection methods will be explored later in this chapter). The purpose of the second phase was to allow for the literature that emerged after the initial phase to guide the data collection process.

Diagram 3. 6: Set of data collection methods



Interviews

Interviews are a key method in the qualitative paradigm. Ary et al. (2010), Basit (2010), Drew et al. (2008) and Punch (2009) all claim that interviews are one of the most prominent data collection tool in the qualitative paradigm. However it is not only central in qualitative research as a whole. Yin (2009) states that interviews are one of the most important sources of information in case studies. On the other hand, although interviews are not the primary source of data for narrative research or action research they are still used within narrative research (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2008). Thus the choice of interviews is a natural for this project.

There are multiple ways in which one can conduct interviews in a research setting. I used Creswell's (2008) model for deciding what types of interviews to use. This model includes nine steps and will be explored in detail below:

1. Identification of the interviewees
2. Determine the type of interview you will use
3. Having a plan
4. Locate a quiet, suitable place for conducting the interview
5. Obtain consent from the interviewee to participate in the study
6. During the interview, audiotape the questions and responses
7. Take notes during the interview
8. Use probes to obtain additional information
9. Be courteous and professional when the interview is over

Step 1: Identification of the interviewees

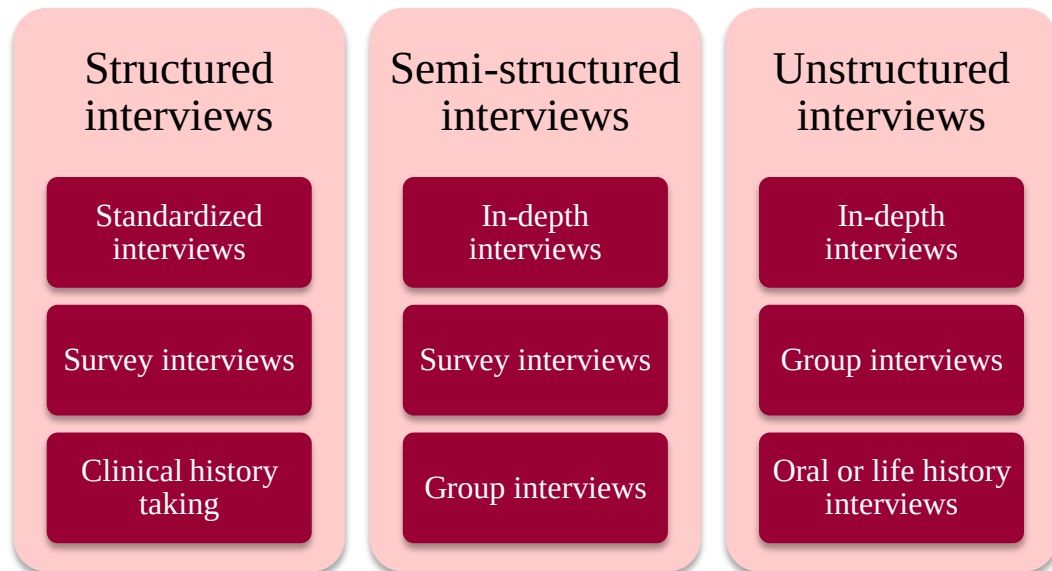
The interviewees for this research project, as mentioned previously, include the three staff members and three students. It was decided to interview both staff and students to gain a holistic view of the school. This decision is supported by Drew et al. (2008) who state that ‘researchers should also seek a variety of perspectives’. The decision to interview only three students, however, was due to time restrictions.

Step 2: Determine the type of interview you will use

When choosing the type of interview there are two aspects to consider; structure and mode of inquiry. In terms of the structure of the interview Basit (2010), Bell (2010) and Punch (2009) suggest there are three choices – structured, semi-structured and unstructured – while Drew et al. (2008) suggests there are five choices – unstructured, partially structured, semi-structured, structured and fully structured. As can be seen in diagram 3.7 on the next page, this research project is best suited with semi-structured interviews. This is because the aim of this research project is to

acquire a deep understanding of the circumstances which a structured interview environment would not necessarily provide.

Diagram 3. 7: Types of interviews



The other aspect to consider is the mode of inquiry or manner in which one conducts the interview. Creswell (2008) suggests that one can conduct one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, telephone interviews or electronic e-mail interviews. The interviews in this research project will be both one-to-one interviews, or individual interviews, and focus group interviews. This choice was based on a statement by Creswell (2008): ‘One-to-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably’ (p. 226). Evidently the staff members are not hesitant to speak and therefore individual interviews are a good match. However I knew the students might be a bit more reserved and therefore I chose to conduct a focus group with the students before attempting to conduct one-to-one interviews with them. In addition, as Fraenkel et al.

(2012) and Lodico et al. (2010) suggest, focus groups are also useful in that students build their responses upon the responses of others. Now despite these positives, there are some authors who express concerns regarding focus groups (see table 3.8) however these issues are averted by having much smaller numbers in the group.

Table 3. 8: Concerns regarding focus groups

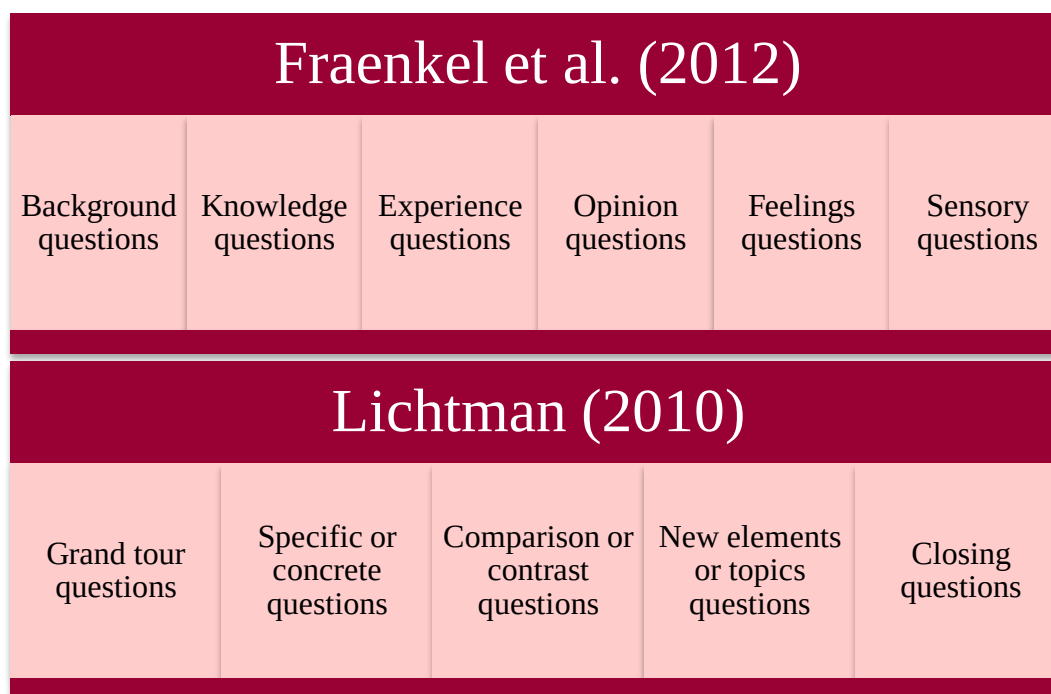
Basit (2010)	Creswell (2008)	Lodico et al. (2010)
There is a danger that dominant personalities in the group will participate more and shy people will stay quiet (p. 104).	A focus group can be challenging for the interviewer who lacks control over the interview discussion (p. 226)	One has to arrange a convenient time and place for all participants (p. 123)
If participants want to state something which is different from the view expressed by the majority of participants, then they are likely to remain silent (p. 104).	When focus groups are audiotaped, the transcriptionist may have difficulty discriminating among the voices of individuals in the group.	Managing the interview can be complicated, because several participants may respond at once and their responses may lead into complex stories (p.123)

Step 3: Having a plan

Once the decision has been made about how one will conduct the interview, as the interviewer one must have a plan. Creswell (2008), Drew et al. (2008) and Lodico et al. (2010) label this element the interview protocol while Basit (2010) and Punch (2009) call it a interview schedule. There are a number of benefits of having an interview protocol or schedule. Lodico et al. (2010) highlight that the schedule helps guide the collection of data in a systematic and focused manner. The use of an interview schedule also guides the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Basit, 2010). Although there are a number of parts to the interview

schedule, the most important part is the questions themselves. According to Fraenkel et al. (2012) and Lichtman (2010) there are several types of questions that can be asked of people (see diagram 3.8).

Diagram 3. 8: Types of questions



Both of the models are on a continuum and begin with general broad questions and then continue on to more specific questions. When developing the questions for the interviews I used both of these models, mostly Fraenkel et al.'s (2012) model for the first round of interviews and Lichtman's (2010) model for any consecutive interviews (see appendix E for an interview schedule example).

As mentioned previously, not only is an understanding of the setting necessary to the project but also an understanding of the participants. The best way to understand an individual is to gain information about their background. As such the first set of questions in the interviews were background questions, the first type in Fraenkel et al.'s (2012) model. These include:

- » What country do you come from?
- » How long have you been in New Zealand for?
- » What year are you in?
- » What is your role at [this school]?
- » How long have you been in your role?

The questions that followed were developed according to the participant and their situation. The interview with the Mr Lewis included predominantly experience and opinion questions such as ‘What are the most rewarding parts of your role?’ and ‘What role do you think the boarding department plays in the achievement of Pasifika students?’ However, a number of knowledge questions – the factual information in contrast to opinions, beliefs and attitudes (Fraenkel et al., 2012) – were also asked in reference to the report written by Mr Lewis. The other interviews with staff members (two with Mrs Latu and one with Mrs King, the teacher) were similar in their question types. However as with Mr Lewis’ interview, they did not include any feeling or sensory questions.

With the student interviews (one focus group interview, two interviews with each current student and one interview with the past student) the process was quite similar. For the first round of interviews with the students, they began much like the staff interviews – with background questions. They also included numerous experience and opinion questions such as:

- » How was your experience at [this school]?
- » What do you think helped you achieve?

In contrast to the staff interviews, the student interviews included aspects of Lichtman’s (2010) question model. The students were asked a number of

comparison/contrast questions. In addition, in subsequent interviews with the students, the opening questions were grand tour questions. Lichtman (2010) states that these questions are very general and they are an excellent way to begin as they get the participants talking. An example of such a question is ‘How has this week been so far?’

In the process of developing my questions I used two methods to ensure quality. The first is a process is undertaking a pilot study. Gay et al. (2009) and Stake (1995) suggest that this process can help the researcher see if the questions make sense and feedback from the participants can help revising the schedule for future interviews. The second process was reflecting on the interviews as each one was undertaken. An excerpt from my reflective journal (see table 3.9) portrays the process done to ensure the following interviews were improved.

Table 3. 9: Reflective journal excerpt #2

Reflective journal <i>1.16pm 3 February 2012</i>	
#1	The interviewee had plenty to say and gave some good insights, mostly on the boarding students. I continuously tried to bring it back to academic success but it was at times hard as I think the DB knows more about the dorms than day school, although the DB still knows a lot about the success of the students.
#2	She seemed very passionate about the students and was eager to talk about the students and the environment. For further interviews I will ask questions that are related to the concepts mentioned in the BOT report by the DP. Such as segregation and what is in place in the boarding department to minimise that; equal treatment; how the BD thinks her role and ethnicity affects students; small classes/school; extend on family environment.

Step 4: Locate a quiet, suitable place for conducting the interview

One of the ethical issues with conducting interviews is privacy and confidentiality. The venue plays an important role in maintaining that in that the venue must allow for full visibility but not allow outsiders to hear the conversation. The location also needs to be suitable. Creswell (2008) states that the location should be free from distractions and audio-tape friendly. The following excerpt from my reflective journal shows that this condition was met.

Table 3. 10: Reflective journal excerpt #3

Reflective journal <i>1.16pm 3 February 2012</i>	
#1	The interview was with the Director of Boarding [Mrs Latu]. It took place in the girls' dorm chapel which is attached to the dormitory building. It has plenty of windows and two doors with windows in. As the interview took place during school time, none of the boarders were in the building and hence the doors were left open. Either way this location was visible but still provided confidentiality.

Step 5: Obtain consent from the interviewee to participate in the study

As mentioned beforehand, part of the ethics approval required all participants to sign a consent form (see appendix C). Both Creswell (2008) and Ary et al. (2010) stress that consent needs to be given *before* the individual participates. Therefore, prior to the interviews all the participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the requirements of them as participants and also their choice to withdraw from the project at any point.

Step 6: During the interview, audiotape the questions and responses

There are both advantages and disadvantages with audio-recording the interviews. Bell (2010, p. 167) suggests that ‘audio-recording can be useful to check the wording of any statement you wish to quote’. In addition, it allows the interviewer to maintain eye contact, stay focused and look interested (Bell, 2010; Gay et al., 2009). Perhaps one of the biggest benefits of audio-recording is in relation to the coding process. It is useful when one may need to listen to a section several times in order to identify themes in the data (Bell, 2010). The downside to audio-recording is the intimidation factor. As Bell (2010) and Drew et al. (2008) point out sometimes the participants do not wish to be recorded or the participants become shy and talk less. These issues can be diminished with the assurance of confidentiality. For the interviews undertaken as part of this project a small audio-recording device was used and placed in an unobtrusive place to create comfort in the interviews.

Step 7: Take notes during the interview

In addition to making audio-recordings in the interview, field notes were written down. Creswell (2008) states that taking notes in the interview are beneficial in case the tape recorder malfunctions. In addition ‘notes taken during the interview can help the interviewer formulate new questions as the interview moves along’ (Patton, 2002, p. 383). A sample of the field notes taken in one of the interviews can be seen in appendix F.

Step 8: Use ‘probes’ to obtain additional information

A method used in the interview to acquire deeper responses from the participants is probing. The concept of probing is described by Lodico et al. (2010, p. 127) as ‘a follow-up question that is asked to get clarification about a response or to seek

elaboration and additional detail. On the other hand, Lichtman (2010) suggests probing is a strategy that is used to get the underlying meaning of what is said. During the interviews if I felt I needed further clarification on any questions I would simply ask (see appendix G).

Step 9: Be courteous and professional when the interview is over

The final step in Creswell's (2008) interview process is regarding manners. This concept is reiterated in Anae et al.'s (2001) guidelines for Pasifika research. Anae et al. (2001) state that:

Closing interviews usually occur with general words of thanks and appreciation for the time spent. It is often during the sharing of these words of thanks that a gift is provided to the interviewee as a token of the researcher's/research team's appreciation and respect for their time spent not only to this project but also to the honour of the researcher. The emphasis here is not so much on the project per se but on the relationships and understandings being built between researcher and interviewees. And, that it is through the formation of this relationship together with the information received that changes or progress can be made. This emphasis reflects the spirit of Pacific values such as respect, reciprocity and service (pp. 37-38).

As I completed several interviews with some of the participants I decided to offer the gift at the end of the whole data collection process instead of at the end of each interview.

Observations

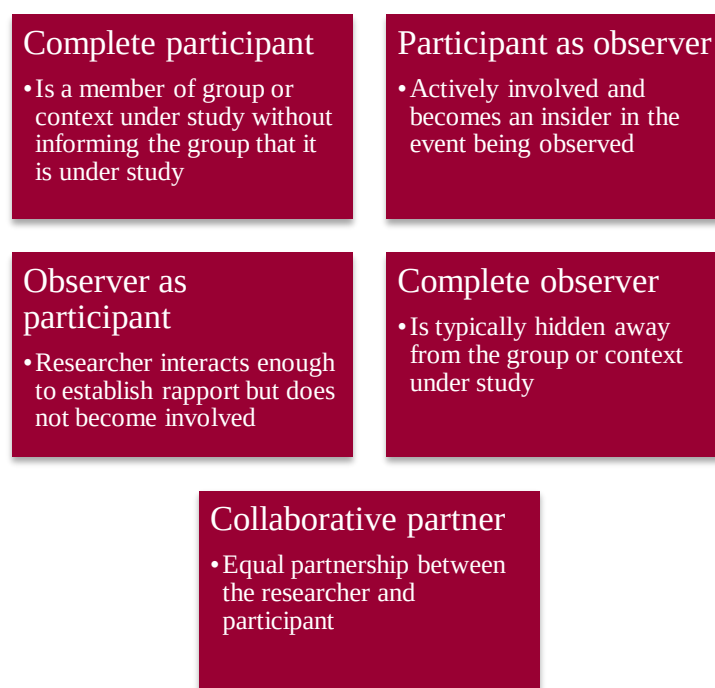
In addition to interviews, observations are a key data collection method in the qualitative paradigm. Ary et al. (2010) and Fraenkel et al. (2012) state that along with interviews, observations is one of the three main techniques used to collect qualitative data. The use of observations in this research project was predominantly linked to the 'teacher-as-researcher' aspects of the project. As Ary et al. (2010) states, action research includes three aspects – experiencing, enquiring and

examining – and the experiencing category focuses on observational data. These observations allow the researcher to explore and understand the complex interactions in a natural setting (Ary et al., 2010).

Similar to interviews, observations can be conducted in various ways too.

Observations can be both structured and unstructured (much like interviews), however the difference lies in that structured observations belong in the quantitative paradigm whereas unstructured observations are associated with qualitative research (Punch, 2009). Evidently, the choice for this research project is unstructured observations. Again, it is not only the structure that one must consider. Creswell (2008) argues that there are two roles the researcher can take in observations – participant observer and non-participant observer. On the other hand Ary et al. (2010) suggests the researcher can take five different roles as can be seen in diagram 3.9, and each different role interacts in a different way within the research context.

Diagram 3. 9: Researcher roles in observations



As the observations in this research project form part of the action-research elements the observations took place within the classroom as I was teaching. Therefore the role of ‘observer as participant’ is best suited as I was interacting with the participants but I did not become part of the ‘class’.

The observations in this research project veered away from the standard ‘observation’. The reason for this is simply the manner in which the observations took place. As mentioned, the observations took place in my classroom while I was teaching during my practicum. One could argue that this is not a *real* observation as I was not solely focused on the interactions of the class. In addition, as Ary et al. (2010) and Lodico et al. (2010) state, observations are very often used in association with field notes and observation protocols (similar to interview protocols). Due to the nature of the observations in this research project, neither protocols nor in situ field notes were used. However, the comments about the observations were completed after the lessons. This aspect is part of taking field notes. Ary et al. (2010), Creswell (2008), and Lodico et al. (2010) state that field notes have two components: the descriptive part and the reflective part. Ary et al. (2010) continues to write that the reflective part includes the observers impressions about the event and speculations about data analysis. These comments are also known as observer comments (Ary et al., 2010).

The reflections I made post observations were written in a journal. A description of the observations made during my time teaching at the school can be seen in chapter four. Evidently, as these observations were very informal this component makes up a very small section of the data collection process.

Questionnaires

One data collection method that is often associated with quantitative research is questionnaires. This is because questionnaires are ‘mainly designed to gather numerical data or data that can easily be converted into numerical values’ (Bisit, 2010). However, as Gay et al. (2009) points out, questionnaires are also a written collection of self-report questions and they allow the researcher to collect large amounts of data in a short time. The use of questionnaires in the data collection process is linked to the latter reason. As interviews only took place with three students it provided a limited view and therefore the distribution of questionnaires would allow the general Pasifika population to give their opinion on the views of the three interview participants. The purpose of gaining this general view is to work towards generating theory from the data. This process is a crucial aspect of grounded theory research (Punch, 2009), and as mentioned earlier on this research project is working towards a grounded theory. Part of this process includes member checking which the questionnaire was partially used for. This will be explored later in the chapter.

Like with both interviews and observations, questionnaires too, have multiple methods of implementation. For an easy distribution process I decided to use electronic questionnaires (Creswell, 2008). I used www.freeonlinesurveys.com which provides a platform for the distribution of the questionnaire and also easy collection of the results (see appendix H for a template of the questionnaire).

Within the questionnaire, there are a number of types of questions that can be used. There are selection questions – which include multiple choice, true-false and matching questions – and supply questions – which include short answer or essay

questions (Fraenkel et al., 2012). These two categories can also be described in terms of closed questions and open questions (Basit, 2010). Depending on the purpose of each question within the questionnaire, different question types were used. For questions that aim to gather data of a biographical or factual nature, they are best suited to closed questions while the open questions allow the participant to write a free flowing account in their own words (Basit, 2010). For questions regarding the participants' demographics, mostly closed questions were used (see image 3.1).

Image 3. 1: Questionnaire excerpt #1



*2 What nationality are you? Tick all that apply.

☐ Samoan

☐ Tongan

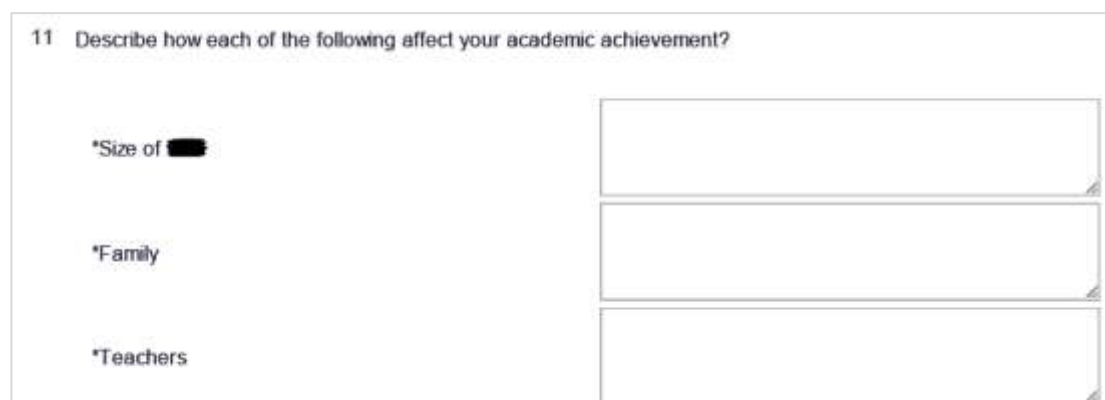
☐ Fijian

☐ Cook Islander

Other (Please Specify):

Conversely, the questions enquiring about the individuals' opinions or feelings were a mixture of both open and closed questions (see image 3.2 and image 3.3 on the next page).

Image 3. 2: Questionnaire excerpt #2



11 Describe how each of the following affect your academic achievement?

*Size of

*Family

*Teachers

Image 3. 3: Questionnaire excerpt #3

14 List the following in the order of how they affect your academic achievement, (from affect the most to affect the least).

A student's background		▼
Socio-economic background		▼
Family		▼
Teachers		▼
Friends		▼
Size of the school		▼
The Christian aspect of		▼
Engaging lesson		▼
Positive role models		▼
Encouragement		▼
High expectations		▼

The questionnaires were distributed to the secondary cohort of student participants using a link on the computers. However, as Bell (2010) and Gay et al. (2009) state, it is important to conduct a pilot study of the questionnaire prior to undertaking the real thing. As the older students were more likely to give more extensive answers I decided that the junior group would be the pilot study. Now the purpose of this is to get the flaws out so the respondents will have no difficulty completing the questionnaire (Bell, 2010) and after the completion of the pilot study I was able to improve the questionnaire for the senior group to complete.

Documentation

Another valuable source of data in qualitative research is documents. In fact, document analysis is the third of the three main techniques of collecting data according to Ary et al. (2010) and Fraenkel et al. (2012). As illustrated earlier, journals will be discussed later under its own heading. Therefore the documents

considered in this section are of the form of those given by Ary et al. (2010) and Lodico et al. (2010) namely files, reports and public records.

The main document used in this research project is a report by Mr Lewis. The choice to use this document as a data source is supported by Lodico et al. (2010) who say that the decision to use documents is driven by the research questions asked. In this case as the research question asks why Pacific Island students at one school in New Zealand are achieving at a substantially higher level than the national average and the report looks at precisely that. Therefore the choice to use the report is logical.

Journal

The last method used in the data collection is journals. Lodico et al. (2010) suggests that the journals used as data source usually come from the participants but can also include a researchers journal. Lichtman (2010) emphasises that as a researcher one should keep a journal. The purpose of journaling as a researcher is two-fold. Firstly, the journal can be used to record and examine the researcher's impressions and feelings during the study and secondly, the journal can provide a space to record and analyse findings (Lichtman, 2010; Lodico et al., 2010).

Through the whole research project, I have kept a reflective journal in which I record my thoughts about the research project, my thoughts about various data collection methods and my thoughts about some of the findings that emerged (see appendix B).

At this stage in the methodology we have identified the research methods and data collection methods. The next step is the data analysis.

Data Analysis

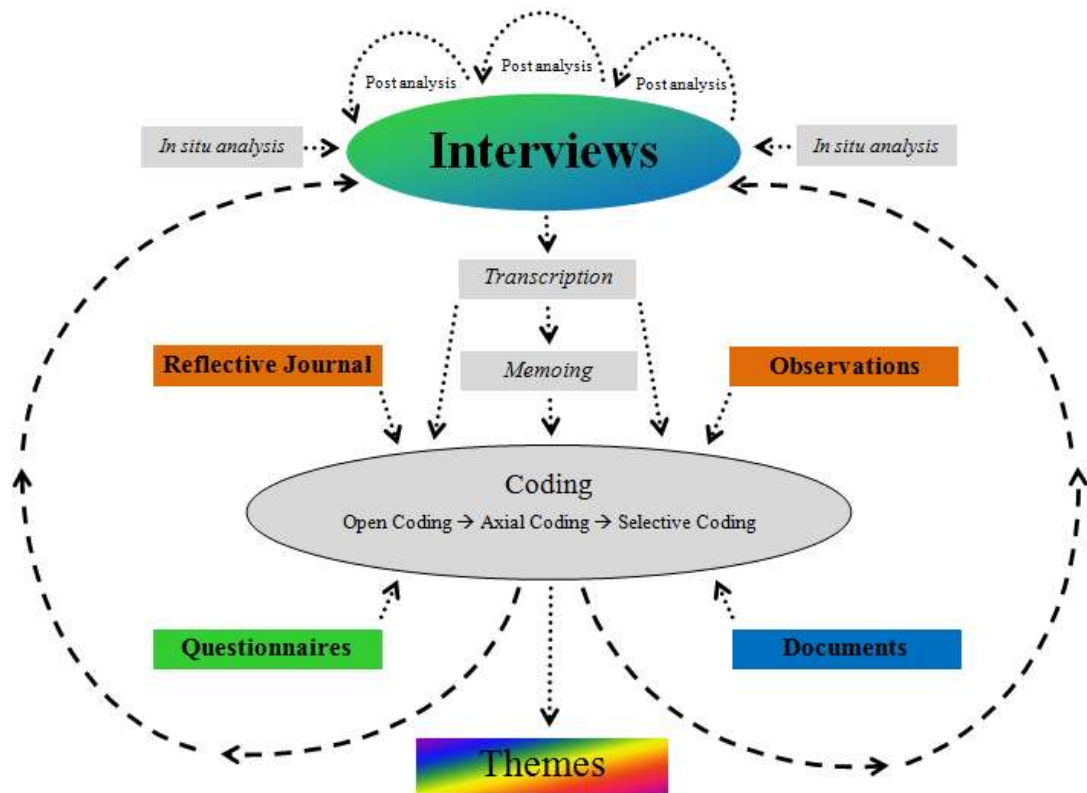
As this research project is in the qualitative paradigm, there are specific processes that the researcher undertakes. Fraenkel et al. (2012) state that qualitative researchers often analyse their data inductively. This means that when they analyse the data they are not trying to put together a puzzle of a picture they already know, instead they are creating a picture from a myriad of different data pieces (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This model of analysis was undertaken when analysing the data for this research project.

As the data were gathered over the course of eight months, the data analysis process was a continual process. This continual process is supported by Basit (2010) and Fraenkel et al. (2012) who write that data analysis in qualitative research is a continuously comparative process of coding. In grounded theory research, which this research project is working towards, this process is referred to as constant comparison and is a 'process of slowly developing categories of information' (Creswell, 2008, p. 443). In addition, Drew et al. (2008, p. 337) suggest that 'qualitative researchers engage in a simultaneous and iterative processes of analysis while still in the field to point them toward important sources and data not predicted in the design phase of the study.

To easily portray the process of the data analysis for this research project, a diagram was created (see diagram 3.10 on the next page). Following the diagram will be an exploration of how the data analysis process occurred. At this stage it is important to highlight the circular arrows in diagram as they indicate that the whole data analysis process reiterated itself and therefore each step of the process took place in several

phases. However, as will be described further along, the deeper levels of coding occurred once the cycle had repeated itself more than once.

Diagram 3. 10: Data analysis process



In situ analysis and post analysis

Right from the beginning when the semi-structured interviews (Bell, 2010; Punch, 2009) were undertaken the data analysis process began. As Gay et al. (2009) suggests, data analysis in qualitative research is not left until all the data has been collected, instead it begins from the initial interaction with the participants. This instant analysis process is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions (Stake, 1995). In this case, as can be seen in diagram 3.11 (next page), the data analysis began in the first interview with the first participant and is referred to as in situ analysis. In the first interview field notes were taken (see appendix F) that identified

initial concepts spoken about in the interview as well as visual cues. As Gay et al. (2009) write while gathering data the researcher reviews everything and asks questions such as ‘Why do participants act as they do?’, ‘What does this focus mean?’ or ‘What else do I want to know about the participants attitude?’ These questions were also answered during the interview and notes taken on the interview protocol.

Diagram 3. 11: Preliminary analysis process



Once the interview is over, another step in the analysis process is undertaken – post analysis. This occurred through the use of a reflective journal and the initial analysis was recorded there (see appendix I). As there were several rounds of interviews (see table 3.11 on the next page), the interchange between in situ analysis and post analysis occurred several times. This circular model of gathering and analysing is referred to as an iterative process (Lichtman, 2010). Once the initial interviews had been undertaken and analyzed at a surface level the task of organizing the data took place. This task is critical because of the extensive amount of data collected during a study (Creswell, 2008).

Table 3. 11: Interview schedule

Mr Lewis	Mrs King	Regina
February 7	February 13	May 23
Mrs Latu	Tevita	Kali
February 3 February 21	February 14 (Focus group) February 23 August 14	February 14 (Focus group) February 22 June 27

Transcribing

The biggest task to be undertaken in the organisation process is transcribing. As Creswell (2008) states transcribing is the process of converting audiotape recordings into data. However there are some guidelines to help create accurate and reliable transcriptions. As Ary et al. (2010, p. 481) argue, ‘words should be transcribed directly to avoid potential bias in selection or interpretation that may occur with summarizing’. In addition, notes should be included that describe the behaviour of the interviewee – such as laughter or gestures – that can give added meaning (Ary et al., 2010). Therefore, when transcribing the interviews each word or sound was written down, even if it did not make sense (see appendix J).

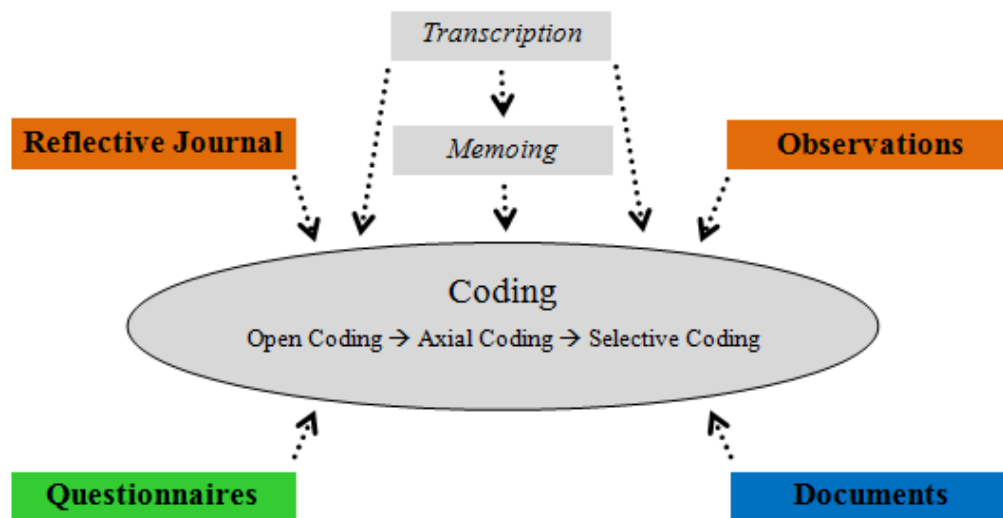
Memoing

On completing the transcription of all the audio-recorded data another important stage in the analysis process begins. Ary et al. (2010) suggest that once the transcriptions are complete the researcher should read through the transcripts and familiarize themselves with the data. Part of this process is writing notes or memos to capture your thoughts as they occur. This process is known as memoing and is a significant part of grounded theory research (Creswell, 2008; Punch, 2009). In fact, Gay et al. (2009) suggest that memoing is the first step in analysing the data. The purpose of memoing is two-fold. Creswell (2008) states that memos help direct the inquirer toward new sources of data while Punch (2009) suggests memos can point towards new patterns. For this research project, once a number of the audio-recordings had been transcribed I began the memoing process. As Ary et al. (2010), Creswell (2008) and Gay et al. (2009) suggest the researcher does, the memos were written in the margins of the transcription and important words or sections were unlined (see appendix J).

Coding

Once the transcribing and memoing is complete the next step in the data analysis process can take place – coding. However it is not only the transcriptions from the audio-recordings of the interviews that form part of the data that will be coded. As can be seen in diagram 3.12 (next page), the data from the reflective journal, observations, documents and questionnaires add to the data obtained through the transcriptions of the interviews.

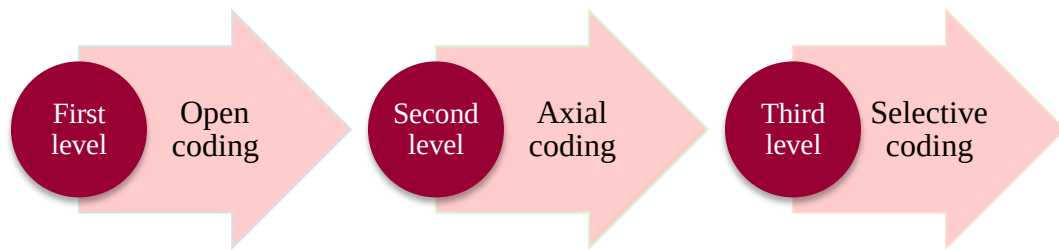
Diagram 3. 12: Sources for the coding process



Therefore when coding the data, it refers to coding not only the transcriptions but also the text from the reflective journals, observations, documents and questionnaires.

Now as Ary et al. (2010) claim, coding is at the core of qualitative research and as such is a vital component of the data analysis process. The definition of coding varies between authors. Creswell (2008, p. 251) states that ‘coding is the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data’, Gay et al. (2009, p. 451) defines it as ‘the process of categorically marking or referencing units of text... with codes and labels as a way to indicate patterns and meaning’ and Lodico et al. (2010, p. 183) write that ‘coding is the process of identifying different segments of the data that describe related phenomena and labelling these parts using broad category names. However, even within coding there are several levels of coding. As Ary et al. (2010), Basit (2010), Creswell (2008) and Punch (2009) state, coding is made up of three steps: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (see diagram 3.13 on the next page).

Diagram 3. 13: Three levels of coding



The first level is open coding where the development of initial categories occurs through the process of breaking down, examining, comparing and conceptualising data (Basit, 2010; Creswell, 2008). The second level is axial coding. The term axial indicates the process undertaken at this level as here the codes are linked and interrelated to central categories (Basit, 2010; Creswell, 2008; Punch, 2009). In fact, Ary et al. (2010) illustrate this process using a wheel with a centre and spokes extending out. The third level of coding is selective coding. This level of coding is particularly important in grounded theory research (Creswell, 2008; Punch, 2009). The reason for this is because at this level of coding the researcher aims to identify a principal code, write theory from the interrelationships of the categories in the axial coding model and form a grounded theory (Basit, 2010; Creswell, 2008; Punch, 2009). Following will be a description of the three levels of coding when applied to the data collected for this research project.

Open coding

As mentioned previously open coding is the first level of coding where the initial categories are formed. The purpose of open coding is to generate abstract categories (Punch, 2009). The way I went about this is explained in a journal entry and can be seen in table 3.12 on the next page.

Table 3. 12: Reflective journal excerpt #4

Reflective journal 5.06pm 14 May 2012	
#1	When I go through the transcriptions, I feel I have to read the full sentence to get the big picture. Just taking words by themselves has no meaning even if it might be repeated 3 times. The context tells more about the 'real' theme than one particular word does. Also even if a word isn't explicitly said, I can gain an understanding of the theme through reading the whole sentence or paragraph. If you were looking for only words, you would miss the underlying issues.

Punch (2009) also suggests there are questions one can ask to guide the process of identifying those categories:

- » What is this piece of data an example of?
- » What does this piece of data stand for, or represent?
- » What category or property of a category does this piece of data indicate?

Therefore, when reading through the transcripts as well as the questionnaire results I would ask those questions and derive appropriate words that would answer one or more of those questions. In addition, when deciding what words to use, I added one more question to that previous list: '*How is this piece of text adding to the research question?*' The chosen words were then written in the margins as can be seen in image 3.4 on the next page (see appendix J for a larger excerpt). In addition to deriving new words from the data, occasionally the interviewee would mention a word that in fact summarised the concept spoken about. In those cases the words were underlined boldly or circled (see appendix J, same as above) in comparison to the underlined segments of text in image 3.4 (next page).

Image 3. 4: Excerpt of open coding process for interview with the teacher

13 Feb 2012	Interview with Teacher	No. 1
C:	What about the fact that there are a lot of different ethnicities at school? Like you have the Japanese kids coming through? Do you think that affect the students? That there is a lot of ethnicities?	
T:	Um, I think it's got... it really benefits all of them especially when Saniku, the Japanese students come, you know, just to get to know people, I mean, who makes a friend with a Japanese student and really gets, really gets to know them, and you know in many other schools um they might just stay to themselves, they do, they do especially for the first few weeks, um. But it opens the doors or your eyes to different worlds, you know if you find out like, I've got a German student, a South African student and a boy from Fiji but he's not Fijian, he was raised in Fiji, in my year 12 class, I mean right away you've got three different cultures represented that you know, you can have a lot to learn from... so yes, I think it really benefits and it benefits the Pasifika students because it makes them realise they're not... um, singled out or, you know everyone's got a different culture and... the way that they do things.	Exposure Exploring Inclusion Equality Unity Acceptance
C:	Ok, how much does the concept of no visual discrimination affect the success of students?	
T:	I read that and I wasn't quite sure, so, so, what I'm assuming, that's coming from this [the report]	

As mentioned previously, in order for the reader to be fully immersed into the research project the tacit knowledge must be transferred in propositional knowledge.

Thus an example of the process undertaken when deriving these words can be seen in table 3.13. This example is based on the excerpt in image 3.4 above.

Table 3. 13: Reflective journal excerpt #5

Reflective journal 7.49pm 10 May 2012	
#1	The teacher is talking about students getting to know different students when the Saniku students arrive. They bring a completely different culture to the school. She even says 'It opens the doors or your eyes to different worlds'. This implies the students get to see a different world from theirs. They in a sense get to explore now worlds and they are exposed to these differences. However she continues to share that 'it makes them realise they're not... um, singled out'. Not being singled out, means you are included. This implies a real sense of inclusion in the situation the teacher is describing. In addition, she adds that this is the case even if everyone has a different culture or way they do things. Being included despite differences takes acceptance on behalf of all those involved. It also means everyone is considered equal. When everyone is included, they are united and this creates unity.

These thought processes occurred each time I was reading through transcriptions or other written data. The words that were developed and written in the margins then formed the basis for my open coding and became the initial codes. These codes that emerged were written down as a list (see image 3.5). This list was later transferred to my reflective journal where I analysed the lists and identified the codes that were common in both interviews. This can also be seen in image 3.5 where the common codes are identified with an asterisk.

Image 3. 5: List of codes derived from interviews

DB - Interview	DP - Interview
- Preparation	- Environment *
- Identity *	- Socio-economic
- Opportunities *	- Identity
- Change *	- Equality *
- Expectations	- Expectations
- Family	- Christianity
- Culture	- Belonging
- Language	- Assumptions
- Self-management *	- Authority
- Environment	- Visibility
- Motivation	- Family
	- Understanding
	- Unity *
	- Security
	- Inclusion
	- Relationships
	- Redemptive
	- Choice
	- Purpose
	- Accepting
	- Helping
	- Exposure

These particular lists (image 3.5) were from the first set of interviews and as explained earlier. As can be seen in diagram 3.11 (on page 111) the analysis process was a circular process, therefore, the process of coding the remaining interviews occurred later once they had been conducted. Once carried out, each of the transcriptions for the interviews was open coded as described above. The coding process for the questionnaires, documents and reflective journal were coded in a similar manner as they occurred.

By the stage the open coding process had been completed nearly all of the data had been collected. Therefore the following two levels of coding occurred with the majority of codes (from the open coding) available.

Axial coding

The second level of coding is axial coding. The main concept of this stage of coding is linking. Basit (2010) and Punch (2009) suggest that axial coding is where the main categories and codes that have emerged from the open coding process are interconnected with each other. To do the interrelating, we require a concept to connect the codes together. Punch (2009) suggests that these concepts are called theoretical codes. As there are a multitude of possibilities for the theoretical codes the axial coding process took several attempts before I was satisfied.

When I began the axial coding process I began with the two lists of codes from the first two interviews (see previous page). The process I undertook to develop the first set of theoretical codes was recorded in my reflective journal. First the codes were divided into six groups as can be seen in image 3.6 on the next page.

Image 3. 6: Axial coding process from reflective journal

The next step after identifying the emerging ideas was to group these ideas. The words were grouped into the following:

A	B	C	D	E	F
Preparation Self Management Choice Authority	Equality Unity Accepting Exposure	Visibility Inclusion Opportunities Change	Identity Culture Purpose Christianity Socio-economic status Language	Expectations Family Belonging Security Relationships Help Understanding Redemptive	Environment

The following words removed as they do not connect with any of the groups:

- Motivation
- Assumptions

Note: Group F (environment) was left by itself as in some ways it is included in other groups, but also other groups could potentially be included under environment.

Once the codes were grouped I began exploring the interconnecting link which would later become the theoretical code. As can be seen in the example in table 3.14 on the next page, the link was explained in terms of the codes.

Table 3. 14: Initial derivation of theoretical codes

Group E
<i>Expectations</i> <i>Family</i> <i>Belonging</i> <i>Security</i> <i>Relationships</i> <i>Help</i> <i>Understanding</i> <i>Redemptive</i>
The common link in this group is relationships: » Students know the expectations on them » The students feel a sense of family at the school » Students feel they belong at this school » Students feel secure at this school » Students receive help » Students are understood » Redemptive practices are used for students

Once the transcription and open coding of more interviews had occurred more codes were added to the initial lists and consequently more codes were added to the groups in image 3.5 (on page 118). These new groups, with new codes added, were linked with new theoretical codes (see appendix K for the diagram):

- » Student ↔ School
- » School environment
- » School practices
- » Student identity
- » Family
- » Teacher

In defining these new theoretical codes I wrote down explanations of my thought processes in my reflective journal. These thoughts can be seen in table 3.15.

Table 3. 15: Reflective journal excerpt #5

Reflective Journal <i>3.10pm 20 May 2012</i>
Each group has themes that come under a specific label [as mentioned above]. However, the problem with this grouping is it is not doing words... I believe that this grouping is ok because it does answer the question 'Why are Pasifika students doing so well at [this school]?' Well...
The school and the students work together in that they: » Prepare students for life and give them an opportunity to practice independence and a choice » They promote self management (especially in the dorms) » There are appropriate role models and authority to turn to for guidance when needed

The school environment helps in that it:

- » Provides a strong community and family feel within the school which Pasifika students strongly identify with
- » There is equality and unity among students
- » Students are exposed to different cultures and are encouraged to interact and accept the commonalities and differences among each other

The school itself helps in that it:

- » Provides opportunities for students to excel in any area that they are particularly good at
- » Provide opportunities for each individual to shine
- » Provide opportunities for change in social structures (for the better)
- » Encourage sharing success among staff and students, which again means students have the chance to shine
- » All students are included in all cultural events
- » Students cannot 'hide' at school

The students themselves at this school help in that they:

- » Identify with the community and family feel of the school
- » They have purpose and a common faith with other students at this school
- » They often come from higher socio-economic backgrounds
- » They have the desires and motivation to succeed

The students families help in that they:

- » Have high expectations for their children
- » They provide security, understanding and belonging
- » There are strong relationships within a family
 - *The interesting point to note is the school itself often acts as 'the family' and therefore the school essentially provides security, a sense of belonging, understanding and strong relationships*

The teachers can have an effect in that they:

- » Believe, encourage and help students
- » They know and understand their students because of the close relationships formed at the school
- » There is a large amount of awareness of differences and similarities within the classroom and teachers adopt these ideas.

Selective coding

Selective coding is the final and deepest level of coding. Punch (2009) suggests that the word ‘selective’ is used because the researcher deliberately selects a core category and concentrates on this. Creswell (2008) and Punch (2009) add that it is integrating, pulling together and writing the interrelationship of the categories developed in the axial coding process. In an essence it is the development of a central theory that supports the situation being studied. The means of finding this central focus is through an inductive process where the concepts are not brought *to* the data or are they *in* the data; they are inferred *from* the data (Punch, 2009).

At this point in the data analysis process, I had developed a set of categories in the axial coding phase. The development of a central theory that would be inferred from the codes took several attempts. First I considered the initial categories (see page 118) and sought to find a common theme among the codes. To aid this process I created several diagrams to illustrate the connections (see appendix L). However, after little success in finding a common theme I returned to the categories, and in essences, returned to the axial coding level. There the categories were reduced down to five groups instead of six: environment, school community, teachers, family and student. However, still not satisfied due to a number of elements feeling ‘out of place’ another set of totally different categories were developed. These revolved around three aspects of the school environment:

- » The physical environment
- » The social environment
- » The emotional environment

All the sub codes were then slotted under the appropriate heading (see appendix M). At this stage I once again, was not satisfied. So I returned to the focal concept of selective coding: “The theory to be developed must have a central focus, around which it is integrated” (Punch, 2009, p. 188). It was at that point I began contemplating the *one* thing that tied everything together and the following was my thought process:

- » Looking through the codes, the majority of the codes stream from a common theme - relationships. So I attempted to categorise the codes into different relationships evident in a school. (Reflection journal, 1.50pm 30 August 2012)

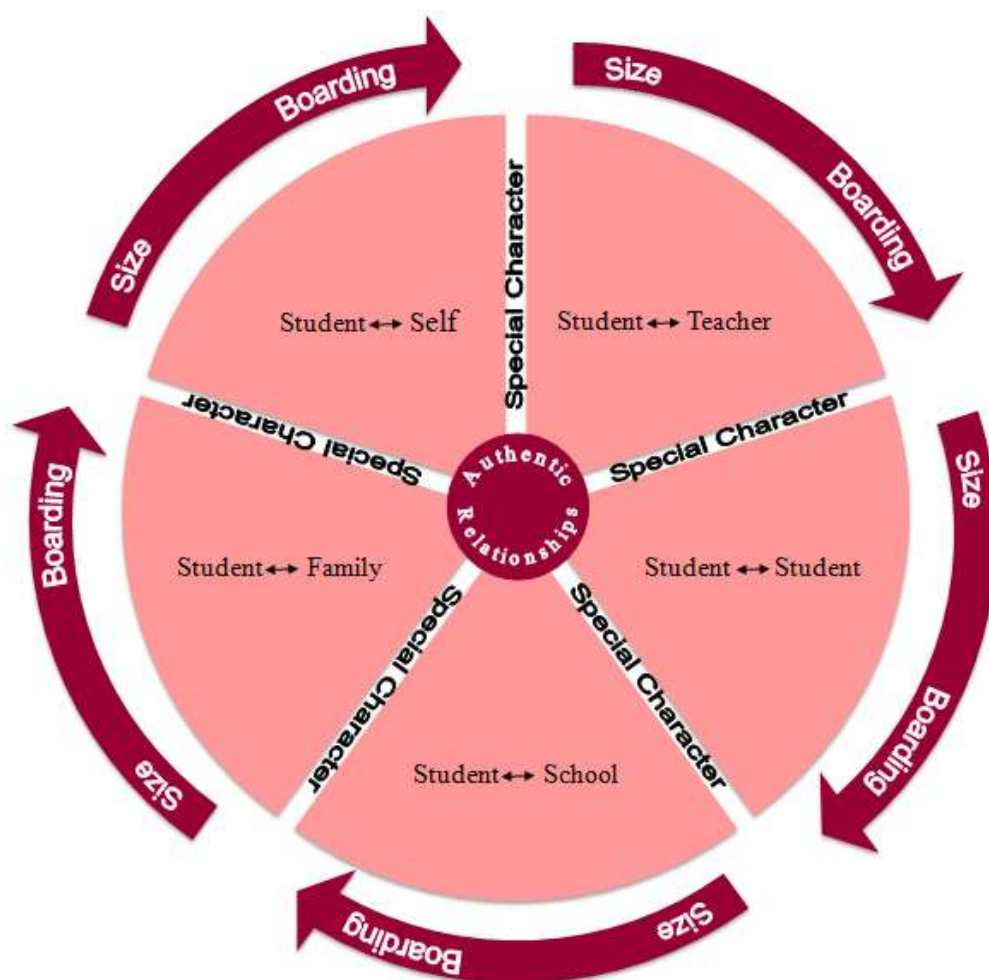
This statement identifies both the theoretical codes – different relationships within the school – and the central theme – relationships. The different relationships within the school were derived from all of the coding levels and were identified as:

- » Student ⇔ Teacher
- » Student ⇔ Student
- » Student ⇔ School
- » Student ⇔ Family
- » Student ⇔ Self

To illustrate how each of the categories related to the theme a diagram was created (see diagram 3.14 on the next page). Each of the segments represents the different relationships with the school, and although not displayed in diagram 3.14, each code (from the open coding process) was placed under each different relationship as can be seen in appendix N. The arrows around the circular centre represent the driving factors that enable these relationships to occur while the black text in between the

segments of the circular centre represents the glue that holds the school culture and relationships together.

Diagram 3. 14: Theoretical framework of the results



The development of this diagram occurred through numerous discussions with persons with non-vested interest.

Towards a grounded theory

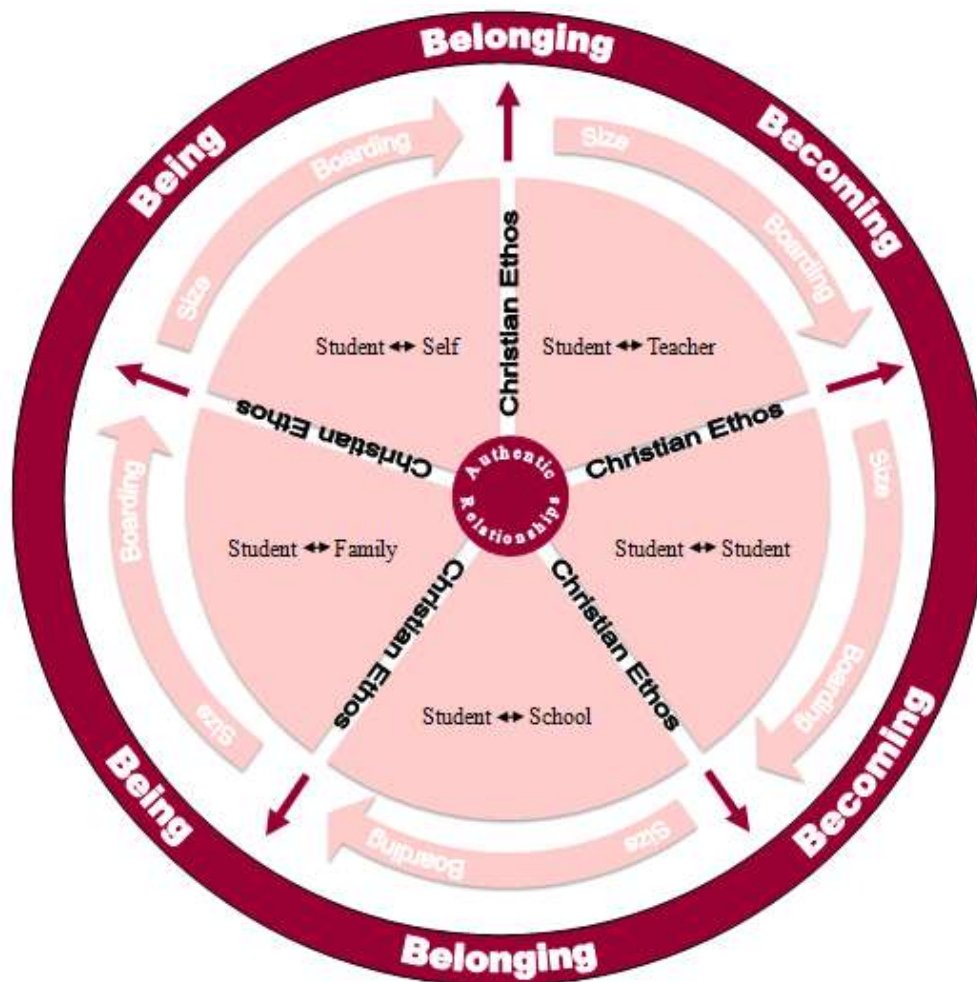
After the selective coding process I believed my codes were fully developed.

However, through the process of emergent design (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2009;

Lodico et al., 2010) a deeper framework was developed. This final aspect of the

analysis process is working towards a grounded theory (Basit, 2010; Burton et al., 2008; Creswell, 2008). This framework was developed to answers the initial research question. After the process of writing chapter four and through numerous discussions trying to convert my tacit knowledge to propositional knowledge (Niedderer, 2007; Sternberg & Horvarth, 1999), a full understanding of how these codes work together to create a framework where Pasifika students can achieve well was developed. The relationships identified and their respective qualities (the open codes) give the students a sense of belonging and allow them to be who they are and become more. Diagram 3.15 shows this framework that is working towards a grounded theory.

Diagram 3. 15: Framework working towards a grounded theory



Evaluation Criteria

During the whole data collection and data analysis process there is one important question to ask. How authentic are my findings and interpretations? Fraenkel et al. (2012) suggest that this process of determining the degree of confidence researchers can place in what they have seen or heard is fundamental to qualitative research.

There are a number of terms used to define this quality (see table 3.16).

Table 3. 16: Terms for evaluating data and findings

Ary et al. (2010)	Creswell (2008)	Fraenkel et al. (2012)
» Validity » Reliability » Credibility » Transferability » Dependability » Trustworthiness » Confirmability	» Validity » Accuracy » Credibility	» Validity » Reliability » Credibility
Lincoln and Guba (1985)	Lodico et al. (2010)	Mertens (2010)
» Authenticity » Trustworthiness	» Credibility » Dependability » Transferability » Catalytic authenticity	» Credibility » Transferability » Dependability » Confirmability » Transformative

Because terms such as validity and reliability are often associated with quantitative research (Ary et al., 2010; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Gay et al., 2009) they will be avoided in this research project. Instead, as Lodico et al. (2010) state evaluation criteria for qualitative research focuses on how well the researcher has provided

evidence that their descriptions and analysis represent the reality of the situation and persons being studied. Therefore, this section will look at three types of evidence that relate to qualitative research as outlined by Ary et al. (2010), Lodico et al. (2010) and Mertens (2010); credibility, transferability and dependability. However, as a researcher one is always on the learning path and through the process of emergent design (Ary et al., 2010) my knowledge and understanding of various concepts within the qualitative research paradigm has increased. This process has led me to discover the many discussions there are regarding evaluation criteria.

Towards new perspectives

Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that terms such as those mentioned previously ‘have their roots and origins in positivist assumptions’ and ‘they are primarily methodological criteria’. Guba and Lincoln (1989) add that terms such as fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity should be used instead. Authors Lodico et al. (2010), Mertens (2010) and Morrow (2005) also suggest that alternative terms should be used as every research situation is different and as such requires different standards of quality.

I would like to suggest that this research project, as Morrow (2005) says, is different from other qualitative research projects and therefore the standards of evaluation for this research project will vary accordingly. This research project although in the qualitative paradigm is fundamentally anchored in Pasifika beliefs. Consequently, when considering the different methods used to ensure *credibility*, *transferability* and *dependability*, I would propose the use of the term *fa’afaletui* instead. Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave and Bush (2005, p. 302) state that the Samoan concept *fa’afaletui* ‘is the critical process of weaving... together all the different expressions

of knowledge from with various groupings’ and describes the validation of this important knowledge. The concept of weaving, whether it is of knowledge or hard materials, signifies a strong relationship between all elements in the weaving. If a strong relationship exists between all elements in the weaving – which in this case is between the participants, me as the researcher, the community and the methods used – this will encompass the previously mentioned evaluation criteria as well as the latest terms such as fairness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), community (Mertens, 2010) and catalytic authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lodico et al., 2010). However, although this new terminology, *fa’afaletui*, is used as an umbrella over the truthfulness of this research project, the methods used to ensure credibility, transferability and dependability are still relevant to this area. As such the methods will be explored under the traditional terminology.

Credibility ⇔ Fa’afaletui

Unlike *fa’afaletui*, the term credibility is a popular choice between researchers. Ary et al. (2010), Fraenkel et al. (2012), Lichtman, (2010), Lodico et al. (2010) and Mertens (2010) all use the term credibility when evaluating research. In fact, Ary et al. (2010) and Lodico et al. (2010) suggest it is the most frequently used term by qualitative researchers. Credibility refers to whether the participants’ perceptions of the situation match up with the researcher’s portrayal of them in the research project (Lodico et al., 2010). There are several methods which a researcher can implement to provide evidence of credibility. According to Ary et al. (2010), Lodico et al. (2010) and Mertens (2010) these methods include:

- » Prolonged and persistent engagement;
- » Peer debriefing;

- » Member checking;
- » Progressive subjectivity; and
- » Triangulation

In *fa'afaletui* the knowledge of *all* individuals is woven together which could be considered a prolonged and persistent engagement due to the nature and complexity of weaving. In addition, the *fa'afaletui* considers all the different expressions of knowledge from various groups. This includes peer debriefing, member checking and triangulation as knowledge can be obtained from a multitude of persons and methods. In addition, as Tamasese et al. (2005) point out, the *fa'afaletui* model ensures information is threaded and rethreaded among all the participants until all agreed the views were valid and authentically reflected the collective experience of the group. Thus, credibility can be linked to *fa'afaletui*.

In this research project, an attempt was made to include all of the above methods each of which will be explained in the following subsections.

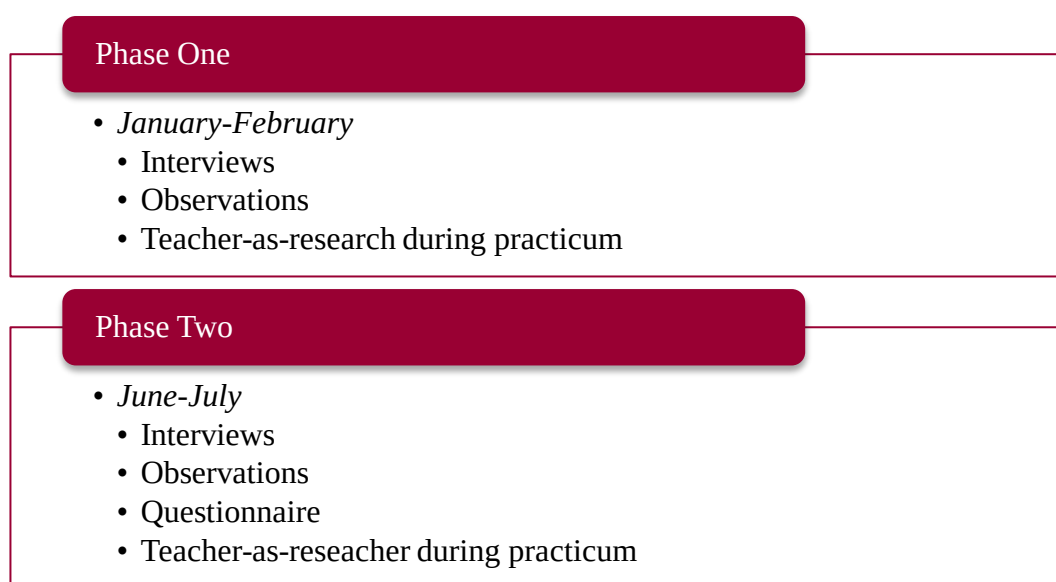
Prolonged and persistent engagement

This method of providing evidence towards *fa'afaletui* or credibility deals with the length of time spent collecting data. Gay et al. (2009), Lodico et al. (2010) and Mertens (2010) claim that prolonged and persistent engagements ensure the researcher has stayed long enough and observed sufficiently diverse situations to see a full and accurate picture. This research project was conducted in two phases over an extended time frame (see diagram 3.16 on the next page).

Phase one took place over a period of two months where I conducted interviews, observations and wrote in my reflective journal. Phase two took place five months

later but also over a period of two months. During this phase I also conducted interviews, observations and wrote in my reflective journal. In addition I also distributed a questionnaire during this phase. This phase also included member checking which will be discussed in a later section.

Diagram 3. 16: Research project schedule



Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing is a useful technique to verify the conclusions drawn in the data analysis process and to ensure that it is transparent. Ary et al. (2010), Gay et al. (2009), Lodico et al. (2010) and Mertens (2010) state that peer debriefing enables the researcher to see whether their interpretations are reasonable. Peer debriefers may also discover new ideas that the researcher did not see (Lodico et al., 2010).

To incorporate peer debriefing in this research project, after the initial phase of the research, I met with a group of group of colleagues and shared my data and my findings. This was an ongoing process where I was given feedback on my interpretations and the transparency of this process. I was also presented with new

views regarding the data that I may not have seen. Notes were taken at the meeting to record what was spoken about and to enable me to reflect on the discussions. See appendix O for an example of the minutes taken at these meetings.

Member checking

Member checking is a similar process to peer debriefing but with one difference. Member checking refers to the process of asking the *participants* whether they agree with the interpretations made from the data (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2008; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Lodico et al., 2010; Mertens, 2010). Creswell (2008) writes that the researcher may ask several questions:

- » Are the descriptions complete and realistic?
- » Are the themes accurate?
- » Are the interpretations are and representative?

The member checking process occurred in several ways for this research project. A final interview was undertaken where the participants in the primary cohort (Tevita, Kali and Regina) were asked to identify whether they agreed with the interpretations, descriptions and themes. In addition, the questionnaire distributed was another way of checking with the majority of the Pasifika population at the school whether *they* agreed with the findings.

In this questionnaire, the students were asked two questions as a means of member checking. The first question asked students to rank a list of factors according to their impact on their educational achievement. These factors were derived from the initial findings and can be seen in image 3.7 on the next page. The results from this question can be seen in appendix P where the graphs show visually the factors

students perceived to have the most and least impact respectively. The results indicate that the students perceived encouragement, teachers and family to have the greatest impact on their academic achievement while the size of the school, positive role models and socio-economic background were identified as the factors with the least impact. The results from this question show inconsistencies from the initial findings. Thus the data analysis process took into consideration these differences and possible reasons for these differences were derived from further responses.

Image 3. 7: First member checking question

14 List the following in the order of how they affect your academic achievement, (from affect the most to affect the least).

A student's background		
Socio-economic background		
Family		
Teachers		
Friends		
Size of the school		
The Christian aspect of [REDACTED]		
Engaging lesson		
Positive role models		
Encouragement		
High expectations		

The second question asked the students to what degree they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements. These statements, similar to the factors in the first question, were derived from the themes developed and can be seen in image 3.8 on the next page. In addition, image 3.8 shows to what degree the majority of the students agreed or disagreed with for each statement. The full results from this question can also be seen in appendix P and again appear to challenge some of my initial findings. Thus the data analysis process took into consideration these differences and possible

reasons for these differences were derived from further responses. These differences were also considering in further analysis.

Image 3. 8: Second member checking question

15 Please indicate how you feel about each of the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strong disagree
I feel like I belong at [redacted]	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
I can be myself at [redacted]	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
I don't have to be embarrassed about my culture at [redacted]	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students treat me well at [redacted]	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Teachers treat me the same as everyone else at [redacted]	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
I like that [redacted] is a small school	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are some teachers that are better than others at [redacted]	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers understand my background and my culture	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
I am friends with a lot of people at [redacted] who aren't Pacific Islanders	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
I feel like I am expected to succeed at [redacted]	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Having people encourage me helps me do better at school	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
The fact that I am Pacific Islander has no effect on how well I achieve	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

Progressive subjectivity

This method is predominantly based around the researcher. Mertens (2010) states that because the researcher is an instrument in qualitative research there is a need to monitor the developing constructs and document the process of change from beginning to end. The primary mode of recording this process was through the

reflective journal kept throughout the research project. In fact, Mertens (2010) states the journaling is popular choice for recording this information.

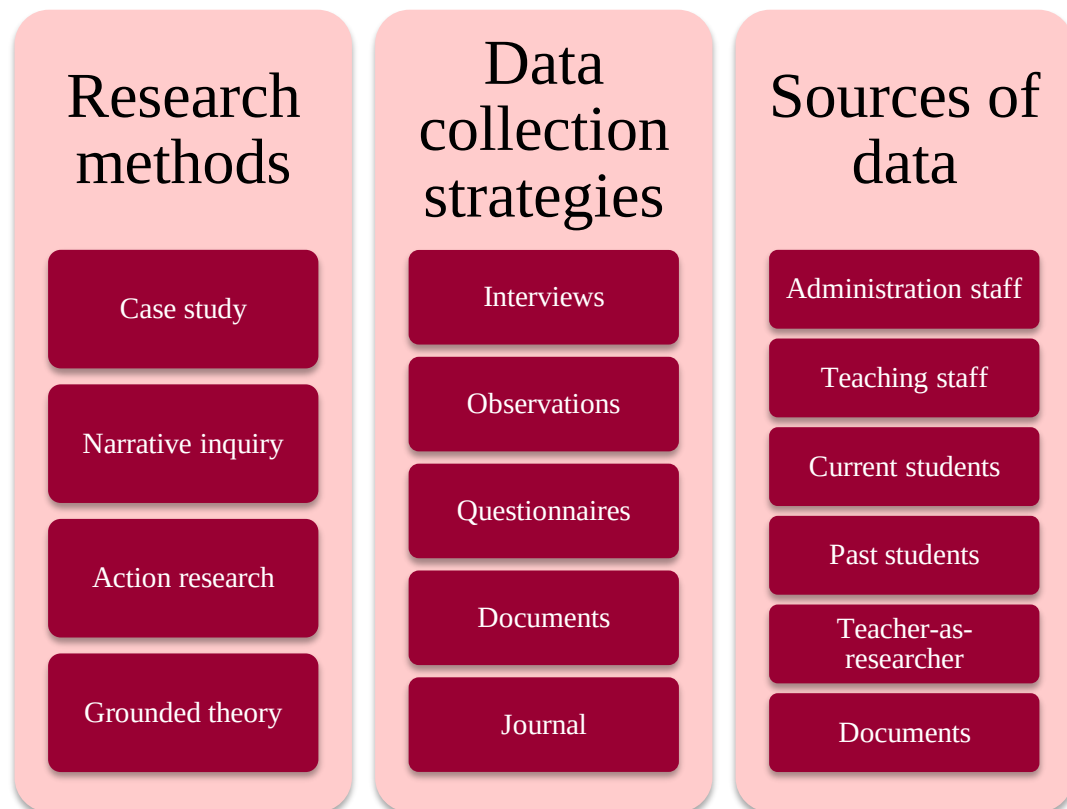
Progressive subjectivity was incorporated into this research project throughout the duration of the research project. This occurred through recording when the direction of the project changed, when I was contemplating what information I had just received from an interview or when I saw another way of interpreting the results (see appendix B for an excerpt).

Triangulation

This method is perhaps one of the most popular methods of providing evidence of credibility or in this instance the *fa'afaletui* model. Triangulation is the process of combining several different research methods, several different data collection strategies and/or several different sources of data (Ary et al., 2010; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2008; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Gay et al., 2009; Mertens, 2010; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). This process enables the researcher to check for consistency across methods, strategies and sources of data (Mertens, 2010). Ary et al. (2010) and Creswell (2008) add that triangulation ensures the theory being developed has been studied, investigated and observed from several different viewpoints. This concept is very closely linked to the *fa'afaletui* concept itself and could be considered a crucial aspect of this model.

This research project used triangulation in all three areas of the research project; triangulation of research methods, triangulation of strategies for collecting data and triangulation of sources of data (see diagram 3.17 on the next page).

Diagram 3. 17: Triangulation in the research project



Transferability ⇔ Fa'afaletui

The second type of traditional evidence is transferability. Ary et al. (2010), Lodico et al. (2010) and Mertens (2010) state that transferability is the degree to which the findings can be related to other contexts. It is important to note however that the reader is the one to judge this quality and therefore the findings must be presented in such a way that they can identify with the situation (Gay et al., 2009; Lodico et al., 2010; Mertens, 2010). Clearly this is a critical aspect of research since there is always a rationale behind every research project which describes how the research is significant. This view is supported by O'Toole and Beckett (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010) who question what the purpose of doing research if this quality is not evident. The manner in which a researcher ensures transferability is based on the written evidence. Ary et al. (2010), Lodico et al. (2010) and Mertens (Mertens, 2010) state

that the researcher must provide sufficiently rich, detailed, thick descriptions of the context to enable the reader to make judgements regarding the similarities to their situation. As mentioned previously, in the *fa'afaletui* the information is 'threaded and rethreaded' (Tamasese et al., 2005) which indicates a thick fabric is created. This can assimilate the thick descriptions developed.

The rich detail and thick descriptions for this research project came both from the extensive background obtained from the site and participants as well as the in-depth questions asked during the interviews. The background for the site and persons can be seen previously in this chapter while the thick descriptions of the theory can be found in chapter four.

Dependability

This type of evaluation criteria deals with the replication of the research project. Ary et al. (2010) and Mertens (2010) are in agreement with Lodico et al. (2010, p. 172) who write that dependability 'refers to whether one can track the procedures and processes used to collect and interpret the data'. To ensure research is dependable, there are a number of methods the researcher can carry out. Lodico et al. (2010) suggest that simply providing a detailed explanation of how the data were collected and analysed contributes to the dependability of a research project while Ary et al. (2010) suggest using an audit trail. An audit trail is a written description of how the study was conducted, a collection of all the data gathered and records of thought processes that enables another individual to follow through and examine the project (Ary et al., 2010; Drew et al., 2008; Gay et al., 2009).

For this research project I used both methods to ensure dependability. As can be seen in this chapter, I have provided an extensively detailed description of the processes I

undertook to collect and analyse the data. I also created an audit trail which includes the descriptions of how this study was undertaken, the data collected and the thought processes. The thought processes are recorded in my reflective journal (see appendix Q) while the data collected is stored in a secure place as to adhere to ethics regulations.

Conclusion

Now that the methodology has been described in extensive detail, the results from the data collection processes – including the interviews, observations, documents, questionnaire and journal – will be shared to support the codes developed in the analysis stage. Chapter four will also begin to create a picture of why the Pasifika students are achieving so well at this school.

Chapter Four

The Mea'alofa – Gift that is handed over

The use of the mea'alofa is used to illustrate this chapter as the mea'alofa is a gift that is handed over and the purpose of this chapter is to hand over the findings.



Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter data were collected through multiple methods; interviews, questionnaires, documents, observations and journals, in order to answer the question:

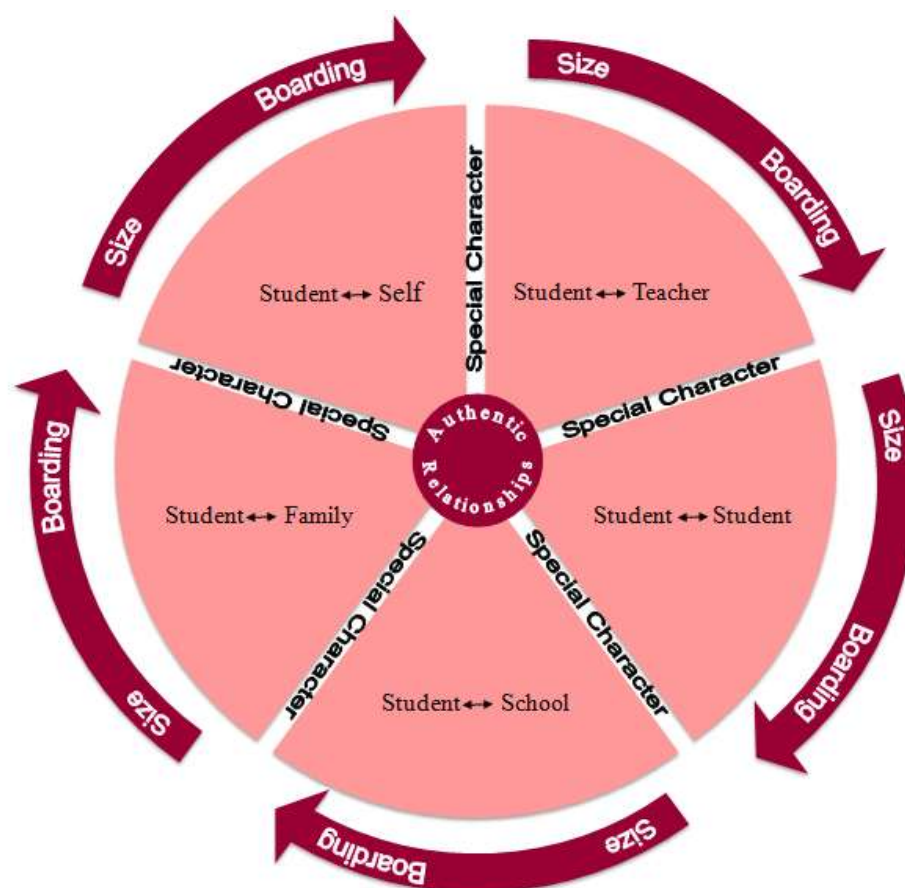
Why are Pacific Island students at one school in New Zealand achieving at a substantially higher level than the national average

The purpose of this chapter is to share the findings from each of these sources, or as one could also say it ‘handing these findings over’. Therefore, as explained on the previous page, this chapter will be assimilated with a *mea’alofa*: a gift that is handed over.

Although the standard model of this chapter suggest that only the data is presented, this chapter will veer away from the typical model (Perry, 1998). Woven into the chapter will be mini analyses that will aim to provide structure and to make sense out of the vast amount of data collected. In addition, the coding diagram, seen on the next page, is atypical to the standard chapter model.

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Diagram 4. 1: Themes derived from the data



However, as the data presented in this chapter supports the themes developed in chapter three and links chapters three and five, it is included to guide the reader through the data and allow the reader to relate it the discussion that will appear in chapter five. Despite this, the structure of this chapter can be seen in diagram 4.2 and will be in three parts: a staff perspective, a student perspective and a teacher-as-researcher perspective. Therefore the structure is not based on the coding diagram.

Diagram 4. 2: Chapter structure



The staff perspective is drawn from the interviews conducted with the Deputy Principal – Mr Lewis, the Director of Boarding – Mrs Latu and the teacher – Mrs King, as well as from relevant documents. The insights shared by the staff members will be presented in different shades of blue (according to the individual). In addition, the headings used in this section are drawn directly from the report and are reasons Mr Lewis suggested aided the success of Pasifika students at this school.

The student perspective is drawn from the interviews conducted with the primary cohort of students as well as from the questionnaires the secondary student participant cohort completed. The data from the students displayed in tables or diagrams will be identified by the colour green and its different shades. The groupings used in this section, again, are not codes that emerged from the data. Each section of the data were grouped to systematically present the results.

Finally the teacher-as-researcher perspective is drawn from observations made during my visit at the school as well as from a journal kept while collecting data. The data displayed in this section will be identified by the colour orange. In addition, the mini analyses woven into the chapter will also be identified by the colour orange as it is linked to the teacher-as-researcher perspective.

A staff perspective

The cohort of staff members, as mentioned previously, includes the Deputy Principal – Mr Lewis, the Director of Boarding – Mrs Latu, and one other staff member – the teacher, Mrs King. Even within this cohort there are multiple perspectives of the reasons as to why this school has Pacific Island students achieving well above the national average. The results from each individual will be presented separately, beginning with Mr Lewis, followed by Mrs Latu and finally the teacher – Mrs King.

Perspective according to the Deputy Principal – Mr Lewis

The views of the Mr Lewis were based on a report that was written by him prior to my research at this school. As such, the interview mainly expanded upon the reasons brought forth in the report however a number of further reasons were discussed. This report was written in 2010 as a response to the Education Review Office Report and in it Mr Lewis presents nine reasons as to why he believes Pasifika and Maori students at this school are outperforming the New Zealand averages;

1. The school is a smaller school with a family atmosphere
2. Staff and students have a common faith
3. Students are expected to embrace other cultures
4. There is no visible discrimination so expectations are the same
5. [This school] has a strong international student presence
6. Maori and Polynesian teachers are role models to all our students
7. The teaching of New Zealand History
8. Te Whare Topa Wha [Maori philosophy of health and well being]
9. The teaching of Bible is important to Maori and Polynesian families.

Now as this thesis is solely focusing on Pacific Island students, points seven and eight will be excluded from the results as they only relate to the Maori part of this report. In addition points six and nine relate both to Pacific Island students and Maori students and therefore only the Pacific Island aspects will be presented.

Following will be a more in depth explanation of each of the above points that relate to the reasons behind the Pasifika students' success according to Mr Lewis as well as further reasons not identified in the report but discussed in the interview.

Small school size and family atmosphere

The first point that Mr Lewis suggests as a reason for the significant achievement of Pasifika students at this school is the small size of the school. Although the full extent of the size of the school is not shared in the report, Mr Lewis – in the interview – shared a little bit about the small size and the effects of this. First of all the issue of size has several implications.

Mr Lewis: We are a small school, we have a select group of Polynesian kids, um...and from that normally the Polynesian kids are Christian, and so we have some really, we obviously have some major advantages...then too, it's just the relative small numbers that we're dealing with um, we're not dealing in thousands here, we're dealing in tens so...*[pauses and laughs]*, you can get three people from Tahiti and all of a sudden your numbers could be skewed quite heavily because they're only interested in smoking, drugs or having sex or whatever it is...so when you're looking at the performance of Polynesian kids uh, I think you have to be very mindful of, and you've got to be, you do a lot of qualitative research in, in the sense of actually talking to kids about benefit has been added to them.

Clearly Mr Lewis is aware of fragility of the situation but he can still see the positives of having such a small school. He outlines that one of the positives of the small size is the *visibility* of students. Mr Lewis says that 'there is nowhere to hide, so it's easier to laugh'. He adds that from a cultural point of view it is important as Polynesian kids are often taught to be seen but not heard and so when they arrive at this school they have little choice but to be seen and included. Mr Lewis also makes a comparison to larger schools where he suggests they would simply get lost in the system because 'well Johnny doesn't say anything or do anything wrong so we'll just leave Johnny alone'.

Another perceived positive that transpires from the small school size is the apparent atmosphere it creates. In the interview the small size of the school is associated with a *whānau* or extended family and Mr Lewis suggests such an environment would suit all students better. The family atmosphere was not only mentioned in the report but also brought up numerous times in the interview. While the report suggests the family feel of the school is linked to the relationships between families and the school outside of school (in church among other places), the responses in the interview regarding the family atmosphere cover several aspects. As can be seen in table 4.1 (below) Mr Lewis suggests the notion of a family atmosphere is highly developed in the boarding department but also extends to day school. The family atmosphere of the school conveys several other notions: a sense of belonging and security. As Mr Lewis expresses it:

Mr Lewis: Hey, you know it's like any family, if you're a part of a family you'll fight for them, you believe in them, because that, that's just natural isn't it? You know that's why I find that a lot of students when they leave [this school]... you can't get rid of them, they keep coming back and um, it's a sense of belonging, it's a safe place, it's a place where, where... you exist.

Table 4. 1: Interview responses by Mr Lewis regarding family atmosphere

We also have boarding, a lot of the Polynesian kids are in boarding, so again we have another environment where kids are, uh, part of that extended family idea or model
And so the whole idea of an extended family and being one and...thinking outside, the whole spiritual aspect and so forth, that's not just good for Polynesian kids and Maori kids that's good for all kids
I would imagine that in a small school which is essentially a, an extended family, that would suit all students better

I think as I said before a lot of our Polynesian kids go through boarding, and that is an extended family within, in itself, um... I would argue that, that uh, that sense of belonging is incredibly important from a lot of Polynesians point of view, that sense of belonging to something bigger, now you could easily argue that Pakeha students don't need that as much, my comment to that would be that an example where a Pakeha student has a stable family background, yea, I can kind of come along with that, but more and more of our students come from broken homes, now... they now have exactly the same desires. They want to be a part of something bigger, they want to be a part of this extended family of, of, of that whole

Common faith

The second reason in the report suggests:

The vast majority of students and staff have a Christian faith and this unites them, along with the staff, in a common purpose. Maori and Polynesian students are not seen as 'different' but as God's children. For Maori and Pasifika students Christianity is often an integral part of their 'culture', therefore Maori and Pasifika students feel comfortable and 'at home' in the Christian environment particularly in the boarding establishment.

Although this reason was labelled 'Common faith' Mr Lewis expressed a number of other ideas along with it. In the interview, when discussing this reason, Mr Lewis explored the idea of equality and unity. When answering the question 'How important is it that staff and students have that common faith' Mr Lewis answered with 'If I say to any student God created you, Jesus died on the cross for you, just like he did for me, that's a, that's an incredible leveller, that's me saying to that child whether they are Maori, Polynesian or European, well hold on... Jesus' got a reason for you so it's incredibly unifying.'

Embracing other cultures

The expectation that students will embrace other cultures was written in the report as a reason for the Pasifika achievement at this school. Mr Lewis, in the report, writes that European students are expected to do the *haka* (a Maori war dance) and sing the

National Anthem in *Te Reo* (Maori language), or learn Japanese and participate in Pasifika Fusion. The driving force behind this is based on the previous reason – the common faith. Mr Lewis conveyed this concept in the interview.

C: The Christian faith puts God first and culture second. How important do you think that is...I think that was in the report as well?

Mr Lewis: I think it's just incredibly inclusive and it's unifying and it is a message of hope rather than a message of judgment.

Mr Lewis adds that the result of this embracement of culture is student involvement in service projects in numerous Pacific Islands: Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Rarotonga and the Solomon Islands. This section of the report finishes off with linking to the first reason: 'We are all members of God's family. [This school] is an extended family, or whānau, of sorts.'

No visible discrimination

In the report the idea of no visible discrimination and its consequences is only briefly discussed, therefore I sought to find out more about this topic in the interview. There were several areas that Mr Lewis argued showed that visible discrimination was not practiced (see diagram 4.3).

Diagram 4. 3: Evidence of no visible discrimination according to Mr Lewis

Student leaders chosen because of their merit - no question about their cultural or religious background

No special rooms, areas or venues for specific cultural groups

All students included in cultural activities

Mr Lewis stated that if a student is chosen as a school leader no one considers twice that they are given that position because they are a certain ethnicity. He added that the school does not provide special rooms for certain ethnicities. This is an area that is rather controversial, as venues such as *Maraes* (Maori meeting house) are also not present in the school. However, as Mr Lewis argues: ‘As soon as you start having things like *Maraes*, Polynesian rooms, and so forth, there is a real danger that you segregate’. Mr Lewis continues by saying ‘Now while you’re trying to do something positive it is actually forming a them-us scenario’. Evidently, this is one of the schools policies and Mr Lewis does share information that works in favour of this opinion.

Mr Lewis: When we’ve ever had, um, for example welcoming guests or whatever, onto the school well, we’ve said that all of the year nine will perform the Haka and the welcome and so forth, so white kids, Polynesian kids, Maori kids, the Japanese kids, they’re all there, and therefore we are proud about the Maori aspect of New Zealand, as we should be, but we’re not segregating in the sense of you are Maori and you are Pakeha. All of you will join, all of you will sing the national anthem in both.

Strong international student presence

One of the physical aspects of the school, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is the international department at this school. Obviously, this department is in the school for the international students. Mr Lewis argues that these students add to the success of Pasifika students at this school. The report states: ‘Many different countries are represented in [this school]. A number of these students are in boarding and therefore have a strong input into the fabric of [this school].’

In the interview Mr Lewis links this idea to the previous idea (no visible discrimination) in the sense that, again, this school does not have a them-us situation,

a segregation of the school. The argument is that in a bicultural setting, where for example you have Maori and Pakeha, there is automatically a them-us model. As Mr Lewis explains it:

Mr Lewis: But if you've got Pakeha and Maori and then you have Polynesians, then you have, ok, you've got three ethnic groups now, then what happens if the next group is Indonesian, and the next group is Tahitian and the next group is American and then, so on and so on.

The inclusion of numerous cultural groups adds to the mixture of the school and as Mr Lewis says, you no longer have them-and-us, you simply have them and them and them and them and them - it forces everybody to be a bit more tolerant.

Another aspect of the international department is the exchange programme the school has with Japan. Mr Lewis maintains that Maori, Polynesian and Pakeha equally struggle when the Japanese arrive because their culture is so different and as a result everybody has this communality or common view of how they will deal with this group. Instantly all Maori, Pasifika and Pakeha have something in common.

Mr Lewis: [It's] kind of funny because we go well we're actually a lot closer than we thought which is kind of, it's unwritten, but we see it and so rather than them and us... we are all one.

Pasifika role models

The proportion of Polynesian role models at this school is explained in the report. However its effect on students was only explained upon request in the interview. The report states that this school has numerous staff in authority that happen to be Maori, Polynesian or Asian. It is also added that their ethnic background is not considered 'special', and as such they are treated equally. This was an interesting point and therefore it was questioned in the interview:

C: How would you describe the impact of Pasifika role models in leadership positions?

To answer this question, Mr Lewis actually told of a metaphorical situation among Aboriginal students.

Mr Lewis: Yea it's really important, and when I start thinking about Aboriginal issues in Australia, you know one of the [chuckles], one of the huge challenges that they face is finding an Aboriginal teacher who can teach physics, but if they can find an Aboriginal teacher who can teach physics... that will break down far more barriers than anything else because as long as they're a good physics teacher, those white kids, they'll be fine, they'll respect that, and when they get told off, that's ok, that's alright as long as he's the real deal, and then that Aboriginal kid will go wow, I didn't fail because I was Aboriginal, maybe I need to revisit this.

Thus, in short, Mr Lewis believes that Pacific Island students greatly benefit from having Pasifika role models because they see that their race has no effect on their academic outcome.

Teaching of Bible

The final aspect of this report, relevant to Pacific Islanders, is that of teaching the Bible. As Mr Lewis suggests in both the report and in the interview, teaching of the Bible is very important to the Pasifika cultures and as a result, the inclusion of the Bible in the curriculum has a number of implications. Table 4.2 shares a few examples of these.

Table 4. 2: Comments by Mr Lewis regarding the inclusion of Bible

One of the major advantages is that a lot of kids come to us with a relatively good understanding of the Bible so they go into a subject where they're already well down the track so in terms of getting academic results, it's not as hard for them because they've already got a head start.

While this is an Adventist school that upholds Adventists principles, it is also a school that is prepared to discuss the principles of the church and open itself up to discussion and so when you have a white European Baptist who has one point of view arguing with a white European roman catholic who has a different point of view who the argues with a Samoan Adventist who has a different point of view, it's being the different denominational, being the different ethnic background, is not actually the difference, the difference is their point of view. So... yea, that, that's inclusive in its own way, it's accepting of difference.

[In response to whether the teaching of Bible is important to Pasifika families]
Well it is, and for a lot of kids who are Polynesian, they have an incredibly strong faith system.

Additional data from the interview

In addition to gaining a more thorough understanding of the points brought up in the report, Mr Lewis – in the interview – was asked to share any other reasons for the Pasifika success at this school. The first response given was relationships.

Mr Lewis: I think one thing about us as a school...the relationships in the school are much closer than I would imagine other schools, certainly other schools I've been at.

After that response, Mr Lewis continued to tell a story regarding a student at the school that demonstrated simply how close the connections in the school are.

Multiple staff members were aware of a situation before it had been officially reported and this was thanks to staff members simply taking time to talk to students – not searching for anything – simply talking. It appears the influences of such close relationships go beyond simply hearing about stories.

C: How important do you think [student-teacher relationships] are to [Pasifika students'] achievement?

Mr Lewis: I think with any child who is facing challenges that relationship becomes significant, um, exponentially, as the problems get bigger so does the need for a relationship become huge, so if you have a Polynesian kid or if you have a Pakeha kid who comes from a very solid background, and

everything is tickity-boo [working in order] at home their need for a relationship from a teacher is minimal...When you think of someone who, say, you know, parents don't want them or whatever, they essentially need to feel the love, and so that relationship is that.

Mr Lewis continues to add that with the high percentage of students, particularly Pacific Island students, who come from broken homes, the need for acceptance, affirmation and a sense of belonging is vast. As a result, it is suggested by Mr Lewis that the close relationships the students have with the teachers provides acceptance, affirmation and a sense of belonging.

Another reason that Mr Lewis suggested impacted the success of Pasifika students at this school goes hand-in-hand with close relationships and is the boarding department. Mr Lewis suggests that academically, the boarding department plays the role of caregiver, mother, father, uncle, grandfather, grandmother and older brother. In addition Mr Lewis claims that the nature of the boarding department and its staff – which includes a young man from Wales who is of Indian extraction, a young Filipino man who speaks with an American accent and an American lady from the Caribbean – exhibits a strong unity that is evident in many other areas of the school.

Mr Lewis: It's just another example of how diverse we are, and again when those kids see us working together, the ethnic issues tend to dissolve a bit... I'm a firm believer that, you know, you have to have pictures of what it is you want, and probably why we've put down the pictures down the hallway and trying to grow that as much as possible, is if you look at those pictures... I mean it's a really valid point... look at those pictures down there and look at the different kinds of people in the pictures, they themselves, are a really good example that... you know, we are all in this together... There isn't pictures of the Kapa Haka [Maori performing arts group] with only Maori, you won't see that. But you will see Polynesian groups with some Europeans and some Maori in it, and that's really important... that students keep getting shown that example.

Mini Analysis - One

- Although Mr Lewis indicated there were nine different reasons for the academic success of the Pasifika students at this school, when looking at the reasons only a few underlying reasons emerge. The thread that runs through each of the reasons brought up is relationships and community. The small school and family atmosphere? That is community and relationships. The common faith? That is community. Embracing other cultures and no visible discrimination? That is relationships. Strong international presence? That is community. Pasifika role models and teaching Bible? That is relationships. Evidently, Mr Lewis is only viewing these reasons at a surface level and what he does not explicitly see is that there is a network of relationships below the surface that contributes to each and every point brought up by Mr Lewis. In addition, what is interesting is that the research indicates that relationships can have vast effects on Pasifika students within the education system, even more so than many other factors (Allen, Taleni, & Robertson, 2009; Hawk, Cowley, Hill, & Sutherland, 2002; Nakhid, 2003). These relationships in turn enable the students to fully embrace who they are without shame, they can contribute and participate without shame because they have rich relationships which gives them a sense of belonging.

Perspective according to the Director of Boarding – Mrs Finau

The role of this staff member, Mrs Latu, affected the nature of the responses given during the interviews. Therefore the results in this sub-section are primarily focused on the boarding department and the students residing in there.

In the first interview, Mrs Latu identified three points which she believed the boarding department was implementing that aided Pasifika students in their education at this school. The first point was helping students develop an identity, the second point was preparing the students and the last point was facilitating changes to cultural trends.

Identity

The notion of identity was mentioned in numerous ways during the interview. Mrs Latu argues that students develop an identity when they are at this school, particularly in boarding. This identity has several layers, one of which is spiritual. Mrs Latu suggests that although a number of students come to the school not wanting to have anything to do with spirituality, many go through the process of self-discovery because their parents are not there to resolve any issues or tell them what to do or think. A specific programme which the school has in place that particularly looks at identity is called ASPIRE (the 'I' stands for identity). The programme helps students to be able to look at self identity and development, relationship building and planning their career path. The programme was started in the boarding department, but due its success, it was expanded to the day school. The outcomes of this programme are explained by Mrs Latu.

C: Do they respond well to it?

Mrs Latu: Yes they do, in the sense that they're breaking out of their comfort zones and meeting up with other students, we have small groups that happen, we... we're all, um, you know, listening through the different worships and lectures and then we can ask questions later, we can start taking questions ourselves, um, it makes them sit up and think about their own, uh, yea I suppose spiritual experience and walk with God.

Another perceived layer of their identity is the sense of belonging.

Mrs Latu: I think they have to realise that the boarding can be a base for them, somewhere that they can feel part of a group, where they are accepted and they will make it similar to home experience, but... what they are looking for in boarding is basically people who are sympathetic and in tune to their cultural matters.

In addition, Mrs Latu adds that the sense of belonging is often stronger towards the boarding department than the day school.

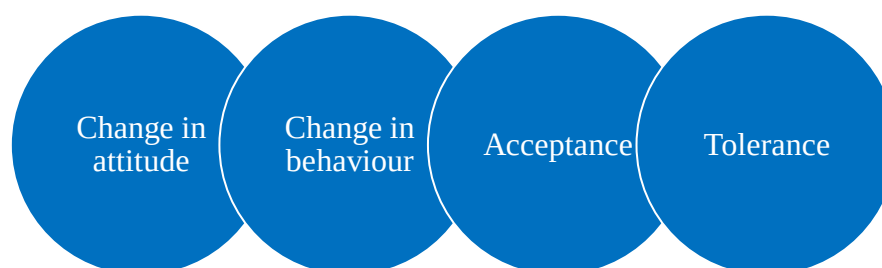
Mrs Latu: It's crossing those two identities during, you know, the school... the boarders feel a strong identity in... stronger for boarding... very strong.

The reason given for this was because they live, work and see each other so often - it creates a real sense of family, which especially the Pasifika students relate to.

A further layer of identity is one's characteristics. Mrs Latu claims that the boarding department is a microcosm of our real society. The apparent benefits it has on the students are numerous (see diagram 4.4 on the next page). Mrs Latu says:

Mrs Latu: When [the students] leave they not only leave with this, um... a change of... of attitude and behaviour, but one of acceptance and of tolerance.

Diagram 4. 4: Benefits of the microcosm



In a sense these four aspects (as seen in diagram 4.3 above) are linked to the next reason given by Mrs Latu – preparation.

Preparation

Mrs Latu, in the first interview, discussed numerous aspects of boarding where they prepare students for life. These are mainly life skills that are needed when students leave school. A selection of these can be seen in table 4.3.

Table 4. 3: Mrs Latu responses regarding preparation of students in boarding

When you've got a group of people who you're responsible for in the sense of a family, it's more than that. Its, um... you know, life skills, preparation and also... in a religious school such as ours... it's not just about our future here, it's also a preparation.

They have to be self motivated but also we have to have, um, we have to provide facilities to make that work so that they see that the study is high priority.

How do you get on with somebody who maybe, you know, you don't like at school and yet you are living with them... in the dorms, so we... we're talking about real basic human relationships and interactions... interpersonal and um, I wouldn't say that it's for everybody but um, it's dealing with situations that we come across in life when we leave school we're not going to have people who tell you when you go to page 44 and you read section two and you'll find the answers there.

The aim of the programme [ASPIRE] is to equip boarders for life...

Change

Change is also linked to identity in that the changes discussed are changes to cultural norms. Mrs Latu argues that the school has promoted changes that benefit Pasifika students in the dormitories.

Mrs Latu: I think we are getting through to our pacific island communities, that girls... the stereotyping of girls staying home and having babies, getting married is changing in the sense that girls are coming through now... they're giving the opportunity to girls to come to boarding. For instance, in the villages back in the islands, the girls wouldn't even get looked at for a scholarship... but now... I've seen a real shift in, um, parents... parenting and focusing on pacific island girls in particular, allowing them to go to boarding.

Another perceived cultural issue is that students would lag behind because they were always at church practice, baby sitting or they couldn't sleep because there were too many people in the house. Mrs Latu suggests that the boarding department can provide opportunities for those things to occur without hindering their academic achievement through particularly having their own study space.

In addition to sharing reasons behind the success of Pasifika students, Mrs Latu was also asked to describe the environment in boarding. What is interesting is the short and simple answer given.

C: How would you describe the boarding environment at school?

Mrs Latu: The boarding environment here, how would I describe it? Uh, congenial. *[Laughs]* Family, family!

Opinion regarding Mr Lewis's reasons for the success of Pasifika students

In the second interview conducted with Mrs Latu, she was asked to share whether she agreed or disagreed with the points brought up in the report written by Mr Lewis. One of the reasons, as mentioned in the previous subsection, was the family

atmosphere. Although Mrs Latu described the boarding as being a family she believed the day school had less of a family environment. She also believed that in some situations the close family feel of the boarders meant they stuck together at school and did not blend with others. However, the apparent impact of this family environment in boarding on the day school was remarkable.

Mrs Latu: The boarders and their friendships within boarding certainly have an impact on day students and they want to join in or else they want to form similar networks like boarding.

In terms of impact on academic achievement, Mrs Latu had a slightly different opinion. She also identified a negative consequence of having such a family environment at school. The reason given for this was again linked to the importance and definition of family in the Pasifika culture.

C: How important is the family environment in the Pasifika culture?

Mrs Latu: How important is the family environment? It is very important because... it is the only environment that Pacific Island students become aware of, uh, from the time they're born. Now, family does not mean Mum and Dad, by the way, family is Grandpa and, uh, Grandmother living with the family and then Uncle and Aunty and their two children, and perhaps a cousin who's come in and needs a place to stay while deciding which university to attend. And uh, and so all this, with, uh, personal space does not occur, there is no such thing as personal space.

C: Do you think this is something that affects students at school?

Mrs Latu: Yes, yes it does. Because... um, while they're at school, everybody is sharing and learning together, all of a sudden we have to be separate because if we share then we're cheating. But if we share, we're actually encouraging and building each other up to be motivated in a positive way.

This concept appears to contradict what Mr Lewis was claiming about the school (this will be explored in the mini analysis later in this section and in chapter five). Despite this, Mrs Latu still believes that the family environment is one of the contributing factors of the academic achievement of Pasifika students at this school. Her reason for this was based on an analogy of sheep: ‘Well I think you can have a family environment where if one person, say, becomes religious the whole family environment will become religious because of that one person, so it seems like sheep’. This concept was linked to the students and Mrs Latu identified that student achievement was reflected and encouraged among their peers and friends.

In terms of the common faith of the school, Mrs Latu believed that although it was evident in the school, the students questioned to what extent the beliefs were being practiced. An example given for this was the standard of dress. Mrs Latu did however state that the common faith was evident in the interactions among staff and students and behaviour of students. Despite this, no indication was made that suggested it had an impact on their academic achievement explicitly.

When asked what impact the embracement of other cultures had on the Pasifika students’ achievement Mrs Latu was in agreement with Mr Lewis.

Mrs Latu: I think it affects them quite a great deal because, uh, Pacific Island students want to be accepted, just like any other student.

The fact that they are accepted was linked to the positive interactions among students which appeared possible due the smaller size of the school. Mrs Latu also adds that when the Japanese students arrive, the whole school works together to embrace the new visitors and learn about their differences.

In comparison to Mr Lewis' view regarding discrimination, although Mrs Latu believed there was in fact some segregation that occurred at this school she argued that there was no racial or gender discrimination. This disparity was based on the boarding status of the students rather than racial background or gender. Again, there was no indication that Mrs Latu believed this had any effect on the academic achievement of the students.

Another reason outlined in Mr Lewis' report identified the international department as a factor in the academic achievement of Pasifika students at this school. Mrs Latu also believed this was the case.

Mrs Latu: They provide tutoring for Pacific Islanders after school with English... maths, yea.

C: So they help them a lot?

Mrs Latu: They help them a lot. They really do, they are very... um, accommodating.

However Mrs Latu believed that the staff in the international department could be doing even more for the students. She suggests they take part in more areas of school life, not just the academic part. In fact, she agrees that if all teachers took part in the holistic school life it would have a positive impact.

The last reason outlined by Mr Lewis was Pasifika role models and leaders. Mrs Latu's response to this indicated that rather than the Pasifika teachers being a role model, they become a buddy. The conversation that took place explains exactly how close these teachers become.

Mrs Latu: They think they have a buddy, an ally.

C: So they see them more as a friend than a teacher?

Mrs Latu: Yes.

C: And why is that?

Mrs Latu: Schools over.

C: What about in school?

Mrs Latu: In school they would see the teacher as, they want to see the teachers as a younger version of their older brother. That's how they work it out?

C: So they relate staff to family?

Mrs Latu: Oh yea, they call... and even with terms of endearment, aunty, uncle.

Mrs Latu adds that the impact of all teachers being viewed in such a way would have tremendous benefits. Having stated that, she still believed that having a larger number of Pasifika teachers would have benefits as well.

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Mini Analysis - Two

- When considering all the different aspects mentioned by Mrs Latu, a slightly different picture emerges. Yes, the boarding department does prepare students for life after school, it does facilitate for change and it does help students form a sense of identity. However, the motion behind all of these aspects is the staff members and students - the individuals. In addition, out of the factors Mr Lewis suggested, the ones Mrs Latu identified as being most relevant were those involving the interaction between staff and students, particularly in the boarding department and with the auxiliary staff. Again, it is evident the interactions appear to play a significant role in the milieu of the school as supported by Allen et al. (2009), Hawk et al. (2002), and Nakhid (2003). Again, these relationships are enabling the students to become more. The family relationships in boarding, in particular, provide a whole different sense of belonging, one of security and a home. If a student feels secure in themselves, they will become more, they will participate and contribute because they feel part of the community as a whole. They want to return what was given to them. This idea of reciprocity which is an integral part of the Pasifika culture (Taufe'ulungaki, 2000, as cited by Anae et al., 2001; Crocombe, 1975) is essential to these relationships.

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Perspective according to the teacher – Mrs King

The data from this participant are mainly related to the school environment and classroom environment, again, due to the role of the individual within the school (classroom teacher). In fact, Mrs King was asked to share her familiarity with the academic achievement of the Pasifika students at this school.

Mrs King: We do hear quite often, you know [the Principal] or [the Assistant Principal] or Mr Lewis will say um... you know we've got so, so many Pasifika students are doing really well and he'll pinpoint a student who's done really well um... and a particular assignment or is doing really well in... achievements.

Following in the interview Mrs King outlined three points that she believed impacted the achievement of Pasifika students at this school – the small number of students in the school, the Christian ethos and the Boarding department.

C: What do you think are some of the reasons why [this school's Pasifika] students are achieving higher than most kids nationally?

Mrs King: Mmm, I think about this, oh you know every time it's brought up in the staff room or in HOD [Head of Department] meetings, I go 'what is the difference'. I... I honestly believe there's several things, one is small numbers... um Christian school. The Christian ethos... and the other one is, is the boarding side of it.

Each of these three points, as listed in diagram 4.5 on the next page, will be unpacked below. However, weaved throughout the interview were other concepts that Mrs King did not explicitly discuss. They will be presented at the end of this subsection.

Diagram 4. 5: Mrs King's reasons for Pasifika success



Small numbers

The implications of the small size of the school are copious. The first point brought up under the banner of 'small numbers' was the concept of knowing the students.

Mrs King: We know our classes, so its small class sizes, we know them individually and so we can, when they're struggling, we can actually get along side them, when they're achieving well we can encourage them.

Later in the interview when asked to expand her response she shared:

Mrs King: I think the small size means, I mean I know kids that I don't teach so I see them in the hall, I introduce myself chat with them, 'oh you're new this year', I mean year seven and eight it's a given but these are senior students or uh, you know, uh, high schools students. If they're new, as a teacher, you say 'oh what's your name, where did you come from?' 'Are you boarding, or 'Are you day student'... because it's small you can just notice a new student whereas I'm sure other places a new student would just blend into the class or you know, in the school.

Mrs King adds that what the students get noticed or known for, goes deeper than the surface level popularity that perhaps would occur at a larger school where a student may be known simply for being 'the funny one'. She says:

Mrs King: We get to see their positive attributes like praise and worship learning or singing up the front... leadership, I mean our head

girl is a Cook Island I think, you know... their qualities can really come out more well rounded.

Another widespread effect of school size is the level of inclusion that occurs at the school. Several times throughout the interview Mrs King makes references to inclusion and unity in the school. As can be seen in table 4.4, this is showcased in the exchange student programme, vision and school events.

Table 4. 4: Mrs King's comments about inclusion and unity

It really benefits [the students] especially when Saniku, the Japanese students come... it opens the doors or your eyes to different worlds, you know if you find out like, I've got a German student, a South African student and a boy from Fiji but he's not Fijian, he was raised in Fiji, in my year 12 class, I mean right away you've got three different cultures represented that you know, you can have a lot to learn from... so yes, I think it really benefits and it benefits the Pasifika students because it makes them realise they're not... um, singled out or, you know everyone's got a different culture and... the way that they do things.

There's unity because we... we've got a common, um, we're here for academia, we're here for studying, for studies and learning, we're here under the whole banner of Christ and that becomes our... where we're united.

House competitions, they're done in such a way that they aren't... no particular group's going to excel. There is a singing competition, there is a writing competition, there's a um, athletic competitions, there's swimming, there's just so many different ones that there's not like just the Maoris will achieve really well in the speeches, or the Pasifika will do really well in this or that... it just evolved because there's so many different learners and styles of learning that different teachers said we have to have different house competitions that really showcase some of these really, um, good qualities instead of just focusing on sporty things.

As can be seen in the second comment in table 4.4, the inclusion Mrs King is discussing there relates to the Christian ethos of the school. They are united under Christ. This leads us to the second factor that Mrs King believed contributed to the academic success of the Pasifika students at this school.

Christian ethos

Mrs King states that the Christian ethos (that is so essential to this school) comes through in not only Bible classes, but roll mark and chapel. However, as she is the Bible teacher evidently, from her perspective, the Bible classes have the biggest influence.

Mrs King: In my classes, let's say I have 30 kids, I might have um... 5 different denominations in the classroom... this is me, but I make a real point early on in the year to let them know that it's really important, that regardless of their... we need to decide on our commonalities so where do we agree, 'Jesus is Lord' 'He died for our sins', the things we have in common, instead of what we have that doesn't connect... there's a real acceptance... you make friends with someone who is 'oh you're Baptist, oh, ok'. All of a sudden you realise that this kid might go to church on a different day but loves the Lord. There's a real common faith and I see that right across the board.

She adds that often the students do not like to be different from everyone else, especially when it comes to religion, so the fact that there is a huge acceptance of different religions and the fact that the focus is more on the commonalities is really important. In fact Mrs King shared a letter that one student had written to her where the student had expressed their gratitude for 'making us all feel part of the same faith'.

Now the repercussions of the Christian ethos are significant. This is due to the fact that the Pasifika culture has strong foundations in Christianity.

Mrs King: Probably 99% of [Pacific Islanders] here were raised in a faith based home, a home where grace was said at table and they went to a church, maybe not weekly but they went to a church that was very much a part of their culture, the fact that they can be in an environment where their faith is encouraged, they can talk about it, I think that is very important... I'm sure it impacts them to be more confident and make a, an impact for other students.

In addition, the teaching of Bible – which is one of the many methods of dissemination of the Christian ethos – is strongly linked to many legends and myths in the Pacific Island culture as well as many other cultures.

Mrs King: There is a legend or, a creation, a virgin birth, a flood, in almost every single culture... the fact that these legends and cultures, they can find a commonality between the flood from genesis and 'oh we actually have a legend about that' um, or you know creation.

Boarding

The last factor that Mrs King believed had an impact of the academic achievement of the Pasifika students at this school was the boarding department. Again, the first word used when describing the boarding department was family.

Mrs King: The other one is the boarding side of it. Um, they have a family, a real family in the boarding.

Later on in the interview Mrs King again depicts the boarding department as family but also expands on it and shares the implications of it.

C: What role do you think the boarding department plays?

Mrs King: I think it's huge, it becomes a family, it unifies students so students who, um, you get your Pasifika students eating alongside your Caucasian, Maori, you know, Japanese students so they come to school and they're already friends with, the barriers are already broken down so the boarding department plays a huge role, they worship together on Saturdays... they come to school and they know people right from year seven to year thirteen already, they've broken down the barriers culturally.

As mentioned at the start of this section, Mrs King explicitly stated three reasons why she thought the Pasifika students were achieving so well. However weaved

through her responses was another idea she spoke about as well – pressure from home creating a desire to succeed.

Pressure

Mrs King mentions several times during the interview the pressure students have on them. She adds that this often creates a desire within the kids to succeed and do their very best.

Mrs King: I have one case on my mind of a Tongan student who was, he's the first in his family to go as far as he has in school. His parents don't speak English and he has such a passion, desire to do well and achieve, um... I have not seen that in my Caucasian students, in my time here. And it might be a case by case, it might be the fact that he is new to New Zealand, his parents don't speak English, he's got that real passion, desire, but I just, I've seen that in some of the Pasifika students.

C: Do you think that might be because Caucasian students might take their education for granted whereas Pacific Islanders might think that this is a real opportunity?

Mrs King: Yes, I think um... the Pacific Island students, there's still a real, um, well and from home as well... 'Come on I didn't get that far' 'I want you to do...' 'I didn't get to, I didn't graduate' or 'uncle didn't graduate' or um, you'll be the first [*emphasised*], and so there's a real... mana [*strength*] around for the Pasifika students to achieve, they don't have to achieve excellence but to achieve and do well in their year.

Mrs King continued to share in the interview the importance of family for this very reason. She stated that the family plays a huge role in encouraging their children to do well and again said that the parents' encouragement is often rooted in the fact that the child will be the first to graduate.

Mini Analysis - Three

- When comparing the three staff members and their different perspectives, one factor stands out among all three of them. Relationships. As mentioned in the first mini analysis, the points brought up by Mr Lewis were mostly based on relationships. The points Mrs Latu believed had an impact were also based on relationships. In her case it was in the form of family, both in school and in boarding. These relationships led to students forming an identity and being prepared for life. Mrs King's perspective was also based on relationships. When discussing the small numbers she continually discussed knowing the students, an element of a relationship. The other two points, the Christian ethos and boarding, are also founded on relationships. The boarding, as mentioned by Mr Lewis and Mrs Latu as well, is essentially a model of a family. When Mrs King discussed the Christian ethos of the school she continually referred to equality in her classroom - making students feel part of the same religion. The process of creating such an environment starts with relationships. In addition she spoke a significant amount about the school size and its positive impact on students which is supported by a number of authors (Bates, 1993; Burke, 1987; Kershaw and Blank, 1993). However, the responses regarding school size also pointed towards relationships. These relationships, between students and teachers, between students and students really convey a sense of equality - we are all equal so we will participate equally, contribute equally and embrace everyone equally.

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A student perspective

The second perspective is the student perspective. As mentioned in chapter three, the cohort of student participants is made up of two select groups – the group that took part in the interviews and the group that completed the questionnaires. As mentioned in chapter three, the three participants of the interview section were Tevita, Kali and Regina: Tevita and Kali are in their last year of high school and Regina is a past student. Tables and diagrams will be colour coded according to each student; **Tevita**, **Kali** and **Regina**. However, as the students in the secondary cohort are all current students their perspectives will be shared together with Tevita's and Kali's. The perspective of the secondary cohort of students will be identified with another shade of **green**.

Perspective according to the current students

The perspective from the current students was acquired through interviews and open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Both Kali and Tevita took part in the focus group and two individual interviews. They also took part in the questionnaire together with the rest of the secondary cohort of students.

Experiences

At the beginning of the focus group, Kali and Tevita had a chance to tell their story about their experiences at this school:

Kali: I love it here... there's a lot more opportunity to be yourself here, like... you can pretty much do anything within the boundaries of the school and yea, and you don't have to worry about your parents telling you 'you know, you can't do this, you can't be who you are'.

Tevita: Yea I like it, better than home I guess... just being around, like people your age. I reckon boarding, it's cool 'cause you have like, I don't know, computers and stuff and you get to study in the library, it's all good.

These experiences were also identified by the secondary cohort. The overwhelmingly number of answers in that listed friends, teachers, family and people as a large part of their experiences indicate that the people have the biggest impression on students at this school. One participant stated 'we are all like a big family' while another stated 'the people – they are really nice and make you feel included'. A number of other students also expressed how inclusive the school was. One year nine student stated that her most enjoyable part of school was 'all the friends I've made, that are from all different walks of life and different cultures'.

One aspect Tevita and Kali did not mention in the focus group but that was popular in the responses of the secondary cohort had to do with the academic side of school:

"I enjoy Bible class because I have never been taught Bible in my whole life and this is one of my highlights of life"

"Photography, fabrics and biology – best classes ever"

"Learning new things that I do not know about"

"The high standard of education"

When Tevita and Kali were asked what their favourite part of the school was both of them answered without hesitation, the boarding department. Kali's reason for this was the boarding department, in comparison to day school, was all about family. She added that she felt more comfortable in boarding. Tevita's reasons were also the family dynamics of the boarding department but he added that the boarding department gave him independence. In the interview they were then asked to share

their favourite part of boarding. Kali and Tevita responded with a few different points as can be seen in table 4.5.

Table 4. 5: Tevita and Kali's responses regarding experiences in boarding

I would say [the fact you are close to your friends], because, um how friends from across the country and possibly the world are with you and they're bringing back so much experience and so much history, so much culture, and that you can learn from them and their personalities. It's good to get to know new people and... and back home I just got sick of seeing the same people over and over and over again, it's silly [laughs]

The fact that you are close to your friends... especially since they live so far away, like, 'cause people board from ages, so if you really, you wanna see them and you weren't boarding you would have to travel for hours, but since you're together and you're just like boys.

In addition to their experiences at this school, the students in the secondary cohort were asked to describe how they were progressing academically. Now although the report written by Mr Lewis claimed that the Pasifika students at this school were achieving really well, there were mixed responses about how they perceived their studies were going. A number of the younger students stated that they did not think they were doing very well whereas most of the senior students said they were doing at least okay. Now since Mr Lewis' report only identified the academic achievements of the students at the NCEA level this could account for the perceived lower levels of achievement in younger year levels. However, what was interesting is that a number of the students expressed the desire to do better, such as one of the year 11 students who said 'I am doing okay but can do better' and one of the Fijian students who said 'I'm doing fine but I aim to do much better'. In addition, one of the year 13 students said that she was striving to get more excellence credits. This concept was discussed by Mrs King who suggested that the students at this school desire to do well.

Impact of the school as a whole

Before discussing specific elements of the school, the secondary cohort were asked to share how the school as a whole had helped them achieve. There was one primary answer to this question: the teachers. A number of comments from students stated that the teachers simply helped them while other students suggested the teachers encouragement aided their achievement (see table 4.6).

Table 4. 6: Student responses regarding impact of school on achievement

Help from teachers	Encouragement from teachers
» Trying to help me achieve my work » By being there step by step » Through the help of teachers and friends	» The encouragement » Giving me a purpose to being here » Most teachers encourage us to do our work » By increasing my faith in God, which then gives me the confidence to do all things

Two other responses indicated that students perceived the equality among students to be a factor in their achievement at this school.

“There are no coloured limits to learning and everyone is able to learn’

“By being a school that...accepts me only on what they’ve seen and not what they’ve heard”

Suggested improvements to aid learning

The students also had the opportunity to share what they would change about the school if they could. Among other things, such as structure of the yearly calendar, Kali said she wanted to change the relationship between the teachers and the students and the relationship between the boarders and the day students.

Kali: I'd love for the teachers to be able to talk more to the student leaders to see what students are more comfortable with, instead of being thrown into the deep end like that.

C: So this is particularly the leaders, the teachers take them under their wing and help?

Kali: Yea... because the leaders are people that students look up to and if they don't know what they are doing then well we don't have anything to look up to, and that's not even their fault 'cause no one's told them or taught them their job...

She then continues to discuss the relationship between boarders and day students.

Kali: As for boarders and day students like if you sit in the cafeteria you see like the boarders clump together and the day students tend to stay away.

C: So there's a bit of segregation between the boarders and the day students?

Kali: Yea, and the teachers see that and sometimes they favour the day students over us, the boarders.

Kali adds that the teachers often have higher expectations of the boarders because they have access to facilities. When asked if the discrimination was due to racial backgrounds Kali was very adamant that it was different circumstances, such as boarding status, rather than a students' nationality.

The responses of the secondary cohort were quite different than Tevita and Kali's responses (see table 4.7 on the next page). Their responses focused a lot more on academic factors.

Table 4. 7: Secondary cohort responses regarding suggestions for improvement

“ I’d have lunchtime tutors ”
“ That the school offered tutors for the boarders ”
“ After school tutoring ”

Similar to tutoring, a number of the students in the secondary cohort also requested more help from the teachers. One year ten student said he would like teachers to help him more while one of the boarding students asked for more help during study time. The fact that these students are requesting changes in the academic side of school could imply their academic experiences are different from Tevita and Kali.

Reasons for the academic success of Pasifika students at this school

The final question in the focus group was based on the research question itself – ‘Why are Pasifika students at this school achieving so well?’ Part of this question was identifying how this school was different from other schools. As this school was the only high school Tevita had attended, he had a limited perspective of how this school would be different. However, Kali, having only been at this school for two years, believed that this school was much more family-oriented:

Compared to lots of schools...[her old school and this school] have got the same number, the difference is it’s much more family oriented here ‘cause of boarding like the boarders naturally have to bind together as a family whereas at [her other school], it’s ‘cause most of the students there are Pacific Islander and um, family is very high... value I think, yea, but it’s not natural it’s just a cultural thing.

She also believed the people made a big difference:

Kali: People. The feel of them like, people are different everywhere you go but, there's always like a collective feel to something, here it's like, coz of boarding, your collective feel of family... togetherness!

In terms of answering the research question, Tevita was not sure but Kali believed there were a few reasons for the academic achievement of Pasifika students at this school:

Kali: For me it would be self motivation, some people are just really motivated to do well and it's a lot easier in a small school to do really well.

She continues to state that her parents have a huge impact on her academic achievement. The thought of how much her parents had put into her education and how hard they were working to pay for her fees made her work harder. The responses from the secondary cohort were quite different from Kali's response and were more like Mr Lewis' suggested reasons. The main ideas that came across in the responses by the secondary cohort were equality, encouragement and expectations. Although, not all the respondents listed all three as possible reasons for the achievement of Pasifika students at this school, one year 9 student identified all three of those as reasons:

"We are allowed to express our culture with the school; the teachers treat us like any normal student; they expect us to reach the high standards and I like how they encourage you to try your best"

The idea of equality was shared by both the younger and the older students in the secondary cohort. One of the youngest students said the reason for the success of Pasifika students was 'probably because at [this school] we treat everyone the same not caring if they are a different race'. On the other hand, one of the oldest students said 'Teachers here do not stereotype their Pacific Island students'. The idea that

encouragement affected the achievement of Pasifika students was again identified across the range of students in the cohort:

“The teachers are really nice and encouraging”

“The teachers are very helpful and are always there to support each student”

The concept of expectations has appeared to have two meaning. Some of the students stated that the teachers’ expectations of them as students helped them succeed. On the other hand, students suggested the expectations their parents had from home helped them succeed, similar to Kali’s response (see table 4.8).

Table 4. 8: Student responses regarding reasons for the excellent achievement

Expectations from teachers	Expectations from home
‘They expect us to reach the high standards’	‘A big percentage of students are boarders and mostly sponsored and you don’t want to let your family down, that’s a big thing for an Islander’ ‘Because Pasifika students that are sent here want to make their parents money worth something...I don’t want to waste all that money by not achieving’

One other reason identified as having a possible effect on achievement was the special character of the school. One of the year nine students said ‘We have a strong belief in God and the teachers pray for us too’. Two of the senior students agreed with this view and said:

“Maybe because we are a special character school”

“It’s all God’s work”

Tevita and Kali, in the second round of interviews, and the secondary cohort in the questionnaires, were asked their opinion on the different factors Mr Lewis believed aided the success of the Pasifika students at this school as well as a number of reasons mentioned in related literature.

Size of the school

In response to the impact of the size of the school there was unanimity among the majority of the responses. For both Tevita and Kali, the size of the school appeared to be important. Both students said that because the school was so small, everyone knew everyone and it would be hard to get lost. Tevita added that the small size enabled students to get to know the teachers really well. In fact, Tevita claimed that he could name every teacher in the school. However, in terms of the impact on the academic achievement, Kali did not appear to be certain whether the size actually had an impact or not.

Kali: I do think it helps for some people, um, other people might like... might like the idea of being isolated in a huge school and that would help them work better because, just such a big school you don't have time to care about what every single person thinks about you. But for me, personally I love being in a small school and it does help me academically because you know, it just gives you kind of this, you know, edge with people who can help you, like you know exactly who to go to, you know exactly what teacher you want.

She also adds that the teachers have time for each student, which she believes does help academic success. Tevita's response indicated he was more convinced about that the size did have an impact:

Tevita: I reckon it's good 'cause like if they don't understand something they can ask but, I reckon if it's smaller, you're not shy to ask the teacher 'cause, you know, better than if it was big and you'd be like so shy.

He added that at bigger schools the students probably would not get as much time with the teachers.

The idea that the size of the school allows everyone to know each other better was supported by many of the students in the secondary cohort. In fact there were numerous students who explicitly said the teachers *know* the students (see diagram 4.6).

Diagram 4. 6: Student responses regarding the impact of the school size

It's small and it's lot easier to get around places especially since you know most of the teachers

People are closer, and everyone knows each other

It's a very small school, I know almost everyone and I don't feel like I'm invisible because everybody knows each other

Because we have smaller numbers the teachers get a better chance of knowing us and helping our different needs

The teachers get the opportunity to get to know you better and this helps them teach you according to how you will learn best

For those students who did not perceive the size of the school having a positive effect on their academic achievement they simply stated it did not matter. There were no responses indicating that it had a negative impact.

Atmosphere of the school

In comparison to Mr Lewis, neither Tevita nor Kali described the atmosphere of the school explicitly as a family. Instead Kali described it in terms of warm and cold depending on how well you knew the majority of people at the school. Tevita responded with a less metaphorical answer and simply said it was friendly:

Tevita: I don't know, I like to be here I guess... just like, oh, if I walk around the school and it's like 'hey, bla bla bla' and they're like 'hey!' ... high-five, yea... you know people so it's friendly I guess.

However, when asked if like the school was a family they both agreed.

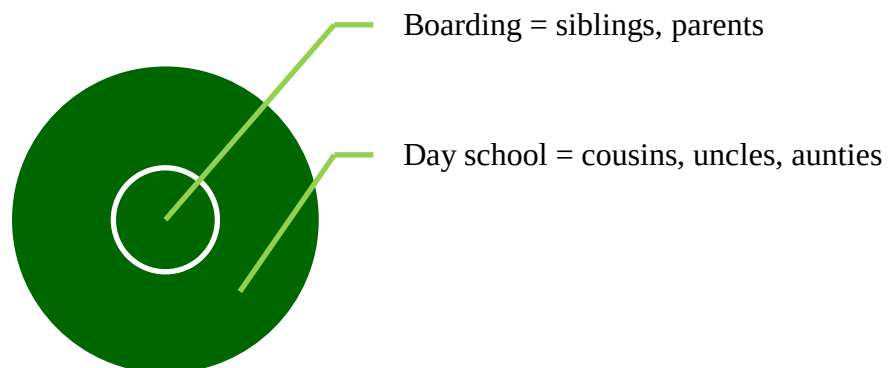
Kali: In normal families, families fight, families, not everybody but families do fight, and we do have disagreements with students and you know its normal, it's human nature, but um, yea no. It is quite a family feel if you know everybody and everybody knows you and everyone's seen you around somewhere.

Tevita mentioned that the boarding department, especially, was like a family.

Tevita: Boarding is a big family, especially like doing everything together, like eating, going to worships and stuff like that... I feel more comfortable around them because I spend more time with them.

When describing the family dynamics in day school Tevita used the analogy of an extended family where boarding consists of your immediate family and day school consists of your cousins, uncles and aunties (see diagram 4.7).

Diagram 4. 7: Extended family analogy of boarding versus day school



Once again the students were asked whether the atmosphere had an impact on the academic achievement of Pasifika students. Tevita once more referred to his extended family analogy (see diagram 4.6 on the previous page).

Tevita: It's kind of like if you're in a family like, you can ask your older brother for help if you didn't know what to do, so you can kind of do that. If I don't know what to do for stats then there's always someone around that know what they are doing so it's like... 'What do you do?' and they can help you like an older brother or sister.

C: Do you think that happens between year groups too?

Tevita: Oh yea, year groups, wherever.

Tevita added that Pacific Islanders in particular are used to being in a large family and therefore having the family feel at the school may help the students because it is similar to home. In comparison, Kali said it depended on the student. She expressed that students who come from a solid family environment, the school atmosphere may have little effect, whereas for those students whose family background is very different the school atmosphere can help them feel good about themselves and be positive about life. She even states that in boarding, all of the boarding students become your family and so you want to do well for them and make them proud because they are your family. Later on in the interview Kali made a comment about the teachers that suggests the teachers are also family:

Kali: The way [some of the teachers] taught was very... it was like they were teaching their own children, very loving and very caring.

Family

At this point in the interview, Kali discussed the full extent of the impact of family rather than the family atmosphere (see the next page):

Wherever you go you represent your family, you want them to be proud of you like no matter what they've done, and um, I think its Samoan culture that's more family-ish kind of people 'cause um, everyone seems so interested in your success no one wants to know about your failure everyone wants to know about your success and so they follow you quite closely and every time, every time I go back home they always have like a big dinner kind of thing for all the family, even people you don't know who are apparently family [laughs] they come along and they're like 'oh congratulations' and you know, and stuff like that. It's very comforting, very warming but, it can also be a big pressure because in small families you're like 'oh ok well only four people will be disappointed in me' but when it's, when it's like all these people like...

[Interruption by phone call]

Yea, uh, just a lot of pressure to do well 'cause um, especially if you're sent to a very expensive boarding school. Everyone kind of depends on you, oh well expects you to live up to that standard. Your parents are paying a lot of money for you to be here you have to do well you can't just fluff around, you gotta do well... So I'd imagine it would be quite embarrassing if you didn't do well and had to go home and face all these people who for the next 25 or 30 years will say 'oh her dad put so much money into her and look what happened'.

Tevita adds that in his culture 'your family provides what you need and as a result you learn to look after your family'. The secondary cohort as a whole had slightly different responses. Those who believed that their family had a positive effect on their academic achievement said that their family:

"Tell me to do good"

"Want me to achieve at the highest level I can"

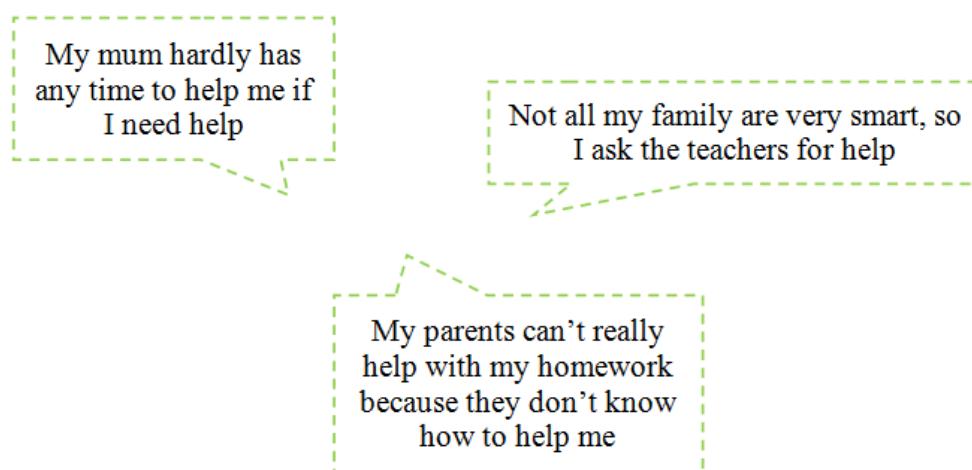
"Are one of my greatest motivations at school"

"Want me to aim for excellence"

In addition, a number of the boarding students in the secondary cohort suggested that because their family lived far away they had become more independent and had to make their own choices and motivate themselves to do well. However, one of the younger boarders stated that the boarding staff took on the role of encouraging while their real family was absent.

On the other hand there was another group of students in the secondary cohort who did not believe their family had any impact. They shared that their parents in particular were simply unable to help (see image 4.1):

Image 4. 1: Student responses regarding the impact of family



Teachers

In addition to reflecting on the impact family had on their academic achievement, the students in the secondary cohort were also asked to share what impact the teachers had on their academic achievement.

The students all appeared to have varied opinions. A group of students thought the teachers did not help at all, another group of students thought the teachers had a significant impact on their academic achievement and the last group believed there were some teachers who helped while other teachers did not (see table 4.9 on the next page).

Table 4. 9: Student responses regarding the impact of teachers

Negative	Both	Positive
» Pretty average, if that » They make me depressed and make me not work so good	» Some teachers are good, some don't explain things properly » Some teachers are alright from frustrating at times » There are some teachers I like and some I dislike, the ones I dislike are the classes I struggle in	» My teachers are very helpful, they are ready to help at any time » They help me and teach me in class » The teachers are very helpful » Teachers are super helpful

The positive responses did not only identify that the teachers were helpful. A number of the students said that the teachers were very understanding and caring. One year nine student said ‘Teachers are very understanding with where I am at with my studies’. Two year thirteen students said that the teachers were ‘really supportive and really try to push their students to achieve beyond just the bare minimum’ and ‘[they] actually care about my achievement’. The interesting responses are those that suggest the teachers have a negative impact. Possible reasons for this will be discussed in chapter five.

Friends

Similar to the response regarding teachers, the students in the secondary cohort responded with different views regarding the impact friends had on their academic achievement. A number of students said that their friends could be a source of distraction:

“Sometimes I get distracted by people who distract me”

“Social life sometimes can get in the way of my learning”

In contrast, there were responses that indicated their friends were helping and encouraging them. Two year nine students said that friends ‘are great here and help me with any problems I face’ and ‘[they] encourage me to do my best and I’d like to thank them for that’. The older students in the secondary cohort also perceived their friends to be helpful, however a number of them shared that they often had to manage their time to make sure their work got done as well.

Common faith

In regards to the claim teachers and students have a common faith; Kali did not see it that way. She said that it was a very individual thing and that both teachers and students often had different outlooks on life. However, she did state that this should not matter.

Kali: To me it really doesn’t matter religious beliefs, ‘cause in any religion God asks us to respect our teachers, respect our elders, so it really doesn’t matter...

Tevita appeared to see the underlying common faith of teachers and says that they are ‘all on the same page’, however he mentioned that some teachers go to church on different days and so they may be conservative while others are contemporary.

However, with the students he seemed to be quite sure that many students did not have a faith at all. In regards to the impact of a common faith, Tevita too, did not think it made a difference academically.

The teaching of Bible

Although Mr Lewis believed the inclusion of Bible in the curriculum had an impact on the academic achievement of Pasifika students at this school, to Kali it appeared to have little impact on the academic side of school.

Kali: Both the presence of religion and the teaching of Bible, they're not the reasons I would succeed, it's God's direct... God's inspiration direct from Him, not because He's, not because we sing about him, not because we're taught about him.

Tevita made no comment regarding the inclusion of Bible in the curriculum.

Embracing other cultures

In the interview, Kali shared the wide range of ethnicities that were in the school:

'Pacific Islander, Asian, Caucasian, we have like, oh Indian comes under Asian, American, they would be Caucasian too, and then we just have sections of people like Filipinos, which are also Asian you know, South Africans, Africans, Kiwis, Maoris, good blend. Good mix'. Despite the vast range, Kali said that students were very accepting of each other although more could be done to embrace all cultures equally.

Kali: Yes, but I think our school's got to the point where it doesn't matter anymore, like you are who you are and people like you for your personality not for your race, people judge you on the content of your character rather than your colour of skin... I think we haven't got enough to fully embrace it and learn about every single culture. Um, we've gotten to the stage where we've embraced the Pacific Island culture and we've allowed the students to participate in Pasifika Fusion, which is where our students can demonstrate our culture through dance and song... But, um, for other cultures we haven't gotten to that stage yet, yea.

Tevita, although he did point out that no students were racist, said that often students would joke with each other about cultures.

Tevita: Me and my friends we joke about it, like, 'oh why are we fat, oh it's 'cause we're black', but it's just jokes, not serious.

He adds that his best friends or his 'boys' are often Pacific Islanders. When asked why this was the case, he stated that they relate better and understand jokes because they are the same. The school however, in Tevita's opinion, seemed to embrace cultures at school with events such as the Pacific Island Festival and dress up days.

Tevita: One day us boys came in togas, for a, just a mufti day [no school uniform required] and everyone's like 'oh yea, I reckon it brings out like the culture of Greece' or something like that... so people are really appreciative, like if they can see it they're like 'wow that's from that culture'.

He finished by adding that the school had a cultural day a few years back where everyone dressed up in their cultural dress.

No visible discrimination

The concept of no visible discrimination in some ways covered in the statement by Kali above. Tevita was in agreement with that point of view and expressed that there was no discrimination between cultures at this school. When asked the reason for this he simply said 'no one cares'. To her previous comment, Kali added that teachers do not have preference over Caucasian students simply because they are Caucasian. Rather teachers may have favourites because a student has shown interest in helping the teacher. She is quite adamant that there is no bias when it comes to race.

Kali: They're not biased at all when it comes to race. I see all the teachers quite love all our students, not for their races, but for their personalities and I don't think a teacher would dislike a student for their race more for their personality, yea. And it is just unfortunate that a person that plays up in class is typically an islander. It's just unfortunate. It doesn't mean the teacher is racist at all, it's just because that is what the student is like.

Student disruption

The last point she brought up was interesting so she was asked to explain. She stated three reasons why she believed Pasifika students were often viewed as being disruptive. Her explanations for these reasons are given in table 4.10 on the next page.

Table 4. 10: Reasons for Pasifika students being disruptive

Reason One	Reason Two	Reason Three
Well... it would be very interesting if you could visit a pacific island home because you will find that the most disruptive child at school is the most respectful child at home, so in that case, you would think that child is looking for a sense of freedom where there are no expectations from the parents and the parents love this child so much they refuse to listen to anything the teachers have to say.	It's kind of more of attention thing, so it takes away the attention the teacher has on the students that work hard and puts it on this child who is so disruptive it's not because they're bad it's just coz maybe they don't get that same kind of help at home and when they come here and they think the teacher won't pay any attention to them [so] they go all sorts of crazy just for the teacher to pay attention because they lack that attention at home, so that's that one.	Um... another reason why a Pacific Islander may be disruptive is just because they just want everyone to like them, think of them as the class clown, because apparently in a Pacific Islander's mind the quickest way to get everyone to like you is to make everyone laugh, and if that's being the village idiot they will do it.

In response to these three reasons, Mrs King identified ways in which the teachers essentially responded to these. As mentioned previously by a number of participants, the boarding department becomes like a family for many students and as such the freedom they receive in boarding, as mentioned by Tevita, could mean students from boarding are not as disruptive in school. In addition, Mrs King suggested students

were encouraged to take part in roles such as leading praise and worship which would make them noticed. The last point – regarding making people laugh so they like you – Kali discussed further.

C: So is humour quite a big part of your culture?

Kali: Yes, humour is the biggest part of my culture... I relate to most of my teachers just because they're funny. They're very funny. They know how to laugh at themselves, they know how to take jokes. And they know how to make jokes at me too.

Therefore it appears the inclusion of humour in the classroom may help with managing Pasifika students.

International department

To Kali, the presence of international students did not seem to have an effect. In fact she was not sure who the staff even were in the international department. However, she did believe that they were effective in identifying students who required extra help with English and subsequently provided assistance for them. On the other hand, Tevita seemed to have a lot more to do with the staff in the international department. He shared how one particular staff member in the international department often supported him.

An aspect of the international department that was not considered by Mr Lewis was the programmes that the international department runs. Each year a group of students from a school in Japan come for six months to learn English. Although Kali thought that students could learn more from them while they were at the school she also believes that having the group visit helps the school unite.

Kali: When they come, it's just like, uh, all of a sudden everyone knows each other... They make everyone feel comfortable because

everyone has to work together to teach them English and to make them feel welcome.

Pasifika role models

Although Kali said she felt like the teachers were role models for her, the idea of the Pasifika teachers being better role models was not supported. In fact she believed, from past experience that the teachers at this school – who were mostly non-Pacific Islanders – were in fact better than many of the teachers – which were mainly Pacific Islanders – she had had at other schools. The reason she gave for this was the teachers at this school ‘actually care about me’. Later in the interview she added that ‘for me anyone can be a role model’ and simply seeing Pacific Islanders being successful did not make her succeed any better.

Kali: Different people are called to do different things, you could come from the lowest of the low, you can go to the most uneducated school, you could go to a school that doesn’t care about you, you can still succeed and I remember my principal from primary school told me that, she said it doesn’t matter where you go, it’s how much work you put into it” like all you teachers, coz I asked her about the teacher thing, and she’s not Pacific Islander, but she’s been around for ages, so I said to her “It doesn’t matter about the teachers or the school I go to?”, she said “No, you can be in a school where no teacher cares about you, but you can still succeed coz of the work you put in”.

Kali did, however, acknowledge the fact that others may relate better to Pasifika teachers.

The comments given by Tevita supported the idea that Pacific Island role models had little impact on him. He said that his role models were musicians or sports persons rather than the teachers. In fact, when trying to think of academic role models he paused for an extended time and still, the only people he could think of were those in movies. When asked if an individual with great success would impact his academic

motivation he said it depended on the person's personality because someone with great success can still be a terrible person.

Motivation

When asked what would motivate the students, Tevita said the biggest motivators would be seeing his progress, his family and having goals. Kali on the other hand believed that her biggest motivator was her family:

The fact [her father] put so much money and the fact he worked so hard, [is] the biggest motivator for me, when I schooled at [my old school] he only had to pay \$1000 and I had a scholarship there in year nine, so money wasn't an issue then. But, even though it's only \$12 000 to come here, it's still an issue coz it's \$12 000 he could have spent on a new car or a new house or another house, like you know, stuff for my sisters or stuff for my mum, you know. There's so many uses for that money, he could have even put it into charity if he found one, but he chose to spend it on my education, I'm not going to let him down by fluffing around, and deciding well oh well it's your money, I'm going to spend it by working hard, being motivated, every time if you're like 'oh this is too hard, I don't want to do homework', I remember Dad is working hard [at home], and I say 'I can match that'

Perspective according past students

Regina, because she is not a current student, only took part in one individual interview. In addition, the questions asked in that interview with were different as she was reflecting on her experiences at this school. Therefore her responses are shared separately.

Experiences

At the beginning of the interview Regina was asked to share her experiences from when she was a student at this school. The one thing that Regina remembers the most about this school seemed to be the teacher student relationships.

C: What do you remember most about [this school]?

Regina: Um... I think teacher-student relationships, like cause classes were so small, like most of the time you always got to know the teachers real well on a like personal level which was weird but it was real good 'cause it helped you so much in your classes just to have fun.

The reason Regina gave for remembering the teacher-student relationships was because it is what makes school – ‘you spend most of your day in classes with teachers’. Her favourite part of her experience at this school was however, as Kali and Tevita said as well, boarding. However, it was not an immediate response.

C: What was the best part of being at [this school]?

Regina: Um... uh... I think the best part of [this school] would have to be... um... [chuckles]... maybe boarding? Moving into boarding... that was pretty cool. Like having students off campus and on campus, I quite enjoy that, I like that.

C: Why is that?

Regina: Um, it just creates a different atmosphere like when you have boarders and when you have, um, off campus students it's like two separate lives. When you put them together you learn just so much about other people and like how people interact and um... you meet people from everywhere and, um, from different places or like off campus students don't, aren't just Seventh-Day Adventist so learning about different cultures, that's real cool too.

Other aspects of the school that Regina enjoyed while she was there included assemblies, being involved in the music productions, being involved in after school sports and lunchtime activities. However, there were also a number of aspects she did not like:

Regina: Where should I start [laughs] um no... I don't know, something I didn't like probably in my earlier years were teachers that would like, it all had to do with teachers for me because there were some teachers that were just so uninspiring or had been teaching for so

long that it was just like, they just didn't, you could tell they didn't like their job and you were just like 'oh, why do I have to be here' or they compare you to other classes 'my year tens back in the day were like this' and it's like 'ugh!'. That's something I didn't like.

Academic success

During the interview Regina was asked how she thought she went with her studies while at this school. She responded by saying she thought she went 'okay', though her last year in high school she admitted 'wasn't so great'. She also added that the teachers pushed her harder although she was not sure if it had anything to do with her skin colour.

Uh, well year 13 wasn't so great but I think that was 'cause of stuff going on with me growing up but my effort through the year was pretty good, I found that... maybe it was 'cause of my skin colour but teachers tend to push you more like they have because of some small classes, like for my science classes, because they were so small teachers had more of an opportunity to pinpoint the issues and be like 'well you're doing bad in this area so let's work on that' well the rest of the students like, seven or eight students in the class did other stuff, which helps you so much like that was perfect...and they always have extra time for you like, um, I don't know about outdoor students, but I know when I was a boarding students teachers would always take time to come in during our study time and be like 'if you need help I don't mind coming in during study time and like helping you guys', and that was always helpful especially for like science. I think the science teacher did that heaps.

This response led on the next set of questions which dealt with what enabled her success at the school.

Enablers for academic achievement

After pausing for a while to contemplate the question Regina said there were 'heaps of things that I can think of'. However there were three specific things she mentioned after that (see diagram 4.8 on the next page). She began by sharing a story about one particular teacher that 'downplayed the fact [she] was an Islander'. In response to

that Regina shared that that teacher's way of treating her made her want to prove him wrong and made her try harder.

Diagram 4. 8: Reasons for academic success at this school according to Regina



The second reason Regina shared was the small classes, similar to the responses given by the staff members and the other two students. The third reason she gave was that the classes were not streamed.

Regina: Because they don't really put us in, like I know they do it for maths but especially for science they don't put you into like different levels like different streams where I know they do that at other schools. At [this school] it's just one stream so everyone's learning the same thing, going at the same pace and if you are falling behind your teacher takes extra time with you which is real good.

When asked what the biggest enabler was in her achievement at this school it was not one of the three previous reasons (see diagram 4.8 above).

Regina: Um, I don't know, just doing my homework [chuckles]. Yea, it helps, and when you get, when you get good homework, fun homework it makes you want to do it or stuff that applies to you...so like for example if you've got art and they ask you to do like draw something that, um, has lots of meaning to you, you can draw like, I don't know, uh, stuff that relates to your culture and stuff like that. Like I loved art for that reason 'cause I could draw patterns and stuff and that could relate to art in every single way but also to who I am.

On the other hand, Regina was also asked what inhibited her from achieving at this school.

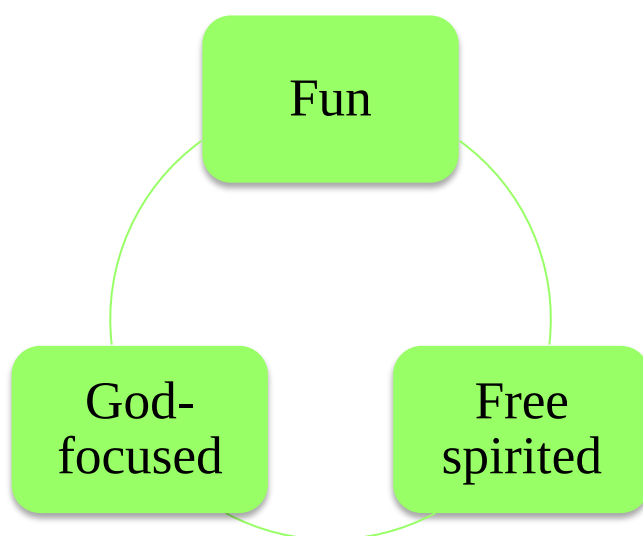
Atmosphere

Again, similar to the questions asked to Tevita and Kali, Regina was asked to describe the atmosphere and how she felt she fitted into the school. It appeared that she felt very comfortable in the school. Her reason for this was the small size of the school which created community.

Regina: You're pretty much friends with everyone in your year level, you pretty much know the name of every kid in your school.

The atmosphere, Regina described as fun, free-spirited and God-focused (see diagram 4.9). The last point, Regina believed 'made the school' because it made every class have a Christian focus and everyone was in the same walk.

Diagram 4. 9: Descriptors of the atmosphere of the school by Regina



The impact of the atmosphere appeared to be positive. Regina stated that having a fun atmosphere meant school was exciting however she reinforced that students, despite this, still knew when to settle down and focus on learning.

Treatment of culture and individuals

Another section of the interview questions dealt with how students treated each other at the school and how different cultures were treated. Regina stated that students treated each other well and pointed out that she never bullied and was never bullied. However, when asked if there was any segregation, the issue of boarder and day student segregation was again brought up.

Regina: As much as I'd like to say outdoor and indoor students mix all the time, it doesn't happen. It's... There's a separation there, um, I know that boarders keep to themselves and other students keep to themselves 'cause they're very different lives. But I found for me individually I mixed with everyone. Like my best friend was an outdoor student so... it was very different, but at the same time I was an outdoor student before I became a boarder so that's where the difference is. But boarders live together, eat together, go to school together... it's a different atmosphere for them than it is for outdoor students who are just at school together.

Drawing on the fact that she was both in boarding and a day student Regina was asked to share the differences between the two. From her response it appeared as though there were not many differences. Her reason for that was because she had friends on 'both sides' and as she describes, 'our year level was very diverse'. The wide range of ethnicities among the students seemed to create a unique community among all students in that year level, even to the extent where she spoke about the class as 'us'. In addition, Regina stated that for her year level, the diversity meant the boarder-day student segregation was non-apparent.

In terms of her culture, Regina stated that she felt her culture was accepted at this school.

I never really felt like I ever was discriminated against... no one really asked about my culture though, because, because I am half-cast so people don't really notice, most people just thought I was Maori so [giggles]...

She also added that there was no discrimination against any cultures when she was there. However, she did mention that jokes were made all the time but reinforced that students knew how to take the jokes. When asked how everyone knew that nothing derogatory was meant by the jokes she responded again that the year group was simply so close that the surface level issues, like skin colour, did not matter; it was everyone's personalities that mattered.

In addition to students accepting cultures, Regina was asked if she had the opportunity to share her culture. Her main experience with that was a presentation she had to do in her junior years at this school:

Regina: In year... oh this is going a bit back... year 10, we did like an identity project, talking about yourself, so you have to talk about your culture and all that kind of stuff.

She also talked about one other event, one that Kali also brought up; The Pacific Island festival or Pasifika Fusion as Regina referred to it as. Regina stated that she would take part in it every year and the school would even organise an assembly where the groups could perform at school (as the festival is off-campus). However it did appear that she did not feel that this festival was displaying *her* particular culture:

Regina: I know we had that chance to share who we were, but that's not exactly your culture... that's just in general, whatever the theme was.

Regina concluded by saying:

Regina: Yes and no, but it's a choice really, at the end of the day for me, if I want to share and I never really felt the need to share so it's just like 'oh'... I could have if I needed to, I just... I don't know, it just never came up in conversation.

In terms of the effect of cultural inclusion on academic achievement, Regina responded by revisiting a previous response. She believed that those teachers who knew her background and culture were more likely to push her harder because they knew where she had come from. She added that, in comparison, those teachers who did not know her culture simply treated her like any other student in the class. However, she shared why she believed there was a difference in the understanding of teachers and it did link back to the school itself:

It's a bit different 'cause at [this school] teachers go to your church so they become family and friends. So going to school and calling them miss is a bit different, like it's just really weird. So in that sense, teachers who know your family and your background push you more only because they know who you are and know where your potential is but for teachers that don't just work with what you show them in class.

Family

As mentioned so many times previously because family is such an integral part of the Pasifika culture, Regina too, was asked how her family impacted her academic achievement. Initially she giggled at the question but then responded with:

Regina: My mum pushes me heaps. She's very academic, she was very academic when she was at school so she's always been encouraging, um always pushed me to do my best.

When asked if there were any other individuals that may have helped her, she initially said that it was only really her mum who she described as 'her rock' and 'her life'. However, shortly after she began talking about a staff member in the international department, the same staff member Tevita had spoken about.

Regina: ...the counsellor at school... he was never my counsellor, but he always pushed me, like he was just a friendly face around college that always asked 'how are you going' and he always pushed

students, like he pushed me. Every time I saw him he'd be like 'how are you going with your school work?' always check up on me, set a new goal for me, just a randomly, but yea, he was, him and my mum were probably the two people who pushed me to get there in the end.

School staff

Regina was also asked how the staff at the school supported her in her learning. It appeared like she was not totally convinced they had an effect. However she said due to her personality she would often speak to all the staff, even the maintenance man and she stated that even he would ask her how she was going. Her conclusion from that was the 'staff works well together...to be real friendly and nice to everyone'.

This was reinforced when she talked about the auxiliary staff.

Regina: I don't really tend to talk to like the library lady or the receptionist about [the academic side of school] so... I think just all the staff being friendly that helps 'cause that makes you enjoy where you are which makes you want to learn which makes, it kind of just sets everything else in place so by them being friendly it does help.

Opportunities

Another aspect of learning that was discussed was opportunities, however once again, her response linked back to a previous concept – expectations.

C: Do you feel you had many opportunities at [this school]?

Regina: Yes and no... I think you're given many opportunities to do stuff you put yourself out to do but things that you kind of don't know about or like... teachers have certain students in mind to do it, that's when it's kind of shut off, like if the teacher only sees you in the classroom and sees you working to a certain level and maybe they don't want to... they're not the type to push, they won't push you to do more which means you don't see more than what you are doing.

She continued by sharing about her brother who attended another school in the same area. In that school her brother was working two years ahead of the rest of his year

level in mathematics and Regina claimed that it was a result of teachers simply pushing him that far. She compared it to the teachers at this school where she believed everyone was paced the same and worked at the same level. She appeared to be quite convinced that had everyone been pushed further students would have reached further as a result. This was an interesting statement as it appears to contradict Mr Lewis' claim that the Pasifika students at this school are achieving at significant levels. Perhaps Regina is implying that *all* students could do even *better* if they were pushed further.

In terms of opportunities provided by the school, Regina mentioned there were a number of sports available as well as a few musical groups. She expanded on one of the musical groups where the school had decided to have a school production.

Regina: We did a musical in... 2009... and yea it was different. It was the first time in like... fourteen years or something that they've done one or thirty? It was something big, and then like um, that was different. No one's really done anything like that before especially at our school, um, one teacher pretty much ran the whole thing, the English teacher, it was all her idea. She ran with it but um... yea it, that was a really good experience because students that never thought they could get anywhere got somewhere, like when I auditioned for it I never thought that I'd end up doing the lead and then I did and I was just like 'oh', and it kind of like, her just believing in me, and like having to work like two hours a day to get ready for this musical plus studying plus getting ready for exams which were right around the corner at the time, that was pretty extreme, but... just having her there being like 'you can do it all'.

Teachers

Some of last few questions in the interview dealt with the teachers at the school.

Regina was asked what her perfect teacher would be and her response included a number of statements (see table 4.11 on the next page).

Table 4. 11: Descriptors of a perfect teacher according to Regina

Can have fun	Controls their class	Passionate about teaching	Passionate about their subject	Always excited
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Regina also added that such a teacher would, despite having ‘off-days’ not show their personal life as she believed from personal experience that it affected classes. After giving these descriptors Regina actually continued by sharing about a teacher who taught her at this school who she viewed as the perfect teacher, her English teacher.

Regina: I’d have to say the perfect teacher from when I was at [this school] was my English teacher. She was so, like in my last two years, she was so passionate about... English, and she loved teaching it and she just pushed it and pushed it and pushed it and if people didn’t listen, she didn’t care, she pushed it until you got the message that it’s fun, it’s exciting so yea... I think that would be my perfect teacher.

In terms of ethnicity, Regina did not think it should affect ones academic achievement, however she continued by sharing a story about another teacher at this school from earlier in her education where it did make a difference.

When I was in year nine and ten when it wasn’t streamed science there was, it did affect us, even the tanned kids, like we had a teacher that didn’t really appreciate darker coloured skin and he was very, he made it well known because he would like, he’d play us down. He’d be like ‘you guys are useless, can’t do anything’ and um, that, yea it does have an effect but I don’t think it should at all because it’s not about your skin colour it’s really about your brains and how competent you are at doing something.

She continues by comparing this teacher to her English teacher who she claimed ‘got it right’.

Regina: She was like ‘I don’t really care about your skin colour, it’s how you think’.

In relation to the previous point, Regina was asked if this teacher-perception of Pacific Island students meant Pacific Island students in particular achieve at lower levels simply because that is what is expected of them. She stated that a number of her friends did believe they were only as capable as the teacher made them out to be, however she also stated that often it would simply be in their head.

Regina: If you think that that’s all you can achieve, and you think that’s what the teacher thinks of you then you’re only going to achieve that, but if you wanna prove your teacher wrong or if you wanna get higher than what every other kid’s getting then they will go for it and they will try and they will get there because they are just like everyone else, um, there’s nothing stopping any student from learning and being at the same level as everyone else.

Reasons for the academic success of Pasifika students at this school

The final question in the interview was based on the research question, why are Pasifika students at this school achieving so well academically? Regina believed there were a number of aspects (see diagram 4.10).

Diagram 4. 10: Regina’s reasons for the academic success of Pasifika students

Less discrimination

Every one is treated the same

Smaller Pacific Island student ratio

The third point Regina expanded upon.

Regina: There was four or five [Pacific Islanders] in my year level out of like fifty of us so there's not that many there which means it's kind of... they can target that group. It's easier to target, um... I know that that number's grown now so I don't know how it's going now but I know when I was there, yea they could target it and it was much easier to... get those students to work and just to treat every student the same compared to larger schools that probably put all the brown kids in one class and everyone else, and one token black kid in the other class that's over achieving [laughs].

Mini Analysis - Four

- Again, when comparing all the students' perspectives, we can see that there are a number of common ideas. Tevita, Kali and Regina all mentioned that the school size had an impact. A large number of students in the secondary cohort also suggested this and as mentioned, the positives of size is supported by literature (Bates, 1993; Burke, 1987; Kershaw and Blank, 1993). The significant impact of family, whether it was the family atmosphere at school or their family at home, was also apparent in the students' responses. What is interesting is that these concepts are common with the staff members responses as well however as mentioned there is very limited research regarding this. What is also interesting is that all of the students, in some capacity, spoke of the impact of teachers and how they treated the students. This links back to the analysis of Mr Lewis' responses - all the ideas correlate to relationships. Once again, the concept of relationships is evident across the participants as well as the literature (Allen, Taleni, & Robertson, 2009; Hawk, Cowley, Hill, & Sutherland, 2002; Nakhid, 2003). These relationships again appear to create a sense of equality among the participants. Students, staff and family are all part of the collective and as such each individual feels part of the group and wants to contribute, participate and embrace each other.

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A teacher-as-researcher perspective

For this section, obviously, the teacher-as-researcher is me. The findings that will be shared are drawn primarily from journal entries and observations.

Throughout the research project, I kept a reflection journal (Lichtman, 2010; Lodico et al., 2010) to write down thoughts I had about any aspect of the research project. In essence, the observations made during the research project took place while I was teaching or while I was on the school grounds. They were most often impromptu and as such the data gathered from the observations also comes in the form of reflections in my reflection journal.

Initial impressions

At the beginning of the data collection process my reflections were mainly based on my initial impressions of not only the site and the participants but the casual conversations I had with a number of the staff members prior to the official interviews. My first impressions were in regards to the high academic achievement of the Pasifika students at this school and the possible reasons for this trend.

8.26pm, 25 January 2012

I believe there are several key factors that contribute to the higher achievement levels of Pasifika students at this school.

Preliminary idea:

- » Pasifika people are very family oriented and the boarding facilities at this school simulate such an environment possibly making students feel more and home.

After my initial reflections, as I was on site at the school regularly, I had a few conversations with a number of staff members from the school. In one conversation

with Mr Lewis he shared a number of ideas which I then recorded in my reflection journal.

- » Involving all ethnicities in all cultural experiences
- » No segregation in the school
- » Small classes
- » No special programmes in place
- » Pasifika teachers in leadership roles beyond Pasifika classes

Evidently these ideas were based on the ideas put forth in the report. However, after discussing these ideas with Mr Lewis I realised these would be worth exploring the in the interviews. I also had a conversation with Mrs Latu and the following comments were made post-conversation:

11.05am, 1 February 2012

I also spoke to Mrs Latu and she thought the boarding environment had a lot to do with [the academic achievement of Pasifika students] as the Pasifika culture is very family oriented and the boarding environment promotes that feeling as well. Something else along those lines would be looking into the family culture of the school.

Reflections post-interview

After a number of the official interviews I would habitually write reflections. During the first interview with Mrs Latu I found that she continually spoke about primarily the students in boarding and as such my reflections reflected that (see next page)

1.16pm, 3 February 2012

The [Director of Boarding] had plenty to say and gave some good insights, mostly on the boarding students. I continuously tried to bring it back to academic success but it was at times hard as I think Mrs Latu knows more about the dorms than day school, although Mrs Latu still knows a lot about the success of the students.

The BD is an older Pasifika lady who has been in the job for over 20 years (couldn't remember how many). This [fact] ties into the concept of 'Pasifika/Maori in leadership positions'. This could have a huge affect on the students as they see Mrs Latu disciplining all students equal and they can see that such a 'position' is attainable for everyone, no matter what ethnicity they come from.

She seemed very passionate about the students and was eager to talk about the students and the environment.

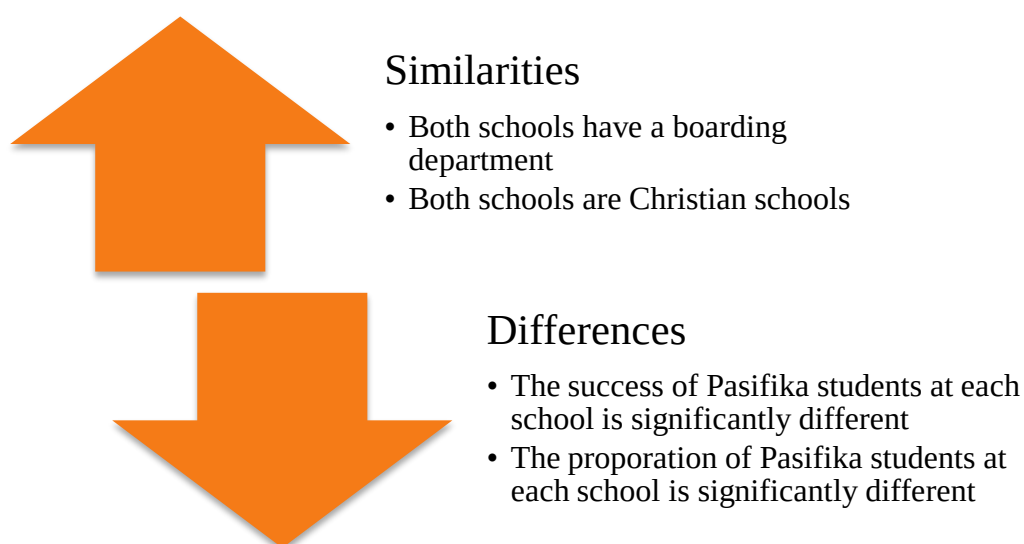
Once the interviews with the students were arranged, they were conducted and I reflected on the interviews afterwards. My initial reaction to the responses given in the interviews was that the students were all in agreement that the school size, the family environment and the spiritual side of the school had an impact on their academic achievement.

Reflections post-phase one

Once the first phase of the data collection was completed (see chapter three for an overview of the data collection process), I reflected on all the data I had obtained as well as possibilities for further data collection. One afternoon, while working through some questions for the next phase of the data collection process, I realised the many similarities that existed between this school in focus and the school I attended previously (the school mentioned in chapter one). However as can be seen in diagram 4.11 on the next page there are a number of differences, mainly the academic achievement of Pacific Islanders at each respective school. This led me to

ponder ‘Maybe it is good to immerse Pacific Island students into the Caucasian culture rather than segregating them from the rest’ (1.00pm 7 March 2012 – reflection journal entry).

Diagram 4. 11: Similarities and difference between my two schools



At a later stage, I again found similarities between a report that I read and the responses given in the interviews.

4.48pm, 27 May 2012

Reading through [this school's] ERO report from 2010 gave me some interesting information. I had not previously read it through thoroughly however when skimming through it just now I noticed sentences that talk about the school community and ethos of the school etc. What is interesting is that the themes that seem apparent in the data are being written about in the ERO report and I was not aware of this before! Interesting...

Reflection during phase two

During the second phase of the data collection I was completing my teaching placement and as such I had the opportunity to be right in the midst of the students in

their learning environment. This gave me valuable insights (see table 4.13 on the next page).

Table 4. 12: Insights from teaching

When disciplining students, the Pacific Islanders are often in trouble for disruptions in class. I believe the reason for this is talking is in their nature, they are very oral people and when they are forced to sit and be quiet they struggle. However, it is not as simple as just letting them talk. I try to incorporate interactive activities into my teaching to facilitate for these learners however I often find that they don't embrace these activities and often simply talk and play up anyway. So in terms of that I am not sure what to do. I am still in the process of discovering this culture and its traditional ways.

Also in terms of disciplining on a couple of occasions the students have expressed that they think I discipline these students simply because they are Pacific Islanders. This is troubling as Mr Lewis enforced the idea that 'No one ever failed because they were Pacific Islander'. I have a feeling that might not be the case among the students though. I feel they think they fail, they get disciplined, they CAN'T succeed simply because they are Pacific Islander. I believe there is a stereotyping going on and the students can't see that it is incorrect simply because (probably) all their family prior to them have never succeeded, so why should they? Having said that, this was a small minority of Pasifika students who I know are not in boarding and are in younger year levels... perhaps the boarding has a more significant effect on academic achievement than was expressed by the students and staff members? It seems these students are having quite significantly different experiences than those in boarding...

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Mini Analysis - Five

- Although the findings from my point of view were nowhere near being as comprehensive as the data collected from the participants, having a outside opinion can show what is *really* going on. This can be illustrated in the case just mentioned previously, regarding the view that 'No one ever failed because they were Pacific Islander'. My observations seemed to contradict Mr Lewis' statement. However, having said that, the group observed was a small minority of Pasifika students who were not in boarding and were in younger year levels. Perhaps the boarding has a more significant effect on academic achievement than was expressed by the students and staff members? It seems these students are having quite significantly different experiences than those in boarding. Interestingly enough, there is virtually no literature investigating boarding and its effects. In regards to the observation about the students being disruptive, perhaps it does not actually have to do cultural understanding? As I was only in the classroom for a short period of time this meant I did not get to know the students that well. Therefore, in light of this, the research indicating that relationships have a significant effect (Allen, Taleni, & Robertson, 2009; Hawk, Cowley, Hill, & Sutherland, 2002; Nakhid, 2003) appear to be supported by my observations. I did not have the opportunity to develop a rich relationship with the students that provided them with a sense of belonging. As such it appears they did not feel obliged to participate or contribute. I was not part of this whole collective group with them and as such there was no reciprocity, no give and take. However, if I had had the opportunity to develop an environment with them where they felt part of my collective, I believe students would contribute because they feel they are a valued member of the group.

Conclusion

Now that the staff perspective, student perspective and teacher-as-researcher perspective have been shared extensively the themes referred to in the diagram in chapter three and at the beginning of this chapter have supporting evidence.

Relationships as discussed in numerous ways and in different contexts, thus the five types of relationships are derived. The size of the school and the boarding department on the other hand, although they were also discussed extensively, they were merely facilitating other aspects of the school, namely the authentic

relationships. The ‘glue’ in the diagram, the Christian ethos of the school was not mentioned explicitly by many of the participants. However, as mentioned by Mr Lewis, it governs the way we act and view others and this was evident in many of the responses regarding their behaviour and attitudes.

Now the next step is to consider how they work together to answer the research question. The next chapter will synthesise the data together with the literature to create a model that will work towards a grounded theory.

Chapter Five

The Tivaevae – Patchwork Quilt

The use of the tivaevae is to illustrate how the results and the literature are patched together to create a quilt that covers the school and its environment



Introduction

Now that we have explored the literature and the results from the data collection process, the aim of this chapter is to synthesise these data into a collective whole that presents the possible optimal conditions that enhance Pasifika education. This process can be associated with the development of the *tivaevae* or patchwork quilt. Gavet (2011) writes that *tivaevae* is a Cook Island concept and is based on the concept of weaving of materials into objects of great value and significance. The objects of great value and significance in this research project are the voices and thinking of the participants and the deep understanding that I, as the ‘teacher-as-researcher’ has gained. What is unique to the term *tivaevae* is that the ‘artefact’ in this concept is the patchwork quilt (Gavet, 2011). As mentioned before, this patchwork quilt will be created with a blend of the literature discussed in chapter two and the results shared in chapter four. Therefore the patchwork quilt can be associated with the theory developed which will follow.

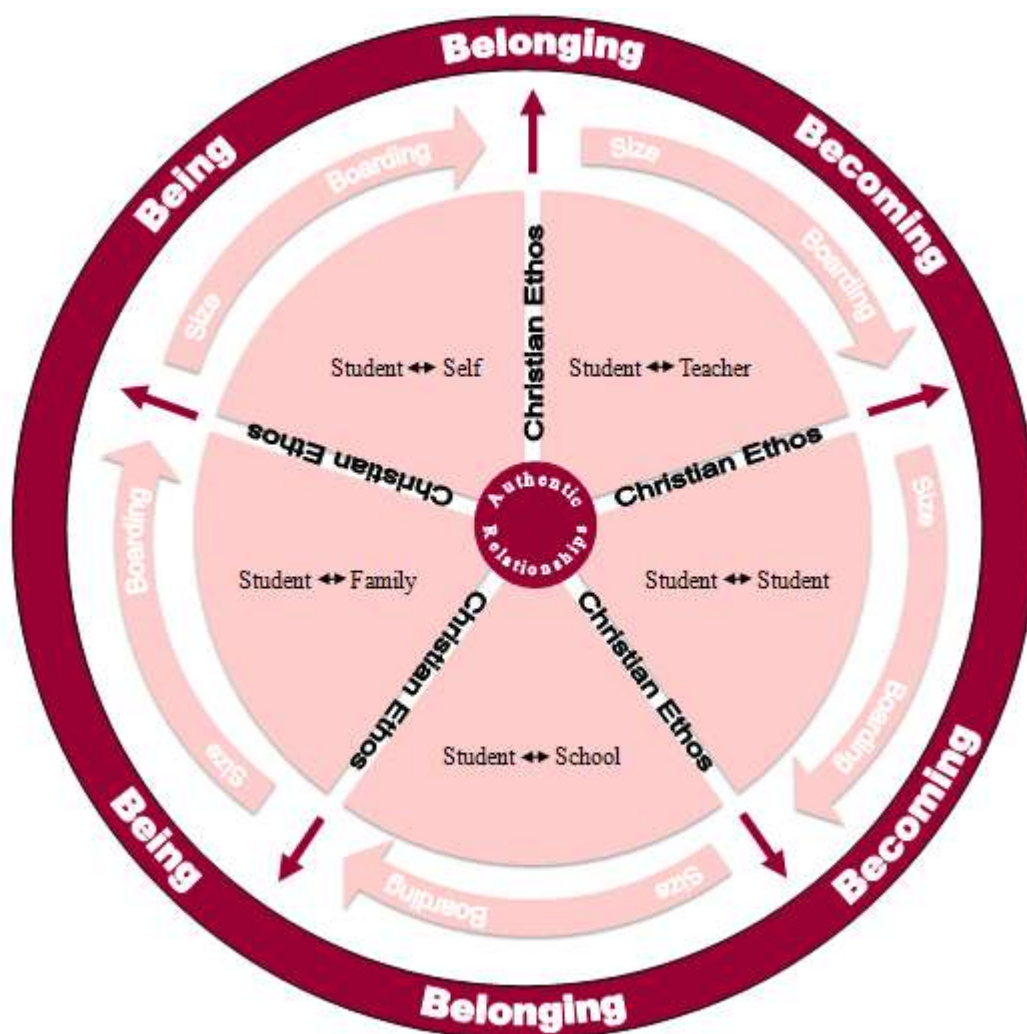
Towards a Theory of Authentic Relationships

In reflecting on this research project, it appears to me that at the core of the process to create an environment where Pasifika students thrive and achieve higher academically is the notion of relationships – authentic relationships. These relationships are also not limited to simply the teacher-student relationship, as suggested by literature (Allen et al., 2009; Hawk et al., 2002; Nakhid, 2003). These authentic relationships are between the students and teachers, between the students and other students, between the students and the school, between the students and family and even within themselves.

These relationships are founded on qualities such as acceptance, knowing, believing, understanding and caring. These qualities are evident in all the relationships. It is a holistic approach that everyone, even the maintenance man, is part of. It seems that when everyone is part of the school as a whole, each individual is able to participate, contribute and embrace each other equally. This is because when the individuals, whether they are students or staff members, feel accepted, cared for, or understood they become part of a collective, one that can be akin to a family. This is in fact supported by Mr Lewis, the Deputy Principal, who states that the school becomes like a family for the students. Then in turn, when all the individuals form a family they are able to contribute, participate and embrace each other as families do, so lovingly. Being able to participate, contribute and embrace equally means each student has the same opportunities to succeed. In addition, being a part of such an environment also allows the students to belong to a unit, be who they are and become something more, more than what teachers and society sometimes limits them to (Alton-Lee, 2003; de Bres, 2008, as cited by Bedford, 2009; Nakhid, 2003). When they become something more, they are extending themselves to their full potential, a potential that means they are capable of achieving just as well as all other students, as demonstrated in this school.

This model for relationships was demonstrated in the school in numerous ways and can be seen in diagram 5.1 on the next page which was developed from the themes that emerged from the data. Most predominantly this model was demonstrated through the relationships shared by the participants. Each of these relationships will be explored in detail to show how each specific relationship works to create an environment that is stimulating and facilitates the academic achievement according to the theory of authentic relationships.

Diagram 5. 1: Themes that shape the patchwork quilt



However, it appears that there are a number of underlying factors that enable such rich relationships to thrive. The size of the school, the boarding department and the Christian ethos all facilitate these rich relationships and can be seen in diagram 5.1 above as the driving forces behind the theory and the thread that holds the relationships comprising this theory of authentic relationships. These will be explored now.

Size of the school

For the above mentioned relationships to flourish and subsequently create an environment where students feel they can belong, be and become more it appears the size of the school needs to be fairly small. Having a smaller size means the relationships are closer and the family that is formed from these relationships is smaller, although undoubtedly still very large. In larger schools it appears students would simply get lost in the numbers, as suggested by Mr Lewis, Tevita and Kali. The more intimate size enables the relationships to be more intimate. The extent of this will be explored under each subsequent relationship.

The idea that the size facilitates these relationships within the school is reinforced by the numerous other responses from the participants as well as literature. Both Mr Lewis and Mrs King identified the small size of the school as the first reason for the academic success of Pasifika students at this school. However the identified implications of the size are what suggests that relationships lie at the core of this school (see table 5.1).

Table 5. 1: Participant responses regarding school size

Mrs King in interview

We know our classes, so its small class sizes, we know them individually and so we can, when they're struggling, we can actually get along side them.

Kali in interview

But for me, personally I love being in a small school and it does help me academically because you know, it just gives you kind of this, you know, edge with people who can help you, like you know exactly who to go to, you know exactly what teacher you want.

Tevita in interview

I reckon it's good 'cause like if they don't understand something they can ask but, I reckon if it's smaller, you're not shy to ask the teacher 'cause, you know, better than if it was big and you'd be like so shy.

Student in the secondary cohort

Because we have smaller numbers teachers get a better chance of knowing us and helping our different needs.

Interestingly enough, the majority of literature only discussed school size on a surface level and did not touch on the issue of deep relationships as a result of small school size. The Education Review Office (2009) questioned the impact of the size of the school and argued that smaller schools with a small Pacific roll, such as this school in focus, have difficulties monitoring students achievement. It was also claimed that the most effective practices were found in schools with large proportions of Pasifika students. Clearly both of these statements are contradictory to the findings from this school. This school has monitored the achievement of their Pasifika students which was outlined in Mr Lewis' report. In addition this school, although small, is displaying positive results which suggests effective practices are in place at this school and could be an element to be considered elsewhere.

Other research regarding any relationship between school size and Pasifika achievement only existed at an early primary level and did not convey the deeper implications of impact of the school size (Phillips et al., 2002). The only research supporting the idea that school size may facilitate close relationships was conducted by Bates (1993) and Kershaw and Blank (1993). However their findings regarding the implication of the school size were limited to caring staff, close relationships with its community and personal environment. Thus this framework suggesting the school size has a significant contributing factor is original. It is important, however, to note that the Education Review Office (n.d.) school reports discussed in chapter two identified effective practices at larger schools as well. Therefore there are

benefits to further exploring this link between school size and relationships across the school.

The boarding department

The other apparent driving force behind these relationships which promotes belonging is the boarding department. This is because essentially the boarding department is family as described by many of the participants (see page 180 in chapter four). Yet again, when the students become part of a family, they want to reciprocate what is shown towards them. If people believe in them and care for them they want to respond and by that they reflect the same qualities modelled by everyone else such as acceptance. Thus when a collective group of individuals all reciprocate acceptance each individual can simply be who they are. In addition, it appears having the support of such an extensive family network, one that is very familiar to the Pasifika culture, enables the students to become more.

The notion of a boarding department being essential to authentic relationships within a school is a new area. Although the boarding department was explicitly mentioned by Mrs King as a contributing factor to the success of Pasifika students, numerous responses indicated that the boarding department fostered rich relationships that developed further in day school and even extended into cohort of day students. Mrs King along with a number of other participants also shared the implications of the boarding department which indicated relationships were at the core of this framework. However Mrs King's response summarises the impact of boarding.

Mrs King: I think [the implications of boarding are] huge, it becomes a family, it unifies students so students who, um, you get your Pasifika students eating alongside your Caucasian, Maori, you know, Japanese students so they come to school and they're already friends with, the barriers are already broken down so

the boarding department plays a huge role, they worship together on Saturdays... they come to school and they know people right from year seven to year thirteen already, they've broken down the barriers culturally.

Now when referring to literature regarding this aspect, again there appears to be limited research regarding the impact of boarding on students, let alone Pasifika students in particular. However, a number of the schools reviewed in the Education Review Office reports (n.d.) were boarding schools. One of these schools identified success in areas such as Pasifika choir, chapel services and involvement in sport and leadership roles. It is important to note that it is not specified whether these practices occurred as a result of the boarding. Thus, to argue that the boarding department is a definite driving force in the relationships of the school is too large a claim to make. Thus once again further research is needed to show whether other boarding schools show the same trends. However, for this school the boarding department plays a significant role.

Christian Ethos

As mentioned previously, although there were two driving forces behind this developing Theory of Authentic Relationships – the size of the school and the boarding department – the aspect which appears to govern these rich relationships is the Christian ethos of the school. When the individuals within a collective group are viewed as members of the family of God, attitudes and perceptions change. As Mr Lewis states:

Mr Lewis: If I say to any student God created you, Jesus died on the cross for you, just like he did for me, that's a, that's an incredible leveller, that's me saying to that child whether they are Maori, Polynesian or European, well hold on... Jesus' got a reason for you so it's incredibly unifying.

This kind of mentality is what gives students the opportunity to participate equally, contribute equally and embrace others which in turn creates an environment where everyone can belong, be and become more.

The notion of the Christian ethos working as an thread holding together the relationships within a school was inferred by Mr Lewis who stated in his report that ‘The vast majority of students and staff have a Christian faith and this unites them, along with the staff, in a common purpose’. This view was also supported by numerous responses from both students and staff members (see table 5.2).

Table 5. 2: Participant responses regarding the Christian ethos #1

Mr Lewis in interview

If I say to any student God created you, Jesus died on the cross for you, just like he did for me, that’s a, that’s an incredible leveller, that’s me saying to that child whether they are Maori, Polynesian or European, well hold on... Jesus’ got a reason for you so it’s incredibly unifying.

Mrs King in interview

In my classes, let’s say I have 30 kids, I might have um... 5 different denominations in the classroom... this is me, but I make a real point early on in the year to let them know that it’s really important, that regardless of their... we need to decide on our commonalities so where do we agree, ‘Jesus is Lord’ ‘He died for our sins’, the things we have in common, instead of what we have that doesn’t connect... there’s a real acceptance... you make friends with someone who is ‘oh you’re Baptist, oh, ok’.

Tevita in interview

[We] are all on the same page

Regina in interview

[The Christian ethos] made the school because everyone was in the same walk

Student in the secondary cohort

The teachers...show and act the true Christian value in this school

This idea that the Christian ethos impacts the relationships was also supported by perceptions claiming the Christian ethos did not make a direct difference on their

academic achievement. The literature regarding religious educational inclusion is perhaps more popular than links between Christian ethos and intra-school relationships. Dickie (2010), Fletcher et al. (2009), and Siope (2011) all suggest including religious aspects in the educational setting can benefit Pasifika students as the Pasifika culture has strong religious foundations. However, the Christian ethos of a school is more than simply including Bible and other religious concepts into the classroom. In fact, although Mr Lewis suggested the inclusion of Bible in teaching benefited Pasifika students because of their strong roots in Christianity, the other participants indicated that there was more depth to the Christian ethos in this school (see table 5.3).

Table 5. 3: Participant responses regarding the Christian ethos #2

Mrs King in interview

Probably 99% of [Pacific Islanders] here were raised in a faith based home, a home where grace was said at table and they went to a church, maybe not weekly but they went to a church that was very much a part of their culture, the fact that they can be in an environment where their faith is encouraged, they can talk about it, I think that is very important... I'm sure it impacts them to be more confident and make a, an impact for other students.

Student in the secondary cohort

With a family of God, [they're] most supportive and understanding and loving and caring

Student in the secondary cohort

We have a strong belief in God and the teachers pray for us too

Student in the secondary cohort

[This school has helped me achieve] by increasing my faith in God, which then gives me the confidence to do all things

This area of the framework – the deeper implications of the Christian ethos – is discussed to a lesser extent. However, as Don (2003, 2008) and Hemming (2011) state this Christian ethos models acceptance, safety, care, support, individuality and

equality – qualities which enable richer and deeper relationships to thrive. In addition, one of the schools reviewed in the Education Review Office reports (n.d.) showed evidence of effective practices in raising the academic achievement of their Pasifika students. These include chapel services and Pasifika choirs; practices which are associated with the Christian ethos of the school.

Now returning to the Christian ethos joining the relationships together to create the framework of authentic relationships, we ask what these relationships are. How do the relationships in this Theory of Authentic Relationships work together to facilitate the achievement of Pasifika students at this school?

Types of authentic relationships

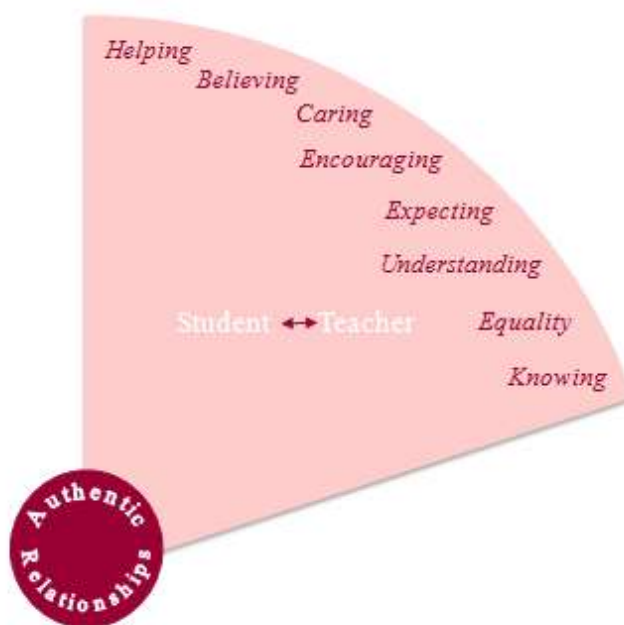
As mentioned previously, there appears to be five authentic relationships that lie at the core of this emerging Theory of Authentic Relationships:

- » Student ⇔ Teacher;
- » Student ⇔ Student;
- » Student ⇔ School;
- » Student ⇔ Family; and
- » Student ⇔ Self

These five types of relationships, as they contribute to the framework in different ways, will be explored individually. In light of the *tivaevae* patch-work quilt, these different relationships can assimilate the different fabrics that create the pattern in the patch-work quilt and create an image unique to this school. Each fabric or relationship is formed through a number of elements; the elements that define the

relationships. These elements can be seen in the diagram below and in the subsequent diagrams at the beginning of each relationship.

The first relationship that will be explored is the most prominent relationship within the school – the relationship between the students and the teachers.



Student ↔ Teacher

Perhaps the most prominent type of relationship within this developing theory is that between the students and the teachers. It appears the teachers who portray qualities such as believing, caring, encouraging, expecting, understanding, treating everyone equal and knowing develop rich relationships with students. Each of these qualities in their own way creates a safe environment where the student can belong, be who they are and become more.

It appears that one of the essential qualities of an authentic student-teacher relationship is helping. This relationship has the most direct influence on academic achievement and this was reflected in the numerous responses stating ‘the teachers

are very helpful’. In addition, the unanimous response that the teachers impacted the students’ achievement the most reinforced the idea that the relationships they formed were at the core. However, again, this relationship appears to go deeper than the surface level of perceiving it as simply ‘effective teaching’. There is a need for teachers to be more than just helpful. Qualities such as believing in them, encouraging them, caring for them, understanding them and expecting high standards from them forms a relationship with students that goes right to the core. Having teachers believe in them, encourage them, care for them, understand them and expect high standards from them appears to give students courage to become more as they have support pressing them onwards. The students also expressed in numerous ways how the teachers portrayed these qualities (see table 5.4).

Table 5. 4: Characteristics of teachers portrayed in the participant responses

Believing	‘Her just believing in me... just having her there being like you can do it all’
Encouraging	‘I like how they encourage you to try your best’
Caring	‘The way [some of the teachers] taught was... like they were teaching their own children, very loving and very caring’
Understanding	‘Teachers are very understanding with where I am at with my studies’
Expecting	‘[The teachers] expect us to reach the high standards’

What is interesting is that Amituanai-Tolosa, et al. (2009) suggest that simply believing in the students and their abilities is a essential attribute of a teacher if they want to enable Pasifika students to be more successful. The other qualities of the teachers are also identified by researchers as beneficial to Pasifika students learning. Alton-Lee (2003) lists caring communities and facilitating high standards as two of

her quality teaching strategies while Siope (2011) suggests being genuinely caring and understanding are the most important quality of a teacher.

The concept that high expectations can impact the students learning is also supported by numerous researchers. In fact Cambourne (1995) suggests high expectations are in fact one of the seven conditions of learning. However, the shortcoming in Cambourne's framework for conditions of learning is the lack of a personal relationship behind the high expectations which appears to drive them to aim for the higher goals. Other research also illustrates a similar concept. One of the effective practices identified in one of the schools reviewed in the Education Review Office (n.d.) reports was communicating high expectations. On the contrary, although still supporting this idea, Alton-Lee (2003) and Nakhid (2003) argue, inappropriately low expectations, labelling and stereotyping of students can have destructive outcomes for Pasifika students. Thus simply having high expectations, such as the teachers appear to have at this school, is a seemingly effortless way of raising achievement of students, and not only of Pasifika students. As Regina believed, all students could have achieved *even better* if they were just pushed harder.

Referring back to Nakhid's (2003) claim that stereotyping can have a negative impact, one other quality of the teachers that was made evident across the responses of participants was the notion of equality. The notion of equality could be considered another driving factor in the Theory of Authentic Relationships. The notion of everyone being equal means students can be who they are no matter what, and they can become more because no one is limited. This concept can also be linked back to the Christian ethos which models such qualities. Numerous students also discussed how the teachers simply treated them like everyone else (see table 5.5, next page).

Table 5. 5: Responses regarding equality displayed by the teachers

Equality	‘The teachers treat us like any normal student’ ‘At [this school] we treat everyone the same not caring if they are a different race’ ‘Teachers here do not stereotype their Pacific Island students’ ‘I see all the teachers quite love all our students, not for their races, but for their personalities’
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The research in this area, however, does not extend further than a handful of comments identifying the stereotyping that occurs and the consequences (Bedford, 2009; Nakhid, 2003; Ms Turner - educational expert, 2012). This is a shame as this idea of teachers treating everyone equal no matter what ethnicity they are appears to be very significant. The fact that the majority of students either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement ‘Teachers treat me the same as everyone else at [this school]’ indicates this is one of the significant qualities of the teachers at this school.

The qualities mentioned foregoing that can form an authentic student-teacher relationship does not fill the entire picture. It appears any attempt to demonstrate the foregoing qualities is void if one does not *know* the individual. Through my experiences as teacher-as-researcher the time limitations did not allow me to fully *know* my students and despite my attempts to create high expectations, encourage and care for them there was still hesitation. However, knowing the students adds a completely new level to the student-teacher relationship. Together with acceptance, care, understanding and equality it enables students to be who they are. They are known and accepted for who they are.

This seemingly fundamental concept of knowing ones students was also evident in Regina’s comment regarding her best memories from the school.

C: What do you remember most about [this school]?

Regina: Um... I think teacher-student relationships, like cause classes were so small, like most of the time you always got to know the teachers real well on a like personal level which was weird but it was real good ‘cause it helped you so much in your classes just to have fun.

This rather personal relationship was reflected by many of the other participants. Mrs King stated that ‘We know our classes... we know them individually and so we can, when they’re struggling, we can actually get along side them, when they’re achieving well we can encourage them’. Mrs King’s statement in fact identifies the outcome of these personal relationships. It helps the students academically. As can be seen in table 5.6, the student participants also agreed with this:

Table 5. 6: Outcomes of teachers knowing the students as identified by students

Regina in interview

Teachers who know your family and your background push you more only because they who you are and know where your potential is but for teachers that don’t just work with what your show them in class.

Student in the secondary cohort

The teachers get the opportunity to get to know you better and this helps them teach you according to how you will learn best

The idea that simply *knowing* students would impact their academic achievement was acknowledged by the Education Review Office (2009). In fact they stated that if teachers want to make a difference in their academic achievement they need to ‘know who [their] Pacifica students are’ (Education Review Office, 2009, p. 32). In

addition, the title of a study by Allen, et al. (2009) advocated the same idea ‘In order to teach you, I must know you’.

This leads to one important aspect of knowing ones Pasifika students. Knowing them personally includes knowing their culture. As the Ministry of Education (2009a, p. 61) point out ‘A key part of improving the educational success of... Pasifika students is acknowledging, valuing and incorporating their culture and identities into the classroom and teaching programmes’. I would like to suggest that to be able to acknowledge value and incorporate students’ cultures, whether they are Pasifika or not, we have to *know* them. Several researchers (Allen et al., 2009; Alton-Lee, 2003; University of Canterbury, 2009) suggest that experiencing the students’ culture will enable them to *know* their students. This idea is actually embraced by this school. As Mr Lewis shared, students and staff are on a regular basis encouraged to be involved in service projects in many of the Pacific Islands.

What is interesting, when comparing to literature, is the significance of knowing a students’ culture seemed to be down-played by the participants in this study. Yes, students identified that their culture was embraced in the school, however the comments extended deeper:

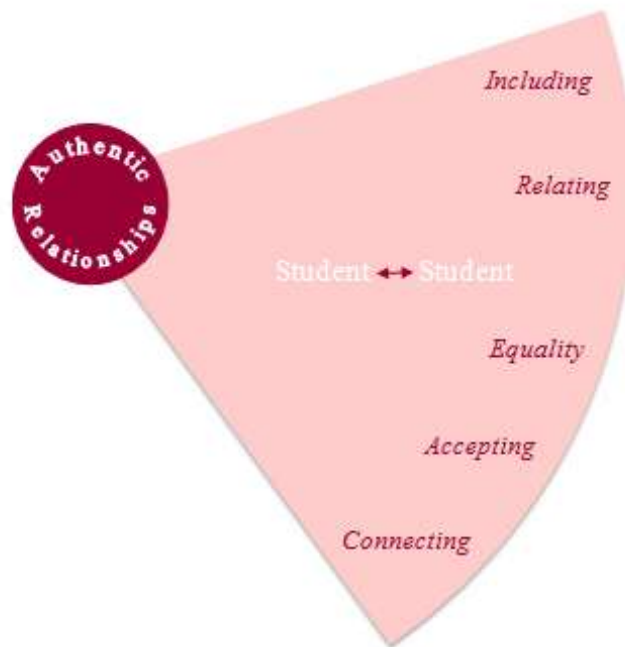
‘We are allowed to express our culture with the school; the teachers treat us like any normal student; they expect us to reach the high standards and I like how they encourage you to try your best’

In addition, Mrs Latu suggested that the classrooms were in fact not particularly culture friendly as the Pasifika culture embraces the concept of sharing however sharing in a classroom would be considered cheating. This indicates that perhaps, merely knowing a students’ culture and incorporating it into the classroom is not the most essential part. I would like to suggest that knowing the *student* is more

important. In other words, the student-teacher relationship which incorporates believing, caring, encouraging, expecting, understanding, treating everyone equal and *knowing* will have greater impact than simply acknowledging, valuing and including the *culture*. This is also supported by numerous researchers who claim this type of authentic teacher-relationship is *critical* to improving educational achievement of Pasifika students (Allen et al., 2009; Averill, 2011; Carpenter et al., 2001; Cowley et al., 2000; Hawk et al., 2002; Hawk & Hill, 1998; Nakhid, 2003). In addition, the qualities described by these researchers include believing, caring, encouraging, expecting, understanding, treating everyone equal and knowing.

Thus, the first type of authentic relationship, the teacher-student relationship has been shown to have significant impact in this school and thus it would appear due to the simplicity of the approach that teachers can develop such relationships in other contexts. The next type of relationship is between the students themselves (next page).

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Student ↔ Student

The authentic relationships between students may be overlooked for their impact on academic achievement. However, the qualities of such a relationship appear to be more important than one may presume. Within a school it appears that a crucial layer of the relationships is between the students themselves. When qualities such as acceptance, understanding and equality are modelled by staff within the school, due to the close relationships between the students and the teachers the students appear to reciprocate such qualities. When the students are accepting of each other it again creates unity and students can feel they belong to a collective group.

As mentioned previously, the Christian ethos of the school works as a thread holding the relationships together. Mrs Latu agreed with this and suggested that the relationships between the students exhibit qualities of the Christian ethos. One of these qualities evident in the student relationships is acceptance. Mrs Latu in several instances stated how the students were accepting of each other. This was especially

noticeable when the Saniku exchange students arrived and all the students would work together to embrace the new visitors. Mrs King extended upon that and stated:

Mrs King: It really benefits [the students] especially when Saniku, the Japanese students come... it opens the doors or your eyes to different worlds, you know if you find out like, I've got a German student, a South African student and a boy from Fiji but he's not Fijian, he was raised in Fiji, in my year 12 class, I mean right away you've got three different cultures represented that you know, you can have a lot to learn from... so yes, I think it really benefits and it benefits the Pasifika students because it makes them realise they're not... um, singled out or, you know everyone's got a different culture and... the way that they do things.

A number of other participants, as well as Mrs King, shared other ways of how acceptance was evident (see table 5.7).

Table 5. 7: Responses regarding acceptance displayed by the students

Mrs King in interview

In my classes, let's say I have 30 kids, I might have um... 5 different denominations in the classroom... there's a real acceptance... you make friends with someone who is 'oh you're Baptist, oh, ok'.

Kali in interview

I think our school's got to the point where it doesn't matter anymore, like you are who you are and people like you for your personality not for your race, people judge you on the content of your character rather than your colour of skin.

Regina in interview

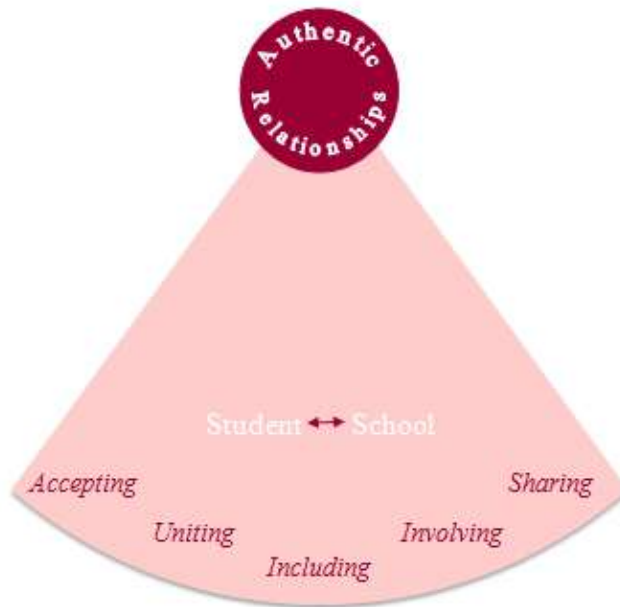
I never really felt like I ever was discriminated against...

The considerable agreement with statements such as 'I can be myself at [this school]', 'Students treat me well at [this school]' and I don't have to be embarrassed about my culture at [this school]' demonstrates even further how accepting the students really are of each other.

What is interesting about this student-student relationship is that literature does not discuss acceptance, relating, equality, inclusion and connecting or even relationships as a whole between *students* in direct comparison to academic achievement. In addition, the effective practices identified in the schools in the Education Review Office (n.d.) reports that dealt with student-student relationships were limited to endeavours to provide training for Pasifika students to take on positions of responsibility such as becoming peer mediators or school councillors. However, as the Education Review Office (2009) suggested, schools need to create an inclusive school environment if they want to make a difference for Pasifika students. Therefore it would appear that more than simply creating an inclusive environment, this environment should be embodied by rich student-student relationships. Relationships where students accept, relate, connect, include and treat everyone equal. Such qualities enable students to belong to a collective and be who they are amidst their peers.

The next relationship in the Theory of Authentic Relationships is that between the students and the school as a whole (next page).

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Student ↔ School

As a school is essentially comprised of the students and staff within a physical environment claiming a relationship between students and the school may seem incongruous. However, it appears the environment of the school enables students feel a sense of belonging to the school and helps them to develop and become more. When a school is united, includes, involves and shares success students are part of collective unity, they belong. Such a sense of belonging can enable the students to reach further in their academic pursuit.

Such a school environment as depicted in the emerging Theory of Authentic Relationships was demonstrated by the school in this study. One student in the secondary cohort identified the acceptance of the school as being crucial in her academic success while Mr Lewis and Mrs King described how the school, despite its diverse nature, demonstrated unity (see table 5.8 on the next page).

Table 5. 8: Responses regarding qualities of the school environment

Student in secondary cohort

By being a school that...accepts me only on what they've seen and not what they've heard

Mr Lewis in interview

When those kids see us working together, the ethnic issues tend to dissolve a bit... I'm a firm believer that, you know, you have to have pictures of what it is you want, and probably why we've put down the pictures down the hallway and trying to grow that as much as possible, is if you look at those pictures... I mean it's a really valid point... look at those pictures down there and look at the different kinds of people in the pictures, they themselves, are a really good example that... you know, we are all in this together... There isn't pictures of the Kapa Haka [Maori performing arts group] with only Maori, you won't see that. But you will see Polynesian groups with some Europeans and some Maori in it, and that's really important... that students keep getting shown that example.

Mrs King in interview

There's unity because we... we've got a common, um, we're here for academia, we're here for studying, for studies and learning, we're here under the whole banner of Christ and that becomes our... where we're united.

The concept of involvement also appeared to be important to the students and was demonstrated through the many opportunities provided such as music productions, musical groups, sports and lunchtime activities. Being involved essentially means the students are participating equally as a part of a collective, which once again gives them something to belong to.

The idea that the student-school is a sharing relationship means that when the students are included, involved and accepted their successes are shared within the group. The sharing again appears to give students a sense of belonging to the collective as they are individually recognised. The sharing student-school relationship was also demonstrated by Mrs King in the case study school.

Mrs King: We do hear quite often, you know [the Principal] or [the Assistant Principal] or Mr Lewis will say um... you know we've got so, so many Pasifika students are doing really well

and he'll pinpoint a student who's done really well um... and a particular assignment or is doing really well in... achievements.

Tevita and Kali also stated that within the boarding department all the individuals were able to share with each other.

Kali: Friends from across the country and possibly the world are with you and they're bringing back so much experience and so much history, so much culture, and that you can learn from them and their personalities.

As described above, this aspect of this initial Theory of Authentic Relationships was portrayed in the case study school. However in the literature the student-school relationship was limited to inclusiveness and involvement: Practices such as running multicultural days and Pasifika choirs and research identifying a need for an inclusive school culture (Education Review Office, 2009, n.d.). The research closest to identifying a student-school relationship as described in the Theory of Authentic Relationships is conducted by Don (2008) who shared the Christian ethos of a school as a relational space where 'a pervading ethos of agape [love], mutual respect and acceptance are portrayed'. Thus, referring back to the start, the Christian ethos again appears to encompass many of the qualities within the student-school relationship. Perhaps this is why there is limited research regarding the student-school relationship specifically?

The fourth authentic relationship within this framework is that between the student and family.



Student ↔ Family

The student-family relationship in the emerging Theory of Authentic Relationship is one that appears to be crucial. This relationship has two aspects to it; the students' real family and the family role the school together with the boarding department takes. It appears that students who come from a stable home have a family who provides a sense of belonging. They also provide support, encouragement and expectations which enables students to become more. However for those students who come from challenging home environments the school and boarding department can take on the that role. The increasing number of broken homes (Statistics New Zealand, 2008) means a school who takes on the role of a family is becoming more crucial. Thus the school which can become a family can show the students acceptance and provide a group to belong to. When students have a family behind them it appears they become more, similarly to the real family.

The idea that a school is family was demonstrated by the case study school. As Mr Lewis shared in the interviews:

Mr Lewis: I think with any child who is facing challenges that comes significant, um, exponentially, as the problems get bigger so does the need for a relationship become huge, so if you have a Polynesian kid or if you have a Pakeha kid who comes from a very solid background, and everything is tickity-boo [working in order] at home their need for a relationship from a teacher is minimal...When you think of someone who, say, you know, parents don't want them or whatever, they essentially need to feel the love, and so that relationship is that.

In addition, numerous other participants identified the school and the boarding department as a family (see table 5.9).

Table 5. 9: Responses regarding the school as a family

<i>Student in secondary cohort</i> We are all like a big family
<i>Kali in interview</i> In normal families, families fight, families, not everybody but families do fight, and we do have disagreements with students and you know its normal, it's human nature, but um, yea no. It is quite a family feel if you know everybody and everybody knows you and everyone's seen you around somewhere.
<i>Tevita in interview</i> Boarding is a big family, especially like doing everything together, like eating, going to worships and stuff like that... I feel more comfortable around them because I spend more time with them.
<i>Mrs Finau in interview</i> The boarding environment here, how would I describe it? Uh, congenial. [Laughs] Family, family!
<i>Mrs King in interview</i> They have a family, a real family in the boarding.

In addition to providing students with a family which to belong to, it appears that the school takes on the role of a family in the sense that it prepares students and provides opportunities for students. Preparing students and giving them opportunities they may not have otherwise enables the students to become more and to extend themselves academically.

The opportunities the case study school provided for the students were opportunities the students, in particular the Pasifika students, may not have other places. As Mrs Latu stated:

Mrs Latu: I think we are getting through to our pacific island communities, that girls... the stereotyping of girls staying home and having babies, getting married is changing in the sense that girls are coming through now... they're giving the opportunity to girls to come to boarding. For instance, in the villages back in the islands, the girls wouldn't even get looked at for a scholarship... but now... I've seen a real shift in, um, parents... parenting and focusing on pacific island girls in particular, allowing them to go to boarding.

She added that the boarding enabled students to have their own study space. This concept appears to be important as Pasifika peoples often have larger numbers living in the same household (Kick, 2001). This concept was also identified by Dr Kilgour (2012), one of the external educational experts. He actually claimed the reason for the Pasifika underachievement was solely the emphasis placed on family within the Pasifika culture.

Dr Kilgour: The main blocks to Pasifika students achieving at school from my perspective is firstly family. Anything to do with family seems to take precedence over study. It could be looking after the siblings, moving uncle's furniture, a whole weekend church camp, a week-long funeral etc.

Dr Kilgour (2012) continues to explain that boarding schools can often provide a space for students to get away from the family pressure and often the boarders bring the day students along with them. This concept is supported by Amituanai-Toloa et al. (2009) who suggests the Pasifika students find meaning in their education through serving their family with their education. However, other literature does not discuss the implications of the Pasifika families upon education. Instead the research places the responsibility on the schools and suggests schools embrace the Pasifika culture

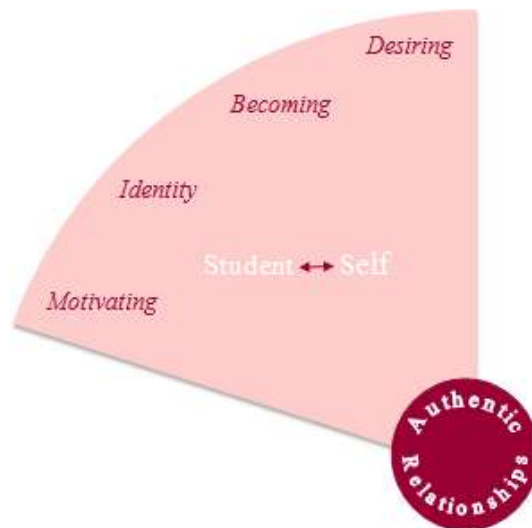
(Education Review Office, 2009; Ferguson et al., 2008). No doubt schools need to embrace the families within their community. This is in fact one of the main goals of the Ministry of Education in their Pasifika Plan (Ministry of Education, 2011c). In addition, many of effective practices identified by the Education Review Office in both their research (2009) and in the Education Review Office reports (n.d.) were based around family-school links (see diagram 5.2).

Diagram 5. 2: Family-school links

Education Review Office (2009)	Education Review Office reports (n.d.)
• Establishing and maintaining close relationships with all parents • Establishing parental involvement in clubs and performance groups • Encouraging family lunches	• Strong home-school partnerships • Participation in the PISCPL project (see page 63)

However it appears if the school becomes like the family the school can provide both the sense of belonging and the structure needed to enable students to succeed and become more.

The final relationship within this initial Theory of Authentic Relationships is that between the students and themselves.



Student ↔ Self

This relationship may at first not seem critical to a school environment, however this relationship adds to the students belonging and being. It appears the students when they are exposed to such rich and authentic relationships as described previously, they not only have an identity within the school; they desire to become more. This desire is founded in the support, care, encouragement and belief placed in them from teachers, other students, their family – whether it is their real family or the school-family – and the school as a whole. This desire in essence appears to provide an intrinsic motivation to be more, do better and reach their potential.

The notion that students have an identity within the school and a desire to reach further was described by participants within the case study school. Mrs Latu suggested that in particularly boarding, the students go through a process of self-discovery in the absence of their family. Mrs King and Mr Lewis on the other hand shared that their family motivated them further (see table 5.10 on the next page)

Table 5. 10: Responses regarding student desires

Mr Lewis in interview

Hey, you know it's like any family, if you're a part of a family you'll fight for them, you believe in them, because that, that's just natural isn't it? You know that's why I find that a lot of students when they leave [this school]... you can't get rid of them, they keep coming back and um, it's a sense of belonging, it's a safe place, it's a place where, where... you exist.

Mrs King in interview

I have one case on my mind of a Tongan student who was, he's the first in his family to go as far as he has in school. His parents don't speak English and he has such a passion, desire to do well and achieve, um... I have not seen that in my Caucasian students, in my time here. And it might be a case by case, it might be the fact that he is new to New Zealand, his parents don't speak English, he's got that real passion, desire... I think um, the Pacific Island students, there's still a real, um, well and from home as well... 'Come on I didn't get that far' 'I want you to do...' 'I didn't get to, I didn't graduate' or 'uncle didn't graduate' or um, you'll be the first [*emphasised*], and so there's a real... mana [strength] around for the Pasifika students to achieve, they don't have to achieve excellence but to achieve and do well in their year.

Interestingly enough, the literature does not identify such a desire in the students. It does however suggest, as mentioned previously, students view their success in education as a way to serve their family and community (Amituanai-Toloa et al., 2009). Thus one can deduce that if a students' family or school believes in them, encourages them, provides them with a sense of belonging, accepts them for who they are, they reciprocate with a desire and motivation to be more – for their family, community and school.

Conclusion

Reflecting on this developing Theory of Authentic Relationships, we can now revisit the research question:

Why are Pacific Island students at one school in New Zealand achieving at a substantially higher level than the national average?

It appears that these authentic relationships within this school driven by the size of the school, the boarding department and the underlying Christian ethos of the school enables students to be treated equally, giving them a chance to participate, contribute and embrace as a collective group. Being able to participate, contribute and embrace as a collective group appears to give students a sense of belonging. Having a place to belong to seems to enable students to be who they are and to become more – more successful in their academic pursuit.

This developing Theory of Authentic Relationships is a transformative process where everyone is part of the process. Each individual is changed from the inside out by the rich relationships that enable all individuals to be who they are, belong to the collective group and consequently transform. As Kohn (Kohn, 1999) points out, often school reforms founder because teachers are provided with information about how and why to adopt new practices rather than been given the chance to experience a transformation. This developing theory emphasises the collective approach where all relationships involving all individuals work together to transform the lives of all individuals within the group.

So having identified why this school in question is different, what implications does it have for other schools, educators and Pasifika groups? The next chapter will discuss the implications of this initial Theory of Authentic Relationships.

Chapter Six

The Mea Fou – New Things

The use of the mea fou is to illustrate how this new theory developed can be used to begin new directions for not only Pasifika education but education in general



Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline why this study that has developed this framework of authentic relationships is needed and why it is important. In addition, the implications of this study for wider contexts will be discussed. The final aspect will identify where further research is needed to support this theory developed.

In light of the developing Theory of Authentic Relationships presented in chapter five it appears that a new approach to the teaching of Pasifika students needs to be undertaken. The embracement of such a new concept is illustrated with the Samoan term *mea fou* – new things.

Importance of the developing theory

As numerous researchers argue there are considerable disparities in the education and solutions need to be found to enable Pasifika students to become successful citizens and contribute to wider communities (Allen et al., 2009; Education Review Office, 2012c; Ferguson et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2009a). Although numerous attempts have been made to improve the situation (see Gavet, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2012c; University of Canterbury, 2009) the emphasis of these approaches seems to be on *doing* and as pointed out by the Education Review Office (2012c) very recently there is still disparities. Therefore taking an entirely different approach, one that is focused on *being*, appears to have its benefits and is supported by research (Amituanai-Tolosa et al., 2009; Hawk et al., 2002; Siope, 2011). If schools prioritise developing ‘authentic relationships’ that enable students to feel like they belong at a school, enable students to simply be who they are and enable students to become more they may see significant improvements in the achievement. What is interesting is the statement Mr Lewis gave at the beginning of the interview:

Mr Lewis: The whole idea of an extended family and being one and...thinking outside, the whole spiritual aspect and so forth, that's not just good for Polynesian kids... that's good for all kids.

Thus, this Theory of Authentic Relationships that has been portrayed is not only beneficial for Pasifika students but all students. In fact this is reflected in the theory itself as it identifies equal opportunities to participate, contribute and embrace as a core result and if this model was only beneficial for Pasifika students then the model would be contradicting its very core element, equal opportunities. As a result, this theory is applicable to a much wider collection of professionals.

Who should take notice?

Although the primary purpose of this thesis was related to those who have a specific interest in Pasifika education, the Theory of Authentic Relationships arising out of this data would appear to be relevant to many, if not all educators. In essence, any school which has a desire to develop a more inclusive school environment should begin by focusing on the relationships within the school. These authentic relationships demonstrated by all members in the case study school described in this thesis appear to give students a sense of belonging, allow them to be who they are and allow them to become more - qualities that enable students to participate, contribute and embrace the full experience of school. Therefore, whether it be a teacher, librarian or a principal, the concept of simply *being* could be one of the simplest approaches to implement in a school context. The essential aspect is simply creating authentic relationships among *all* individuals in the collective group.

The other collective group for which this theory developed appears to have applicability is to teacher education institutions. As identified in literature (Allen et

al., 2009; University of Canterbury, 2009) the emphasis of approaches in teacher education institutions is on what teachers should *do*. It appears that if these institutions simply demonstrate and model authentic relationships in similar way to the relationships demonstrated at the case study school, these relationships will provide a change in perception of this problem. A view that is transferred from what we can *do* for the Pasifika students to what we can *be* for them.

Further research

Evidently, there are a number of aspects of this Theory of Authentic Relationships which are new and not fully explored in literature again reflecting the notion of *mea fou* – new things. The concept of the size impacting a school on a deeper lever (more than directly linked to higher academic achievement) is needed to further support claims that the size of other schools in fact enables such rich and authentic relationships to thrive. In addition, the impact of the boarding department in this school is evident in the relationships across the school however very limited research has been conducted revealing whether this is the case in other boarding schools.

The final, and perhaps most important aspect, is the concept of ‘what is good for Pasifika students is good for all students’. It is a bold claim that in essence disputes much of literature regarding Pasifika education as the majority of literature suggests the Pasifika culture needs to be acknowledged, valued and included in order for improvements to be made (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Therefore, with such bold claims more research is needed to support this view in other contexts.

Epilogue

Looking back at my first experiences in a Pasifika dominated school culture and now reflecting on the process of choosing, planning and implementing my research project I can see my attitudes towards this issue have completely changed.

The first day I attended my old school; having come from overseas in an environment without Pasifika peoples, I was shocked to say the least. Nothing could have prepared me for the environment of that school and in fact I stayed home from school for three days refusing to go back. However, I came around and eventually returned however my view towards the school environment was always tainted and as expressed at the start of this thesis I wondered about the lack of motivation in the students. *How could students be so lazy and unmotivated?* This Eurocentric view essentially stayed with me when I began studying to be a teacher and even right up until I began this research project. When contemplating future job positions I was quite adamant that even given the opportunity to teach in a predominantly Pasifika school I did not want it.

Now, having immersed myself so deeply into this current issue through reading literature, conducting research and reflecting upon my findings I can see how one-sided my view was. When I was at my old school I did not feel like I belonged, I did not feel like I could be myself and I definitely did not feel like I could become more. However, seeing the rich relationships which enable qualities such as belonging, being and becoming to shine through in all members of a school has reignited my passion for teaching and in fact awakened a desire to demonstrate to government bodies such as the Ministry of Education that approaches as simple as taking time to build an authentic relationship built of equality with not only students but all

members of your school community could in fact be just as effective or even more effective than complicated lengthy statements regarding what teachers should *do* rather than what they should *be*. My concluding comments regarding this area I am now so passionate about are summed up in the poem by Emma Kruse Va'ai (as cited by Siope, 2011):

*Listen teacher
Listen to me
Don't look away
See my eyes they hold messages
that can make you understand me
Hold my hand and your heart
will warm towards me.
Let me dance and sing you
my own songs which you don't know,
and you might smile
as you've never smiled before
Let me tell you a story
of my ancient past
and then, maybe, you will see
another person in me.*

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Appendices

Appendix A: Authors associated with the Ministry of Education

Airini, Anae, M., Mila-Schaaf, K., Coxon, E., Mara, D., & Sanga, K. (2010). Teu le va - Relationships across research and policy in Pasifika education: A collective approach to knowledge generation and policy development for action towards Pasifika education success. Auckland: **Ministry of Education**.

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Appendix B: Reflection journal entry #1

January

Wednesday, 25 January 2012
8:07 a.m.

Reflection on action

8:26pm 25 Jan 2012

Through discussions with staff at the chosen school, I have acquired information that suggests the academic results of the Pasifika students at this school is well above the national average. This has caused me to totally rethink my whole project.

Not only is this a very interesting case study, but I believe there are several key factors that contribute to the higher achievement levels of Pasifika students at this school.

Preliminary ideas:

1. Pasifika island people are very family oriented and the boarding facilities at this school simulate such an environment possibly making students feel more at home.

I think through further discussions with both [redacted] and [redacted] as well as student swill enlighten me on further aspects that are very beneficial to these students.

Hence my interview structure has therefore been modified - addition of 2 staff members (Academic dean and Boarding manager)

Question has also changed - no longer focusing on the transition but rather and investigation into what makes this school different? Why are they achieving at a higher level? Is the boarding facility theory supported by differences in achievement between Pasifika boarding and day students? (These questions will most likely be my underlying driving force for my research). Obviously the transition could still feature in the research but it is no longer the main focus.

The title is harder to reword... The underlying question is 'What makes this school different?'

This is what I have so far.

'A qualitative investigation into the above-average academic success of Pasifika students at one school'

Appendix C: Participant consent form template

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

- » I have been given information about 'A qualitative investigation into the significant academic success of Pasifika students at one school'.
- » I have been given the opportunity to discuss the research project and my involvement with Claire Pedersen, who is conducting this research as part of her Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching (Honours) degree supervised by Phil Fitzsimmons in the Faculty of Education at Avondale College of Higher Education
- » In this project I may:
 - Be asked questions by the researcher which may be audio-recorded; and,
 - Have their journal entries collected by the researcher to be used as a discussion tool
- » As the research will be predominately carried out outside of regular class time, it is anticipated that the research project is unlikely to be a burden or interfere with student learning.
- » I understand that participation in this research is voluntary, and that I am free to refuse to participate and to withdraw them from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdraw consent will not affect me in any way.
- » I understand that my anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained, whereby under no circumstances my identity will be disclosed.
- » I have discussed with my parent/care-giver my willingness to participate in this inquiry and they have agreed to be my involvement.
- » If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Claire Pedersen (researcher) on +64 22 077 0237 or by email at claire.pedersen@hotmail.com. Alternatively, I can contact Dr Phil Fitzsimmons (supervisor) on +61 4 5025 6940 or phil.fitzsimmons@avondale.edu.au. If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is conducted, I can contact the Faculty of Education, Avondale College of Higher Education, 582 Freemans Drive, Cooranbong, 2265, New South Wales, Australia.
- » By signing below I am indicating my consent to participate in the indicated sections of the research entitled 'A qualitative investigation into the above-average academic success of Pasifika students at one school' conducted by Claire Pedersen as it has been described to me in the information sheet and in any discussion with Claire. I understand that the data collected from my child's participation will be used for Claire's Honours thesis and scholarly journal publications and I consent for it to be used in this manner. I know that I can withdraw my consent at any time and that I will be given a signed copy of this form to keep.

Please indicate by crossing the box which sections of the research you are giving consent to participate in:

☐ Interview/Journal section

☐ Questionnaire section

Name (please print your name here)

Signature

Date

.....

.....

...../...../.....

Researcher's Signature

.....

Appendix D: School principal consent form template

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

- » I have been given information about 'A qualitative investigation into the above-average academic success of Pasifika students at one school'.
- » I have been given the opportunity to discuss the research project and my schools involvement with Claire Pedersen, who is conducting this research as part of her Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching (Honours) degree supervised by Phil Fitzsimmons in the Faculty of Education at Avondale College of Higher Education
- » In this project they may:
 - Be asked questions by the researcher which may be audio-recorded; and,
 - Have their journal entries collected by the researcher to be used as a discussion tool
- » As the research will be predominately carried out outside of regular class time, it is anticipated that the research project is unlikely to be a burden or interfere with students' learning.
- » I understand that participation in this research is voluntary, and that I am free to refuse permission for the school to participate and to withdraw them from the research at any time. The school's refusal to participate or withdraw consent will not affect me, the school or the students' treatment in any way.
- » I understand that my students' and the school's anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained, whereby under no circumstances their identity will be disclosed.
- » If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Claire Pedersen (researcher) on +64 22 077 0237 or by email at claire.pedersen@hotmail.com. Alternatively, I can contact Dr Phil Fitzsimmons (supervisor) on +61 4 5025 6940 or phil.fitzsimmons@avondale.edu.au. If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is conducted, I can contact the Faculty of Education, Avondale College of Higher Education, 582 Freemans Drive, Cooranbong, 2265, New South Wales, Australia.
- » By signing below I am indicating my consent for the school to participate in the research entitled 'A qualitative investigation into the above-average academic success of Pasifika students at one school' conducted by Claire Pedersen as it has been described to me in the information sheet and in any discussion with Claire. I understand that the data collected from the students' participation will be used for Claire's Honours thesis and scholarly journal publications and I consent for it to be used in this manner. I know that I can withdraw my consent at any time and that I will be given a signed copy of this form to keep.

Name (please print your name here)

Signature

Date

.....

.....

...../...../.....

Researcher's Signature

.....

Appendix E: Sample of interview schedule

Interview Questions

Focus Group – Students

- 1) What country do you come from?
 - a. If New Zealand, what nationality are you?
- 2) How would you describe your culture?
- 3) Why did you choose to come to [this school]?
- 4) How long have you been at this school?
- 5) What year are you in?
- 6) Do you enjoy being at [this school]?
 - a. Why/Why not?
- 7) What do you enjoy most about [this school]?
- 8) Are you living in the dorms? If so, how long have you been living in the dorms?
- 9) How do you enjoy living in the dorms?
- 10) What is your favourite part of living in the dorms?
- 11) If you could change two things about [this school], what would they be?
- 12) Where were you before you came to [this school]?
- 13) How would you compare the two schools?
- 14) What are the biggest differences between the two schools?
- 15) Compared the national average Pasifika students at [this school] are achieving really well, why do you think that is?

Appendix F: Sample of field notes

Date	Interviewer	Time
13) Have you had a similar role at any other institute prior to this?	Yes. Dean in Auckland.	
14) How would you compare the environment?	90% Pasifika. Cross sections.	Quite different. Struggle with language. (Emphasis).
15) How would you compare the students?	Yes. P.I. & Caucasian. PE → inclusion. (Emphasis).	change of person.
16) How would you compare the academic achievement of those students compared to ...?	Opportunities with learning. Personal sense of belonging.	land. Islands. Meles. (Emphasis).
17) What do you believe are the reasons for this?		stronger in learning family. (Emphasis).
18) Are there any other aspects of the school life that you are familiar with that you believe have an effect on Pasifika students' achievement at ...?	Sports - Church. (Emphasis).	practice.
19) If so, what role do they play?	Prioritise.	
20) Tell me about the ASPIRE program, what is it about?	Worship AM & PM. - Program.	Self identity.
21) What are the aims of this program?	Equip learners for life skills.	Planning. Micro society. Interactions. Life skills.
22) Has this program fulfilled any of its aims?	Yes! = built in. - incorporated.	into school.
23) How do you think this affects the Pasifika students?	Spiritual - !! & breaking up out of comfort zone.	Think.
24) Do you believe this has an effect on the Pasifika students' academic achievement?	Motivate. High achieving. continue.	
a. How?		

Appendix G: Sample of probe questions

22 Feb 2012

Interview with Student one (PTu)

No. 1

- some might have favourites, but just not because of race, just because a student has shown help to the teacher, shown interest in helping the teacher, like outside of school, inside of school. But no, they're not biased at all when it comes to race. I see all the teachers quite love all our students, not for their races, but for their personalities and I don't think a teacher would dislike a student for their race more for their personality, yea. And it is just unfortunate that... a person that plays up in class is typically an Islander. It's just unfortunate. It doesn't mean the teacher is racist at all, it's just because that is what the student is like. - *Stereotype?*
- C: Why do you think that Pacific Islanders are more commonly disruptive I suppose? How do you put it nicely?
- S: Well... It would be very interesting if you could visit a Pacific Island home because you will find that the most disruptive child at school is the most respectful child at home, so in that case, you would think that child is looking for a sense of freedom where there are no expectations from the parents and the parents love this child so much they refuse to listen to anything the teachers have to say, um, another reason a Pacific Island student may be disruptive is coz they feel, they think as if that's all the teacher's interested in, like oh he just likes the Caucasian kids coz they're white. It's kind of more of attention thing, so it takes away the attention the teacher has on the students that work hard and puts it on this child who is so disruptive it's not because they're bad it's just coz maybe they don't get that same kind of help at home and when they come here and they think the teacher won't pay any attention to them they go all sorts of crazy just for the teacher to pay attention because they lack that attention at home, so that's that one. Um... another reason why a Pacific Islander may be disruptive is just because they just want everyone to like them, think of them as the class clown, because apparently in a Pacific Islander's mind the quickest way to get everyone to like you is to make everyone a laugh, and if that's being the village idiot they will do it. - *beyond classroom*
- C: So is humour quite a big part of your culture?
- S: Yes, humour is the biggest part of my culture. If you don't know how to laugh at yourself no one's going to like you because you're so sensitive to what everyone says, which is kind of sad because everyone is different. Not all Pacific Islanders are born with that humour.
- C: Do you think the teachers laugh at themselves a bit?
- S: Yes.
- C: So would you say that you relate to them because they do that?
- S: Yes, I relate to most of my teachers just because they're funny. They're very funny. That know how to laugh at themselves, they know how to take jokes. And they know how to make jokes at me too. [redacted] is the prime example of a joking teacher [laughs hysterically]
- C: Yes, yes, yes. I remember him. Um, about the international department, how much do you interact with the staff from the international department?
- S: International department? Not that much, no.
- C: Do you know what they do?
- S: No, I don't. I don't even know who they are. I know [redacted] is the transitional [?] teacher, she organises what the Saniku do and as far as I know that's it? Unless, is the Maori teacher part of the international department?
- C: I don't think so?
- *expectations*
- *unrightfully judging teacher?*
- *time for all students ab*
- *the yes thing*
- *humour. a families laugh.*
- *beyond expectations*

Appendix H: Sample of questionnaire

Page 1 / 1

Report Abuse

Survey Information

Kia ora! - Kia oriori - Tahiā level - Māta e level - Māta e level -
Pūkākāka level and - Tahiā level

Create your own
FREE ONLINE SURVEY

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. I am very thankful for your response and they will make a huge impact on my research project.

Please be completely honest when answering the questions and provide as much detail as possible. The answers will be completely anonymous so you do not have to worry about anyone knowing what you answered. When the responses are presented in my thesis fake names will be used so you will not be identified.

If you have any questions at all, or if you would like to talk to me about anything, please email claire.petersen@totara.ac.nz.

*1 Without stating your name, describe who you are.

*2 What nationality are you? Tick all that apply.

☐ Samoan
☐ Tongan
☐ Fijian
☐ Cook Islander
Other (Please Specify):

*3 Were you born in New Zealand?

☐ Yes
☐ No

*4 Are you a day student or a boarder at [REDACTED]?

☐ Day student
☐ Boarder

5 How would you describe your culture?

*Traditions

*Communication

*Family

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1/4

*Food	
*Other	

*6 Why did you choose to come to **XXXX**?

*7 How long have you been at **XXXX**?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years

*8 What year are you in at **XXXX**?

- ☐ Intermediate
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10
- ☐ 11
- ☐ 12
- ☐ 13

*9 What do you enjoy most about being at **XXXX**?

*10 Describe how you are going with your study and assignments at **XXXX**?

11 Describe how each of the following affect your academic achievement?

*Size of **XXXX**

*Family

*Teachers

*Friends

*Is there anything else that affects your academic achievement?

*12 If you could change something about [redacted] that would help you achieve even better, what would it be?

*13 According to statistics, Pasifika students at [redacted] are achieving a lot higher than Pasifika students at most other schools in New Zealand. Why do you think that is?

14 List the following in the order of how they affect your academic achievement, (from affect the most to affect the least).

- A student's background
- Socio-economic background
- Family
- Teachers
- Friends
- Size of the school
- The Christian aspect of [redacted]
- Engaging lesson
- Positive role models
- Encouragement
- High expectations

15 Please indicate how you feel about each of the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strong disagree
I feel like I belong at [redacted]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can be myself at [redacted]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't have to be embarrassed about my culture at [redacted]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students treat me well at [redacted]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers treat me the same as everyone else at [redacted]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I like that [redacted] is a small school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are some teachers that are better than others at [redacted]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers understand my background	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

and my culture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am friends with a lot of people at [REDACTED] who aren't Pacific Islanders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel like I am expected to succeed at [REDACTED]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having people encourage me helps me do better at school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The fact that I am Pacific Islander has no effect on how well I achieve	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*16 How has [REDACTED] helped you achieve?

17 Is there anything else you would like to add that might help answer the question:

"Why are Pacific Island students at one school in New Zealand achieving at a substantially higher level than the national average"

18 When this information is presented in the thesis, what name would you like to be used in place of your real name? (OPTIONAL)

*19 I have signed a consent form that states I am willing to participate in this research project.

IMPORTANT:

If you have not, you will need to sign one now. They can be found on the desk by the door. Once you have signed it, please tick YES. Thank you.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Finish Survey

Appendix I: Reflection journal entry #2

Reflections

1.16pm 3 Feb 2012

Reflections from recent interview.

The interview was with the Director of Boarding. It took place in the girls dorm chapel which is attached to the dormitory building. It has plenty of windows and two doors with windows in. As the interview took place during school time, none of the boarders were in the building and hence the doors were left open. Either way this location was visible but still provided confidentiality.

The interviewee had plenty to say and gave some good insights, mostly on the boarding students. I continuously tried to bring it back to academic success but it was at times hard as I think the BD knows more about the dorms than day school, although the BD still knows a lot about the success of the students.

The BD is an older Pasifika lady who has been in the job for over 20 years (couldn't remember how many). This ties into the concept of 'Pasifika/Maori in leadership positions'. This could have a huge affect on the students as they see the BD disciplining all students equal and they can see that such a 'position' is attainable for everyone, no matter what ethnicity they come from.

She seemed very passionate about the students and was eager to talk about the students and the environment.

For further interviews I will ask questions that are related to the concepts mentioned in the BOT report by the DP.

Such as:

- Segregation and what is in place in the boarding department to minimise that.
- Equal treatment
- How the BD thinks her role and ethnicity affects students
- Small classes/school
- Extend on family environment

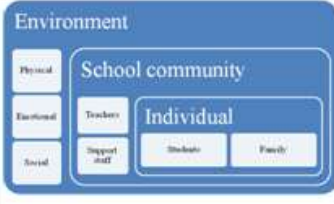
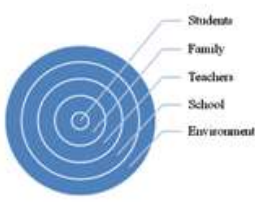
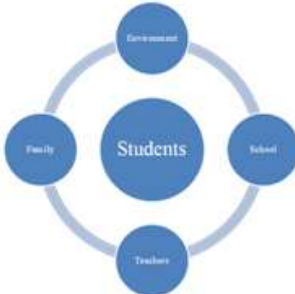
Appendix J: Sample of transcription

7 Feb 2012	Interview with Deputy Principal	No. 1
have that either, so I mean it's, but it, but nobody ever failed because they were Maori or Polynesian, or at least I don't think so, um, I think the Aboriginal question is a lot more complicated, um, but I still don't believe that Aboriginal people fail because they're Aboriginal, they might fail because of their, their backgrounds or the violence or the alcohol or whatever it might be, but being Aboriginal never caused anyone to fail, well I don't think so, um, it might force us to reconsider what success is, um, but I don't know if anybody's ever actually asked Aboriginal people what success looks like, I don't know, but certainly quite taken by the whole situation over there, it's quite drastic.	then you've got some people who don't believe at all and so you have this... this is, while this is an Adventist school that upholds Adventist principles it is also a school that is prepared to discuss the principles of the church and open itself up to... discussion and so when you have... a white... European... Baptist who has one point of view, arguing with a white European... roman catholic who has a different point of view, the boy who argues with a Samoan Adventist who has a different point of view, it's being the different denominational, being the different ethnic background, is not actually the difference, the difference is their point of view. So... yes, that's inclusive in its own way, it's accepting of difference, and that allows people to move forward, is by accepting that they may not necessarily have arrived at that final destination, and I'm always very conscious that that's a dangerous place to think you're at. But, yes, some may disagree.	
C: And it's extremely hard to do research on them as well, so it makes it even harder. DP: I'm not surprised. C: Um, ok, so how do you think the whole spiritual aspect affects students, in particular Pacifica students? DP: I just think it's a sense of belonging. C: Adds to that? DP: Oh absolutely, I mean you got to remember at the lot of kids end up on Sabbath with their teachers, it's not, it's not unusual, so you could easily go... six days of the week and holidays and doing things together so, it's not unusual for me to have a student at school be with them on Sabbath and do a Sabbath, a church activity over the weekend, and then we spend a lot of time together and so even then coming to my home as, as for whatever reason on church or because, and the other thing too is a lot, a lot teachers have here have their own children here and that brings another layer of interaction that exists so you have all these overlapping layers and so that, you form much closer relationships between students and teachers, and while there are barriers and there are sort of... what's the word, you know, I don't wear a tie at home but I wear a tie here sort of thing... those experiences are far deeper and therefore, life goes a lot easier. C: Ok, um, well evidently the Christian faith puts God first and culture second. How important do you think that is? DP: Sorry, say that again? C: Um, Christian faith puts God first and culture second. I think that was in the report as well. DP: You, well, we've probably covered that, I think it's just incredibly inclusive and its unifying and it is a message of hope rather than a message of judgement, so um... even when a student here gets a flea in their ear there is... there is a restorative system which says ok well this is not the way God wanted this to be, do you actually want to change this? As opposed to simply a punishment. I might be more included on the punishment side, but there are systems in place where we pick up the pieces and, and move on. C: Um, I think of the last points in the report states that teaching of Bible is important to Pacifica and Maori families. DP: Well it is, and for a lot, a lot um... a lot of kids who are Polynesian, they have an incredibly um... strong faith system. It may not necessarily agree with everybody else in certain areas but then we get back to that point of well we are a bit of a melting pot anyway so... has that lovely aspect where you've got 20, 25 percent Adventists, but then you've got a number of Baptists and then you've got some Methodists, and then you've got some Anglicans and then you've got some Catholics here and there and	C: students' overall achievement? DP: It is a very clear message to the community including parents, staff... students, the groundsman that the Bible, Bible is the cornerstone of why we are here. So there's a very strong message, it's one of those immovable forces and, and I think it is... incredibly important. C: Do you think it has an effect on students' achievement? DP: Well it does because, um, one of the major advantages is that a lot of kids come to us with a relatively good understanding of the Bible so they go into a subject where they're already well down the track so in terms of getting academic results, it's not as hard for them because they've already got a head start. Um, from the kid in a state school who does Bible and has never picked one up or done religious instruction, so... it, it something that, that allows us to discuss... what we are doing as a school continually with a, with a biblical perspective and a, you know, practice the presence of Christ idea. It also allows us to have a chaplain at the school, it allows us to discuss things collectively as a staff, um, so it's important for the staff to see this too. C: Yes. DP: Mmm. C: Ok, um... are there any other reasons that are, might, or that you think affects students achievement? DP: I think one, one thing about us as a school, and, and it's probably, has many of these bits put together, but the relationships in the school are... much closer... than I would imagine other schools, certainly the other schools I've been at, the relationships were, were not... anywhere near as close. C: Between staff and students... DP: Uh yea. C: Or students and students? DP: Uh, a good example of this is um... this just happened recently, uh, walking down the hallway, saw a boy, didn't quite know where he was going, I asked him um... Are you lost? Yea I don't quite know where I'm going, asked him how things were going, oh yea not too bad, I said oh, um, sad about that ferry going down in Papua New Guinea. Now... the boy was Papua New Guinea, he then told me his younger brother was on the boat. Now I then forwarded that information on to... uh, a teacher, then I went down to reception, the irony was that reception was about to tell me that because another teacher had found out. And this was one very quiet boy, now the boy has only	

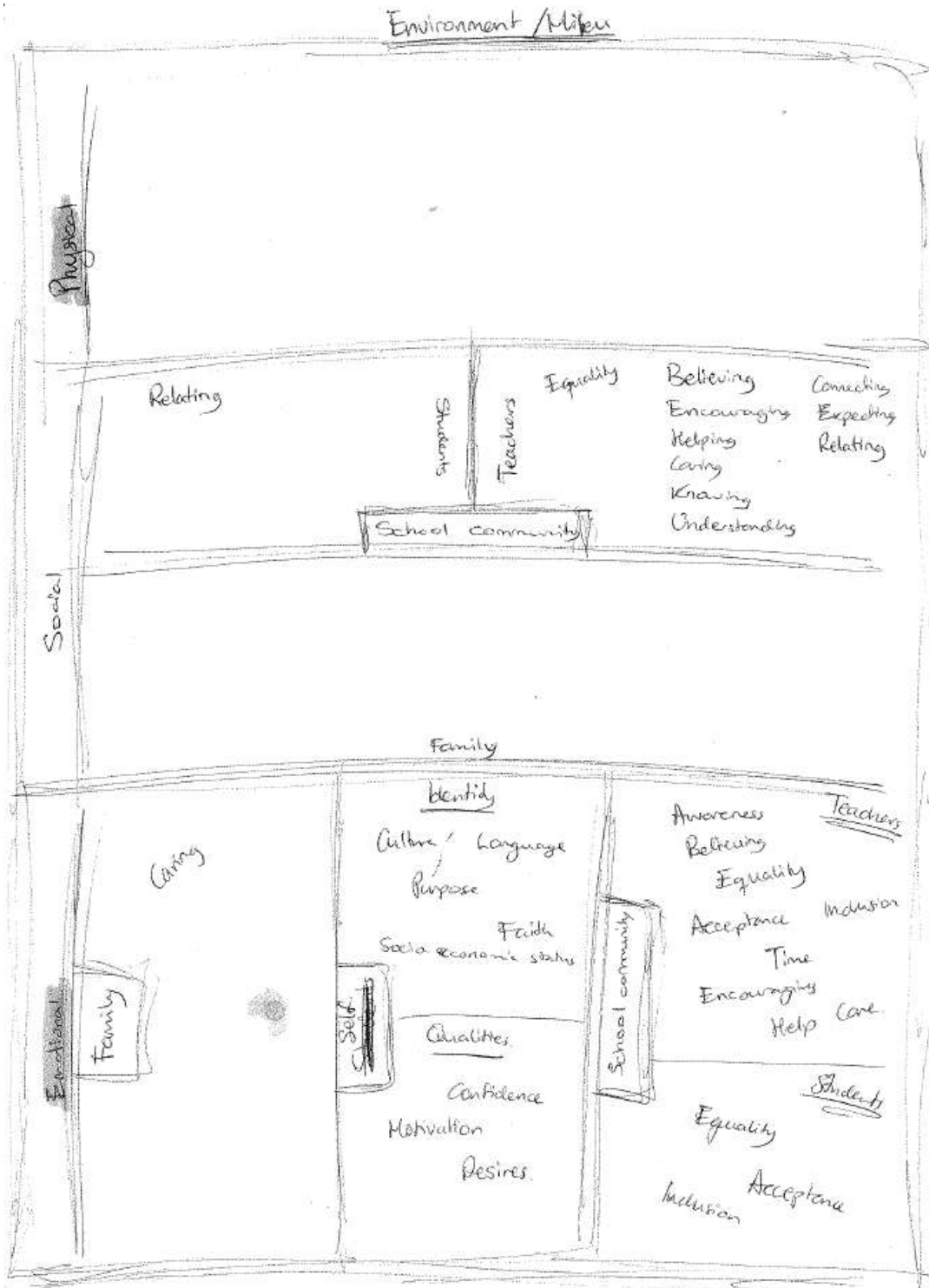
Appendix K: Initial coding diagram



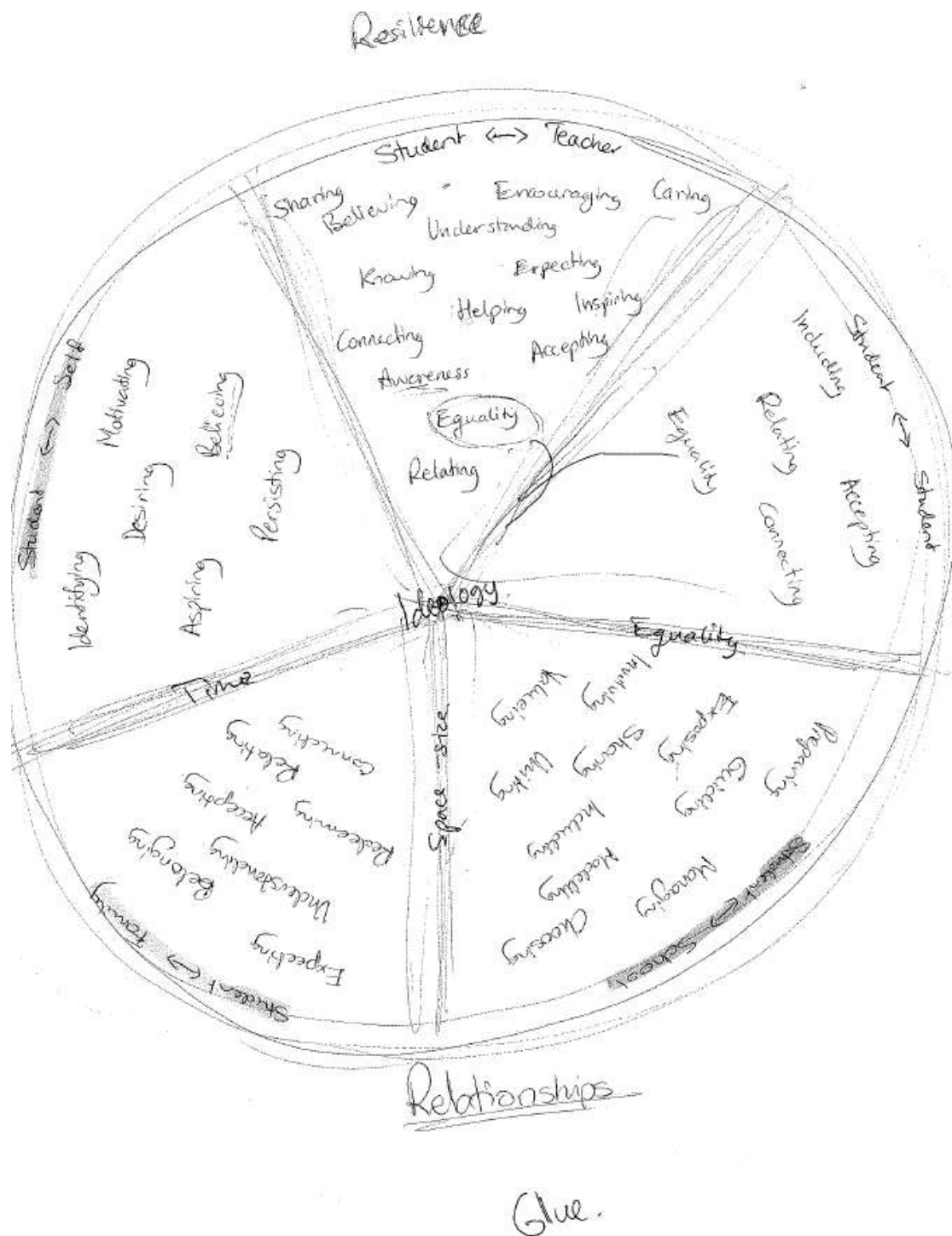
Appendix L: Developing coding diagrams #1

Funnel  Becoming + This model conveys the joining of themes that result in a common outcome. It shows how the 'elements' mix to form the one 'substance'. - It is only possible to have 'three' elements in the funnel which limits the categories and means some themes would perhaps have to be merged (which could complicate things)	Nested target  + This model shows how each theme is 'derived' from a bigger theme and links the categories well. It shows that the school community is only an aspect of the 'environment' and the individual is part of the school community. - Again, this diagram can only provide three different 'blocks' which limits the range of categories	Converging radial  + This model shows how each element adds to the focus of this study - the student. It allows for an 'unlimited' number of themes to 'add' to the focus. - It doesn't clearly identify that the students themselves have an effect on their achievement (ultimately)
Stacked Ven n diagram  + This diagram shows again how each theme is 'derived' from a larger theme. It also portrays the interconnections between themes and how each theme is nested in each prior theme - This diagram doesn't show any explicit links between for ex. Students and teachers, it simply implies the following pattern Environment -> School -> Teachers -> Family -> Students	Basic target  + This is similar to the previous model. It shows how each theme is nested in the previous themes. - This diagram doesn't show any explicit links between for ex. Students and teachers, it simply implies the following pattern Environment -> School -> Teachers -> Family -> Students	Radial cycle  + This shows that each theme is linked with each other - This diagram doesn't show any links between the themes in the 'circle' and the students which is the most essential part.

Appendix M: Developing coding diagrams #2



Appendix N: Developing coding diagrams #3



Appendix O: Sample of minutes from research meetings

Honours Meeting Minutes

30 April 2012

Present: [Names removed for privacy]

Topics

- » Questions/Literature review discussion
- » Literature review information
- » Chapter 3 – Methodology
- » Tables
- » Coding
- » Due Dates

Discussions

» Questions/Discussions

○ [Student 1]

- Transcribing – fully transcribes at least one of each interview (1st, 2nd & 3rd interview).
- One good interview and you code it – and compare other interviews to that one.
- Member-checking: E-mail okay.
- Coding –
- Axial coding – layers of coding. Community as connecting – socially emotionally connections.
- Methodology chapter – talk about questions. Coding rules. How you coded, what the rules were.
- Memoing the implications for this study.
- This is going to inform how you are going to instruct the rest of your chapters.
- This is a rigorous study – I touched this person – I engaged.

○ [Student 2]

- Literature review
- What you have is really good/solid –focus on transitions between sections – linking.
- Where it makes most sense is where your voice is in it.
- Follow pattern of [lecturer]:
 1. Voice first
 2. Research support
 3. Combine both
- Introductory paragraph – this is where I'm going and this is how it is structured. This chapter will... (Explaining yourself).
- Question of thesis – perhaps change? Question is morphing.
- Data – analyse it. It will help with change of question.

- Highlight the point of student perspectives and bring it back to your question.
- **[Student 3]**
 - Literature review
 - Focus on paragraph.
 - Number pages.
 - Flowing logically.
 - Flesh it out and tell the story more.
 - Table – opportunity to make more creative (colour, etc.)
 - TABLES are great! ☺
 - Show synthesis skills before and after table.
- » **Literature review (*repeated from previous meeting*)**
 - Everyone has a good start
 - Will work on it continually throughout next few months
- » **Chapter 3**
 - End of May, Chapter 3 complete (good draft at least!)
 - Next meeting [lecturer] will bring in examples of Ch.3. & what you need to have in it.
 - Coding rules.
- » **Tables**
 - Tables are good (and colour). It brings clarity and easy to follow.
 - Word-cloud generator.
 - Envivo software coding also does it.
- » **Coding**
 - Role of the literature
 - 3 modes.
 - 1 level – big picture level & interrogate that by frequency of words, verbs and gerunds.
 - 2 level – line by line – what the meaning is.
 - 3 level – collapse codes down to categories. Categories have to speak to each other.
 - Emic & Etic language – Member-checking and negotiate meaning through the emic and etic language.
 - Cathy Charmaz (google it you will find her chapter online).
 - Corbin and Straus
 - Denzin and Lincoln.
 - Creswell.
- » **Due dates**
 - May (end) – Complete draft of the Methodology chapter.
 - Next week bring in examples of Ch. 3
 - [Student 1] bring in coding and steps of coding next week.

Appendix P: Results from questionnaire

Question one:

Factor	1st	2nd	3rd	9th	10th	11th
Student's background	0	1	1	1	0	2
Socio-economic background	0	1	2	1	4	1
Family	2	3	1	2	0	1
Teachers	1	1	3	1	0	0
Friends	1	1	1	2	1	1
Size of the school	1	0	0	1	3	1
Special character	1	1	0	1	0	3
Engaging lessons	1	3	1	2	0	2
Positive role models	0	0	0	1	3	0
Encouragement	3	0	4	0	2	0
High expectations	3	2	0	1	0	2

Question two:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel like I belong at [this school]	3	6	7	2	1
I can be myself at [this school]	4	7	3	3	2
I don't have to be embarrassed about my culture at [this school]	11	5	2	0	1
Students treat me well at [this school]	6	7	5	1	0
Teachers treat me the same as everyone else at [this school]	4	8	4	3	0
I like that [this school] is a small school	6	6	4	2	1
There are some teachers that are better than others at [this school]	8	8	3	0	0
Teachers understand my background and culture at [this school]	2	4	8	2	3
I am friends with a lot of people at [this school] who aren't Pacific Islanders	2	11	4	2	0
I feel like I am expected to succeed at [this school]	6	8	2	3	0
Having people encourage me helps me do better at school	10	5	3	0	1
The fact that I am Pacific Islander has no effect on how well I achieve	5	4	8	2	0

Appendix Q: Reflection journal entry #3

June

Monday, 25 June 2012

9:37 a.m.

Reflections

9:38am 25 June 2012

I am in the process of setting up the questionnaire distribution. The purpose of this questionnaire is threefold.

1. Because Pacific Islanders are rather shy and reserved only a few of the students were willing to participate in interviews whereas a larger number indicated they were willing to take part in a questionnaire
2. This will provide an opportunity to get a broad view of the general consensus of Pacific Islanders at this school. Do the general population agree with what the few students suggested?
3. This also provides an opportunity to member check with the general population

For this questionnaire I am thinking of getting the students a small gift despite such gestures condoned in educational research books. The disregard for this comes from Anae, et al. (2001) who writes: *"Closing interviews usually occur with general words of thanks and appreciation for the time spent. It is often during the sharing of these words of thanks that a gift is provided to the interviewee as a token of the researcher's/research team's appreciation and respect for their time spent not only to this project but also to the honour of the researcher"*