The Anti-deficit Approach: Reassessing the Notion of Pasifika Academic Achievement

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Pacific Studies, The University of Auckland, 2013.

ABSTRACT: The issue of Pasifika "underachievement" has been the subject of discussion and debate by educationalists, government policymakers and Pasifika people themselves. This thesis contributes to this discussion by examining some of the challenges faced by Pasifika students in their academic achievement. In particular it raises some pertinent questions regarding the notion of achievement itself and focuses specifically on some of the environmental and pedagogical factors which influence the academic performance of Pasifika students and some of the initiatives by government and non-government groups to address the challenges of Pasifika educational achievement.

This thesis examines a number of factors which have influenced Pasifika educational achievement. These include and are not limited to curriculum, pedagogy, familial and parental influences, peer influences, and students' self-esteem. Pasifika education is often understood through a "cultural-deficit" perspective. This thesis will examine the issue of Pasifika academic achievement through an "anti-deficit" lens which essentially means focusing on academic success and ways to raise academic achievement—as opposed to subscribing to the cultural-deficit model which emphasises failure and "underachievement" (Harper 2012:1; Irizarry 2009). The emphasis of this study will be on two main categories of initiatives to raising Pasifika academic achievement, namely those of the New Zealand government and those funded or supported by corporate/community groups, referred to within this study as "non-government".

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to

the late great Leulua'iali'i Sosene Ropati,

my Grandpa who always encouraged me

to do the best I can.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank God for giving me the strength to finish this thesis and I am truly grateful for the life I live. All glory to God!

I would also like to thank my family for their undying support of me. Without them, this thesis would have not been written. I salute my ancestors who have emphasised the importance of education and bettering ourselves and our families. I also thank my extended family for their support and words of encouragement. I would also like to acknowledge the support my parents have given me throughout my life with my education amongst other things. They have been nothing but great and have made great sacrifices for me and my younger brother Daniel so that we enjoy an easier life than theirs and are able to continue their legacy. This thesis is as much theirs as it is mine.

I also would like to take the opportunity to recognise my supervisor Steve Ratuva of the Centre for Pacific Studies of University of Auckland. Thank you for your patience with me and guiding me along the way. You have deepened my understanding of many things throughout my time at the University of Auckland and this year has been no different. Thank you for being a loyal mentor who never gave up on me even when I failed to constantly meet deadlines.

I am also thankful to the University of Auckland for the education I have received. Since 2009 which was my first year I have been blessed to brush shoulders with several positive and like-minded people, lectures, tutors, Tuākanā staff, and the many friends I have made along the way. In particular I would like to thank Melani Anae, Peni Fa'alogo, and Judy McFall-McCaffery for the inspiration, knowledge, and insight they have given to me.

I am also thankful to my good friends who have provided me great company and emotional support throughout the making of this thesis.

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Glossary

‘Aiga: extended family, Samoan.
Alaga’upu: proverbial expression, Samoan.
Bourgeoisie: the politically dominant ruling class, French.[1]
Decile: the ranking of New Zealand schools according to the socioeconomic status of the neighbourhoods they serve.[2]
Fa’aaloalo: respect, service, and dutifulness, Samoan.
Fa’alavelave: an important event or development, a disruption. Samoan.
Fa’asamoa: the way of the Samoans, Samoan culture (aganu’u).
Māori: the indigenous people of New Zealand/Aotearoa.
Milieu: familial or social environment as used by Bourdieu (1974:35), French.[3]
Mua i Malae: Richmond Road Primary’s Samoan language bilingual unit.
O le Taiala: Finlayson Park School’s Samoan language bilingual unit.
Pākehā: Māori term for New Zealander of European descent.
Palagi: similar to Pākehā, Samoan.
Pasifika: Label for New Zealanders of Pacific Islands descent.
Polyfest: Annual cultural festival for Auckland high schools.
Rōpū: Māori word for group, as used at Richmond Road Primary to distinguish between various bilingual units
Taciqu: “younger brothers (of a male), younger sisters (of a female), cousins (of the same gender) of a junior line, junior relatives”, “Fijian (Natasiri Dialect)” (Patterson 2012:xii)
Teina: “younger brothers (of a male), younger sisters (of a female), cousins (of the same gender) of a junior line, junior relatives”, Māori (Patterson 2012:xii)
Teu le va: to teu le va means “to value, nurture, look after, and if necessary to tidy up the va” which is the space or relationship between two parties, Samoan (Anae 2010:12).
Tuākanā: older sibling of the same sex, mentor, also the name of the University of Auckland’s Pasifika and Māori achievement-focused initiative, Māori.
Va: the space between two parties that partly constitutes their relationship, Samoan (Anae 2010:12).
Va fealoa’i: mutual respect, accountability, Samoan.
Yalomatua: spiritual wisdom, determination, intelligence, Fijian (Nabobo 1994:42).

[1] Thomas and Nikora (1996:30); Liu et al (1999:1026).
[2] According to MoE (2013c), “A decile is a 10% grouping, there are ten deciles and around 10% of schools are in each decile. A school’s decile rating indicates the extent to which it draws its students from low socioeconomic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socioeconomic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students.”
[3] See www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/milieu

Abbreviations

AIMHI: Achievement in Multicultural High Schools, MoE initiative.
ECE: early childhood education.
ERO: Education Review Office, "the New Zealand government department that evaluates and reports on the education and car of students in schools and early childhood services" (ERO 2013).[4]
MATES: Mentoring and Tutoring Education Scheme, a non-government initiative that provides academic mentoring to many students of lower decile schools including Pasifika and Māori (Great Potentials Foundation 2012).
MoE: New Zealand Ministry of Education.
MPIA: New Zealand Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs.
NCEA: National Certificate of Educational Achievement, New Zealand's secondary school educational qualification system.
NZCF: New Zealand Curriculum Framework.
NZQA: New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PEP: Pasifika Education Plan, official document of the MoE including the latest edition *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017*.
PLF: Pasifika Languages Framework, official document of the MPIA.
PPCR: Pacific Peoples' Constitution Report, official document of the MPIA.
SEMO: Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara, MoE initiative.
TASS: Team Approach to Student Success, A TEC-funded programme of the Auckland University of Technology.
TEC: New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission, "responsible for funding tertiary education in New Zealand."[5]

[4] As quoted from www.ero.govt.nz/About-us
[5] As quoted from www.tec.govt.nz

Chapter 1: Introduction

The issue of Pasifika "underachievement" has been the subject of discussion and debate by educationalists, government policymakers and Pasifika people themselves. This thesis contributes to this discussion by examining some of the challenges faced by Pasifika students in their academic achievement. In particular it raises some pertinent questions regarding the notion of achievement itself and focuses specifically on some of the environmental and pedagogical factors which influence the academic performance of Pasifika students and some of the initiatives by government and non-government groups to address the challenges of Pasifika educational achievement.

This study identifies a number of factors which have influenced Pasifika educational achievement. These include and are not limited to curriculum, pedagogy, familial and parental influences, peer influences, and students' self-esteem. Pasifika education is often understood through a "cultural-deficit" perspective. This thesis will examine the issue of Pasifika academic achievement through an "anti-deficit" lens which essentially means focusing on academic success and ways to raise academic achievement—as opposed to subscribing to the cultural-deficit model which emphasises failure and "underachievement" (Harper 2012:1; Irizarry 2009). The emphasis of this study will be on two main categories of initiatives to raising Pasifika academic achievement, namely those of the New Zealand government and those funded or supported by corporate/community groups, referred to within this study as "non-government".

Context

This thesis is centred on the Pasifika pan-ethnic group in New Zealand. It is based largely on analysis of data and literature around existing research. Though it is based on Pasifika peoples in New Zealand those in the island homelands such as Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji are unaccounted for as they are independent nations and their respective governments have their own educational policies. This study will focus on the predominantly New Zealand-born Pasifika pan-ethnic group in metropolitan centres such as Auckland and Wellington. Although there are some references to the indigenous people of Aotearoa, the Māori, this is

because the two groups (Maori and Pasifika) share similarities in the level of educational achievement as well as the remedial policies by the government to address the problems. It must be noted from the outset that certain Pasifika groups may represented more than others in the analysis. This is because of the disparity in the availability of data and literature across the Pasifika population.

Although there are many labels that categorise ethnic groups such as Samoans, Tongans, Fijians, Tokelauans, Niueans, and Cook Islanders into one seemingly homogenous group, this study will use the term "Pasifika" when referring to the peoples of the Pacific who live in New Zealand primarily because "Pasifika" is the term the Ministry of Education (MoE) uses in referring to learners who are of Pacific descent (Samu 2006:40).[6] Since the 1950's, many Pacific peoples have migrated to New Zealand in search of a "better future". This essentially means that New Zealand was coveted amongst Pacific peoples as it presented them better-paying jobs and a higher standard of living (de Bres and Campbell 1976:15-18). Notably, formal education in Aotearoa was seen as the key to achieving "a better life" (Siope 2010:15, 82; Jones 1991:55; de Bres and Campbell 1976:17; Māhina-Tuai 2012:177).[7] Many Pacific migrants made significant sacrifices so their children could take advantages of the opportunities offered in their adopted homeland. For instance, one grandparent's legacy "was that he would work the factory floor so that his children would work office jobs, which they did, and that their children, we his grandchildren, would go on to better theirs" (Siope 2010:62). The 1986 Census showed that 63% of full-time Pasifika workers were employed in fields such as labouring and transport and that there were not many of them in white-collar professional occupations (Jones 1991:32).

Gaining a "better life" in New Zealand proved difficult for many migrant Pacific Islanders. The institutionalised racism they faced in the 1960's and 1970's is well documented (see de Bres and Campbell 1976; Perrot 2000; Anae 2012; Ongley and Pearson 1995). New Zealand needed unskilled labour in this period due to the economic growth the nation was experiencing and the Pacific had many people willing to fill this labour shortage (Ongley and Pearson 1995:774). The entry of Cook Islanders, Niueans, and Tokelauans into New Zealand was unrestricted as they were New Zealand citizens (and still are), meanwhile the 1962

[6] This is a relatively recent term. Terms like "Pacific Islander" have preceded "Pasifika" (Samu 2006:40).
[7] Jones (1991:55) points out that colonial administrations in the Pacific convinced Pacific peoples that Western formal educations were a good thing and not only led to enlightenment but also economic gain.

Treaty of Friendship between Western Samoa and New Zealand allowed for an "annual quota of 1,500 migrants, periodically adjusted" (Farmer 1979:38-39 and de Bres and Campbell 1976 in Ongley and Pearson 1995:774).[8]

Despite this mutually-beneficial relationship New Zealand had with Pacific migrants, "the deterioration of economic conditions in the early 1970s…prompted a clampdown on Pacific Islands overstayers involving dawn police raids and random street checks" (Ongley and Pearson 1995:774). This is a large part of the institutionalised racism Pacific migrants in New Zealand faced. Migrants overstaying their permits in New Zealand were generally overlooked until the nation experienced economic downturn (de Bres and Campbell 1976:21). According to de Bres and Campbell (1976:21) the majority of migrants to New Zealand in this period were not from the Pacific but from the United Kingdom and Europe. It is important to note, however, that "there has been no record of Europeans being constantly raided in the manner that Pacific Islanders, innocent or otherwise, have been" (de Bres and Campbell 1976:21). There is no doubt that the practice of targeting Pacific Islanders (or any individual or group bearing the slightest resemblance) was systematic and indiscriminate. In 1974 "a prayer meeting of the Free Church of Tonga was interrupted by police and dog and five more people were arrested, including the Minister of the Church" (de Bres and Campbell 1976:21). This is supported by Anae (2012:223) who points out that young Polynesians in Auckland "were getting picked up, held in custody overnight, appearing at the magistrates' court the next day and getting sent away to borstals and that…[with] no [legal] representative."[9] People who were involved in dawn raids and other associated events were rarely given the opportunity to provide documentation proving that they were not illegal immigrants (de Bres and Campbell 1976:21). Therefore, the dawn raids are synonomous with the institutionalised racism Pacific Islanders faced in New Zealand.

This brief historical overview is important because it shaped the Pacific people's sense of security and determination to succeed. Education was seen as a means to achieve success but the socio-economic and policial conditions they found themselves in impacted on their level of educational achievement. An important factor in the Pacifika people's socio-economic life was the fact that they were predominantly working class (Ongley and Pearson 1995:774; de

[8] Other Pasifika groups such as Fijians and Tongans had normal entry restrictions and their permanent entry depended upon whether or not they had immediate family members who were NZ residents (Ongley and Pearson 1995:774)

[9] Borstals are similar to youth detention centres.

Bres and Campbell 1976:21). Many Pasifika migrants had high expectations and envisioned that their children would not be blue-collar workers like themselves (Siope 2010:62; Jones 1991:32). Pasifika political problems of the past such as this are currently being addresed in education. The state wants educational outcomes of Pasifika to greatly improve through improvement of aspects of education such as pedagogy, curriculum, and the shift towards a more culturally-responsive education (see Madjar et al 2009; MoE 2013a; TEC 2013). This thesis addresses some of these issues in the context of the changing cultures and attitudes within New Zealand and globally.

Aims and objectives

This study aims to:

- Critically examine the notion of "underachievement" and how this is related to the situation of Pasifika education in light of some of the studies carried out on this topic;
- Examine some of the factors which influence Pasifika educational achievement and some of the challenges faced;
- Discuss initiatives of the New Zealand government, non-government organisations and corporate groups to address the challenges of Pasifika education;
- Identify some possible strategies to address some of the challenges identified.

Rationale

This topic I feel is important as the statistics suggest Pasifika learners do not perform well educationally compared to other ethnic/cultural groups such as Palagi and Asians, despite many having parents and grandparents who migrated to New Zealand so that they could have a "better future" (Siope 2010:15; Jones 1991:55). The literature on Pacific education has always been based on emphasising "underachievement" and not so much on the achievements and how to achieve.

The success stories of Pasifika students in addition to the programmes that aim to foster success amongst them are important in our attempt to raise the level of Pasifika academic

achievement.[10] This is in direct opposition to the cultural-deficit perspectives which attribute academic achievement as the sole responsibility of the student, their family, and their cultural background (Irizarry 2009). Even though I consider upbringing and the way cultural identities are transmitted to the learner as important in academic achievement, I feel that the way in which formal education is delivered is equally important. Thus, a key purpose of this thesis is to explore the ways in which Pasifika academic achievement can be improved. This resonates with the goals of Pacific research; one of which is to "advance Pacific peoples directly" (Vaioleti 2006:29).

Methodology

Most of the information gathered by this study has been obtained through literature review. A wide range of sources have been consulted by this study, including:

- Official statistics of the New Zealand government, including bodies such as Statistics New Zealand, Education Counts, and the Ministry of Education;
- The work of international educational theorists and sociologists, such as Apple (2004a) and Bourdieu (1974);
- Government-funded education research projects and official policy documents including *Starpath* and the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017;*
- Pasifika scholars' studies on the achievement of Pasifika students, such as the work of Siope (2010), and Samu and Siteine (2009);
- Non-Pasifika New Zealand-based scholars' research on Pasifika students, such as May (2009).

The notes taken from the existing literature were then organised by theme and sorted into a logical order which assisted and guided the writing process. Some information was obtained through personal communication.

A diverse and wide-ranging body of existing research has been consulted by this study but it is likely that several sources of potentially useful and relevant information have been overlooked. Not all government initiatives related to the academic achievement of Pasifika have been accounted for within this study; some have had to be excluded on the basis that

[10] For instance at St Joseph's, 90 % of the total roll is made up of Pacific pupils and the school wanted to improve the literacy skills of their students, so parents became more involved in their child's reading, reading along with them and discussing what they had read after (MPIA 2010:22).

they are not as relevant to this study as others or do not reflect current goals for Pasifika learners. Additionally, no examples of literature that are overt representations of cultural-deficit theory were encountered by this study—in explaining the cultural-deficit model, this study relies upon the accounts of scholars in opposition to the cultural-deficit model.

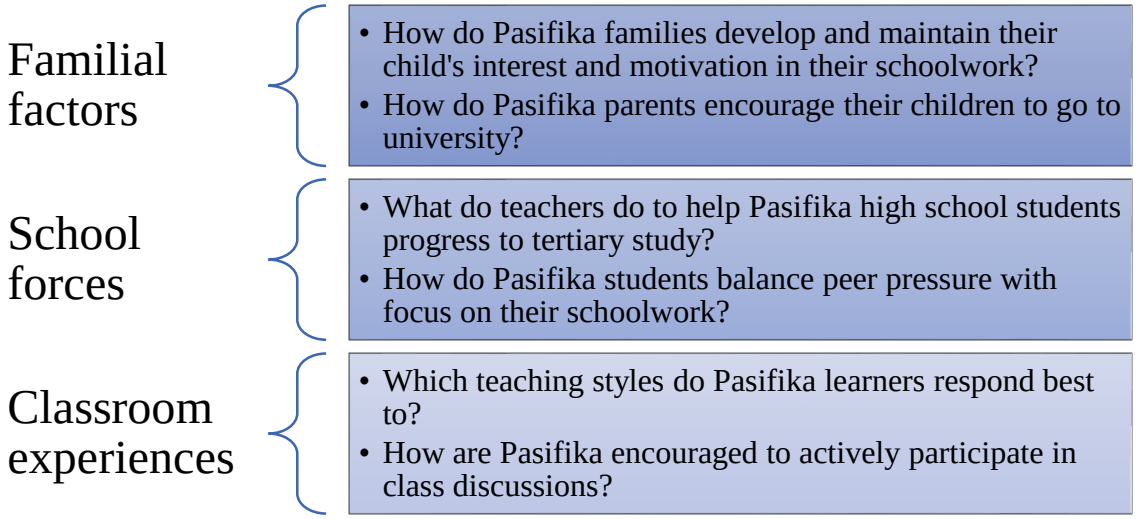
Though some older documents such as the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (MoE 1993) have been included for discussion purposes, older studies on Pasifika academic achievement such as AIMHI (Achievement in Multicultural High schools) and SEMO (Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara) are not considered within this study. In respect to the initiatives to address Pasifika learning, the focus has been on current plans of the government. Previous *Pasifika Education Plans* have not been incorporated in discussion whereas the current version, *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017* is prioritised. It is important to note that in this thesis there are more examples of Pasifika-specific initiatives than there are examples of nationwide policies. Also, discussion around non-government approaches to raising Pasifika academic achievement is partially limited in the regards that there is no mention of Church-based initiatives.

Theoretical approach

This thesis will approach the issue of Pasifika academic achievement through an anti-deficit framework. This framework "inverts questions that are commonly asked about educational disadvantage, underrepresentation, insufficient preparation, academic underperformance, disengagement, and…student attrition" (Harper 2012:5).[11] Dominant discourse is effectively "inverted" or reversed by this framework taking a different approach to explaining academic achievement (See Fig. 1). This is reflected in an adaptation of Harper's (2012:5) anti-deficit framework:

[11] This thesis predominantly draws upon Harper's framework (2012:5). His is created for African American male learners in the United States of America and I am applying this to a New Zealand Pasifika context.

Figure 1: Examples of Anti-deficit questioning



Source: Adapted from Harper (2012:5)

The anti-deficit framework is supposedly more effective in identifying solutions to address lower academic achievement than the cultural-deficit model. Many scholars support this view. Irizarry (2009) contends that the cultural-deficit model attributes "underachievement" and failure to the student and his or her family and cultural background and ignores the influence of the school and teachers upon a student's achievement (see Jones 1991:146). Harper (2012:1) suggests that the cultural-deficit model offers few solutions to improving educational outcomes as it is focused on negative aspects such as failure and finding "deficiencies" in students' cultural backgrounds. Yan (1999:5) adds that the cultural-deficit model ignores the ways families encourage academic success. As this study is primarily concerned with finding ways in which better educational outcomes for Pasifika can materialise, it makes sense that an anti-deficit approach is used (See Fig. 1).

Research questions

This study is guided by four key research questions which are:

- As an overall picture, what does the research say about Pasifika academic achievement in terms of causal factors and challenges?
- How is academic achievement theorised and how does this influence the institutional responses to Pasifika "underachievement"?

- What initiatives (both government and non-government) are in place to address Pasifika learners' relatively low academic achievement levels?
- Which initiatives, approaches, and practices are most helpful to Pasifika students' learning?

Chapters overview

Chapter 2 is a literature review based on identifying and analysing several factors in Pasifika learners' academic achievement. This includes things such as teaching styles, peer influence, and familial support and views on education. It also provides a brief overview of some of the ways in which success can be interpreted. Chapter 3 answers the question "as an overall picture, what does the research say about Pasifika academic achievement in terms of causal factors and challenges?" This chapter will show that there are a range of factors functioning as a prerequisite for success, such as the presence of a support network consisting of not only parents and family but also teachers and support staff. Chapter 4 looks at some of the explanations for achievement; this encompasses theoretical understandings of academic "success" and "failure". These include the cultural-deficit model which alleges failure or underperformance is due to deficiencies in the students' cultural background, and anti-deficit approaches which focus more on the role of the education system in "underachievement". Chapter 5 is then dedicated to government funded initiatives that seek to raise the achievement levels of Pasifika learners. These are divided into two categories: Pasifika-specific, and nationwide policies. Pasifika-specific approaches include the *2013-2017 Pasifika Education Plan* and the tentativeness surrounding Pacific languages' usage in learning. Nationwide policies include things such as partnership schools, which are not necessarily targeted at Pasifika but are relevant to addressing their achievement levels. Furthermore, Chapter 6 will look at the various non-government funded initiatives to raising Pasifika academic achievement. These include mentoring programmes such as Dream Fonotaga (also known as Dream Fono) and Pasifika language bilingual education. Finally, Chapter 7 will present a discussion of this study's findings, in addition to providing overall answers to the research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Many scholars argue that there are many factors which shape academic achievement. For instance, Bourdieu (1974:35) highlights the significance of a family *milieu* (environment) to academic achievement; while Apple (2004a:3) claims the school, knowledge taught within the school, and the educator are part of a wider context. Furthermore, Fuligni's (1997) study of immigrant students in an ethnically diverse part of California focused on a range of aspects including family background, and the attitudes of parents and students towards academic achievement. This is significant because it shows understanding academic success requires knowledge of the background to it. Notably, this rule applies to in a local New Zealand context. In the *Pacific Education Issues Literature Review* (Anae et al 2001) it was found that support from friends, family, teachers, and the presence of role models was influential in the schooling of Pasifika (Anae et al 2001:76).

This literature review will seek to create a deeper understanding of the factors relevant in academic success. Including references to the experiences of other minorities in other monocultural societies, such as African Americans and Hispanics of the USA will help assist this. This literature review is of an interdisciplinary nature as it draws upon a range of perspectives, such as those of Pacific and non-Pacific sociologists, educators, anthropologists, and educators. This literature review will focus on two key research questions:

- "What does the research say about the notions of a background to achievement?"
- "What is success? What role does education play in it?"

In the hope that a strong, focused understanding of these questions provides a strong foundation for answering the rest. This chapter is divided into three sections. Firstly the various theories of achievement (and "underachievement") will be made sense of. Secondly, findings that support the notion that there are influential background factors affecting Pasifika achievement will be discussed. This section will be based on institutional factors such as practices of the school and teachers. Finally, the factors relevant to academic achievement

that are pertaining to the homes and communities of Pasifika learners will be considered. This includes peers and community influences, in addition to a supportive home environment.

Success: what does it mean to Pasifika people?

Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005:488) define "success" for Pacific people as having "life chances" and "life choices". The former refers to being able to thrive in the education system and wider society which are both largely monocultural; whereas the latter refers to someone being able to participate in their own Pacific community and pass on their heritage language to their children if they choose to (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:488). Success, however, also has economic underpinnings for Pacific peoples. Many who migrated from the likes of Samoa, Fiji, and the Cook Islands to New Zealand since the mid-20th century did so for economic opportunities such as gaining better-paying employment (Madjar et al 2009; Jones 1991; Siope 2011; Mulitalo 2001). However, few realised their dreams and as a result, they expected their children to be more successful than themselves (Jones 1991; Siope 2011; Mulitalo 2001). This is reflected in Fetui and Williams' (1996:234) finding that in the early 1980's, Samoan parents objected to their language being used at Hillary College on the grounds that it had relatively low economic value compared to subjects such as accounting. On the other hand, having a good education is a "dream" for parents. Not only does this mean their children can "give back" to their families through financial support but also grants them "qualifications that can get you somewhere" as opposed to doing manual labour (Samu 2006:37). Siope's (2011:82) findings also suggest that Pasifika secondary school students felt that through education they could gain well-paying jobs. Success for them meant being able to support their family and honour and serve their parents (Siope 2011:82).

Theorising achievement and "underachievement"

The literature examined features a slight variety in the way academic achievement is conceptualised and explained. These different perspectives can be separated into two different categories: the cultural-deficit model, and the post-deficit or anti-deficit discourse (Harper 2012:5). The cultural-deficit model focuses upon "underachievement" and is concerned with explaining failure (Harper 2012:1). It frames "underachievement" as the fault of the student and their family (Irizarry 2009). Some scholars such as Robinson and Biran (2006:47) are of the view there are different schools of thought within the cultural-deficit

framework. These include the cultural deficiency and the cultural difference perspectives (Robinson and Biran 2006:48). Nevertheless, many theorists of academic achievement are quick to denounce the cultural-deficit model. According to Yan (1999:5), "[Deficit perspectives] ignore the ways in which African American families promote successful school achievement and experiences." This is but one of the many criticisms of the cultural-deficit model found in this study. The practice of attributing poor academic performance to students and their families also occurs in New Zealand and amongst Pasifika students. May (2009:15) remarks that the lack of academic achievement amongst Pasifika in New Zealand has been attributed to their culture, language, and approach to teaching and learning. In all, the cultural-deficit model is one of the more notable perspectives on academic achievement.

While the cultural-deficit model attempts to explain failure and is focused on "underachievement", what Harper (2012) describes as "anti-deficit perspectives" focus on explaining academic success. These approaches are more accurate according to Harper (2012:4) than cultural-deficit approaches simply because we learn more from the success stories. Anti-deficit approaches include asking questions such as "how do the school and teachers prepare Pasifika students for university?" Whereas Nakhid (2003:305) suggests obtaining the views of Pasifika students and their parents—instead of relying upon the school's deficit-based view of them. This is significant because these perspectives on Pasifika and their achievement determine the institutional policies and approaches related to them (Nakhid 2003:305). Therefore, the review reveals that there are two main perspectives on achievement. Yet the cultural-deficit model is more popular in addition to being the dominant discourse; Even though it is a biased perspective it is "counterbalanced" by anti-deficit approaches (Harper 2012:1). Overall, the literature covered by this study featured two distinct theories of academic achievement, the cultural-deficit model and the anti-deficit view.

Streaming

The practice of streaming plays a rather important role in academic achievement. Streaming is a common practice in New Zealand schools and effectively partitions students by their level of ability (Nakhid 2003:302). It is a practice with implications for Pasifika students who may be channelled into "low-status" or "non-academic" subjects and be subjected to career mapping (Nakhid 2003:302). This process is also linked to how the school and teachers perceive their students in addition to what the teachers expect of them (Nakhid 2003:302).

Furthermore, Silipa's (2004) study sheds some more light on the implications of streaming and career mapping. Samoan high school students who were struggling with their schoolwork were referred to specialist programmes by their teachers (Silipa 2004:206). Not only did this make them feel inferior in terms of ability but that they were not valuable members of the school (Silipa 2004:206). This is confirmed by (Nakhid 2003:302) who affirms that schools create an identity for a student by subjecting them to streaming them into classes depending on their perceived ability. The school effectively denies the student the freedom to create his or her own identity (Nakhid 2003:303). Overall, streaming is but one part of the factors impacting on achievement.

Curriculum

Curriculum also shapes achievement. Curriculum content selection and teaching are not innocent empty practices but ones that have significant impact upon academic achievement. Apple (2004a:6) suggests that the curriculum consists of "socially legitimate knowledge" that is based on one ideology pre-empting another. More so, curriculum can be better understood by questioning it; especially in regards to where the knowledge contained within it comes from, who the knowledge belongs to and what social groups it supports (Apple 2004a:13). Amongst African Americans, Robinson and Biran (2006:49) found that the subject matter in high school text books is not engaging or empowering because it does not help them better understand themselves or their community. Notably, these text books do not mention African Americans which implies they are insignificant (Robinson and Biran 2006:49). This shows that curriculum can potentially be used as a tool to encourage academic achievement in addition to being part of the background to academic achievement. However, curriculum can also maintain unequal achievement levels. Apple (2004b:178) argues that the multiculturalism schools incorporate into their curriculum are usually conservative. By this it is meant that the contributions of others will be mentioned as a side note (Apple 2004b:178). Notably, Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001) labels the Ministry of Education as "gatekeepers" who only want Pacific languages to be taught as a subject (rather than be used as the teaching medium). Nakhid (2003:310) echoes this criticism, contending that schools only let Pacific cultures, languages, and identities to only be articulated at the annual Polyfest. In all, as suggested by the literature, curriculum is a key component of the cultural background to academic achievement.

Inclusion in the curriculum

Though curriculum is significant to academic achievement, the literature reviewed suggests it is more specifically important how Pacific cultures and people are included in the curriculum. In the previous paragraph it was shown that mentioning and other conservative forms of inclusion are some examples of how curriculum can be a hindrance when it comes to academic achievement. Inclusion in the curriculum therefore is a problematic aspect. Siteine and Samu (2009) highlighted this with their study of secondary school social studies teachers and their curriculum. The majority of the teachers in the study felt that their knowledge of the Pacific was inadequate; therefore using Pacific content in their curriculum would be a challenge (Siteine and Samu 2009:52).

Despite this, Siteine and Samu (2009) point out there are three different types of how Pacific content can be included in social studies curriculum: the "oceanic perspective", "the small-island perspective", and the "tourist perspective" (Siteine and Samu (2009:54). The oceanic perspective is based upon the work of Epeli Hau'ofa and emphasises the Pacific as being a sea of islands as opposed to isolated islands in a large ocean; drawing upon pre-European Pacific indigenous knowledge (Siteine and Samu 2009:54). Whereas the small-island perspective focuses on geographic discourse—smallness, remoteness, and dependency are some of the key words to describe this perspective (Siteine and Samu 2009:54). On the other hand, the tourist perspective emphasises an idealised, stereotypical Pacific image that assumes Pacific cultures are static (Siteine and Samu 2009:54). These last two ways of conceptualising the Pacific in curriculum will undermine Pasifika learners' identities and sense of belonging, especially the tourist perspective (Siteine and Samu 2009:54, Anae 1997). Robinson and Biran (2006:67) aptly state that: "[ideally] curriculum sends the message that African people are of value in American society"; to them, this will help raise the achievement levels of African American students in America. Perhaps the terms "African" and "American" can be substituted for "Pacific" and "New Zealand". A curriculum with the Oceanic perspective would definitely portray Pacific people as valuable to New Zealand society. Overall, the inclusion of Pacific culture in the New Zealand curriculum is problematic but undoubtedly viable.

Pacific languages in the curriculum

Doubly problematic and important to academic achievement is the inclusion of Pacific languages in the curriculum. According to May (2009:7) bilingualism needs to be seen as a resource for success rather than something that inhibits success. The dominant (and popular) discourse on bilingualism is that students cannot use two languages in their education because Pacific languages and English language are supposedly oppositional (May 2009:7). This means that the two are irreconcilable and clash with each other. Additionally, Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001:205) describes the refusal to include Pasifika languages in education (beyond preschool) as based on educationally-irrelevant and political grounds. Language and more specifically bilingual curriculum is an important part of the background of academic achievement; this is because the experiences New Zealand-born Samoan students have with their native language and ethnic identity can either be a positive or negative influence on their achievement. While Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001:203) reports that bilingual programmes have resulted in Samoan high school students in New Zealand achieving well amongst all subjects; Anae (1997) suggests ethnic identity-particularly that of New Zealand-born Samoans is fluid as they are subjected to a range of labels and confusion. Therefore, Pacific language and identity especially in education is a somewhat dubious and complex aspect of the background of academic achievement.

Teachers

On the other hand, the literature is clearer on the role teachers play in achievement. They too are part of the background of academic achievement. Siteine (2010) points out that the different types of teachers (at the intermediate level) and the way they teach social studies in a multicultural society influences the students' ethnic identities. For instance, teachers may choose to embrace differences, or ignore them altogether (Siteine 2010). Pasifika students could be marginalised if they are not included in the classroom programmes and resources (Siteine 2010). Nakhid (2003:301, 309) adds that the way teachers and the school treat Pasifika students' identities also plays a part in academic achievement. For instance, Nakhid's (2003:309) study of Pasifika high school students in Auckland found that teachers have low expectations of Pasifika because they believed the students dress, speak, and behave

in a "lower-class" manner. Judging students based on the values of their respective *milieu* is a by-product of teachers being "products of a system whose aim is to transmit an aristocratic culture" (Bourdieu 1974:39). Therefore, these are just some of the negative implications teachers have on the academic achievement of Pasifika students within the literature.

Though teachers can be a negative influence, the literature reviewed also suggests they can help Pasifika achieve better in their education. Anae et al (2001:80) argue that participants found teachers helpful in advising them on future tertiary education plans. Remarkably, the same participants felt that guidance counsellors and careers advisors were not as helpful in comparison to the teachers that assisted them (Anae et al 2001:80). Whereas Silipa's (2004:197) study established that teachers who had a close positive relationship with their Samoan students not only learnt more about their culture but were able to support them better. More so, teachers are an instrumental part of the background to academic achievement because they are influential to their students (Anae et al 2001:78). For instance, they can help a student realise what their strongest subject is, motivate them, give them belief, and help them with tertiary entrance procedure (Anae et al 2001:78). In all, teachers constitute an important part of the context to academic achievement because they can either be a positive or negative influence upon their students.

Interestingly, some of the research critiqued how teachers see the students' families and parents. The relationship between teachers and students' parents therefore may play a role in achievement. According to Yan (1999:20) educators need to interact more with parents and better understand different ways of parental involvement. Stereotypical attitudes and conceptions of minority parents are ineffective when it comes to raising achievement of minorities (Yan 1999:20). Nakhid (2003:307, 310) adds that teachers' teaching style and limited interactions with Pasifika parents and communities are counter-productive. This is because the parents are generally viewed by teachers as disinterested (Nakhid 2003:307, 310). Remarkably, the teachers interviewed by Nakhid (2003:307) blamed the parents and the home for their students' poor performance in the classroom—even though the teachers had little or no interaction with the parents. This shows that teachers who do not know their students well will rely upon stereotypical images in conceptualising the students' parents. Despite this, St Josephs School in Otahuhu, Auckland helped their Pasifika students (who make up 90% of their total roll) by involving parents in their child's reading (MPIA 2010:22). Parents read along with their children and then discussed what they read (MPIA

2010:22). This example shows that when teachers and parents collaborate they are able to further the students' learning. Overall, teachers' perceptions of students' families and parents was presented as significant by the research covered by this study.

Counsellors, mentors, and other institutional support

Equally important within the background to academic achievement is the role careers advisors, mentors, and educational support programmes play in the achievement of Pasifika students. Support personnel, policies, programs, and resources are all important in guiding students to tertiary study (Harper 2012:4; Anae et al 2001:76). Although some scholars such as Anae et al (2001), Tuiletufuga (2001) and Nakhid (2003) are wary of counsellors and institutional support; the general consensus of the literature studied is that these support networks do encourage academic success. Despite this, it is noteworthy that Harper (2012:10) found in his research on high achieving African American young males that guidance counsellors gave misinformed bad advice to them. They "channelled" them into "comprehensive state universities", discouraged them from "elite private institutions like Williams College or Brown University", and did not approve of Black Colleges (Harper 2010:10). Harper (2010:10) implies support staff need better training and more African American input as Black Colleges (on the contrary) are beneficial for African Americans. This shows that counsellors and support staff have an influential role in achievement because they can play a large role in deciding which type of tertiary institution minority students end up in. More so, Anae et al (2001:81) report that mentoring services for young Pacific high school students is important to getting them into tertiary. Participants suggested that dialogue and more communication between Pacific tertiary students and Pacific high school students would be beneficial (Anae et al 2001:81). Though it would be motivational and personal, the high school students would be able to relate to their tertiary counterparts (Anae et al 2001:81). More so, the high school students may develop their interest in tertiary study and learn from the mistakes of the more experienced tertiary students (Anae et al 2001:81). In all, the literature reviewed suggests that while counsellors and other institutional support are influential in students' success, they need to be positive influences in order for success to be cultivated.

Pedagogy

However, the literature examined placed little emphasis on the importance of pedagogy. In comparison to other aspects of the background of achievement, pedagogy is given little attention. Despite this, some scholars do mention it. Nakhid (2003:308) for example reports that Pasifika high school students find maths boring because of the language the teacher uses in addition to his or her general lack of enthusiasm. On the other hand, Silipa (2004:198) highlights the positive effects of incorporating an effective pedagogy within the classroom. He found that Samoan students were given more autonomy over their work and creative freedom by teachers—this developed trust and a sense of purpose in addition to incorporating the value of va fealoa'i (mutual respect) (Silipa 2004:198). Overall, pedagogy remains a relatively obscure aspect of the cultural background to academic achievement. This is because the research examined does not consider it to be important.

Parents and the transmission of cultural identity

Several scholars consider that cultural identity and the way parents pass cultural traditions and values on to their children is very important to success in school. For example, in an American context, Schneider and Lee (1990:368) report that high achieving East Asian students had parents who encouraged "education for self-improvement, self-esteem, and family honour." These same students also were made to work twice as hard as their White American counterparts (Schneider and Lee 1990:370). This is because the parents thought their children would be racially discriminated against (Schneider and Lee 1990:370). This shows that cultural identity is significant to academic achievement as it can be used to raise achievement of students. More so, Fuligni (1997:352) adds that the children of immigrants are told stories of struggle, sacrifice, and hardship by their parents. These stories make the children aware of what their parents went through and this is a motivational factor in schoolwork (Fuligni 1997:352). Whereas Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001:203) argues parents implicitly teach attitudes towards their culture to the children simply through the type of language they use. For instance, parents who used broken English conveyed the message to

their children that English language and culture is better (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001:203).[12] Therefore, the different types of cultural identity parents transmit to their children plays a role in their academic achievement.

Families and their attitudes towards education

Additionally, the attitudes towards education that parents teach their children constitute a large part of academic achievement. The research examined confirms this. Bourdieu (1974:32) points out that families indirectly transmit an ethos to their children that shape the latter's attitudes towards education. Ethos is the essence of a culture; an example could be the fa'asamoa to Samoans. More importantly, the literature suggests that which attitudes are taught are more important than how they are taught. An international (American) example would be Lopez's (2001 in Irizarry 2009) study. He reports that the Latino parents in his study personally show their children the agricultural work they do; they do this so that the children realise education provides better work and income (Lopez 2001 in Irizarry 2009). Also, parents transmit an attitude towards education by having high expectations of their children (Robinson and Biran 2006:51; Fuglini 1997:352). While Schneider and Lee (1990:370) point out that having higher expectations than Palagi parents in terms of education is a key characteristic; Anae et al (2001:75) add that tertiary education is commonly seen amongst Pasifika as the "key to a secure future." This attitude was reinforced by the families of participants which echoes Bourdieu's (1974:32) earlier point (Anae et al 2001:75). Meanwhile, Harper (2012:9) contends high achieving young males had parents who viewed college was the only way to achieve upwards mobility and success.[13] Confirming Bourdieu's (1974:32) idea of ethos being transmitted as important in shaping attitudes towards education; Harper (2012:19) clearly states: "parents and family members must convey to Black boys as early as possible that college is the most reliable pathway to success." Therefore, attitudes towards education—especially the type of attitude that parents teach their children is an instrumental part of the cultural background to achievement. The international and local literature studied undoubtedly confirms this.

[12] They used broken English instead of their native tongue which denied their children the ability to see the richness and value of their own language (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001:203).
[13] Harper's study was conducted amongst high achieving African American males.

Supportive home environment

Equally important to achievement is a supportive home environment. Though it is noteworthy that the local research emphasised this more than the international literature did. This is underlined by the various Samoan proverbial expressions that relate to having a supportive home environment. “Ia tupu i se fusi” translates to “may you grow in a swamp” (Schultz and Herman 1949:182). This relates to the growing of taro in fertile, wet soil and a child growing up in an equally rich environment (Schultz and Herman 1949:182). In the context of academic achievement this proverb highlights how families may provide support and invest in education. Anae et al (2001:77) build on this, adding that the support of the wider ‘āiga especially parents is a critical aspect of the cultural background to achievement. The swamp-like home environment is one where parents help by: “ensuring they were doing their study, buying materials and resources which would assist in their study, giving the opportunity or time to devote to study or making the home environment more conductive for studying” (Anae et al 2001:77). Additionally, the alaga’upu “fa’afanauga a laumei” compares parents and children to turtles and their young (Schultz and Herman 1949:150). This proverbial expression likens parents who create a negative and careless environment for their children to turtles. Samoans believed that turtles ate their young as soon as they were hatched which makes the turtle a bad parent (Schultz and Herman 1949:150). Thus, an exceptional home environment is an important part of achievement. This idea is found throughout the local, Pacific literature consulted by this review.

Peers and community

On the other hand, the roles friends, peers, and other members of the community play in academic achievement are also important to success. Despite this, peers and community are an overlooked part of the context to educational success. Though there were some scholars whose research considered the importance of social networks and friends in achievement. Bourdieu (1974:35) points out that peer groups are a significant part of the *milieu*. This is because peer groups influence the ideas and actions of an individual belonging to the group (Bourdieu 1974:35). This influence can either be negative or positive, however the literature studied focused on how peers contribute to success rather than failure. Fuligni (1997:352)

supports this; pointing out that the support of friends may compliment the support the student receives at home (Fuligni 1997:352). Undoubtedly, the support of both friends and family working in unison is better than them working against each other. This would occur if the student had friends who distracted him or her from their schoolwork. Anae et al (2001:80) report that successful Pasifika students distance themselves from friends who "wagged" and engaged in too much leisure. Correspondingly, it was found that successful students associate themselves with peers who have similar goals in terms of schoolwork (Anae et al 2001:80). Whereas Fuligni (1997:358) adds that these groups of friends helped each other with homework, tests, in addition to providing encouragement. The importance of these peer networks extends to tertiary education. Anae et al (2001:79) suggest that friends not only provide healthy competition—but also emotional support when participants were feeling lonely during their first year of tertiary study. Therefore, the literature studied indicates that peer networks constitute a relatively significant part of the context to academic achievement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this review sought to make sense of the context to Pasifika learners' academic achievement. This context was made up of several factors. Though there are many, a select few were discussed within this report. These were: peers and community, supportive home environment, culturally-based attitudes towards education, parents and the transmission of cultural identity, pedagogy, counsellors and other institutional support, teachers, pacific languages in the curriculum, inclusion within the curriculum, and issues of streaming. The research definitely suggests cultural and social factors play a part in academic success. It is noteworthy that the research encountered by this study directly opposed deficit theorising in regards to Pasifika academic achievement (see Nakhid 2003; Harper 2012; Silipa 2004). Although there is a lot of research detailing the schooling experience of Pasifika students, there are some gaps in the literature. The ways in which Pasifika academic "underachievement" is being addressed need to be explored in more depth. Issues of inclusion and representation for Pasifika peoples in the curriculum need to be studied further. It is also apparent that quite a noticeable amount of the existing literature focuses on one or two aspects of the background of Pasifika academic achievement. While this has its merits such as providing well-focused insights, it provides little analysis on the relationships that exist between factors in academic achievement. These relationships have not been explored extensively in relation to Pasifika leaners. Though there are many aspects to Pasifika

academic achievement, the literature encountered did not offer many answers as to how Pasifika academic achievement is being addressed. Overall, this study will address some of the gaps identified by this literature review.

Chapter 3: Background of research on Pasifika students' academic achievement in Aotearoa

Introduction

The existing body of research on Pasifika academic achievement is diverse and represents a wide range of discourses. Some academics such as Siteine and Samu (2009) highlight the problematic nature of representing Pasifika within the curriculum, whereas the likes of Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001) and May (2009) contend that Pasifika languages and worldviews are useful in teaching Pasifika but are excluded in their education. Pasifika students' cultural identities are also factors in their academic achievement according to academics such as Nakhid (2003), Anae (1997), and Siteine (2010). Much of the existing research on Pasifika academic achievement also emphasises that students' parents and families are important to their success in school; in addition to their teachers and various support staff such as guidance counsellors. The influence of peer networks, particularly friends, is also significant to student success.

This chapter weaves the existing body of research on Pasifika academic achievement with the work of educational theorists and sociologists such as Bourdieu (1974), Franklin (2004), and Apple (2004a) with the aim of explaining the background to academic achievement of Pasifika learners. It is important to note that scholars such as Bourdieu (1974) make reference to a hegemonic and dominant ruling class, sometimes referred to as the *bourgeoisie.* In New Zealand the *bourgeoisie* are the politically dominant and educated elite Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent) (Thomas and Nikora 1996:30; Liu et al 1999:1026). They function as a conservative force and this is exemplified in the way minorities' cultural representations are "censored" within education and wider society (Apple 2004a:13; see Siteine and Samu 2009:54; May 2009; and Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001). Furthermore, Thomas and Nikora (1996:30) contend that New Zealand is an assimilationist society which has a history of delegitimising the cultural and political values of minority groups (particularly the Māori); while neoliberalism is evident in the nation's recent moves to "privatise" education, particularly in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods (see Parata 2013; QPEC 2013b).

The curriculum and challenges for Pasifika learners

School curriculum poses challenges for a wide range of students; Pasifika learners are no exception to this rule. This is because curriculum is not something innocent, unintentional and without consequence. It is deliberate and planned. The knowledge within it comes from somewhere and belongs to a certain social group (and therefore supports their interests) (Apple 2004a:13). This is based upon the assumption that a politically and numerically dominant ethnic group of a pluralistic society would have curriculum that supports their interests (such as maintaining the status-quo and hegemony) (Apple 2004a:13). A curriculum that upsets and opposes the omnipresent ways of thinking therefore would have difficulty in being granted national status.

According to Siteine and Samu (2009) there are three main ways the Pacific is presented within the curriculum: the oceanic perspective, the small island perspective, and the tourist perspective. This mainly applies to the social studies curriculum of New Zealand but can relate to other subjects which may incorporate Pacific topics.

Firstly, the oceanic perspective is based upon the work of Epeli Hau'ofa (1993), especially his widely-renown *Our Sea of Islands*. Using this framework in the classroom would mean avoiding the usage of Eurocentric rhetoric about the Pacific (Hau'ofa 1993:150). These include notions such as "Pacific nations are too small and have far too few resources to ever rise out of their state of dependency on the powerful former colonial powers" (Hau'ofa 1993:150). Ideas like these would be replaced in the oceanic framework by their "Pacific" counterparts.[14] For example, in the classroom a teacher using this perspective would encourage his or her class to consider the migratory nature of Pacific peoples and how they transcend "national and economic…borders that have been defined only recently [by colonial Palagi]" (Hau'ofa 1993:151). He or she would emphasise the Pacific in a manner that shifts away from these bleak perspectives. Rather than teaching the students to view the region as geographically small and economically weak, they would be encouraged to see it as a large

[14] Ideally these ideas and perspectives are drawn from 'Pacific' knowledge(s) and experiences but it would be dangerous to accept 'Pacific' as homogenous and every Pacific person sharing the same perspective and experience. Therefore, I suggest that the Oceanic perspective is more based upon the perspective of Pacific scholars such as Epeli Hau'ofa who critique dominant discourse—as opposed to the consensus perspective of Pasifika people.

interconnected network of Pacific peoples that spans not only the Pacific homelands but the metropoles of Australia, New Zealand, and USA (Siteine and Samu 2009:54; Hau'ofa 1993:152)

However, a more commonly used discourse is the small-island perspective. A curriculum featuring this view would focus on the likes of Samoa and Tonga's geographical smallness, human and economic development, and gross domestic product to name a few (Siteine and Samu 2009:54). Effectively, this purports the Pacific Islands as being MIRAB states—small, economically backward states that will forever depend on migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy (Pacific leaders as aid "beggars") (Hau'ofa 1993:150). Siteine and Samu (2009:54) believe this approach's use in the classroom is detrimental. Hau'ofa (1993:151) adds:

> What kind of teaching is it to stand in front of young people from your own region, people you claim as your own…and you tell them that our countries are hopeless? Is this not what neo-colonialism is all about? To make people believe that they have no choice but to depend?

Therefore, the small-island discourse is bad for Pasifika students not only because it has negative implications for the ways they conceptualise their homeland[15]; but also because it encourages neo-colonialist (and therefore not "free thought").

Equally troublesome is what Siteine and Samu (2009:54) identify as the "tourist perspective" which (superficially) focuses on the "traditional". What this means is that Pasifika students have their culture "put on show" in the classroom by having half-hearted experiences of Pacific cuisine, language, and dance (Siteine and Samu 2009:54). Even though this attempts to include the Pasifika students within the curriculum; their worldview, cultural identity, and preconceptions about their culture may be compromised. This is because this curricular viewpoint has the potential to advance stereotypes about the "traditional" cultures of the Pacific and therefore imply to the students that they are not "authentic" (Anae 1997; Siteine and Samu 2009:54). More so, their cultural presence could be ignored within the curriculum (and the school) and relegated to co and extra-curricular activities such as the annual Polyfest (Nakhid 2003:313).

This relates to Apple's (2004b:178) point that conservative forms of multiculturalism are incorporated into the curriculum. These inclusions are often tokenistic. For instance,

[15] And by association their history, culture, and language.

textbooks may be written in a manner that "mentions" the contribution of marginalised groups of society (Apple 2004b:178; Robinson and Biran 2006:49). This is the practice of dedicating a small amount of text to mentioning and recognising the "other's" contribution to society (Apple 2004b:178). Anything that threatens the dominance of English language will not be permitted in a conservative curriculum (Apple 2004b:178). This includes (but is not limited to) bilingual teaching and Pacific (and indigenous) ways of being (see Fetui and Malaki-Williams 1996; May 2009; Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001). Pasifika (and other New Zealand minorities') knowledges and experiences are unlikely to be included in the curriculum in the near future because the *bourgeoisie* have institutionalised their cultural norms, values, customs, and worldview in education (Jones 1991:94; Bourdieu 1973). To become "educated" in school, a learner therefore must assimilate the "dominant culture" whether that be the dominant group's mannerisms or conceptualisations of the world (Jones 1991:93-94).[16] There is strong evidence which suggests that this is the case in New Zealand's education system—many students determine how valuable knowledge is through its assessment credit value in the NCEA system (Madjar et al 2009:41). If this is the case, then excluded or grudgingly-included knowledge must be of little value to the learners.

Exclusion of Pacific languages and worldviews in the education of Pasifika students

Much of the research conducted on Pasifika students suggests that Pacific languages and worldviews are excluded from the curriculum. Referring to the well-established A'oga Amata (Bilingual Samoan pre-school programme), Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001:204) states that "the linguistic strengths of students are not being valued beyond the preschool level." By this it is meant that teaching in English and a Pacific language (that is native to the learners) is unacceptable to the "gatekeepers" of New Zealand's education system.[17] May (2009:4) agrees, suggesting that bilingualism has been institutionally restricted—language loss is not the entire fault of Pasifika peoples. Thus, it is safe to say that Pacific languages, worldviews, and identities are excluded from formal education.

The Ministry of Education wants the likes of Tongan, Samoan, and Fijian to remain as subjects rather than being used in more extensive ways in learning (May 2009:14; Tuafuti

[16] The "dominant group" of New Zealand refers to the Pākehā Anglo-Saxon ruling class.
[17] Hunkin does not elaborate on whom the 'gatekeepers' are but I assume he means the Government including policymakers, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Pacific Island affairs and curriculum planners.

and McCaffery 2005). Though there is increased pressure from Pasifika peoples now to meaningfully include their languages; these attitudes were not always widely-held (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005; Fetui and Malaki-Williams 1996). In the early 1980's, Fetui and Malaki-Williams (1996:234) found that Samoan parents opposed the inclusion of their language being used at Hillary College because subjects such as accounting had more economic value.[18] Effectively, they believed that it jeopardised their children's chances of upwards mobility.

However, exclusion should not be thought of as just in terms of language. It equally applies to Pacific ontologies and epistemologies, which are closely related to worldview and beliefs about reality (Strega 2005; Mahina 2004; Kovach 2005). Ontology is essentially a worldview; a theory about what exists and what can exist (Strega 2005:201). Ethnic groups can have their own ontological definitions about the world so it is not untruthful to believe that people can be living in "different worlds" (Davidson and Tolich 2003:24). Therefore, by limiting the importance of Pacific languages in learning, the associated beliefs and perspectives (of languages other than English) are implied to be insignificant. Of equal status accorded by the New Zealand education system are Pacific epistemologies. According to Strega (2005:201), "an epistemology is a philosophy of what counts as knowledge and "truth"; it is a strategy by which beliefs are justified." Essentially, it is the labels, names, and concepts which people use to define and justify their social reality (Mahina 2004:44). Though there is a lack of explicit research on the exclusion of Pacific worldview in New Zealand's education system, Siteine and Samu's (2009) work represents how certain ways of seeing the world are contested within the curriculum. If the Oceanic perspective is an example of Pacific worldview in social studies—it is often rejected in favour of those perspectives which are closer epistemologically and ontologically to the beliefs of the dominant in society. It is noteworthy that the dominant discourse 'teaches' indigenous people that western ways of 'knowing, being, and doing' are the most legitimate and desirable (Strega 2005:204).

At school I've got a chance: a vignette of exclusion

In Jones' (1991) study of Pacific Islands girls' academic achievement at Auckland Girls Grammar, the findings resonated with the above point made by Strega (2005:204). Though

[18] Hillary College in Otara, Auckland was the first high school in New Zealand to feature Samoan language being taught as a subject (Fetui and Malaki-Williams 1996:234).

these girls' ways of being and seeing the world were rejected throughout their education, what mattered most were its implications. For instance, in one social studies class the "lower-ability" streamed girls were learning about gender role stereotypes (Jones 1991:125-6). Even though they participated actively in discussions around this topic, their input was largely ignored. The teacher was looking for adjectives that stereotype girls and the Pasifika contingent called out things such as "Bad! Good! Sl**s!" (Jones 1991:125-6). However this was not recorded on the board; things such as "dainty", "pretty", and "quiet" were accepted though (Jones 1991:125). Therefore, the realities of the students is at odds with the ontological definitions of the curriculum (Jones 1991:125). This is noteworthy as "the subtle and unintentional exclusion of the 5 Mason girls from understanding and learning school knowledge is a systematic and ongoing process" (Jones 1991:127).[19] Despite taking numerous notes, the Pacific Islands girls gained a superficial understanding of topics such as "gender role stereotyping" (Jones 1991:127). Because of this, many of them (the first generation of New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders) failed to meet the expectations their parents had of them, especially upwards mobility (Jones 1991). Overall, the exclusion of Pacific worldview and experience in the classroom means that understanding of important topics is often made difficult.

Pasifika students' cultural identities and academic achievement

"Cultural identity" lacks a universal definition as it is difficult to define completely. However, there is plenty of research on identity and attempts to accurately theorise and conceptualise it. Though there is a plethora of research on what cultural identity is; I will briefly discuss two relevant key discourses to explain what I mean by "Pasifika cultural identities".

The first of these discourses contends that ethnicity is socially constructed. This means that "individuals have multiple ethnic identities" as "ethnic groups are constructed and reconstructed as individual identifications change" (Bayar 2009:1643). In essence, ethnicity is an "emotional attachment…born out of social interaction" (Eller and Coughlan 1993:184). Individuals' sense of belonging to an ethnic group is therefore dependent on how they feel about themselves. Furthermore, Epstein (1978:111) introduces a concept known as the

[19] The 5 Mason stream/class was the name of the predominantly Pacific middle-class cohort of students, in contrast with the 5 Simmonds stream/class which was largely made up of Pakeha and middle-class students.

"intimate culture". This refers to sites of contestation such as "ethnic gatherings" where individuals' cultural identities are reinforced, navigated, and challenged (Epstein 1978:111). Ethnic gatherings in a Pasifika context can include things such as fa'alavelaves (distractions) which encompass large-scale funerals, weddings, and family reunions. Ethnicity therefore, can be claimed as being socially constructed; as it is dependent upon the feelings of an individual who are to varying extents influenced by others.

On the other hand, the second discourse is based upon the idea that ethnicity is primordial. This essentially means that an ethnic identity is "first created or developed" and has "persisted from the beginning" (Eller and Coughlan 1993:187). Spicer (1971:796) adds that it is part of a "persistent identity system" which effectively means ethnic identity is "handed down" from parents to children. Unlike the aforementioned discourse which suggests ethnicity is socially constructed, "primordial identities or attachments are…prior to all experience or interaction" (Eller and Coughlan 1993:187). This effectively means that an individual's ethnic identity is influenced more by ineffable characteristics passed down by parents than their social interaction patterns. Shils (1957:142 in Eller and Coughlan 1993:184) supports this notion, stating that ethnicity "is not cemented through interaction; rather, it derives its strength from a certain ineffable significance…attributed to the tie of blood."

Tying this into Pasifika students and their identities, Anae (1997) argues that New Zealand-born Samoans' identities are problematic (not just in relation to learning) as they face "labelling" from a multitude of other parties—this could possibly apply to all Pasifika youth born in New Zealand. The process of labelling or conceptualising Pasifika students, identities, languages, and cultures in education is significant as the way Pasifika are theorised determines the institutional responses to them (Nakhid 2003).

Because Pasifika is such a diverse category that overlooks the differences between the ethnic groups that make up that pan-ethnic group—the students and their cultural identities are bound to be theorised in a variety of ways by the school (Nakhid 2003; Anae 1997; Siteine 2010). The curriculum is increasingly being used as a tool of forming students' identities and this is problematic as New Zealand is a plural society (Siteine 2010:7). Teachers can choose how they wish to treat identity within the classroom; particularly in social studies (Siteine 2010:7). For instance, what Siteine (2010:3) describes as a "cultural provider" is a teacher

who is primarily concerned with the ethnic identity of minority students. Though cultural providers generally believe that minority students are often confused about whom they are; they also believe a curriculum dominated by Eurocentric worldview undermines Pasifika students' ways of "seeing" and "being" in the world (Siteine 2010:3)

On the other hand, some teachers may be "cultural populists" and will emphasise national identity (Siteine 2010:7). This identity is invented. By that I mean a national identity framework is drafted by the teacher and then is taught as the-one-and-only national identity (when in fact it is based upon the ideals of the teacher). Learners are encouraged by cultural populists to make connections to the "kiwi" or "New Zealander" culture so that they are able to identify as "kiwis" (Siteine 2010:6). This style of teaching and curriculum is largely monocultural (thus risking alienation of minority students). The type of identity taught in the classroom is a significant topic because curriculum is used to shape student's attitudes and understandings (Franklin 2004:61). Therefore, by taking a "cultural populist" or "cultural provider" approach to teaching (especially social studies) a teacher will be directly forming the learners' thinking about themselves and their position in wider society.[20]

Furthermore, students' cultural identity does affect their academic achievement in various ways. It would be misleading to suggest that schools do not preserve (and create) inequalities through their "evaluative procedures" (Franklin 2004:62). Nakhid (2003:309) reports that teachers generally conceive of Pasifika learners' cultures, speech, and dress as being "lower-class" and "low-status". This is significant because the identity allocated to the students by the teachers and school determines the institutional responses towards them (Nakhid 2003). Streaming learners (dividing them into groups based upon ability or ethnicity) and mapping their careers are some examples of the questionable responses to minority learners in school (Nakhid 2003; Franklin 2004; Bourdieu 1974). Essentially, by streaming students (and treating them in associated ways) the school is rejecting the identities the learners have created for themselves—this is replaced by a school-and-teacher-created identity and therefore school quickly becomes a "place of containment rather than attainment" (Nakhid 2003:313). Silipa (2004:206) supports this notion, asserting that Samoan high school students in his study felt that they did not belong in the school when they were referred to specialist

[20] By position I mean in terms of ethnicity, power, class, and gender

programmes.[21] Equally problematic is the relegation of Pasifika identity and its exploration to cultural festivals such as the Polyfest (Nakhid 2003:303). This implies to the Pacific learners that school is not a place for "culture" despite being subjected to the "invisible" dominant culture throughout their schooling career (Bourdieu 1974; Franklin 2004).

The importance of Pasifika parents and families in academic achievement

The literature encountered by this study generally suggests that the family of a Pasifika student is significant to their academic achievement in unique ways. For instance, there is a general consensus that the family transmits their beliefs and attitudes towards education to their children (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001:203; Bourdieu 1974:32; Schneider and Lee 1990:368; Anae et al 2002a:75). According to Bourdieu (1974:32), "each family transmits to its children, indirectly rather than directly, a certain cultural capital and a certain ethos. The latter is a system of implicit and deeply interiorised values which, among other things, helps to define attitudes towards the cultural capital and educational institutions." This essentially means that families shape their children's attitudes towards learning. It can be as simple as developing a love of reading, or encouraging homework to be done on time. Additionally, it can also apply to the attaining of tertiary qualifications. Anae et al (2002a:75) found that participants generally believed that gaining a degree would guarantee a financially secure future. These values and attitudes can be ingrained into a worldview; drawing upon their study of East Asian students in America, Schneider and Lee (1990:368) report that they are raised with a "cultural tradition which places a high value on education for self-improvement, self-esteem, and family honour." Comparatively, Pasifika learners considering tertiary education perceived family members who graduated as a source of inspiration (Anae et al 2002a:77). These students were particularly mesmerised by the symbolic nature of the graduation ceremony (Anae et al 2002a:77).

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that parental support is a decisive factor in Pasifika academic achievement. Parents support their child(ren)s' achievement in many ways including "ensuring they (the learners) were doing their study, buying materials and resources which would assist in their study, giving the opportunity or time to devote to study or making the home environment more conductive for studying" (Anae et al 2002a:77). Though fathers are

[21] It is noteworthy that these students were contrasted by Silipa (2004:206) with students who had close relationships with their teachers and their higher sense of belonging within the school.

important to parental support; Madjar et al (2009:61) point out that mothers are the cornerstone of support at the home. Nevertheless, parents can be incorporated by the school to develop synergy and a unified approach to achievement. Meetings that featured a desire by both parties (family, student – and teacher) to succeed were beneficial—in the regards that they helped Pacific Islands parents better understand how they could participate in their child's schooling (Madjar et al 2009:80). Another example is that of St Joseph's school in Otahuhu, Auckland where Pasifika parents were given more responsibility in reading with their child (MPIA 2010:22). At St Joseph's, 90 % of the total roll is made up of Pacific pupils. They and their parents were tasked with reading alongside eachother and then discussing what they learnt after (MPIA 2010:22).[22] However, Jones (1991:13) interestingly suggests that the pupils who are born into privileged families are more likely to succeed at school (or as Jones puts it, "get access to educational rewards available in New Zealand"). This means that parents with more cultural capital aligned with the school such as familiarity with the education system and a wide range of books. More so, this is unintentional on the part of teachers as it is "a product of the way in which educational institutions tend to work" (Jones 1991:13). Jones (1991:13) used this theory in her study, which centred upon working class, female Pasifika high school students and their perceived lack of "power and privilege within New Zealand" (Jones 1991:13).

On the other hand, Pasifika parents also support their children through the encouragement and aspirations they abide by. They may not be involved (according to the teachers) due to English being a second language or difficult work hours—but their aspirations and encouragement are significant (Fuligni 1997:352; Madjar et al 2009:78; Nakhid 2003). Therefore, the popular notion that Pacific parents do not do enough to help their child's/children's schoolwork cannot be applied to all Pacific parents (Nakhid 2003:307). Rather, it would be more productive to find ways to include them meaningfully in supporting their children—especially as the parents interviewed by Madjar et al (2009:78) do not want an insignificant role in their child's education. Though Pasifika parents are important as sources of encouragement for their children in regards to education; their aspirations are equally significant. Pacific parents of the 1980's were shown to like teaching styles where the students sat quietly and took a lot of notes (Jones 1991:97). They strongly encouraged their children to work hard at school which meant doing a lot of note-taking and listening. By

[22] Pasifika make up 90% of St Joseph's total roll (MPIA 2010:22)

comparison, they were indifferent to discussions and group activities in the classroom (Jones 1991:97). Indeed, the Pacific Islands girls in Jones' (1991:57) study did work hard in the classroom; but on the whole did poorly in examinations and did not gain the careers their parents had envisioned.[23] Regardless of this, the encouragement and aspirations of Pasifika parents is undoubtedly important in their children's academic achievement.

Furthermore, there is much evidence to suggest that family and education is closely linked. Parents, it seems, are not at all unlike teachers (Bourdieu 1974; Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001; Anae et al 2002a; Jones 1991). Bourdieu (1974:37) aptly states: "all the characteristics of a school career, in terms of schools attended or subjects taken, are indices of the direct influence of the family *milieu"*. What this means is that the family environment which has social, cultural, and class connotations is an important factor for the learner in the classroom. Additionally, there are many Samoan proverbs that support the notion that parents are like teachers. For example: "O le tama a le manu e fafaga I 'ia ma fuga o la'au, ao le tama a le tagata e fafaga I upu ma tala." This roughly translates as "Animals and birds feed their offspring with fish and seeds or berries of trees but the children of humans shall be fed with words" (Le Tagaloa 1996:16). [24] Essentially, this means that a child of a family is taught to have certain values or beliefs amongst other things.

Since parents are teachers in a sense, it seems logical that there needs to be effective communication between them and the school and teachers (Anae et al 2002a:75). Yan (1999:20) agrees with this, pointing out that: "educators need to increase their awareness and acknowledgement of cultural differences in parental involvement in order to better challenge their own and other's stereotypical ideas and attitudes toward minority parents." This holds true in New Zealand and for Pasifika students; Nakhid's (2003:307) study found that the overwhelming majority of teachers interviewed felt Pasifika parents were unconcerned with education and had low expectations of their children. Interviews with the learners themselves actually showed parents did care and had high expectations; but did not partake in teacher-parent evenings for a variety of reasons such as work commitments or not being told about them by their children. This shows that the "distance" between school and parent needs to be shortened. In essence, there needs to be more effective communication between parents and schools which results in better understanding of parents and their culture (Yan 1999:19).

[23] See the prior paragraph, which has one of Jones' explanations for this.
[24] Proverbs are part of epistemology; they are metaphors which reflect ontology or a way of seeing the world.

Also, NCEA needs to be easily understood especially by parents who are familiar with a different education system, do not have higher education qualifications, who are not strong in the English language, and generally are pessimistic about their abilities to help their children in New Zealand's education system—so improved communication between Pasifika parents and schools opens up opportunities for this to be explored (Madjar et al 2009:94). Parents' understanding of NCEA is critical. Currently, it inhibits their ability to participate fully in helping their children make the right subject choices (Madjar et al 2009:78). In all, family and education are closely linked and this is manifested in the 'desire' for better communication between the family and the school.

The role of teachers in Pasifika academic achievement

Correspondingly, teachers play a big role in Pasifika academic achievement.[25] They can help a student realise what their strongest subject is, motivate them, give them belief, and help them with tertiary entrance and career planning (Anae et al 2002a:78). Also, Silipa (2004:197-8) shows that having a close positive relationship with teachers helped Pasifika students immensely. Teachers were able to develop their knowledge of their student's culture and were able to support their students better (Silipa 2004:198). This is evidenced by Silipa's (2004:198) contention that the Samoan value of va fealoa'i (mutual respect) was incorporated to an extent in classrooms examined in his research. This is because the Samoan students he studied had more autonomy over their work and creative freedom; this developed a sense of trust between the two parties and both accepted their responsibilities and purposes that came with the social arrangement that is va fealoa'i (Silipa 2004:198). Additionally, Madjar et al (2009:77) report that many teachers covered by the *Starpath* project saw themselves as professionals, a good influence on subject choice, and "advisors" to the learners. Though teachers can undoubtedly be a positive factor in Pasifika academic achievement; they can also potentially stifle achievement. This is seen in Jones' (1991) study of Pasifika girls at high school. Their social arrangement was different. They were unintentionally treated as "empty vessels" at school which means they had little or no knowledge (Jones 1991:74). On the other hand, the teachers were "full vessels", full of knowledge to "pour" into the students

[25] Unfortunately there is no quantitative data that measures the difference 'culturally-responsive' research makes that this thesis has considered.

(Jones 1991:74). Teachers would avoid asking questions to the class that the 5 Mason girls[26] were in to "cater" to the girls' "shyness" but unwittingly perpetuated this social arrangement (Jones 1991:74). Notably, this "relationship between the teacher and the student is one-directional and the student relies heavily on the teacher's judgement as to what is worth learning, what is "true" and "false", and so on" (Jones 1991:74). Pasifika learners at this school were treated (inadvertently) as if they had no relevant knowledge to contribute to learning (Jones 1991:74). Teachers using this style may be playing a negative role in Pasifika academic achievement.[27] Not only do they restrict the engagement of students but they also devalue the learners' own knowledge and experience. Therefore, teachers have the potential to be negative or positive influences over academic achievement; regardless of which type of influence they are, it is evident that they are decisive in a learner's education.

On the other hand, support staff, such as careers advisors and guidance counsellors also play an important role at school (Madjar et al 2009:72). This also applies at the tertiary level; the first year is commonly regarded as the most difficult because it requires adaptation and transition to a foreign environment (Harper 2012:11; Anae et al 2002a:80). Though support systems throughout high school are important as are programmes dealing with the transition into tertiary study; the research covered by this study almost unanimously discredits support staff (Anae et al 2002b:92; 2001:81).[28] There are parallels here with international research. In America, Harper (2012:10) found in his research on high-achieving young tertiary-level African American males that they had negative experiences with guidance counsellors. They tried to direct them to "comprehensive state universities and historically black universities" and discouraged them from applying to "elite private institutions like Williams College or Brown University" (Harper 2012:10). Similarly, in New Zealand, guidance counsellors and careers advisors were found to be not as helpful as teachers by Anae et al (2002a:80). More so, Anae et al (2002b:92) point out that guidance counsellors may discourage Pacific Islands students from attending universities; instead directing them to the likes of polytechnics or private training institutions. This is alarming considering the relative lack of Pasifika participating in tertiary education (Anae et al 2002a; Madjar et al 2009).

[26] The 5 Mason stream/class was the name of the predominantly Pacific middle-class cohort of students, in contrast with the 5 Simmonds stream/class which was largely made up of Pakeha and middle-class students.
[27] I use the word 'may' because this study focused on the old School Certificate system which is markedly different from the modern NCEA system.
[28] The exception to this is the initiatives set up to encourage dialogue and 'mentoring' between Pacific high school students and Pacific university students (Anae et al 2002a:81).

Though the research analysed by this study is generally critical of support staff and their role in Pasifika academic achievement; some of the academics such as Nakhid (2003), Silipa (2004), and Jones (1991) are equally critical about the negative role teachers play in the education of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. Nakhid (2003:305) suggests that the approach to Pacific students at school is counterproductive. The blame that is placed on Pacific students', their families, and their culture(s) by teachers is misplaced and therefore masks the shortcomings of the education system and the teacher (Nakhid 2003:305). For example, in Silipa's (2004:206) study, Samoan learners who struggled with course content were sent to specialist programmes which made them feel "dumb" even though they felt they were capable. This relates to Nakhid's (2003:307-310) point that teachers' teaching style, pedagogy, and limited interactions with Pasifika parents and communities were counter-productive. This is because the parents were viewed as disinterested and the students were viewed as recently-arrived migrants who struggled with the English language. Whereas Jones (1991) points out that Pacific Islands girls refused to participate in discussion because they understood their role in the classroom as empty vessels. Clearly, the research seems to say that the manner in which Pasifika are treated within the school is fraught with misconceptions.

The role of peers in Pasifika academic achievement

On the other hand, the influence of peers and friends in Pasifika academic achievement is secondary in importance to family, teachers, and support staff. Anae et al (2002a:79) argue that successful Pasifika students had friends that were positive influences in regards to their schoolwork (Anae et al 2002a:79). Not only did they provide emotional support and help each other but they also provided healthy competition and comfort when participants were feeling lonely during their first year of tertiary education (Anae et al 2002a:79). More so, participants associated themselves with peers that had similar goals and motivation in regards to academic achievement. They distanced themselves from negative influences including those who "wagged" and engaged in too much leisure at the expense of their schoolwork (Anae et al 2002a:80). Siope (2010:58) adds that "peer culture" does impact upon how well individuals pertaining to a group do educationally. Overall, this shows that friends and peers do play an understated role in Pasifika academic achievement. Additionally, Bourdieu (1974:35) suggests that peer groups are part of the *milieu*; these groups influence the ideas

and actions of an individual belonging to the group and therefore they are part of the environment related to schoolwork. Jones' (1991:15) work revealed that those who were expected to do well were grouped together—while those who were expected to not achieve were grouped together. If some students with potential are put in the latter stream, this may harm their chances at academic achievement because they have a higher exposure to negative influences (such as wagers) than those in the former stream. In all, though the research considered by this study focuses on the importance of family and teachers in schoolwork; friend networks and peer groups are still noteworthy in documenting achievement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the background of research on Pasifika academic achievement represents a wide range of discourses. For instance, the curriculum is problematic for Pasifika learners and this is reflected by the various ways the Pacific can be represented in the curriculum and the exclusion of Pacific languages and worldviews within the curriculum. This was shown to exemplify conservative multiculturalism (Apple 2004b:178). Additionally, some scholars such as Nakhid (2003) and Anae (1997) add that Pasifika can present challenges due to the imagined homogeneity within the Pasifika pan-ethnic label and the challenge of responding to students' cultural identities. On the other hand, the family and parents of Pasifika learners are of utmost importance to their academic achievement according to scholars such as Anae et al (2002a:75). Whereas scholars such as Nakhid (2003), Silipa (2004) and Madjar et al (2009:72) suggest that teachers and school support staff also are important to Pasifika academic achievement. Friends and peers were shown to be an equally significant background factor to Pasifika academic achievement.

Chapter 4: Explanations for Pasifika students' level of academic achievement

Introduction

There is a wide range of explanations for Pasifika students' academic success and failure. Broadly speaking, theories on achievement tend to fall under two categories: those that emphasise the role of students' backgrounds (see Yan 1999, Robinson and Biran 2006); and those that attempt to explain variances in achievement by examining the institutional factors such as the school's teaching styles or course content (see Jones 1991 and Evans 2011). The former focuses on things such as students' ethnic identity and background, as well as his or her family's socio-economic position in society and racial stereotypes. On the other hand, the latter category of theories centre upon relationships between institutional factors and achievement. These may include faults of the education system, the role of teachers (including teaching styles and interactions with parents), and challenges with NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement). Even though it is tempting to pigeonhole the existing explanations into either cultural-deficit or anti-deficit categories, this would lead to a rather superficial understanding. Therefore, this chapter will examine some of the key features of both explanations of achievement. Firstly, the cultural-deficit model will be introduced, followed by the idea that everyone is given a fair chance at achievement. Then notions of a "cultural match" and "cultural capital" will be examined. To wrap up the section on the first category, this study will suggest that the manner in which these theories conceptualise culture is a site of contestation. Furthermore, the anti-deficit approaches will be explained, as well as the idea that education reproduces unequal social conditions and maintains the status-quo. More so, the NCEA system poses a challenge to students making good decisions and parent participation in education. These will be juxtaposed with insights into teachers' and their teaching practice, and parents and privilege. It is noteworthy however, that many scholars see the raising of achievement as the job of both the education system and the family (Harper 2012; Irizarry 2009; Jones 1991; Hunkin 2001; Yan 1999; Madjar et al 2009).

Theories that emphasise the role of students' families and cultures in academic achievement

The cultural-deficit model

The cultural-deficit model is one of the most notable discourses on academic achievement. It specificall
y focuses on how students' backgrounds affect their achievement. These "background" factors can include: cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs, parental guidance and involvement, and the income of the family as a whole. However, the literature examined by this study generally views the cultural-deficit model as a negative explanation of academic success. This is because it focuses on failure and "underachievement". More so, it is an incomplete representation of achievement. Though the lack of success is attributed to the student and his or her family, the role of the school and teacher is ignored by the cultural-deficit theory (Irizarry 2009). Effectively, this approach makes the assumption that the school, teacher, and education system are fine; the problem is with the student and his or her *milieu*.

The education system, including teachers, therefore may perceive Pasifika and other minority students as lacking the required learning styles and cultural capital in order to succeed (Jones 1991:181; Robinson and Biran 2006:48). Nakhid's (2003) study revealed that some teachers of Pasifika learners did indeed have these views. For example, when questioned as to why Pasifika achievement was so low, they attributed it to the students' socioeconomic status and culture (Nakhid 2003:309). Pacific students were effectively thought of as having "lower-class" dress, mannerisms, and language which inhibited their ability to succeed at school (Nakhid 2003:310). One teacher even believed their "culture" was inextricably "low socioeconomic" (Nakhid 2003:309). This is an example of the cultural-deficit framework because it focuses solely on the students' background in explaining achievement. When it was put to Pasifika students in Nakhid's (2003:309) study that their teachers believed they were not achieving because of their socioeconomic status, they flatly disagreed with that notion. Remarkably, the teachers believed there was nothing wrong with their teaching style or the language they used (which the students felt did not stimulate their interest in the subject) in assessing Pacific students' "underachievement" (Nakhid 2003:308). This resonates with Irizarry's (2009) point that adherents of the cultural-deficit model are uncritical about the school's and teacher's influence on achievement. These teachers are also

preoccupied with explaining the academic "underachievement" of their Pasifika students and seemingly, there is no consideration on their behalf of how their students' families promote academic success (Harper 2012; Yan 1999:5). In all, the cultural-deficit model is but one example of a theory that emphasises the role of students and their families and culture in academic achievement.

The individual is responsible

Furthermore, cultural-deficit explanations of achievement present the argument that the individual is responsible for his or her achievement. This relies on two assumptions: that everyone is supposedly given a fair chance at success, and that the role of teachers and schools in academic achievement are ignored to an extent. Teachers sometimes exemplify this when framing "underachievement" as the fault of the student (Nakhid 2003:309). When this happens, the school (and by extension teachers and education system) is pardoned of responsibility for "underachievement" (See Apple 2004a; Franklin 2004). This is supported by Jones (1991:146) who states that "when people believe that patterns of school success and failure are due primarily to individual abilities, the reality of power relationships within a society – particularly within its educational institutions – is concealed." Additionally, Pasifika learners may be "cooled-out". This essentially means that they are repeatedly told by teachers that they are guaranteed social mobility if they apply themselves in schoolwork but are channelled into more "realistic" pathways (Clark 1961 in Jones 1991:170). Jones' (1991:170) study of female Pasifika high school students demonstrates that not all students are given a "fair chance" at success; some are "cooled-out" and led to believe it is completely their fault that they did not get the results that they thought they would.

Cultural "matches" and "mismatches"

Explanations of achievement also make mention of a "cultural mismatch". By this it is meant that the respective "cultures" of the school and the home are at odds with each other. Since the two "cultures" are irreconcilable, it is believed that students who have a cultural background that is at odds with that of the school will not be successful. Jones (1991) exemplifies this belief: "there is a match between the middle-class girls' class cultural approach to teaching-and-learning, and those of their teachers" (Jones 1991:136). This statement was made when contrasting Pacific working-class high school students and Pākehā

middle-class students. Essentially, Jones (1991) was alluding to the fact that Pasifika students' cultural capital was not "rewarded" by the school. The two Pacific Islands girls in 5 Mason (one graduated from university with a BSc, and the other got a bank clerk job) were different from the rest (Jones 1991:181). One sat alone and did not have many close friends, whereas the other had a father who worked at a university in the field of linguistics and their mothers were not Pasifika but Pākehā (Jones 1991:181). Therefore, cultural capital is not just to do with ethnic groups as it can vary between individuals of the same ethnicity.

As a result, this perspective suggests there is a "cultural conflict". Madjar et al (2009:48) provide an example of an overseas-born Tongan father who is completely baffled by the NCEA system and teachers who try to explain his daughter's subject selection to him. Essentially he wants to know why his daughter has not continued her computer course despite excelling at it; in his mind the school is not supporting her aims of becoming a teacher because they are confusing her (Madjar et al 2009:48). By Madjar et al's (2009:48) account it seems that he has made an honest attempt at trying to understand what the teachers are telling him, but there is an implied "cultural conflict". Essentially, it is implicitly suggested that the Tongan father has a cultural understanding of the school that is different from that of the school and the teachers, and prevents him from understanding NCEA fully. In all, explanations for achievement that focus on the students' backgrounds commonly feature notions of a "cultural match" or "mismatch".[29]

Theories that focus on the role of the education system, teachers, and schools in academic achievement

Anti-deficit approaches

Anti-deficit approaches to educational achievement have been developed by some scholars in response to the cultural-deficit model. This is because they feel the latter is ineffective. The deficit approach to education offers few solutions because it is focused on the negatives such as "underachievement" (Harper 2012:1). Yan (1999:5) points out that deficit approaches ignore the ways families encourage success; while Nakhid (2003:305) argues that the current deficit-based institutional approaches to Pasifika students' and their educational issues are

[29] It is a possibility that the notion of "cultural matches" or "mismatches" rely upon the assumption that ethnicity is primordial as opposed to socially constructed.

dismal. Essentially, anti-deficit approaches have been formulated in response to the perceived unproductiveness of the cultural-deficit approach. These new approaches seek to address issues of "underachievement" from a markedly different stance. This is difficult though because the cultural-deficit model is so prevalent. Despite this, Harper (2012:7) provides a framework for challenging this hegemonic explanation for lack of achievement. It is based around questions focused on the agency of the education system. While he researched African American males, his framework may have some merit in being applied to Pasifika learners in New Zealand (Harper 2012:7). For example, his framework includes questions such as: "how do parents help shape Black men's college aspirations?" and "what compels Black men to take advantage of campus resources and engagement opportunities?" (Harper 2012:7). This is significant because it addresses what the deficit perspectives ignore:

> The popular one-sided emphasis on failure...must be counterbalanced with insights gathered from those who somehow manage to navigate their way to and through higher education despite all that is stacked against them—low teacher expectations, insufficient academic preparation for college-level work, racist and culturally unresponsive campus environments, and the debilitating consequences of severe underrepresentation, to name a few (Harper 2012:1).

This not only illustrates the shortcomings of the cultural-deficit perspective but also the merits of the anti-deficit approaches to achievement. For example, the latter encourages researchers and educators to critically examine the education system; while the former renders the education system invisible in the equation of achievement (Jones 1991:146). In all, anti-deficit explanations for achievement are borne out of critical responses to the cultural-deficit model.

Education reproduces the status-quo

Also, scholars who focus on the role of the education system tend to stress that it reproduces the status-quo. By this it is meant that education produces unequal outcomes and reproduces inequalities. I noticed that this was a recurring theme amongst the likes of Bourdieu (1973; 1974), Apple (2004), Franklin (2004), Jones (1991), and Nakhid (2003). Education, it seems, does this because it is strongly linked to economic factors such as policies that "require some people are relatively poor and unskilled and others are not" (Franklin 2004:60). This would not only decrease the quality of education for some learners but also harm their future opportunities as a result of receiving a low quality education. Thus, schools "work" for the dominant social groups of society, such as the ruling class (Jones 1991:188; Franklin 2004:60). Schools effectively "stream" students. Those who are seen as being future "white-

collar" (or professional and well-educated) workers will be given ways to develop their sense of flexibility, choice, and problem solving abilities (Franklin 2004:62). Their curricula and teachers will emphasise these skills and values (Franklin 2004:62). On the other hand, those learners who are seen as "lower-class" or prospective unskilled workers will have a school experience that will stress values such as punctuality, neatness, and obedience (Franklin 2004:62). This has implication for Pasifika students as they and their culture are commonly seen as "lower-status" (Nakhid 2003:309). Therefore, very few of those seen as "lower status" will achieve the upwards mobility many Pasifika parents expect (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001; Fetui and Malaki-Williams 1996). This could be due to their experiences with hegemony. This is "an organised assemblage of meanings and practices, the central, effective and dominant system of meanings, values and actions which are lived" (Apple 2004a:4). Because they may have experienced or lived the school streaming them into lower-status careers, they accepted it as their fate. Jones (1991) argued that female Pasifika high school students who failed to live up to the high expectations of their parents blamed themselves not their school or teachers. In all, education reproduces the status-quo and its associated inequalities.

Complexity of NCEA

Though the education system does reproduce if not generate inequalities, one way it inadvertently does this is through the NCEA system. Because it is difficult for students and their parents to navigate, they generally end up making bad choices that impact upon their future career options (Madjar et al 2009). This is relevant to the "bigger picture". Currently, those ethnic groups currently underrepresented in tertiary-level study are restricted from gaining higher levels of representation (Madjar et al 2009:100). This is because what Madjar et al (2009:100) term the "status-quo"—the NCEA system and other aspects of New Zealand's education system—must change. In order for NCEA to perform to its full potential, students need to be able to make well-informed decisions with quality support from their school and parents (or caregivers) (Madjar et al 2009:94). I believe "quality support" in this context entails parents being well-versed in the language of NCEA. That would enable parents to better assist their children in making decisions in regards to subjects and mapping out their careers (Anae et al 2002b). More so, NCEA needs to be easily understood especially by parents who are familiar with a different education system, do not have higher education qualifications, who are not strong in the English language, and generally are pessimistic

about their abilities to help their children in navigating New Zealand's education system (Madjar et al 2009:94). By being more "responsive" to these parents, it is implied that changes in NCEA will lead to the "status-quo" changing and producing better educational outcomes for Pasifika students (in addition to other minority and working-class students). But in present times, the NCEA system is doing these students a disservice:

> It is evident from our study that many students do not manage to navigate their way through senior high school and the NCEA system in a way that facilitates the realisation of their and their parents' aspirations. The complexity of the system and the multiple and sometimes poorly signposted pathways students can follow, makes it likely that many students will fail to achieve their educational potential (Madjar et al 2009:105).

This shows that learners need support and guidance during their time in navigating the NCEA system, but they generally have difficulty in doing so as their parents' understanding of NCEA is just as inadequate. In all, the education system of New Zealand reproduces inequalities through the NCEA system and the confusion it generates amongst students and parents.

Though the Starpath report (Madjar et al 2009) showed that parents of New Zealand were generally confused by NCEA on the whole; Pasifika parents especially were confused by it. Therefore, the NCEA system effectively prevents Pasifika parents from participating in their children's education. It is difficult for parents and students alike to navigate (Madjar et al 2009:44, 48). This is because there is a wide range of subjects offered to learners but without the right guidance they can make poor misinformed subject choices (Madjar et al 2009:20). They need the guidance of their parents; but their input is stifled. This is because the parents' (surveyed by Madjar et al) general lack of understanding and knowledge of NCEA prevents them from participating fully in helping their child/children making the right subject choices (Madjar et al 2009:78). This effectively shows that parents, although they can be confused, generally do not want to be unimportant in their child's decision making and there needs to be more ways to include them meaningfully (Madjar et al 2009:78).

Remarkably, there are documented accounts of Pasifika parents working alongside teachers to find the best possible solutions (Madjar et al 2009:80). Though meetings between student, teacher, and parent(s) can often be negative experiences, Madjar et al (2009:55) show that these meetings can be used to achieve positive results. An unnamed school researched by the Starpath project (Madjar et al 2009:55) held meetings between student, his or her parent(s),

and form teacher. The purpose of these meetings was to review the student's: subject choices, future plans, and academic performance (Madjar et al 2009:55). Over seventy % of parents attended these meetings and generally reported that they had a better understanding as a result (Madjar et al 2009:55). This shows that effective engagement of Pasifika parents is required in order to raise the achievement levels of their children. Education therefore would not only be more culturally responsive but it would be more adapted to the cultural capital of the parents. There is an implied lack of familiarity with the education system; they may also have difficulties with the language used in NCEA-related documents. In all, Pasifika parents and learners alike are generally confused by NCEA and thus they navigate it poorly.

Parents, cultural capital, and privilege

Furthermore, according to Jones (1991:13) "schooling…confers success and privilege on those pupils who are already advantaged within society, and denies it to most of those who are not. Whether we like it or not, our parents' privilege has a lot to do with [succeeding]." Essentially, this means that because Pasifika learners and their families lack cultural capital and privilege, they are heavily disadvantaged in education. This has been seen in the previous subsection where the NCEA system was presented as challenging for Pasifika learners and their families. Inadvertently, Pacific students were disadvantaged by the NCEA system—their cultural capital was not included. Whereas other students more familiar with the system were conferred success as they knew which subjects to take and choices to make in order to reach their educational goals. More so, the provision of information to Pasifika peoples regarding NCEA (such as the meetings between student, parent(s), and form teacher) may be discredited by the dominant and culturally privileged. Bourdieu (1974:38) points out that the latter may see these "labouriously-acquired" values and knowledge as only valuable "when they are innate." In all, theories that focus on the role of the system in educational achievement tend to take the view that it disadvantages some based upon their cultural capital and privilege.

Teachers and their practice

Teachers have a wide range of conceptions (and misconceptions) about their Pasifika students and their cultural identities (Siteine 2010; Nakhid 2003). Therefore, they can have a negative impact upon the achievement of Pasifika learners. In Silipa's (2004:206) study, Samoan high

school students felt they did not belong within the school when told by teachers to get help from specialist programmes. It is implied they expected teachers to care for them. Creating identities for Pasifika students is also a negative practice on the part of teachers and schools; not only are Pasifika learners' commonly imagined as lower socio-economic but they are also streamed into lower-status career paths (Nakhid 2003:302, 307, 309). Also because some teachers may adhere to the cultural-deficit way of thinking, they may be uncritical about their pedagogy which may bore or marginalise some students (Nakhid 2003:307).

Despite this, teachers and their practice can be a positive influence in Pasifika learners' education. Teachers who had a close and positive yet professional relationship with their Pasifika students proved to be beneficial (Silipa 2004:197). Not only did the students feel they were supported better; they also felt their teachers had a better understanding of them and their culturally-specific values and ways of learning (Silipa 2004:197). Whereas Anae et al (2002a:80) found that participants in their study of Pasifika learners generally were of the view that guidance counsellors and careers advisors were not as helpful as teachers. They gave "better" advice (Anae et al 2002a:80). Essentially, teachers have the power to positively influence their students. They can help a student realise what their strongest subject is, motivate them, develop their confidence, and help them with tertiary entrance and career planning (Anae et al 2002a:78). This is reflected in Silipa's (2004:198) study: Samoan high school students were given more autonomy and creative freedom in their schoolwork by teachers. This not only developed a relationship based on trust, responsibility, and purpose but also symbolised va fealoa'i (strong mutual respect, accountability) (Silipa 2004:198). Furthermore, Harper (2012:15) found in his research that high achievers had experiences that their lower-achieving peers did not have—including influential teacher(s). In all, teachers are an important factor in Pasifika learners' education; this includes their practice, pedagogy, and approach.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the wide range of explanations for the varying levels of Pasifika students' academic achievement. It was shown that there are two predominant types of theories on academic achievement: those that focus on the role of students' backgrounds; and those that centre upon the institutional factors such as teachers, the school, and the education system. The former theories emphasise things such as students' ethnic

identity and background, as well as his or her family's socio-economic position; whereas the latter explanations stress the influence of institutional factors on learners' academic success. These may include faults of the education system, the role of teachers (including teaching styles and interactions with parents), and challenges with NCEA. Since this chapter was dedicated to exploring the various justifications for Pacific learners' achievement levels, several of the key features of the aforementioned theories were discussed. These included: the notion that everyone is given a fair chance at achievement, the possibility of a "cultural match" and "cultural capital", and that "culture" in explanations which focus on students' backgrounds is contentious and is a site of contestation because it is loosely defined. On the other hand, this chapter also covered aspects of anti-deficit or education system-centred approaches to Pasifika achievement. These included: the idea that education reproduces unequal social conditions and maintains the status-quo, that the NCEA system poses a challenge to students making good decisions and parent participation in education, in addition to schools favouring those students who possess the necessary cultural capital. In all, there are several different ways of conceptualising Pasifika learners' academic achievement. Despite this, they can be divided up into two distinct groups; one being concentrated on learners' backgrounds, and the other being education system-centred.

Chapter 5: Government Initiatives to Address Pasifika Academic Achievement

Introduction

The New Zealand government has established and is overseeing many initiatives that aim to make Pasifika learners more academically successful. Through the *Starpath* (2009) research reports, the government (through the Tertiary Education Commission[30] (TEC) have identified possible changes to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) system, particularly in regards to subject choice and academic pathways in secondary school that would see Pasifika make the most of the subjects available to them. Also, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017* (PEP) that directly focuses on the learning of Pacific students. This has many aims and visions for Pasifika people, and this chapter discusses these in addition to the characteristics of the latest PEP and educational outcomes the MoE expects for Pacific learners. Furthermore, the ERO (2012a) found that there were many implications of applying the previous *Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012* into schools and practical situations.

This chapter then focuses on school's initiatives to build better relationships with Pasifika parents and communities which relate to the PEP's vision for school-community networks (MoE 2013a). By comparison, much of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs' (MPIA) policies focus on Pacific languages, including their place in education of Pasifika learners. Though the MoE has provided the *Tupu* series of Pacific literature materials, the *Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika* (LEAP) resource, and released the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (NZCF) it is the MPIA which places a greater emphasis on Pacific languages. The MPIA has released the *Pacific Languages Framework* (PLF) and the *Pacific Peoples Constitution Report* which outline the goals for Pacific languages and the "special" place of Pacific languages in New Zealand respectively.

[30] According to Patterson (2012:9), the TEC "is the government agency responsible for providing funding to all New Zealand tertiary providers based on the performance funding to all New Zealand tertiary providers based on the performance and achievement of key goals and strategies that TEC outline and is responsible for a $2.7b annual investment in tertiary education."

This study will then consider the issues surrounding literacy and the various approaches of both the MPIA and MoE to address Pasifika literacy; in addition to arguing that the attitude towards Pacific languages and worldview in education is dually conservative and hegemonic. The government's strategies for raising Pasifika achievement at the tertiary level will then be discussed, followed by two recent nationwide policy initiatives of the government and their implications for Pasifika success in learning. These are the introduction of partnership schools, and the introduction of National Standards.[31] Overall, the New Zealand government have a variety of initiatives that seek to improve educational outcomes for Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa.

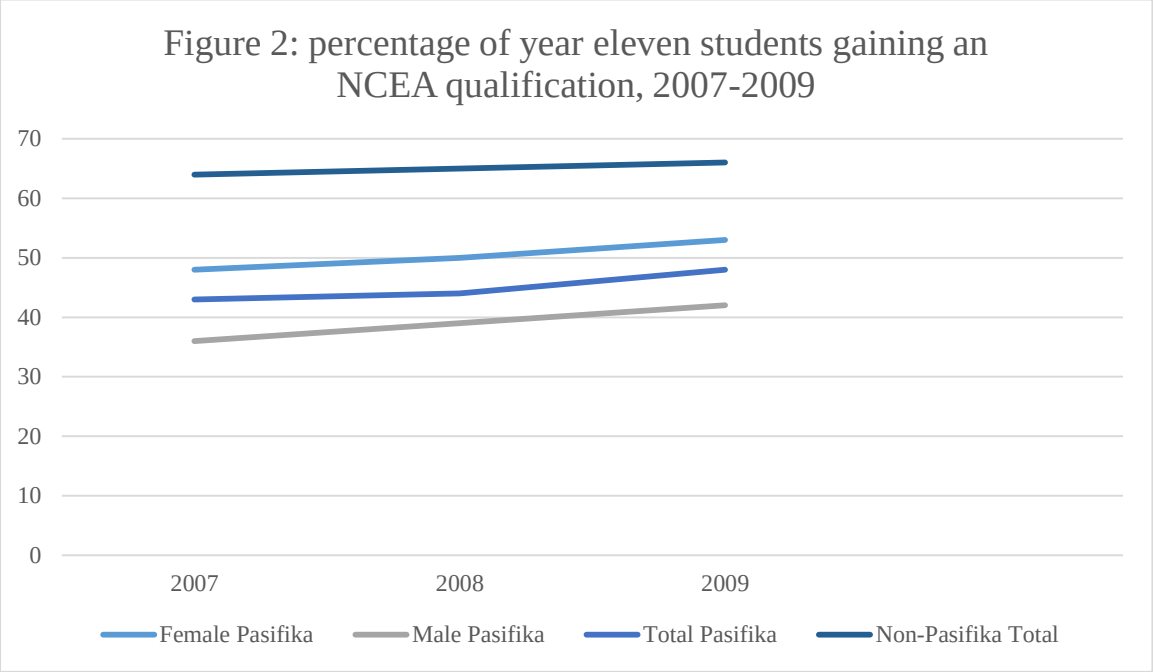
Introduction and ongoing improvement of the NCEA system

NCEA was introduced in 2002 as New Zealand's new school qualification system. Its key strength is that it is very flexible in terms of the subjects and "paths" offered to students. (Madjar et al 2009). It is much more effective in "meeting the educational needs of the majority of secondary school students than the system it replaced" (Madjar et al 2009:4). However, it is not perfect and has some identified weaknesses. It is a rather complex system. Madjar et al (2009) found that parents of many secondary school students (especially Pasifika parents) find NCEA perplexing. Ideally, parents should be able to confidently and competently assist their children with subject choices and making the best decisions.

For some parents in New Zealand this is not the case. Some parents are unable to sufficiently help and provide advice to their child(ren) in regards to subject choice and path selection (Madjar et al 2009:6). Combined with the complexity of NCEA and the wide range of choices offered to students this is potentially a hazard for secondary students, particularly Pasifika (Madjar et al 2009:20). This is because without the right guidance, learners can make poor choices which do not help their chances at gaining university entrance (UE) or the various NCEA qualifications (Madjar et al 2009:20). In all, NCEA is an effective and flexible system that works well for many students but at the same time is confusing for parents and learners alike.

[31] The discussion of partnership schools will be juxtaposed with the notion that they are representative of the Government's strategy of privatising education, whilst the discussion of National Standards will also include themes of a 'competitive model'

The proportion of year eleven Pasifika students completing NCEA level one is steadily rising.[32] In 2009, just under half of all year eleven Pasifika students achieved an NCEA qualifcation with 48 %. This is encouraging considering 44 % gained an NCEA qualification in 2008 (see Fig. 2) (Education Counts 2010).



Source: Adapted from Education Counts (2010)

Despite the fact that more Pasifika are gaining an NCEA qualification by the time that they complete year eleven; Figure 2 shows that there is still a major "gap" between Pasifika achievement and non-Pasifika achievement levels. In 2009, 66% of all non-Pasifika year eleven learners gained an NCEA qualification (Education Counts 2010). By comparison, in the same year Pasifika students only registered 48% as being awarded an NCEA certificate (Education Counts 2010). The gap between Pasifika and non-Pasifika learners in NCEA therefore is most likely related to *Starpath's* (2009) goal of making NCEA easier to navigate for students of Pacific descent in New Zealand.

By comparison, the %age of Pasifika students at year twelve gaining NCEA level two or above is increasing—however, this increase is not as great as their year eleven NCEA

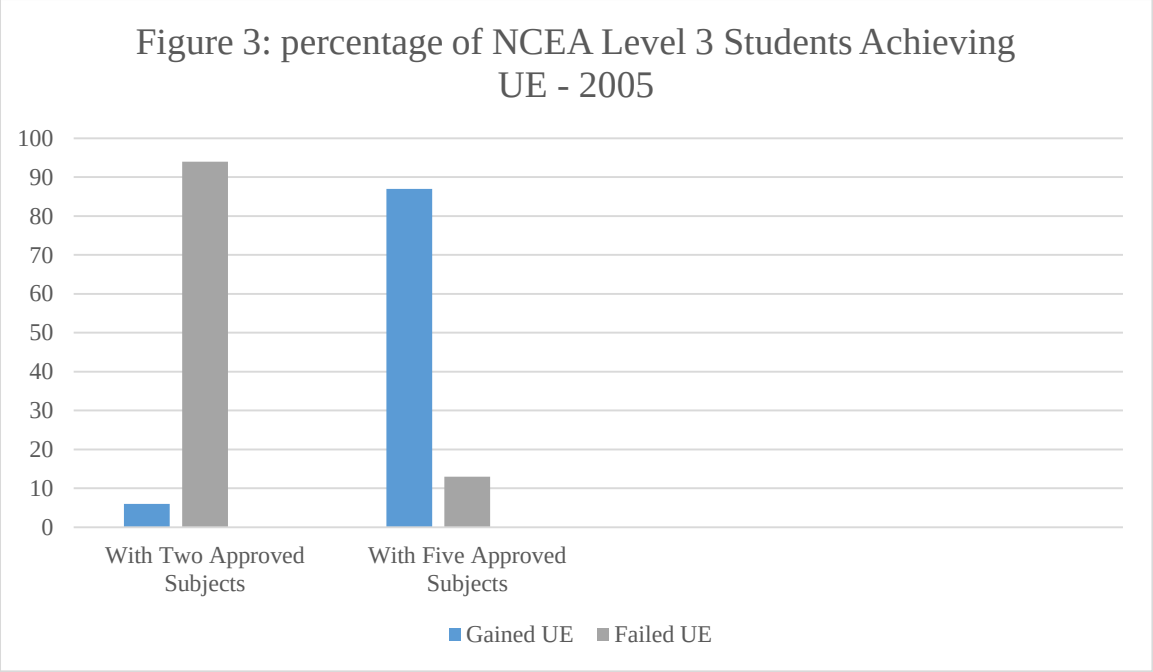
[32] NCEA level one is the lowest qualification out of levels one, two, and three and in New Zealand it is usually completed by students during year 11. Year 12 is when students usually aim to complete NCEA level two, and in the final 13th year students typically work towards completing NCEA level three. Despite this, NCEA is a flexible system, for example, students do not have to be year 12 students in order to be working towards gaining NCEA level two.

attainment (Education Counts 2010). In 2009, 49% of year twelve Pasifika students gained NCEA level two or above; whereas in the same year only 31% of all Pasifika year thirteen students gained NCEA level three or higher (Education Counts 2010). Both of these statistics are considerably lower than the scores of non-Pacific learners in the same years (see Fig. 2). Unquestionably, the New Zealand government is aware of this and have taken measures such as researching the implications of NCEA for Pasifika learners with the *Starpath* reports to address this educational inequality .

Complexity of NCEA and *Starpath*

Accordingly, Pacific secondary school students face many challenges due to NCEA's complexity. *Starpath's* focus implies this. The project explores the link between Pasifika learners poor NCEA subject choices and their relative underrepresentation in tertiary education (Madjar et al 2009:12).[33] For example, one of the findings of the *Starpath* project was that students need to take more "approved" subjects in order to gain UE. "Approved" subjects are those which the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) has deemed acceptable for students to use credits gained from these courses to obtain UE (Careers New Zealand 2013). Therefore, the more approved subjects one takes, the more chances he or she has at gaining UE. In 2005, only 6%of NCEA level three students who took two approved subjects achieved UE, whereas in the same year 87% of their counterparts who took five approved subjects gained UE (see Fig. 3) (Madjar et al 2009:19).

[33] It is important to note that Starpath focuses on learners from many disadvantaged groups (in regards to ethnicity and class) and their underrepresentation in tertiary education statistics. "Pasifika" have been used specifically here to maintain flow of the paragraph and avoid awkward wording.



Source: Adapted from Madjar et al (2009:19)

This shows that if learners, especially Pasifika, are to gain greater representation in Tertiary education and raise their level of education as a group, then their subject selection at high school needs to be addressed. This needs the support of their teachers and parents (Madjar et al 2009:94).

As NCEA has been identified as a way of increasing Pasifika representation at the tertiary level, *Starpath* (2009) has suggested some key actions that should entail better educational outcomes. One of these is that 'engaging' guidance and support should be provided to students of low decile schools, in addition to Maori and Pasifika students. Additionally, NCEA needs to be clearer to parents and students (Madjar et al 2009:7). *Starpath* (2009:7) recommends this can be achieved by "mapping out clear pathways that can lead to different tertiary education or employment destinations." This means that NCEA documentation could possibly demonstrate to students different subject choice 'paths' to achieving entrance into further study or career of choice. In essence,

> …it needs to be more straightforward, transparent and easier to navigate. The pathways it offers to students with different levels of ability and different interests need to be made clearer and the signposts and warning signals for potentially inappropriate choices need to be visible and timely. If students from the currently under-represented groups are to be qualified and able to enter degree-level education in significantly greater numbers then the status quo must change. (Madjar et al 2009:100)

One way "potentially inappropriate choices" can be negated is by making it clear to students that there are different types of subjects with different orientations. This could be done by

labelling subjects as "academic" or "vocational" as well as elaborating on their specific purposes (Madjar et al 2009:101). Though students wishing to gain a university education should be directed away from subjects not to take; it should also be ensured that they do not take these other subjects in place of "essential academic subjects" (Madjar et al 2009:101).

Also, Maori and Pacific families need information relating to NCEA that is both "clearer" and "culturally contextualised" (Madjar et al 2009:7). *Starpath* (2009) did not actually provide an example of a culturally responsive provision of NCEA material to Maori and Pasifika as it was beyond the scope of the report. However, by "culturally contextualised" this perhaps means that the language and wording of documents related to subject choice could be adjusted or even written in Pasifika languages. Regardless, these "tools" will provide Pasifika and Maori with specific advice on what subjects to take and which ones to avoid if they wish to progress to "degree-level qualifications and careers" (Madjar et al 2009:7). In all, *Starpath* (2009) offers some well-justified actions that should see Pasifika learners making the most out of the NCEA system.

Pasifika-Specific Approaches to Raising Achievement

The 2013-2017 Pasifika Education Plan

The PEP 2013-2017 has clearly-outlined aims and visions for Pasifika people. The MoE is of the view that education is the way to elevate Pasifika's relatively low socioeconomic status (MoE 2013a:11). They want Pasifika learners to be at least on par with other learners of different ethnic groups in tertiary education (MoE 2013a:11). The PEP 2013-2017 coordinates the government's strategy to address Pasifika academic achievement issues, including "underachievement" (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:104). By addressing these issues through the PEP, the New Zealand government hopes to achieve better outcomes—educationally, socially, and economically for Pasifika in New Zealand (MoE 2013a:1).

Though there are many approaches to doing this, the MoE has identified a few key areas that will be targeted in order to achieve their goals for Pasifika. These are: early learning, schooling, tertiary education, and education sector-wide (MoE 2013a). Focusing on these four distinct groups should lead to the realisation of the MoE's ambitious vision for Pasifika

students in New Zealand which is: “five out of five Pasifika learners participating, engaging and achieving in education, secure in their identities, languages and cultures and contributing fully to Aotearoa New Zealand’s social, cultural and economic wellbeing” (MoE 2013a). This essentially means that the MoE, by the PEP, wants to have all Pasifika learners successful. This means that they are not only proficient in their Pacific culture and language but also academically successful.

The PEP 2013-2017 has some noteworthy characteristics which embody the New Zealand government’s approach to Pasifika education. One of these is that Early Childhood Education (ECE) is implied to be the foundation of success for Pacific learners (MoE 2013a:6). Despite Pacific people having the option of sending their children to Pacific language immersion or bilingual ECE centres, the MoE (2013:6) makes no mention of this. Rather, the New Zealand government imply to Pasifika people that sending their young children to any form of ECE is a positive move, while at the same time suggesting Māori children attend Māori language ECE (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:487). This proposes that the “foundations’ of Pacific peoples” educational success can either be bilingual or monolingual (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:487).

Additionally, the PEP 2013-2017 explicitly states that “the focus is on more informed and demanding parents, families and communities supporting and championing their children’s learning and achievements” (MoE 2013a:3). It will be interesting to gauge how the MoE determines which parents provide support and which do not. This risks marginalising many Pasifika parents, families, and communities who may be interpreted by the MoE as “uninterested” in educational success. Those without the necessary cultural capital may be left behind. The significance of this is that by only focusing on Pacific peoples seen as “demanding” and worthy of engagement, the MoE make their goal of all Pasifika “participating, engaging and achieving in education” seem unrealistic.

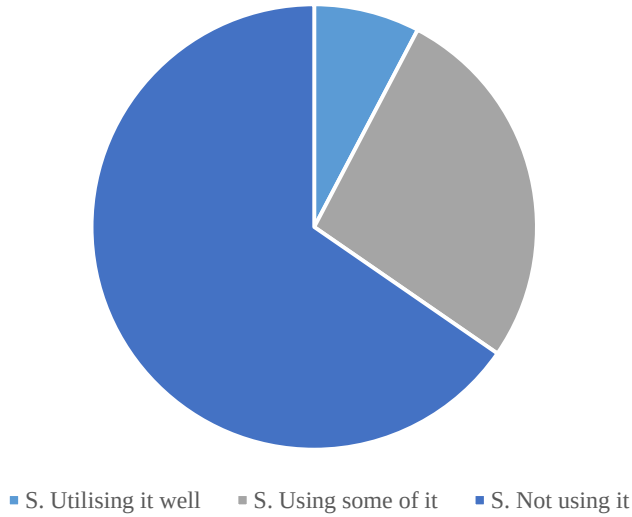
The MoE (2013a) have outlined some key actions they will take to ensure that the goals it has for Pasifika peoples are realised. The MoE see “promoting closer alignment and compatability between the learner’s educational environment, and their home and/or cultural environment” as an important measure to take (MoE 2013a:4). This relates to the previously mentioned point that the MoE wants Pasifika learners’ education to be more culturally responsive; though it is unclear if the home or cultural environment should adapt to the

"educational environment", or if schooling will adapt to the home environment of Pasifika. Regardless, the MoE (2013) has numerous plans for Pacific Islands learners in New Zealand. Schools with large concentrations of Pasifika students will implement targeted programmes that will aim to generate better outcomes, while simultaneously creating "alternative learning opportunities and pathways that support Pasifika learners to succeed" (MoE 2013a:8). The ERO will also closely review school's programmes that target Pasifika learners (MoE 2013a:8). Therefore, the MoE have identified and researched possible actions they could take to raise Pacific Islands students' achievement levels and achieve the goals of the PEP 2013-2017.

The 2013-2017 Pasifika Education Plan: issues of implementation

However, the implementation of the PEP 2013-2017 into schools may be challenging, as the application of the previous *Pasifika Education Plan* 2009-2012 (PEP 2009-2012) edition proved (ERO 2012a). According to ERO (2012a) the majority of schools are indifferent to improving the performance of Pasifika learners. Even though the PEP is a well-known official document, ERO (2012a:16) found that: "large proportions of schools are not carefully examining the achievement of Pacific students, using Pacific contexts in the classroom, responding to the individual needs of Pacific learners, or involving Pacific parents." In accordance with the ERO's (2012a) report, the PEP 2013-2017 (MoE 2013a) advocates developing better relationships with parents and making education more relevant and engaging for Pacific students. Many schools therefore have undermined the MoE's goals for Pasifika learners and by continuing this trend they are doing a disservice to their Pacific students. ERO (2012a:11) found that schools with a Pacific cohort generally did not know of the PEP and were not using it in their strategies to raising Pasifika achievement (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4: Secondary Schools with Pacific Learners Use of the Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012



Source: Adapted from ERO (2012a)

The clear majority of schools that had Pacific students were not using the Pasifika plan.[34] This is in accordance with another ERO (2012a:13) finding—the majority of schools believe that general school-wide policies are sufficient to raise the achievement levels of their Pacific learners. Unfortunately, ERO (2012a:13) disagree: "this lack of a focus and planning for the Pacific learners who were not achieving well is likely to contribute to the ongoing achievement disparities evident in national and international assessment data." By continuously disregarding the MoE's PEPs schools are not helping the current situation of Pasifika students' relatively low levels of academic achievement.[35] In sum, the implementation of the PEP 2013-2017 may prove difficult as the majority of schools have not taken past PEPs on board.

The flipside of this is that the ERO (2012a:13) found that when utilised well, the PEPs can be beneficial: "in some schools, positive initiatives found included the use of Pacific learning contexts, especially in social studies, music and visual arts. A few schools included Pacific languages and culture as separate subjects. Some schools also had staff members with responsibility for Pacific student achievement." Additionally, one unnamed high-decile

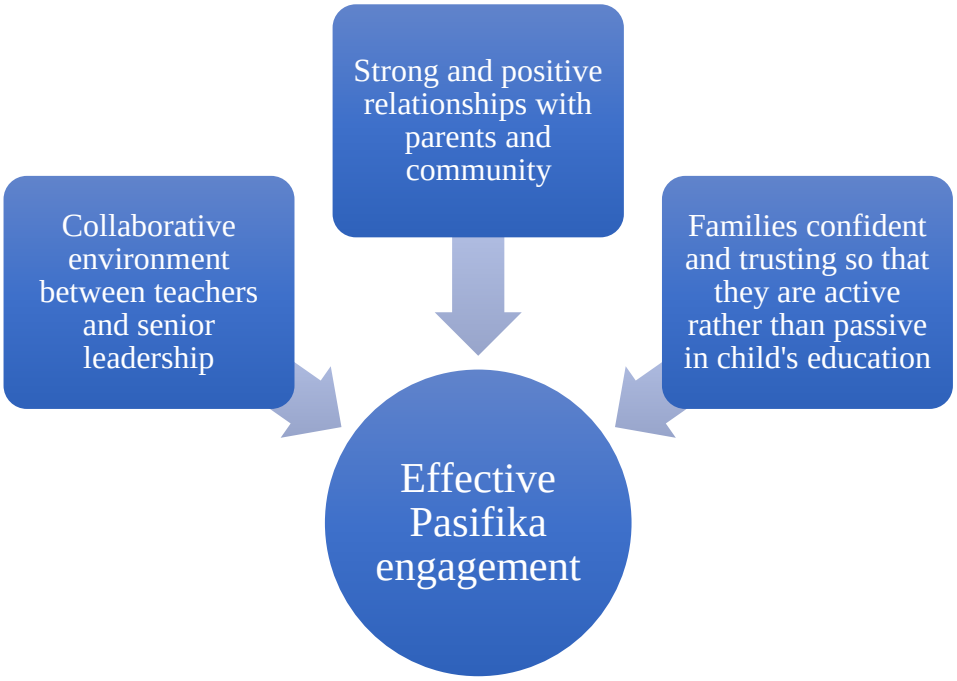
[34] ERO (2012a:11) had a sample of 52 secondary schools. 4 were using the Pasifika plan 'well', while 14 schools were partially using the PEP 2009-2012.
[35] It is noteworthy that schools may be taking *alternative* measures to raising Pasifika achievement but these have not been reported by the ERO.

secondary school that has 4% of its total roll declared as Pacific students has several Pacific contexts utilised in its curriculum (ERO 2012a). For instance, its sustainability class focuses on Tokelau and migration, art teachers encourage Pasifika learners to draw upon their cultural background, and the science department is successful in getting university-level science scholarships for its Pacific students (ERO 2012a).

On the other hand, the MoE have identified upskilling teachers to better respond to Pasifika learners as a major part of improving Pasifika academic achievement (MoE 2013a:14). The PEP 2013-2017 (MoE 2013:14) states: "a framework for Pasifika competencies for teachers [will be] a basis for initial teacher education programmes, graduating teacher standards and criteria for teacher registration." This effecitvely means that the MoE will expect new teachers to be "competent" in teaching Pacific Islands students in New Zealand. Teachers will therefore be made more aware of Pasifika learners and be better equipped to respond to their learning needs. Notably, in 2009, Siteine and Samu (2009:52) reported that many social studies teachers felt their knowledge of the Pacific was inadequate, therefore they were not confident in using Pacific content within their curriculum. Teachers, therefore, need to "know" their students (ERO 2012a:15). This essentially means that they need to avoid working "in isolation from the learner's family" so that they know how they can help involve parents in their child's learning; in addition to knowing what motivates the students and engage them successfully (ERO 2012a:15).

Unfortunately, in 2010 only a small minority of schools had implemented programmes that were dedicated to "increasing teachers' and/or trustees' knowledge of Pacific cultures"—as well as setting and meeting high achievement expectations for Pasifika learners (ERO 2012a:12). Nevertheless, the ERO (2012a:15) have conceptualised what an "effective school" is like, that is, one that has made positive inroads to "getting the most out of Pasifika learners". Schools successful at engaging its Pasifika cohort have many remarkable characteristics (see Fig. 5).

Figure 5: "Effective Schools" for Pasifika



Source: Adapted from ERO (2012a)

In 2009 the ERO (in Stats NZ and MPIA) found that the majority of Auckland schools had initiatives to help teachers become more effective in teaching Pasifika students. This is pleasing as it underlines the commitment of the MoE and schools to ensure that education is a fulfilling experience for the relatively-poor performing Pasifika contingent of students. Despite this, the future of this commitment seems bleak according to the Labour Party (2012) which pointed out that the "National [government] promised to improve teacher quality but cut funding for teachers professional development by $15 million per year and are now going down the opposite path by allowing un-registered and un-qualified teachers into charter school classrooms." Therefore, improving the institutional response to Pasifika learners, such as teacher's skillsets and the model of collaboration with parents and communities, is but one of many government initiatives to improving Pasifika academic achievement.

Additionally, one goal of the PEP 2013-2017 is that Pacific parents and communities are engaged with schools as a means of providing better support to Pasifika learners' education (MoE 2013a).[36] The ERO (2012a:15) reported that some schools had stronger relationships than others with Pacific communities and parents because they had Pacific board members.

[36] Mara (1998:38) argued for the importance of a close connection between school, teachers, and parents. Notably, this was over ten years ago.

Additionally, some had teachers that had a respectable standing in various communities and were fluent in a Pasifika language (ERO 2012a:15). Some schools even recruited the assistance of church leaders who encouraged parents to be involved "in school activities and specific aspects of the learning programme" (ERO 2012a:15). Despite this, Pasifika progress is rarely accounted for in schools (ERO 2012a:14). About 45% of schools surveyed by ERO (2012a:14) reported on Pacific student achievement to Boards of Trustees. The ways in which schools did monitor Pacific progress were inaccurate and therefore made it hard to gauge how well their Pasifika-targeted schemes were working (ERO 2012a:14). The significance of this is that building stronger relationships with Pasifika parents and communities requires commitment from schools. In all, engaging parents is a key objective of the PEP 2013-2017.

Pacific Languages in Education

The use of Pacific languages in education in New Zealand is a contentious topic with many researchers such as McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010), Tuafuti (2005), Spence (2004), May (2009) discussing the merits of bilingual education; the MoE (1993;2013), ERO (2012a;2012b), and (MPIA 2012a;2012b) are also major players in the Pasifika bilingual "issue". Nevertheless, in New Zealand there are over 100,000 speakers of Pacific languages and around 50% of Pasifika people in New Zealand are fluent in their home language (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:93). Some of these languages, especially Cook Islands Māori and Niuean, are under threat of extinction. There are more Cook Islanders and Niueans living in New Zealand than there are in the Cook Islands and Niue (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:94). Remarkably, just 5% of New-Zealand-born Cook Islanders and 11% of New Zealand-born Niueans can speak their native language (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:94). Like Niueans and Cook Islanders, Samoans, Tongans, Fijians and other Pacific Island ethnic groups have a growing New Zealand-born population and their languages are increasingly on the decline (Statistics New Zealand 2010; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010; Taumoefolau 2004). Unfortunately, English is dominant in the education of Pacific peoples in New Zealand—the survival (and growth) of Pacific languages requires the support of the state (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:92; Taumoefolau 2004; May 2009). Therefore, the possibility of learning in or with a Pacific language is often explored by researchers, both representing the New Zealand government, and those who are

"independent". This is an alternative measure that could potentially address Pasifika "underachievement" better than existing measures.

It is noteworthy that becoming monolingual in English does not always translate to academic success for Pasifika peoples (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:99). About 32% of Cook Islands students leave school before they reach the age of 17, and only 6.3% are working towards a university qualification (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:99). To address this controversial statistic along with the possible use of Pacific languages in education, the New Zealand government have published various significant documents. The MoE have released the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (NZCF) (1993), and the PEPs (most recently 2013-2017); while the MPIA have released the Pacific Languages Framework (PLF) (MPIA 2012b) and a special report that provides evidence for the place of Pacific languages in New Zealand (Pacific Peoples Constitution Report 2010; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010). Overall, Pacific languages' inclusion in learning is a highly debated subject; much of the previous research encountered by this study centred upon bilingualism in education.

The Ministry of Education's plans for Pacific languages in education

The MoE has seen Pacific languages to be useful in the learning of Pasifika students but only to a certain extent. Establishing the LEAP website and support resources in 2003 was symbolic of the indirect and cautious approach of the MoE (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:112). The significance of this is that the MoE acknowledged that bilingualism can be used as a vehicle for academic achievement. This approach recommends that bilingualism is applied in "academic or instructional uses" and is far more worthy for Pacific learners than just use in social or cultural contexts (MoE 2013b). Additionally, the NZCF published by the MoE (1993) openly advocates the use of learning other languages as it is important to the nation in terms of "health and growth" (Spence 2004:393). For example:

> All students benefit from learning another language from the earliest practicable age. Such learning broadens students' general language abilities and brings their own language into sharper focus. It enriches them intellectually, socially, and culturally, offers an understanding of the ways in which other people think and behave, and furthers international relations and trade. Students will be able to choose from a range of Pacific, Asian, and European languages, all of which are important to New Zealand's regional and international interests (Ministry of Education 1993:10).

Languages other than English therefore were officially allowed the opportunity to be taught as subjects and potentially used as mediums of instruction (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:107). In 1993, the MoE most likely as a whole had a positive opinion of learning other languages and identified many benefits; both educational, economic, and social, that would come to fruition if learners become bilingual or multilingual. However, McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010:107) are of the view that the government no longer believes in bilingualism. The new curriculum framework does not meniton the benefits of learning other languages like its 1993 predecessor. Despite this, the PEP 2013-2017 (MoE 2013a) "personalises" the government's work on Pasifika education so that all related government departments such as the MoE and Education Parter Agencies (such as New Zealand Qualification Authority) (NZQA) are responding well "to the identities, languages and cultures of each Pasifika group." By focusing on the languages of Pasifika peoples, surely this suggests that the MoE is interested in using their languages throughout their educational experience. In all, the MoE has released several (aforementioned) documents such as the NZCF 1993 and the consecutive PEPs that recognise the importance of bilingualism in Pasifika learning—yet they have also contradicted this which suggests their approach to Pasifika language is conservative.

The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs' plans for Pacific languages in education

The MPIA strongly supports the demands for Pasifika bilingual education (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:484). In 2008 when the National government came to power, the then-Human Rights Commissioner (HRC) Joris de Bres wrote to the government enquiring about their stance on Pasifika languages and other languages' usefulness in learning (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109). The then-Minister of Pacific Island Affairs, Georgina Te Heuheu, replied that Pasifika language is a key priority for the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs as the Pacific Language Strategy was in development (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109). It is noteworthy that the MPIA advocate greater state support of Pacific languages (MPIA 2012b:4). The rationale for this is that strong backing for Pacific language use in education will entail more Pasifika people feeling more secure about their cultural identity and their sense of belonging in New Zealand. It could also lead to higher

academic achievement and a much "healthier" Pasifika population (MPIA 2012b:4).[37] A key strategy put forth in 2012 by the MPIA was the Pacific Languages Framework (PLF) (MPIA 2012b). In accordance with the MPIAs' goals, the PLF aims to have the government and Pacific communities working together to ensure that languages such as Tongan, Samoan, Cook Islands Māori, and Fijian are 'flourishing' in New Zealand (MPIA 2012b:4). This essentially means that more people will be using Pacific languages "with skill and fluency in everyday situations, particularly children and young people" (MPIA 2012b:4).

Though the MPIA seem assertive and direct; this is not the case. They, and by association the New Zealand government, will take a passive role in the maintenance of Pasifika languages. This is manifested in the PLF which explicitly states: "Leadership and ownership of the protection and promotion of Pacific languages lies with Pacific communities" (MPIA 2012b:4). This document also implies that Pacific languages only have cultural worth and are not valuable economically or educationally—"language is vital to vibrant Pacific cultures", but it could also be vital to Pacific economic, technological, and educational advancement (MPIA 2012b:4). Perpexingly, the MPIA do suggest that Pacific languages are used in the early stages of young Pasifika learners' educations. The rationale behind this is that it will reinforce the development of literacy and thinking skills while they become more skilled in English (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:30).

Despite the MPIA's seemingly direct-yet-indirect approach to Pacific languages in New Zealand, it is worthy of mention that they have managed to achieve the "recognition of the special status of Niuean, Cook Islands and Tokelauan communities and their languages in the New Zealand constitutional framework" through the commission of the Pacific Peoples' Constitution Report (PPCR) (MPIA 2000) in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:484).[38] This document was produced partially to challenge the notion that Pacific languages had no special position or status in New Zealand (Tuafuti and

[37] McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010) point out that Tongans, of all Pacific ethnic groups in New Zealand, have the highest amount of speakers of their own language. They also perform well educationally in New Zealand and have the highest amount of PhDs amongst Pacific peoples. Comparatively, Cook Islanders have the lowest amount of speakers of their own language of all Pacific groups in New Zealand, and are greatly underrepresented in tertiary education figures.

[38] New Zealand has unique historical relationships with several Pacific nations which shows Pasifika people and by association their languages have a special place in New Zealand. New Zealand administered Samoa from 1900 to 1962 and have a special relationship with Tonga; recently New Zealand signed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which exemplifies this relationship. (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109)

McCaffery 2005:484). It revealled that Niueans and Cook Islands are citizens of New Zealand and have New Zealand passports despite being "free association" foreign nations while Tokelauans are also New Zealand citizens as Tokelau is a territory of New Zealand (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109). Additionally, the PPCR highlighted New Zealand's "friendship treaty" with Samoa and past colonial administration of Samoa; alongside the "special relationship" between New Zealand and Tonga (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109). This shows that the PPCR underlines the MPIA's commitment and support for Pasifika languages in New Zealand. Overall, the MPIA aim to have the government and Pacific communities working in harmony to ensure that Pacific languages are thriving in Aotearoa.

Literacy: a key issue

Furthermore, literacy is often cited by the government as the focus of raising Pasifika's academic achievement (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:30). This is reflected in the statement that "children who achieve essential reading and writing skills early in their schooling go on to learn well through secondary school" (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:30). However, in 2009 the ERO (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:3) found that a small minority of schools are actually performing better than in previous reviews when it comes to Pasifika achievement levels in English literacy. Addressing Pacific students' literacy levels therefore is difficult for schools. This is in part due to the lack of solutions to Pasifika learners' relatively low scores in literacy (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:30).

However, the MoE had one notable tool they had used to advance Pacific students' literary proficiency: This was the *Tupu* series. Essentially, *Tupu* was the name of a range of learning materials for students learning a Pacific language(s) or learning about things Pacific in ECE and schools (Tuafuti et al 2011:60). These resources were inclusive of Pasifika worldview(s) as they were written by Pasifika writers, illustrated by artists of the Pacific and were published in five different Pacific languages which were: Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, Cook Islands Māori, and Tokelauan (Tuafuti et al 2011:60). Despite this, the MoE stopped producing *Tupu* resources at the end of 2010 as they felt the resources did not help raise

Pasifika literacy and numeracy (Tuafuti et al 2011:60).[39] This move implied that the MoE no longer cared for the Tupu series. Pasifika communities petitioned the MoE regarding the phasing out of the Tupu series; while the MoE chose to ignore this and the extensive research "on the importance of languages in academic success and people's lives" (Tuafuti et al 2011:62). Therefore, the MoE has effectively decided to change their strategy in addressing Pasifika literacy in 2010 by removing a Pacific-specific initiative (Tupu series) and replacing it with a "one-size-fits-all" approach (National Standards).

Furthermore, this highlights the problematic nature of defining "literacy". There are multipile definitions of literacy (Tuafuti et al 2011:64). To some ethnic groups and social classes, literacy may constitute being competent in reading, writing, thinking critically and problem solving (Tuafuti et al 2011:64). Literacy can also mean being skilled in oral language and sharing beliefs and values that are widely considered as desirable and mandatory. It can also refer to acting in a dignified manner and adhering to religious rules and customs (Tuafuti et al 2011:64). Thus, it appears that being literate means different things to people of different class, ethnicity, and status. Comparatively, The government's stance on literacy is that it is just about reading, writing and abstract thinking (Tuafuti et al 2011:65). The implication of this is that it encourages Pasifika learners to become less literate in their "home system" which could be about things like learning Pasifika languages, their identities, and their cultural values while becoming more successful in the "school system" (Tuafuti et al 2011:65). This leads to some Pasifika youth to be successful in either their "home system" or "school system" whereas "some fail in both systems" (Tuafuti et al 2011:65).[40] Therefore, literacy by definition is contentious and disputed.

In spite of the New Zealand government's work with Pasifika languages, much of the literature encountered by this study suggested that the government is treating Pacific bilingualism as an obstacle in raising Pacific students' academic achievement levels (particularly in literacy). This is a recurring theme amongst all the national education policies of New Zealand (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:486). Remarkably, the PEPs treat languages

[39] Interestingly, the MoE also released National Standards at the start of 2010, while "phasing out" *Tupu* at the end of 2010. This is, perhaps, a reflection in the change of strategy towards raising Pasifika literacy on the part of the New Zealand Government.

[40] Notably, surrendering use of Pacific language in favour of English does not always translate to academic success. 32% of Cook Islands students leave school before they are age 17, and only 6.3% are working towards a university degree. (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:99)

such as Niuean and Tongan as a problem rather than a solution when dealing with literacy and other facets of education of Pasifika (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:106). At the ECE level, the PEP 2013-2017 wants young Pasifika learners to "transition" well into "English medium schooling using language acqusition strategies" while requesting all Pasifika families and communities recognise the value of ECE (MoE 2013a). This effectively means that Pasifika learners are expected by the government are expected to become proficient in English from a young age. This will supposedly improve their chances at success; Pasifika languages are implied to not be helpful in attaining success (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:106).

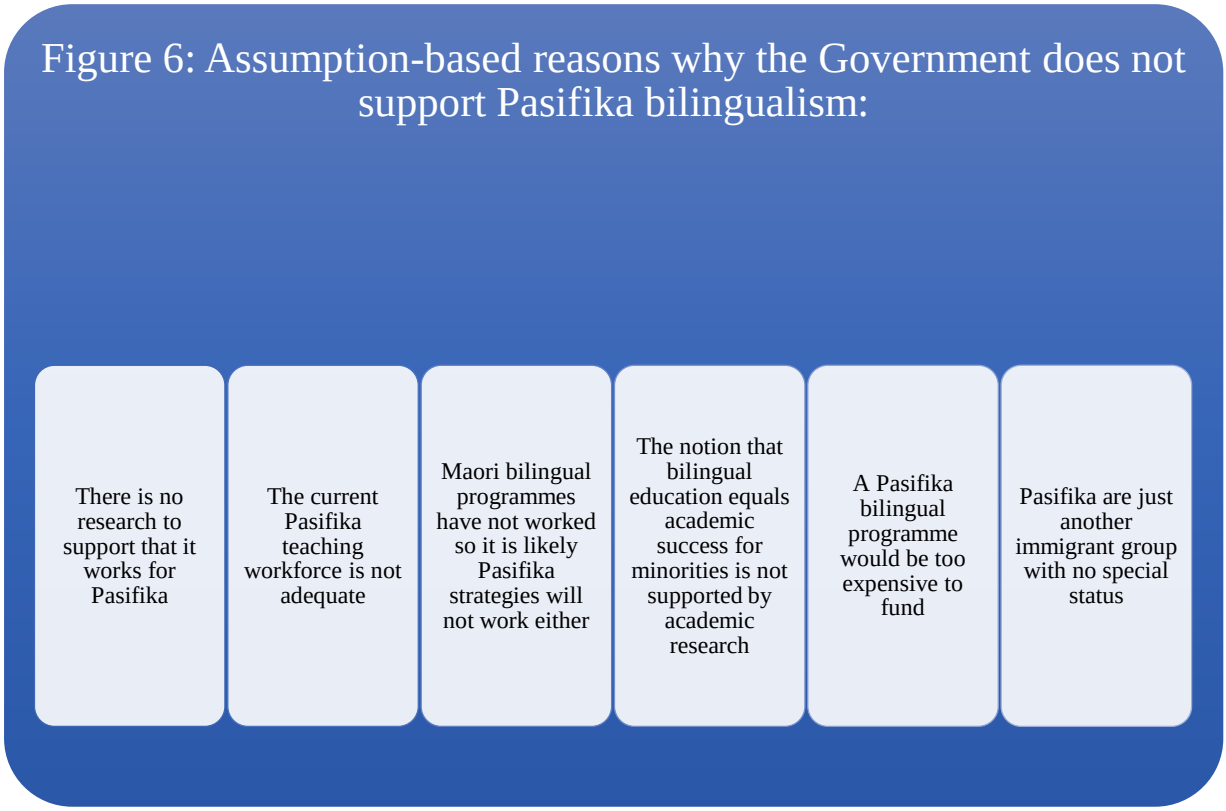
Additionally, a goal of the PEP 2013-2017 (MoE 2013a) for year thirteen students is that they leave school "academically and socially equipped" for success. Language does not feature in this vision. Therefore, the educational journey (from ECE to year thirteen) that the government envisions for the Pacific learner will rarely feature their home language. This does not just apply for Pasifika learners as Māori and Asian children will be required by school policy to learn a language they do not know (such as Spanish) while having their "home and heritage languages" replaced with English (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:108). In essence, by "equipping" students and preparing them for success the government are assimiliating them into a Eurocentric model of success. Though this may seem completely Eurocentric, the government have developed a "Learning Languages" curriculum which encourages Pasifika languages being taught as subjects from year seven onwards (intermediate level) but implies a nonintervention in the role of other languages replacing english as the teaching medium in early childhood and primary education.

"Pacific languages: not our responsibility" – New Zealand government

It appears that the New Zealand government does not feel that it is responsible for the maintenance and use of Pacific languages as they are percieved to be devoid of any significant value. The dominant discourse on language and identity is that ownership of these "cultural" issues belong to the private domain (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:91; May 2009:4). As a result, ethnic minorities' arguments for their identity are often easily repulsed in education and "other public domains of life in Western societies" (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:91). For example, the MoE does not want to accommodate Pasifika languages on the grounds that they do not have any special constitutional or educational place

in New Zealand's society and education system (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109).[41] The MPIA however, challenged this. The PPCR released in 2000 in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice proved that Cook Islanders and Niueans are New Zealand citizens and their languages are indigneous to the "Realm of New Zealand" (McCaffery and Mcfall-McCaffery 2010:109). New Zealand administered Samoa from 1900 to 1962 and have recently signed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which exemplifies Pacific peoples' place in New Zealand (Tuafuti et al 2011; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:111).[42] The MPIA therefore have suggested that Pacific languages do merit a place in New Zealand's education system.

Despite this, Samoan, Tongan, and other languages of Oceania are still dismissed in favour of English as the language of learning. McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010:111) have identified many reasons as to why the government are reluctant to support bilingual education (see Fig. 6).



Source: Adapted from McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2011:111)

[41] This would also mean languages such as Mandarin and Hindu would have to receive the same treatment and would therefore be too expensive.
[42] Tonga have close ties to New Zealand (such as the Atalanga) and Samoa has a friendship treaty with New Zealand.

They include things such as: that Pacific bilingualism will most likely not do a better job of addressing Pasifika achievement than current strategies as it is not supported by academic research, Māori kura kaupapa and kohanga reo (Māori language schools and language nests) have not "worked" so it is likely Pasifika strategies will replicate this, and that Pacific peoples are an immigrant group with no special status (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2011:111). In all, the New Zealand government has a range of reasons for not supporting Pacific languages (especially in learning) to a greater extent.

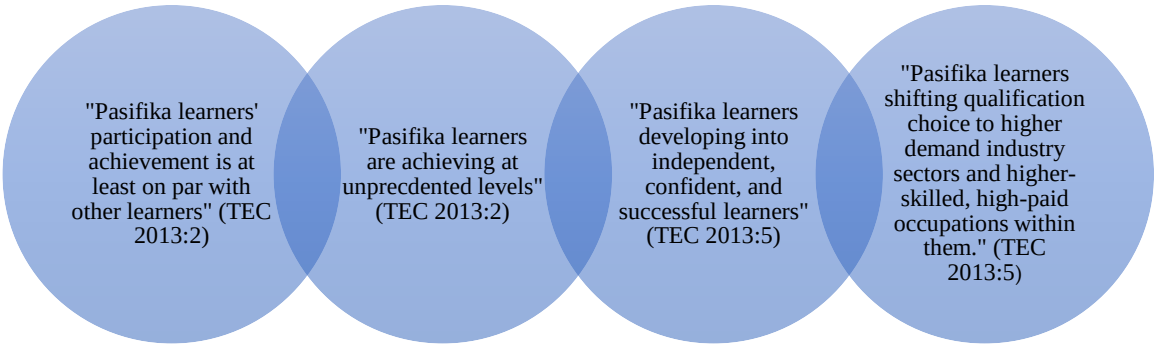
Pasifika-specific tertiary education initiatives

The government also have various tertiary education initiatives specifically focused on creating more equitable outcomes for Pasifika learners.[43] This is because gaining qualifications such as bachelor's and master's degrees "early in adult life provides better employment opportunities and income, which in turn improves quality of life" (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:53). However, Pasifika students are only a third as likely as the total population to achieve a bachelor's degree by the age of 25; hence the government's interest in improving tertiary education outcomes for Pasifika (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:54).[44] The TEC is the government department that has responsibility for New Zealand's tertiarty education providers, it provides funding and has official strategies for the general direction of higher education in New Zealand (MoE 2008:18; Patterson 2012:9). In regards to Pasifika, it wants to fund "a tertiary education system that assists all Pasifika New Zealanders to reach their full potential and contribute to the social and economic well-being of New Zealand" (TEC 2013:2). The TEC's Pasifika Framework 2013-2017 has many goals for Pasifika (see Fig. 7).

Figure 7: Some of the anticipated outcomes of the Pasifika Framework 2013-2017

[43] Universities in New Zealand are partly funded by the Government, but "all the providers operate in an environment of decentralised governance and management (MoE 2008:18)." Some initiatives operated by the university but not funded by the TEC such as Dream Fono are included in Chapter 6, whereas this chapter will contain those initiatives funded by the TEC (Efeso Collins, founder of Dream Fonotaga. Personal Communication. 21 September 2013).

[44] Many other statistics suggest that Pasifika are one of the lowest-performing groups in terms of tertiary education (see University of Auckland 2012; Patterson 2012:2; Education Counts 2010).



Source: Adapted from the TEC's (2013:2-5) Pasifika Framework 2013-2017

These goals underline the commitment of the New Zealand government to the betterment of Pasifika people.

Team Approach to Student Success (TASS)[45]

TASS was[46] a TEC funded programme operated at Auckland University of Technology (Nakhid 2006:296-7). It encompassed many initiatives such as a database system monitoring several aspects of Māori and Pasifika students' academic performance including their "attendance, assignment submission, grades achieved, staircasing, progression, withdrawl and retention"; in addition organising an extra Māori and Pacific tutorial for one course which was proving difficult for numerous Māori and Pasifika students (Nakhid 2006:296, 299). Many of the lecturers however were uncooperative. Some insisted there was nothing wrong with their teaching style and the problems lied with the learning practices of the university's Māori and Pacific cohort; whereas others felt that professional development and recording of data was not worthwile as it was not relevant to their job or added to their workload (Patterson 2012:12; Nakhid 298-299). Nakhid (2006:301) contends that the general undermining of TASS by Auckland University of Technology lecturers is contrary to tertiary institutions' commitment to ethical provision of higher learning. Inequalities existing prior to the formation of TASS included the low achievement rates of Pasifika in relation to other learners; TASS sought to address these unequal outcomes but according to Nakhid (2006:301) this is an example of the university "maintain[ing] existing inequalities and the dominance of particular cultures by treating everyone the same."

[45] This is a pseudonym used by the author Nakhid (2006)
[46] Nakhid (2006) implies that TASS is no longer running.

Tuākana

Tuākana is a mentoring programme for Māori and Pasifika first year students at the University of Auckland (Patterson 2012:1).[47] Besides tutorials for certain courses, Tuākana also offers study retreats, exam workshops, and places to study when end of year exams are running.[48] It is based on the concept of Tuākana/Teina, which essentially means the strong relationship of support and teamwork that exists between siblings of the same gender (Patterson 2012:1). It is not just a concept indigenous to Māori; Tuākana relationships are elements of many other Pacific cultures (Patterson 2012:1). Taciqu, for instance, is Fijian for younger siblings of the same gender and relatives of a junior lineage and Patterson's (2012:1) research centres upon the taciqu or the younger tertiary students involved in the Tuākana programme and their learning experience to date. It is a successful programme in helping many Pasifika and Māori learners at the University of Auckland achieve their academic goals through the benefits it grants learners. One student reported that they felt Tuākana offered them a "community" which was supportive and assisted them greatly (Patterson 2012:33). Another adds that "the people that actually come to Tuākana are the ones who want to succeed, who will actually take their time out to come to the workshops. So I made friends straight away with people who had the same sort of mind-set as me. They want to succeed" (Patterson 2012:35).[49] In all, the MoE are focused on helping Pasifika tertiary students get their qualifications and make the most of higher learning and this is manifested in government-funded initiatives such as Tuākana.

Nationwide education policies

Partnership schools and the privatisation of education

In June 2013 the Education Amendment Bill 2012 passed its third and final reading in Parliament which meant that the Education Act 1989 was amended. Partnership schools (Kura Hourua) as a result, are now percieved by the New Zealand government as the future

[47] Professor Mike Walker established Tuākana in 1990 (University of Auckland 2011:1)
[48] Tuakana is now funded by the TEC (Tapeni Fa'alogo, Postgraduate Pathways Equity Coordinator, University of Auckland. Personal Communication. 07 September 2013).
[49] I too was involved as a teina/taciqu of the Tuākana programme, and I felt that attending postgraduate pathways seminars and other Tuākana-provided services inspired me and gave me confidence to do things such as apply for scholarships during my undergraduate years.

of raising academic achievement levels in low socioeconomic areas (Parata 2013). Areas "where educational underachievement is most entrenched" will be targeted by the government (National Party and Act Party 2011:3). The government will allow education providers as well as other parties such as parent groups, community groups or corporate groups to submit proposals to operate schools "in areas such as South Auckland and Christchurch" (National Party and Act Party 2011:3).[50] More so, the government expects proposed partnership schools to live up to a certain standard. School management have to be ambitious and be founded on (some) specific principles such as: "a rigorous academic focus", Māori governance principles, or to serve as "specialist" schools focusing on vocational training or a language other than English. (National Party and Act Party 2011:7). Notably, Pasifika learners are amongst the lowest-performing ethnic groups in education statistics of New Zealand and therefore will be deeply affected by the introduction of partnership schools. Clark (2010:116) suggests that the government are intent on privatising education and the introduction of partnership schools is a clear representation of this. In all, the New Zealand government are of the view that partnership schools or kura hourua are the "silver bullet" in addressing chronic "underachievement".[51]

On the contrary, much of the research encountered by this study suggests that the privatisation of education in New Zealand and the establishment of partnership schools will fail to raise achievement levels. The Quality Public Education Commission (QPEC 2013b) contend that the introduction of charter schools into New Zealand is unjustified. Similarly, Save our Schools New Zealand (SOSNZ 2012) ask a crucial question: "how will charter schools with untrained staff and a management focused on money making be the answer to improving things for those [disadvantaged] children?" Nevertheless, the government believes the overseas systems they are basing their kura hourua strategy on are successful—these include the KIPP schools in the United States of America and the free schools of the United Kingdom (National Party and Act Party 2011:7). Notably, QPEC (2013b) argue that Parata has no evidence that charter schools have outperformed public schools in overseas countries which have their own kura hourua or partnership schools.[52] Regardless of this, it is important to note that the government of New Zealand's nationwide strategy for education is clear:

[50] The "sponsor" then "will sign a contract with the Crown that sets out the responsibilities and obligations of both parties (Parata 2013)."
[51] See National Party and Act Party (2011:7) for further information
[52] Hekia Parata, the current Minister of Education in New Zealand; Ravitch (2012) suggests that much of the research advocating for KIPP is funded by KIPP school sponsors.

increase investment in higher-decile private schools while privatising schools in lower-socioeconomic neighbourhoods.[53] In all, the government see partnership schools and the privatisation of education as a means of achieving greater outcomes for all New Zealands' learners.

National Standards and the competitive model in education

The government controversially introduced National Standards at the start of 2010. National Standards are an "assessment tool" that effectively assess how well learners from years one to eight perform at school compared to others and help predict the chances of the student achieving NCEA qualifications at high school (Clark 2010:116; Tuafuti et al 2011:60; MoE 2013c). League tables will also be formed (Clark 2010:116). These will be publicly available to parents when selecting schools for their child as schools will "market" themselves to parents, compete against other schools, and gain state funding based on their National Standards performance (QPEC 2013a; Clark 2010:116).

Much of the literature encountered by this study suggests that National Standards will not improve academic achievement for many learners. According to Hartevelt (2009) many children will be labelled as "failures" from a very early age—according to MoE projections almost half of all year 8 students will fail the newly-introduced National Standards in numeracy and literacy. Echoing Hartevelt's sentiments, Thrupp et al (2009) state:

> the intended National Standards system wrongly assumes that children are failing if they do not meet the standard for their age…the repeated labelling of many young children as failures…will be self-fulfilling because it will damage children's self-esteem and turn them off learning and achieving in literacy and numeracy and other curricula areas.

Correspondingly, Tuafuti et al (2011:61) point out that one of the senior academics who assisted the MoE in the formulation of National Standards, John Hattie, wanted policy makers to further refine National Standards as he felt it was being released too early. It is likely that labelling potentially-successful students with "unexceptional schools records" as failures throughout their childhood was one reason for this (Thrupp et al 2009). Furthermore, public league tables and aggressive competition between schools show "low correlations with actual student outcomes" according to PISA (Programme for International Student

[53] There was a 40 % increase in Government subsidies for Kings College between 2009 and 2011 (QPEC 2013c); whereas since 2009 the Government has tried to increase class sizes twice (Labour Party 2012).

Assessment) data (QPEC 2013a). Equally significant is the fact that National Standards "replaced" the Tupu resources in 2010. National Standards are percieved by the government as the solution to Pasifika students' relatively low levels of English literacy (Tuafuti et al 2011:59). Accordingly, Pacific languages are a "problem" and supposedly serve to maintain these low levels of English literacy. The Tupu resources were effectively "phased out" in favour of National Standards which, as a "one-size-fits-all" approach will perform better than Pacific resources in raising Pasifika students' literacy. Coupled with the "labelling" aspect of National Standards; Pasifika students may risk being "labelled" failures while also underutilising the cultural capital they have that is relevant to being "literate" (See Nakhid 2003:305). Therefore, the National Standards system has many negative implications for learners in New Zealand in spite of the government's objective of raising literacy and numeracy levels.

Conclusion

There are many initiatives formulated by the New Zealand government that aim to improve the educational success of Pasifika students. NCEA was shown to be an effective yet complex and confusing system. Currently, Pasifika learners are not maximising their gains due to poor subject selection and the government seeks to rectify this. Additionally, the PEP 2013-2017 has many aims for Pacific learners, which are dually ambitious and optimistic. It was shown that achieving these outcomes may be difficult as many schools have not embraced past PEPs and remained indifferent to the MoE's strategies for raising Pasifika achievement. The New Zealand government also aim to foster better relationships between schools, parents, and Pasifika communities in order to better involve Pacific parents in their child's education.

Therefore, improving the institutional response to Pasifika learners, such as teacher's skillsets and the model of collaboration with parents and communities, is but one of many government initiatives to improving Pasifika academic achievement. However, building stronger relationships with Pasifika parents and communities requires commitment from schools. In all, engaging parents is a key objective of the PEP 2013-2017. Furthermore, it was shown that Pacific languages' inclusion in learning is a highly debated subject; much of the previous research encountered by this study centred upon bilingualism in education. For instance, the

NZCF (1993) and the consecutive PEPs recognise the importance of bilingualism in Pasifika learning—yet they have also contradicted this which suggests their approach to Pasifika language is conservative. The PLF, similarly, aimed to ensure that Pacific languages were used "with skill and fluency in everyday situations, particularly children and young people" (MPIA 2012b:4).

Despite this, the MoE changed their strategy in addressing Pasifika literacy by removing a Pacific-specific initiative (Tupu series) and replacing it with a "one-size-fits-all" approach (National Standards). This highlighted the contentious nature of "literacy". The various reasons as to why the government do not support Pacific languages in education were also briefly examined. This led to the point that New Zealand's education system is inclusive but is also conservative: Pacific languages threaten the dominance of English and therefore are excluded. Equally significant were the government's strategies for raising Pasifika achievement in tertiary education. This was shown through the TEC's objectives in the Pasifika Framework 2013-2017, and various TEC-funded initiatives such as University of Auckland's Tuākana programme and TASS of Auckland University of Technology. However, the New Zealand government are of the view that partnership schools are the "silver bullet" in addressing chronic "underachievement" of Pasifika; complimented by the National Standards system. In conclusion, it appears that the government of New Zealand has a range of initiatives that address Pasifika achievement that are either Pasifika-specific or nationwide—some of these have been controversial and their effectiveness are being questioned.

Chapter 6: Non-government Funded Approaches to Addressing Pasifika Academic Achievement

Introduction

This chapter will attempt to make sense of some non-state funded initiatives dedicated to raising the academic achievement levels of Pasifika students. For secondary school students, there are some programmes in place that aim to mentor and guide learners to realise their academic potential. These include: the Mentoring and Tutoring Education Scheme (MATES), Studio 274, and Dream Fonotaga. It is a general desire of these non-state funded initiatives (and those funded by the government) that more Pasifika learners receive a tertiary qualification. Additionally, many Pacific people see education as the key to getting better jobs and salaries (Tongati'o 2010:99; Jones 1991). Tertiary Education grants individuals access to the knowledge economy which means they have the option of having jobs which are thinking-based as opposed to menial labour. Being a "knowledge worker" as opposed to a "manual worker" therefore, is desirable amongst some Pacific peoples (Tongati'o 2010:99; Drucker 1966.) In some, it is part of their ethos.[54] However, in present times Pacific people are only a third as likely as the total population to achieve a Bachelor's degree by the age of 25 (Statistics New Zealand and MPIA 2010:54). If more Pacific learners achieved a degree by this age, they would have "better employment opportunities and income, which in turn improves quality of life" (Statistics New Zealand and MPIA 2010:53).

Additionally, many scholars such as Siteine and Samu (2009), Nakhid (2003), (Siope 2010:56) and Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005) endorse the inclusion of Pasifika worldview in schools' curriculum, resources, and pedagogy. According to Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005:485) Pasifika youth are "being forced into a Palagi (European) lifestyle and English-only future." This suggests that Pasifika worldview needs to be included into the existing framework. Several scholars therefore contend that a "culturally-relevant" education will generate more success for Pacific learners. Ideally, it "would produce students who can achieve academically, have cultural competence, and are able to understand and critically engage with the existing social order" (Ladson-Billings 1998:211). In all, this study will

[54]According to Bourdieu (1974:32) ethos are "implicit and deeply interiorised values which among other things, helps to define attitudes towards the cultural capital and educational institutions."

examine the proposal that Pasifika worldview is included in Pacific students' education, particularly in regards to curriculum, resources, and pedagogy.

Another significant component of worldview is language—there are quite a few Pacific language nests and Pacific bilingual units operating in New Zealand schools (Taumoefolau 2004; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010). This is because bilingual education has the support of several Pacific (and non-Pacific) academics, families, and community organisations (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010; Tuafuti 2005; May 2009). According to McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010:113) the increased use of Pacific languages and cultural capital in the classroom not only gives students more confidence and security, but also the ability to use their own language "for higher-order thinking and academic work." In addition, it will play a role in the maintenance of Pacific languages, which are experiencing decline (Taumoefolau 2004; Statistics New Zealand 2010). Though there is a wide range of Pasifika bilingual initiatives operating in Aotearoa; this study will focus on a select three[55]: A'oga Fa'a Samoa ECE centre, Richmond Road School's Mua i Malae and Finlayson Park School's O le Taiala. Therefore, in New Zealand there are many non-state funded (and supported) initiatives that seek to make Pasifika more successful through education.

Mentoring programmes

Mentoring and Tutoring Education Scheme (MATES)

The Mentoring and Tutoring Education Scheme (MATES) is a programme run by the Great Potentials Foundation (Great Potentials Foundation 2012:7).[56] It has a CEO and board of trustees, and is funded by scholarships, grants, and donations from various sponsors, supporters, donors and friends. These include the AMP Foundation and the Vodafone New Zealand Foundation to name a few (Great Potentials Foundation 2012:7). It is operated in some of Auckland's lower-decile secondary schools (Great Potentials Foundation 2012).

[55] These are all Samoan. This is because of all Pasifika groups' bilingual education advances, Samoans have best established bilingual infrastructure.
[56] It was previously operated in partnership with the University of Auckland but they are no longer partners (Shana Malio, MATES Programme manager. Personal Communication, 02 September 2013)

This programme assists Pasifika (and non-Pacific) students who have the ability to achieve but risk not meeting their potential by partnering them up with a university student mentor (Statistics New Zealand and MPIA 2010:56; Great Potentials Foundation 2012:19). The mentor usually is studying a topic at university which the mentee aspires to study when they finish school (Great Potentials Foundation 2012). Mentees are usually paired up with a mentor who has the same ethnicity, interests, or personality as them (Great Potentials Foundation 2012). The success of MATES is unprecedented. In 2006 over 90% of students involved in MATES gained significantly better NCEA results; meanwhile their parents reported that their child's attitude towards schoolwork had improved (Statistics New Zealand and MPIA 2010:56). MATES is also of great benefit to Pasifika students whose parents did not receive a tertiary qualification but expect them to as the programme makes university seem an obtainable and realistic goal (as opposed to a distant "abstract" goal) (Great Potentials Foundation 2012:19).

Studio 274

Studio 274 is located in Otara, one of the lowest socioeconomic suburbs in New Zealand (Usmar and Milne 2011:1).[57] Many of the youth Studio 274 serves are from decile 1-3 schools (ASB Community Trust 2013). It is an initiative of the High Tech Youth Network Trust (ASB Community Trust 2013; Usmar 2012). It is funded by private sponsors, corporate sponsors, such as Microsoft New Zealand, and the Crown (Usmar 2012).[58] Studio 274 is a purpose-built facility on the Kia Aroha College campus in Otara that seeks to provide a creative, welcoming, and safe out-of-school environment where learners work with mentors to "explore their own ideas, develop skills and build confidence in themselves through the use of technology" (Studio 274 2013; see Goodhew 2013;Usmar 2012).

The provision of technology at Studio 274 is about more than just providing computers and high-speed internet access to the youth of Otara. By encouraging them to use technology in a positive learning environment with the assistance of inspiring mentors, Studio 274 gives disadvantaged youth skills, knowledge, and experience that serves them well—not just in

[57] Otara has one of the largest populations of Pacific peoples in Auckland.
[58] The 2013 budget allocated $1.9m to the High Tech Youth Network, whereas in the same year they received $625,000 from the ASB Community Trust's Māori and Pacific Education Initiative (ASB Community Trust 2013; Goodhew 2013). The Government provides support to HTYN as they have a common objective – improving access to technology to underserved communities (Goodhew 2013).

terms of career, but also in confidence and personal growth (Usmar 2012). To compliment this, members of the clubhouse are also given chances to "communicate their ideas, exhibit their potential, and take action in their communities" (Studio 274 2013). This is reflected in Studio 274's continued involvement in programmes such as the Kiwibots VEX Robotics competition and Oktobor Bright Stars. The former grants learners the opportunity to apply science and technology expertise in robotics competitions whereas the latter gives learners valuable insights for Studio 274 members into the business, creative, and technology industries (Studio 274 2013).

Dream Fonotaga

Dream Fonotaga is another significant non-government funded initiative geared towards improving the educational outcomes of Pasifika. It is funded by the University of Auckland's School's Partnership Office.[59] It was formed in 2002 "as an attempt to outreach to Pasifika young people in low decile schools, with the hope to inspiring them to higher education" (Collins 2013a). The University of Auckland introduced Dream Fono as a means of achieving its equity goal of helping underrepresented (in tertiary education) ethnic groups, including Pasifika (Collins 2013a). Dream Fono assisted in the University of Auckland's equity goal of making tertiary education a more realistic goal for Pasifika youth (Collins 2013a).[60]

Dream Fono is a live-in camp held for Pasifika senior secondary school students from Auckland (Collins 2013a). It features "motivational speakers, academic counselling and goal-setting workshops" (Collins 2013a). A central part of Dream Fono is that students are given access to an extensive support network that they would otherwise not have (Siope 2010:96). This consists of not only motivational speakers, but also undergraduate Pacific students from the University of Auckland employed as mentors, and other high school students who are also considering their future (Siope 2010:96). This is a successful initiative as over 50% of students who attended Dream Fono went on to participate in tertiary education (Collins 2013a).

[59] (Arthur Milo, UOA School's Partnership Office. Personal Communication 30 September 2013; Efeso Collins, founder of Dream Fonotaga. Personal Communication. 21 September 2013).
[60] According to Collins (2013a) Dream Fono is no longer in operation as the University of Auckland's School's Partnership Office withdrew funding for it.

Community and scholarly support for Pasifika worldview in education

The inclusion of indigenous and minority worldviews in education is supported by international organisations, foreign scholars, as well as non-Pacific New Zealand-based scholars.[61] A worldview is essentially a way of seeing the world. It is based on two things: an ontology, and an epistemology (Strega 2005; Mahina 2004; Kovach 2005). An ontology is a theory about things that exist and what can exist (Strega 2005:201). Ethnic groups have unique ontological definitions of things such as love, life, and death (Davidson and Tolich 2003:24). Ontologies are directly related to epistemologies. These are the labels, names, and concepts which people use to explain and describe their social reality (Mahina 2004:44). Ontologies therefore combine with associated epistemologies and come to form a significant part of worldviews.

A key aspect of including Pasifika worldview in education is its position in the curriculum. This is directly related to Pasifika learners' identity; particularly in how they perceive themselves, their place in relation to their school and teachers, and also their upbringing in New Zealand (Nakhid 2003:305; Anae 1997:128). Ladson-Billings (1998:204) argues that learners cannot be successful when the curriculum alienates them and their worldviews. Nakhid's (2003) findings support this, stating that Pasifika secondary school learners' experience was more like "containment" than "attainment". It is implied by Siteine and Samu (2009:54) that including more Pacific and culturally-relevant topics in subjects such as social studies would lead to better engagement of Pasifika students. However, many secondary school social studies teachers have limited knowledge of Pacific topics and therefore do not feel confident in using Pacific content in their curriculum (Siteine and Samu 2009:52). Though there are several ways the Pacific could be conceptualised by teachers, Siteine and Samu (2009:54) contend that Pacific topics are best explained through an "Oceanic" perspective (see Hau'ofa 1993).[62] This avoids some of the stereotypes of the Pacific,

[61] Pasifika scholars who support the inclusion of Pasifika worldview in learning include Siteine and Samu (2009), Siope (2010), Tuafuti (2005) and community groups who have helped implement bilingual programmes in schools, such as Richmond Road Primary's A'oga Fa'asamoa and Finlayson Park Primary's O le Taiala. International organisations supporting the inclusion of Pasifika worldview include the International Reading Association (2010) and May (2009), Jones (1991), and Nakhid (2003) are examples of non-Pacific NZ-based scholars in support of Pasifika worldview in learning while Ladson-Billings (1998) and Harper (2012) are international contemporaries.

[62] Hau'ofa (1993) essentially viewed the Pacific as being a large, grand ocean with many interconnected islands, belonging to the Pacific people who inhabit it as opposed to the many colonial powers who have laid claim to

particularly in regards of "traditional culture" (Siteine and Samu 2009:54; Hau'ofa 1993). It also would legitimise (and improve education for) Pasifika in New Zealand, who are often "labelled" in a negative manner by members of their own ethnic group and outsiders (Anae 1997; Siteine and Samu 2009:54).

Another key aspect of non-government funded approaches to raising Pasifika academic achievement is that they draw upon Pacific languages and worldviews as resources. Studio 274 engages its members by linking "cultural knowledges and values with technology" (Usmar and Milne 2011:8). Learning processes here embrace members' backgrounds. They are permitted to use technology to explore their interests and create knowledge that is relevant to not only their ethnic background but also their community background (Usmar and Milne 2011:6). By encouraging clubhouse members to use technology in a way that is both educational and relevant to the way they conceptualise the world; Studio 274 helps encourage in learners a positive sense of who they are in addition to belief in their potential and valuable skills (Usmar and Milne 2011:8).

Similarly, Dream Fono also features Pasifika worldview. According to Collins (2013a) "the live-in programme allowed a full expression of Pasifika ways of being – premised on what being Samoan, Tongan, Niuean or Cook Islander meant in a New Zealand context." Having the freedom to explore and develop one's own identity is also a central goal of De La Salle College's teachers for their students (Evans 2011:68). The use of Pacific literature at De La Salle was shown to be "great as boys relate to it and enjoy it but they hugely appreciate other cultures" (Evans 2011:69).[63] This shows that Pasifika identities are used as a vehicle for success, as opposed to being stifled or suppressed.

Pedagogy for success

Many scholars such as Anae et al (2001) and Ferguson et al (2008) point out that the way Pasifika learners are taught plays a large role in how well do at school.[64] This has a lot to do with teaching styles or pedagogies. The notion "pedagogy" refers to many dynamics in the classroom including ways in which cultural differences and identities are treated, and how

parts of it. He also believed the Pacific was not just restricted by national borders of Pacific states but extended to wherever Pacific people lived.

[63] De La Salle College in Mangere, Auckland is a single sex school for boys.

[64] Further examples include Madjar et al (2009), Silipa (2004), (Siope 2010), Evans (2011) and Jones (1991).

learning contexts (including communication between student and teacher) are constructed and negotiated (Sheets 2005; Ferguson et al 2008:17). Teachers "hold significant power over students and their pathways through secondary school and beyond" (Madjar et al 2009:72). By this it is meant that teachers not only help students realise what their best subjects are, but also inspire them and help them with tertiary entrance and career planning (Anae et al 2001:78). Pasifika respond well to certain teachers. One Pasifika student suggested they learned better in classes with teachers who put in a lot of effort in to making extra resources such as handouts and study guides; as opposed to teachers who: "[give] you the manuals and they're like, ok work out of those pages from that and you don't get it. And it's like, well I don't get that but they don't really do anything extra and they just like write things on the board" (Siope 2010:76). This relates to Pasikale's (1999) findings that teachers who had empathy and cared for their Pasifika cohort were more likely to get the best out of their students. Evans' (2011) study of De La Salle College in Mangere portrays the school as one that is committed to employing a pedagogy that "works" for Pasifika.[65] Many teachers at this school were "effective"—this means that they not only respected students, valued discipline, and had high expectations, but also "used humour and more personal interactions to motivate and inspire" (Evans 2011:54). Therefore pedagogy is an important factor in the achievement of Pasifika learners; this is a widely-held opinion amongst many scholars, both Pacific and non-Pacific.

Furthermore, some academics such as Silipa (2004), McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010), and Ferguson et al (2008:18) advocate the incorporation of Pasifika worldview into the teaching of Pasifika learners. For instance, the idea that Pasifika worldview should be included in pedagogy translates in practical terms to things such as "co-constructing classroom contexts" (Sheets 2005; Ferguson et al 2008:17). This means that teachers encourage significant others such as Pasifika parents to contribute "to the cultural, linguistic, cognitive, social, and physical dimensions of the classroom context" (Ferguson et al 2008:18). This means that parents' input into their child's learning is treated as valuable and teachers aim to have a strong relationship with them, particularly in Pasifika bilingual units. Finlayson Park School, which has successfully implemented bilingual language programmes, is an example of this (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:495). The school often holds workshops and seminars for parents on understanding the education system and developing strong

[65] Located in Mangere, Auckland, "De La Salle College is a decile 1 boys only school with a roll of 1,030 and over 90% Pasifika"

connections with parents so they are not afraid to question teachers (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:495).

Teu le Va: a Samoan concept in pedagogy

To teu le va means "to value, nurture, look after, and if necessary to tidy up the va" which is the space or relationship between two parties (Anae 2010:12). In a pedagogical context this means the relationship between teacher and student needs to be well-maintained and encompass Samoan concepts such as fa'aaloalo (respect) and va fealoa'i (mutual respect, "space between relational arrangements") (Anae 2010:12). The way teacher and student speak to each other and express themselves through body language are "indicators" of the va (Anae 2010:12). Also, to teu le va pedagogically is to teach effectively—Anae (2012:13) states that "maintaining good relational arrangements can bring blessings." This is supported by the findings of Silipa (2004) and Evans (2011). Silipa (2004:197-8) points out that secondary school teachers who have a close and positive relationship with their Pasifika contingent are able to better support their learning. Students felt that their teachers had demonstrated to them the value of va fealoa'i as teachers granted them more creative freedom with their schoolwork (Silipa 2004:198). To maintain the va with their teachers students were obliged to complete their work to a high standard and apply themselves in the classroom (Silipa 2004:198). Silipa (2004:198) also notes that students in this study felt more responsible and purposeful. These findings are in accordance with Evans' (2011). Pasifika students in Evans' (2011:78) study appreciated "that teachers recognised their values, attitudes, qualities, and characteristics" in addition to the fact that their teachers cared for them and compelled them to do well. This is relevant to the va relationship between student and teacher as it demonstrates good relationships bringing blessings as Anae (2010:13) suggested.

Yalomatua: a Fijian reference

Fijian scholars Nabobo (1994) and Baba (1993 in Nabobo 1994) are of the view that education of Fijian students' needs to incorporate yalomatua.[66] Yalomatua is essentially

[66] Nabobo (1994) is writing about Fijian students in Fiji – though this concept could possibly work in New Zealand as many "Pasifika values" have been adapted in the PEP 2013-2017 (MoE 2013a). It is important to

spiritual wisdom. According to Baba (1993:3-4 in Nabobo 1994:42) yalomatua is "the idea that there is an absolute necessity for hard work in any venture in life…nothing of worth or significance can be obtained without hard work or necessary effort." Those who overcome adversity and have a mind-set that enables this ability are said to have yalomatua (Nabobo 1994:46). It is relevant to learning in many ways as "yalomatua is basic to a child's attempt to be successful" (Nabobo 1994:46). This is because a student who has yalomatua will care about their academic performance, their future prospects, and not give in to negative peer pressure (Nabobo 1994). However, it is unclear how schools can apply yalomatua and promote associated values of determination and perseverance.

Ineffective pedagogies

It is important to note that a pedagogy that does not work for Pasifika students usually does not help their learning. Jones (1991:74) found that female Pasifika students in one particular central Auckland school were subjected to an "empty vessel" kind of pedagogy. The teacher is a full "vessel", full of knowledge, whereas the students are the "empty vessels", devoid of knowledge (Jones 1991:74). Instead of learning in a way that embraced their existing conception of the world, their existing knowledge was deemed inadequate (Jones 1991:74). Additionally, Nakhid (2003:307-310) contends that teachers who had limited interactions with the parents of their Pasifika students and limited knowledge of their cultural background often held stereotypical attitudes towards them. This meant that the students in Nakhid's (2003) study often had teachers who had low expectations of them as they were believed to be new migrants who struggled with the English language (Nakhid 2003:307-310).

Bilingual education

Another significant initiative supported by academics such as May (2009), Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005) and community groups such as Ulimasao (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:495) is to educate Pasifika learners through a bilingual education programme.[67] These programmes are usually either focused on bilingualism or immersion (Bilingual Education New Zealand 2013; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:104). The former is based upon

note that Nabobo (1994) also writes about Fijian values such as yalomatua in relation to similar Samoan concepts.

[67] To be successful in these programmes means to have high levels of literacy in both languages (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:112)

teaching in two languages: English and a Pacific language (the dual medium approach); whereas the latter approach favours using a Pacific language most of the time (Bilingual Education New Zealand 2013). These programmes have been operating in New Zealand since the late 1980's. Samoan bilingual programmes in New Zealand began in 1987 at Clydemore and Richmond Road schools (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:112).[68] Since then 25 Samoan bilingual units have been established at the primary level and two at the secondary level (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:112; Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:487). Notably, bilingual programmes are mainly the end product of "local initiatives at the school and community level, rather than via the support of national policy" (May 2009:14). This study will later examine three of the most exceptional bilingual units in Aotearoa, Richmond Road School's A'oga Fa'a Samoa and Mua i Malae programmes, and Finlayson Park School's O le Taiala.

Pasifika bilingual education – justification and rationale

One of the main reasons why Pasifika should have the option of receiving a bilingual education in New Zealand is that New Zealand has a special relationship with various Pacific states. Cook Islanders and Niueans are New Zealand citizens and their languages are indigenous to the "Realm of New Zealand." (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109).[69] "The Realm of New Zealand is the area over which the Queen of New Zealand is the ruling monarch. It covers the islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the "free association" countries of Niue and the Cook Islands.[70] This is a unique constitutional relationship in which all are citizens of New Zealand and hold only New Zealand passports" (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109). As a result of this arrangement, there are now more Cook Islanders and Niueans living in New Zealand than there are in their homeland. The populations in New Zealand are largely monolingual (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:94). According to McFall-McCaffery (2010:109), "the future of these languages appears to lie here in Aotearoa." The relationship New Zealand shares with the Cook Islands and Niue also extends

[68] Of all Pasifika peoples, Samoans have the most established bilingual education system (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:112)

[69] Remarkably, the Pacific peoples which New Zealand has the strongest ties with have a lack of bilingual programmes. Niuean and Cook Islands programmes have been successful at Mangere Central School in South Auckland, but were closed by the MoE. Richmond Road Primary School's Cook Islands programme ended when there were too few students enrolled in it to make it sustainable (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:112).

[70] Tokelau is a territory of New Zealand.

to other Pacific Islands, despite the fact that they are not in free association with New Zealand. New Zealand administered Samoa from 1900 to 1962 and now have a treaty of friendship with the Samoans (United Nations 1962; see Field 1984; 2006); New Zealand also maintains close political links with Tonga and Fiji, and recently signed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:109; see Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee 2005). In the 1970's, New Zealand also executed many "dawn raids" on Pacific people living in New Zealand in the 1970's; anyone who looked "Pacific" was not exempt from being investigated, even Māori (Anae 1997:130; Perrott 2000).

Language maintenance

Using Pasifika languages such as Cook Islands Maori, Samoan, and Fijian in bilingual immersion and dual language programmes would assist in the maintenance of Pasifika languages. According to Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001:211) language use can be understood in terms of spheres. If Pacific languages were used in more spheres, such as home life, church, or in schools, it is likely that language loss will occur at a slower rate. Essentially, families face too much pressure from the hegemonic nature of the English language to maintain their languages; the help of the state is required (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:92).[71] It is believed by scholars such as Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001), May (2009), and McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010) that the state can help by supporting bilingual education. This will not only help Pasifika peoples meet their language maintenance goals but also advance them educationally. Becoming monolingual in English does not always translate to academic success as a third of Cook Islands students leave school before they are age 17 and only 6.3% are studying towards a university degree (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:99).[72] Comparatively, Tongans have a well-maintained language and are the best-represented Pasifika subgroup in tertiary education (Statistics New Zealand 2009; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:101-2). This shows that heritage languages are worthy of maintaining.

[71] This is true of Niue; English is the preferred language in Niuean schools and Niuean language is one of the most under-threat Pacific languages in New Zealand. It has also "been on the United Nations seriously endangered languages list since 2001 (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:92;98)."
[72] It is also uncommon for New Zealand-born Cook Islands children to be able to speak and write in Cook Islands Māori (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:99).

Educational benefits of bilingualism

According to Nakhid (2006:299), bilingual programmes have been established to address the percieved ineffectiveness of how Pasifika students have been "catered for at compulsory school level."[73] There are many theorists who are in support of bilingual educations' academic merits such as Tuafuti et al (2011), Krashen (2005), (Ianco-Worrall 1972), and Franken et al (2005). Tuafuti et al (2011:64) for instance suggests that bilingual education can foster academic success when resources such as literature are relevant to the bilingual learners and when the two languages are being used in a complimentary (rather than oppositional) manner.[74] Krashen (2005) contends that there are "two pillars of bilingual education", or two ways that bilingual education helps nurture success. The first is background knowledge and the second is literacy transfers (Krashen 2005). Background knowledge means the understanding learners have of their own language helps them understand concepts in English better; whereas literacy transfers refers to "developing literacy in the first langauge is a shortcut to developing literacy in the second language" (Krashen 2005). Ianco-Worrall (1972:1938) echoes this, arguing that bilingual children develop a greater understanding of words or metalinguistic awareness faster than their monolingual counterparts.[75] In this study, 4-6 year old bilingual children mainly focused on the meaning of words whereas their monolingual counterparts focused on phonetics or the different sounds of words (Ianco-Worrall 1972:1398; Franken et al 2005:20). Also, according to Franken et al (2005:20), bilingual children generally are capable of divergent thinking (Franken et al 2005:20). This means that they are able to think of a wide range of solutions to problems, many different outcomes or possibilities. Divergent thinking can be equated to imagination and "thinking outside of the box" (Franken et al 2005:20).

Case Study 1: A'oga Fa'a Samoa

A'oga Fa'a Samoa is one key example of bilingual education proving to be successful in New Zealand. In 1984 a group of like-minded parents and grandparents created plans for the "A'oga Fa'a Samoa" (Samoan language nest) and operated it (the first Pasifika ECE centre)

[73] This also applies to Māori students (see Nakhid 2006:299)
[74] Tuafuti et al (2011:64) also contend that bilingual education requires the collaboration with parents and that tokenism must be avoided at all costs.
[75] Franken et al (2005:20) define metalinguistic awareness as "the ability to analyse language, particularly language *forms*, how they work, and how they are integrated into the wider language system."

from "the Pacific Island Resource Centre in Herne Bay, Auckland" (Podmore et al 2006:14). Five years later in 1989 the A'oga Fa'a Samoa moved to "the grounds of Richmond Road School…in 1990, this same centre became New Zealand's first licensed and chartered Pacific early childhood centre" (Podmore et al 2006:14; see A'oga Fa'a Samoa 2013).[76] It has a close connection with Richmond Road School's Samoan bilingual programme Mua i Malae; though it is funded as a separate entity from the primary school (Cazden 1989:150). In 2003 the MoE designated the A'oga Fa'a Samoa as one of six centres of innovation (Podmore et al 2006:17). This is testament to A'oga Fa'a Samoa's success. ECE centres of innovation are basically some of the best in New Zealand that use innovative approaches to teaching and learning. It is the only Samoan language ECE centre listed as a centre of innovation (Podmore et al 2006:17).[77] Its innovation is manifested in its many aims. These include: promoting "Samoan language and culture", "nurturing the positive identity of the children", hiring skilled staff and upskilling current staff through higher level training, and being inclusive of parents so children are given a "family atmosphere" (Podmore et al 2006:16-17; A'oga Fa'a Samoa 2013). Even if there are children who only speak and understand English in attendance at A'oga Fa'a Samoa, the total Samoan immersion programme will still be used—this has proven successful as many children enrolled come from English-only homes (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:106; Podmore et al 2006:15).[78]

Case Study 2: Mua i Malae of Richmond Road Primary School

Mua i Malae is the Samoan bilingual unit of Richmond Road Primary School, located in Ponsonby, Auckland (ERO 2013:1). It is offered to Year 1-6 students (ERO 2013:1). Mua i Malae is the brainchild of a previous visionary principal and the local Pasifika community; symbolic of an attempt to "create New Zealand's first truly multicultural multilingual school" (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:486). In 1989, Richmond Road's staff was as culturally diverse as the student body; which was "21% Samoan, 18% Māori, 18% Pākehā, 13% Cook Island, 13% Tongan, 6% Niuean, 3% Indian, 2% Tokelauan, and 5% other, including Fijian, West Indian, Malaysian and Japanese" (May 1991:204). However, in November 2012, the ethnic

[76] Interestingly, A'oga Fa'a Samoa's (2013) website lists this date as 1987 not 1989. This move was helped by Richmond Road Primary School already having a Māori language ECE centre (Kohanga Reo) and a Samoan bilingual programme at the Primary level (A'oga Fa'a Samoa 2013).
[77] Its innovative approaches include its Samoan language-immersion programme and its "community of learners" collaborative approach (Podmore et al 2006:17)."
[78] This is in contrast to other immersion and bilingual ECE centres who will use English if there are any children present who only understand English (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:106).

composition of the school was not as markedly Polynesian as it used to be. The roll in 2012 consisted of: 30% Pākehā, 20% other European, 22% Māori, 15% Samoan, 3% Tongan, 3% Niuean, and 7% other including Fijian, Cook Island, Indian, Tokelauan, and Chinese (ERO 2013:1).[79]

Irrespective of these changes, the school is still committed to bilingual education. In the 1980's, Richmond Road had a visionary principal who believed the school curriculum should "reflect the ethnic diverstiy of the community it serves" (May 1991:204; Cazden 1989:142-145).[80] This is shown in the school currently operating a bilingual programme (or "rōpū/stream/divison") in Samoan (Mua i Malae), but also one in Māori and French (ERO 2013:1).[81]

Richmond Road Primary school subscribes to some key values which guide its policy on bilingualism. These include: focusing on the collective rather than the individual, in terms of students cooperating and working together rather than competing with eachother (May 1991:209). Students at varying skill levels often work together at Richmond Road as the organisation fosters and maintains a "supportive" and "cooperative" environment (May 1991:209; Cazden 1989:148). Remarkaby, Cazden (1989:153) adds that the caretaker was a part of the "family" at Richmond Road; he was involved with staff and children in ways such as "welcoming visiting groups" and coaching sport teams. This "family" includes parents too. The school has an "open door policy" for parents who can come in to visit at any time of the school day (Cazden 1989:158).

Parents have a choice of which unit their child is to be educated in and they are not excluded if their ethnicity is different from the language being offered by the "rōpū" (bilingual group or stream at the school) (Cazden 1989:156). Teachers teach the children in their rōpū for many years which means that "staff come to know the familes particularly well, further fostering community and school interchange over this time" (May 1991:204). This means that the various rōpū including Mua i Malae are indicative of the school's values and beliefs.

[79] Many of the bilingual rōpū children live out of school enrolment zone. This represents changing Pasifika demographics as from the 1950s-1980s inner city suburbs of Auckland were working-class and where many Pacific peoples lived prior to gentrification and other forces (ERO 2013:2; see Jones 1991).
[80] See Cazden (1989) for more on Jim Laughton, former Principal of Richmond Road.
[81] Richmond Road also once operated a Cook Islands rōpū, which is further evidence of their commitment to bilingualism

In accordance with values such as cooperation and multiculturalism, "the bilingual rōpū are based on a dual-language medium philosophy where during half of each morning and every other afternoon, the teachers speak only the minority language to the children and the children are encouraged to respond in the same language" (May 1991:204; see Cazden 1989:156). In all, Mua i Malae is Richmond Road Primary's is one of New Zealand's premier bilingual programmes and it strongly reflects Richmond Road's status as New Zealand's "first truly multicultural multilingual school" (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:486).

Case Study 3: O le Taiala of Finlayson Park Primary School

Like Richmond Road Primary's Mua i Malae, Finlayson Park School's O le Taiala (the world of the navigator) is another noteworthy bilingual unit operating in Auckland (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:490).[82] It caters for year 1 to 8 students. According to Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005:493) "in 2005, O le Taiala is both the best developed and the most successful Pasifika bilingual programme currently operating in Aotearoa/New Zealand." This is because of the emphasis the school places on empowering families and the community (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:491). This shows that Finlayson Park School is both committed to serving the community it is located within, as well as providing a high level of service in terms of bilingual education. Its support for the local community is manifested in its extensive range of bilingual units. Finlayson Park features two immersion programmes, one in Māori and Samoan, and three bilingual programmes, one of each in Māori, Samoan, and Tongan (Finlayson Park School 2013; ERO 2012b:1). Like Richmond Road, it has a relatively multicultural roll. Its ethnic composition is: 52% Māori, 28% Samoan, 6% Tongan, 6% Cook Islands Māori, 2% Niuean, 1% Pākehā, 1% Chinese, and 2% other (ERO 2012b:1).

Finlayson Park School, and by extension O le Taiala, is driven by its principles. The school's leadership is dedicated to making its largely Pasifika and Māori population as successful as possible and believe this can be achieved through culturally-relevant learning and bilingualism (Finlayson Park School 2013). This involves things such as having a curriculum that is relevant to both the students' ethnic and community backgrounds, as well as running bilingual units such as O le Taiala according to a high standard (Finlayson Park School

[82] Richmond Road is a decile 8 school, whereas Finlayson Park is a decile 1 school. Richmond Road operates in the more affluent suburb of Grey Lynn, whereas Finlayson Park is located in Manurewa, South Auckland (ERO 2012b:1; ERO 2013:1).

2013). This cannot be done without having the right staff though—Finlayson Park School has many quality teachers who adhere to the school's philosophy of excellence in two languages (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:493). The school and its staff has a positive reputation amongst the local Samoan community; Many are impressed with O le Taiala and see it as a desireable option for their children (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:493). Parents have an undeniably strong relationship with the school. According to Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005:492):

> parent participation in and around the school has increased dramatically. There is strong parental support for educational trips and visits, fundraising and community events. Parents indicate that they feel a real sense of onwership and control over their children's education.

This shows that Finlayson Park School dually empowers the parents of its students as well as its community. Overall, its many principles exemplify its response to its large Pasifika contingent, which has proven successful.

A large part of this success can be credited to O le Taiala. Student attendance at O le Taiala is higher than that of Samoan children at other decile 1 schools (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492). Families are also reluctant to transfer their children from O le Taiala to other schools if they move out of zone (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492). This is partly because the students of O le Taiala are not only displaying signs of their academic potential; but they are growing up to be confident, respectful, and successful (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492). O le Taiala students generally have a positive attitude towards their schoolwork; in addition to having performed well in "external competitions, such as the local district speech competitions and the Australian Mathematics competition" (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492). Also, many students participate in sports and cultural events as well as act as positive role models for other students (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492). In all, their success has gone beyond academic achievement (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492).

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many initiatives in New Zealand supported and funded without official state support which aim to address Pasifika academic achievement. Many of these initiatives are reinforced by academic research and are funded by Pacific communities, trust groups, and corporate sponsors. This chapter looked at a wide range of these initiatives, including mentoring programmes such as MATES, Studio 274, and Dream Fonotaga. These were shown to be successful, as they had helped Pasifika learners realise their potential,

develop their confidence, improve their attitude to schoolwork, and assist them with getting in to tertiary study. Additionally, this chapter also examined bilingual education in New Zealand. Case studies include the A'oga Fa'a Samoa of Ponsonby, Auckland, Richmond Road Primary School's Mua i Malae unit, and Finlayson Park Primary School's O le Taiala programme. This is arguably representative of the upper echelon of bilingual education in Aotearoa. These programmes were shown to be successful, each in their own right, as they have enabled Pasifika students to have "life chances" and "life choices". This means that they were able to excel in their education as well as being able to develop competence in their own cultural capital, such as their heritage language (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:488).

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, this study was guided by 4 key questions. This framework lent itself to the structure of this thesis, especially in regards to how the findings were disseminated. These key questions were:

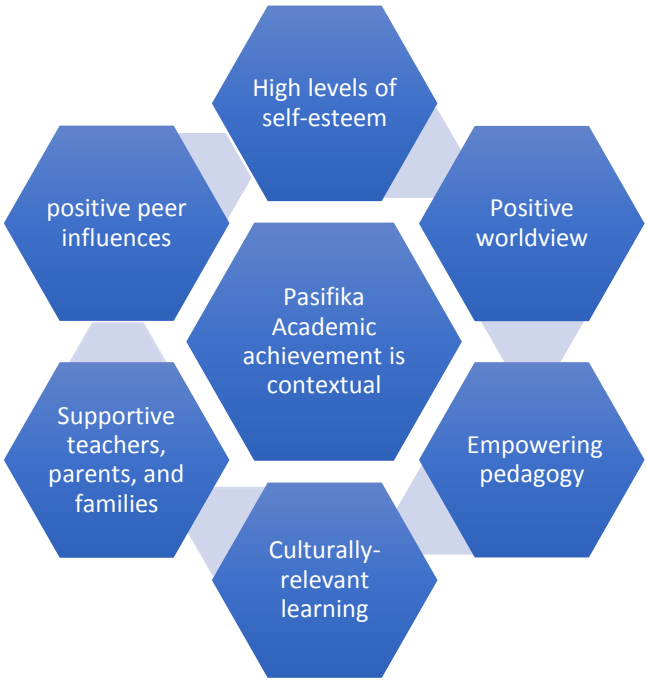
- As an overall picture, what does the research say about Pasifika academic achievement in terms of causal factors and challenges?
- How is academic achievement theorised and how does this influence the institutional responses to Pasifika "underachievement"?
- What initiatives (both government and non-government) are in place to address Pasifika learners' relatively low academic achievement levels?
- Which initiatives, approaches, and practices are most helpful to Pasifika students' learning?

It is important that these questions or themes are addressed as they are a central part of what this study focused on exploring. The findings contained within the body of this thesis will serve as key references in answering these questions throughout this final chapter.

- **As an overall picture, what does the research say about Pasifika academic achievement in terms of causal factors and challenges?**

The findings of this study suggest that for Pasifika learners to reach their full potential by the end of their compulsory education, certain prerequisites must be met. This is not to say that those who do not have these prerequisites or factors in their lives cannot academically achieve; but rather that these dimensions function as indicators of academic success. The findings suggest that Pasifika students' who experience these "dimensions" or are exposed to them are more likely to do better in school. These indicators are outlined in figure 8 as: high levels of self-esteem, positive worldview, empowering pedagogy, culturally-relevant learning, supportive teachers, parents and families, and positive peer influences (see Fig. 8).

Figure 8: The background to academic achievement



Source: Summary of information gathered within this study

Self-esteem

It is apparent that Pasifika students who have high levels of self-esteem are more likely to be successful at school. According to Robinson and Biran (2006:51):

> Before anyone can excel in an environment, they must have a sense of who they are or a cultural base to orient themselves to prevent becoming lost or discouraged…identity is what anchors a person to a cultural reality, and it is what helps to maintain a focus that motivates academic success.

Pasifika students at De La Salle College are given the freedom to explore and develop their own identity, particularly with the use of Pacific literature and course content (Evans 2011:68-9). Self-esteem is a central component in many other programmes aiming to raise Pasifika academic achievement, including Dream Fono, Studio 274, and Pasifika bilingual programmes (Collins 2013a; Usmar and Milne 2011:8; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:113).

Positive worldview

Pasifika students who have a positive worldview in regards to their education are more likely to do better academically. Like high levels of self-esteem, positive worldviews are to an extent dependent on the education the student receives. This effectively means that Pasifika students "learn" how to see the world, themselves and their life chances through their education (see Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492). For instance, the MATES programme gives senior high school students the opportunity to seriously consider and aim for tertiary entrance when they complete year 13. Many mentees who are the first in their family to enter degree-level study do not have parents familiar with applications to tertiary education providers and thus university entrance is an "abstract goal" to them (Great Potentials Foundation 2012:19).[83] The mentoring offered to students like these by the MATES programme not only helps them do better in their NCEA internal and external assessments, but also helps them become more confident and positive about their futures (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:56; Great Potentials Foundation 2012:19; Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:56). However, it is important to note that positive worldview does not guarantee success. Many of the Pasifika students in Jones' (1991) study worked hard at school and expected to gain white collar careers, which would fulfil their parents' "migrant dreams" (see Siope 2010). Despite their hard work, these students rarely gained sufficient understanding of classroom topics (Jones 1991:127).[84] They were "cooled-out" by the education system which effectively means that they were led to believe social mobility is guaranteed to all (but their failure to capitalise on this was solely their fault) and channelled into "realistic" lower-paid careers (Clark 1961 in Jones 1991:170).

Empowering pedagogy

An empowering pedagogy is also an indicator of academic achievement for Pasifika learners. According to many scholars such as Siteine (2010), Silipa (2004), Evans (2011), and Madjar et al (2009) Pasifika students respond better to certain teachers and teaching styles. For instance, teachers who genuinely care for their students are desireable amongst Pasifika

[83] Tertiary students function as mentors in the MATES programme, mentoring high school students—the mentees.
[84] Students worked hard by making notes and being attentive in class but did not understand their teachers at all. Teachers often did not ask these students questions in class as they saw them as extremely shy. However, when they did participate in classroom discussions their input was ignored (Jones 1991:121-7).

learners; irrespective of their ethnic background (Pasikale 1999). Whereas Evans (2011) suggests De La Salle College in Mangere is committed to employing a pedagogy that "works" for Pasifika. This means that teachers at De La Salle not only respect students, value discipline, and have high expectations, but also "use humour and more personal interactions to motivate and inspire" (Evans 2011:54).

Culturally-relevant learning

Culturally-relevant learning is beneficial to Pasifika learners in terms of learning.[85] The Ministry of Education (2013:4) agree with this as the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017* highlights "closer alignment and compatibility" between Pasifika students' homes and schools as a means of achieving "optimum learning".[86] In essence, culturally-relevant learning in relation to Pasifika entails incorporating their worldviews and experience into the schooling experience in a meaningful way. For instance, the ERO (2012a) reports that one unnamed high decile secondary school made use of several "Pacific contexts" within its curriculum. Its sustainability class focuses on Tokelau and migration, whereas Pacific students taking art are encouraged to draw upon their cultural background for inspiration. Yet Siteine and Samu (2009:54) point out that tokenistic and Eurocentric forms of culturally-relevant ways of including Pasifika experience and knowledge into the curriculum are counterproductive. This is because characterising the Pacific as "small and remote" or Pasifika cultures as only located in "traditional" forms risk undermining attempts to be culturally-relevant.

Supportive teachers, parents, and families

Supportive teachers and parents are also significant factors in Pasifika academic achievement. Teachers have the power to greatly influence students as they can help a student realise what their strongest subject is, motivate them, give them belief and help them with tertiary education applications and career planning (Anae et al 2001:78). Madjar et al (2009:77) add that teachers see themselves as "advisors" as they are able to provide sound subject choice advice to their students. It is interesting to note that Jones (1991) and Nakhid (2003) focus on

[85] According to Ladson-Billings (1998:204), learners cannot be successful when the curriculum alienates them.
[86] "Optimum learning" is not defined within the PEP 2013-2017 but it could be characterised as interesting, engaging, and even inspiring.

negative influences on Pasifika academic achievement and teachers in these respective studies take a dim view of their Pasifika cohort. Teachers, therefore are an important influence in Pasifika academic achievement; The Ministry of Education (2013:14) and several schools (ERO 2012a; Evans 2011) have recognised this and have programmes in place to ensure that teachers are effective players in raising achievement levels of Pasifika learners.

Equally significant to how well Pasifika learners do educationally is the influence of their family, especially their parents. According to Bourdieu (1974:32), "all the characteristics of a school career, in terms of schools attended or subjects taken, are indices of the direct influence of the family milieu." This effectively means that the home environment and associated familial influences play a large role in a student's academic achievement. Parents, for instance, support their child's learning in many ways. These include: "ensuring they were doing their study, buying materials and resources which would assist in their study, giving the opportunity or time to devote to study or making the home environment more conductive for studying" (Anae 2001:77). Yan (1999:6) adds that "emotionally supportive home environments" and positive conversation within the home are also significant ways in how parents support their child's education.

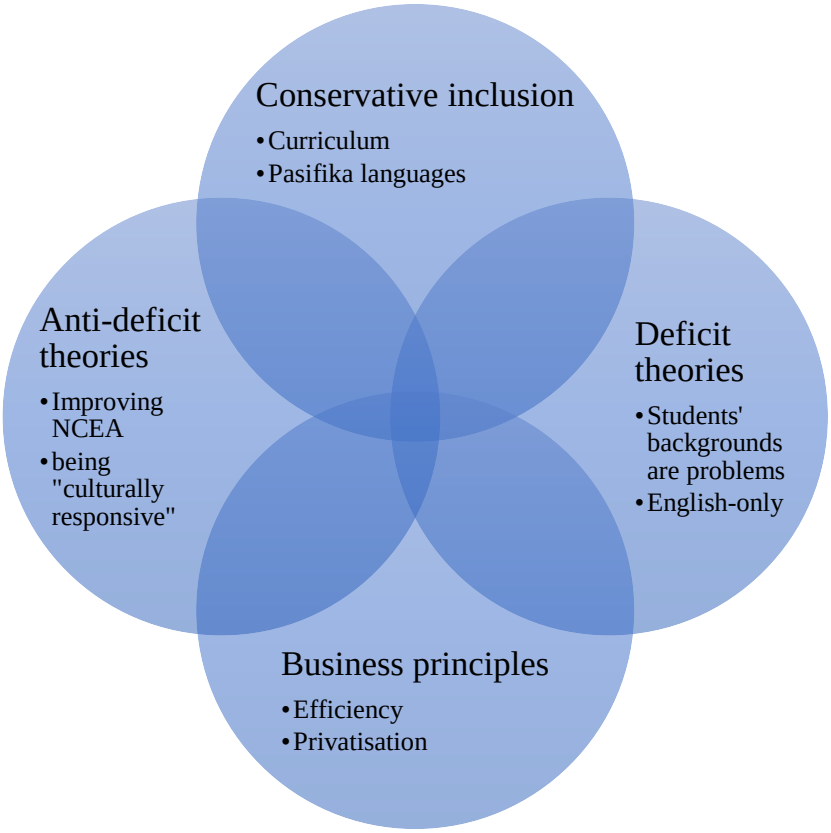
Positive peer influences

Another indicator of academic success for Pasifika learners are the peer groups which exist around the student and to which he or she belongs to. The individual is a part of a group (this can be a group of friends or classmates) which have some influence over his or her ideas and actions (Bourdieu 1974:35). Successful Pasifika learners tend to have friends who have similar values to them in terms of their education. Anae et al (2001:80) report that Pasifika who do well in their schoolwork distance themselves from negative influences, particularly those who "wag" classes to have leisurely excursions from school.[87] Good friends also are "more likely to help each other with homework, study together for tests, and encourage each other to do well in school" (Fuligni 1997:358).

[87] A "wagger" is a colloquial term for a truant. Therefore, to wag is to commit truancy.

- **How is academic achievement theorised? And how do these understandings influence the institutional responses to Pasifika "underachievement"?**

Figure 9: Academic achievement theories and how they apply to institutional responses to Pasifika achievement



Source: Summary of information gathered within this study

This study found that there are two main ways in which academic achievement can be theorised or explained. These were cultural-deficit explanations and anti-deficit approaches; the former focus on failure and "underachievement" and "blame" this on students' parents and cultural backgrounds whereas the latter pay special attention to how the education system and certain aspects of it can be improved (see Fig. 9).

The New Zealand government's approach to addressing Pasifika "underachievement" is influenced by both cultural-deficit and anti-deficit theories of academic achievement (see Fig. 9). Deficit theorising is manifested in the way the PEP 2013-2017 characterises Pasifika families and the overall state approach to Pasifika languages in education. It is also represented through the conservative inclusion of Pasifika and implementation of the deficit-informed business principles into New Zealand education. On the other hand, the New

Zealand government also makes use of anti-deficit theories in its quest to improve the NCEA system (and make it culturally-responsive).

Cultural-deficit theorising – Pasifika families and languages

The MoE's approach to Pasifika "underachievement" is influenced by cultural-deficit theory. The PEP 2013-2017 highlights this. It clearly states that "the focus is on more informed and demanding parents, families and communities supporting and championing their children's learning and achievements" (MoE 2013:3). This is relevant to cultural-deficit theory as parents may be involved with their child's learning but in ways which the MoE may not recognise, such as having high educational aspirations but working long hours in addition to being unfamiliar with the NCEA system (Madjar et al 2009:48; Fuligni 1997:352). It appears that the MoE (2013:3) are of the view that some Pasifika parents lack the cultural capital necessary to successfully participate in educational achievement and they are best ignored.

Cultural-deficit theory is also evident in the way the government treat Pasifika languages. Existing research such as that of Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005), Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001), and May (2009) suggests that the government is treating Pacific bilingualism as an obstacle in raising Pacific students' academic achievement levels, particularly in literacy (see McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:106). This is a recurring theme amongst many national education policies of New Zealand (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:486). Notably, in 2010 the MoE canceled the production of Pasifika language reading resources for primary school children (Tupu series) and replaced it with a "one-size-fits-all" approach better known as National Standards (Tuafuti et al 2011:62).

Tokenistic inclusion

Some of the New Zealand government's responses to Pasifika achievement pay lip service to multiculturalism while maintaining cultural-deficit underpinnings. According to Apple (2004b:178) this means that anything that challenges the dominance of English language or dominant worldview will not be incorporated into the wider schooling experience—the contributions to society and the historical experiences of minorities will be included in a

tokenistic fashion.[88] This is reflected in the treatment of Pasifika in the curriculum and Pacific languages. Siteine and Samu (2009:54) point out that the Pacific can be characterised as "backward", "traditional", and "remote" in the curriculum, particularly in social studies topics. This is a case of conservative inclusion as not only are Pasifika learners' identities and sense of belonging undermined; but also because Pacific ways of conceptualising the Pacific (ontological definitions) are pre-empted by dominant discourse surrounding the Pacific (Siteine and Samu 2009:54).

Many scholars, such as Tuafuti et al (2011), McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010), May (2009), and Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001) highlight the ways in which conservative inclusion is manifested in institutional responses to Pasifika bilingual education. For instance, McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010:104) point out that "the characteristic feature of most New Zealand initiatives in education policy has been the search for ways of helping Pasifika learners to succeed in English literacy without having to investigate and support Pasifika bilingual/immersion education."[89] This, combined with the resignation of Galumalemana Alfred Hunkin from the MPIA Pacific Advisory Council underlines the conservative nature of Pasifika education in New Zealand. Justifying his resignation, Hunkin (MPIA 2012c) stated:

> I am disillusioned of the repeated platitudes that continue to be trotted out each time by way of plans that have not had much substance nor resources financially or otherwise to make them useful or meaningful. Both the Pasifika Languages Framework of the MPIA and the PEP plan by MOE reflect no real commitment to policies that commit the Government to using Pasifika languages in the education of our children.

Thus, it is clear that state initiatives to make Pasifika learners more successful, especially in regards to curriculum and language, exemplify conservative inclusion.

Business principles

The New Zealand government is currently mobilising to "promote the privatisation of education" which effectively means introducing business principles such as efficiency, auditing, and transparency to the nation's education system (Clark 2010:116). The introduction of National Standards in 2010 coincided with the phasing out of Tupu Pacific

[88] Apple (2004b:178) includes the practice of "mentioning" as an example of this which generally means to mention the inclusion of "others" as a side note in text books or other learning resources.
[89] See Tuafuti et al (2011:61) and May (2009:14) for similar sentiments.

language resources, a move that reflects a shift in the attitude towards Pasifika achievement, particularly in regards to literacy (Tuafuti et al 2011:59). This is relevant to deficit theory as this implies Pasifika languages and ways of being are a factor in Pasifika's relative low levels of English literacy (Tuafuti et al 2011:59). It also furthers the deficit theory as it relies upon the judgements of the education system (especially teachers) about learners' abilities and levels. Many children will be labelled "failures" from a young age which will cause them to greatly underperform educationally (Hartevelt 2009; Thrupp et al 2009).[90] The Government are also introducing charter schools, better known as "partnership schools" in New Zealand. Remarkably, the *National and ACT Confidence and Supply Agreement* (National Party and Act Party 2011:3) states that these partnership schools will be implemented in areas "where educational "underachievement" is most entrenched...such as South Auckland and Christchurch." Charter schools' introduction into New Zealand is indicative of cultural-deficit theory in practice. This is because the National Party and Act Party's (2011:3) above statement is reminiscent of teachers' sentiments in Nakhid's (2003:309) study—who believed Pasifika students were "underachievers" due to their socioeconomic status and cultural background. This authorises the privatisation of education in these "problem areas" which will see the establishment of charter schools focused on efficiency and profiteering (see SOSNZ 2012; QPEC 2012b).

Anti-deficit theories

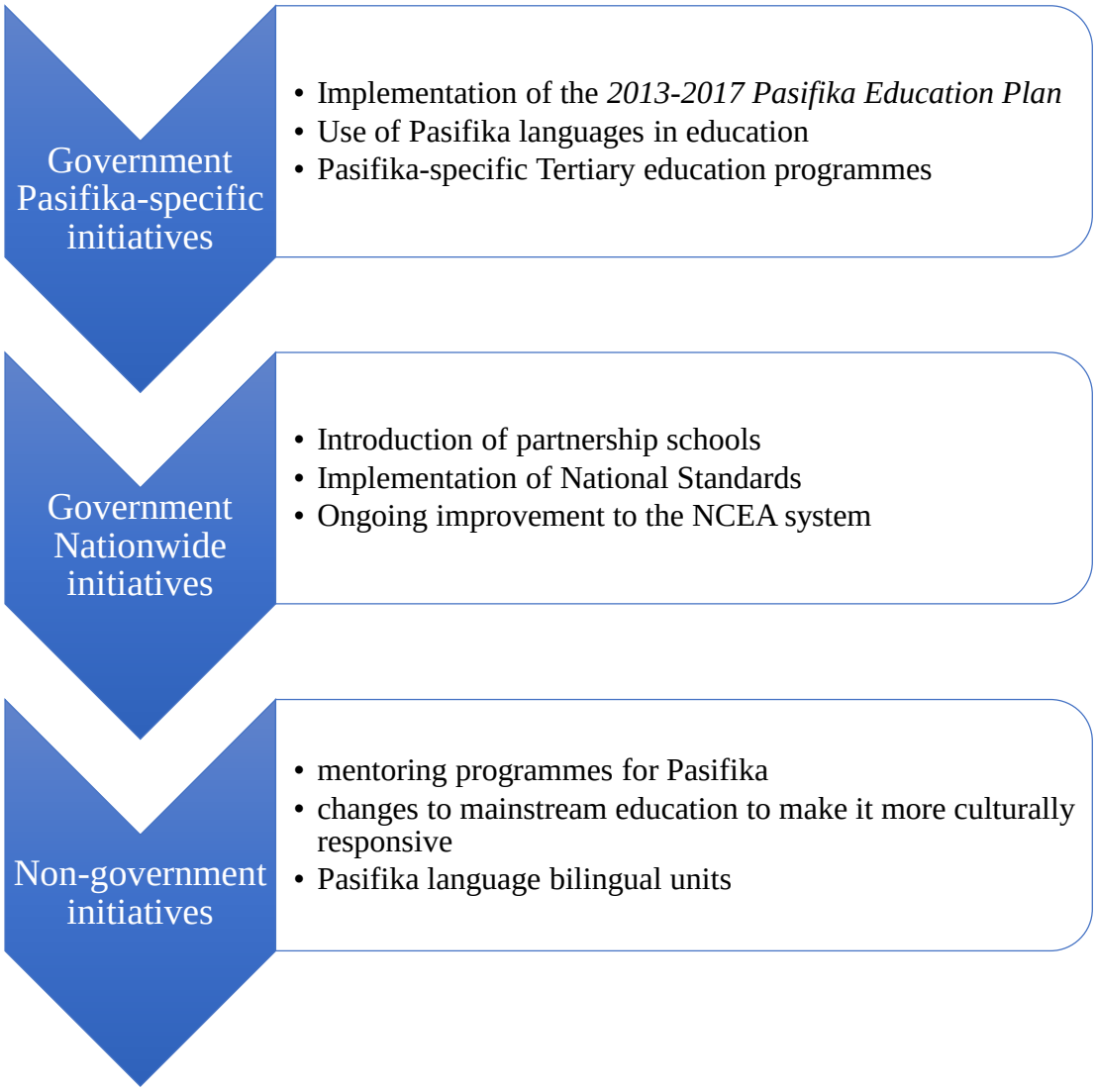
Despite the prevalence of cultural-deficit theory in government responses to Pasifika academic achievement, there is evidence that the government does take an anti-deficit approach in some instances (see Harper 2012:4). This is manifested in their programs to improve the education system as a means of gaining better educational outcomes for Pasifika learners. The TEC's *Pasifika Framework 2013-2017* represents this best as it wants "Pasifika learners' participation and achievement [to be] at least on par with other learners" in addition to "Pasifika learners shifting qualification choice to higher demand industry sectors and higher-skilled, high-paid occupations (TEC 2013:2-5)." It is noteworthy that the TEC support successful initiatives such as the University of Auckland's Tuākana programme (Patterson 2012). Through the *Starpath* project the government also recognises the NCEA system needs to be improved if Pasifika are to get more out of their education. This is because it is complex

[90] According to MoE projections almost half of all year 8 students will fail the newly-introduced national standards in numeracy and literacy (Hartevelt 2009).

and difficult for Pasifika parents to understand; as a result parents are unable to advise and support their children's schooling to the best of their abilities (Madjar et al 2009:6). Students are unable to confidently navigate the NCEA system "in a way that facilitates the realisation of their parents' aspirations (Madjar et al 2009:105)."

- **What initiatives (both government and non-government) are in place to address Pasifika learners' relatively low academic achievement levels?**

Figure 10: Some notable initiatives to address Pasifika "underachievement"



Source: Summary of information gathered within this study

This study has come to the conclusion that the New Zealand government has a range of initiatives in place to address Pasifika academic "underachievement". These were grouped into two categories: Pasifika-specific, which are focused on Pasifika learners, and nationwide

initiatives which affect all of New Zealand's learners (see Fig. 10). Pasifika-specific initiatives included the *2013-2017 Pasfika Education Plan*, the (cautious) introduction of Pasifika languages into Pasifika learners' education, and Pasifika tertiary education programmes.

Pasifika-specific government initiatives

The PEP 2013-2017 outlines the government's many aims for Pacific learners which include fostering better relationships between schools, parents, and Pasifika communities, and improving teachers' training so future teachers are better-equipped to teach Pasifika students (MoE 2013a) (see Fig. 10). However, reflection on past *Pasifika Education Plans* suggests that schools and the MoE need to work together in order for the PEP 2013-2017 to work. Just under half (45%) of all schools surveyed by ERO (2012a:14) reported on Pacific student achievement to Boards of Trustees. Additionally, the majority of schools are indifferent to improving the performance of Pasifika learners: "large proportions of schools are not carefully examining the achievement of Pacific students, using Pacific contexts in the classroom, responding to the individual needs of Pacific learners, or involving Pacific parents" ERO (2012a:16).

The government's approach to addressing Pasifika academic achievement is somewhat contradictory, especially in regards to Pasifika languages (see Fig. 10). The MoE and the MPIA point out that bilingualism is academically useful in students' education. This is demonstrated in official documents such as the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (MoE 1993), the *Pasifika Education Plan* (MoE 2013a) and the *Pasifika Languages Framework* (MPIA 2012b:4). The latter points out that Pacific languages should be used "with skill and fluency in everyday situations, particularly children and young people" (MPIA 2012b:4). However, Pacific languages are not used as mediums of instruction and are only being embraced by the MoE as subjects (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001:205; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:104; MPIA 2012c). This is partly because they are percieved by the MoE as being devoid of any significant value (McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:91). Also, the MoE's Pasifika language resources *(Tupu series)* were discontinued shortly before National Standards were introduced which reflects the confusing nature of New Zealand's educational

approach to Pasifika.[91] Overall, even though Pasifika languages are represented as academically useful in official education documents, it appears that they are not used extensively in addressing Pasifika academic "underachievement".

The government also has various tertiary education initiatives specifically focused on creating more equitable outcomes for Pasifika learners.[92] This is because gaining qualifications such as bachelor's and master's degrees "early in adult life provides better employment opportunities and income, which in turn improves quality of life" (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:53). However, Pasifika students are only a third as likely as the total population to achieve a bachelor's degree by the age of 25; hence the government's interest in improving tertiary education outcomes for Pasifika (Stats NZ and MPIA 2010:54).[93] The TEC is the government department that has responsibility for New Zealand's tertiarty education providers, it provides funding and has official strategies for the general direction of higher education in New Zealand (MoE 2008:18; Patterson 2012:9). In regards to Pasifika, it wants to fund "a tertiary education system that assists all Pasifika New Zealanders to reach their full potential and contribute to the social and economic well-being of New Zealand" (TEC 2013:2).

Tuākana is a notable tertiary education initiative of the government (Through the TEC). It helps many Pasifika and Māori at the University of Auckland achieve their academic goals through the benefits it grants these learners. One student reported that they felt Tuākana offered them a "community" which was supportive and assisted them greatly (Patterson 2012:33). Another adds that "the people that actually come to Tuākana are the ones who want to succeed, who will actually take their time out to come to the workshops. So I made friends straight away with people who had the same sort of mind-set as me. They want to succeed" (Patterson 2012:35). Tuākana assists the TEC (2013:2-5) in fulfilling its goals for Pasifika, which include "Pasifika learners' participation and achievement is at least on par with other learners" and "Pasifika learners developing into independent, confident, and successful learners" (see Fig. 7).

[91] See Tuafuti et al (2011:65) for implications of this change in definition of "literacy".
[92] Universities in New Zealand are partly funded by the government, but "all the providers operate in an environment of decentralised governance and management (MoE 2008:18)."
[93] Many other statistics suggest that Pasifika are one of the lowest-performing groups in terms of tertiary education (see University of Auckland 2012; Patterson 2012:2; Education Counts 2010).

Nationwide government initiatives

Furthermore, the increasing privatisation of education in New Zealand appears to be based on non-intervention by government. Partnership schools are being introduced in areas where "underachievement" is a "chronic problem" and represent the government's lack of solutions to raising Pasifika academic achievement (National Party and Act Party 2011:3; QPEC 2013b) (see Fig. 10). Partnership schools are indicative of this because the government have seemingly run out of ideas to raise academic achievement levels. The government currently are offering other organisations such as community groups the opportunity to attempt to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged students, including Pasifika (Parata 2013).

National Standards were introduced at the beginning of 2010. National Standards are an "assessment tool" that help predict the chances of the student achieving NCEA qualifications at high school (Clark 2010:116; Tuafuti et al 2011:60; MoE 2013c). League tables will also be formed which will be publicly available to parents when selecting schools for their child as schools will "market" themselves to parents, compete against other schools, and gain state funding based on their National Standards performance (Clark 2011:116; QPEC 2013a; Clark 2010:116). Much of the literature encountered by this study suggests that National Standards will not improve academic achievement for many learners. According to Hartevelt (2009) many children will be labelled as "failures" from a very early age. This represents the growing influence of business principles within New Zealand's education system—not only is it experiencing privatisation, but it is also becoming increasingly subject to efficiency and transparency.

Despite this, NCEA is poised to become a culturally-responsive system that hopefully creates better educational outcomes for Pasifika learners (see Fig. 10). Culturally-responsive in a Pasifika context means to include the worldview of Pasifika in education, especially in regards to resources and pedagogy (see Strega 2005; Ladson-Billings 1998:204; Siteine and Samu 2009:54; Usmar and Milne 2011:8; Evans 2011:68). *Starpath* (Madjar et al 2009) hinted that Pasifika need an education system that is clear to them and helps them make subject choices that are in accordance with their aspirations. Parents will receive "culturally-contextualised" information that should help them understand NCEA better. *Starpath* (Madjar et al 2009) also found that Pasifika learners were at risk of making poor subject choices due to the complex nature of NCEA that jeopardised their chances of achieving their

educational goals. By becoming culturally-responsive, NCEA should assist more Pasifika learners in making appropriate subject choices that help them reach their goals (Madjar et al 2009).

Non-government initiatives

There are many non-government initiatives in New Zealand that have the aim of improving educational outcomes for Pasifika learners. This study identified three notable types of non-government initiatives which are mentoring programmes for Pasifika, changes to mainstream education to make it more culturally responsive, and Pasifika bilingual units.

Mentoring programmes for Pasifika

Mentoring programmes for Pasifika have been successful in addressing Pasifika academic "underachievement". MATES has helped many Pasifika (and non-Pasifika) students as it pairs them up with a university student mentor of the same sex and similar personality (Statistics New Zealand and MPIA 2010:56; Great Potentials Foundation 2012:19). In 2006 over 90% of students involved in MATES gained significantly better NCEA results and many parents of MATES participants reported that their child's attitude towards schoolwork had improved (Statistics New Zealand and MPIA 2010:56). Whereas Studio 274 gives disadvantaged youth from Otara the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence through technology (Usmar 2012). Studio 274 is involved in programmes such as Kiwibots VEX Robotics which grant their members the opportunity to further explore a career in high-tech and creative industries (Studio 274 2013). Dream Fono is an example of another non-government initiative that has had success in assisting Pasifika learners. It is essentially a live-in camp held for Pasifika senior secondary school students from Auckland (Collins 2013a). It features "motivational speakers, academic counselling and goal-setting workshops" which all serve the purpose of encouraging participants to undertake tertiary study (Collins 2013a). A central part of Dream Fono is that students are given access to an extensive support network that they would otherwise not have (Siope 2010:96).

Changes to mainstream education to make it more culturally-responsive

Another key non-government initiative is the idea that Pasifika education needs to be culturally-responsive. For instance, Pasifika worldview merits a place in secondary school curriculums according to some scholars such as Nakhid (2003), Ferguson et al (2008) and Silipa (2004). This is because it will make a positive impact upon Pasifika learners' identity; particularly in how they perceive themselves, their place in relation to their school and teachers, and also their upbringing in New Zealand (Nakhid 2003:305; Anae 1997:128). This is significant as Ladson-Billings (1998:204) argues that learners cannot be successful when the curriculum alienates them and their worldviews. It is notable that Pasifika students at De La Salle College are given the freedom to explore and develop their own identity, particularly with the use of Pacific literature and course content (Evans 2011:68-9). According to Evans (2011:54) De La Salle College is "effective" at engaging Pasifika students as it is a culturally-responsive school.

Additionally, Pasifika learners respond well to teachers with certain pedagogies. Siope (2010:76) points out that some Pasifika learners appreciate teachers who demonstrate Pasifika-like values such as maintaining good relationships (see Anae 2010:12). One Pasifika student suggested they learned better in classes with teachers who put in a lot of effort in to making extra resources such as handouts and study guides; as opposed to teachers who: "[give] you the manuals and they're like, ok work out of those pages from that and you don't get it. And its like, well I don't get that but they don't really do anything extra and they just like write things on the board" (Siope 2010:76). Silipa (2004:198) adds that certain teachers demonstrate the Samoan notion of va fealoa'i (mutual respect) in the classroom because they have close relationships with their Samoan students, are able to better support their learning, and give them more creative freedom with their schoolwork.

Pasifika bilingual units

Another significant initiative supported by academics such as May (2009), Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005) and community groups such as Ulimasao (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:495) is to educate Pasifika learners through a bilingual education programme. These programmes are usually either focused on bilingualism or immersion (Bilingual Education New Zealand 2013; McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery 2010:104). The former is based upon

teaching in two languages: English and a Pacific language (the dual medium approach); whereas the latter approach favours using a Pacific language most of the time (Bilingual Education New Zealand 2013). According to Nakhid (2006:299), bilingual programmes have been established to address the percieved ineffectiveness of how Pasifika students have been "catered for at compulsory school level". Tuafuti et al (2011:64) for instance suggests that bilingual education can foster academic success when resources such as literature are relevant to the bilingual learners and when the two languages are being used in a complimentary (rather than oppositional) manner. This study identified three successful Pasifika bilingual units: Aoga Fa'a Samoa ECE centre, Mua i Malae of Richmond Road Primary School, O le Taiala of Finlayson Park School.

Government and non-government: similarities and differences

It is safe to say that the majority of non-Government funded initiatives complement those of the Government, even though there are some clear differences between the two. The MoE have high hopes for Pasifika high school students; according to the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017*, a key aim is: "five out of five Pasifika learners participating, engaging and achieving in education, secure in their identities, languages and cultures and contributing fully to Aotearoa New Zealand's social, cultural and economic wellbeing" (MoE 2013a). Non-government funded mentoring programmes such as MATES and Dream Fonotaga assist Pasifika in achieving higher NCEA marks and function as a "stepping stone" for senior high school students to progress to degree level study. Students are mentored in a way which encourages them to develop their confidence and attitude towards their learning; university study for instance is made a realistic goal for MATES "mentees" (Great Potentials Foundation 2012:19). These programmes are successful

The MoE (2013a:4) wants a more culturally responsive education system for Pasifika learners. This is outlined in one of their goals for Pasifika education, which is a "closer alignment and compatability between the learner's educational environment, and their home and/or cultural environment" (MoE 2013a:4). Pasifika initiatives such as the inclusion of Pacific worldviews in pedagogy are directly related to this notion and could potentially challenge the conservative inclusion of Pasifika cultural capital in learning. Researchers such as Silipa (2004), Evans (2011), and Nakhid (2003) have all suggested ways in which a "closer alignment" can be achieved. For instance, this could mean involving Pasifika parents

more in their child's learning or including Pasifika worldviews and experience in the curriculum (Evans 2011; Nakhid 2003).

When teachers and parents have a solid relationship there is a possibility that they are able to further the students' learning (MPIA 2010:22). The MoE state in the PEP 2013-2017 that "the focus is on more informed and demanding parents, families and communities supporting and championing their children's learning and achievements" (MoE 2013a:3). This implies that the majority of Pasifika parents are at risk of being marginalised by the Government's strategy to raise Pasifika academic achievement as only a small minority who are deemed to possess the necessary cultural capital will be catered for.[94] Comparatively, some Pasifika bilingual units operate with the philosophy that all parents need to be actively involved in their child's learning. Finlayson Park Primary School's O le Taiala unit has built up a rapport amongst the local Samoan community as many parents feel "a real sense of ownership and control over their children's education" (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492). Whereas Richmond Road Primary's Mua i Malae unit involves parents to an extent where teachers come to know families well and extend the offer of an "open door policy" to them (Cazden 1989:158; May 1991:204). Overall, the ways in which Pasifika parents are included in their child's education is but one example of how non-Government approaches to addressing Pasifika academic achievement levels differ from Government-funded initiatives.

- **Which initiatives, approaches, and practices are most helpful to Pasifika students' learning?**

Culturally-relevant learning

The findings of this study suggest that a culturally-relevant education is significant in providing an impetus for Pasifika students to succeed. A culturally-relevant education is one which draws upon the cultural capital of the corresponding students; the MoE (2013a:4) through the PEP 2013-2017 sees "promoting closer alignment and compatibility between the learner's educational environment and their home and/or cultural environment" as a necessary measure. This manifests itself in several ways for Pasifika: NCEA is to be improved so that secondary school Pasifika students no longer make poor subject choices but

[94] ERO (2012a:16) report that many schools are unaware of the MoE's PEPs and therefore are unable to implement several of its goals, including better involving parents.

rather are able to make choices that fit their aspirations and those of their parents (Madjar et al 2009:20).[95] Other examples include "the use of Pacific learning contexts, especially in social studies, music and visual arts. A few schools include Pacific languages and culture as separate subjects. Some schools also have staff members with responsibility for Pacific student achievement" (ERO 2012a). Culturally-relevant education can also be delivered in languages other than English—some Pasifika language bilingual units such as O le Taiala have been successful with this approach. Student attendance at O le Taiala is higher than that of Samoan children at other decile 1 English-medium schools and the students of O le Taiala are not only academically successful, but also demonstrate confidence and respect for themselves and others (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492). An "educational environment" which is similar to the students' "home environment" has been successfully applied at the tertiary level too; University of Auckland's *Tuākana* programme provides Pasifika (and Māori) students with a support network of peers and staff who serve to encourage one another to do the best they can (Patterson 2012:33-35).

Culturally-responsive learning must not be tokenistic. The inclusion of Pacific topics in the curriculum has the potential to marginalise and undermine the identities of Pasifika learners. This is because ideas such as Pacific states being small isolated entities entirely dependent on Western states such as New Zealand and Australia for survival or that Tongan or Fijian culture can only be defined as legitimate when thought about in terms of "tradition" and the past only serve to advance neo-colonialist discourse (Siteine and Samu 2009:54). These approaches also imply to students that they are "inauthentic" and may lead them to question their identity and sense of belonging (Anae 1997; Siteine and Samu 2009:54). Also, according to Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005:486) the Government consistently are looking for ways to help Pasifika excel academically without introducing bilingualism, which is perceived as an "obstacle". This presents a dilemma for Pasifika in New Zealand as the institutional response to their relative academic "underachievement" seeks to be culturally-responsive and meaningful while paradoxically not including bilingualism.

[95] This is relevant to the ERO's (2012a) definition of "effective schools" which suggests that schools effective at raising Pasifika academic achievement have "strong and positive relationships with parents and community".

A pedagogy that "works" for Pasifika learners

This study found that a teaching style that "works" for Pasifika learners is important in helping them become successful. The MoE (2013a:14) recognise this and have plans to initiate "a framework for Pasifika competencies" for trainee teachers. Pasikale's (1999) found that teachers who had empathy and cared for their Pasifika cohort were more likely to get the best out of their students whereas Evans (2011) reports that notable teachers of De La Salle College in Mangere not only respected students, valued discipline, and had high expectations, but also "used humour and more personal interactions to motivate and inspire (Evans 2011:54)." Pedagogies that feature these characteristics are dually engaging and popular amongst Pasifika students (Pasikale 1999; Siope 2010:76). Furthermore, the inclusion of values indigenous to the Pacific such as the Samoan concept of teu le va or the Fijian concept of yalomatua into teaching has proven to be effective (see Anae 2012:13). Anae (2012:13) defines teu le va as looking after the relational "space" that exists between teacher and student or class and teacher (in this context) and if necessary, "tidying" it up as "maintaining good relational arrangements can bring blessings." Silipa (2004:197-8) points out that secondary school teachers who have a close and positive relationship with their Pasifika contingent are able to better support their learning; to maintain the va with their teachers these students were obliged to complete their work to a high standard and apply themselves in the classroom (Silipa 2004:198). It is apparent that teachers have the potential to make significant imprints upon their Pasifika students (Evans 2011; Jones 1991; Silipa 2004; Pasikale 1999; Nakhid 2003).

Instilling confidence

Another approach that was proven to be helpful to Pasifika students' learning was instilling confidence in them. Programmes such as MATES and Studio 274 are key examples of this. For instance in 2006 almost all students involved in MATES achieved at a higher level in NCEA compared to their past results and as a result of being involved in the programme had better attitudes towards their schoolwork (Statistics New Zealand and MPIA 2010:56). Whereas Studio 274 aims to give their members skills, knowledge, and experience that serves them well—not just in terms of career, but also in confidence and personal growth (Usmar 2012). Members of the clubhouse are also given chances to "communicate their ideas, exhibit their potential, and take action in their communities" (Studio 274 2013). Additionally, a

prominent feature of Pasifika bilingual education is that it fosters confidence and self-esteem amongst students (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001:203). For instance, O le Taiala students generally have a positive attitude towards their schoolwork and have achieved success in "local district speech competitions and the Australian Mathematics competition (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492)." Also, these students are respectful to members of other ethnic groups and are valued members of their family and church groups (Tuafuti and McCaffery 2005:492).

Final thoughts

Finally, despite the attempts to improve Pasifika education, the broader factors mentioned in this thesis will continue to influence the Pasifika children's education and the debate on how to address the issue of achievement will continue. However, in the spirit of the anti-deficit discourse, there is optimism that through the right approach, Pasifika education will reach unprecedented heights in the future.

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