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Pasifika teachers in secondary education: Issues, possibilities and strategies

Final report

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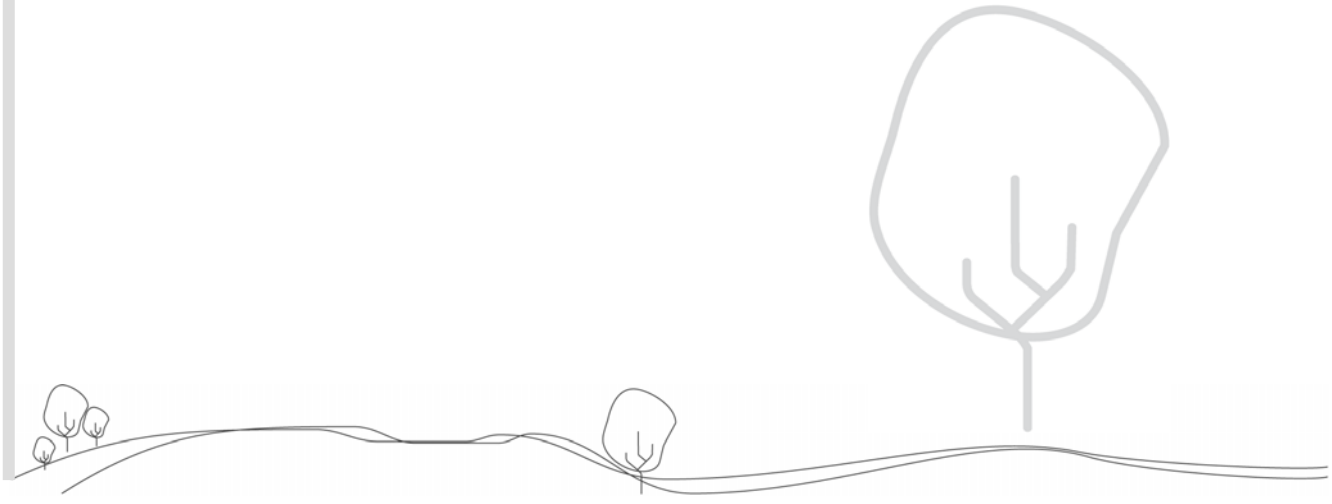

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1. Overview

Introduction

This modestly scaled research initiative aimed to make visible and ask questions about the experiences of Pasifika secondary teachers as they moved into the profession, or alternatively, failed to find jobs. The study comprised interviews with approximately eight young Pasifika secondary teachers and other relevant professionals as well as collective reflective enquiry carried out by the research team of:

- Tony Brown, professor of education, Waikato University/ Manchester Metropolitan University
- Dr Nesta Devine, lecturer in education, University of Waikato, Hamilton
- Elsie Leslie, teacher of history, Hamilton Boys School
- Margaret Paiti, Pasifika Liaison Officer, Ministry of Education, Hamilton
- Emilie Sila'ila'i, tutor in education, University of Waikato, Hamilton
- Sandra Umaki, head of mathematics, Forest View High School, Tokoroa
- Jay Williams, teacher of music and drama, Gisborne Boys High School.

All of these team members were, or had been, teachers in secondary schools, and five were of Pasifika descent (Paiti/Umaki, Cook Islands; Leslie/Sila'ila'i, Samoa; Williams, Niue/Cook Islands). [1]

The study outlined the characteristics that Pasifika people assign to themselves and how these are challenged within educational contexts and at interfaces with other New Zealand cultures. It examined how schools assist and resist the accommodation of new Pasifika teachers. It surveyed the rationales for building Pasifika representation within the teaching force and how they shape the expectations and experience of new Pasifika teachers. Through examining how notions of Pasifika cultural identity for individuals are held in place between community ties, genealogical roots, and oral histories, the study asked how such identities might be seen as reaching out to possible futures within the context of mainstream secondary education within New Zealand. In

[1] The team comprised seven people, all of whom had secondary teaching experience. Four members of the team were currently involved in secondary teaching. Three were currently involved in teacher pre-service education. One was at that time involved in teacher in-service education and support through her role in the local branch of the Ministry of Education. Two were senior members of their respective school's staff—both Heads of Department, and one was a relatively recent graduate, engaged in short term contract and relief teaching. The people interviewed were of two groups: practising teachers of Pacific origins, and secondary school principals known to be interested in issues of Pasifika education.

the light of the analysis, the study examined how future priorities might be formulated and offers preliminary advice on how and where future initiatives might be targeted to bring more Pasifika teachers into the profession and to improve the retention of these teachers.

Why does research of this kind matter? We, as a research team, thought that there were four main reasons, namely:

- Pasifika teachers themselves find strength in association with each other, and regard themselves as having distinctive experiences, and distinctive talents to offer education
- we are or aim to be a "democracy" in the sense of a democracy that goes beyond fraternity, that is, is not inclusive only of those who can claim common heritage (Derrida, 1997)
- if we are to escape current philosophical dead ends in education by knowing our own history we have to engage with the history and culture of all our citizens
- it is in the interests of the country for all its citizens to be treated with respect and to be encouraged to be as productive as possible.

The Pasifika school population is one of New Zealand's fastest growing groups. The Ministry of Education suggests that in 30 years, the present 8 percent of the total school population will have increased to 11 percent (Education Review Office, 2003). Yet teachers of Pasifika ancestry are few, both in absolute terms and relative to the population they represent, at about 2 percent of the teaching workforce. Pasifika graduates are not coming into teaching in great numbers. This scenario has a number of adverse implications: Pasifika interests are underrepresented in schools, curriculum development, broader social definitions of teaching practices, and more specific concerns with Pasifika students. For example, contrary to research findings about optimal intellectual development, Pasifika learners are not able to learn at school in their first languages (May & Hill, 2003). Meanwhile, teacher induction, teacher education, and school management of teachers show little sign of significant change in order to adapt to this change in the New Zealand demographic. Indeed, more specifically, schools do not "have a clear focus on reducing disparities in achievement between Pacific and non-Pacific students" (Education Review Office, 2002, 2003, p. 2).

Every teacher represents heavy investment by the government, the teacher and their family, but Pasifika teacher education particularly represents a major investment by people who are the least able to absorb losses. The loss or underemployment of Pasifika teachers is something that should be avoided as much as possible.

Inclusive education may be high on the agenda of educational ambitions in New Zealand, yet the dimensions of this inclusiveness are constantly under pressure from other priorities that tend to work to the disadvantage of Pasifika principles and ways of relating. This research aimed to redress those priorities by bringing Pasifika needs and concepts to the fore; "recognise the different needs and priorities of Pacific people" (Education Review Office, 2003, p. 58); address the task of bringing more Pasifika teachers in to the profession; and improve the retention of these teachers.

The unemployment rate for Pasifika graduates is almost double that of the general population of graduates (7.4 percent to 4.1 percent: Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2002, p. 6), and in the absence of firm data, it must be feared that this is the case for teacher graduates.

The participants in this research, who were Pasifika teachers, raised these issues through professionally based narratives, which were then discussed in the light of the practical experience of all participants, and analysed in groups and individually. The narrative and discursive strategies that emerged form the substance of this report.

The research drew upon a small but significant literature of Pasifika theorising in education, notably that of Byron Seiuli, Timote Vaioleti, and Linita Manu'atu. The project falls within the Samoan tradition of "mea alofa", a socially predicated "gift", with all its implications of social obligation, responsibility, and generosity (Seuili, 2004; Derrida, 1997). The process employs the notion of "talanoa", conversation, as it is explained by Vaioleti (2004), and draws upon the literature of kaupapa Māori research (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1999). All participants were committed to respect for Pasifika cultures and improving the standing of Pasifika teachers and students within the mainstream of New Zealand education.

The research team comprised a partnership between school practitioners, other Pasifika professionals, and academic staff. On the one hand, it included Pasifika teachers seeking to confront everyday issues. On the other hand, it comprised teacher educators and researchers developing pathways for a more inclusive teacher development agenda. For the latter, by examining institutional definitions of teacher roles and practices and thus examining their own agency in social and professional environments that present obstacles to certain cultural groups, the research contributes to an understanding of a major element of the processes of teaching and learning. The project thus corresponded with all four of Graham Smith's (1990) models—tiaki, whangai, power sharing, and empowerment—by which culturally appropriate research can be undertaken by non-indigenous researchers: *tiaki*, or mentoring, as the teacher researchers (those not university based) took on increasing responsibility for the dynamics of this research, and will very likely go on to further research in some capacity; *whangai,* in that six of the members of the team, Margaret Paiti, Emilie Sila'ila'i, Jay Williams, Sandra Umaki, Elsie Leslie, and Nesta Devine, were committed through family relations to a life-long relationship with Pasifika which goes beyond research, *power sharing* in that the research team sought the assistance of the Pasifika teaching community through the Pasifika teachers' network to meaningfully support the development of the research project, and *empowering* in that the research addressed the sorts of questions Pasifika teachers want answers to, and will have beneficial outcomes.

The peoples of the Pacific islands most closely associated with New Zealand are diverse and in New Zealand even more so, since they incorporate both the Pacific-born and the New Zealand-born. In this study, the research team was conscious of the complexities of different ancestries, but elected to work within the wider concept of "Pasifika", to include both the major Pacific island groups and their New Zealand-born affiliates. The members of the team reflect this

position. Terms and concepts used reflect the diverse theorising of the groups involved. Consequently we use terms and concepts drawn from several of the Pacific languages.

More broadly, this study contributes to the burgeoning interest in educational research paradigms that "cross borders" (Giroux, 1992). In particular, the study analyses how language and culture shape the professional environment of Pasifika teachers against a backdrop in which the children represent increasing cultural diversity but the teachers show a more stable but limited cultural mix. This perspective enables the development of narrative and discursive strategies for Pasifika agendas within an educational system that is generally defined biculturally. At the same time, Pasifika culture is itself highly diverse and this weakens more holistic conceptions of Pasifika culture, making generalisation more difficult, but understanding no less necessary. Such Pasifika diversity may also heighten the sense of marginalisation and isolation for individual Pasifika teachers, especially for those few working at a distance from the main urban centres of Pasifika life. Thus the study explores perceptions of intercultural links between Pasifika teachers involved towards identifying common concerns and hence possible mediations within broader cultural parameters.

As Deborah Britzman says, it is not only what is spoken which should be considered; a problem can be understood as, "a conceptual structure that can be identified both by the questions it raises and the questions it is incapable of raising". She points out that not only does "the compartmentalized orientation of both schools and universities exclude(s) consideration into other ways to organize knowledge and persons", but "Silences express power struggles because 'certain accounts count,' and discount others" (Britzman, 1991, pp. 38-39). A key aim of the current study was to find ways of enabling Pasifika people, some relatively new to teaching, to give voice to their concerns about their own initiations into mainstream teaching. These concerns were set against a more general backdrop of Pasifika peoples retaining a sense of their own cultural identity as a minority group within New Zealand. Although the Pasifika population of New Zealand is growing rapidly, this group is heterogeneous, spanning many islands, languages, and stages of absorption into New Zealand society. There were also differential relationships to be negotiated with other cultural groups such as the white majority, the indigenous Māori population, and other new immigrant groups, mainly from Asian countries. The specific theme addressed here concerns the way in which Pasifika peoples might hold on to a sense of their cultural identity and how that is a function of their perceived cultural history.

Background

As New Zealand's Pasifika population increases, there is growing pressure to re-conceive existing modes of participation in teacher education and induction. In just the same way as the public service has undertaken to ensure the employment and promotion of Pasifika people (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 1999), the education "industry" should examine its own performance and rationale in this area. Insofar as the loss or underemployment of trained Pasifika teachers results

from structural or attitudinal issues in the education system itself such loss suggests national, societal and industry failure, rather than personal failure. While there have been some attempts to address aspects of this problem, the effects have been fragmentary and uncertain. Despite the allocation of about 70 TeachNZ scholarships each year, there are apparently no statistics on the retention rates of these beginning teachers, so the contribution they make to schools and the Pasifika communities associated with them is unclear. Pasifika teachers in the research team's consultative group reported some dissatisfaction among Pasifika teachers in Auckland whose teaching experience amounted to being allocated to groups of Pasifika children for disciplinary reasons. Such an experience makes for a tricky immersion into teaching and may account for some of the early departures. There were also significant numbers of qualified Pasifika teachers unable to secure posts and who require assistance. To assist Pasifika teachers to get and retain jobs is to use teacher research and teacher education funds in a very practical and financially attractive way—attractive, that is, to government and therefore to ourselves as taxpayers. Such issues need to be better understood now, so that strategies can be developed to broach such difference, especially since the demographic changes expected in this country over the next 40 to 50 years predict continued growth in the Pasifika community. If the education system is to serve those students and their families in the future well, the contemporary situation with regard to Pasifika teachers must be improved.

Immigration to New Zealand has been a constant factor in the past 20 years and is likely to be so in the foreseeable future. The diversity of Pasifika groups risks being subsumed in mainstream educational thought, as new immigrant groups join with other ethnic groups in being identified as the "Other" to present bicultural definitions of education practices. Inclusiveness in New Zealand has historically been interpreted as sameness, with disappointing results. As a research team our inclination is to address inclusiveness through an acceptance of difference. The current study is concerned with both *reducing inequalities* and *addressing diversity*, through considering how existing structures might be rethought to be more inclusive and to assist participation in such structures. There is a need to work through issues relating to how new or potential Pasifika teachers assert a cultural identity within this space, an identity that retains and develops its cultural specificity whilst benefiting from participation with others seeking their own cultural recognition.

The study aimed to understand better how Pasifika teachers might be assisted in to the profession, whether they have trained as teachers in New Zealand or in the Pacific, or indeed are untrained but are potentially interested in teaching. The aim was not to produce more effective teachers in the sense of Pasifika teachers who would fit into existing paradigms of what it is to be an effective teacher, but to look closely at what it might be to operate at a high level as a Pasifika teacher in relation to the sometimes conflicting expectations of Palagi (European), Pasifika, and specific island communities.

The existing literature on Pasifika education is not large, but it is growing. Most of the literature (including papers commissioned by the Ministry of Education) is concerned with issues of provision of services, student welfare and education (e.g. Meade, Puhipuhi, & Foster-Cohen,

2003; Mara 1995, 1998). There are anecdotal accounts of the experiences of Pasifika students (e.g. that of Foliaki, 1991), and general research on the transition of Pasifika students from secondary school to tertiary education (Turoa, 2002). Specific research in Pasifika education (e.g. Coxon et al., 2002; Mara, 1996; Hart, 2003; Nahkid, 2004) concentrates, understandably, on the positions and issues of the students and does not draw attention to the positioning of Pasifika teachers in the schools of New Zealand. Works with a multicultural theme from the 1970s on tend to assume that the need is for Palagi teachers to understand their Pasifika students (e.g. Bray & Hill, 1974; Metge & Kinloch, 1984; Begg, Bakalevu, Edwards, Koloto, & Sharma, 1996; Hart, 2003; Nahkid, 2004). The assumption is that the *students* have a problem, often located in the inadequacies of Palagi teachers. The existence of a substantial number of Pasifika teachers is seldom envisaged. Strachan's (1999) account of a Pasifika woman teacher's experiences addresses the gap representing the experiences of Pasifika teachers.

The current study, which used teacher narratives, was designed to be realist, in that it portrays a real and knowable world; critical, in that it does not accept that the world has to be like that; deconstructive, in that it explores ways of thinking differently; and reflective, in that the researchers were involved in rethinking their own narratives. The theoretical apparatus was derived from theoretic and critical perspectives addressing cultural issues in a New Zealand and Pasifika context (e.g. McKinley 2003a, 2003b; Tamasese, Peteru, & Waldegrave, 1997; Vaioleti, 2004; Thaman 1988) and in an international context (Lather, 1994; Bhabha, 1994). Practitioner research methods were guided by cross-cultural approaches described in the work of team members (Brown & Jones, 2001; England & Brown, 2001; Brown & England, 2004, 2005). Here cultural identification is understood as a negotiation between participants intrinsic to this form of research process. More generally, a number of writers explore such narrative approaches in educational research (Connolly & Clandinin, 1990; Lather 1994; Rushton, 2001; Winter, 2002).

Aims and objectives

As the project developed, then, the central aims and objectives crystallised into:

- producing reflective accounts of the experiences of Pasifika teachers, with a view to improving the standing and working environment of Pasifika teachers within mainstream schools.
- providing a scoping analysis, with view to identifying future priorities and the targeting of future initiatives

2. Research design

Procedure

Discussions between team members took place over a period of some four months during the preparation of the proposal. These discussions addressed issues of protocol, project structure, and procedures that sought to facilitate practices conducive to research that was sympathetic to Pasifika custom on the one hand, while attentive to TLRI principles on the other. Team members also consulted more widely to include ministry consultative groups and other professionals with a Pasifika interest. One of the research team (Devine), in various capacities within the University of Waikato Pasifika Research Group, has also facilitated widely attended Pacific Island Research Symposia, both before and during the research, specifically designed to raise issues relevant to this proposal for discussion in the community of those involved in Pasifika research. The main component of the research comprised the following steps. A day-long, full-team meeting, chaired by a team member (Paiti), was held every five months for the duration of the project to discuss progress.

Step 1. Narrative collection

The first stage in the narrative collection (primarily from research team members) involved full team meetings to plan how to conduct the meetings and to agree on detailed interview formats and schedules. The team created a semi-structured format for the interviews. This included getting details of biographical history, current links with Pasifika communities, identification with Pasifika cultures, issues of cultural identity in relation to other cultural groups, consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of collaboration with other cultural groups, issues of accreditation and acclimatisation into teaching culture, and present day issues, including interactions with Pasifika students. Researchers' own accounts were produced through interviews and research diaries, with an emphasis on Pasifika team members becoming teachers in New Zealand. Pasifika team members (Leslie, Williams, Umaki, Sila'ila'i) interviewed each other and Brown interviewed Paiti.

The second stage in collecting the narratives followed a similar format, with all research team members carrying out some discussions with Pasifika teachers and other relevant professionals within the Central North Island region. The Pasifika team members interviewed young Pasifika teachers, while the other two team members (Brown and Devine) interviewed principals employing Pasifika teachers. The results of all such interviews were collated by a research

assistant and then discussed by the full team. Unfortunately, planned interviews with local Education Review Office staff implementing current policy relating to Pasifika interests did not take place as the staff declined to be interviewed as they felt they did not have specialist knowledge in this area. This is disappointing as their policy is designed to "promote among review officers a sound understanding of Māori and Pacific learners" (Education Review Office, 2003, p. 64).

Planned recording of daily experience by the Pasifika team members was more limited than anticipated. Group discussion was found to be by far the most productive format for eliciting personal material relating to professional experiences. Some personal reflective writing was completed and this is included in the discussion that follows. Nevertheless, the core of project data was derived from group meetings and associated interviews. Interactions between Pasifika teachers and pupils did not feature in the data collected.

Step 2. Narrative analysis

The narratives, interviews, and observations were read by all team members between team meetings and then discussed at the meetings. This step might usefully be understood in terms of "talanoa", wide-ranging discussion (Vaioleti, 2004). This enabled the identification of themes emerging in the interviews of young Pasifika teachers and those on the fringes of the profession. It also entailed comparison with interviews conducted with principals and Ministry of Education officials with a view to identifying how the discourses emerging from the various parties supported and resist each other. This facilitated the identification of impediments and how they might be overcome.

Step 3. Reporting

Owing to the high work load of practising teachers on the research team, writing up the research fell to the academic members of the team (Brown and Devine) with assistance from the teacher-researchers where needed.

Summary

In summary, the data comprised the following elements.

1. Audio recordings of team meetings, interviews, and conversations. Numbers of Pasifika secondary teachers in the Central North Island are small and most such teachers were interviewed within the study. Apart from those teachers who were research team members, most of these teachers were located in Hamilton and Tokoroa. This made it possible for the study to include a significant proportion of secondary principals with Pasifika teachers on their staff.

2. Accounts of the participating teachers (documents, diaries, writings) that described, reflected on, and analysed their experience and practices. This enabled Pasifika team members to provide accounts of their everyday experiences to supply data relating to issues of participation and inclusion within school environments. This supplemented personal reflection on how aspects of this everyday experience affected their professional identity and wellbeing. It also included accounts by these team members of experiences of seeking to find teaching posts and the sorts of difficulties encountered. Attention was also be given to issues relating to the individual teacher's own training prior to starting teaching.
3. Palagi team members' exploration of their role in the project and how this connected with their ongoing theoretical work relating to issues of teacher research and cultural interface in educational contexts. A particular theme of this research related to Todd's (2003) notion of "learning from the other", derived from Levinas' classic work on ethics and social responsibility and how one might be receptive to and accommodating of alternative ways of being. Todd emphasises learning *from* the "other" rather than learning *about* the "other" as an attitude that resists seeing the task of the "other" as being about fitting into current understandings and structures. Palagi team members were also influenced by Badiou's *Ethics* (2001), which provided a framework for ethics that resisted undertones of Western models of humanity in addressing cultural interfaces. Rather, the task is one of shared evolution of a relationship. As such, Palagi team members conducted their own personal reflective research with a view to better understanding how emergent themes arising in group discussions might be better theorised and how this theorisation might assist and ultimately structure the group discussion process in building a conception of more Pasifika-friendly educational practices in New Zealand. Ultimately this discussion considered how such theorisation could enable a more far-reaching understanding of inclusion and participation that could support broader demographic changes. Some aspects of this work are included in a conference paper presented by one member of the research team (Devine, 2006).
4. Audio recordings of group discussions of the narratives and observation material. Many of the interviews involved Pasifika teachers being interviewed by Pasifika team members. Full team meetings, led throughout by Paiti in conjunction with other Pasifika members, provided a forum in which the results of interviews could be shared with all team members. Palagi members took a back seat in early meetings. The meeting also provided the opportunity to compare and contrast the various interviews with a view to detecting how alternative professional perspectives understood the task of greater Pasifika inclusivity. The recordings of these meeting were analysed with view to pinpointing the group's evolving understanding of relevant issues, in a process akin to that described by Brown and Jones (2001), and how differently positioned team members see these issues having an effect on their individual professional practices. As such the process was not only attentive to the issues emerging in the interviews, diaries, and meetings but also how they are worked through in the group context towards achieving a consensual account of this process. This shared reflection on group discussion and the consideration and mediation of alternative discourses comprised an essential ingredient in better understanding how the concerns might be generalised and

addressed more broadly. It was also fed into the team members' own subsequent reflections on practice during the project.

5. Meeting notes following negotiation on the emerging themes of the discussion, narratives and observations. The discussions included negotiation of the team's role in mediating the results of interviews and the accounts provided for broader consumption. Transcripts were compiled for four of the five day-long meetings.

Difficulties

The project was intended to be fully funded; however, there were a number of difficulties in this respect. The funding supported time for interviews and team meetings, part-time research assistance, hire of off-site venues, travel and hospitality. The funding was insufficient to cover the full range of activities outlined in the proposal, with well over 70 percent of team members' funded time absorbed in the five day-long meetings.

Secondly, the research initiative was based on team members reflecting on their own respective professional practices, but this aspect proved difficult for Pasifika team members, and the volume of material produced in this element was lower than anticipated. The teacher researchers in the team saw the project as relevant to them and to other Pasifika people engaged in education, and collective discussion proved more fruitful than individual reflection.

It was of paramount concern for the research team that its teacher researchers were not disadvantaged. There was an inescapable paradox in that to define the issues which were distinctive to young Pasifika teachers, the research required them to devote time which they could ill afford to spare from the very demanding calls of teaching and family life. However, the research team organised relief days and travel expenses in order to keep these demands at the minimum possible, while remaining aware that these things did not make up for the effort expended.

In terms of cultural appropriateness, there were issues resulting from two of the researchers being Palagi. The particular issue that emerged was in the absence of substantial writings from the Pasifika members of the team, a greater responsibility was placed on the Palagi members in collating data and converting this in to an acceptably structured report for wider consumption. The two Palagi researchers acknowledged the expertise of the teacher researchers in the field, and endeavoured to support and be guided by them in cultural matters. In order to make sure that the project stayed within culturally acceptable parameters, the Pasifika Education Community Reference Groups in Hamilton and Tokoroa, and the Waikato Pasifika teachers' network were consulted. All participants gave their free and informed consent. Participation was fully voluntary, and all participants had the right to withdraw at any time. One of the original team members did in fact withdraw prior to the start of the study as a result of mounting pressures in his professional and family lives. Privacy and confidentiality was respected as far as possible: the limited number of participants and highly specific nature of their information has made it difficult to conceal the identity of individuals and schools, but this has been achieved in good measure. Data collected

were handled in accordance with the requirements of the University of Waikato Ethics procedures. The approval of the Ethics Committee of the School of Education, University of Waikato was gained before the research was undertaken.

Changes to proposed schedule

The only significant change to the proposed schedule was the cancellation of one of the six meetings with the full research team. This resulted from difficulties arising from the broad geographical spread of team members and the consequent decision to hold some meetings off-site at locations that were easier for those living at some distance from Hamilton to get to. As it cost more to hold meetings off-site, this meant insufficient funds for a sixth meeting. Another minor change was that the activities started in November 2004 (earlier than the proposed starting date of February 2005) once funding had been secured, so that activities could be initiated before the long summer break from schools. A Pasifika university staff member with extensive school teaching experience also attended all meetings on a voluntary basis and contributed accounts of her own experiences in schools and educational contexts more generally.

3. Findings

The study collected its findings under five themes:

- the characteristics that Pasifika teachers assign to themselves in asserting their own **cultural identity**.
- how Pasifika teachers understand their past, present and future **community ties** and how these ties shape conceptions of their teaching.
- how **social images** of the teacher's role assist and resist the easy accommodation of Pasifika teachers into mainstream New Zealand secondary education.
- perspectives on the process Pasifika teachers undergo in **securing professional status**.
- aspects of **teacher recruitment and retention that might impact on the professional lives of Pasifika teachers.**

In the conclusion, the study offers a more theoretical perspective on how cultural traditions shaped around community ties, genealogical roots and oral histories might be understood and developed within a situation of cultural minority.

The following discussion outlines some issues related to each of these themes. The summaries comprise writings drawn from team members at the conclusion of the study that draw on evidence produced over the course of the study. This is followed by a case study of one of the team members with regard to her experiences of getting recruited into teaching. The section concludes with a discussion of the perspectives of school principals on recruiting and employing Pasifika staff.

Perhaps, however, the most important contribution this research might make is to give language to the anxieties and tensions within the education system for Pasifika teachers. As Britzman puts it (1991, p. 38): "To approach education and the language of experience as problematic, then, is to study its discourses and discursive practices in such a way as to reveal its commissions and omissions". In this study, the research team has been concerned with both the named and unnamed experiences of its members.

Pasifika cultural identity

How do Pasifika people understand themselves and which of these characteristics do they wish to nurture as they embrace life in a culture where Pasifika people are in a minority? The Pasifika research team members clearly understood themselves to be Cook Islanders, or Samoans or Niuean, and "Pacific Islanders", and New Zealanders. They found no difficulty in asserting all

these identities at once. Yet, clearly a great range of subject positions is available within these defining terms. How do Pasifika people understand themselves and which of these characteristics do they wish to nurture as they embrace life in a culture where Pasifika people are in a minority? This was the core theme of a paper written by team members and accepted by the international journal, *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* (Brown, Devine, Leslie, Paiti, Sila'ila'i, Umaki, & Williams, in press). This paper represents the outcome of discussions within the team as regards how Pasifika teachers are faced with a task of negotiating cultural identities within mainstream New Zealand teaching contexts. Some of the key aspects of this task are summarised here:

- Some general features of Pasifika cultures as outlined in the Ministry of Education *Pasifika Education Research Guidelines* (2002, p. 14) were apparent throughout the study. Issues such as respect, reciprocity, communalism, humility, collective responsibility and spirituality were recurrent themes in the research team meetings and discussions with Pasifika people in the community. As one teacher put it: "Pasifika peoples place great importance on spiritual influences and genealogy must be taken into consideration when dealing with our students. Providing safe opportunities and places for their views to be expressed through any medium, for example, art, song, dance".
- The style of team discussions echoed Pasifika approaches based on talking things over and being prepared to negotiate, working things through together rather than seeing the discussions as being about presenting alternative points of view.
- There was a commonly expressed aspiration that such qualities were being brought to a wider New Zealand community and that the preservation and development of these attributes should be seen as qualities that could be shared and nurtured beyond the Pasifika community. In line with New Zealand's national embrace of a multicultural society, the privileging of such attributes could be seen as a contribution to this multicultural ethos.
- There were perceived challenges that could potentially present a threat to governmental support being directed or spent on specific cultural groups. Team members were divided as to the benefits of the "one nation, one people" political rhetoric. There were felt to be advantages and disadvantages to associations between different ethnic groups.
- Pasifika self-image might be susceptible to challenge from younger generations within the community as well as from without as absorption into mainstream New Zealand culture is experienced differently between generations.
- Pasifika people value links with Māori yet such association can work against specific Pasifika identities and result in unhelpful stereotypes that pigeonhole Pasifika teachers in roles unsupportive of their early professional development; for example, being mistaken as Māori and being assigned to Māori classes in difficult schools.

The final point was discussed extensively and developed theoretically and more generally with regard to how individuals form cultural identifications (see Devine, 2006). With regard to how Pasifika people identify with their cultural heritage, one teacher put it thus:

> I think the whole network of family; the essence of who you are and where you are from. What defines being Pacific is the stories, the values, it's the past, it's the connections. In essence, I think it is innately part of you as well. … In some ways it is just like breathing, it is just natural. It is natural because it emerges from you. You just look at yourself, you just look in the mirror and the perceptions of how people see you and they see you as being Pacific. It's a hard one to characterise. Being Pacific is just being Pacific. There is no difference.

And in relation to specific identifications with Māori culture:

> "My Dad says Māori are the tangata whenua so we have to respect them. . . . and welcome and be a part of Māori identity and moving forward with mana Māori. The landscape of Polynesia or Pacific is inclusive of New Zealand in itself. There is a relative tie. Dad is very much for Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi. We have to stand by them and support them and so forth.

There were felt to be definite advantages of identifying with the Māori community. The teacher continued:

> There definitely are and I think for myself, I am saying I look Pacific but a lot of people say I look Māori. There is an inter-twine for me. It's either playing a game or the shifting of identity. I can take on here and I can walk in this road. As going through school, it was very interesting as well because there were no Pacific kids in the schools I went to until I hit secondary school. They often identified me as being Māori. I was told by teachers that I was Māori. The other part to play was if a Māori teacher says, "You're Māori" and they'd go back and do whakapapa. The canoe is Takitimu. And Rarotonga is where the waka came. They themselves bring up the history. There were advantages for me. …Yes, being included in part of a larger group rather than being Pacific and being alone.

Yet since numbers of Pasifika people were small, allegiances with the broader range of Pasifika and Māori groups soon encountered the heterogeneity of the term "Pacific" (or indeed, "Pasifika") and how that manifested itself in different languages, cultural practices, and so on:

> On top of that, you tend to take on certain mechanics. You do Te Reo Māori because there is nothing else there for you. I couldn't do Cook Island Māori. Because we had no Polynesian group, of course I joined Kapa Haka. I utilised the aspect of Taha Māori and Māori for that, missing the Pacific side—of my upbringing or of my whole school education journey. It was interesting because it wasn't until I came to Waikato University where that embracement became a different type because the Māori up here were in some ways more radical or not so much radical but to be Māori, you had to be Māori. I was back to being Pacific.

What are the stakes, then, for an individual or group of individuals importing a cultural history to new environmental conditions and in that new environment encountering alternative cultural histories and ways of being? Old stories are being asked to work in new situations yet the old stories are important nonetheless in securing collective strengths from family and community ties. They mark out the cultural territory in the absence of some of the geographical parameters that preceded them. As an example of how such collective strength might be understood, one of the interviewees of Samoan descent put it thus:

> We need each other. We need each other's love, support, acceptance and value. We are not "needy" however. We seek to "give" first, and by natural and spiritual laws, we 'received' more than we might have even anticipated or wanted or needed.

This statement is an example of the research team's attempts to pinpoint stories that encapsulated its collective account of Pasifika culture that might be held in distinction to more Westernised or Māori accounts of human interaction. But Badiou (2001) provides a caution. His basic premise is that most conceptions of ethics and the human rights associated with them are predicated on Western conceptions of what it is to be a human. Similarly, for Pasifika people entering the teaching profession in New Zealand most barriers are seemingly invisible, a sly functioning of Western modus operandi. Part of the research task was to gain a better understanding how Pasifika people anchored their cultural senses of self. And in doing that the team was aware of the risks entailed of conflating differentiation within the category "Pacific". There seems to be no easy way through on this point. Allegiances with any group necessitate compromise and for Pasifika peoples who span a huge variety of cultural groups there will be a need for individuals to find productive ways of working with others both within the Pasifika community and beyond.

Issues of cultural contestation within the New Zealand Education system for new Pasifika teachers

The ongoing stresses inherent in adjusting the mainstream environment to the values of Pasifika teachers and pupils earned particular comment, encapsulated as "Conflict in thinking patterns about the benefits of education". As one of the Pasifika teachers said:

> The relevance of [Pasifika] education within the teaching environment and community is an issue that must be acknowledged and addressed. For example, when learning different knowledge it is important that traditional values and knowledge continue directly or indirectly so that Pasifika students buy into the educational experience, in the understanding that conflict occurs when these cultural systems are undermined or not valued. For example, management styles for Pasifika students must be created to suggest a particular culture. Also the roles and function of the student in the classroom are different: where a student is seen as a child, in Polynesian cultures they are spoken to as an adult. There is the assumption that the nuclear family structure is the norm, therefore conflicting with the concept of aiga, that is essential in all Pacific thinking. This impacts upon the student's ability to function effectively.

Mara (1995, p.11) points out that although Pasifika women as educators place emphasis on transmitting the culture, they unavoidably alter it as they do so. For reflective teachers, this alteration along the lines of Pasifika values is desirable and should affect all levels of education, and all systems within it—curriculum, management, classroom practices, and so on. Two of the teachers expressed their view that Pasifika values and understandings had a place in the development of New Zealand teachers' understanding of a world that includes Pasifika people:

> Teacher education must have a wider framework of inclusiveness that aspires to embrace Pasifika frameworks of learning and culture.
>
> Cultural experiences are of value … in addressing Pasifika disparity or in building understanding of the global world through a Pacific lens.

Pasifika community ties

Some of the issues mentioned by Pasifika teachers who were interviewed are summarised as follows:

- Identity and community spirit is encapsulated in both present and past for Pasifika people. The extension of family is an extension of self. You carry the mana of your family by who you are and what you become. This can be seen as a weight or as a freedom dependent on how you successfully meld it into the bread of daily life. It helps shape who you are but does not translate into a single positioning of identity as each generation builds a landscape that looks at bettering opportunity for the generation to come. The past gave up for the future. The future gives to the past.
- Pasifika teachers are concerned about the capacity of parental and community support for children in school. Such involvement plays an important role in the educational success and outcomes of our students, yet parents often feel that they are not equipped. They lack knowledge or experience when it comes to what are seen as Palagi concerns. They sometimes feel that they are not familiar with the language or protocols of a Palagi system. Understanding the socioeconomic influences and restrictions of Polynesian families will identify other barriers affecting the schooling success of our students.

There were some specific suggestions for the creation of a community within a school:

- Pasifika peoples live, love, and learn "in community". We value the support of our immediate and extended families. We value the contributions of all others, friends, acquaintances, work colleagues and so on into our lives. We, in return, willingly offer our support, in any shape or form, to our families, friends and community.
- We realise and acknowledge that we are not alone—we are never alone. We also believe that we did not get here, where we are, by ourselves—that is, if where we are is a "good" place, we had the help and support of our "community". However, if where we are at any time is a "bad" place, we are quick to take full responsibility for our actions that got us here.
- We need each other (as stated earlier).

Other issues that were mentioned included:

- Although Pasifika people differ in their degrees of commitment to community, there is a general theme of close, meaningful connections.
- There are different forms of communication for disseminating Pasifika issues. For example, the church plays an important role in "gelling" the Pasifika community. In the school similar

means of communication are needed. It is important to promote community issues within the school, promote networks of Pasifika teachers, creating a Pasifika context for Pasifika students, and provide within the curriculum understanding of language customs, arts, history.

- It is important to respect the community of Pasifika teachers and have regard for these teachers' commitment to community expectations.

Resisting stereotypical images of "The Teacher" in New Zealand schools

Several of the Pasifika teachers interviewed sometimes felt that they were noticed by schools only insofar as they fitted the conventional image of a New Zealand teacher. As one of our team put it, "Being a Pasifika teacher often means hiding behind a guise of being westernised as to fit into the mainstream system". There were also some particular issues experienced by new Pasifika teachers being located in schools where Pasifika pupils are more numerous. Such schools are often in more disadvantaged urban areas with the additional pressures such schools present to new teachers. Further, in these schools the Pasifika teachers are often mistaken for Māori and thus assigned to classes of Māori children. The experience of one of the teachers was that "doors are opened in relation to being a solution maker for a certain type of school community (e.g., at-risk, Māori, Pasifika students)".

There was felt to be an image of an ideal teacher that Pasifika teachers did not quite fit. This image was held in place by the artefacts of teaching, curriculum documents, school practices, social expectations, and so on. And this conflicted with Pasifika people's self-images centred on respect for authority, an aversion to self-promotion, being family- and community-oriented, and where cultural histories are predicated on oral traditions and blood ties.

One of the team members sought to describe this image:

> Tentative is our walk in the world of teaching. It is a negotiation of our self-image to the supposed frame of the New Zealand ideal. The general portrait that is painted contains the singularity of the colour white, he has traveled the road of middle New Zealand, he aspires leadership, challenges or questions for the common good, seeks opportunity to self promote without maligning the team that surrounds him. He is an individual that blends in the house of familiarity his corner in the staff room is a haven he does not have that conscious plight of wondering where he 'can' fit. This picture is lacquered and sealed by the constructs of policy, leadership and social norms that pervade our schooling community.

She felt that the task for such teachers was to work with this supposed New Zealand image while finding ways of preserving aspects of their own self-image. Such images, however, are held in place by cultural parameters that are themselves being troubled as a result of shifting environmental conditions.

Other Pasifika teachers told stories of being disempowered and of feeling dejected or rejected without having the opportunity to discuss with schools the opportunities that might be afforded as

a result of having them in their school classrooms. As one Pasifika teacher put it, there were feelings of betrayal expressed with regard to the perceived "failure of a system that allowed them the key to the door but not the ability to unlock the door. There seems to be a discrepancy in how we broach the tentative entry into the teaching journey". For some there appeared to be a "lack of opportunity, a lack of mentors and a lack of leadership [which] makes the journey more difficult for our people".

The following are some further comments from Pasifika teachers about these concerns:

> Personal ownership of the educational system requires a sense of belonging and personal success. If these are not intrinsically aligned to the participants of learning, the opportunities and endeavours to seek higher learning will be only open to those who fit the current model or ideologies.
>
> Often assumptions or perceptions are barriers that have to be identified and disestablished before the doors into schools are open.
>
> At present [education in schools is] focused on "outcomes" in terms of assessment—measurable bulk of knowledge, certain skills of an intellectual/mathematics kind.
>
> [There is a] need to recognise the intangibles, [the] incommensurable aspects of education.
>
> [We need to emphasise the] importance of social skills, ability to develop ethics and social skills in curriculum.
>
> [We need to provide] alternative ways of understanding management to [the] individualistic competitive model.
>
> [Employment practices need to emphasise] structure/scaffolding, support for, persistence with, Pasifika teachers.
>
> [With regard to the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education, there is a] danger of these agencies requiring compliance in return for offering employment.

The process of becoming a teacher In New Zealand: securing professional status

For many of the teachers interviewed within the project, there were difficulties at each stage of becoming a teacher, many of which were attributed to the teacher's Pasifika identity. These difficulties are effectively encapsulated in the story of one Pasifika teacher who shared her account of the process through which she eventually secured a teaching job. This story has been constructed into a case study that is attached as Appendix A to this study. Additionally, taking an alternative perspective, there are clearly issues for school principals which affect their recruitment of Pasifika staff. The study carried out extensive interviews with school principals who had employed Pasifika staff. Such perspectives have been gathered together as Appendix B.

Issues raised in connection with the process of becoming a teacher included:

- absence of Pasifika peers with whom experiences could be shared
- schools, teachers, and principals often lacking of awareness of cultural differences
- geographical and cultural isolation for Pasifika teachers outside main urban areas
- Pasifika teachers generally preferring the opportunity to work with Pasifika students, yet clusters of such students were often located in urban areas where the demands on new teachers were greater
- difference can sometimes be interpreted as non-compliance with norms that favour majority cultures.

Principals raised various issues in relation to the employment of Pasifika staff:

- There is need to recognise that the employment criterion of "best person for the job" should include cultural factors. The employment of Pasifika teachers would often add to the collective cultural profile of schools and this should be seen as a positive attribute.
- It is important to include Pasifika staff as role models, both for Pasifika and Māori students who might aspire to similar professional roles but also for Pākehā pupils preparing for life in a multicultural environment.
- Linguistic difficulties can result in some first-generation Pasifika staff missing the subtleties of classroom life and experiencing general difficulties as a result.
- The transition from secondary school to university has proven difficult for many students and such difficulties can be compounded when this university experience is used to support professional practice.
- Pasifika staff have a different attitude to the hierarchy of the school and this can result in some difficulties in jockeying for position with other staff.

Suggestions for addressing some of these issues included:

- enabling cohorts of Pasifika trainees to work together in schools during their early days of training or teaching
- providing buddies to support Pasifika teachers in their early days.

Issues relating to recruitment, retention and success of Pasifika teachers

Pasifika people place enormous importance on respect. Although Pasifika teachers were very willing to offer respect (and several principals commented on their respect for hierarchy in schools), they were often conscious that they themselves were not treated with respect. It was clear from many of the stories that school staff rooms could be unpleasant places for Pasifika teachers to spend time in. One member of the team observed that it was possible to tell as they walked into the room where they could sit and where they could not. Often, if there were no other

Pasifika members of staff they would gravitate to the Māori staff. Although they did not share community ties, they shared the same sense of humour.

The teachers learnt to deal with this in various ways—by avoiding the staff room, finding support with sympathetic colleagues, or by going 'straight to the top' when they needed assistance. Suggestions for ways by which this situation can be improved include the following.

There was a perceived need for greater emphasis to be placed on being welcoming. Meeting and greeting is important, and should not be left to chance. Welcomes could also be more gracious. One teacher said: "We could be given the opportunity to say something about ourselves, not just 'this is Mrs So-and-so'." Something as simple as offering Milo rather than just tea and coffee would contribute to a feeling of being respected for those Pasifika (and other) teachers whose religion rejects stimulants.

One principal suggested that an important factor in establishing and retaining positive relationships in the staffroom was the role of the principal and senior management in making all the staff feel positive about their work. The morning briefing was seen as vital in this process: "praise globally but criticise individually" was the recommended technique.

Reference was frequently made to the importance of mentoring by individuals of standing in the profession who had made career suggestions, or who had supported Pasifika research team members at critical points in their professional lives. A good mentor, it was felt, was someone who "sees your potential [which the Pasifika teacher may be sometimes too modest to acknowledge] and advertises it—someone who will bat for you".

A friend on the staff, with whom "you can be yourself", and who will act as a sounding board, was also considered important. A formal "buddy" system could help—provided that the buddy was carefully selected—particularly with negotiating meetings in the staffroom at interval and lunchtime. The important point, however, was that, no matter how support systems are structured, the Pasifika teacher needs to feel valued in a situation with which they are unfamiliar and in which they are experiencing shyness.

Larger-scale networks of Pasifika staff, within the school, in the same curriculum areas, and nationwide—for example, the Komiti Pasifika in PPTA—were seen as sources of strength. A suggestion was made for professional development in goal setting, self-assertiveness, and middle-management skills.

The attitude of the school towards children of Pasifika heritage was critical to the emotional wellbeing of Pasifika teachers. Stereotypes and assumptions surrounding Pasifika students' abilities and capabilities could be rationalised as reflecting lack of education and wisdom, but in the end, the ties between the teacher and students meant that the teacher could not feel respected and valued if the students were not treated with respect. It was not considered necessary for Pasifika children to have only or even mostly Pasifika teachers: The research team and those interviewed agreed with Coxon et al. (2002) and Taia (2005, p. 30) that empathy was more important than identity in this regard:

> . . . it is teacher empathy, not necessarily teacher ethnicity, that is critical for successful teaching and learning. Many Pacific students know that having a Pacific teacher does not ensure their success as learners. Rather, it is having *good,* or effective, teachers *(Coxon et al., 2002, p. 103).*

It was clear that some schools had a reputation for being inclusive and supportive and some did not. Where Pasifika teachers found themselves in an unsupportive environment they would usually leave that school and move to a more inviting one.

Various other issues were raised relating to the scope and content of the training/induction process:

- There needs to be positive promotion of role models and career options for Pasifika youth. Teaching must be seen as an occupation that offers both opportunity and quality of life. Such a route may not be immediately apparent to many people in the Pasifika community as they may not have encountered many Pasifika people who have pursued such a route.
- There is a need to identify safe networks of teachers and professionals who are able to support Pasifika students, not just academically but also practically.
- There are general issues to address with regard to how children of Pasifika heritage might raise their educational level more generally to increase the supply of prospective Pasifika teachers who are suitably qualified. A human capital argument was suggested. If the government invests money in the development of expertise in this section of the community it will raise achievement levels of this population as it moves through the schooling system.
- There is a need to make the structure of schools, the curriculum, curriculum materials, pedagogy, teaching methods, administration, and school culture more Pasifika friendly and to promote the recognition of Pasifika values in school patterns of behaviour. If Pasifika culture is not understood, it is not noticed or valued. Teacher education must have a wider framework of inclusiveness that aspires to embrace Pasifika frameworks of learning and culture.
- Pasifika students need goal posts to help direct them. For example, it is important to build and make visible pathways for leadership opportunities.

One principal employing several Pasifika staff had the following practical proposals for securing and retaining Pasifika staff in particular areas:

> There are things like providing money to help them (PI students) do their training, encourage them, giving them scholarships and maybe tying them to teach in that area. So, we'll give you $10,000 a year to do your training, but you have to teach in R for three years. With the growing population, in time there's going to be more people from that actual pool themselves who will become available, rather than having to attract somebody from the K pool or some other pool.

Discussion and conclusions

The study was predicated on four core assumptions relating to practice:

1. Teachers develop ways of being in the classroom and the staffroom that enable them to function.
2. Other teachers can make a substantial difference to the ease with which this position is established.
3. The signs of this establishment are likely to be visible or audible in the narratives of teachers and the discussions, practices, and conventions with which they engage in the course of their work.
4. Teaching can become a more attractive vocation for Pasifika people.

As such, the research team feels that this study has engaged fully with TLRI practice priorities. Meanwhile, the central thrust of the study has been to address diversity towards reducing inequalities, thus addressing two elements of TLRI strategic priorities. This analysis has been predicated on finding ways of enabling teachers to be more effective, so addressing the third element. Yet how might we address the fourth element?

There is clearly an urgent need for Pasifika teachers, particularly in major centres of Pasifika population. To date, although Pasifika parents typically express high regard for learning and education, the enrolment of Pasifika people in higher education including teacher education has not been in proportion to their numbers in the community. It is important to better understand the practices that currently employed Pasifika teachers have developed which make their continued presence in schools possible for them, and to understand what practices, discourses, or expectations make it difficult for them to work in New Zealand schools. It is hoped that this research will have practical implications for the better use of Pasifika teachers as a human resource in schools which may lead to a lessening of the difficulties Pasifika teachers face, and an improved understanding of their experiences, priorities, and complex relationships and responsibilities within the school and communities in which they live and work. Given that there is likely to be increasing future demand by Pasifika parents for Pasifika-oriented education, comparable to kura kaupapa Māori, it seems essential to attract more Pasifika teachers into the profession, and to ensure that the profession provides a hospitable working environment for them. However it seems likely also that Pasifika students and teachers will continue to use the "mainstream" education system. The research team takes a position that we address diversity from a position that is comfortable with the continued existence of diversity—understood as diversity within the schools and possibly diverse kinds of schools. We expect that this position will lead to productive understandings of teaching and learning which may have significant implications for teacher education and the conduct of professionals. As such, this project points to an opportunity for a reworking and renewal of Pasifika identity within a New Zealand professional education context. However, such practical engagements raise the question of what the goals for such

reworking are. What principles would govern the decisions and actions to be taken? In particular, how do Pasifika people understand their own evolution(s)? What do they want from the future? And how do these needs coexist with alternative needs and preferences?

One of the Pasifika research team members saw this articulation spanning five stories in Pasifika evolution. The first story is the story of coming to New Zealand for a better life for children, via education. The second story comprises respect for elders, the past, and authority. The third story is that of the various obstacles that have been encountered, not least the potential conflict between the first two stories especially where a critical engagement in education is in question. The fourth story (the present position) is about looking to the future in the light of experience. The fifth story is that of professionalism as a way of encompassing all these stories and keeping them in control. So how might futures be conceptualised within these stories alongside stories emanating from alternative sources?

In a conference paper (Devine, 2006), one of the research team sought to work through some of the issues relating to current modes of describing practices and how such descriptions can hamper moves to define new problems in new languages. In examining how we as educational professionals understand educational practice and its evolution, Kemmis (2005) has argued that we need to attend to both insider and outsider perspectives. He suggested that "changing practices is not just a question of changing individuals but also a social, discursive, historical process—it requires changing the social, discursive and practical conditions that support and structure the practice" (p. 413).

For Pasifika teachers in New Zealand, there is a task of shaping their individual practices to function effectively in the classroom, in the school, and in the broader educational and social community. Yet there is also a need for wider practices to adjust to accommodate diversity in the teaching force. Kemmis (2005) introduced Habermas' notion of "public sphere" in pursuing what he called "symposium research" (p. 414). This comprised a forum to combine thinking inside the head of practitioners with thinking outside of it, to better understand how discursive conditions shape individual actions and from there move towards achieving a consensual good. Participants of this activity might be seen as human subjects being immersed in discourses but then exploring these immersions. Yet the individual participant would move between insider and outsider perspectives without necessarily realising it. Such an analysis troubles the boundaries between what Kemmis calls individual and extra-individual perspectives (p. 420–422). The individual's sense of cultural identity is a function of identifications built according to uncertain parameters.

Multiculturalist policies require an awareness of the ideologies that govern actions, by consent or otherwise, and it is necessary to subject them to critical review and resist them where necessary. Yet so often alternative ideologies encounter each other and the differences need to be worked through in individual and collective practices alike. Happy consensus is not always an option, with one ideology pulling its weight over another. But, surely, ultimate agreement is not the only worthy outcome of this meeting of minds. Histories, whether past, present, or future, are not set in stone, and nor are they fully self-evident. Nor can we as teachers or researchers aspire to singular

interpretations. And they vary between cultures both in terms of their content and in terms of the way in which stories are put together and preserved. Conceptions of educational practice are both time and perspective dependent. As a country of diverse ethnic groups we need to attend to our emerging histories but our histories can be crafted in many different ways according to what we know of ourselves, what we know of the world but also according to what we each want from the future. As Freud (2002, p. 5) has suggested, the "sense of self is subject to disturbances, and the limits of the self are not constant". But so too are the features and dimensions of the relevant world. As the dimensions of our world expand inwards and outwards to the future how will our understandings and masteries of this world be revised? As Ricoeur put it, the important thing is to continue with the endless work of distancing and renewing our historical substance (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 246). These sentiments appear to be present in the words of a teacher in the research team:

> It is not only the embracement of the past or the stories of the past but it's [the] telling of the stories for the future, for the betterment of who you are. For my Dad, the whole reason for migrating to New Zealand was for a better future. The better future was for him the aspiration of his children doing well. When his children do well, that is a legacy that he is leaving behind and that legacy will continue as you march into the future. I think when you are looking at the future; you are also looking behind you, behind the people who helped you take that journey, those steps and the reasons behind those steps. I think my Dad took a huge leap of faith in coming to New Zealand and leaving his family and community behind him for us and what he perceived as a better future. I think for me what I am looking for [for] my children is [for them] to have confidence in themselves but also the worlds they are going to walk into.

This research gave the core research group the opportunity to reflect in depth on some issues facing Pasifika teachers. The process seemed to give strength to all involved, in a number of ways—in being able to assert themselves as belonging to their own cultural groups, and in increased confidence in themselves as teachers. Every participant researcher associated with this study has made a significant step up the career ladder since the inception of the research. As a research group, we trust that our reflections will be of use to other Pasifika teachers, Pasifika students, families and communities—indeed to all those who are engaged in the task of ensuring the welfare of Pasifika education in New Zealand.

4. Limitations to the project

Without doubt there are serious limitations to a project funded to carry out five day-long meetings of a varied group of educational professionals with some limited supplementary enquiries. Nevertheless, the group included members well able to offer insights into the issues underpinning the research objectives. And it was the sharing and combining of these perspectives that provided the fruit of the enquiry. In combining these perspectives, the research team was able to craft an account of issues faced by Pasifika teachers at different stages of their careers.

The team did not reach definitive conclusions on how the future might be conceptualised for Pasifika teachers. We did, however, raise concerns as regards how futures might be understood, and offered some practical suggestions as well as some tentative theoretical apparatus. The task was predicated on an assumption that alternative perspectives need to be worked through. Although Pasifika people value their cultures and are keen to find ways of ensuring their futures, such futures are shared with other cultures, and all share their resources and learn from each other.

Future research cannot be understood in merely instrumental terms, such as practical advice to solve problems. Such problems are always cast within particular understandings that favour one set of preferences or another. There is a need also to work hard at better understanding how people engaged in education might engage more creatively with cultural interfaces towards supporting the evolving cultural needs of New Zealand's many peoples. And for Pasifika people, this entails ensuring that these needs are not understood merely through the filter of some supposed cultural majority. Difference is real for everyone and differences need to be given space. The specific issues that face New Zealand people are present in different forms around the world and the literature is rich in such areas. New Zealand research can learn from this literature but is also well placed to contribute to this literature in a very profound way. These opportunities need to be taken.

5. Capacity and capability building

As noted earlier, the project team comprised Tony Brown, Nesta Devine, Elsie Leslie, Margaret Paiti, Emilie Sila'ila'i, Sandra Umaki, and Jay Williams.

The project centred on a group of people known to Dr Devine through her work at Waikato University and her associated work with Pasifika education networks. Dr Devine had facilitated a number of Pacific Island Research Symposia that still continue as regular events. Membership of these symposia extended to include a number of other networks concerned with Pasifika education issues and other more general issues related to the Pasifika community. Ms Paiti continues to be instrumental in facilitating some of these networks whilst Ms Sili'ila'i was an active participant. Ms Leslie and Mr Williams were former students of Dr Devine. Ms Umaki completed elements of her master's degree with Professor Brown. The five Pasifika members of the research group, who were at different stages of their careers, could report on their experiences of securing professional work as teachers, and were able to liaise with many other Pasifika teachers in similar situations. As such the project conformed to the TLRI principle that the research be "undertaken as a partnership between researchers and practitioners".

Within the study, all participants engaged with research practices principally concerned with how experience in educational contexts could be translated into research material. A key activity in this regard was shared participation in creating a paper that reached an international audience.

Within the terms of this research, all participants have been able to articulate their experiences and share in a common discussion and reflection on their professional lives. It is hard to assess just how significant this has been, but the teaching members of the team have made some important career moves since the inception of this research which may indicate increased confidence and renewed sense of purpose. Ms Paiti has secured a post as a deputy principal in a secondary school. Mr Williams has become a head of department at a secondary school with a successful performing arts programme for "at-risk" pupils. Ms Sila'ila'i has become a senior tutor at a university. Ms Leslie has secured a permanent post at a secondary school. Ms Umaki has declined other opportunities in order to remain as head of mathematics at a secondary school with a vibrant Pasifika community.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Case study of Lefu: The process of a new Pasifika teacher seeking employment

In trying to capture one example of a teacher making the transition into teaching, we provide a case study of Lefu.

We are able to track the teacher from the beginning of our project when the teacher was recently qualified and still in the process of looking for jobs. We begin with some reflections by her when she had started to apply for jobs and dealing with the disappointment of not getting shortlisted. We review some reflections made during the subsequent period while she was doing part-time relieving. These reflections capture the insecurity of trying to fit into schools. A particular incident provoked some anxiety and we provide an account of how the teacher tried to make sense of this. We then offer some reflections provided by the teacher when she finally achieved the security of a permanent position. These reflections are supplemented by comments from her new principal on her process of settling and how this process compared with that of other new staff members. The comments also compared her position in school with that of a Pasifika teacher already in the school.

Reflecting on interviews

Recently qualified Lefu is in the process of applying for jobs in a competitive market. She reflects on how she is crafting her CV to be noticed.

> I've done so many CV's it's not funny, different types of paper, so it stands out. I spent a lot of money on my CV and presentation of my CV, actually, I've changed it several times, now I've changed it so it tells the story of me. So I've got the title, my Graduate Diploma of Teaching, then under it just a brief paragraph of why I made the decision to become a teacher and how I found doing the course. Then it's got my Bachelor's and it's got a brief paragraph of how I found doing my Bachelor's. And then there's just a list of my work history. I kept it brief, because I know the last thing a principal wants to look at is a long-winded CV, and just a cover letter. I've spent lots of money on different types of paper, but I've decided yellow marble paper is the best one.

On occasions she finds herself competing with more than a dozen other candidates:

> I got fed up once because I got so many rejection letters, and I called up (the school). I said, 'Look, I've applied for two jobs, it took you so long to get back to me, how come I wasn't short-listed for interviews?' and they said, 'Actually, you got in the top ten, but we only interviewed the first five.' She just said they short-listed and they short-listed me for the top

ten, but they only interview the first five of the ten, which I couldn't understand, why would you short-list ten then, if you were only going to interview five. I told her that I felt that you could have given me a chance and you chose not to just cos you only do five. They said it was a time-frame thing and they were in a hurry to fill the gap.

Well the job that I was going for was Social Studies/English, so it was perfect really, but what bugs me is when I hear from the kids what they really think of that teacher that took the role and then I hear that teacher's left the school cos she couldn't handle it. I didn't reapply or anything like that, but . . .it's frustrating though, you just get down in the dumps, with rejection letter after rejection letter. My philosophy is that it wasn't meant to be, it's timing, it wasn't for me at that time, whereas applying for jobs now feels right, the timings right. I haven't heard from any yet, it takes two or three weeks, if I don't hear by the third week I'm going to ring. I haven't heard back from any yet, but I sent a letter to (one school) expressing interest in an English job they had, and they wrote back and said that applications were closed, but they were still interested in my application . . .

Reflections during early relief teaching

This section presents diary reflections kept by the teacher during her early days as a relief teacher.

4/3/2004

First day relieving at school. Initially a little nervous; however, I managed to make it through today. At first a few of the students in various classes were rather boisterous. I was often asked where I was from. I answered each time with the following response: "I'm from Auckland and I'm Samoan." Students were stunned to have a Samoan teacher I'm not too sure if it's a welcomed change or not for the students.

STAFF ROOM

I feel like a nobody at the moment I found myself shifting towards the table where all the Māori teacher are seated but I still feel out of place. One of the Cook Island teachers is very hospitable which is good but it's rather difficult trying to fit in. Hopefully it's only first day nerves.

5/3/2004

My second day already. Had an accelerate class Year 11 today doing Year 12 work. Talk about a cocky group of boys. I came across one student struggling with the short story they were reading I tried to offer assistance and the boy turned to me and said "Miss, you don't know what we're talking about because you have to have the story to know what you're talking about." What a dick head!!!! I walked away and left him to suffer with his own incoherent thoughts about the short story. I had the impression that this particular student saw brown reliever, she don't know what she's doing. JERK. Anyway, I digress. I went back to the student towards the end of class and basically spoke to him with words filled with so many syllables he couldn't keep up. I think I got my point across though. The student asked me if I taught English and I said yes; he humbly returned to doing his work.

STAFF ROOM

Talk about dreading to go and eat my morning tea. I half-heartedly returned back to the staff room to have morning tea. BIG MISTAKE I sat next to a group of middle aged group of people they didn't say BOO not even a simple hello or simple Hello smile. Is it me? Or do they not have skills in being friendly towards other. Lunch was again another highlight of my day!! I sat next to a teacher on her own who managed to give me some friendly conversation however, when her mates turned up she did not introduce me or try to include me in the group. Talk about feeling so isolated. I just got up and left and joined the Māori teachers at the table in the middle of the staffroom.

15/3/2004 A student asked me today if I was Pacific Islander. I responded by telling him, no I'm Samoan. He then went on to ask me what part of South Auckland I was from. I've often had this question from students, they just seem to assume I'm a Pacific Islander, therefore, I am from South Auckland and apparently because I'm from West Auckland I may not be considered a true Pacific Islander because I'm from the west, apparently I'm of a higher class just because of where I have raised. In another class they were surprised when I mentioned that I was Samoan and they were even more surprised by the fact that I can speak the language.

STAFF ROOM

Here I am again hanging out with the Māori teachers having a good laugh sharing our lunch and I guess I'm just comfortable with them and their humour. They embrace me, and acknowledge me and they are more genuine when they ask me how am I doing? They are actually interested in what I have to say. They are quite a nice group of people Aunty Pani is hard case!

16/3/2004 Today we had an interesting English class. I could see the students are getting frustrated with the amount time their teacher had been away for. The teacher has a very ill son which I explained to the students and they appeared to be sympathetic to their teacher; however, one boy said that the teacher's son being sick will not help him in passing his assessment. I told the student that having a teacher teaching him half heartedly because she is concerned about a sick son at home could be worse than her absence today. He thought about it for a while and nodded his head in realisation when he finally switched on to what I was saying. I had a small class of boys who were the academy boys, they were not quite the intelligent lot, well not in English anyway. One egg decided he would draw a dog on his back with a whiteboard marker. I took him aside and spoke to him and discovered he was Tokelauan.

STAFF ROOM

HHHHhhhhhmmmmmmmmmmmnnnnnnnnnnn Back at the same table with the same folks. I sat with some other group at lunchtime because my normal table of mates were not there at lunchtime, the work load must be kicking in now. So I sat with a group of younger looking staff members; they were all male however, once again conversations were pretty much non-existent I should of just stayed in my class to eat. Talk about a mundane lunch.

30/7/2004 Another stressful day I found myself relieving all the lower classes. 10I class came into class rather stroppy They thought I would tolerate their stroppiness and walked into the class praising the fact they have a reliever. As I watched them come into class I gathered the energy I needed to attain control. After 10mins into class I couldn't handle their disrespectful behaviour and ripped into them. After our brief conversation the room was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. It takes a lot of energy to attain control and I can see it being quite draining for some.

STAFF ROOM

I didn't feel like going to the staff room since they are so friendly (not). Anyway lunch was quite nice from a local bakery.

13/8/2004

Once again I have the Māori academy boys. They are a good bunch of boys they just have different perspectives on life I guess. I could see how some of the boys may be a result of the environment they have grown up in however, there are the odd one or two who appear to want to make changes in their lives but they appear to have hit a brick wall.

STAFF ROOM

I've managed to get along well with the members of staff who are Māori. They are a lot more friendly than the other staff. I tried sitting somewhere different, throughout all of morning tea nothing was said to me not even a hello. I purposely decided not to say hello first I did that last time I sat with this particular group. They were all Pakeha, one teacher teaches Chinese, and one taught science and the other two teachers taught English. I gathered all this information from relieving these ladies' classes. Every time I relieve, I leave relief notes for the teachers; however, there was not mention of my notes or even a simple hello. SNOBS!!! It's no wonder I go wandering for lunch and morning tea rather than hanging out in their mundane staffroom.

23/8/2004

Not too bad today. I had science classes but the most interesting thing happened today. I walked into my class after morning tea and two science teachers were discussing how I had been yelling at my previous class. One of the cocky wannabe teachers asked me "Are you ok with your classes?" I could read the undertones in his question. I knew he thought I had no control over that class. However, ironically that same day I had to walk through his class to get to mine. One student yelled at that same teacher saying "Sir you're a useless teacher man." I turned around and growled at the student for disrespecting his teacher in that manner. The teacher did not say a thing. However, I was not impressed at how he judged me as a not too great at relieving.

STAFF ROOM

Same old same old, hung out with the Māori teachers and shared our lunch I thought it was pretty cool. Another teacher brought a pot full of cooked mussels the other day. It was divine. I'm enjoying hanging out with the Māori teachers; however, I have noticed on occasion I can not connect with them in various conversations because a lot of the talk is about extracurricular areas that I have no affiliation with.

Pacific Island Group

I have been roped in by one of the teachers to teach the students in the Pacific Island group so I will be teaching the Hawaiian and Samoan section; hopefully it all works out.

Talk about extremely busy; we have practises every Wednesday; however, the students are interesting. The Samoan students are not supporting the other culture. The groups are to perform 5 different dance routines from 5 different islands of the Pacific. We have just found out that our Hawaiian dance will not be classified as a Pacific Island. Due to the fact that they can't find a judge with true knowledge of Hawaiian dancing. Unfortunately, one school pulled out their Niuean group for the same reason. The Pacific Island Trust couldn't find someone adequate to judge the Niuean section. I think this is disgusting, why are they knocking out the students desire to perform these two cultures due to admin type stuff. I'm shocked!!

24/8/2004

I will be at school for the rest of this week thanks to tournament week so I'm considering myself to be very lucky.

An incident while relieving

This section provides an account of an incident in which the teacher perceived staff to be acting in a difficult manner. It includes discussion of how the teacher made sense of this incident. It also includes later reflection when the teacher looks back on the incident from the security of a permanent job.

> I just wanted to share an experience that I'd had when I was relieving at a primary school. I went to have lunch. The school didn't tell me that I was on duty for the teacher that I was relieving for . . .I walked into the staffroom and the deputy principal looked me straight in the eye and she goes, 'Do you know that you're supposed to be on duty?', in front of the whole staff. I was at one end of the room, she was at the other and I said, 'Oh well actually I wasn't told that I was actually meant to be on duty', and she goes, 'Well, do you realise that S's out there doing the duty, and you should be doing it?' . . . really demeaning. Well I felt that she was really demeaning. And I said, 'Okay, I'll go out straight away'.
>
> When I finished the duty . . . I was going back to my classroom . . . and the team leader of the teacher that I was relieving for goes to me, 'Do you realise that you were supposed to be relieving at lunch time today?' She spoke to me . . . like she was talking to a five year old. She was lucky she was talking to someone else, because I was ready to rip, you know. I'd just been demeaned in front of other staff members (by the deputy) and then I walk in the hallway and (the team leader) talks down to me. And I walked into that classroom and I just thought, 'Who the heck does she think she is?' I was so angry! And then after that, because it bugged me for that whole afternoon, it just ruined my afternoon. I thought the school was beautiful until that time. And then after school, I walked into (the team leader's) room and I said, 'Did you talk down to me because of my colour? Do you think I'm dumb and stupid and that you have the right to talk to me in that manner?' I was just not impressed! And I said, 'Who do you think you are, Miss X?' because she's from X. I was so angry. I said, 'Don't you dare do that to me again!' and I said, 'I would have said these exact words if you were not talking to someone else in that corridor, but I respect you as a human being and I leave it until now' . . . Her face, she went all red. She doesn't say sorry, that's one thing I noticed. She goes, 'Well, you should have been there to do the duty' . . . I think she got her back up, because maybe she was surprised that I had this thing to say, and she said . . . she didn't even say sorry, she said, 'Well, you should have been there to do your duty', and I said to her that I didn't know, that Mrs T did not tell me that I was on duty, and if you had told me I would have been there . . . So she pretty much said, 'Oh well'. That was how our conversation ended . . . So I won't be relieving there for a while I don't think!
>
> It brought back a lot of ill feelings, because I felt like I had to go through that when I was on section, you know, people mistreated me and I thought they just stereotyped me, 'brown girl, coconut, probably just scraped through' kind of attitude. And that's the impression I get every time people demean me like those ladies did. And I think they do it a lot, because I've had it often.

Extract from interview with a Samoan team member:

I: What was the actual response?

Lefu Which one? Miss X? I've got a mouth and when it has to work it will work. Her face, she went all red, she doesn't say sorry, that's one thing I noticed, she goes, 'Well, you should have been there to do the duty', she still, I think she got her back up, because maybe she was surprised that I had this thing to say, and she said … she didn't even say sorry, she said, 'Well, you should have been there to do your duty', and I said to her that I didn't know, that Mrs James did not tell me that I was on duty, and if you had told me I would have been there.

I: There was nothing written on the teacher's desk to say that you were left to […]

Lefu So she pretty much said, 'Oh well, that was how our conversation ended.

I: Good on you for speaking up.

Lefu So I won't be relieving there for a while I don't think!

How might one review these incidents and the subsequent report by the teacher herself? Clearly, analysis is not going to deliver a definitive account of the factuality of these encounters. We can only speculate why, on the one hand, some senior teachers spoke in an apparently abrupt and rude manner, yet the teacher interpreted this abruptness as racist. With the limited information available on this incident we can only attempt to fill in some of the detail of the story that has the teacher interpreting abrupt speech as evidence of a racism that affects her broadly across her life generally and specifically with regard to her entry in to teaching. Whatever the scope, intended or otherwise, of the senior teachers' comments, taken together with other experiences, the teacher interpreted the comments as fuelled by racism.

We offer some attempt to make sense of this incident.

Having been unsettled by the staff room incident, the teacher found herself exasperated by the subsequent encounter with the team leader. It is the teacher herself who introduces the suggestion that these encounters were a result of racism and confronts the team leader on this supposition, and further raises the cultural stakes by introducing reference to the team leader's nationality. The teacher was introducing the racial element within a particular version of self in which the racial tag was dominant in flavourings interpretations made. The teacher was new to teaching and felt insecure and attributed part of this insecurity to a perceived sense of not being fully accepted. It is hard to say whether the actions of the two teachers were racist or not, and this tag potentially gets in the way of careful analysis. The team leader or the deputy principal, would not think of themselves as being racist. Yet it would seem that the style of their actions as reported resulted from specific interpretations of the power relations that prevailed that opened the door to readings in which racism might be insinuated.

Yet can we find pathways that offer more positive outcomes, perhaps only for this specific teacher, but perhaps also for other teachers in this situation. There seems to be a need to explore alternative interpretations of the event, and consider how different parties would bring different

interpretations to it according to where they are positioned in relation to the exchanges described. Our conjecture was that Pasifika teachers clearly experienced additional pressures in the early days of teaching, and some of these would be the result of them being marked by others in ways that accentuated these pressures. If this included racism, racism was not going to be removed easily by new vulnerable teachers, yet by better understanding how such vulnerabilities arose such teachers might be better equipped to confront them or circumnavigate them so as to reduce the disturbance to their growing confidence as a teacher.

We are experimenting with research strategies to see what results could be produced. We cannot predict with certainty how the research practices or the research material we produced would affect educational practices. We can only work with models that might succeed. The research team had spelt out some broad objectives in the proposal yet the task of working with such specific and personal data forced reconceptualizations of how we imagined reports of our research outcomes might affect practices.

Some six months later we raised the issue with the teacher again to ask her to look back on the event through the transcript produced. We were specifically wondering if she still interpreted the event as a racial incident or whether, given her more recent establishment in a more secure job, she might revisit the event as being more about her own insecurity as a new teacher. Could the incident be recast as a less significant component in the story the teacher told of her emerging professionalism. The teacher responded and the relevant extracts are reproduced here:

May 2005

> At the time of the incident I felt that they did not appreciate who I was. I felt like a five year old being scolded by my primary school teacher. I think some individuals enjoy having authoritative power and do not brush up on people skills. I was very upset by what had happened however; I was most grateful I was only relieving because to work there permanently would have been a nightmare.
>
> I think I'm getting soft because as I read through my comments I was beginning to think maybe I am being too harsh. That may be the islander in me speaking saying I was wrong to retaliate, maybe I should have just left it alone and just gone home and said nothing to her after.
>
> However, I felt that when the deputy principal and Ms X accused me of not doing a duty I was unaware of in front of other colleagues (if i can call them that), [it] was not only unprofessional but also a perspective in the sense that what they showed to me was their true perception of me. That is a brown-skinned, coconut who doesn't know what she's doing. The way I was treated by these two women was demeaning. I feel I should have said something to the deputy principal also. However, will that get me anywhere or will it truly make a difference to her perception of me or will it only confirm her fears or her ideas of truths about me?

Comment by new principal

During the course of this project the teacher secured permanent work at a well-regarded school. The project team took the opportunity to interview Lefu's new principal:

> Lefu just is … gets on so easily with everybody. I remember the first day, we were practising for the powhiri, and all the new teachers were learning a waiata and our head of Māori immediately thought Lefu was a Māori, and she was very quick to say, 'No, I'm not Māori, everybody calls me Māori, I'm Samoan', and so she defined herself really quickly, so she had that kind of … that strength. And neither of them would be … feel separated, I would … it would be interesting for you to ask them that, but I don't think they have that sense of isolation … because of their character, then … but I … I can't really ask that one. A lot of young teachers may feel alienated by the fact that the average age of teaching is forty-six. You know, I think that probably has an impact too. I've got a young man on the staff who's twenty-two, well, he would probably feel more different from the staff than … than someone like Lefu.

December 2005:

Given the delicate nature of some of the issues addressed in this case study the team decided to write to the teacher as the project report was being completed to check if she wanted to add or delete any of the elements being included. The teacher replied with the following email reflecting back on her experience:

> In term 3 I had a few issues with my Head of Department. I found it to be very difficult to go and confront my HoD. to discuss how I felt. Therefore, I went and spoke to a fellow colleague about my feelings and he advised me to speak to the Headmaster so I did. However, soon word got to my HoD that I was not happy and she confronted me I was unprepared and I'm not very good with confrontations especially when I'm on the receiving end. She was obviously angry with me and I was sorry that her feelings were hurt. However, she misinterpreted why I went about things the way I did. I explained to her I went and discussed my problems with the other colleagues because of respect for her. At this point I was upset I was angry that she spoke to me in an angry and I think in some ways too strong a manner. Through my tears I explained to her I have always been taught to never question those in authority over me. Therefore, I was seeking advice as to how to approach my concerns with her. However, my HoD managed to accept that there was a cultural misunderstanding and that there are some things that she needs to learn about me and my culture.
>
> This experience made me realise that I am still adapting to my surroundings as a new teacher and that other teachers do not have the same understandings of my culture as I do. Furthermore, their perceptions of teaching and professionalism stems from 20 years plus experience whereas I am only beginning. Their 20 years of teaching experience govern their perceptions of what teaching is all about. However, being a new teacher I need to start defining my own journey in teaching. I must mould myself into the teacher I want to be and not allow myself to be moulded by someone else's perspectives of how to teach.
>
> I love my cultural heritage however, I must quote a friend she told me "I need to get some balls" there will be times in my career where my voice must be heard. I must question my

> authorities if needs be. However, I will do it in a respectful manner and try and go straight to the source. I will still go to individuals I trust and seek their advice because I'm still new to teaching in many aspects. My perception of teaching is still being moulded it will change as the years go by but one thing I promise myself is that my perception of teaching will come from my own experiences, my own research and from the heart.

Shortly after this was followed by a second e. mail concerning the account of her relieving experience documented above:

> Looking back at that experience it was very judgmental of me to think that it was because of my colour that I was treated that way. I think in some ways it was racism or maybe they thought I was slacking off however it's not a excuse to make someone feel so belittled.
>
> I feel that I come across as a racist myself by referring to her as Miss X hence, I feel I'm contradicting. I'm quite confused about this excerpt maybe I'm reading into this too much myself I don't know.
>
> I think I come across too strong in the part where I confront the teacher. Looking back at the experience although I was furious I feel I didn't handle it professionally however, now I am speaking with a more experienced voice I suppose. I recall telling her that I didn't know I was suppose to be on duty and her strong stance that she had she did have an arrogance about her I remember that vividly.
>
> I was wondering if maybe we should omit the part of my confrontation with the teacher mostly because I feel it's only one voice coming through and I appear racist myself. It doesn't allow the voice of the other teacher's perspectives of the situation. I know this may be too late I just want to make the account sound more factual I guess.

The team responded with the following email after which the teacher indicated that she was happy for all material to be included:

> … you are much more secure now as a result of getting a job that clearly values you and that you value but whilst you were in a less secure state you were trying to find ways of making sense of the difficulties that you were experiencing. It is enormously stressful job hunting and dealing with this. We can't decide if Ms X was being racist or not but that is how you experienced it at the time and you acted on the assumption that it was racist. … Ms X was being really insensitive and opened herself to criticism - racism is one way of you making sense of her actions even if she did not see it in those terms herself. And if you were experiencing it as racism then your response may be shaped around that sense that that was the game that was being played.
>
> What we are trying to capture is the process as you experienced it - and it is without a doubt a story with a good outcome that you made good. And this e. mail that you have sent presents you as having dealt with it in an effective reflective manner that shows you able to deal with such stresses in a very different way now that you have become more established.

Appendix B: Some perspectives from principals employing Pasifika teachers

We interviewed four principals of schools which were attended by significant numbers of Pasifika children, relative to other schools in the area. Team members felt that these schools were interested in employing and retaining Pasifika teachers. The principals were all very helpful in giving time and thought to this project. In this section verbatim extracts from some of these interviews are given, which show how some of the concerns which arose from the Pasifika teachers were acknowledged and considered by the principals.

Reasons for/Issues in appointing Pasifika staff

I'm certainly interested because I very deliberately tried to diversify my staff and we've got two Pacific Island teachers permanently appointed with us … oh no, I suppose X] who's a Fiji Indian would count as well, and I suppose Y who's a Fiji Indian would also count as Pacific Island in some way although I don't sort of see them in that category somehow … correctly or incorrectly, that's something that could be discussed. But I've got a woman who's Tongan, and a man who's Raratongan and Cook Island Māori and I … I believe in diversifying the staff because we've got such an incredibly diverse bunch of kids. But some people who have come from that background have been more successful than others.

You've got a really diverse school so have you got any sort of policies … do you employ in order to get a diverse teaching staff? Is that a criteria for you?

> Very much so. While we'll always try and employ the best person for the position, often that … what is considered the best person in terms of the person profile is to try and reach out to kids. If you've got a diverse community school as we have then it's absolutely imperative that the teaching profile represents the whole school profile. And in a school like ours, 20 percent of our school are something else New Zealanders, 20 percent are Māori New Zealanders and 60 percent are Pākehā New Zealanders, and so therefore the staffing profile should try and match that as much as you possible can. And so whenever we have a vacancy within the school, I normally will talk to the head of the faculty about the needs of the faculty and then we'll have a good look at the person profile of the faculty and sometimes … and when I first came here, for example, the maths and science departments were very male … Pākehā, male dominated so we sort of came to an agreement that we would try and attract females, we would try to attract Māori and the 'other New Zealander' type people into certain departments. English on the other hand, the English faculty was the reverse as it is in most schools. Strong dominance of female Pākehā in that area and so we'd always try to do that. Now, it's more than that, it's about world experiences, world view and some of the staff in our staffroom probably would be unacceptable in other staff … in other

staffrooms, because they certainly don't fit the stereotyped vision of what a teacher looks like, for a start, and how they act and dress. Umm … but some of the best teachers in our school - and I've got a hundred and twenty teachers, a hundred and eighty-five staff in total – some of them are these left-of-centre, off-the-wall, bizarre-looking buggers that … umm are absolutely fantastic people and have a very, very strong empathy for young people. So the issue then when it comes to Pacific teachers … I mean, New Zealand is getting a larger number of Pasifika youngsters and one of the issues that we're going to have to look at is that we often lump Pasifika as one group, and I think one of the things we're going to have to do very quickly is say, 'Hang on, Pasifika isn't a group, it's a number of subsets, and we're going to have to recognise that some of those subsets are probably more diverse than comparing Päkehä with Fijians, as opposed to Samoans and Fijians, sort of thing. So we have to recognise that our schools, in our diversity, have a larger number of Pacific Island students, therefore we need staff who have a Pasifika empathy or are Pasifika in their own identity.

One of the beliefs that I have in getting more Pacific Island and Māori people into teaching, is that there seems to be a bit of a break between secondary school and university. We're still not making the jump from secondary school into university for a significant number of our Māori and Pacific Island kids. Now I've actually done quite a bit of investigation and would like to do this, where we become like a transition centre, a transition school, a magnet school for Pacific Island and Māori kids who we think can actually make that move from secondary school into university. They may not even have quite the qualifications, they may not have the experience or confidence but they need … like an apprenticeship, and so what we would do as a school, we might say have … six to a dozen who are … they've finished Year 13, and they come to us and they do a year with us, almost like an apprenticeship teacher training, and they then go automatically at the completion of completing the course with us into the first year training college course. And the Training College in Hamilton here, they would be part of the selection process, so … we could say to the kids as they came through, 'You and I were sitting there at the interview and we agreed, "Yes we'll take this one on"', so there's no other interview, there's not another door that they've got to go through, another sort of hurdle to jump over there. They know that once they've got in with us, provided they succeed with us, then they're going to get automatic entry into the next level. And again, it's those economies of scale, you bring in … say you just made it the Pacific Island group. Here's Fraser, this is your Pacific Islander apprenticeship group. And they spend a year with us, a dozen of these Pacific Island young people wanting to be teachers and we lift them to the next standard and then they get the automatic entry into Training College.

Enabling Pasifika teachers to fit in comfortably

We're very diverse… people come into our staffroom and express surprise at how interactive everybody is … I mean you've got one or two people sit in more or less the same place most times, but everybody … most people move around, move around the groups depending on what's on.

It's not one of these where you've got almost allocations …

> No, absolutely not … I mean to some extent they have, if you're looking for a particular person, you'd probably look in that corner, and another person in that corner or another person in that corner, but who they sit with from one lunch hour to the next will vary enormously and people move very, very freely between the groups and there's a great deal of exchange at a personal level. I mean, we've got a jolly hard environment in which to work and … but there is a really strong collegiality I believe, I don't think I'm inventing that. I think it's the sort of feedback I've had from people who've expressed surprise, who've made comments about the morale of the staff and … you know I foster that in every way possible. So that in terms of the Pacific Island people integrating into the staffroom, they're just part of it. I mean I've got a reasonably diverse staff and they would tend to … you know as I stop and think about again, he tended to sit with the people that … in the science department, because they were really mentoring him all the time. They would … you know, 'How did the lesson go?' and 'da-de-da-de-da' and they actually gave him a huge amount of support, but he didn't always sit with them and … umm … the older woman who's a little bit more assertive, umm … is actively involved in other activities in the school and so she's involved with this group, with that group and so she's exchanging information with this one or that one. So again I … it's the assertiveness coming in to play there.
>
> My experience with Pasifika teachers would be that they tend to have a different understanding of the hierarchies of school. It's all to do with tradition and responsibility and leadership and so they tend to look at the hierarchy of the school with a certain amount of deference that probably others don't quite see. And there's a shyness that is inherent with a lot of our Pacific Island people, that's not so much the Fijian Indian teachers here, and there again, they're a different subset again. But certainly the true Pasifika … Samoan, perhaps umm … Tongan, and the Māori teachers from the Cook Islands, there is a natural shyness and deference which sort of comes from their culture and that would make it a little difficult for them to fit into a pakeha dominated society, if you like, and to some degree it's the same thing with Māori teachers. It's almost an economies of scale problem. You've got to actually build up within your staffroom a number of people of a similar identity and they get …they … those people get a … they awhi each other along and there's a snowballing effect. And umm … so part of it is to do with that very complex cultural thing of who they are. The other thing is I think … sadly a lot of our staffrooms, and you will have been through a number of staffrooms, some of them are very inhospitable places which perhaps reflects the learning culture and style of the school, and I'd like to think that our staffroom reflects the holistic version and … and, yeah … philosophy of our school.

Another principal offered the following thoughts:

> I think the focus was in Māori, but what we have here is an on-going interest in Pacific things. We've got a teacher who's not Pacific herself, who's the head of special needs who's taken a real interest in Pacific Island students as a minority group for many years. And then we've got the Pacific teachers. Now they have done things anyway, like the other night we had a Pacific Island achievement evening where parents an students were invited.
>
> Every new teacher that comes to the school, whether they are an experienced teacher or not, [they] are given a buddy. So there's a buddy teacher you can ask all the 'dumb questions' to and that sort of thing. It's somebody that's not in your department and who you were going

to be working with anyway, its another person so we hope that that helps people with the transition in. We do have every staff member being a member of the committee, so they are all contributing to the wider development of the school, rather than just in their curriculum area, so that builds that collegial thing. The staff social committee is quite strong and organises a lot of staff functions, at least one per term, which not everyone goes to but you have the opportunity to go to it. And I think another strong thing at the school is the lakes. We've got four houses which we call lakes, because they are named after local lakes and the lake feeling is quite strong. The tutor-groups are vertical tutor-groups in the lakes, so each lake has seven tutor-groups. They meet as a lake, the tutors meet as a lake and so as well as belonging to a department, you belong a lake. So there's quite a lot of ties and support networks amongst the staff, even amongst the kids and I think that helps the transition a bit. I think the other thing is, for the Pacific and the Māori teachers it's nice to not be the only ones on the staff, so they have each other as support groups too. It's much easier if there's three of you, than if there's one of you.

What would you see as strategies for being effective in the school in terms of making Pasifika staff more welcome?

One would be having other Pacific staff with them. It's easier to attract someone when they're not the only one. If I was sitting in a school in Hamilton with very few Pacific students in it and trying to attract a Pacific staff member, I think that would be quite hard. Maybe you could find out through the Mormon church people who might be … but those teachers would probably rather teach at Church College than anywhere else, but that might be something. Living next to a stronghold of their particular church, whatever it might be. Or, if there's any community …I don't know in Hamilton, is there a Cook Island community or a Samoan community who meet regularly and they will get wider support from being part of that group. I think those side-issues are actually quite important for most of them. I know there are different ones, I don't know if that particularly would affect S in a great way, for example, but I think that she probably would have been happy teaching in Hamilton, but she had it inside her that she wanted to help her own people. So she's come to a place where there's a lot more of her own people that she can help. She's got her family here as well, so having a family connection is important.

I guess they have to feel comfortable with the tone of the school, is there a family feeling in the school? You walk into a school and you get a feeling about the school, and I think that they might get more of that feeling than others do. You're probably walking into different schools and you get a feeling of the school when you walk in. I do when I go to different schools, especially if you're walking around the school and you see the kids. I think the feeling of being somewhere does make quite a deal to somebody. I know of other schools I've walked through and thought, 'I wouldn't like to teach at this school'. How you adjust that is just the overall ethos of the school, the way people in that school treat each other and speak to each other and are friendly or not towards each other, and I think that would make a difference.

Difficulties associated with appointing Pasifika staff

> Well, I'm thinking of two people, who came into the school more or less at the same time and one of those people is permanently appointed now, and one of those people I decided not to appoint and with considerable regret, because I think he had a lot of potential, and I … the issues were; language fluency, competency in the depth of the language. When I did … that was one of the issues, when I did classroom observations … are you recording now … that's fine … so when I did classroom observations, this person was a science teacher and well qualified, but he didn't have the experiences and the vocabulary to draw on to connect with the students. Umm … he prepared very, very hard and very, very thoroughly and very, very carefully, but if a student answered with terminology he didn't know, he was floundering … and although his English was adequate, he didn't have the depth of the language and that became a barrier, and … in the give and take of a classroom, you've got to be able to respond pretty quickly. You can't stop and think about, 'What did that really mean?' or 'What are the words to respond to that suggestion?', umm …

So this was a person who'd come from the Islands?

> Come from the Islands, done a degree at Waikato and was a person I would love to have had on the staff as a role model, but I ended up not appointing him because of that limitation. The other thing was that … deeply embedded into his own culture and as a relatively young person, I think had difficulty asserting himself, and he was a very kind and gentle … lovely person! But not … I mean in the Island … I think he would have been fine in the Island situation where the teacher has status, and the kids sit and listen, but in our dynamic where …

Which is often a shock, isn't it?

> Yes, and people from other cultures as well, I think are a little bit surprised at the dynamic of the teaching environment in New Zealand. He had difficulty gaining the respect of some of the children who would have respected someone who could be up-front and assertive.

So this could be a generalisable problem, couldn't it, because that modesty of the young is such a deeply imbued cultural characteristic. And although the person you are talking about comes from the Islands and is perhaps an extreme example, that […] is still there with the New Zealand born as well?

> Absolutely. Yes, yes I don't have enough experience to draw a direct comparison. If I thought about the other person who I have appointed permanently … highly qualified degree and all the rest of it, from the Islands, a little bit older and a very confident woman who has been able to gain the respect of the kids. And although she has a gentle manner, she can be quite strict when she wants to be and the kids have learned that there are boundaries that of respect.

Relationship between Pasifika and Māori teachers

> I think there's a lot more opportunity to develop the Pasifika model than it is the Māori model and I think there's a lot more room for success. And the reason I say that is because my impression is … umm … the Pasifika community is far more cohesive and far stronger

> than the urban Māori communities and, you know the … the whanau model has broken down completely, it's a myth. But with the strong church affiliation of the … many of our Samoan and Tongan kids in particular, if schools can create within their communities linkages back to those churches, and with the elders … we've got … I think we've got time to do some […?] … in fact we've lost sixty years with out Māori model. If we had been doing this with our Māori community sixty years ago, we would have been far better off than where we are now, but we've got the advantage of time on our side with the Pasifika model and I think this is where it's a relationship and a partnership between that community and I see it very strongly with our own school.
>
> In a very short space of time I've seen some of the Pasifika statistics in this school … change and … well, not change, but certainly improve to the level that they're far … they're in excess of the Māori statistics, especially in the behavioural and social side of things. I've had no Pasifika kids come through this office for suspensions or stand-downs this year. Whereas the Māori statistics are still far beyond what they should be in terms of the ratio of the number of kids and percentages that are there. And I can see, if we move with some degree of haste, but with a lot of thinking, we can actually … I think we could address the Pasifika issue and … and where we've got Pasifika statistics matching Pakeha in a very short space of time. And it's simply because of the strength of the community, the potential strength of the community, especially in Hamilton. Auckland might be a little more difficult because of the fragmentation of some of the Pasifika community, but I don't know enough about it, but certainly here I think there's … [you've\we've] got real chance to do something.

Another principal commented:

> Informally. The Māori teachers tend to sit together in the staffroom, staff meetings, that sort of thing, which I haven't promoted, I would like them not to probably, but they do, because that's what they like, that's how they feel comfortable.