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**“MALAMALAMA- MISS, IT MEANS TO UNDERSTAND, BUT
IT CAN MEAN LIGHT ALSO.”**

**PASIFIKA STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES OF STUDYING
HISTORY IN NEW ZEALAND.**

A thesis

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of the requirements for the degree

of

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By

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This thesis is dedicated to three amazing men in my life. To my brother, Bjorn, who lived with me during the process of writing this thesis. You showed me patience and provided both perspective and time-outs when I needed them. To my Dad, Garry, who believes in me, inspires me and supports me. You become more “educated” every day. Thank you Dad for showing me that being educated is not just about having certificates to prove it! Finally to Opa Bardoul, who I miss dearly. Perhaps this is proof of my “frontal-lobe development?” I hope I have made you proud.

Christina

ABSTRACT:

This thesis looks at Pasifika students' perspectives of studying history in the New Zealand secondary school I currently teach in. The methodology for the thesis was centred on a Tongan research approach referred to as *Talanoa*. This is an informal conversation during which Year 13 history students, who felt they belonged to the Pasifika collective, shared their experiences, attitudes and perspectives of studying history. The ideas and insights from the *Talanoa* are discussed and explored in this thesis. I contend that understanding the identities of our students is essential if we are to understand their experiences and perspectives of the enacted history curriculum and school programme. Therefore, this thesis explores the notion of identity formation, and looks at the various factors that shape the identities of the participants in this research. It is my view that as a result of lived rich cultural experiences Pasifika students have a personal sense of history. This in turn provides a unique lens through which they experience history in the classroom. This way of knowing the past influences their perspectives of the nature and purpose of history education. This includes how they see the role of interpretation in history, and how they find relevance or make connections with the historical contexts they study in the classroom history programme. I discuss curriculum theory that has informed my curriculum understandings. I reflect on the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) and its supporting assessment policies in light of the implications for both history education in New Zealand, and for Pasifika students who receive this curriculum. It is my contention that the students in this research project demonstrated a deep understanding of history and provided valuable insights for teachers that may enhance teaching and learning experiences in the history classroom.

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Christina.

PREFACE

I embarked on this thesis two years ago, hoping to find a little more *malamalama*, (understanding/enlightenment) of students I taught every day at my South Auckland secondary school. I wanted to know how, if at all, Pasifika students' experiences of studying history differed to the experiences of other students I had taught whilst undertaking pre-service practicums. I was interested to learn how Pasifika cultures influenced ways that students in my classroom perceive and understand history. Early interactions with students at my school had taught me the value of talking with and listening to students. Within the first two months of teaching, I found the greatest moments of professional development resulted from conversations I had with students. I learnt what parts of my lessons they connected with, what parts of my lessons they disengaged from, and I learnt the qualities they value in a teacher. After several of these conversations a clear pattern had emerged. The students I taught longed for cooperative learning, the opportunity to assume the role as teacher, to explore areas of contention in history, and a teacher who understood their learning needs and set high expectations. These informal interactions began to inform my every day teaching decisions. However, I felt these interactions were superficial. I did not really know who my students were and how their identities influenced the way they experienced history. My thesis, therefore, attempts to better understand Pasifika students' perspectives of studying history in the secondary school curriculum.

Of the students I teach, 96% identify as belonging to one of the Pacific Islands' cultures included under the term Pasifika. The term Pasifika encompasses many different ethnic groups, and I do not suggest that the perspectives and experiences of students who have participated in my research are the same for all Pasifika students who study history. It is but a small representation and I do not wish to homogenise the uniqueness and individuality of the various Pasifika cultures, nor of the individuals within these cultural groups.

Throughout the thesis, when discussing conversations and storying interactions with my students, the reader will understand I am referring to Pasifika students. This also applies when referring to research participants. The research discussion in the thesis comes from the two Talanoa (informal conversations

without rigid framework) held with the informed consent of Year 13 students drawn from a Year 13 history class.

I believe that the discussions storied in this thesis reveal helpful insights into ways Pasifika students in many classrooms across New Zealand may experience history in the secondary school curriculum. Whilst their perspectives and experiences may not be identical, similar themes, understandings or parallels may exist. At the very least, it is my hope that my research contributes to the professional discussions and insights required to raise Pasifika students' achievement in New Zealand. As New Zealand's population demographic continues to change, revising and improving Pasifika education is becoming increasingly pertinent. Perhaps the findings of this thesis can contribute to the discussion around Pasifika education in New Zealand.

This research has been a part of my process of professional reflexivity. As a result, my voice, experiences and encounters are also storied in the pages that follow. As both an insider; a teacher of the students involved, and outsider; a Palagi (person of white skin) with a specific agenda, I was placed in a unique position as a researcher. I decided that instead of ignoring or trying to counteract this positionality by attempting to remove myself from the pages, I would recognise and embrace this. Therefore, I begin most chapters with my story. When discussing major themes I consider my personal stance and experiences. As a result I hope readers will be able to (at least partially) identify the lens through which I have interpreted the students' thinking that was shared with me, and through which I have understood the literature that is discussed.

Over the past two years I have come to appreciate the power of reflection on my practice. Rather than see it as something I like to do, I now view reflection as something that needs to be done as part of my professional learning. This thesis is in many ways a product of professional reflection of my experiences linking pre-service teaching and my current position as a teacher. Therefore it will forever be a work in progress. What I hope is that future discussions that draw on my research will provide *malamalama* and stimulate reflection by other teachers. This may then result in enhanced history learning experiences and cultural understandings for all students.

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INTRODUCTION

“Malamalama- Miss, it means to understand, but it can mean light also”: Pasifika Students’ perspectives of studying history in New Zealand, is motivated by my own desire to understand how Pasifika students experience history in the classroom. As a first year teacher in South Auckland, I found employment in a school that had a predominantly Pasifika school roll. I nervously read up on Pasifika education and came across some concepts I did not understand. Hoping that the students would be able to explain the deeper understandings of these concepts with me I wrote on my classroom board, “what do these words mean? I need help: *Malamalama, Ilo, Poto, and Ako.*” My first class walked in and immediately a Year 13 student smiled proudly and said “Miss, malamalama, it means to understand, but it can mean light also.” We continued our discussion and she explained the link that malamalama had to enlightenment, knowledge, understanding and learning, all the while enjoying the chance to teach me something and allow me to take on the role of the student. Realising what had just happened she smiled at me and said, “and what we have just done Miss, you know, you learning from me, that’s ako.” Amituanai-Toloa (2010) states that malamalama is a “refined state of a’o (to learn) and iloa (know)...this means one is enlightened when one is taught” (p. 6). This concept has become central to my research because I believe that if I am to be enlightened about how I can better teach and understand Pasifika students in my history work, I need to first learn from these students and listen to their experiences and perspectives.

Pacific peoples have been referred to in many ways by institutions and government organisations (Wendt-Samu, 2006). My thesis uses the term Pasifika as this is in line with current terminology used in government policies. Many Pacific Island languages translate Pacific as Pasifika, (Wendt-Samu, 2006). Educator Tanya Wendt-Samu reflects that the term Pasifika is not simply about translations but more about power. She notes that “the fact that as a term it ‘originated’ from us is of no small consequence because being able to define ourselves is an issue of control” (2006, p. 36). This argument is similar to that made by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1998) who contends that there is enormous power in being able to define yourself and constructing your own identity. Using Pasifika as a collectivising term can be problematic. There is a danger that by

using a blanket term such as Pacific Islander or Pasifika, researchers, conceal and undermine specific cultures thus creating a homogenising lack of appreciation for the diversity the term represents (McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Nakhid, 2002). However, Wendt-Samu (2006) draws on Crocombe (1976) when she advocates that collectivising terms such as Pasifika should not imply homogeneity but rather should be used in instances “when the common interest of all the islands people can be served by collaboration” (as cited in Wendt-Samu, 2006, p. 40). Whilst my research uses Pasifika as a term to describe the many Pacific cultures, the research acknowledges and recognises various traditions and values unique to each cultural group.

Throughout the thesis, I discuss the experiences shared with me in the data collecting process (*Talanoa*) and often share my interactions with students I have taught over the past two years. Therefore, throughout this thesis when I refer to students I teach, or to the research participants, the reader will understand I am referring to Pasifika students.

The contextual background of this research encompasses different disciplines and fields of study. It involves the context of Pasifika cultures in New Zealand. This includes understandings as a dominant migrant group, raising concerns around Pasifika education and of the multiple identities represented in the collective term, “Pasifika”. In addition to this, history education is a growing and widely debated issue in contemporary academia and thus provides another context for this research (Arrowsmith, 2005; Barton & Levstik, 2003, 2004; Clark, 2009; Haydn & Harris, 2010; Hunter and Farthing, 2005, 2008; Kunowski, 2009b; Lang, 2010; VanSledright, 2004, 2008, 2009). The nature and purpose of history and its relevance to students in the 21st century is discussed internationally and nationally. Recent changes to the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007; NZC) has caused renewed fervour to this debate in New Zealand. Discussions around ethical issues in research also contribute to the contextual foundations of this thesis. This is a result of the power relationships, identities and cross-cultural aspects of this study.

This thesis is driven by two founding questions:

1. What attitudes, issues and insights are revealed by Year 13 Pasifika students when discussing their experiences of studying history in New Zealand?
2. How can Pasifika students' perspectives of studying history in New Zealand schooling inform teacher understandings and enhance learning experiences?

My research aimed to create an opportunity to listen to the voices of Pasifika students at my school. I hoped to shed light on the experiences, issues and attitudes that Pasifika students have when studying history at school. The research evidence aimed to inform teacher understanding, and enhance student learning experiences. At the same time, research participants may have found personal satisfaction from being able to share their learning and enlighten others of their perspectives and experiences. This is not to be mistaken as goodwill and intervention, but rather as a way to provide an opportunity for, and develop the way in which students reflect on and make sense of their learning experiences, especially those related to the study of history. Finally, I believe that the research evidence indicates ways in which New Zealand history teachers may adopt culturally effective pedagogy that might better engage Pasifika students and their learning needs.

I invited Year 13 history students who identified as Pasifika (Wendt-Samu, 2006) to be a part of this study for two reasons. Firstly, some of these students would have undertaken the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d) history for two years and would have a wide range of experiences to draw from. Secondly, I did not teach Year 13 students and therefore this would minimise possible ethical issues such as coercion, fear of repercussions, and power relations.

The research design for this thesis, involved a review of relevant literature, a short survey (Appendix A) with prospective participants, followed by two group conversations with the consenting students (For documentation relating to informed consent see Appendix B1, C, and D). These conversations enabled me to shape the themes of this thesis, and provided most of the research data. It was important to me that my research did not cause harm to the participants in any

way. I needed to create a culturally responsive and safe environment so that Pasifika students could reflect on and confidently articulate their own experiences and perspectives. By taking time to do this, I hoped the conversations shared would be more open, honest and genuine, so the real experiences of these Pasifika students could be heard. It is intended that the structure and approach of the thesis allows for the voices of the students and researcher to be at the forefront of the discussions. Therefore, the theory and literature is intertwined in my narrative and the students own words to allow for reflexivity around the ideas and experiences explored in this thesis.

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the motivation behind this research and looks at the research process. This includes the contexts of history education the national curriculum and the secondary school involved, the justification, and the qualitative, interpretive and cultural methodology used. A consideration of identity formation and identity theory is central to justifying the methodology used and understanding the perspectives of the students. Therefore Chapter One explores the significance of my identity as the researcher, and the identities of the participants. My identity, as researcher and as a teacher at the school (although not their classroom teacher for history) placed me as both an “outsider” and “insider” of this research. In addition, the interpretation required to make sense of the data collected meant that I unavoidably became part of this research. I contend that rather than attempt the impossible task of removing myself from the pages of this thesis, I needed to acknowledge the limits and strengths of this relationship and learn from it. When writing this thesis, I have attempted to story some of my reflections, experiences and understandings as well as those of the students. I have used literature to explain or support the perspectives and insights shared. Chapter One discusses some of the ethical issues addressed in this research and how the ethical considerations influenced the methodology chosen for this research.

Chapter Two considers the students’ identities, their Pasifika roots and the traditions that come with this. The Ministry of Education charges teachers with the responsibility to ensure the identities of their students are “recognised and heard” in the classroom (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). In order to meet this challenge, teachers first need to understand the identities of their students. I look

at how Pasifika students construct identity and the implications of this for the way history is experienced in New Zealand schooling. Family, religious and cultural communities, government policy, and schools and societal stereotypes all contribute to the formation of various identities for the students in this research. The participants swapped between identities to help “fit in” certain contexts. In this chapter, I argue that school history is sometimes at odds with the Pasifika way of being; but conversely, can also help Pasifika students to gain confidence and a greater understanding of who they are. I contend that as a result of a rich cultural identity, Pasifika students have an innate history within themselves which provides a lens through which they experience the classroom history curriculum. This sense of history, as historical consciousness was at no point learned, but resulted from a student’s life interactions and experiences.

Chapter Three introduces aspects of the nature and purpose of history education from international and national perspectives. Literature, from debates abroad and within New Zealand, is used to build a foundation for analysing and understanding the research participants’ discussions. The history curriculum is a socially constructed and cultural site in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC), therefore the pedagogical content and practices that play out in the history classroom shape meaning for students (Hunter and Farthing, 2008, p. 15). This comes with a powerful responsibility for all New Zealand’s history teachers because the learning and teaching that occurs within the history classroom could affirm or contradict the personal meanings already held by the students. Moreover, it could influence the way in which new meanings are formed. History engages its learners in a way that allows them to connect with the past and their personal story. This chapter looks at some of the connections that students have made as a result of studying history, and how Pasifika students’ attitudes towards studying history reveal something about the nature, purpose and role of history in *The New Zealand curriculum* (NZC).

In Chapter Three I focus on ways the research participants perceived the nature and purpose of history. I was interested in how they defined the subject based on their cultural experiences and the experiences they had with the history curriculum. I share the ways in which the participants see interpretation, perspective and historical relationships as the defining aspects of history. In

addition to this, they use the New Zealand history curriculum notions of historical relationships (e.g time; continuity & change; cause & effect) as the essential tools of history that help them to process and understand historical content. Whilst some of the students' thinking was strongly influenced by the assessments and historical contexts they had studied, their cultural experiences and ways of knowing meant that they had also developed unique cultural understandings of history.

Chapter Four focuses on curriculum theory and understandings. As a history teacher I made significant changes to my history programme, and the way in which I teach it, to accommodate the new requirements of *the New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). For me, it was both important and timely to consider how different understandings of curriculum present challenges for teachers. I discuss the literature that has informed my conceptions of curriculum, and I look at how the way I understand curriculum has implications for the students I teach. I have been influenced by theorists who see the curriculum as a construction of the social, political and economic context of the time (Lee, Hill, & Lee, 2004; McGee, 1995; Mutch, 2000; O'Neill, 2005). The nature and purpose of history in the curriculum is itself a political process that has the ability to marginalise minority groups in society. This led me to consider how the aims of inclusion of the 2007 NZC, could lead to exclusion and create "otherness". I reflect on ways the strong citizenship notions of the revised curriculum may influence the overarching aims of history lessons, and change the focus for teachers of the social sciences.

Chapter Four looks at elements of *The New Zealand Curriculum* including its elements of the *Vision, Principles, Key Competencies, teaching by inquiry* process and the learning areas' *Achievement Objectives*. I also consider the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's (NZQA) supporting documents for NCEA used by teachers to implement assessments. The influence of New Zealand's national assessment process also forms an important part of the chapter's discussions. In order to reduce the effect that assessment has on the enacted curriculum, topics in history are no longer prescribed. However, assessment requirements continue to create pressure for teachers and influence the history experiences of students. As the thesis focuses on history curriculum and Pasifika

education this chapter looks at how history plays out in the classroom and at the progress made in Pasifika education in New Zealand.

In Chapter Five I discuss ways in which the research participants experience the curriculum, and how the pedagogy that occurs within the classroom has helped them to engage with history. I look at how the classroom history programme students would create for themselves and I look at the ways Pasifika students make personal connections with historical contexts studied. With the changes made to the New Zealand curriculum in 2007, the questions of significance or relevance have become more pertinent in my planning and thinking around course design. The participants were asked to design their own course and explain the reasons for their selections. The choices they made show they are able to find relevance in topics that were foreign to their own lives. This chapter also considers how students enjoy history when they are shifted to a different setting and provided with the opportunity to explore a new context, that in some ways, “expands their world”. Specifically, this chapter discusses a case study of the Samoan Mau movement 1914-1962, and the relevance of this for individuals who experienced the context as part of the school’s history curriculum. Finally the chapter outlines some insights and practical suggestions from Pasifika students about affective histories, effective pedagogy, history experiences, and building relationships that lead to a strong learning community.

It is my hope that this research can be used to inform decisions for history teaching and classroom pedagogy. The conversations of the participants often focused on what was, and was not “working” for them in the history classroom. As a result, the discussions in this thesis which aim to communicate the feelings and experiences of Pasifika students, often link to discussions around pedagogy. When I refer to pedagogy, I am not just referring to the actions or process of teaching, giving instructions or the delivery of the curriculum. In my view, the concept of pedagogy requires an understanding that encompasses much more. Pedagogy is defined as the “study and practice of actively distinguishing what is appropriate from what is less appropriate for young people” (van Manen, 1999, p. 25), but this definition in itself compels us to consider the complexity of the term pedagogy. Schulman (1986) began to see pedagogy in a more complex way when he brought together the idea of teacher actions and teacher knowledge and

described these domains as related and dependent on each other. Rather than see these areas as two separate entities Schulman (1986) conceived them as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). My understanding of pedagogy builds on the idea of PCK but includes a cultural responsiveness (Bishop and Berryman, 2006), community of care, and an understanding of its relational aspects (van Manen, 1994). Pedagogy is not used in this thesis as a definable narrow concept instead it is a term which represents wider and evolving understandings around teaching and learning processes.

I do not pretend that Pasifika students are a homogenous group that learn and experience history in exactly the same way. This thesis does not attempt to provide a guaranteed method of ensuring Pasifika engagement and achievement in history. Instead, it is my hope that the research findings lead teachers to consider how student voice could inform pedagogical practices and decision making in the history classroom.

CHAPTER ONE: INITIATING THE RESEARCH AND CHOOSING A METHODOLOGY

Introduction

At the outset of this research, I was working as a first year Palagi history teacher in a South Auckland secondary school with a predominantly Pasifika community. I quickly learnt that teaching Pasifika students requires a different approach pedagogically from those I had experienced on practicums during my four years as a pre-service teacher. There was also a different approach required in establishing positive teaching and learning experiences. I began to develop a sense of my relationships with the students. I felt like they were allowing me into their world the more I showed them I cared for them, respected who they were, and recognised the qualities and knowledge they brought to my classroom. I wanted to break down barriers that exist between student and teacher while still remaining professional in my interactions. During the first two terms of 2010 I had numerous interactions with students, and I came to better understand the way they learn, live and make sense of the world. These interactions not only helped me to *know* my students better, but also, in many situations led me to reflect on my teaching. Through these encounters I found a little more “malamalama”. I was inspired to ask my students more questions and listen to what they had to share with me. Malamalama is a Samoan concept that when translated in English means enlightened or understanding. During my short time as a teacher I have had many rewarding conversations with Pasifika students and they reveal so much about their own, and their teachers’ attitudes to learning. I believe that it is essential for teachers to listen to students if they are going to form relationships that will foster learning and sharing in the classroom. The premise that underpins my research is that by listening to the experiences of students, I can develop my pedagogy and a reflexivity of my actions in the classroom, thus enhancing history experiences for students.

I believe that every piece of research is both limited and improved by the identities involved in the process, not least, by the identities of the researcher. Who I am, or perhaps more accurately, who I *feel* I am, has strongly influenced this study and its conclusions. The lens in which we view the world is shaped by our complex identities. It was through a unique lens of understanding that each

Pasifika participant shared her experiences, and through my unique lens of understanding that these conversations were processed. Therefore my identity and the identity of the participants are central to my research. This chapter looks at the experiences that led to this research, my role as the researcher, and the formalities of the research itself. This involves the justifications, research contexts, methodology and ethical issues considered in this thesis.

Initial assumptions: How Pasifika students were experiencing history

When I started the research in my dual role as a history teacher and researcher, I assumed that Pasifika students found enjoyment and interest in studying history, but had difficulty finding personal relevance or the historical significance in what they were learning. In my personal interactions with my students, they reflected on how at times they were dismayed with their education, how much they valued their teachers having high expectations of them, and how they could be disconnected from the material they were studying. I was concerned about this perceived incongruity between the history they were studying, their identities and their lives. At face value, the students seemed to lack an understanding of how the historical content they were engaging with (or perhaps more appropriately, that they were passively consuming) was of significance to their lives. Through my research I aimed to identify some of the attitudes, beliefs and concerns expressed by Pasifika students when they reflected on their experience of studying history in a New Zealand school. The New Zealand Ministry of Education *Pasifika Education Research Guidelines: Final Report*, as compiled by Anae, Coxon, Mara, Samu & Finau (2001) note that Pacific research involves Pacific participants and has the role to “identify and promote a Pacific world view...[and] interrogate the assumptions that underpin western structures and institutions” (p. 7). This role is central to my research which seeks understanding of Pasifika students’ attitudes and perspective of studying history in New Zealand. Despite my cultural understandings and comfort and experience with western institutions, I hope that the participants’ voices, and the ensuing discussions, acknowledge and authentically reflect a Pacific worldview.

My identity as the researcher

Whilst this study is essentially about the Year 13 Pasifika history students at my school, I am unavoidably interlaced in the discussions, the generalisations and the conclusions. Gee (2000) defines identity as “certain kind of person, in a given context and acknowledges that people have multiple identities” (p. 1). I am a Dutch-New Zealander, from a large Catholic family, a grand-daughter, daughter, sister, middle child, a teacher. Theorist James Cote, (1996) supports my understanding that my identity has developed as a result of my place in contemporary society, my family my culture, and the institutions I operate in. I believe my identity as a Dutch-New Zealander and the work I have already done with this migrant group was an implicit motivation for me to embark on this research (Reymer, 2009). Like the research participants, my family is also a migrant family living in New Zealand. My parents had cultural struggles at school but for a long time had no voice to express their needs in light of the dominant New Zealand culture. To a large extent my parents were assimilated into New Zealand culture. There was no room in the classroom for their language, their traditions, and their understandings. As a result very little of their cultural knowledge and treasures have been passed down to my generation. My grandparents never understood the New Zealand education system and felt distanced from it. My parents and their siblings went to school, endured a fairly disconnected experience then left school upon first opportunity. My parents wanted for their children a more engaging school experience, and they worked hard to ensure that school was capitalised on. However, some Dutch cultural traditions, beliefs and attitudes have been passed onto me, and these, together with my upbringing, interactions, and my fluid, negotiated and ever-changing identity, have and will continue to underpin my educational experiences.

As the researcher in this study, I asked many of the questions and facilitated many of the conversations. I was also the teacher and went to school with these participants. I shared in their learning experiences and their answers were influenced by our relationship. Furthermore, their answers subsequently influenced my professional practice and reflection. My teaching identity means that this research links to aspects of my life and professional philosophy and practice. Therefore it is impossible for me to remove myself from the pages of this

thesis, as the conversations have been listened to and interpreted by me, and thus have been considered through my cultural lens. My lived experiences, family upbringing, perspectives and sense of identity and history, all make up the lens through which this study has been completed. As a teacher at the school where the research was conducted, I am in many ways an “insider” within the researched community. However, as a person without a Pasifika identity and as a Masters student focused on a particular topic, my interpretation and views of the conversations themselves re-position me in many ways as an outsider. The position within research of the “insider” and “outsider” has been critiqued by scholars such as Schroenberger (1992) and Smith (1999) who argue that there are strengths and limitations in each instance. This dual role is significant. It contributed not only to the depth of information shared and perhaps withheld from me, but also to my “positionality” as an interpreter of both the language and ideas expressed in the conversations I had with the students. Understanding this often complex position as not only the researcher, but also as part of the researched community is vital. Our gender, class, race, nationality, politics, history, and experience shape our research and our interpretations of the world, however much we deny it (Schroenberger, 1992). The task then, is not to do away with these things, but to know them and to learn from them. Phinney (2000) notes that in minority cultures, such as those included in the Pasifika cultural umbrella in New Zealand, there is a greater emphasis on a person’s relationship to the group. For the purpose of my research I needed to find a relationship that links me to the group but sits at ease with how I see myself. I wanted the emphasis to be less on my identity as the participants’ teacher, which could have created power barriers and a sense of hierarchy in the room, and instead focus on my identity that emerged from my cultural, religious and family contexts.

Contexts of the research

This research works within the two major contexts of the secondary school, and history education within national curriculum and assessment requirements. These contexts need to be explored as they, like my identity as the researcher, naturally influence the outcomes of the research.

First Context: The secondary school

The secondary school in which the research took place is a state integrated Catholic girl's school and has a decile ranking of one. In New Zealand a school's decile ranking indicates the extent to which the school draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile One schools make up 10% of New Zealand schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. A decile is calculated on five factors: household income, occupations, household crowding, educational qualifications and income support (Ministry of Education, n.d). The school caters for Year 9-13 students. In New Zealand, a student will usually begin their secondary education at Year Nine (most likely aged 12-13), with the option of completing five years of secondary schooling, to leave at Year 13 (usually ages 17 or 18). The school is situated in Otahuhu, South Auckland, New Zealand. Its ethnic composition made it ideal (Samoan (58%); Tongan (24%); Māori (4%); Asian (4%); other Pacific (6%); other ethnicities (4%); New Zealand Education Review Office, ERO, 2010). A strong majority of students at this school consider themselves as part of the "Pasifika umbrella" (Wendt-Samu 2006). Furthermore, my employment there as a history teacher meant I was familiar with this context. The school offers history based on the *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) (Ministry of Education, 2007) and the qualification of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) over Levels One to Three (NZQA, New Zealand Qualifications Authority). In some ways, the school fits the idea of "positive deviance" (Milo-Schaaf & Robinson, 2010). It is a school with high achievement and in 2011 was ranked first in Auckland for the school with the highest level of raised student achievement, as reported by a Metro Magazine inquiry (Wilson, July-August, 2011). The school is well ahead in statistics for Pasifika academic achievement. Its community and cultural ethos closely aligns with that of the Pasifika students, and this may mean they are more likely to succeed. The school is renowned for the achievement of its students, and its programmes are aligned with the NZC and also the needs of the students. The Ministry of Education's *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in School; Best Evidence Synthesis* shows that the cause of the disparity is not in the decile ranking of the school, but is normally a result of teacher effectiveness (Alton-Lee, A., Ministry of Education, 2003). Thus, my

research provides an opportunity to see how teacher effectiveness in the subject of history can be improved, so to engage Pasifika students and enhance their learning experiences.

The second context: The national curriculum

The school is only a micro context for this research, and it must be considered in light of the wider context at play, the national curriculum. New Zealand has a national schooling curriculum which gives guidelines and specifications for all levels of primary and secondary education. The *New Zealand Curriculum* is the policy schools must comply with. The revised national curriculum was introduced in New Zealand in 2007, and is currently in the process of being implemented in New Zealand schools. The NZC has a vision of life-long learners who are “confident, creative, connected and actively involved” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). The NZC is a standards based curriculum which sets out learning objectives at each level of the curriculum. Teachers are required to develop their students’ understanding of these in order for the students to progress through levels of learning. The NZC, history objectives, and other aspects of national requirements and understandings will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Four.

Justifications for the research

As mentioned in my introduction and at the beginning of this chapter, my research was inspired by personal encounters with students in the school, and the reflection that followed these interactions. However, during the early stages of my self-directed professional development in Pasifika education, and interest in culturally responsive pedagogy, I discovered that any justification for researching this area was more far reaching than my personal pursuits.

Pasifika education, a “big fish”

The subheading of this section is borrowed from the work of Amituanai-Toloa (2010) who, in my opinion, provides the most valid justification for this study. Amituanai-Toloa argues that that Pacific education is a big fish but too many people only have a small frying pan. She develops this metaphor and argues that because no one has a big enough frying pan to cook this fish, researchers, policy

makers and powerful individuals too often throw this big fish back to sea. I hope this study helps teacher understandings and improves learning experiences in a way that leads more history teachers in New Zealand to buy “bigger frying pans”. In terms of total numbers, there were nearly 266,000 people of Pacific ethnicity living in New Zealand in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand Census 2006 and National Population Estimates; Statistics New Zealand June 2007 quarter). In 2040, it is estimated that the majority of students in NZ primary schools will be Maori and Pasifika (Wendt-Samu, 2006). When considering the projection figures of New Zealand’s ethnic composition, tailoring our pedagogy to cater to the needs of Pasifika students is becoming even more pertinent. New Zealand needs to cater to the diversity that students with Pacific culture will bring to the classroom.

Pasifika people are becoming more cemented into New Zealand’s society. Nakhid (2002) contends that Pasifika students have an identifying process involving their own construction of themselves, and that this process is central to their academic success. The Pacific population is often identified with low socio-economic status, high unemployment or low skilled jobs and poor academic achievement (Nakhid, 2002). If this deficit storying becomes the identity that Pasifika students relate to, it is likely they will feel disconnected and at odds with the education system (Macfarlane, 2007). Pacific education is essential if the Pasifika stereotypes are to be re-storied so that academic success becomes part of the Pasifika student’s identity. Educating Pasifika young people should not require them to abandon their sense of identity to fit in with a constructed and false identity of “New Zealander”, but rather it should aim to be culturally responsive and culturally informed (Siteine, 2010; Wendt-Samu, 2010). The identity process is crucial in providing all students a sense of belonging to the education system and school (Nakhid, 2002). This calls for teachers and policy makers to look at the good practice that has enhanced Pacific education policy (Anae, 2010; Coxon, 2010). My research aims to reveal the interrelated nature of the students’ identities and their experiences in history classroom. That is, how the educational experiences of Pasifika students shape their identities but also how their identities shape their educational experiences.

The nature and purpose of history

This research also contributes to studies around the nature and purpose of history within the curriculum. The history curriculum is a socially constructed and cultural site in *The New Zealand Curriculum*, and thus the pedagogical content and practices that play out in the history classroom shape meaning for students (Hunter and Farthing, 2008, p. 15). This comes with a powerful responsibility for all New Zealand's history teachers. The learning and teaching that occurs within the history classroom can affirm or contradict the personal meanings already held by the students or influence the way in which new meanings are formed. History engages its students in specific contexts, that allows them to connect with their past and their personal stories. This research elicits some of the connections that students made as a result of studying history in a Year 13 programme, and how Pasifika attitudes towards studying history reveal something about the nature, purpose and role of history in the New Zealand curriculum.

Methodology and ethical considerations

The final sections of the chapter discuss both the methodology and the ethical considerations of my study. The cross-cultural nature of this research and my dual roles as teacher and researcher meant that the methodology and ethical decisions for this study are strongly intertwined with each other. The following sections of this chapter reveals my thinking and the deliberate decision making process that occurred around methodology. At the same time, I will discuss ethical issues that informed, or resulted from these decisions. This is to reflect the interrelated nature of the methodology and ethical issues in this research.

Mixed methods approach: Thinking about interpretation and cultural understandings

It is clear from the complexity and sensitivities that needed to be considered in this research that the use of a single method was not going to be sufficient. Therefore a mixed methods approach was necessary. The methodology employed needed to recognise the qualitative, interpretive and cultural components of this study. Anae (2010), a Samoan researcher, states that given the lack of methodologies on multi-ethnic community research we need to work on existing models and improve them so validity can be enhanced. She also advises that

“researchers draw not only from Pacific methodologies but also on traditional western interdisciplinary methodologies” (Anae, 2010, p. 16). The product of this research does not aim to be a generalisation of outcomes, or to measure “how much”. Rather it is about understanding the perspectives and experience of Pasifika students and their interactions with history. It is directly concerned with the meaning that the individuals bring to their “lived” or “felt” experience. The methodology therefore needed to be qualitative as well as culturally responsive. A qualitative approach can offer insights into complex and evolving truths (Eichelberger, 1989; Hughes, 2003; Maykut & Morehouse, 2001; Merriam, 1998).

The role of identities in determining the methodology

Identity discussions form an essential part of this research and this has important implications for the methodology. When making decisions about a research methodology, it was also important to consider how my identity could influence the research. Studies indicate that Pacific participants in research will behave differently depending on the age, gender, cultural rank or community standing of the researcher (Vaioliti, 2006). Given that my identities placed me as both an insider and outsider to the research group it would have an important influence on the methodological approach of this study. Furthermore, I wanted the methodology to sit at ease with my identity and what I held to be significant. I had to acknowledge the complex nature of identity formation and the essential role of identities to this study. Not only is the consideration of identity central to the study of history but it is also a prominent theme in most of the writing on Pasifika education. Therefore my method had to ensure that it would enable either an explicit discussion of identity, or allow this to be implicitly embedded in the conversations. Phinney (2000) notes how personal narratives would be appropriate for this as they can provide a valuable perspective of the complex interactions of the broader social trends, societal norms, familial, community or cultural factors and other forces that mould and influence one's identity. Personal narratives can “illustrate the many ways in which levels of change intertwine in the story of one's life” (Phinney, 2000, p. 30). Therefore, the methodology of this research also had to consider the various identities held by each student participating in this process as well as the collective identity they represented.

The identities of the students and the teacher

The dynamics between the identities at play in this research further influenced the methodology. My identity as a teacher and the participants' identity as "student" meant the power relationship had to be addressed through the chosen methodology. As discussed in Vaioleti (2006), power sharing is an integral part of the Talanoa method and is even more pertinent when conducting research across cultures, or within a minority culture. The researcher needs to acknowledge and recognise the power dynamic which is embedded within the relationship with their subjects. As a New Zealand European or "Palagi" (person of white skin) teacher at the school, my role of researcher was complicated by the power relationships that my identities created. The research required the participation of students at my school. The teacher-student relationship at times suggests an amount of vulnerability of the students. This needed to be carefully considered in the research. Furthermore, my skin colour and cultural background differed markedly from my participants. Given that many Pacific peoples, especially Samoans, have suffered at the hands of white oppressors in their homelands this was also a power relationship that needed careful acknowledgement and consideration (Mo'ungatonga, 2003, as cited in Vaioleti, 2006, p. 25). Students in this study were reassured that their decision to participate, and their discussions and perspectives would be kept within the research project and would not be used to judge any other aspect of their work.

I made the decision based around Pasifika research and the complex identities involved in this study to explore and work with an oral method. Considering the cultures of my students, and my personal comfort with conversation, a natural starting point was to include an oral component to the methodology, as oral tradition was central to both the participants' cultures and my identity as a Dutch-New Zealander. The Tongan *Talanoa* approach appeared to encompass the cultural and oral aspects that I sought for the methodology of this research. Talanoa is a conversation or personal encounter in which the participants story their experiences and this allows more *mo'oni* (pure, real, authentic) information to be available for Pacific research than data derived from other research methods. The method of Talanoa had its origins in Pasifika research and therefore had embedded in it the principles and values of the *Pasifika*

Education Research Guidelines (Anae, Coxon, Mara, & Wendt-Samu, 2001), encouraged conversation, and allowed for interpretation and qualitative analysis. Talanoa allows for the participants to “identify issues, and then co-create knowledge and solutions for themselves” this in turn links to the aims of my research (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 32). Talanoa also enables student voice to be heard and this may result in the student feeling empowered. As Hamilton (2006) contends, when student voice is really heeded students feel respected and understand their views make an impact. Furthermore, listening to student voice is an enabling factor for the building and creating of empowering relationships and for the development of a learning community (Hamilton, 2006). In many instances it is the students themselves that can best articulate the most effective learning methods for them, as well as being able to highlight areas of understanding that have connectedness to other contexts at play in their lives.

Additionally, Talanoa is especially concerned with the relationship that exists between researcher and participants. The Talanoa method reminds researchers that power sharing is essential to the process and that the researcher needs to recognise the power dynamic that exists in the relationship between the researcher and the participants. In this way Talanoa also embraces the Samoan concept of *teu le va*, which is to maintain, nurture and cherish the relationship. Teu le va is about maintaining the central concepts such as focusing on the collective, not just the individual, ensuring personal well-being by protecting the tapu and the sacred nature of people, understanding the complexity of language, and understanding the limits of relationships (Anae, 2010). This is important as it means that despite being an outsider, I was able to create a relationship of trust, respect and integrity with the participants, so that during the Talanoa genuine information, stories and experiences were shared with me from the students. The use of the Talanoa approach and considerations of the teu le va Samoan perspective helped maintain the integrity of the relationships at play in this research. As Vaioleti contends, the “reciprocity embedded in Talanoa will raise the expectations that researchers and participants have of each other, promoting mutual accountability which adds to the trustworthiness and quality of the research” (Vaioleti, 2001, p. 26). As the researcher, it was important for me to be faithful to the students’ languages, cultures and perspectives that they would share

with me during this research. I understood the need to be careful not to knowingly manufacture meanings inconsistent with what students were trying to portray.

The Talanoa approach provided the foundation for my methodology. The data collected from the survey and Talanoa was then analysed using a qualitative approach. In addition to these methods, Amituanai-Toloa's (2010) three humane indicators of courage, honesty and integrity and hope and faith, became the founding principles of my research. These indicators resonated personally with my values, purpose and aim. Moral values are a fundamental part of my identity and for the school in which this research took place. Given that the students and their families had made a deliberate choice to attend a Catholic values-based school these principles offered a sense of security and comfort to the parties involved in this research; the school, the students and the researcher. The first principle is courage. I needed to have courage to ask the students to speak honestly and openly about their experience. As a Pakeha researcher I needed courage to accept the responsibility of communicating the participants' thoughts, words and insights, so that I and New Zealand history teachers become more culturally responsive. The second principle is honesty and integrity. Amituanai-Toloa (2010) urges that we "can no longer brush aside" (p. 9) Pasifika students, their families and their education. I needed to act with integrity when collecting and analysing the data from the students. Finally, hope and faith, "to believe that faith will ground us, and hope will carry us to do what we must do, and whatever we decide to do for Pasifika education, we must believe that we also do it for all New Zealanders" (Amituanai-Toloa, 2010, p. 9). In addition to this the principles of the *Pasifika Education Research Guidelines* which encompass concepts of communalism, *ako*, respect, and collective responsibility also underpin my methodology (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Therefore the methodology of this research is an amalgamation of a western qualitative approach, my principles and values, Pasifika concepts and processes such as Teu le va, Talanoa, and the humane indicators. Where possible this eclectic approach was employed at all stages of the research process, including research design, and data collection. Selecting a qualitative method meant that a level of interpretation was required in order to elicit meaning from the data collected. This required interpretation on my part, as a researcher and as a

teacher. How I made sense of the students' voice influenced the conclusions that are drawn in the final findings.

The research design

The research design involved an initial face to face meeting with the students in the Year 13 history class. This was an informal meeting in which I talked to the students about my proposed research and how they had the choice to participate. This face-to-face contact is in line with the recommendations of the Talanoa research process. After this, all students in the Year 13 history class who had indicated and consented (Appendix D) to an initial willingness to be involved were given a survey (Appendix A). The responses from this survey provided me with possible themes that could be elaborated on during the group conversation session where students shared their experiences of studying history in New Zealand. The group conversation or Talanoa took place in a relaxed setting with no rigid framework or agenda to be met. This is in line with the Talanoa process which aims for a flexibility which will provide opportunities for one another to probe, challenge, clarify and realign (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 25). Analysis of the conversations (the research data) then followed the thematic approach in which key themes, such as cultural themes, concepts, trends and moments of personal reflections, were analysed and discussed in order to make the meaning of the conversations more explicit to the reader of my thesis. As the researcher I was listening for moments in which students offered their own perspectives and insights into their experiences of studying history in New Zealand. I was interested in how students connect with or make sense of the history they were studying.

Many of these themes were co-constructed by the participants during the Talanoa. In order to improve trustworthiness, and to add validation and credibility to the conclusions drawn in my thesis, a follow up session was held with willing participants. The second Talanoa allowed students to reflect on my initial interpretations of the data collected from the group conversation, and further elaborate and discuss these and their meanings.

Even the best laid plans often go astray: What actually happened

The intended methodology and research design was followed as planned. However, when I reflected on the group conversations some interesting observations came to light. It was essential to create a relaxed, informal and safe environment ideal for the Talanoa process. The aim was for the conversation to be a free flowing discussion and to attend more to the narrators rather than my agenda. I had intended to become immersed with the participants' conversations and try to understand the story from their points of view— from within their cultural understandings, without imposing my interpretations onto what was being said (Anderson & Jack, 1991).

The space in which the conversations took place was chosen as it was known as a welcoming, bright, safe classroom at the school. For many of the Year 13 students, this space acted as a de facto common room during lunchtimes. In addition to this food was provided for all participants to share before and during the conversation. Providing a meal, and giving thanks for it through prayer, was an essential factor in bringing the participants together and creating a sense of purpose. The sharing of food also enabled a feeling of informality and commonality between all those in the room.

Despite this, the presence of a recording device and a teacher inevitably created barriers to the flow of dialogue. The students waited for me to make comment on their contribution, reassure them of validity, and in some instances summarise comments, before another student offered her thoughts or insights. As a result I was pulled into the conversation more than I had anticipated. This highlighted how these participants were accustomed to teacher directed discussions and this in turn, limited spontaneous contributions and made the use of the prepared questions necessary. In the second conversation, that considered initial generalisations and allowed for elaborations, time was provided for the participants to discuss their answers in smaller clusters before sharing back with the group. This led to more personal insights, group consensus on many of the comments made and a more communal construction of key themes. Towards the end of the second Talanoa, the need for cluster time was made obsolete as the participants began to embrace the freedom of conversation afforded them. They

let down their guard, acknowledged my genuine attempts to understand them better, and trusted the environment enough to disclose honest and insightful perspectives of their experiences of studying history in New Zealand. As a result the second conversation proved to be much more revealing than the first conversation. This is evidence of the importance and value of the follow up session in empowering participants and in ensuring their experiences were authentically communicated.

Ethical issues that stand alone

While I have already discussed some of the ethical issues pertinent to my methodological decisions, there are some that need to be explained as ethical considerations in their own right. This research had several important ethical issues that needed to be considered in order to ensure the wellbeing of the participants and integrity of this research. In particular my identity as a teacher created ethical considerations around power relationships, conflict of interests; both with the students feeling obligated to participate, and the professional relationship between my colleagues and me. This is because the nature of the Talanoa and the discussions around the students' experiences of history meant some students reflected on the positive and negative aspects of their classroom history teacher and his pedagogy. During my time at the school, I had established a professional relationship based on mutual respect and trust, and I did not wish for this research to undermine this in anyway. Keeping the Year 13 classroom teacher fully involved and informed was essential to maintaining the integrity of this research. Furthermore my position as an outsider to the Pasifika community meant I needed to consider ethical issues arising from cross-cultural research. Throughout this study I have strived to be culturally responsive and to understand the students' perspectives from their cultural understandings rather than my own.

Seeking ethical consent

In order to begin the research I had to develop and have approved a research proposal. After due consideration of the ethical issues and concerns of this research, ethical consent was granted by the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee of the University of Waikato in October 2010. My proposal scoped the aims, questions, justifications and reviewed relevant research

literature. An important part of the proposal was identifying, acknowledging, and where possible, accommodating areas of ethical concern. Without careful consideration to the ethical demands of this project, consent could not be approved. Several measures were taken to reduce the risk of mental and social harm that were outlined by the University of Waikato's, *Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations* (2009). These included informing the participants in full of their rights and of the research intentions. Research participants were provided with sufficient information about the purpose and nature of the research through the cover letters (Appendix B1) and information sheets (Appendix C) to enable informed consent (Appendix D) to be freely considered. The Board of Trustees, Principal, the classroom teacher of the students concerned, and the participants were given cover letters (Appendix B2, B3) and information sheets (Appendix C) that outline the aims, methods, and risks of this research project and rights as potential participants. Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time of the research process. The school and students were also informed about the issues around anonymity and confidentiality. In writing about my research I have referred to student conversations. To do this, some students opted for a pseudonym to be used in published materials, and some have given permission for their first name to be used. All information about who provided this information remains confidential to me as the researcher. However, the group conversation methods employed in this research meant that the students participating in the conversation were sharing their stories and experiences with all those in the room. Thus, their anonymity is compromised.

It is evident from the methodology and ethical issues discussed that consideration of the various identities at play in this research, form an integral part of this thesis. Chapter Two, *The identities of Pasifika students in the research: The decision to "be" Pasifika*, discusses the implications of the different identities involved in this research, the identity formation of the students and how this in turn influenced their history experiences at secondary school.

CHAPTER TWO: THE IDENTITIES OF PASIFIKA STUDENTS IN THE RESEARCH: THE DECISION TO “BE” PASIFIKA

Introduction

This chapter considers the identities of the Pasifika students involved in the research, and uses identity formation literature to help shed light on how these students have constructed their identities as a result of participation and experiences in their private, cultural and public communities as Pasifika. This includes evidence of their thinking and communication of a cultural perspective of history, and how this is (or is not) legitimised by their family, community and school. The main focus of this chapter is how Pasifika students' identities influence their historical thinking, and in some instances transform the way they experience history in the classroom. However, studying history also provides the opportunity to contribute to the formation of students' identities. Therefore this chapter highlights the reciprocal relationship that studying history and identity formation have on each other.

In this research, I had the opportunity to listen to the participants discuss their cultures, traditions, families and school experiences. As these students moved between their daily environments such as individual classrooms, school, home and church, the decision on when to “be” Pasifika or not to “be” Pasifika was often negotiated. I use the term “be” because our identity is a fluid state of being that changes and adapts to different environments and situations (Gee, 2000). This appears to be particularly true of the Pasifika students' experiences.

The Year 13 history class that was invited to participate in this research comprised of Samoan (46%), Tongan (38%), and Fijian (8%). The remaining ethnicities (8%) did not identify as Pasifika (data gained from students' profiles on school roll which show primary ethnicity of each student). However their identities extend well beyond their ethnicities. Not only were the identities of these students fluid but also very complex.

The complexity of identities resulted from the many influences and aspects in their lives that contributed to the identity construction of these students. At the core of their identities was an embedded sense of what the past was about that sat at ease with their cultural identities. This perhaps was a history that had not been

considered by their teachers, and thus only surfaced when the environment permitted the safe expression of this aspect of their identity. Pasifika researchers, Nakhid, (2002) and Siteine, (2010) contend that the role of “identity”, as it is constructed *by* the individual and *for* the individual is central to the understanding, experience and achievement of Pasifika students. The students in this research had a repertoire of identities to choose from to “fit” the environment they found themselves in such as the church, school playground, the mall, or home. This range of identities resulted from their participation in school, the classroom, home life, family, cultural groups and religious membership. This is not to say that these students had a consistent and constant uncertainty about who they were, what they thought or how they were to “be”. In many aspects of their identity the participants spoke with conviction and certainty. However, at times it seemed as if these students compromised or put aside their Pasifika identity, in order to “fit in” with the hierarchy of values that school and society had deemed more valid. I was made aware of this during the Talanoa. The students began to talk about their own perceptions of the past and of history from a Pasifika perspective. During this part of the Talanoa, the participants spoke confidently knowing they were an authority on the knowledge. They spoke with passion and pride as they shared their stories and experiences. This sharing manifested a sense of history inside all the students, and it is through this way of knowing that they experience history in the classroom.

Understanding the identities constructed by and for the students

A bold yet simple statement from the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2007) provides justification for this chapter; “teachers today are charged with the responsibility of ensuring their students identities are recognised and heard” (p. 9). Whilst I have always seen this as part of my role as a classroom teacher, this study has led me to reflect on how complex and difficult this responsibility is. As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, an important aspect of this research has been to understand the complexity of identity construction and to acknowledge the significance of the various identities at play in this research. Pasifika students negotiate a sense of personal identity. Knowing the specific ethnicities of my students is a good start but as this chapter goes on to address, teachers may need to first recognise that the identities of their students are complex and ever-

changing. Identity is a key understanding in my research for two reasons, the cross-cultural nature of this study, and the intricacies involved in unpacking identities. The cross-cultural nature of the research, both within the group of participants, and between the participants and the researcher necessitates a strong understanding of identity. A thorough understanding is also important when considering the influences involved in identity construction and how and when these identities are negotiated. Therefore, the task the Ministry of Education has set for teachers, to recognise and cater for our students' identities, requires the teacher's understanding of what these identities are, how they came to be, how they are negotiated across time and place, and how curriculum and decile policy frame these identities (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The nature of identity development has been explored, discussed and elaborated on by many scholars (Allison & Schultz, 2001; Archer, 1982; Boyes & Chandler, 1992; Erikson; 1959, 1968; Marcia; 1966, 1980; Nakhid, 2002). The volume of identity formation literature is evidence of its importance. Erikson (1959, 1968), an early theorist in this area, believed that the process of creating a cohesive sense of identity involved periods of dramatic change and uncertainty. Marcia (1966) operationalised Erikson's work into four workable "statuses" of identity formation; diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement. From this framework I can begin to see and understand the students' identities in my research. Marcia (1966) firstly argues that youth who have failed to seriously consider their future or commit to a life course are said to be in a state of *identity diffusion*. On the other hand, adolescents who have committed to a specific future, but only as a result of uncritically adopting a pre-determined set of values imposed on them by an authority figure, are in the stage of *identity foreclosed*. The third status is *moratorium*, a state of indecision and crisis which results from being unable to justify specific commitments made thus far. Passing through these statuses, or making one or more informed and independent life decision for oneself, brings a person to the *identity achievement* status.

Whilst Marcia's work is from the early years of identity formation literature, and as a result should be seen as limited, it is still used in recent studies such as Allison and Schultz' 2001 study on eighth graders. Marcia's stages are used in my research simply as a supportive frame, which at times helps with

understanding the observations I have noticed in regards to Pasifika students' behaviour, attitudes and identities. Rather than directly fit into the framework proposed by Marcia (1966) I see the identity process of Pasifika students as moving in and out of the four phases outlined in her model. I believe the students I teach visit these "statuses" as they move between different environments and operate and respond to different expectations, attitudes and societal influences. Despite the usefulness of this frame in explaining some of the identity issues I have identified, Tupuola (1998) argues that for ethnic minority groups "the process of identity ... appears to be increasingly fluid in nature and not as progressive and stage-like as implied" (p. 188). Like Tupuola (1998), I contend that Pasifika students have multiple identities that they may need to reconcile in order to experience success in the classroom. In this chapter I argue that rather than working through an identity process that is linear, the students I teach, visit or pass in and out of these statuses, with the different identities they have constructed for themselves. With this in mind, Marica's stages are merely a helpful way of understanding some of the observations discussed in this chapter.

These four statuses that Marcia (1966) proposes, provide an interesting framework of understanding for the unquestioning way many of my students approach their religious beliefs, their cultural obligations and perhaps, as will be discussed later, how they approach the school discipline of history. Most of the students at my school have time consuming commitments to both their religious and cultural groups. Some students attend bible classes every morning at 7am for an hour, others lead and attend church youth groups or organise youth mass. Some are in church music groups or do readings and altar serving, most have demanding roles to play in White Sunday rituals, as well as weekly church attendance. In addition, many of my students will have an active role in cultural groups, will run cultural stalls at markets, are called to participate in *Fa'alavelave* (Samoan ceremonial occasions such as wedding/funerals etc. that interfere with "normal" life) or would be expected to help with *Umu* (Tongan main Sunday meal). The decision to be an active participant of these groups arises from an expectation and pressure from parents and their communities to do so. The groups that these students are members of comprise predominantly of other Pasifika youth who have the same cultural and spiritual values. For example most of the church

groups the students attend are in South Auckland, and serve the spiritual needs of a predominantly Pasifika congregation. Some students attend Samoan or Tongan congregational churches therefore both their religious and cultural understandings and identities are in the most part shared by the group.

From interactions with my students I have come to believe that the cultural and religious involvement of Pasifika learners has important implications for their identity formation. I feel as though my students sometimes adopt a life course that revolves around a pre-determined set of commitments and beliefs that have been prioritised for them by their parents, elders in the community or religious personnel. This aligns with the work of Allison and Schultz (2001) that researched eighth graders and where they fit in Marcia's identity model. Allison and Schultz noted that most of their participants "have made commitments that they will strongly defend. These commitments, however, typically conform to the values or expectations of parents and/or significant others and have been accepted without considering alternatives" (p. 519). For the participants of my study, their cultural and religious identities are further reinforced by their Catholic school which has a demographic that is 95% Pasifika. I believe that for many of these participants, their cultural protocols and concepts, and their religious beliefs were for the best part of their teenage years held as unmitigated truths, and they had not spent time considering alternatives. I was made aware of this when teaching Roman religion to my classical studies class. My students laughed at the daily practices of Romans and the extent they went to in order keep the Gods on side. They commented on how stupid the Romans seemed to be to believe in a number of Gods who controlled different aspects of their lives. I pointed out the similarities this has to Catholicism, the religion of the school they attended, and asked them if they had any more reason to believe in Jesus Christ than the Romans had to believe in their Gods; Venus or Jupiter. They were visibly unnerved by this question and began to defend their religious understandings. Upon reflection, they agreed this was the first time they had been challenged on the validity of their beliefs. Therefore, I believe that as a result of imposed cultural expectations and adopted beliefs, many of the participants of this research have at some time in their lives visited the *foreclosed* identity stage of Marcia's model. Alternatively,

in certain environments such as the church or at home, my students happily operate in this stage in order to fit in with external expectations.

Despite a seemingly stable commitment to culture and religion, the students in this research sometimes “opted out” of their cultural identity as a way to adapt to the environment they found themselves in. During a speech competition focusing on race unity, one of my students said to me, “should I use my Palagi voice Miss?” When I asked what this meant she explained, “You know, my posh voice, when I say all the worlds clearly and with a posh accent.” Other students are accused of being “plastic” (not *really* Pasifika) because they achieve well academically. One of my students once said to me, “she is Palagi-as in class, she always asks questions”. These notions suggest that students see “being” Pasifika as incompatible with academic pursuits. I feel as though the students’ responses reflect an awareness of the deficit theorising that exists around Pasifika students. Pasifika students have been storied in educational discussions and government policy as low achieving and of low socio-economic status (Hernandez Sheets, 2005; Nakhid, 2002; Portes, 2005). As argued in the *Literature Review on the Experiences of Pasifika Learners in the Classroom*, that was commissioned by the Ministry of Education, “deficit theorising results in perceptions that are based on factors such as low socio-economic status of Pasifika, academic underachievement, and assumptions that many Pasifika students are recent migrants” (Ferguson, Gorinski, Wendt Samu & Mara; 2008, p. 27). I argue that this is partially a result of the decile rating system used in New Zealand. Secondary schools across New Zealand that have predominantly Pasifika and Maori student populations also have correspondingly low deciles. In entrenching these correlations, schools often compare their National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results against their own results from the previous year, the national average and then schools of similar decile. Students in predominately Pasifika schools may see that although their school NCEA results are below the national average, they are at the same level as other schools of a similar demographic. This may perpetuate deficit thinking around Pasifika students, and has an important impact on the perception Pasifika students’ have of themselves and their potential in education institutions. Participants in this research see themselves represented in the graphs of the low decile results, even though for

many of them their individual achievement surpassed the national average. As a result, these students could internalise “underachievement” as part of their Pasifika identity.

Having established that socio-economic identity is becoming synonymous with Pasifika, Nakhid (2002, 2003) goes on to argue that in the field of education, underachievement is also added to this identity construction. Dominant Pakeha culture found in many New Zealand schools, often reflected by traditional methods of formal teaching and a rigid set of values, is in many ways at odds with the cultural values of Pasifika students (Nakhid, 2002). As a result this system marginalises learners and compromises success (Garden, 1998; Hill, 1994). This may create a destructive cycle through which Pasifika students do not identify with the culture of the classroom, become disengaged and unmotivated, and get poor academic results. This may reinforce the stereotyping of Pasifika students by teachers, and in some instances the students themselves. As Nakhid argues in regards to Pasifika students, “institutional perceptions held of marginalised groups of students affect their achievement ... and an “identifying process” involving the students own construction of themselves is necessary to academic success” (2002, unnumbered). If we wish to generate a change in Pasifika achievement, we need to ensure that any generalisations around the Pasifika identity come from the students themselves, as the identifying process is crucial if they are to find a sense of belonging to the education system and school (Nakhid, 2002).

When looking at Pasifika identity through a lens of achievement in education, Pasifika statistics show low levels of achievement, higher levels of suspension, and greater rates of unexplained sustained absences from school (Siteine, 2010). With these markers continuing to shape the Pasifika student identity, it is no wonder that many of the research participants exhibited moments when they chose to “be” in a way they saw as atypical with the Pasifika identity that society had constructed for them. During my teaching experiences, many of my students overtly and subtly expressed that “being brainy”, “doing good”, or academic achievement, is not *Pasifika*. This mind-set, coupled with the predominantly Pakeha approach that many schools have to teaching (Nakhid, 2002), means some students shed allegiances to the Pasifika culture the minute they walk through the school gate, in order to fit in with the identity and culture of

the school. This highlights the importance of the fluidity of the participants' identities, which allows selectivity around which aspects of their identities are expressed in different places at different times. Wendt-Samu (2006) discusses, how we perceive ourselves provides the context for how we continue with learning. In my everyday interactions with Pasifika students, I see many of them trying to hide or disown being Pasifika, in the hope that they will be taken seriously by teachers who may perpetuate false stereotypes about underachievement. In a casual conversation with one of my social studies students, she commented on one of her teachers. She said,

She didn't let us be *us*. When I didn't speak Tongan or sat away from the Tongans she would pick me to answer questions. When I sat with the other Tongans and spoke Tongan she straight away assumed we were being naughty when most the time we were explaining it to each other.

Another student described one of her peers, a contender for Dux at the school, saying: "she is brainy as, Miss, but she is a plastic at school, she acts Palagi as so teachers know she's smart." These conversations have made me aware of the conscious decisions students make around their identities when they operate within the school environment and against teacher perceptions.

The stereotypes that society has constructed around "Pasifika" means that many of the students from my school see academic achievement as part of the "Palagi" or "Asian" identity. However, Pasifika families are major investors in the "identity market" (Cote, 1996). Cote refers to identity markets and argues that the best portfolio of identity has sociological and psychological assets. I believe Pasifika parents and students often over-participate in certain aspects of life to ensure a belonging to a specific identity. Many Pasifika parents are over committed to church life, through music groups, fundraising and Sunday classes. Other Pasifika families invest in their cultural identity through weekly markets, passing on traditions, attending church sessions in their own language, and regular attendance to Pasifika festivals and celebrations. However, I am beginning to recognise an increased interest of Pasifika parents and their investment in their child's education. I feel as though the parents and students I work with are interested in educational success because of the perception that this gives them

added status in the wider community. Cote (1996) argues these are the tangible and socially visible features of one's identity that allows one to pass the "gate keepers" of several social and institutional spheres. Formal education is increasingly seen as a valued commodity by the Pasifika community, This is not only because of the monetary value it potentially holds, but also because the cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) that is acquired through education is seen by many Pasifika parents as necessary for competing and succeeding in a "Palagi world". When discussing career paths and future aspirations with my students, I note that students articulate a narrow fixation— all be it aspirational, on becoming a lawyer, a doctor, or as expressed more recently, an engineer. These careers, as expressed by one of my Samoan students as "Palagi professions", represent the successful attainment of cultural and identity capital that are seen as atypical to Pasifika identities.

Success in education is not only about creating employment opportunities for students but about the benefit that this may have for their Pasifika communities. In her experiences with Pasifika communities Wendt-Samu (2010) argues Pacific people espouse the belief in the importance of education, but the motivation is not to benefit the self but the community. Education presents the opportunity for greater qualifications, better employment and income, which equates to improved contributions to their familial networks; importantly this offers collective status and security (Wendt-Samu, 2010). This may also help to explain the obsession my students have with the "Palagi professions", as the social status, and in some instances the monetary status, attached to these career options would seem like the pinnacle of success and security for our students' families. This is supported by Ferguson et. al (2008) who argue that the "reason for this constricted choice are often to do with parents' desires for their children to achieve higher employment options than the parents have had" (p. 31).

How studying history at secondary school contributes to Pasifika students' identity formation

At this point I revisit Marcia's theory on identity statuses (1966). The *foreclosed* identity status of the research participants, coupled with firm cultural and religious understandings has important implications for Pasifika students studying history. In the Samoan culture, to question authority, to question tradition or even to

question the teachings of the bible, is seen as inappropriate and as challenging *fa'asamoa* (traditional Samoan knowledge). As a result these students are often taught to listen and obey without questioning (Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi, Taleni, O'Regan, 2009; Tiatia, 1998). However in the history classroom these students are being asked to argue with grand history narratives, interpret the past, have divergent viewpoints, and question widely accepted "truths". As Tiatia (1998) points out this could be problematic for Pasifika learners as it requires them to move themselves mentally from the identities and role they have in their family, traditional church and culture. On the other hand, history exposes my students to alternative thought, values, and beliefs about the past. It therefore creates the catalyst of establishing an identity that has been critiqued and considered by the individual. This engagement with history is not only in many ways contrary to their cultural way of "being", but could also provide the "epistemic doubt" (Boyes and Chandler, 1992) that may trigger an identity shift. The teacher's role, and the role of other adults in the student's life, is to prompt and guide a process of epistemic development which helps the adolescent "act with confidence in this new world of wholesale uncertainty" (Boyes & Chandler, 1992, p. 283). For the students in this research, the debate, interpretation and critical engagement with history may have led them to reflect on and question the stability of their identities, and activated a process of reflecting, questioning, challenging and negotiating other "truths" in their world. In this regard, the experience of studying history at secondary school may in some instances shake the seemingly stable cultural and religious identities of my students.

As a result of a legacy of status attached to studying history as an intellectual pursuit (Hunter, 2011), academic institutions, employers and communities still see the study of history as a highly valuable and academic pursuit. Pasifika students in this research and their parents have subconsciously, or consciously, invested into history for this reason. My participants reflected on the higher level skills, or as Cotes (1996) describes, the intangible assets, that history offers them. These include cognitive skills, critical thinking, perspective, self-monitoring, and moral reasoning. I believe that the history curriculum needs to be more than the transmission of names, dates and events; and should focus on the deeper thinking skills associated with understanding history. In doing this we

may help Pasifika students to reach Marcia's stage of *identity achievement* or aid them in the formation of multiple identities that are needed in order to negotiate themselves a place in institutions and life beyond school. It seems that for the students at my school, studying history in New Zealand contributes to their identity formation which in some instances aligns with the statuses outlined by Marcia (1966). Studying history provided a safe opportunity to question their own beliefs or identify themselves in the contexts they studied in class. They looked for histories that aligned with their sense of morality and social justice, but also history that was about countries, groups, races and individuals forging their own identities. This may also explain their desire for "big" history, emotive history, social justice history and a "real" history experience (Chapter Five, pp. 100-101). It is this type of history that connects and fits with their negotiated cultural, religious, school and community identities.

It is important to consider though, that it is not only "doing history"; the thinking, analysing, contesting, and interpreting, but also the historical knowledge and information being studied that can help the students to more deeply understand their identities. Many of the research participants had been given the opportunity to study the Mau movement as part of the classroom curriculum. The Mau organisation was a non-violent movement in Samoa that began in the early 1900s to work for independence from colonial rule. The organisation had the slogan *Samoa Mo Samoa* (Samoa for Samoans) and envisaged a Samoa without interference from New Zealand. For the Samoan students in this research, learning about the Mau also helped to define and clarify part of their identities. I will expand on this in Chapter Five (p. 97) which looks at how the Pasifika participants reflect on their experiences of studying the Samoan Mau movement and how the personal relevance of this topic led to a heightened learning experience and awareness. Grace, one of the research participants commented:

Knowing that my Granddad was half German. I never knew how that happened. Like how did the Germans get to Samoa? Why were they in Samoa? And when I studied the Mau movement I realised it was [because] Germany had occupied it. And it made me go oh, and realise, maybe this is why I am who I am. Maybe my ancestors were part of the

troops that had occupied Samoa...I don't know, it just makes me understand more about my past, and my culture.

In Grace's extract, she allows us to see how the incorporation of a Samoan context into the classroom curriculum gave her a greater understanding of who she is. In this way, school history has enabled her to become clearer about how her Granddad came to be half-German, and this offered to her a further explanation of her past and culture. However, the language Grace uses, "maybe this is why"; "maybe my ancestors"; "I don't know", indicates that her conceptions around her identity are in a process of being considered. Another student, Sena, offered insights into how studying the Mau movement made her feel like a more genuine or authentic Samoan. Before studying this topic her siblings called her "plastic", a term Pasifika youth often use to describe someone who is not able to speak the native language. Sena had internalised being "plastic" as part of her identity and accepted it as true. However after studying the Mau movement, she came to the realisation that being able to speak Samoan is not the single determining criteria of a "true Samoan". Sena comments:

It was interesting, because when I speak Samoan, I am so not fluent...[my siblings] call me plastic, and learning about Samoa, like, the Mau movement... I found it 'cool as', cos ...it was about where my mum, and my ancestors and all them came from. I liked it. I'm not plastic now!

For Sena, studying this period in Samoan history allowed her to find a sense of belonging and acceptance of her Samoan identity despite being New Zealand born, and a predominantly English speaker. This draws on the work of Wendt-Samu (2006) who contends that many Pasifika students have a,

notion of a shared identity where the New Zealand born or New Zealand raised Pacific Islander wishes to be multi-ethnic or bicultural on their own terms. This is a conscious and deliberate construction which means it is ok not to be fluent in the language and protocols (p. 40).

A sense of history: “you can never get rid of it” (Grace)

I begin this section by sharing with the reader a moment that occurred in the classroom on a hot October Friday afternoon. This moment occurred during the second conversation held with the participants to clarify and elaborate on the themes and ideas from our first conversation. This part of the Talanoa process aimed to bring validity and authenticity to the research and to ensure that the participants were being listened to and understood as they had intended when they shared their thoughts and insights. We had a conversation around the themes that arose from the first Talanoa. We had shared most the food, we had laughed and connected, but after thirty minutes the conversation was coming to a natural end. I asked the girls a final question, “what unique concepts or understandings about the past and history are there in your culture?” Without hesitation a Samoan student, Laine, answered, “respect”. Laine’s culture, but more importantly the past attached to her culture, came with traditions, actions and even a unique distinction in language that was centred on the concept of respect. Her ancestors had established rules and formalities around hierarchy, authority and cultural protocols which in her opinion seemed to be founded on the principle of respect. These formalities through repetition over the years had become tradition, and a way of acknowledging the past. Therefore, for Laine, respect is an embedded principle of her understanding of history. This idea was supported by the group. Grace, also Samoan, elaborated, that there was a “specialness” about studying the past because;

It still happens today, our parents teach us, like in our culture, what they did back in the day... and they still do that, but only because they did it back in the day. So we will do it when we grow up, you can never get rid of it, it will always stay with us.

The cultural understandings of the students in this research determined how they viewed history. The participants agreed that history for them was about stories, and that the study of history was a continuation of learning stories and traditions, both from their own past and the past of others. Learning history was synonymous with the past, the deeds of ancestors and tradition. The students in this research expressed that learning history was about respect. They saw historical knowledge

as “a special kind of knowledge” that came with an obligation to “pass it on”, “share it”, “carry it on”, “tell your kids”, and “keep doing it”. Laine reflects;

My dad sees it [knowledge] as your future. You need to learn stuff and you need to understand, so you can tell it to your kids and pass it on... History is a special kind of knowledge, it's special because you know your ancestors did that... it's like you take pride in it.

For these students, the Split Enz lyrics (1981) “*history never repeats*” did not ring true to their perspectives and understandings of the past and of history, as deliberate repetition of past was a part of being themselves.

It was when the students talked about their cultural understandings of the past that the Talanoa provided me with cultural insights and understandings of the students’ thinking. The nature of the conversation changed completely. During the Talanoa discussion preceding this, the students waited for each other to say their part, before agreeing or adding their own comments. However, when speaking about their traditions, the notion of respect, the importance of sharing the past, and their understandings around history, the participants interrupted each other, spoke over their peers, spoke freely and helped explained the ideas that their peers were trying to communicate. It seemed that even though someone else had raised the idea, what was being said was important and relevant to the whole group, and therefore everyone wanted a chance to contribute and be heard. The knowledge being shared was owned by everyone there and the participants willingly shared it with me. Their faces, voices and body language demonstrated a sense of pride and passion. Importantly they seemed to enjoy the experience of being a voice of authority on the matters discussed. I have detailed for the reader this part of the Talanoa because what it revealed to me was so valuable. I came to realise that there was a personal sense of history inside all the participants who were in the room that day. Wendt Samu (2010) writes that “amongst Pasifika learners are unique and institutionalised ways of knowing and relating to the world. What is needed is tailor-made contextualised teaching” (p. 8). These words from Wendt-Samu shed light and understanding onto what was shared with me by the participants. When the students spoke freely and openly shared their practices, superstitions and beliefs in their culture, they offered me an insight into their

understandings of history. I became aware of the lenses through which they experienced history in the classroom. Participants revealed a certain respect for the past that shaped how they felt about history, and how they experienced history today. This history was a part of them, it lived in them. They could not remember a time in their lives when this history, unique to their culture, was taught to them, instead it had always just been a part of who they were. However, the participants seemed to share a knowing that this historical consciousness (historical thinking) was the way of the past, and they were acutely aware of how the past influenced their actions and experiences in the present day. In this way the students demonstrated a strong historical consciousness. Seixas (2004) contends that historical consciousness is about acknowledging how ones understandings of the past shapes our sense of the present day and the future.

The students' sense of history has important implications for teachers as it is through this lens of understanding and historical consciousness that our students then experience the formal traditional history they receive in the classroom. This is not to say that students cannot connect with or find relevance in other contexts studied in history, as the research participants proved this was not the case. In *Connecting Learners With Their Pasts as a Way Into History*, Hunter and Farthing (2007) argue students "historical consciousness" helps them to personally connect with history and see the big picture (Hunter & Farthing, 2008; Seixas, 2004). My research participants stated they would find enjoyment and relevance in learning about the world wars, the rise and fall of empires, the cultural history of Japan and major world movements. It seems they could connect with these contexts through their own lenses of understanding, in a very personal way. In fact, rather than just receive this historical content, it seemed that they would be able to feel and experience it from their perspective of "knowing" history. This draws on the evidence from the *Effective Pedagogy in Social Sciences/Tikanga ā Iwi: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (2008) which talks about the importance of connections in Social Sciences in the New Zealand curriculum. The chapter on *connection* in the BES document explains that drawing on relevant content, making students' own lives a point of comparison, and using resources that highlight diversity are all ways to make connections with and for the learner (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008). During the Talanoa, Laine

comments on how she wants to learn about Iraq and Turkey. When her peers laugh she says:

Like they have their own- no honestly I'm serious it would be interesting- they have like their own traditions and stuff, like there is heaps of groups out there that still carry on their traditions and like we can relate it to our culture like we still carry on our traditions.

This reflects the findings of Brophy and Alleman (2005, as cited in Aitken & Sinnema, 2008, p. 64) who believe that by focusing on “cultural universals”, (for instance traditions, languages and rituals) we provide a means of keeping content close to the students’ life experiences. The concept of tradition could be seen as a cultural universal. All cultures have their own unique set of traditions, and whilst these traditions differ markedly across the cultures of the world, the presence of traditions in all cultures can be seen as a cultural universal that could help connect students with the historical context being studied. Furthermore, as indicated in Laine’s quote, such an approach to studying history would gain the students interest, another key mechanism to learning in the Social Sciences (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008). In my research, Pasifika students have expressed their thinking that as a result of studying history they can now make these connections themselves. The content does not have to be explicitly relevant to them, as they can search for connections in the themes. Hunter and Farthing, (2007) argue that students have a personal connection to the past and that teachers need to focus on historical agency in history education. Agency at a personal level can enhance historical thinking and reflection. After all, the past is frequently encountered outside school history, during family rituals, movies, and discussions with grandparents, and we need to draw on these rich experiences and the historical consciousness of the learner (Hunter and Farthing, 2007). From the data collected during the Talanoa, it is clear that Pasifika students are regularly exposed to history outside of school and that these encounters are what construct the historical understandings held by the students.

Despite the tone of excitement and pride expressed by participants when sharing aspects of their cultural traditions during the conversation, I personally found this cause for alarm. This was not because of what they said, but rather

when they had chosen to say it. In both the research survey and the second Talanoa, I had asked the students what history meant to them and what concepts they would use to describe history. Frequent responses from the group were words like *freedom, change, impact, consequences, society, and decision*. With the exception of “*freedom*” all these words appear in the NCEA history achievement standards that the girls are assessed on. This is in line with Hunter and Farthing’s findings in their article *Students Think History and Teachers Learn* (2008). Students defined history using the words of the national history assessments, and whilst their responses are not incorrect or irrelevant to history, they fail to encapsulate the broader and deeper historical understandings that these students have. When sharing their *own* sense of history with me, they spoke around concepts of *respect, culture, continuity and tradition*; clearly these were also the words they associated with history. Yet for some reason, when I had asked them to brainstorm concepts that were central to history they spoke only about the formal, institutionalised type of history they experience in the classroom and not the history which they have a much deeper understanding of, their personal sense of history. As the research participants led me to reflect, all students in my history classes most likely have an inherent cultural understanding of history too, and that it is a part of their identities. Therefore if I am to ensure my students’ identities are “recognised and heard” in the classroom, as the Ministry of Education requires (2007, p. 9), I need to make sure that this internalised personal history of my students, which is so central to their identities, is validated as a legitimate understanding of history.

Conclusion

Understanding the identities of Pasifika students in this research is a complex but essential entry point to understanding the themes and ideas revealed during the Talanoa. These students seemed to have developed multiple identities for themselves to respond to the varying attitudes, expectations, roles and relationships they are required to work with in differing settings. The complexity and ever-changing nature of their identities has significant implications for teachers when meeting the challenge of the Ministry of Education to ensure their students identities are recognised and heard” (2007, p. 9).

Marcia's theory that draws on Erikson's identity formation, with the four identity statuses (1966), has provided me with a starting point for discussing the identity process of young Pasifika people. Despite putting too much emphasis on *identity achievement*, which may need to be understood differently when discussing Pasifika youth, it gives an interesting frame for understanding some of the students' actions that I have witnessed whilst teaching at this secondary school. Pasifika students often have a strong spiritual life and play an active role in religious groups. The decision to participate in these religious groups with the level of involvement and unquestioning commitment to the faith's doctrine is often a result of family tradition, or parental and community expectations. Often both the religious and cultural groups that Pasifika youth belong to serve the same demographic, and thus their beliefs and values are not often challenged or reflected on. As a result Pasifika students may experience a life course that revolves around a pre-determined set of commitments and beliefs that have been prioritised for them by their parents, elders in the community or religious personnel, thus operating within the *foreclosed identity* status that Marcia (1966) has described.

Despite a seemingly stable commitment to culture and religion, the students in my research sometimes "opted out" of their cultural identity as a way to adapt to environments they found themselves in. It is important to point out that in my experiences as a teacher this seems to occur fairly often within an academic or schooling environment. This is possibly a result of the identity that society, schools, and governments have reinforced around Pasifika students as having a low socio-economic status and being underachievers (Hernandez Sheets, 2005; Nakhid, 2002; Portes, 2005). This identity formation is further perpetuated by the decile ratings of schools. Furthermore the dominant Pakeha culture found in many classrooms across New Zealand is in many ways in contrast to the cultural values of Pasifika students (Nakhid, 2002). This may mean Pasifika students leave their identities at the school gate, perhaps with the hope that in doing so they may be taken seriously by teachers at school. In saying this, formal education is increasingly seen as a valued commodity by the Pasifika community and parents of Pasifika students are keen to have their children experience academic success. This could reflect their desire to see their children experience greater option in the

workforce than they have had in New Zealand and to see their children gain the cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) that is seen by many Pasifika parents as necessary for competing and succeeding in a “Palagi world”.

Studying history in New Zealand classrooms also has the opportunity to significantly influence the formation of students’ identities. It is my view that history should encourage students to consider the constructed nature of historical knowledge and its differing ways of interpretation. History involves questioning, critical thought and interrogation (Hunter & Farthing, 2009). As Tiatia (1998) points out this could be problematic for Pasifika learners, as it requires them to move themselves mentally from the identities and role they have in their family, traditional church and culture. However, studying history may provide the impetus for students to reflect on, evaluate, challenge and reconsider the other “truths” in their lives and come to view their religious and cultural understandings in a more critical way. In addition to the “doing of history”, the historical context can also influence the identities formed by Pasifika students. This was made evident when my research participants reflected on their experiences of studying the Samoan Mau movement. For Samoan students involved, this helped fill gaps or provide clarity around what it is to “be” Samoan.

This chapter has focused on a sense of knowing the past that Pasifika students seem to articulate. Initially in the Talanoa, students demonstrated somewhat narrow understandings of history by using concepts key to the history assessment requirements. However, towards the end of the conversations, the students revealed deeper understandings of the past. The concepts of *respect* and *tradition* had key roles in how they understood history. Furthermore their cultural understandings meant these students viewed studying history as special, and as a privilege that came with obligations to share it and pass it on (Hunter & Farthing, 2009). Through this vibrant and enthusiastic storying of the participants, they shared with me a personal sense of history that had not often been heard in the history classroom. Chapter Three, “*That’s not really history, is it?*” *Pasifika students’ understandings of history* considers how the students’ complex identities and unique understandings of the past that were discussed in this chapter, also influenced the way in which the participants viewed the nature and purpose of history.

CHAPTER THREE: “THAT’S NOT REALLY HISTORY, IS IT?” PASIFIKA STUDENTS’ UNDERSTANDINGS OF HISTORY

Introduction

In 2005, I was finishing high school and I was contemplating what my next step in life would be. For some time I had been certain it would be in either medicine or teaching. The decision was made rather easily after a series of bad science lessons that had left me convinced of two things; firstly that medicine (which apparently involved a fair bit of science) was not going to be my calling, and secondly, teaching was one of the most powerful professions I could think of and I wouldn't mind giving it a go. In two or three appalling lessons a single person, my science teacher, had influenced me to give up all sciences and pursue the arts; or more importantly, to give up on the idea of medicine and pursue teaching. The amazing thing is that this teacher was completely unaware of her influence. To my dismay there were still a few more life changing career decisions to address. Although I had my heart set on teaching I was yet to decide which subject I would be a teacher of. It came down to history or drama. Like all major decisions in my life I sought the counsel of my mother. She asked me to describe what I liked about history and drama and which one I was leaning towards. My reply went something like:

I love history because it is an experience. It takes you places you would never otherwise go. I almost feel voyeuristic studying history, like I am spying on someone without them knowing. When I study history I feel like I am getting a secret insight into something not everyone knows about. Stories, people, events, for a brief moment I am there with them. I can argue with history, analyse it and dig deeper. I can empathise with the people and imagine alternatives. It is a big story that gets retold in different ways by different people. But, it is not only what we learn Mum; it is how we learn it. We do role-plays; paint famous people then graffiti words about them all over them, we have class debates, and we read, we watch footage from the period we are studying, we look at artefacts and pictures, and we dress up. I think I will become a history teacher.

After what I thought was a convincing speech Mum replied, “That is not really history, is it?”

In recent years I have revisited this conversation with my mother and she offers an explanation for her response. She explained how high school history in her time was taught mainly from a textbook, with an ancient teacher, with an acceptance of a grand narrative that was infallible, and finally was assessed through essay writing. She told me that as a result, she told me, “I learnt from my older sister’s mistake and never took history during high-school.” To this day, she regrets this decision. Upon travelling the world she has found a passion for history but feels as if she lacks the skills to understand it, grapple with it, and piece the past together. This conversation presented me with three important realisations. It highlighted for me how effective my history teachers at high school were, how much history as a curriculum subject has developed and progressed, and finally, how the nature and purpose of history is contestable and perhaps even indefinable. Given the diverse, complex and wide range of approaches we have to studying and writing history in today’s society, I would not be surprised if Mum’s question, “is that really history?” is being asked more frequently. I smile when I think about what Mum would think of the *Great Cat Massacre*¹ being considered history, or for that matter what she thinks of the “what if history?” phenomena. The nature and purpose of history is constantly being challenged, the boundaries are being pushed further, and history has become less definable as a discipline (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Seixas, 2004; Wineburg, 2001).

This chapter draws on international and national literature on the nature and purpose of history education to inform the Pasifika students’ understandings of what history is. From the Talanoa it became clear that Pasifika students have complex understandings of history. Their understanding are determined by the experiences they have had with the national history curriculum and, as discussed in Chapter Two, their cultural experiences. In this chapter I will explore the ways

¹ The Great Cat Massacre was written by American Historian Robert Darnton. This is a non-fiction story, set in France during the 1730s and tells of how some apprentice printers suffered difficult conditions whilst their masters favoured the cats more than the workers. The apprentice printers contrive a plan that in turn led to a cat massacre. Darnton sees this as an early form of protest from the workers, and uses the incident of the ‘cat massacre’ to gain insight and understandings of the culture and society of 18th century France. Robert Darnton, (1985). *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. New York: Vintage Books.

in which the Pasifika students see interpretation, perspectives and historical relationships as the defining facets of history, and as the necessary processes of history that help to organise and make sense of historical content.

The nature and purpose of history education; International perspectives

The nature and purpose of history has long been a topic of debate and one that is always open for further interpretation, theorising and contention. Barton and Levstik (2004) and Haydn and Harris (2010) contend that there are two common schools of thought about the purpose of history. I draw on these schools of thought accordingly. Firstly, Students should learn about the past in ways consistent with the academic discipline of history; secondly history education is about education for citizenship and participation in a pluralistic democracy.

History education should be consistent with the academic discipline of history

If history education were to be consistent with the academic discipline of history, this would require history teachers to look at the fundamental aspects of studying history and the skills involved (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Haydn & Harris, 2010). I believe the academic discipline of history is about investigation, rigorous questioning of “evidence”, using primary sources, and considering and constructing alternative narratives. As Lee and Ashby (2000) point out, the approach of teaching history in secondary schools in a way that is consistent with the academic discipline of history often lends itself to a “knowledge verses skills” debate. However, they suggest this does not need to be the trade-off. Instead of a polarity, Lee and Ashby (2000) argue that historical knowledge is taken more seriously, as something that has to be understood. This would require students to understand the nature of historical knowledge and how historians arrive at the claims they make. Successful history pedagogy would develop students understanding of historical knowledge in a way that is multifarious, interpretive, constructed and contentious in nature. Students would be encouraged to engage with interpretation of evidence and consider multiple perspectives (Barton & Levstik, 2003, 2004; VanSledright, 2009). School history is an inquiry-oriented subject, it requires the students to ask questions, think critically, develop historical consciousness, and consider multiple perspectives of the past (Barton & Levstik, 2003, 2004; Haydn & Harris, 2010; Hunter & Farthing, 2008; Seixas, 2004;

VanSledright, 2004, 2008; 2009). Despite the benefits of engaging with history in a way that is similar to how historians do, history education at a secondary school level need not perfectly mirror the academic discipline of history. As Barton and Levstik (2004) point out this is “unlikely to provide the intellectual and emotional commitment to reform practice” (p. 259).

Teaching history for the purpose of education for citizenship

A second rationale for history education is that “students should learn history to contribute to a participatory, pluralistic democracy” (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 258). Through the study of history, students are able to discern a good argument, think critically about issues, and can interact with their world using a host of strategies for understanding. The skills and abilities taught and exercised in history are closely related to the skills needed for participation in a democratic society (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Openshaw, 2005; Tosh 2008; VanSledright, 2004, 2008). If this is the purpose of history, then history teaching will not be focused on a consensual narrative but instead about moving beyond the students’, or for that matter their country’s perspective, to consider other perspectives and interpretations of the past. If preparation for a democracy is the goal of history, then teachers will need to afford students the opportunity to “examine a variety of evidence, consider multiple viewpoints and develop conclusions that are defended and negotiated with others” (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 260).

From the international history education literature I have referred to, there seems to be an increasingly common belief in the United Kingdom and the United States that the purpose of history education needs to move away from the pursuit of an infallible and agreed upon narrative or a practice of objectivity. Instead studying history needs to encourage students of history to become comfortable and confident in dealing with a contested and messy past (VanSledright, 2004, 2008, 2009). Practitioners and researchers suggest that history education needs to be about the narration of many stories, interpretation and selection of various sources and perspectives. However, in many history classrooms it seems little has changed from the textbook and single narrative approach (VanSledright, 2009). History is often taught as a single, consensual, nation-building narrative which

after repetition across generations becomes the agreed on “truth” of the past (Clark, 2009; Hunter and Farthing, 2007; VanSledright, 2004, 2008, 2009).

The nature and purpose of history education in Aotearoa New Zealand

New Zealand also has a place in the debate on the nature and purpose of history. Sheehan, a long time history educator considers history in New Zealand schools as a lost opportunity (2006). The question often being asked in the circles of history educators in New Zealand is, “who are our history programmes for?” Sheehan (2006) contends that our school history programmes are too closely aligned with the academic discipline of history and has become a subject that, in many instances around New Zealand, has “served the interests of universities rather than the majority of our students” (unnumbered). However, not unlike the arguments of the international literature, Sheehan points out that when history is taught well it is more purposeful than just preparing students for university, and instead can prepare them to participate in a complex social world. The nature of history is that it can teach students tolerance, critical thought and the ability to identify and develop a reasoned and informed debate. Hunter and Farthing (2007) and Sheehan (2006) argue that New Zealand students are constantly exposed to a sense of history through their family stories, novels, historical sites or film narratives, and through these encounters they shape popular perceptions of the past. However many of these students do not have the tools to engage critically with the historical claims they are being exposed to as they were not taught the skills of historical thinking in the classroom. Given the image and text-rich society that surrounds young New Zealanders it seems pertinent that the nature and purpose of history education caters to the needs of the students. This surely begins with a need for the ability to think historically and engage critically with a range of narratives.

Hunter and Farthing (2007) look at the way in which the past is constantly encountered by New Zealand’s secondary school history students. In their work they look at how they can connect learners with their pasts while simultaneously helping learners to understand and critically engage with key concepts in history. For Hunter and Farthing (2007) history education should not be about a master narrative, rather it should aim to be about questioning, critical thinking and

evaluation. In their work, Hunter and Farthing (2007, 2008) advocate for a history education that involves personal agency, interpretation and deeper analysis of how the past is constructed. The national and international literature on the nature and purpose of history follow a similar line of argument; that history education needs to focus less on creating “little historians” for tertiary history study and focus instead on teaching students to look at the construction of history and how to think historically. In doing so students will be geared with skills needed to participate in an increasingly complex and diverse society that needs to be experienced through a critical lens.

However, the purpose of history education in New Zealand has recently seen renewed debate as a result of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) (Ministry of Education, 2007). The history *Achievement Objectives* of the *New Zealand Curriculum* require “people, events and places of significance to New Zealanders” to be taught to New Zealand secondary school history students (Ministry of Education, 2007, unnumbered). This has given vigour to discussions on the role of relevance and significance in history education. Kunowski (2009a) looks at how the history curriculum plays out in the classroom and suggests that students want a “usable past” that they can use to make sense of the events in history and the present. She goes onto explore what New Zealand students saw as significant and how this fits with the teachers perceptions and the requirements of the curriculum.

The nature of the enacted secondary school history: What Pasifika students’ have to say

In Hunter and Farthing’s work (2007, 2008), they encourage history teachers to talk to their students to learn how they perceive and experience history. Various studies have been conducted that seek to identify the students’ perspectives on the purpose of studying history. These researchers found that many students have a poor understanding of the usefulness and relevance of studying history (Adey & Biddulph, 2001; Haydn & Harris, 2010) and had different understandings of the main concepts that occur during history education (Hunter & Farthing, 2008). I was interested to see how students at my school understood the nature and purpose of history education. During the Talanoa (informal conversation) with the students, which was the data collecting stage in the research process, I asked the

participants “what words would you use to define the past?” and, “what do you think history is?” At this point in the Talanoa the group naturally started small conversations among themselves and discussed what they considered to be the defining concepts of the past. I listened to the conversations and then I asked them to share their ideas back with the whole group. In most instances the two groups had the same concepts on their lists; *change, impact, consequences, decisions, society, and causes*.

Hunter and Farthing (2008) argue that the concepts students use to define the past often result from the contexts that they have been involved in through their classroom history curriculum. Pasifika students in my research have showed similar trends and were especially reliant on terms from their internal and external New Zealand Qualification Assessment standards (NZQA, 2011). These are discussed and explained later in Chapter Four. Hipkins (2007) also notes that aspects such as assessment structures serve to reinforce the status quo. From the conversations with the research participants we can see that the assessment standards and history contexts had largely shaped students’ perspective on the past and of history. For Tee, a Tongan student in my research, history or the past was about *freedom*. Tee comments “cos’ like, all those in the past went through a lot to get what we have now.” For Tee everything in the past had been for the pursuit of freedom. This is most likely a result of the contexts that Tee had been exposed to throughout her three years of history at secondary school. She had learned about the origins of World War Two 1919-1939, and how allied troops (Great Britain and “her” empire) went to fight for democracy and freedom from fascism; the Mau movement (1914-1962) in which Samoan leaders wanted freedom from New Zealand administration, and the Black Civil Rights movement from 1950-1970 where blacks sought freedom from oppression. Tee’s comment made me realise how important the structure of the senior history course is in providing a diverse and thorough history experience for the students in my class.

Another concept important to Pasifika students was *change*. When asked to elaborate, a Tongan student, Ana said; “Change; cos, how now is different to, like, the past” and Laine adds, “We have become more, like, nicer...like back then it was more barbarian, like we have become more civilised, a bit kinder.” This comment intrigued me as it gave me the first insight into the cultural lens in which

Pasifika students in my research were experiencing history. For Laine history had a sense of moral and social progression to it and each era saw an improvement in morality among humanity. She defined the past as “a collection of events, or just one event that has an impact on the future, for the person, the country or the whole entire world”. I argue that this is again a result of the topics she has studied as part of the history curriculum, and the way they have at times been taught to see the past as a progression from archaic to modern, bad to good. American researcher, VanSledright (2008) also draws attention to the follies of history contexts being taught as grand history narratives, often with a nation-state theme, that progresses a student through the dark days of that country’s history, through the battle, into the light of freedom and equality. This may help to explain why change is so important to the Pasifika understanding of the past. However, when I asked the research participants whether the concept of continuity, which they had used in partnership with change, has a lesser role in defining history, their responses revealed how their cultural understandings influence the way they view the past:

Grace: it is less because every day is changing and what we maintain from the past changes like...

Sera: people bring in their own traditions

Grace: yeah, it would be interesting to know what still is....Some stuff does continue...like maybe it (continuity) is not less than change, like think about traditions that people try to keep....It’s like there is slight changes, I wouldn’t say major changes.

The discussion above shows how students’ ideas and understandings of their traditions shape the way they view the past. For them continuity was explained through the preservation of traditions in their own culture, and the assumption that other cultures had their own traditions that still lived on from the past. However, these traditions had changed slightly and thus change was also a concept important to the study of history. For Pasifika students it appears the historical relationship of continuity and change is, to a certain extent, explained through the enduring presence and slight changes of their own cultural traditions.

It is important to note that some of the responses from the Pasifika students in this study were not influenced or determined by the NCEA achievement standards (NZQA, 2011). Quite often the reasons they provided for their choice of concepts show a deeper understanding of history. A particularly interesting example is the response that the group gave to the question: “What is the most important concept you would use to describe the past?” One student, Laine offered “reason” and this was quickly expanded on by the group. Ana commented, “Yeah. Like, reason behind events and thinking.” Tricia added, “And reasons for change, like factors in change”, and Sera contributed; “And people have their own reasoning behind how they describe the past.” This part of the Talanoa reveals a deeper understanding of history and how it is constructed. These responses are not determined by assessments or contexts studied, but rather demonstrate that students in this research see history as being about perspectives, personal constructions and reasoning. This insight is encouraging because it links back to major international literature which argues for an understanding of the construction of historical knowledge to be at the core of history education (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Haydn & Harris, 2010; Hunter & Farthing, 2007, 2008; Lee & Ashby, 2000).

Importantly, from the Pasifika point of view, the understanding of historical knowledge also leads to greater enjoyment and satisfaction from the subject. From the conversation about “reason” being an important concept of the past, Tee commented:

People think history is boring, because they think it’s black and white. Like, I saw history as like just black and white, and now that I have studied it I think it’s awesome.

And later in the Talanoa, Laine continues:

People think it [history] is boring because they don’t understand it and they don’t get it, they are not good at it so they go around telling people history sucks, but when you take it, you understand it. When you are understanding something you like it. It is like when you’re good at a sport, that’s when you like it...

Tee and Laine's comments are important because not only do they reveal that for Tee and Laine history was about different reasoning and about perspectives that extend beyond "just black and white", but that this realisation meant history became engaging and "awesome". This was similar to the findings of Australian researcher, Clark (2009) who found that among Australian and Canadian history students, a "return to the "facts" at the expense of critical historical engagement in class could turn students away from history" (p. 745). Furthermore, in Laine's view, coming to the realisation that history was multifarious and complex in nature; was for her essential to understanding history and being "good" at history.

Year 13 Pasifika students' perspectives on the purpose of history

As mentioned earlier (Chapter Three, p. 49) studies of students' perspectives of the nature and purpose of history education have mostly concluded that students have limited understanding of what the nature and purpose of history is (Adey & Biddulph, 2001; Aldrich, 1987; Fink, 2004; Haydn & Harris, 2010, Hunter & Farthing, 2009; Schools Council, 1968). At first the conversations with my research participants revealed similar themes to that of the research undertaken by Haydn and Harris (2010) and Hunter and Farthing (2009). These researchers identified some key responses students have when asked about the purpose of studying history. These include; the need to understand the past to avoid making the same mistakes in the future, studying the past in order to better understand the present, and studying the past to pass it on. The following responses demonstrate that some Pasifika students see the purpose of history in a similar way. Tee talked about wanting to study history because "Today will be tomorrow's yesterday...we need to know about what people have done so we don't make the same mistakes." Ana felt it was important; "Because it's important for everyone to know why their society is the way it is so that they understand" and Sena expressed that you study history "So you can tell it to your kids and pass it on."

However, on closer analysis Pasifika students seem to have a deeper understanding as well. In Kunowski's (2009a) work around Year 13 students and pre-service history teachers, she concludes that when discussing the purpose of history education in New Zealand, these two groups attach a common core of understandings that focus around identity; awareness of the past and how it

shaped the day, and understanding New Zealand history as part of the duty of living in New Zealand. Pasifika students in my research made comments about the importance of studying New Zealand history so that the citizens of New Zealand have the necessary historical context to understand contemporary issues. Tee comments that studying Maori land rights and Maori land claims in New Zealand history made her realise that studying history was about becoming a more informed citizen of New Zealand: “Some [New Zealanders] complain too much about this and that, and don’t really know why it’s happening.” Interestingly, Pasifika students linked gaining a better understanding of their own identities closely with the purpose of history education. The Pasifika students in my research mentioned several times the need “to know what our ancestors, people that came before us, went through, so we know how things came to be,”— history “just makes me understand more about my past, and my culture.” Some mentioned that history should become compulsory for school students in New Zealand “because it’s important for everyone to know their identity.” This is also backed up by Hunter and Farthing’s the research (2009) that found students saw learning history as contributing to personal identity formation and understandings of cultural diversity. Finally, Pasifika students in my research attached a sense of moral duty to studying history. They commented how history education should be compulsory as Laine comments “Because some people are so ignorant...they don’t understand.” Grace added “You have a responsibility to share it [your knowledge of the past] ... don’t be selfish. That’s why we have ignorant people in the world.” For the students in this study, coming to understand the events of the past and the perspectives involved in events would help to create more unity, compassion and tolerance in society. In my opinion, the research participants demonstrated a deeper understanding of history than revealed by the students in international research (Fink, 2004; Haydn & Harris, 2010). History, for my research participants, seemed to be about more than avoiding the mistakes of the past and understanding the present. Instead, it contributes to an understanding of their sense of self, the development of their own perspective of what is happening in their country of residence, and finally, the understanding of shared customs, values and beliefs of the country to which they feel they belong.

Pasifika students' understandings of perspectives and interpretation in history education

During the Talanoa I asked the group, “What sort of thinking are you encouraged to do in history?” “No thinking”, joked a quick-witted student and the group shared in laughter. Whilst the students moved on from this response to critically discuss the nature of historical thought, the moment of humour did provide some insight into the experiences of these students’ studying history in New Zealand. It led me to reflect on how at times, I take away from my students the opportunity to think historically and instead do too much of the thinking for them. They had shared with me incidents in which they were made passive receivers of historical facts and opinions, and noted that the thinking which took place in the history classroom was often done by the teacher and not themselves. Tee comments “the teacher is like bla bla bla, and I am thinking, turn around and talk with us.” She goes onto say that for a long time she saw history “as one big story” and this is because of:

How the teacher teaches us, usually they will strongly emphasise their point of view so its bias the way they teach us....But if we had studied it in general, like...broadly, then we would have better perspective on it....Let us form those perspectives ourselves.

In Tee’s comments she is revealing the desire to come to her own conclusions, to construct her own understandings, and to do her own historical thinking. I share with you this joke from the Talanoa, and Tee’s response, because this was an important moment in the conversation. The participants had previously been discussing how interpretation and perspectives played an interesting and essential role in studying history, but despite this, it seemed to me that this was the first time they had thought about how thinking in history was unique compared to the thinking done in other school subjects. However, when given the opportunity to reflect on their thinking in history some encouraging responses were shared.

Trish: Critical thinking. You have to think critically...

Grace: yeah and you have to think from the historical point of view.

Laine: Can you trust this? Is this what actually happened. Is there enough evidence to support it?...

Sera: Reliable. Like...it makes you think beyond what you usually do....It pushes the Boundaries ... it doesn't just limit you to think about that situation. You need to think about its many points of view...

Laine: Yeah and you have to think about if there is anything else that has to do with it, like was it connected to anything else?

This conversation highlights the complex way in which the research participants engage with historical knowledge and historical narratives. Many of the participants are aware of the thinking that is needed around historical constructions of the past. However, in my experiences, most of the students I teach need to have it modelled for them, how to think in this way, and then be encouraged and given the opportunity in the classroom to do so. If this is not provided as part of the history pedagogy, then it is likely that history students will continue to engage with history on a superficial level, and as Tee commented during the Talanoa, continue to see history as “one big story”. Interestingly all students who were involved in the conversation above, had taken history for two or three years rather than having picked it up as a subject in Year 13. I believe that the participants in this research have progressed in their ability to think historically as a result of their continued study of history. My experiences with Year 11 history students I taught in 2010 and 2011 were that they often accepted all history in the textbooks, and any history narrative I told them, as the authorised and truthful account of the past. It was not in their nature to pull history apart and rigorously question it. Again (as mentioned in Chapter Two, p. 34), this links to the work of Fletcher et al (2009) around how questioning and challenging is not *fa'asamoa*. However, in the classroom interactions that I have with Pasifika students I am beginning to see a slow but definite change in their ability to challenge and contest historical claims in textbooks, and this is reflected in the comments made by the participants during the Talanoa.

By Year 13 it seems that Pasifika students who have studied history for more than one year at secondary school have a good understanding of historical knowledge and of the thinking required from them when engaging with constructions of the past. Barton & Levstik (2003), contend that:

Students should learn how such stories are developed in the first place. They should be involved in historical investigations, they should analyse and interpret primary sources, and they should understand the relationship between historical evidence and the construction of accounts....that the same evidence can lead to divergent interpretations (p. 358).

From the research participants' conversations around perspectives and interpretation it is encouraging to note that they seemed to have developed the understandings around history that Barton and Levstik (2003) have deemed attractive in a good history student. When asked about the role of perspectives and interpretation in history, the group came up with similar responses:

Laine: You can have different interpretations because as Mr X was saying he thinks it [the treaty] was well intentioned, just a misunderstanding, but then others may say this was on purpose!

Trish: There may be one story but then there [are] always different sides and points of view to the story.

Tee: You can interpret it from different perspectives.

The quotes above are only the initial responses of the students, but they indicate that these students have a sense that history is contested. However I believe that the students in my research were not only able to acknowledge the different perspectives, "layers" (Mary used this term during the Talanoa, full quote on p. 59) and interpretations of history, but they are able to see how the nature of historical knowledge provides those studying history with the opportunity to construct their own understandings of the past. During the Talanoa we discussed how historians use historical sources to piece together the past and considered how historians have varying accounts of how and why a specific situation or event occurred. Laine was excited by this part of the conversation and she contributed, "I like to do that, I can do that, I think." The group laughed for a while, but then Laine continued:

I like maths cos I like solving stuff. I like history cos it's like I'm a problem solver. Like you have to think about other stuff [in the past] and how it came about to this [the event studied]. It is like you are given a

situation...and then some problems...and you need to find the right problem to go with the answer. It's like mixing it all around.

Another participant, Tee picked up on the idea of constructing the past from the way she interpreted the sources: "Cos then that would be like my opinion, and if I got to write it, and then if [I] taught other people, they would get to learn from it and make their opinion on it..."

In these responses Laine and Tee are acknowledging that there are several possible explanations for how, why and what happened in the past. For Laine, studying history, allowed her to form her own constructions of the past. She feels like a problem solver or a detective using evidence to piece together what happened in history. When discussing historical events and possible causes, the people involved, and given evidence to examine; she is able to construct her own understandings and own narrative of an event or situation from the past, and hypothesise as to why such an event took place. VanSledright (2004) was worried that history education focused on nation building narratives and the committing of facts to memory would lead to a conceptualisation of the past as "fixed, stable and unchanging" (p. 233). However, it seems that my research participants have escaped such limitations as they are "tolerant of different perspectives as these perspectives help them to make sense of the past" (VanSledright, 2004, p. 233). Throughout the Talanoa, the participants showed they were able to do more than identify the role of perspectives and interpretations in history, and more than simply acknowledge the validity of different individual interpretations and perspectives. They were able to take this a step further and reflect on how the very nature of history meant that they too could actively construct their own understandings of the past. The process of constructing history was not an academic pursuit exclusive to historians, but rather was an activity they were able to partake in. Furthermore, they longed for more opportunity to do this in the history classroom. The students' enthusiasm during the Talanoa when discussing perspectives and interpretations of history is in line with the findings of Australian researcher Clark (2009). She contends that instead of being turned off by the multiple perspectives approach to history, students thrive on it and are more engaged with history during learning experiences that emphasise these perspectives. Far from being "confounded by the challenge of historical

understanding, students seem to revel in the way its skills, perspectives and methods complicate the past” (Clark, 2009, p. 759).

Pasifika students’ understandings of historical relationships in history education

Another way in which the Pasifika students demonstrated a complex understanding of the nature of history was through their discussions of historical relationships. For them, using the historical relationships common to our curriculum language, was an effective way of dealing with the multiple perspectives and “layers” of history. They comment that using the historical relationships of *cause* and *effect*, *change* and *continuity*, *specific* and *general*, helps them to “make sense of the past” and “it helps organise the ideas of history.” For some of the students, such as Ana, organising the “facts, events, storyline, people, causes and stuff” into the particular structures that the historical relationships provide, helped her to engage with history in a more complex manner. As Ana explained:

then we can compare one cause with another or one event with another, and then it will be easier for us to grasp the whole of history, cos history is such a massive subject, it can go all the way back from the start of time...

Another student, Mary commented that the idea of historical relationships helped her to organise the “layers” of the past into their levels of importance:

Like the importance of the events...The micro events and the bigger events...like rock layers, like you see on the side of the cliff? Like the little events are the little layers at the bottom and the others go at the top.

Mary and Ana’s responses when discussing historical relationships is important as they draw on the same concepts; *cause*, *effects* and *events*, that they mentioned when asked to define history earlier in the Talanoa. When the students used these concepts to define history I had assumed it was because these concepts are present in the NCEA history achievement standards, and perhaps assessment requirements had largely influenced the way the participants saw and defined history. However, the participants’ discussions around historical relationships led me to consider whether these concepts may have been included in the way the participants

defined the past, irrespective of the place these terms have in assessments that students are exposed to. It seems, that the historical relationships which incorporate the concepts Pasifika students used to define the past, also help the research participants to think about the interconnectedness and significance of events in history. In addition to this, it is revealing, for those of us who teach history with Pasifika students, that the participants discussed how they needed to have the structure that historical relationships provided in order to understand, organise and make sense of history. The students in this group that had taken history for two to three years, commented that the consistent thinking around historical relationships in history meant they were now able to process, organise and make connections in history themselves without the explicit help of a teacher; “The way they taught us to use that [historical relationships], means we are now able to make these connections ourselves.”

Conclusion

Recent international literature on the nature and purpose of history tends to focus on three key lines of rationale: mirroring the disciplinary approach to history (Wineburg, 1991; Yeager & Davis, 1995); teaching history as a way of contributing to democratic societies (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Tosh 2008; VanSledright, 2004, 2008), and the dangers and follies associated with focussing on nation-building narratives (Macintyre and Clark, 2003; Osborne 2003; Phillips 1998). History education scholars who write on the nature and purpose of history tend to put an emphasis on the need for history students to understand the nature of historical knowledge and how it is constructed (Barton & Levstik, 2003, 2004; Haydn & Harris, 2010; Seixas, 2004; VanSledright, 2009; Wineburg, 2001).

New Zealand has in some ways followed the international debate. Sheehan (2008, 2010) discusses the disciplinary and scholarly nature of New Zealand history. Hunter and Farthing (2007, 2008) discuss how students need to become aware of the nature and construction of historical knowledge and grapple with the complexities, contradictions and fallacies of history. They argue history education and history pedagogy needs to move beyond the pursuit for “truthful” reconstruction of the past but instead highlight the contesting and multifarious perspectives of history. The dialogue in New Zealand has differed in some ways

as a result of the requirements or lack of requirements in recent national curriculum documents (Sheehan, 2010). Before the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) there was no prescribed requirement to include a New Zealand history dimension to the classroom history curriculum other than through certain achievement standards that signalled a New Zealand context.

The results of previous studies (Adey & Biddulph, 2001; Haydn & Harris, 2010), found that many students have a poor understanding of the usefulness and relevance of studying history and had different understandings of the main concepts that occur during history education (Hunter & Farthing, 2008). In light of this I asked the students in my research to discuss what they saw as the nature and purpose of history, key concepts in relation to history; and the role of perspectives, interpretations and historical relationships in history education.

Initially Pasifika students used concepts to define history that were influenced by the NZC (2007), NZQA assessment tasks, or by the context studied in class (Hunter & Farthing, 2008). However, the explanations that students in my research supplied for their selection of concepts often revealed a deeper and more insightful understanding of historical knowledge. When discussing the concept of continuity, Pasifika students showed me, perhaps subconsciously, how their cultural understandings influenced the way in which they understood the past. Their understanding of their own cultural traditions, and the way these traditions change or remain the same, helped them make sense of the cause and continuity relationship. A complex understanding of the past was also demonstrated during the discussions on how “reason” was for them a key concept of history. This part of the conversation demonstrated the students were aware of how the construction of historical knowledge is something that is human-made and therefore open to challenge. These responses showed that the research participants had a good understanding of the nature of historical knowledge.

This chapter has looked at students’ understandings of the purpose of history. Some of the responses from the participants in this research demonstrated a similar narrow understanding of the purpose of history education as shown by Fink (2004) and Haydn and Harris (2010). However, a key purpose and benefit of

studying history for my participants was that it contributed to an understanding of their sense of self and of the society they felt they belong to. They were also able to articulate the type of thinking that was done in Year 13 history. They made links between how the nature of interpretation and perspectives in history requires the need to think critically when engaging with the past. The Talanoa showed that Pasifika students understood the need to interrogate and deconstruct (to look beneath the “layers”) the past and furthermore, enjoyed doing so. Not only did the research participants understand the nature of historical thinking, but they saw being able to think historically around the contexts they studied in class, as the qualities of a “good” history student. For them the opportunities to contest and construct history allowed them to become active constructors of the past, and empowered them with the sense that history might be accessible to everyone. Finally, the chapter has looked at how Pasifika students in the research used some of the historical relationships, as identified in the New Zealand history curriculum, as tools to help organise, structure and process facts, events, perspectives and stories of the past. More than being tools of organisation, historical relationships such as *cause & effect*, *Change & continuity* and *general & specific*, allowed for deeper and more insightful historical thinking around the past. After using the historical relationships as frames for historical contexts, students of this research were eventually taught to organise historical narrative and make historical connections without the explicit help of a teacher.

The research participants spoke competently about their perceptions of history. During the Talanoa, students discussed how they experienced the history curriculum, but also how the history curriculum influenced them. With this in mind, it is important to look at understandings of the curriculum and the curriculum policy that inform New Zealand teachers’ decision making. Chapter Four, “*Curriculum understandings: What does this mean for the Pasifika research participants?*” looks at my conceptions around curriculum, the *New Zealand Curriculum* revised in 2007, the classroom history curriculum, assessment policies and provisions and policies for Pasifika education in New Zealand.

CHAPTER FOUR: CURRICULUM UNDERSTANDINGS: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE PASIFIKA RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS?

Introduction

The heart of this thesis is about Pasifika students' perspectives of studying history in New Zealand. The school history experience for Pasifika students is greatly shaped by their identities, cultural ways of knowing, the teachers' understandings and practices, and the school's decision making in specific learning areas. In addition to this, the enacted classroom curriculum is also a major contributor to students' conceptions and experiences of history. When sharing their stories and experiences with me during the Talanoa, participants revealed an innate sense of knowing the past and this affected the way in which they understood historical information and the nature of history as a subject. As mentioned in Chapter Two (p. 41) their unique cultural way of understanding history is not always acknowledged. Furthermore, their personal way of knowing the past is often different to the type of history experienced in the classroom. As detailed in Chapters Two (p. 41) and Three (p. 50), the influence of curriculum and assessment policies was particularly evident when the students initially defined history using the key concepts of the classroom history curriculum and NCEA achievement standards they had been exposed to. However, they later revealed a much deeper, personal, and cultural understanding of history. The Talanoa reveals that the classroom history curriculum resonates most with the participants when it aligns with their personal understandings of the past. It appeared to me, that these two forces; their personal way of knowing and the enacted curriculum, were constantly working in negotiation with each other to both structure and deepen the history experiences for these students. The extent to which curriculum plays a part in shaping the students classroom experiences is difficult to determine, especially when considering the multiple identities and influences at play in a student's life. However, in order to understand students' perspectives of studying history in New Zealand we must first come to terms with the constructed nature of curriculum. The national curriculum is the product of the policy writers' (usually a select group) initial decisions, selections and limitations about what schools should aim to provide for all its students. Furthermore, the students' ability to meet the

Achievement Objectives of the specific learning areas, such as history, is often how teachers and institutions gauge student success.

In this chapter I look at the nature of curriculum and discuss various conceptions of curriculum theorised in curriculum literature. I consider the nature of curriculum as a political construction, and the null and hidden curriculum. I indicate how curriculum literature has shaped my understandings, and in turn, I reflect on how this influences curriculum decisions I make in the classroom. Teachers' curriculum understandings have important consequences for students, as personal conceptions of curriculum both privilege and deny certain knowledge and outcomes over another. This in turn may have significant repercussions for students in our classrooms, especially if the curriculum they experience, marginalises, tokenises, ignores their place and part in history, or, their way of knowing, learning, and responding.

Curriculum understandings that have shaped my thinking and decision making

Curriculum is a complex and difficult term. Rather than seeking to define curriculum in this chapter, I share my understandings of what curriculum is and how these understandings have implications for my decision making as a history teacher. Whilst I draw mostly on New Zealand theorists, international commentators have also shaped my thinking.

Thinking about and designing curriculum is a critical task as people view curriculum differently, through their own agendas, prejudices, understandings and priorities. For this reason the role of curriculum and discussions around fundamental concepts are debated and analysed in various work. For some New Zealand curriculum writers, the focus has been on curriculum design (Aitken, 2006; Barker, 2008), whilst others have looked at the constructed nature of the curriculum, and what this means for specific groups in society (Carpenter, 2001; McGee, 1995). Curriculum literature also considers how curriculum policy is a product of the social and economic influences at the time of the policy's construction (Clark, & Openshaw, 2004; McGee, 1995; Mutch, 2000). Other theorists such as Jesson (2008), Popkewitz (2009), and Roberts (1998), problematise curriculum as a political construction. The complex and constructed

nature of curriculum is further evident when we consider curriculum theory from within ideologies that could shape curriculum considerations (Schiro, 2008). Other curriculum theories see curriculum as a dialogue through which the curriculum is negotiated (Renshaw & van der Linden, 2003).

Mutch (2000) who theorises curriculum in relation to social sciences has influenced my understandings of curriculum. She argues that curriculum construction happens in social, political, cultural and economic contexts (2000). She believes that curriculum construction “does not happen in a vacuum but is influenced by the context in which it occurs” (2000, p. 6). Linked to this understanding is the slightly narrower view that curriculum is a political construction (Popkewitz, 2009). Over the decades, curriculum has commonly been reformed as a result of change in political leadership, or political motives and priorities. This has important implications for both teachers and learners as it means the foundation policy of instruction for schools and teachers is shaped by the political, social, and cultural climate at the time. Schools then, design the curriculum for specific subject areas, followed by teachers who produce a curriculum for delivery in their own classroom. The reproduction and interpretation of curriculum is therefore shaped by the immediate social, political, cultural, and economic concerns that are prioritised (differently) by individual schools and teachers (Lee, Hill, & Lee, 2004; McGee, 1995; O’Neill, 2005).

Curriculum design has important implications for education practitioners, students and society. In their work Aitken (2006) and Barker (2008) discuss the contentious nature of curriculum design, and argue that it is an essential aspect of curriculum study. Understanding the curriculum as a construction that is influenced by the context it occurs in has important implications for me as a teacher, especially when teaching at a predominantly Pasifika school. I must be aware of how the international and national trends in education, such as *future focus* issues of the NZC; *sustainability, citizenship, enterprise and globalisation* (2007, p. 39), may not always reflect the needs and priorities of the students in my classroom. Therefore, what society or a school has deemed important, and therefore prioritise in the curriculum, may not be recognised by the students as a relevant or worthwhile focus. Importantly I must also acknowledge how my biases; political alignments, religious or social stances, and cultural background,

may differ to those of my students. If I do not consider the economic, cultural and social situation of students, the decisions I make for the classroom curriculum are likely to address my concerns rather than serve the needs of students.

Despite learning about curriculum and assessment at university whilst studying to become a teacher, I was not challenged to critically consider who was being advantaged and validated by New Zealand's curriculum. However, the reading undertaken for this thesis has caused me to reflect on the nature of curriculum construction. The notion that curriculum is a construction that results from the influences and focus of society at the time of its production, also relates to the idea that control over a country's curriculum policy is fundamentally about power. Carpenter (2001), McGee (1995), and Young (1971) argue that because a country's curriculum is a statement about what policy writers see as valid and purposeful knowledge, control over the curriculum and what is included is essentially about power. The curriculum (national, school and classroom curriculum) is based on beliefs about what is important for schools to teach and students to learn. In essence the curriculum defines what counts as valid transmission of knowledge (Bernstein, 1971; Carpenter, 2001; Gay, 2004; McGee, 1995; Sheehan, 2010, Young, 1971). In addition to this, discourses around "ways of knowing" and ideologies held by the policy writers and dominant voices in society, also determine what is included in the national curriculum (Lovat & Smith, 2003; Schiro, 2008).

When reflecting on my practice, I only superficially counter the privileges of the curriculum. As a teacher I make conscious efforts to present balanced political opinions, and provide arguments that represent a wide range of perspectives upon which students can then make informed decisions. Despite this, I had not worked hard enough to ensure that students' diversity and their unique ways of knowing were acknowledged and validated. This is partially because the curriculum policy that guided my decisions, and the assessments I relied on privileged certain understandings over another. When the revised curriculum was introduced in 2007, the Ministry of Education commissioned a team to look at how the curriculum was being implemented across New Zealand. The second phase of this study began in 2009 and a final report was published in 2011.

Curriculum Implementation Exploratory Studies 2 (CIES2) (Hipkins, Cowie, Boyd, Keown & McGee, 2011) looks at how innovative schools and individual teachers were implementing the 2007 revised NZC. This study is important as it looks at how the NZC is being interpreted, delivered and enacted throughout the country, and whether the vision and intentions of the NZC are being realised. As the CIES2 reports, the curriculum still seems to privilege success in traditional academic terms. As a result Maori who were achieving the same as the non-Maori students at the school were “taking on a white face” (Hipkins et. al., 2011, p.21). Instead of being able to achieve on their own terms and share their cultural understandings of knowledge, the report showed that Maori students experienced academic achievement when they ignored, if only temporarily, their cultural identities. I argue that the curriculum presents similar challenges for Pasifika students. This was elaborated in Chapter Two when I discussed how Pasifika students saw being academically successful, was a “Palagi” way of being.

The construction of curriculum and what it includes (and just as importantly what it excludes) has long been recognised as a political act. The early curriculum theorist, Denis Lawton (1980), noted that,

the problem of curriculum planning is ... making the selection of the most important aspects of culture for transmission to the next generation. The crucial cultural question is “what is worthwhile?” and the crucial political question is “who makes the selection? (as cited in Mutch, 2000, p. 13).

The politics of curriculum reform is discussed by Ahonen (2001), McGee (1995) and Roberts (1998). This conception of the curriculum also has important implications for history in a school curriculum. The work done by Ahonen (2001) in Germany, is specific to the history curriculum. Ahonen (2001) argues that:

...as history is used for identity building, any grand narrative diffused through a school curriculum tends to reinforce a uniform identity. Those with no place or role in the grand narrative will be excluded from the historical community. They either face a sense of double consciousness or lack resources to face up to their past....In order to be socially and politically inclusive, a history curriculum must recognize alternative

narratives of the past. Only in this way will people with different experiences be included in a historical community (p. 190).

Ahonen reminds teachers that they have an obligation to students, to story the many narratives of the past into our history programmes, especially those narratives that will help to validate or explain the students' understandings and identities. This curriculum understanding has important implications for the diverse groups of students who experience a national curriculum. Gay (2004) has also looked at the challenges of creating a curriculum policy that caters for cultural diversity in the classroom. She contends that the curriculum is too frequently loaded against pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. She noted:

Knowledge taught in schools is a form of cultural capital and is a social construction that reflects the values, perspectives, and experiences of the dominant ethnic group. It systematically ignores or diminishes the validity and significance of the life experiences and contributions of ethnic and cultural groups that historically have been vanquished, marginalised, and silenced (p. 160).

If what we teach at school is reflective of only the dominant ethnic groups such as Pakeha/Palagi, then the curriculum, and the knowledge it privileges and validates fails to recognise the immense "cultural" wealth that Pasifika, Maori or Asian students bring into New Zealand classrooms. This prompted me to consider how the classroom curriculum I implement ignores the wealth of knowledge and experiences that Pasifika students bring with them into the classroom. How often do I encourage students to verbalise their understandings of events, or share their knowledge, before I present the content I have decided to include in the programme? In a research-focused history internal assessment in 2011, my students looked at the role of New Zealand women in World War Two. When looking through their research folders I noticed a distinct absence of Pasifika women or even discussions of the part women played on Pacific Island battle fronts. This is partially a result of the sources that were accessible to the students, but also my failure to fully story Pasifika peoples into the history I taught when looking at the role of New Zealanders in World War Two. Whilst we looked at Maori war efforts and perspectives, and the war in the South Pacific (New

Caledonia and Guadalcanal) during the early 1940s, I failed to acknowledge the interactions New Zealanders had with Pacific peoples (especially in Fiji and New Caledonia) during this period. As a result I may have prevented my students from gaining a sense of belonging to this aspect of New Zealand history. Despite this, the unit I designed met the requirements of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) including that of the principles of cultural diversity and inclusion, as I can clearly identify ways in which this had been considered in my classroom curriculum planning.

Accommodating cultural diversity and selecting what knowledge is to be recognised by the curriculum, is a challenge that curriculum developers face worldwide. In the literature review commissioned by the Ministry of Education, *Strategic Research Initiative Literature Review: The Effects of Curricula and Assessment on Pedagogical Approaches and on Educational Outcomes*, it states; “Many countries are still debating the inclusion of different cultures and knowledges into the curriculum” (Carr, McGee, Jones, McKinley, Bell, Barr, & Simpson, 2005, p. 32). As my research reveals, Pasifika students in this research have a body of cultural understandings that underpin their history experience, yet the history course they experienced had failed to draw on, or recognise their ways of knowing. As mentioned in Chapter Three, instead of affirming their cultural assumptions about history, students had begun to conform to the understandings validated by the curriculum and assessment policies. I believe that if I wish to address the area of cultural diversity in the classroom curriculum I deliver, I have to move beyond tokenistic gestures of inclusion which could further marginalise Pasifika students. The inclusion of the 1970s Polynesian Panther movement and Dawn Raids² historical experiences into my history programme would not guarantee that I had enabled students to develop understandings of the Pasifika cultures, especially if I taught specific history contexts, such as the Dawn Raids, without first seeking to understand the perspectives, grievances and aspirations of the Pasifika community during this time in history. Furthermore, without an

² In the consciousness of Pasifika people in New Zealand the Polynesian Panthers and Dawn Raids in the 1970s are extremely important. Samoans, Tongans, and Niueans living in New Zealand formed the Polynesian Panthers in 1971 after becoming political targets and experiencing social, economic and legal inequalities in New Zealand. As part of an attack on Polynesians in New Zealand, the government began to carry out early morning raids on Polynesian homes in search of overstayers that were then deported ‘home’.

understanding of the concepts central to Pasifika cultures, I am unlikely to truthfully portray the experiences of Pasifika peoples involved in this part of New Zealand's history. As Seixas (1993) noted;

Curriculum designers should not begin with historical concepts or generalisations...nor with historians' knowledge products (however diverse)...History teaching might be conceptualised around students' questioning of their own culture and experience, an investigation of the past that questions its traces and theorises its legacy and import for the present so that the historical understanding students internalise are the components that help them to make sense of their lives, their situation and their identity (p. 315).

Another concept closely related to cultural diversity in the curriculum, is the principle of *inclusion*. This has been included as a founding principle of the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). However, whilst *inclusion* is an explicitly stated principle, the idea of inclusion can also be found in the *Vision* of the NZC which aims for young people to be "confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). In his article, *Curriculum Study, Curriculum History, and Curriculum Theory: The Reason of Reason*, Popkewitz (2009) discusses how curriculum policies that aim to look at inclusion by their very nature lead to exclusion. Lindbald and Popkewitz (1990) explored how social inclusion and exclusion are embedded in each other (as cited in Popkewitz, 2009). Curriculum that is designed on the premise that all children can learn, or with the aim to make all children life-long learners (a vision of the NZC), will naturally result in exclusion. Those students who do not fit the mould of a life-long learner then, according to Popkewitz do not feel they occupy the space of "all children". This has important implications for New Zealand teachers, because the national curriculum aims for inclusion, and to make all students life-long learners. Drawing on Popkewitz's thinking, this could lead to exclusion, and further alienate Pasifika students who may not see themselves reflected in the current curriculum policy. Further, Popkewitz (2009) comments that "the universality of the cultural thesis of the life-long learners simultaneously inscribes the opposite, the child who does not "fit" into its space and this objected into other unliveable spaces" (p. 306). He continues,

the recognition of particular populations for inclusion, it is important to recognise are responses to correcting wrongs; yet the very desire to include is inscribed in systems of thought that create continuums of value that differentiate, divide and abject (2009, p. 306).

Popkewitz argues that curriculum policies in America often create psychological categories (the child is passive, introverted, or is not confident), and sociological categories (single-parent family, poverty, teenage pregnancy) that form as cultural theses about dangerous modes of life (p. 306). The work of Popkewitz was particularly thought provoking. It made me aware of how the curriculum I implement may aim for inclusion and cultural diversity through its *Vision and Principles*, but when enacted can reinforce certain dominant cultural assumptions that I may be unable to recognise. This is due to my lack of knowledge around “other” ways of knowing. Again this comes back to the necessity of listening to my students and knowing their cultural understandings, so that their identities, values and knowledge can be recognised in the classroom.

Curriculum discussions often consider the type of education that the curriculum is designed to provide; in particular, education for citizenship. In their literature review on curriculum and assessment, Carr et. al. (2005) found there were complex discussions to be had around education for effective citizenship and its incorporation into the curriculum. Lohrey (1996) and Cogan (1997) believe that education for effective citizenship is best taught through the general ethos of the school rather than in particular subject areas. The work of New Zealand researchers Barr (1998) and Mutch (2000) indicate that New Zealand’s approach to citizenship education is present more obviously in the social studies learning area (compared to other subject areas), but is most likely to be found in the general values and ethos of the school. These researchers found that in New Zealand education for citizenship occurs both “inside” and “outside” the curriculum. In *Citizenship Education Without a Textbook*, Barr (1998) finds that 86% of the teachers in his study “claimed that citizenship issues were more likely to arise in the day-to-day milieu of the school than in social studies classes” (p. 31). He concludes his paper by noting that:

Active participation by New Zealanders in political processes is due in some degree to an educational programme designed to encourage students to think and accept responsibility, a programme that teaches citizenship by allowing students to be citizens (p. 35).

Similarly, the teachers in Mutch's case study (2000) felt that the success of citizenship education in New Zealand relied on "how individual teachers approached the curriculum and how they picked up on all the informal opportunities to reinforce these ideals (p. 175). The curriculum policies of the past and the present have made reference to citizenship education. The designers of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1997) put high importance on the values essential to being an active citizen in a democracy. Therefore, the social studies curriculum policy includes inquiry, values exploration and social decision making as three processes that influence and underpin all social studies learning.

The revised curriculum in New Zealand also has a distinct citizenship focus. The *Foreword* of *The New Zealand Curriculum* states that the pace of social change is reflected in the increasing diversity, sophistication and complexity of our population, technologies and workforce; and "our education system must respond to these challenges" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 4). This statement hints that the purpose of education is to prepare students in such a way that they can actively participate in the communities they belong to. In addition to this, the *Foreword* also makes reference to the *Key Competencies* outlined in the curriculum, which are critical to "sustained learning and effective participation in society" (p. 4). Furthermore, a new learning area of languages "has been added to encourage students to participate more actively in New Zealand's diverse multicultural society and in the global community" (p. 4). The *Foreword* finishes by noting that the curriculum design ensures "young people are equipped with the knowledge, competencies, and values they will need to be successful citizens in the twenty-first century (p. 4). The recurrence of citizenship notions in the *Foreword* of the *New Zealand Curriculum* reflects the aims and intentions of the curriculum policy writers. It also emphasises the increasingly common role that citizenship education has in curriculum discussions. This focus

has important implications for all teachers in New Zealand who have a responsibility to help educate students for active participation in society.

Defining curriculum is made even more complex by the considerations of the “hidden” curriculum and “null” curriculum (Carpenter, 2001). The hidden curriculum can occur as “stereotypical messages about ethnic/minority groups or gender roles” or about appropriate social behaviour and norms which are often transmitted to students through everyday school interactions and school policies (Carpenter, 2001, p. 11). This could include messages about work ethic, dominant cultural assumptions about appropriate “lifestyles”, and gender roles. The null curriculum is defined by McCutcheon (1997) as what students are not permitted to learn because of the exclusion of certain subjects from the national curriculum. In the past this has included topics such as sexual education (Carpenter, 2001). I think that acknowledging the possibility of a null curriculum has significant implications for history teachers, especially if we consider what is “null” in our classroom history curriculum. Whilst it would be impossible to cover all aspects of history and teach the histories associated with the identities of all the students in my class, I do believe a much more balanced approach could be taken. In the past I have privileged global war history and race relations movements whilst completely failing to story Pacific Islanders into the historical contexts being explored. As a result, I have, to a certain extent, nullified their place in these histories, and I am concerned as to what impact this has had on students’ understandings of these events or movements.

Another key understanding of the curriculum which has influenced my practice, and has helped explain some of the responses shared through the Talanoa, is the idea of a narrowing curriculum. The “narrowing” of curriculum is a term used to refer to the shrinking space for classroom decision making (Dillion, 2006; Jerald, 2006; Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Crocco & Costigan (2007) contend that as a result of high-stakes testing and assessment in the United States after the *No Child is Left Behind legislation*, the classroom decisions made by teacher about how to enact the curriculum have been largely removed. They believe that many teachers are now puppets rather than autonomous decision makers. Crocco & Costigan (2007) write that testing and assessment has led to a narrow curriculum which has thwarted professional and personal identity and diminished

the ability to forge meaningful relationships with the students (p. 512). This was also found to be the case in the UK. Silvernail (1996) found that prescribed assessment programmes contributed to a narrowing of the curriculum to the point that the assessed curriculum was becoming the taught curriculum. This aspect of the curriculum was cause for reflection on my assessment practices, as the three internal assessments at NCEA Levels One and Two history (NZQA, n.d) are time consuming undertakings that tend to dominate the first half of my teaching year. Between the three internal assessments and two external assessments that my students are enrolled in, the history course is largely designed to meet the needs of these assessments, rather than perhaps the more pressing needs of the students.

Finally the concept of the enacted curriculum is central to my curriculum understandings. As Hipkins (2007) and Shkedi (2009) note, the relationship between national curriculum and classroom curriculum is also an important aspect of curriculum studies. My understanding of the enacted curriculum is how the students receive the curriculum teachers deliver to them. By this definition, the enacted curriculum is likely to differ for each student as a result of their identities, cultural understandings and personal beliefs. In addition to this, the enacted curriculum will differ among classrooms and schools, as it is dependent upon teacher decision-making and teachers' understandings. As Doyle (1992) notes, whilst teachers try to adhere to the dictates of the curriculum, it is the teachers' actions that form the curriculum experienced by the learners in that classroom. In the CIES2 report Hipkins et. al. (2011) made clear that "there is no one right way to give effect to curriculum. A local curriculum must be responsive to local contexts, and implementation needs to be an on-going rather than a "one-off" activity for this responsiveness to be maintained" (p. 20). With this in mind, the NZC *Principles* (p. 9) provide opportunities for inclusiveness, community engagement, and personalisation of the learning contexts. In theory this encourages a curriculum that, whilst meeting the requirements outlined in the NZC policy, allows diversity in the curriculum enacted throughout the country, and specific needs to be catered to. It is important to note however, that the *Principles* outlined in the NZC are ideals, and it is possible that they remain unrealised in many New Zealand classrooms.

The New Zealand curriculum policy and assessment

The 2007 revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) framework was published for implementation in New Zealand schools by 2010. As mentioned in the *Foreword*, “The New Zealand Curriculum is a clear statement of what we deem important in education” (Ministry of Education, p. 4). In my view and experiences as a teacher, both the first half and second half of the curriculum present their own set of challenges when it comes to school and classroom curriculum design. This part of the chapter, explores the design and requirements of the New Zealand curriculum and how these have affected my practice as a history teacher.

The *Vision of The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) for all students to become confident, connected, actively involved, life-long learners has its own challenges. The goals of the NZC, such as creating life-long learners, links to Brophy and Alleman’s (1992) suggestion “that a curriculum should not separate skills and knowledge, but instead it should be aimed at engaging students in higher order thinking so that they can develop understanding that can be applied to life outside the classroom” (as cited in Carr et al. 2005, p. 45). If we consider the NZC as a curriculum that has been constructed as a response to the needs, changes and influences of society, the understandings and motivations behind the *Vision* of the NZC becomes clearer. Social change is continuing at rapid pace. New technologies and globalisation present multitudes of information which the consumer needs to grapple with. Schools are then charged with the responsibility of preparing students to cope in this rapidly changing environment. In this light, preparing students so they are confident in their own ability to process new information and issues, remain connected with the world, find a way to contribute to society and seek further knowledge in an area of interest, in my opinion is a productive vision.

The *Principles and Key Competencies* of the *New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) reflect the intentions of the curriculum policy writers, as they have a clear emphasis on student inclusion and success, as well the development of critical thinkers and life-long learners. I believe that the *Principles* which call for coherence, high expectations, cultural diversity and inclusion (p. 9), encourage teachers to think about how their teaching decisions enhance student learning and

encourage student success. As Hipkins et. al. (2011) contend, the *Principles of the New Zealand Curriculum* change the policy vision around pedagogy and assessment from being “a deficit model to a strengths based culture of learning and achievement” (p. 44). Upon reflection, I believe that by incorporating the *Principles of the New Zealand Curriculum* into my classroom curriculum, I have unwittingly “transmitted” a hidden curriculum of ideals, which tells of everyone’s right to achieve, welcomes difference and diversity, and validates the communities that the students belong to. As part of the curriculum policy, five *Key Competencies* are to be developed by all students. Gilbert (2005) argued central to creating a “knowledge society” was a curriculum that fostered competencies such as critical thinking and creativity. This view was widely endorsed by the New Zealand curriculum policy writers who included the five competencies of; *Thinking, relating to others, understanding symbol and text, managing self* and finally, *participating and contributing* (Ministry of Education 2007, p. 12).

Finally the first half of the curriculum also considers effective pedagogy and *teaching as inquiry*. *Teaching as inquiry* is about teachers inquiring into their own processes, being reflective and importantly looking for and responding to evidence of learning (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 35). According to the NZC, teaching as inquiry requires teachers to “inquire into the impact of their teaching on their students” (p. 35) and this necessitates three key questions; What is important and therefore worth spending time on given where my students are at? What strategies (evidence based) are most likely to help my students learn this? And; What happened as a result of the teaching, and what are the implications for future teaching? (p. 35) This is an underlying aim of the NZC and it links curriculum directly to pedagogy. As mentioned in the *Curriculum Implementation Exploratory Studies 2*, (Hipkins et. al., 2011) curriculum change was seen as being as much about changing pedagogy as what was taught (p. 79). This aspect of the curriculum resonates most with me. I believe that inquiry into my teaching and the impact that it is having on my students, builds better relationships with the students and creates better learning experiences in my classroom. When students see that I am seeking their opinion on my practice they are able to see that their needs come first in my classroom. Importantly, as a result, my history students

have become confident in telling me how I can help them better. They are more critical of my pedagogical decisions and this helps me to reflect on my teaching, and better understand what evidence of my students learning may look like. From this, I am then able to decide what the next step in learning should be and how it can best be achieved. In my opinion, *Teaching as Inquiry* adds positively to the role and responsibility of teachers. The inquiry is effective when different pedagogical activities are tried in order to improve an aspect of students understanding. The results, whether successful or otherwise, can immediately inform future teaching decisions.

Supporting curriculum policies: NZQA and NCEA assessment policy

To better understand the experiences of Pasifika students in New Zealand one must understand the assessment framework they work with. Therefore this section briefly details the national qualification that the research participants were enrolled in; National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). Secondary school teachers in New Zealand work with assessment policies produced and assured by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA, n.d). In New Zealand, secondary school learners begin formal national assessments at Year 11, usually at the age of 15-16. The NCEA qualification has three Levels completed at Year 11, 12 and 13 respectively. The NCEA achievement standards aim to align with *The New Zealand Curriculum*. For example, the NCEA history achievement standards (set by NZQA) align with the *Achievement Objectives* set out in the social sciences and history learning area. As a result of the revision of the *New Zealand Curriculum* in 2007, the achievement standards set by NZQA have also undergone change. The achievement standards are in the most part, non-prescriptive and allow for teacher autonomy when deciding which contexts to teach. The NCEA's impact on the history curriculum and the assessment of students' historical understanding and skills, is discussed in the following section of this chapter.

The history curriculum in New Zealand: How it plays out

Before we can understand how the history curriculum is played out in classrooms across New Zealand, we must first look at what the national curriculum is mandating for history. The NCEA Achievement Standards for History (Internal

and External Assessments) closely align with the *History Achievement Objectives* in the *New Zealand Curriculum*.

Table 1:

The New Zealand Curriculum Achievement Objectives for History

	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
AO 1:	Understand how the causes and consequences of past events that are of significance to New Zealanders shape the lives of people and society	Understand how historical forces and movements have influenced the causes and consequences of events of significance to New Zealanders	Understand that the causes, consequences, and explanations of historical events that are of significance to New Zealanders are complex and how and why they are contested
AO 2:	Understand how people's perspectives on past events that are of significance to New Zealanders differ.	Understand how people's interpretations of events that are of significance to New Zealanders differ.	Understand how trends over time reflect social, economic, and political forces.

History teachers are expected to design a classroom history curriculum using the two *Achievement Objectives* at each level as guidance, and deliver these through historical topics whilst also meeting the requirements of the first half of the curriculum document. This lack of prescription was an opportunity for me to design new, exciting, and diverse history courses, which cater to the needs and interest of the students in my class. However, as a second year teacher implementing the history *Achievement Objectives* of the revised curriculum for the first time at Level one in 2011, the lack of guidance and detail from the curriculum meant I became reliant on what I saw as supporting curriculum documents; the NCEA achievement standards and assessment tasks and the history teaching and learning guides.

Despite the non-prescriptive nature of the *New Zealand curriculum* (NZC) and the opportunity this provides for a diverse range of engaging and new topics, the status quo of school based history has resulted in few significant differences in the national curriculum (Hunter and Farthing, 2008). In 2011 the revised NZC was implemented at Level One. To accommodate this change, the NZQA designed new Achievement Standards for history. The changes have largely focused on the new requirement to look at past events or places “that are of

significance to New Zealanders” (Ministry of Education, 2007, Level 6.2). Given that most history teachers can extrapolate links of how events of the past are significant to New Zealanders, many teachers across New Zealand can continue teaching their topics largely as they had been doing so pre-curriculum reforms. Whilst they now need to assess to the new standard, the generic nature of the achievement standards allow for the traditional topics such as Origins of World War Two and Black Civil Rights to be continued. History practitioners, Hunter and Farthing (2008) argue that although the internally-assessed achievement standards provide exciting opportunities for history, many teachers in New Zealand generally maintain the status quo, and use these standards as a way to cover more of the content that they wish to transmit to students.

Sheehan (2010), when writing about the revised curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) was of the view history would no longer be dictated to by examination prescriptions but rather would reflect the outcomes-based framework of the curriculum. However, the recent alignment of the NCEA achievement standards with the Ministry of Education’s *Achievement Objectives* for history, has in my experiences resulted in a strong emphasis being placed on the NCEA assessments that occur during the year rather than on the nature and skills of history itself. However, this is not unique to my experiences. A study conducted in New Zealand secondary schools found that NCEA determined much of the curriculum decisions made by teachers. The Curriculum Implementation Exploratory Study 2 team found that “some teachers are reluctant to change their teaching because they still see external examinations (as) the most important end point for student learning” (Hipkins et. al., 2011, p. 60), and then go on to contend that “what could be assessed for NCEA was seen to determine what could be in the curriculum” (p. 75). Furthermore, they found that NCEA has the potential to cue traditional coverage teaching. Teachers found that NCEA was a barrier to giving effect to the more innovative and future-focused aspects of the New Zealand Curriculum (Hipkins et. al., 2011). These findings have important implications for history teachers in New Zealand. If external assessments still dictate teacher decision-making when planning the classroom history curriculum, then I believe that issues of coverage are still likely to remain in the forefront of teachers’ minds. This is unfortunate, as it results in students missing opportunities

to explore empathy, perspectives and interpretations in history. Further missed opportunities may arise in curriculum areas of learning-to-learn, critical thinking, and cultural diversity.

Despite some of the worrying findings of the CIES2 team's research, I also choose to focus on the potential that the *New Zealand Curriculum* can offer students. I believe that the broad *Achievement Objectives* that are complemented by generic achievement standards give autonomy back to the classroom teacher. For instance teachers are able to select new contexts for learning, use web resources, deconstruct the nature of history, and perhaps become less dependent on using textbooks to teach history. The revised curriculum allows each school, or even individual history teacher to select which historical contexts will be taught in their classroom. As Harris and Clarke (2011) note in their study done with trainee secondary school history teachers in England,

historical content selection can be used to promote a more diverse and inclusive view of the past that has repercussions for how we view the society in which we live today; in particular it allows the past to be viewed from a range of perspectives and not just those from the majority groups in society (p. 172).

The revised *New Zealand Curriculum* has provided the opportunity for me to explore areas of history that interest students without the stress of in-depth content coverage in order to meet the “unknowns” of the prescribed external assessments. After a quick two week overview of the origins of World War Two, my 2011 history class, a cohort of 25 female Pasifika students, looked at the role of New Zealand women during World War Two, both on the home front and abroad. The struggles and “scandal” around this topic, which the students uncovered through their research, encouraged them to be actively involved and engaged in their learning. Later in the year we looked at the Black Civil Rights in America 1950-1970 (a tried and true favourite, as discussed in Chapter Five). We then moved on from America to look at a race relations movement closer to home— the Polynesian Panther movement in New Zealand during the 1970s. Accordingly, it is of no coincidence that 24 of my students chose to write about the Polynesian Panthers in their external examination. The students had been moved by the Black

Civil Rights movement, only to find that similar aspects of the African American's struggle for political, economic and social equality were also experienced by Pasifika communities that included their own family members. My history programme will continue to change in response to the students in my class and the changing social, political or personal situations they experience. This flexibility exists because of the design and nature of curriculum policy in New Zealand. The revised curriculum could result in really positive experiences for history students and teachers alike. However caution is necessary as the "openness" of the curriculum and generic nature of the NCEA policies might prove detrimental if abused by teachers or schools driven by assessment results.

Pasifika curriculum in New Zealand

Education is essential if misunderstandings around Pasifika students are to be restored so that academic success becomes part of the Pasifika student's identity. Educating young Pasifika people should not require them to abandon their sense of identity to fit in with a constructed and false identity of "New Zealander". Rather, education should aim to be culturally responsive and culturally informed (Siteine, 2010; Wendt-Samu, 2010). The identity process is crucial in providing Pasifika students with a sense of belonging to the education system and school (Nakhid, 2002). However, this is unlikely to occur if the curriculum does not accommodate Pasifika worldviews or ways of knowing. Grosvenor (2000) and Gundara (2000) also argued that an exclusion of ethnic groups from the curriculum leads to a sense of exclusion and marginalisation from education in general. This has important implications for teachers in New Zealand as it may help mediate the issue of Pasifika underachievement in schools. I believe that the low achievement rates of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools is not because Pasifika students are unable to achieve, but rather find it difficult to achieve in a way consistent with the dominant culture of the school. That is to say, Pasifika students may not have their way of knowing acknowledged in the classroom. They may not be given the chance to make connections to the content or process it in a way that resonates with them, and learning and assessment processes may not reflect their way of interacting or learning. As a result many Pasifika students may feel that to experience educational success they need to leave their Pasifika identity at the school gate and take on a "white face" (Hipkins et al., 2011, p. 21).

As discussed in Chapter Two, I have seen much evidence of this approach to schooling in my daily interactions with students at the school I teach.

Curriculum policy makers need to work to ensure that the curriculum policy lends itself to culturally responsive teaching. In my daily teaching interactions with Pasifika students I have seen that students bring into the classroom an abundance of cultural capital. Cultural capital refers to “the culturally based values and experiences that individuals...bring with them” (Anae et. al. 2002, p. 7). However, at school, I still overhear teachers talking about the way the Pasifika students’ lack of cultural capital limits them in debating competitions or interschool quizzes. Upon reflecting on these conversations I came to realise that some teachers may measure cultural capital in relation to their own understandings of what counts as valuable cultural knowledge. Anae et al. (2002) also look at cultural capital in the classroom and argue that whether these are “actually assets or liabilities to success depends on whether or not school-based structures and processes are able to build on them” (p. 7). Students may be disadvantaged if they are left with little option but to adapt to the dominant culture of the school in order to experience educational success. In a paper, Helu-Therman (1996) contended that by promoting and acknowledging the different ways of knowing schools and teachers enable the development of strategies to not only mediate, but also to facilitate the achievement of learning goals and outcomes (p. 22). The curriculum therefore needs to ensure that one culture is not privileged at the expense of the minority cultures at the school. According to Jones (1991): “School success is not a result of cultural differences as such, but is a result of the way in which schools unconsciously make familiarity with the dominant culture a prerequisite for school success” (p. 94).

Specific curriculum research in relation to Pasifika education is lacking in New Zealand (Anae et. al, 2002). However, Wendt-Samu (2009) undertook research critiquing the absence of Pacific knowledge and experience within the national social studies curriculum. She concludes in her findings that in classrooms she visited, social studies teachers were including Pacific contexts into the social studies courses but only in a simplistic and stereotypical way. Sparks (1992) used the term a “tourist” approach which amounts to “touring” students around the food, dress and music of ethnic groups (as cited in Ferguson et. al.

2008, p. 39). I have been the recipient of this approach as a junior social studies secondary student nine years ago, witnessed this whilst on teaching practicums, and as a perpetrator of this approach. When looking at how cultures express and maintain their identities I have often used a Pacific Island culture because of its visibility in New Zealand, or because a Pasifika student in my class could then share her cultural knowledge. A “tourist approach may serve to perpetuate the stereotypes, misrepresent the cultural realities and undermine a sense of belonging and identity” (Ladson-Billings, 1992; as cited in Ferguson et. al., 2008, p. 39). As a result, in the past year I have worked to develop Pasifika experiences and knowledge more deeply into my social studies and history programmes. Pasifika students lead a lot more of the teaching as the experts with their own understandings. We look at a wide range of perspectives when looking at challenges Pacific Islands face, seeking first to understand cultural hierarchies, communities and traditions. Whilst time constraints sometimes override my good intentions, the lack of prescription and generic nature of the national curriculum, has in my opinion, made for more culturally responsive teaching in the classroom. I agree with the authors (Benham; 2006, Bishop; 2003, Cahill; 2006, Nakhid; 2003, Tupuola; 1998), who have argued that for inclusion to occur in schools and classrooms, all those in the classroom need to acknowledge the right of each student to be themselves; learn in ways that align with their own ways of understandings, and be able to identify their own culture in the learning environment.

In order to address the needs of Pasifika students in New Zealand’s educational institutions, the Ministry of Education (2009) developed *The Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012*. This plan outlines some important requirements if Pasifika students are to experience educational success at a level equal to those of other ethnic groups in New Zealand schools. According to this plan, a important step towards Pasifika students’ secondary school success is the practice of assessment for learning. Assessment for learning is “underpinned by the utmost confidence that every student can improve, plan and manage the next steps in their learning” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 15). It requires teachers to “have a sense of the likely understandings and misunderstandings students will bring to the classroom and how to best facilitate new learning” (p. 15) It also encourages

students to take risks with their learning. Whilst I believe in the value of assessment for learning as a way of enhancing Pasifika student achievement, I found the *The Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012* to consist of broad idealistic statements with little or no indication of how they will be achieved or implemented. The plan indicates that the *Student Achievement Function* (a group of practitioners employed by the Ministry of Education) will help ensure schools have the capability to improve students' outcomes. I remain sceptical over how many of the intentions of this report will be put into practice. What this policy does make clear, is that Pasifika students, as a collective, are underachieving in education in New Zealand and the Ministry of Education is taking measures to address this situation.

Conclusion

The chapter began by looking at various ways curriculum has been theorised and understood in literature and how these in turn have influenced my understandings of the curriculum. My strongest understanding of the curriculum follows the premises of Lee, Hill, & Lee (2004) McGee, (1995), Mutch (2000) and O'Neill (2005), who see curriculum as a construction which results from the social, political, economic and cultural influences at play in society during the time of the curriculum's design. This understanding of curriculum is not just reserved for the national curriculum, as the school and classroom curriculum are also constructions that are likely to be determined by societal pressures and changes. This understanding of the curriculum necessitates deliberate reflection and self-critique for me as a teacher of Pasifika students. I am acutely aware of the differences that exist between my priorities, lifestyle, and concerns, and those of the students I teach. It is reasonable to conclude then, that what I see as worthy or relevant forces in society that should help decide my classroom curriculum, may be quite insignificant to the students who are receiving the curriculum.

Given that the curriculum responds to forces in society at the time of its production, certain groups are likely to benefit from the curriculum whilst other ways of knowing and other identities may fail to be validated or reflected in the curriculum policy. Control over the national curriculum is therefore, essentially about power relations. What is included or excluded from the curriculum is a

statement about what is important for New Zealand students to learn. This chapter looked briefly at the work of Ahonen (2001) and Gay (2000) who consider how the deliberate selection of knowledge for the curriculum impacts on minority cultures that are not considered. As a teacher I try to counteract any prejudices in the curriculum and teach in a culturally responsive way. However, given that the curriculum and assessment documents I rely on privilege certain ways of knowing over another, my attempts to accommodate for the cultural diversity in my class, and create a learning environment in which they can see themselves and experience success on their own terms, need to be more deliberate. As the *Curriculum Implementation Exploratory Studies 2 (CIES2)* found, the curriculum still seems to privilege success in traditional academic terms which mean some Maori students who were achieving academically were doing so by “taking on a white face” (Hipkins, Cowie, Boyd, Keown and McGee, 2011, p.21). The concept of the null and hidden curriculum further necessitates great care in regards to the selection of what is to be included in the curriculum. This was also elaborated on in this chapter.

This chapter has looked at the challenge of cultural diversity in the curriculum. Students in this research had shown that when their body of knowledge and cultural understandings had failed to be drawn on or recognised, they began to conform to the understandings that were validated by the curriculum and assessment documentation. In addition to cultural diversity, the concept of inclusion and its place in curriculum documents was also discussed in this chapter. Popkewitz (2009) talks about how curriculum policies that aim to look at inclusion in their very nature lead to exclusion. This understanding has important implications for *The New Zealand Curriculum* which aims for all students to become lifelong learners.

Understanding the purpose of curriculum is an important aspect of curriculum literature. In particular the idea of education for citizenship dominates discussions in this area. If this was to be a key aim of education, then there would be multiple opportunities in history to develop notions of citizenship in our students. However, I contend that whilst teachers often prepare students for active participation in society beyond school, this should not be the primary focus of education. Rather, a focus on helping students to acknowledge, negotiate and

become confident in their identities would be more beneficial goal of the curriculum. The narrowing of the curriculum as a result of rigid curriculum demands and assessment requirements has been discussed in both the United States (Crocco & Costigan, 2007), United Kingdom (Silvernail, 1996) and in New Zealand (Aitken, 2006). What is enacted in the classroom is often determined by the demands that teachers are most pressured by, in many instances this is formal assessments. Therefore the narrowing of the curriculum and the enacted curriculum are closely linked to each other. This chapter has looked at the *New Zealand Curriculum* and how it is organised. The implications that various aspects of the curriculum have on teachers was also discussed. In particular this part of the chapter looks at the intention behind the *Vision, Principles* and *teaching by inquiry* model, and considers how these aspects of the curriculum also contribute to a hidden curriculum being established.

In addition to the *New Zealand Curriculum*, aspects of the NCEA's national assessment standards in history were also explained. The NZC and NCEA documents influence the way history is taught in the classroom. The history *Achievement Objectives* at levels Six, Seven and Eight, guide the structure of programmes which teachers design and deliver. These policies are characterised by their lack of prescription which allows for exciting history teaching (and learning) to occur in the classroom. However, the demand of assessments both internally and externally still heavily influences teachers' decision making for the classroom curriculum.

Finally this chapter looks at the curriculum in relation to Pasifika education. I contend that if Pasifika students are to achieve academically, on their terms, through their ways of knowing; then the curriculum needs to reflect their identities and their cultures. Furthermore, this chapter looks at what knowledge or cultural capital the curriculum validates, and which cultural capital is disregarded as useful when in an educational context. Often the cultural capital that Pasifika students bring to the classroom is not validated by teachers, and as a result, Pasifika students struggle to find a place of belonging in the education system. This section of the chapter also considers gaps in research in relation to the Pasifika curriculum in specific learning areas of the NZC. Interestingly, some work has been done in the area of social studies, from which Wendt-Samu

concluded that teachers are open to teaching about Pacific concepts and ideas, but usually only do so on a superficial level. Finally this chapter looked at *The Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012* and the intentions and goals of this document. Whilst I believe this is a positive step forward for Pasifika education, the follow through on this policy is essential if we are to recognise the ideals of this plan.

In my experiences the national curriculum does create opportunity for autonomous selection of historical contexts to be studied, and allows for creative pedagogy in the classroom. I believe that this has the potential to result in history courses that cater to the diversity of our classrooms. With this in mind, I asked the participants in my research what they would include in the classroom history curriculum if they were given the chance to design the history programme for themselves. The responses from this discussion are explored in Chapter Five; *Pasifika students discuss their ideal secondary school history programme*.

CHAPTER FIVE: PASIFIKA STUDENTS DISCUSS THEIR IDEAL SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY PROGRAMME

Introduction

I remember my first day as a teacher very clearly. On the 28th of January 2010, I sat at the front of my classroom, in a South Auckland, decile one, Catholic school, with 28 Pasifika students in front of me. At approximately 9.30am I began to call the class roll, and at about 10am I had finished what was supposed to be a quick task. Many of the Pasifika names on my roll were long, had apostrophes, had a number of vowels in them, and required a quick lesson in Samoan and Tongan blends in order to master. It had taken me half an hour to practice the pronunciation of 28 names. My catch line during roll call was “is this how your mother would say it?” I remember the students laughing in a friendly and mildly impressed way as I worked for perfection. I also remember how not one but 28 voices would correct me as I got it wrong. By the end of the first day I realised that if I was to get the most out of the students, and the most out of this job, I would have to be comfortable and ready to assume the role of learner. I was almost completely unprepared and inexperienced in teaching Pasifika students and I found that the easiest way to address this was to talk to, and learn from them. Since beginning as a teacher I have found that talking to students has been the most valuable professional development. From my students I have been able to learn what excites them about learning and what can happen in the classroom to “turn them off” from learning. My students share with me what makes for engaging and effective pedagogy and what they want and need from their teachers both inside and outside the classroom. By this logic this final chapter asks the research participants to discuss “how they would have it, if only they had the chance.” I was interested in what students would include in the classroom history curriculum and why they would make these decisions. Importantly, I wanted to see if the course designed by this group would meet the requirements of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), align with the principles of the *Effective Pedagogy in Social Sciences/Tikanga ā Iwi: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]* document, and satisfy the individual needs and interests of each student.

With the changing demographic of New Zealand as a result of migration particularly from the Pacific Islands and Asia, it is becoming pertinent for teachers to engage with literature that addresses cultural diversity in the classroom. A worldwide phenomenon of increasing cultural diversity in the classroom has resulted in many educators looking for pedagogically effective practices (Allison and Rehm, 2007; Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afai, Taleni & O'Regan, 2009; Hartoonian, 2007; Wendt-Samu, 2010). As a result of this growing diversity, New Zealand policy makers, educational institutions and teachers, have begun to consider how they can offer more culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum and pedagogy that caters for all students in the classroom (Alton-Lee, 2003; Fletcher et al. 2009; Wendt-Samu, 2006). This growing diversity creates a challenge for today's educators to find pedagogical practices that better cater to the diversity in their classrooms. Many educators have worked comfortably in what has traditionally been a "European dominated society with predominately European-based education systems" (Fletcher et al., 2009, p. 25).

It is important that Pasifika students can identify themselves in the classroom and the curriculum. It is through pedagogy and content, as well as the other facets of secondary school, that teachers can ensure that they are enabling the "identifying process" to occur and be legitimate for students (Nakhid, 2002). Nakhid uses the class photo analogy, pointing out how the first person we look for in a class photo is ourselves. This is also true for students who wish to see themselves in the curriculum. I can relate to Nakhid's analogy and believe that the setting for the "school picture" she talks about could include the classroom, the course outline, or even the special character of the school. My research looks at whether the research participants can find themselves in the class photo if the setting for the photo is the history curriculum. Wendt Samu (2009) argues that "teacher decision making is a political process that has become an even stronger determinant for whether or not Pacific topics will be included in school....programmes, given that the national directives for the inclusion of such topics no longer exists" (p. 108). As Arrowsmith (2005) points out, there is no mention of the Pacific context in the social studies essence statement or *Achievement Objectives* of the 2007 revised *New Zealand Curriculum*. In fact Pasifika people are only explicitly mentioned in the essence statements for The

Arts (p. 20) and Learning Languages (p. 24). However, the NZC *Principles of inclusion* and *cultural diversity* mean the needs of Pasifika students should be considered by educators. I feel as though the few mentions of Pasifika people in the NZC, has made it even more important for schools and teachers to make deliberate decisions on the behalf of their students, to ensure all students can find themselves in the history “class photo” (Nakhid, 2002). Whilst literature can be informative and provide food for thought on how this can be done, it is by listening to the students themselves that I am most likely to make effective changes to my teaching practice to make it more culturally responsive. Therefore, in this chapter students speak about what they wish to study in history. Importantly, they are asked to consider what historical topics could be included in the classroom curriculum to help with their “identifying process”.

In this chapter I discuss how the ideas that emerged from my research can be considered when designing classroom history programmes and individual lessons. The research participants share what they want more of in history, how they connect with history, and what it is that really engages them in the history classroom. The aim of this chapter is to provide a stage for the students’ thoughts on history course design, the relevance of historical contexts studied and the connections they make with these. In the Talanoa the participants spoke about the history programme they would design for themselves and elaborated on the reasons for their selections. I was struck by how much I had underestimated the capacity of these students to challenge themselves, make connections to wider contexts, and to engage with histories that at times seemed to contrast with their own experiences in the world. Despite this, the research participants also cherished the chance to learn about the Mau movement. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Mau organisation was a Samoan non-violent movement that began in the early twentieth century to work for independence from German, and later New Zealand rule. Studying the Mau movement not only helped the students with their own identifying process, as indicated by Grace and Sena in Chapter Two, but also because it engaged the whole family and wider community in conversation around the students’ learning. Finally, students in this research stated that it was when history moved them emotionally; made them feel sad, angry or proud, that it was most engaging and enjoyable. The importance of establishing a learning

community and prioritising and nurturing the different relationships in the classroom also provided important insights for teachers. The Talanoa revealed that teachers did not need to make big changes to their practice, but rather revisit considerations around content and pedagogy to enhance Pasifika engagement and learning in history.

Pasifika students design a history programme of relevance

Lawton (1980) questioned issues of controversy, control, and power that arise when developing curriculum policy. The questions he posed 30 years ago are still worth asking today. As mentioned in Chapter Four of this thesis (p. 67), Lawton (1980) asked the crucial cultural question of, “what is worthwhile?” and the political question; “who makes the selection?” (as cited in Mutch 2000, p. 13). These questions strongly resonated with me, and I wondered what my research participants would include in the classroom curriculum if they had autonomy to do so. My research gave me the opportunity to ask students this question. I found that their selection of contexts for a history programme, as well as their appreciation for the differing perspectives and interpretation of history (as discussed in Chapter Three) would accommodate the requirements of the national curriculum. Their suggested programme develops understandings around beliefs and practices, cultural diversity, and conflicting values systems. Furthermore, their programme caters to the *Vision* of the NZC as it prepares students for active citizenship while also meeting the history *Achievement Objectives* by considering events of significance to New Zealanders.

In 2007 the NZC introduced some interesting changes for history. Five of the six *history Achievement Objectives* set out for history across the senior levels, now include the phrase “of significance to New Zealanders” (Ministry of Education, 2007). For me, the changes made to the history *Achievement Objectives* puts the question of “how is this relevant to students in my classroom?” at the forefront of my decision making and assessment throughout the history programme. The question of relevance is discussed by Coxon (2010) when she looked at the life work of Tongan educationalist, Futa Helu, who in himself has become an institution. Helu talked about the catch phrase of

“relevance” that educators were so quick to convert parents, students, and businesses too. He argues that this doctrine,

...was hinged on the premise of a society having a unity of interests, whereas all that were being promoted was the specific interests of the powerful, thus the utilitarian-vocational understanding of education informing these developments was exploitative education at its most effective (as cited in Coxon, 2010, p. 2).

The NZC asks teachers to look at moments in history that have historical significance for New Zealanders. However, as Seixas (1997), a scholar of history education, argued students from diverse ethnic backgrounds sometimes have difficulty coordinating their perspective on historical significance with those presented in the school curriculum (p. 2). The *Effective Pedagogy in Social Sciences BES* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) states that students must be able to see the relevance and importance of their subject in their own lives, and be able to explain why some historical events have a significance and resonance for them. The emphasis put on relevance and significance in the previous *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum*, (Ministry of Education, 1997) and current NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007), led me to ask the students what they saw as relevant, interesting, and important. I wanted to see if there was in fact a consensus on what was considered significant history to be included in the course. I was interested to hear whether the topics I considered relevant for students in my classroom, were the same as those that the students in my research prioritised. It is interesting to note the students’ responses do not focus on current social concerns such as global warming or environmental sustainability. Additionally, they do not include previously popular contexts explored in school history such as the Vietnam War or World Wars; but rather included topics that reflected themes and ideas that they deemed relevant or had some understanding of.

When first asked what they would include in the history course the students all agreed with the response “Pacific studies”. Interestingly, the first historical context they would include would relate closely to their identities as Pacific Islanders. Their reasoning, “because there are more Pacific Islanders here [at this school]...and girls will be more interested in learning about their own

background cos it will kinda relate to them” shows us how the exact context was not as important as the historical setting. It did not seem to matter whether they studied the Mau movement, Fijian Coup, the Dawn Raids, or the Tu’i Tongan Empire; what matters is that it is a historical context that is located in the Pacific Islands “cos it will kinda relate to them’. This initial response of the research participants supports my arguments as written in Chapter Four and in the introduction of this chapter, around the need for Pasifika students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. However, rather than needing exact matches to their identities, they are willing in some part to forego the specificities, as long as the Pasifika umbrella (Wendt-Samu, 2006) is in some way represented.

The participants’ first instinct was to include a Pacific topic, and this perhaps reveals a longing for a context that more directly links to their identity. However, the following selections for their own history programme show that Pasifika students are able to make sense of, and connect to distant and unfamiliar histories as well. Students opted to include the Elizabethan period because as Sena notes, “it has an impact on today, cos after a few centuries it comes to New Zealand.” The participants saw a pattern between the problems both England and New Zealand faced during different era’s in history. They believe that the aspects of life in England during the 16th and 17th centuries were repeated in New Zealand during the 19th century. Arrowsmith (2005) argued that the “Irish rebellion, Nazi Germany and Tudor-Stuart England are all interesting topics, but a continuation of this pattern will cast history as an increasingly irrelevant subject for “browning” young New Zealanders to study (p. 22). However, students in my research have shown that this is not entirely the case, as they can make their own valid connections to these contexts. Despite this, teachers still need to model for students how these contexts are relevant and how connections are present, as this is what students overwhelmingly requested from their history experience. Wendt Samu (2006) suggests that teachers need to link the course content to their students’ worldview and ensure that the material covered in the classroom curriculum has parallel associations. This does not have to be through explicit links such as studying periods of England’s history because New Zealand is part of the British Commonwealth, or for that matter studying New Zealand history because we are residents of New Zealand. The research participants showed they

were capable of making more complex connections therefore making a variety of topics “relevant” to their lives. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Laine was interested in learning “Turkish stuff”. She explained:

Learning about the old countries like Turkey and that area. And Iraq and stuff. Like they have their ... they have like their own traditions and stuff, like there are heaps of groups there that still carry on their traditions and like we can relate it to our culture like we still carry on our traditions.

Similarly, Nino wanted to include New Zealand’s 19th Century women’s suffrage movement into the course because “I am from a family where [the] majority are boys and they always overrule me and like just learning about how girls - how girls like, how they are up there with the men and all.” These comments show the students’ ability to make valid and deep connections with the content they are engaging with, in order to find relevance in what they are studying. Rather than wanting to learn about Iraq because New Zealand has troops deployed there; or studying the woman suffrage movement in New Zealand because this is why she can now vote in elections, students found a deeper level of relevance from these contexts. Laine saw similarities in cultural practices as relevant to her life, whilst Nino related the social status of New Zealand women in the 19th century to the gender roles of her own family or inequalities women face in her culture. By considering cultural and social practices in relation to their own experiences, an entry point of “relevance” was created that allowed students to engage with an unfamiliar historical context and to find significance for people living in New Zealand.

Pasifika students made connections with historical contexts in ways that linked back to their identities or culture; but also found connections in the underlying concepts of a topic and by identifying changes that occur over time. The students in this research unanimously included a study of the American Black Civil Rights Movement of 1950-1970 into their history programme. A Samoan student, Sera, explained for the group; “Because injustices do happen... The injustices of that day, like, what happened back then, still happens today...”, then Laine elaborated,

and because there are more fundamentalist type people, now people are starting to take more action, in the 50s era everyone was all about peace, like Ghandi and King and stuff, but now everyone is like we need more action...

Initially this response seemed to be quite predictable and clichéd; most the participants wanted to learn about the Black Civil Rights movement, and considered it relevant because racial inequality still exists today. However, Laine continued to explain in the Talanoa why she would include a Black Civil Rights topic. She made connections between the protest methods of the mid-twentieth century with the more abrupt approaches used by some religious fundamentalist groups, such as Al Qaeda, in the present day. This showed an incredible process of thought. Laine had not only demonstrated the ability to think about a specific aspect of the Black Civil Rights topic, non-violent protest; but she thought deeper about how this protest may have differed if it occurred today. She found relevance in this topic by considering how this history would look if it was transferred to the present and influenced by current attitudes in society.

The final point of significance that came from this aspect of the conversation has important implications for history teachers. Despite enjoying Pacific Studies, the students made it very clear that the topics did not have to be Pasifika topics in order to be relevant to their lives. I believe that to include topics such as the Samoan Mau Movement for independence from New Zealand's administration, or the Dawn raids in New Zealand during the 1970s, on the reasoning that they will be relevant to Pasifika Students, fails to acknowledge their ability to search for and find deeper relevance in vastly strange and unfamiliar historical contexts. Furthermore, I felt from the students that there was a longing to know something big, to travel (if only by imagination) to a new place or time, and experience something beyond the cultures they were so familiar with. The students in this research talked about how history provides an opportunity for them to temporarily move outside of their local setting. As Mary commented;

I want to know more about something that I haven't learnt about, it's not your world but you get to experience learning it. You get to experience that world by learning about it. You get to picture what it would be like...you just get to run wild with your imagination.

This links to the work of Milo-Schaaf and Robinson (2010) who argue there is an attractiveness of being able to master more than one environment. Knowledge and schooling needs to be about taking the knowledge and skills learnt and using it in another environment, as this is what will make it relevant and personal. Laine's comment reflects this thinking:

It doesn't need to be [linked] to our culture, but to other ideas that interest us, like if we are doing NZ history, link it to the other countries we are interested in, or like link it to today, and then we start to see a connection between history and different countries, with the here and now, in New Zealand.

This last point links closely to the contention of Tosh (2008) who argues in *Why History Matters*,

the best thing we can do for students through history education is allow them to see themselves situated in time - to allow them to recognise the centrality of change and development in accounting for the world around them (p. 127).

This is indeed what the research participants seem to be asking for from their history teachers.

The history programme that the research participants chose for themselves is well rounded. It draws on universal themes such as cultural traditions and gender representations; fits with their moral standings around treatment of humanity, the principles they base their lives on such as equality and justice, and their own lived experiences. It is important to note how the course content they selected for their classroom curriculum, and the reasons they provided for this are never linked to underachievement or their low socio economic status. This is how educators identify Pasifika students in education, rather than how Pasifika students define themselves (Hernandez Sheets, 2005; Nakhid, 2002; Portes,

2005). This comes back to Nakhid's (2002) argument that generalisations of particular groups can be made as long as they are based on the image and generalisations that the group themselves identify with, and not the construction that serves the dominant culture.

Studying the Samoan Mau movement (1914-1962) is significant in the participants' lives

When given the opportunity to design the history course, the participants' most immediate response was to include a Pasifika topic. They discussed how they could relate to historical topics that would be unfamiliar to them, and expressed the desire for these to be included in the course as well. However, first and foremost, they wanted a topic that directly linked to their Pasifika identities. At Year 12 (Level Two NCEA) the students in this research had been given the chance to study a Pacific topic in their history programme. This topic was the Samoan Mau Movement (1914-1962). In this topic students learn how Samoa opposed the rule of New Zealand from (1914-1962) until their independence. Students studying this topic explore the way Samoa organised themselves to form *O le Mau a Samoa, (the firm opinion of Samoa)*, more commonly known as the Mau, and they consider the leadership provided by Tupua Tamasese Leolofi III, the leader of the Mau who was shot during a Mau procession in 1929. They look at the role passive resistance played in the Mau protest, and the tragic event of Black Saturday in which members of the Mau lost their lives from shots fired by New Zealand policemen during a protest demonstration. The topic ends with Samoa gaining independence from New Zealand administration in 1962, and New Zealand's Prime Minister, Helen Clark's apology to the Samoan people in 2002.

Whilst this topic is specific to Samoan history, the non-Samoan research participants also enjoyed learning about the Mau movement. The students in this research, who had done Year 12 history, considered it one of the highlights of their school history experience. As mentioned in Chapter Two (p. 35-36), the Samoan students had a sense that they were learning more about themselves. Students commented that they were "learning about our cultural history"; "we don't even know about us"; "wow this is where we come from", and "I had no idea about my ancestors' past." However, those students that were not Samoan (Tongan and Fijian) also seemed to connect with the topic because it was set in a

Pasifika context. Not only was this topic about their Pacific neighbours but also the themes of independence and self-government are central also to the struggle of their own Pacific nations. A Tongan student, Tee, made a connection with the Mau protest against New Zealand government to the protests of the Polynesian Panthers in New Zealand in the 1970s. In her comment she alludes to how the consideration of Pasifika people is important because they have often contributed to New Zealand's history. She stated: "Especially cos of what happened with the panthers and all that...we have a mark on New Zealand history as well now."

Importantly, studying the Mau movement also had positive consequences for Pasifika students as it pulled the family into the students' learning. Students talked about how they shared their learning with their parents, and how their parents shared stories back. This reciprocal learning and teaching allowed the family to become involved and invest in the students' education. This was something valued by the research participants. Grace commented, "they know about it...it was good to have something to talk to them...have a conversation with them about something that is important." Sera added: "Yeah they were telling me the whole life story..." The whole group echoed these comments. These responses show how studying the Mau movement helped to build a learning community around the student, an aspect that Aitken and Sinnema (2008) see as key for student success in the social sciences. Interestingly, Pasifika students did not seem to have this same engagement with parents and the wider community when studying other topics. When asked if they shared with their parents what they learnt this year in history (New Zealand in the 19th century), they responded quite differently. Sena said: "No, no cos they are migrants". Grace said: "No, they are not interested," and Laine elaborated "I think that is probably why we are not interested, growing up in a family that doesn't care about [New Zealand] history." The students perceived that their parents were not interested in hearing about other topics they studied, or that their parents could not talk to them about other topics because they were unfamiliar with the history. Sera defended her parents saying, "It's not really that they aint interested, it's that they don't know." The group also agreed, as Laine exemplifies: "You can't really talk to them about it cos they don't know anything about it." These insights have important implications for teachers who often struggle to find ways to draw parents into

their students learning. For these students and their parents it seems that more learning is taken from the classroom into the home when it is likely to be engaging and interesting to the parents as well.

However, through interactions with the students I teach, I have noticed another trend. When the history I teach moves my students emotionally (shock, anger, sadness, hope or happiness), these students share what they have learnt in history with their peers and also their siblings, often in settings outside of school. When teaching about the Emmitt Till a young African American boy who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955, or Tigi Ness, a Polynesian Panther involved with the Dawn raids in New Zealand during the 1970s, my students were visibly moved by these experiences and told their siblings and friends. Over the next week I had visits from various younger siblings and students' friends asking me for more information on these historical events. These interactions showed me that Pasifika students enjoy sharing their learning with others and once inspired to do so, will happily share with someone else about what they have learnt. This not only helps the student to revise and cement their knowledge and understanding of the history being shared, but also provides the student with the experience of teaching someone rather than always assuming the position of "learner".

Pasifika students engage with history when it stirs emotions

In the discussion that precedes this section, it is clear there is a great deal of literature and evidence to support the contention that the curriculum needs to be relevant for the students who receive it. For history teachers, this means we need to carefully select historical contexts that will have either explicit or underlying connections to our students own understandings and experiences. As the research participants showed, students are often capable of making these connections themselves, on a level much more complex than we perhaps give them credit for. However, in discussing how they related to the ideas and themes or experiences, my research participants revealed how they also craved an emotional relationship with the history being studied. They wanted to relate to the "feelings" of people in the past as well. Students expressed how they got angry for the people who were treated unjustly, felt sad and shared in the loss people of the past experienced, had hope, celebrated success, and became frustrated on behalf of groups and

individuals from the past. As the participants discussed their course selection, I was amazed at how central the role of emotion was to engaging these students in their learning. The historical contexts that had managed to move them emotionally had also managed to engage them in the learning. This insight, revealed in the Talanoa conversations, showed me how attractive the “affective” side of history is to Pasifika Students. I believe this has significant implications for teachers, as it provides a practical suggestion of how to initially engage Pasifika students with history. This relates to the work of New Zealand teacher and researcher Davison (2010) who has focused on historical empathy in history and the *relating to others* Key Competency from the NZC. Empathy is about making an emotional connection with the past to help students be moved appropriately by the events they are studying (Bardige, 1988). Davison (2011) looked at how exercises in historical empathy require students to draw on both the cognitive and affective aspects of the past. In the early stages of his research, Davison found that the group of students that began learning a topic through the “affective” were better engaged than the group that began the topic with content overview. Therefore Davison found that moving the students emotionally was a good method to bettering student engagement with the past (Davison, 2011). Similarly, this finding can be seen in my research. Lepe’s comment; “I got more involved... [Hitler] made me angry, and I get passionate about it, and want to learn more, I want to know why, and then I have heaps of questions...” This response clearly shows Lepe’s process of engagement with the past. After an initial teaching episode on Hitler, she was moved to anger at the atrocities his regime committed, the arrogance he showed and the way he manipulated the people of Germany in order to become dictator in 1933. This anger then triggered Lepe’s passion to know more, to inquire and to question. Not only was her emotion a trigger to her engagement with the historical narrative, but it prompted her to think critically and actively participate in class by asking questions.

Lepe’s comment was not an isolated response. There was group consensus that studying Black Civil Rights was interesting because as Mele commented; “the white people- how badly they treated African Americans...It was horrible.” Another student added: “it was a real life situation. We wanted to know why they got treated like that, it’s not fair. I was scared and sad at the same time.” Finally,

Laine offered: “You know, you get that feeling in the stomach, like, oh my gosh, what if something worse happens.” These quotes emphasise how taking students from the comfort of present day, and exposing them to the injustices, challenges, and in some instances, successes of the past; is an effective way to increase engagement with the history. To use the words of students, “things that were shocking” or “the real stuff” was more interesting to them. For them, feeling emotion as a reaction to what happened to the people in history was real and therefore interesting. Furthermore, feeling the past they were studying seemed to give Pasifika students in this research a personal connection with the history being taught. One student commented, “you feel like it’s personal, you want to get more involved.” In my daily interactions with students in my history class, I have noticed a readiness to become emotionally committed to the history we are studying. When watching films, YouTube clips, or even listening to my stories of events in the past, students have often cheered spontaneously at a small success of the “underdog”, cried whilst listening to gross injustices, and even got visibly frustrated by what they were hearing.

Students I teach seem ready and willing to relate to the past and explain it by comparing it to their own experiences. Rather than studying the past, the research participants wanted to experience the past. They wanted the past to be made as real and as personal as possible. As a history teacher I was then intrigued as to how I can bring the past to life for my students. The research participants offered suggestions such as role plays, watching movies, using archives, going to places, through effective storytelling and trying to provide the lived experience of the past. This research shows that students enjoyed history when the past was recreated for them by the teacher, or opportunities existed when they were able to recreate the past for themselves through role play, analysing sources and engaging historical imagination. They shared a history experience when they studied the Black Civil Rights topic. Their teacher had created a classroom community where segregation existed and, as a simulation, treated the left handed students differently to the right handed students. The students recalled, “You can feel it...we could feel segregation.” What strikes me from this aspect of the conversations is that the suggestions offered by the students are practical and realistic ideas that can be included in the classroom curriculum with relative ease.

If the result is engaged and invested learners then a small effort may have great benefits. As summarised by Laine and Sera;

Laine: History needs to be real. Because it's different it's... (gets interrupted)

Sera: I don't know, because, you can relate to it

Laine: It makes us want to learn more.

Pasifika students reveal the importance of classroom relationships

When I look back on my four year teacher education programme at the University of Waikato, I believe the phrase I heard most was that “relationships are key”. If not for any other reason, the fact that this was the emphasis of my learning whilst at the Faculty of Education makes it deserving of its reputation in New Zealand. Perhaps my identity and philosophy around teaching made me more aware of these three words but I genuinely believe the university got their focus right. For four years I was not only encouraged to think about what my relationships were like with my teachers when I was a secondary student, but I was also challenged to consider the relationships I had with my peers, parents and community in relation to my learning. I remember one exercise vividly. Our class of 40 pre-service secondary teachers were asked to surmise from our own experiences what it was that made the “good” teachers so effective in the classroom. At the crux of our class’s contributions, was that the good teachers were the ones that made an effort to *know* us. Not just our names and a hobby, but rather they knew what kind of learner we were, what type of humour we had, when to push us harder, when to break down the barrier and show they cared and what rugby game to come and watch. These teachers knew when to get our parents involved or when to deal with the matter in class, when to give us space, they knew how to inspire, they knew how to support and they knew what to say to individual learners to motivate them effectively. For these teachers, relationships were key. When teaching I have always made the relationship I have with my students, and the relationship the students have with each other my first priority. Whilst this approach to teaching helped me create positive teaching and learning experiences as a student-teacher on practicums, I believe it has paid its greatest reward at the school I currently teach at.

When working with Pasifika students at my school, I have noticed that when I place myself in the position of teacher, stand at the front of the room, instruct and set tasks, the students in my class will respond by getting their work out, note taking and completing the work without question. In my observations of the students I teach, when faced with an authoritative teacher they comply, but do not engage with the learning. Again this may link to the work of Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi, Taleni, O'Regan, (2009) and Tiatia (1998) who argue that to question a person of authority, such as a teacher, is not fa'asamoa. Therefore to question or challenge me in the classroom may not align with my students' identities. When I spend time talking to students in my class about their lives and mine, sit among them as I teach, ask them questions, speak using less jargon, have them lead discussions and relinquish some of my power to the students, they respond by taking risks in the classroom. They participate knowing it is ok to be wrong. In short, Pasifika students become ready to take a chance in their learning. Furthermore, my experiences reflect Wendt-Samu's (1995) work in which she suggests that teachers make use of "instructional language that does not make students feel incompetent about their own abilities" (p. 18, as cited in Aitken & Sinnema, 2008). By doing this teachers show they are sincerely interested in their students and have an understanding of who they are (Wendt-Samu, 1995, as cited in Aitken & Sinnema, 2008).

As part of establishing positive relationships in history classrooms, teachers need to establish a positive learning community. These two things are strongly intertwined. The students in a classroom need to have positive relationships among themselves so that they feel they can take risk in the classroom, without being vulnerable to criticism or negative reactions from their peers. My research participants talked about wanting to act as a learning community, and being able to draw from all the knowledge of different students. For this reason, they enjoyed debating historical perspectives and interpretations during class. It allowed them to pull the ideas together and consider multiple viewpoints, expressed by Sera, for example, "we were doing it against each other, it naturally arose in class. Feeding ideas off each other, in the end we were able to learn both ways of this one topic." A teacher who is able to pursue these moments that occur spontaneously and allow the students to continue with the debate, will

in turn create a learning opportunity for their students. Discussion and debate are by no means the only way of achieving an effective learning community and the participants noted that something as simple as the configuration of desks assists in creating a more conducive learning community. Nino commented, “I think that’s why it so hard in X’s room, cos we feel like, so separated. We can’t connect in his room because it’s like front and back.” Another student agreed, “And [the desk format last year] made us feel tighter, like we were all a group, but like this year, it’s as if...I don’t know, we are split up.” Most the participants also suggested that having the same teacher and similar students in your history class for consecutive years also helped build up the learning community. They suggested that this made the transition between the years easier, they had a bond with the teacher and began to have class “jokes” that helped break down the barriers between teacher and students. This is not to suggest these students wanted to be “friends” with their teachers but rather, they wanted a teacher that would relate to them, that would share some personal stories with them so they felt confident to share back, and to feel like their teacher was one of them.

The themes from Pasifika students’ conversations resonate strongly with the responses Aitkin and Sinnema (2008) include in the *Effective Pedagogy in Social Sciences BES*. In this document Aitkin and Sinnema talk about establishing productive teacher-student relationships. The research participants in the BES talked about teachers who “mingled with us and wanted to know us outside the classroom” and “shared stories...it makes you feel confident enough to share your own story” (p. 137). Coxon (2010) analysed the type of pedagogy and curriculum encouraged by Futa Helu. Coxon (2010) found that Helu placed emphasis on a relaxed and informal teaching environment in which critical thought, debate, questioning and contention was encouraged. In Futa Helu’s learning institutes in Tonga, teachers are not the absolute authority in the classroom but “just better informed learners whose own learning could be advanced through the teaching process” (p. 5). Again, the pedagogy seen in the classrooms of Futa Helu’s schools, reflect the request that students in my study made. The following comment by Grace, a Samoan student in my research, summarises this section of the chapter well. It highlights the importance of both creating positive relationships and a learning community. Grace suggested that teachers need to

work together with students and listen to what their student have to say. Furthermore, when teachers are successful in building a learning community, students are more likely to see success at school as possible rather than being overwhelmed by their education. She commented “[teachers] should listen to us, instead of doing it their way, they should try compromise with us.” Grace explained the way in which Pasifika students learn as; “talking, activities, acting, communicating, helping each other learn...so we don’t need to struggle on our own.”

Research participants discuss teaching pedagogy that works for them

As a teacher I constantly question whether I am taking the best approach in class. Should I be firmer, should I set more activities, should I dress up, should I give notes? What is it that my students really want from me? On numerous occasions I ask students, in an informal manner, for feedback on my lessons. The feedback is usually a balance between praise and constructive advice, and I believe this is a result of the respect and the common goal for learning that underpins the relationship between the students and me. It interests me to hear what students consider as good pedagogy and what they value in a teacher. History education scholars Barton and Levstik (2003), found that despite having complex understandings of what history is, university students who took history stated good teachers were the ones that told the best stories and put the best notes on the board. Again, these findings motivated me to ask the research participants how their teachers’ pedagogy and attitudes in history enhanced their learning experience. The ideas research participants discussed fit into two categories. Firstly, the actions teachers can do, and secondly, the way teachers can “be”. Their responses are heartening as students were not asking for the impossible or the unrealistic, but rather, were seeking simple changes in teacher attitudes and small actions that could be easily introduced in the classroom. Pasifika students enjoyed teachers who “are crazy but cool” (Sera) and that “make us do out of it stuff” (Mele). Students in this research were also aware that each individual learns in a different way. They asked that teachers remember this and “mix it up a bit”.

For research participants, the mind sets and attitudes of teachers are just as important as the actions teachers take in classrooms. The students value passion in

their history teachers. Ana stated that it helps “having a teacher that is passionate about history, and then we feel passionate about history too.” As well as passion, participants asked for patience and time from their teachers. For these students it was important that teachers “taught in the moment” and allowed the teaching to stop in order to address a problem or questions that arise. Mary commented, “Go out of your way to check our understanding. If we don’t get it [the teachers] still carry on. It’s hard to carry on when we don’t understand.” When listening to the conversations, it is clear that when students don’t understand a key concept or event in history it needs to be explained clearly or else the confusion mounts causing individuals to feel overwhelmed by history. Finally, students asked that teachers be patient with them regardless of what level of achievement they are at. They appreciate teachers who make time for the high-achieving student as well as the struggling student, and for those who maintain a belief that academic achievement is a reachable goal for each individual in the class. As Gorinski & Shortland-Nuku (2006) have highlighted, culturally responsive teachers do not sacrifice high achievement, but rather take steps to support minority group learners in their academic pursuits. I believe that these principles of time, passion and patience, are most likely to result in improved engagement for all students. With this in mind, I hope that the insights shared by students in my research may lead teachers to reflect upon their own teaching philosophy.

Conclusion

This chapter began with a reminder of Nakhid’s (2002) class photo analogy of how we all instinctively look for ourselves in the class photo and our absence leads us to feel as if we do not belong. Nakhid argues the same is true for the curriculum; students look to see if they can find themselves in this also. In this chapter I have considered Nakhid’s analogy in relation to the history curriculum and how teachers must ensure that Pasifika students can see themselves in the curriculum. Catering to the cultural diversity of our classes is becoming more important and necessary as the demographic of our classrooms continues to diversify and change. I believe the teacher is not always the best person to be making decisions about the classroom history curriculum, especially when at times we may not know our students as well as we could. Therefore, students could work with their teacher to design the classroom history programme. When

asking the research participants what they would include in the classroom history curriculum, their responses included a wide range of topics and they were able to explain their reasons for the selections they made.

Given emphasis placed put on “relevance” in past and current curriculum policies (Ministry of Education; 1993, 1997, 2007) and the Social Sciences BES (2008), this chapter has considered how the topics the students chose for their history programme are relevant to their lives. Students began by requesting a Pacific historical context to study as it would link to their Pasifika identity. However, subsequent topic selections demonstrated complex understanding of the concept of relevance and how historical contexts can be relevant on different levels. The research participants were able to find parallels in a range of diverse topics and make relevant connections back to their own lives in the 21st century. These connections were not only made back to their own culture or experiences, but sometimes “relevance” was found in a universal concept or theme such as “injustice”. Relevance was also found by imagining how that history may have looked if it was transferred to a present situation or context.

I have also discussed the participants’ desire to learn something completely different to their cultures and the Pakeha culture of the school. I argue that by studying a variety of contexts in history, Pasifika students are briefly exposed to a different world, different cultural ways, and different experiences; this provides them with a sense they are expanding their repertoire of cultural understandings and temporarily moving outside of their local setting.

This chapter then has looked at the importance that the research participants and their families attached to the opportunity to study the Samoan Mau movement from 1914-1962. Not only did the research participants gain a deeper understanding of their own identities, but they also enjoyed the benefits of being able to discuss their learning with their parents. Studying the Mau movement helps draw parents into the learning community that supports their daughters’ learning. Unfortunately, the students in this research felt that their parents were less confident in discussing other historical topics with them perhaps as a result of a perceived lack of knowledge around these topics.

I have also considered the role emotion can have in helping to engage Pasifika students with history. There was overwhelming agreement from the students that engagement with history most occurred when the historical context being studied created an emotional response. This insight has important implications for history teachers as it highlights the need for pedagogy that includes the affective domains of history as well as the cognitive (Davison, 2010). For my students the more “*real*” history was made for them and the more easily they could rebuild a sense of it and feel it in their minds, the more engaged and interested they became in learning.

The chapter has looked at the role of relationships and the learning community as being central to student success in education. I feel that the relationship a teacher chooses to have with their students can determine the attitude and approach to learning that students take in the classroom. I have looked at the suggestions the Pasifika students made as to how teachers can create an environment conducive to building a positive learning community. This includes not only pedagogical suggestions, but also simple steps such as desk configuration. I have drawn on the ideas of the Tongan educator, Futa Helu, to show how his philosophies align with what my students are asking of their teachers.

Finally, in this chapter, I have shared some of the attributes that students in my research appreciate in their teachers. I found it encouraging that they did not expect miracles from their teachers, but rather they offered do-able suggestions such as variety in class activities, visual aids, and pedagogy that helps bring history “to life.” They also asked that their teachers maintain both patience and high expectations of all students, as the students believed this would help make academic achievement possible.

CONCLUSION

As a beginning teacher I had so many questions about how I should teach, whether I was making the right decisions, what helped my students to learn, and how I could develop my history pedagogy. Two years on, and having completed my research, the same questions remain, but the manner in which I attempt to answer them has changed. Whilst trial, error and reflection are still, in part, a way I attempt to answer these questions, I have come to see talking to my students as my first “port of call.” It is by talking with my students that I have been able to design the thesis and share the findings. For the most part, they have assisted me to answer my initial research questions (refer to p. 3). Furthermore, it is from talking to the students I teach that I have come to know them better. As a result I am beginning to make more informed decisions in order to enhance the teaching and learning experience of the classroom history curriculum.

The use of student voice is entwined throughout this thesis. I found the quality of the student sharing ideas was greatly enhanced by the Talanoa methodology used. The themes and ideas discussed in this research, were generated from the informal and non-rigid framework that the Tongan Talanoa method provided (Vaiioleti, 2006). This open sharing of conversation enabled participants to interrupt, support, contradict, explain and elaborate on what their peers were saying. This in turn led to a better understanding of the ideas about their cultures and school history experiences. I found that when the Talanoa worked best, it allowed the participants to act as prompts for each other. This meant I could focus on listening to the conversation and achieve a more genuine understanding of the themes being discussed.

The identities of myself and the participants needed to be storied in this thesis. This has taken account of the power dynamics and cross cultural issues that arose in the research. However, my identity was important as it positioned me both inside and outside the research, and influenced the way I understood the ideas that students shared. The students’ identities were also discussed as an important aspect of the research. The participants in this study had developed complex and fluid identities as a result of societal, family, cultural, school, and community expectations and perceptions of “normal”. It was in considering the

students' identities that I was able to recognise and begin to understand how the cultural experiences of each participant created a personal way of knowing the past. It was through this understanding that students experienced history in the classroom. A powerful outcome of my research was that I gained insight into how students' perspectives and personal experiences of history had developed from the various contexts at play in their lives.

The revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) presents many challenges and opportunities for teachers. I feel that its greatest challenge is the responsibility it places on teachers to ensure their students identities are "recognised and heard" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). I believe this thesis challenges history teachers not only to know their students' identities, but leads teachers to reflect on how this understanding of their identities may be used to enhance the history experiences for all students in the class.

The thesis chapters initiate and contribute to this reflection process. For example, Chapter Two focused on what lies behind the identities formed by the participants, and how studying history has a dual role to play in their identity formation. Chapter Three considered how this unique sense of the past in turn shaped the way history was experienced by students. Chapter Four discussed the various conceptions and understandings of curriculum design and curriculum policies. In Chapter Four I agreed with scholars who view the curriculum as a product of the social, economic and political setting at the time of its construction. A curriculum selects knowledge and values that it considers important, and in doing so unavoidably validates some ways of knowing and ways of "being" over others. Therefore the curriculum delivered in schools can also influence the formation of students' identities. Chapter Five detailed how the students' personal way of knowing the past meant they were able to make seemingly distant historical contexts and topics relevant to their own lives.

At the outset of my research I had assumed Pasifika students experienced history in a disconnected way. Whilst they enjoyed aspects of history I felt as though they failed to find a personal connection with the historical narratives and skills they were learning. I had often wondered how well they understood the nature of historical knowledge, or whether they merely saw history as a

transmission of facts. This study revealed that the participants had a much deeper connection with, and understanding of history than I had credited them with. Rather than experiencing history at a superficial level as I had anticipated, the research participants longed for the opportunity to grapple with the conflicting interpretations that arise in history, and work on their own constructions of the past. They actively sought to make connections (often quite perceptively) between their own lives and the historical contexts they were studying.

One of the more interesting research findings was the affective impact that histories can have on student engagement and learning. When the participants were emotionally moved by the historical context they were studying in class, they were motivated to share what they had learnt with their peers, siblings and even parents. Furthermore, the students described how when their emotions were stirred, they were intrigued to learn more about a topic studied. This finding is significant as it provides a potential opportunity to draw parents and the wider community into a student's learning experiences. It also enables learning to take place outside of the classroom. Therefore, it is possible that if we can engage our students emotionally when teaching history, we may encourage further self-directed and self-initiated study. This could then result in the development of a life-long learner, as outlined in the vision of the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). I believe there is more research to be done on Pasifika students and emotional responses to the classroom history curriculum.

A second area in need of further research is the importance that the participants in this research placed on space. Upon reflection, I have categorised the students concerns around space in two ways. Firstly, the participants spoke of the physical space in the classroom. When studying history they longed to have a physical closeness to their peers. The configuration of desks needed to be conducive to cooperative learning, conversation and reciprocal teaching between fellow students. Furthermore, from my teaching experiences, I argued that for Pasifika students, ways teachers position themselves in this space is also important. By sitting among the students and by changing the position from where instruction takes place in the classroom, I was able to break down the students' perception of my authority. As a result they asked questions and engaged with their learning. Alternatively, when teaching from the front of the room I find

students are compliant but there is less interaction and critical debate. Secondly, the “intangible” space between the teacher and students was also important for the participants in this research. When teachers seek to establish a genuine interest in their students’ learning and lives, both inside and outside the classroom, a more culturally responsive environment was created in which students felt they were being supported. Having high expectations, sharing personal experiences and reaching out to the students beyond school, all helped to maintain a positive space between teacher and students.

Whilst this thesis has looked at Pasifika students’ perspectives of studying history, I believe the themes and key ideas discussed may be applied to most students, teachers and classrooms across learning areas of the New Zealand secondary curriculum. The research’s discussions around ways participants developed a personal sense of the past, made complex connections with new contexts, and responded to history when it emotionally moved them, might also reflect the experiences of different cultural groups and across other school disciplines. Further research could be done in this area. This thesis has been a process of personal reflexivity. Gaps in my professional knowledge was the impetus for the thesis, and the research has since resulted in continuous personal reflection on my professional practice. From these moments of reflection, I have attempted different approaches to teaching history. I continue to refine my pedagogy with the intention of improving student engagement in the history classroom. It is my hope that this thesis will generate similar reflexivity for those who read it.

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APPENDIX B1: COVER LETTER FOR STUDENTS



**The
University
of Waikato**
*Te Whare Wānanga
o Waikato*

Talofa, Mālō ē lelei

I am currently doing Masters research on Pasifika perspective of studying history in New Zealand. I am seeking your informed consent to participate in the research. This letter, along with the accompanying information sheet will help give you some idea about my research. Please take time to read it so that you will be comfortable and aware of the process and the details of my study.

The accompanying information sheet outlines the basic purpose of my study and also brings to your attention some of the issues and processes that will be necessary in completing my thesis. Hopefully, it will also help you to become familiar with the types of research processes that will take place.

I am interested in Pasifika perspectives of studying history, because I am currently a first year history teacher at your school, which as you know, has a large Pasifika population. I would like to gain insights on how Pasifika students experience history in New Zealand and how this experience might be enhanced. I am excited about the Talanoa/conversation that we will share. I hope that sharing your stories and perspectives will prove to be a rewarding experience for you as an individual and that this research will benefit the whole Pasifika community. I want you to feel relaxed and confident to share your stories in an open and understanding environment.

You will have control over how long or short you wish the group conversation to be. And can choose to end your participation in the conversation whenever you think it is appropriate.

I hope that you will enjoy this experience, and I appreciate and am thankful that you might be willing to give up your time. Should you give consent to be a participant in this research, I will contact you to discuss a suitable time and date for the group conversation, and address any of your concerns.

Fa'afetai Lava
Malo aupito,
God bless,

Christina Reymer.

APPENDIX B2: COVER LETTER FOR CLASSROOM TEACHER



**The
University
of Waikato**
*Te Whare Wānanga
o Waikato*

To (name removed for anonymity)

Talofa, Mālō ē lelei

I am a student at the University of Waikato and am currently doing Masters research on Pasifika perspective of studying history in New Zealand. I am seeking your informed consent to allow my research to take place with students from your class. This letter, along with the accompanying Information Sheet will help give you some idea about my research. I would appreciate you giving your time to read this so that you are comfortable and aware of the process and the details of my study.

The accompanying information sheet outlines the basic purpose of my study and also brings to your attention some of the issues and processes that will be necessary in completing my thesis. Hopefully, it will also help you to become familiar with the types of research processes that will take place.

I am interested in Pasifika perspectives of studying history, because I am currently a first year history teacher at your school, which as you know, has a large Pasifika population. I would like to gain insights on how Pasifika students experience history in New Zealand and how this experience might be enhanced. I am excited about the Talanoa/conversation that the students will share in as part of this research. I hope that sharing their stories and perspectives will prove to be a rewarding experience for them as individual and that this research will benefit the whole school and Pasifika community.

I hope that the students will enjoy this experience and that this study can contribute to the emerging research on Pacific education. I appreciate and am thankful that you might be willing to allow your students to be used for this project. Should you give consent for the students in your class to be used as a case study for my research I will contact you to discuss and address any of your concerns.

Fa'afetai Lava
Malo aupito,
God bless,

Christina Reymer.

**APPENDIX B3: COVER LETTER FOR PRINCIPAL OF MCAULEY
HIGH SCHOOL AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES**



**The
University
of Waikato**
*Te Whare Wānanga
o Waikato*

To (name removed for Anonymity) and The Board of Trustees

Talofa, Mālō ē lelei

I am a student at the University of Waikato and am currently doing Masters research on Pasifika perspective of studying history in New Zealand. I am seeking your informed consent to participate in the research. This letter, along with the accompanying Information Sheet will help give you some idea about my research. I would appreciate you giving your time to read this so that you are comfortable and aware of the process and the details of my study.

The accompanying information sheet outlines the basic purpose of my study and also brings to your attention some of the issues and processes that will be necessary in completing my thesis. Hopefully, it will also help you to become familiar with the types of research processes that will take place.

I am interested in Pasifika perspectives of studying history, because I am currently a first year history teacher at the school, which as you know, has a large Pasifika population. I would like to gain insights on how Pasifika students experience history in New Zealand and how this experience might be enhanced. I am excited about the Talanoa/conversation that the students will share in as part of this research. I hope that sharing their stories and perspectives will prove to be a rewarding experience for them as individuals and that this research will benefit the whole school and Pasifika community.

I hope that the students will enjoy this experience and that this study can contribute to the emerging research on Pacific education. I appreciate that you might be willing to allow the school to be used for this project. Should you give consent for the school to be used as a case study for my research. I will contact you to discuss and address any of your comments and queries around this research.

Fa'afetai Lava
Malo aupito,
God bless,

Christina Reymer.

APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET FOR THOSE GIVING CONSENT TO THE RESEARCH OR PARTICIPATION



The
University
of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga
o Waikato

Information Sheet about research project

Title of Project: “Miss- malamalama, it means to know and understand, but it can mean light also”: Becoming enlightened by the Pasifika Students’ perspectives of studying history in New Zealand

Research project:

I wish to conduct research with Year 13 students in this school that looks at Pasifika Perspectives of studying history in New Zealand.

Who is involved?

All Year 13 students at the school, who currently study history and identify themselves as Pasifika or, who would like to offer support to their peers during the research process.

What is involved?

Initially I will just talk to the class about my proposed research. If you are interested in participating in this study, then you will be asked to consent to being a participant in my research project. If you provide consent you will be asked to complete a short survey, and then share in a group conversation with your classmates. After I have listened to the conversations and drawn out key themes that you have discussed, we will have a reflection afternoon, where we will reflect on some of the responses and ensure I have understood you correctly.

Seeking your consent to participate

I am inviting you to participate in the research, but I do need your consent to be involved in these three activities:

- Completing a short written survey;
- Sharing in an audio-taped group conversation with classmates. This conversation has no set time limit but will probably be between 1-1.5 hours long. I hope that the conversation will give you the opportunity to share your experience in your own words. This means that I will try to keep my questions as open as possible to allow you and the group to direct the conversation in a way that feels comfortable for you. In this conversation I would like to hear about your experiences, and also about the way that you have thought and felt about studying history.
- Attending a feedback session where I reflect back some of your thinking and some key themes after listening to your group conversations. This will help to make sure that I have understood you when I *listen* to you share your stories.

- You will be able to decline participation or withdraw from the research at any stage.

If you agree to participate in this study the stories and experiences that you share will be used in my Masters thesis. Your name will not be used in this research, however, you will be invited to select a name (pseudonym), from your culture to be used in the writing and to protect your identity. The taped audio recordings will be stored at the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato.

Where will the research take place?

The group conversation will take place at school in my classroom during September and/or October.

Informed Consent:

Attached to this information you will find the consent form which clarifies the conditions under which you agree to participate in this research and the research process.

Kind regards and God Bless,

Christina Reymer.

August, 2010.

Researcher: Christina Helene Reymer

Contact details of researcher:

Phone: (09) 571 2411

Work: (09) 276 8715

Mobile: (027) 323 8281

Email: Chr3@waikato.ac.nz

Supervisor: Philippa Hunter, Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences Curriculum & Curriculum in Education, Faculty of Education University of Waikato.

Contact details of supervisor:

Phone: (07) 838 7817

Email: phunter@waikato.ac.nz

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email deluca@waikato.ac.nz, postal address: University of Waikato, Faculty of Education, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3204.

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS



The
**University
of Waikato**
Te Whare Wānanga
o Waikato

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

**“Malamalama- Miss, it means to understand, but it can mean light also”:
Pasifika Students’ perspectives of studying history in New Zealand.**

I have read Christina Reymer’s introductory letter and Information Sheet detailing her intended classroom based history research. In either granting or declining consent to the research involving Year 13 history students, I understand:

- I am not obligated to participated in this research, and that my decision to decline participation will not result in repercussions;
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time. To do this I need to contact the researcher or research supervisor;
- If I agree to participate, I will be involved in a survey, an audio-taped group conversation, and shared reflection session. All recorded data collected as research evidence will be archived at the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato with the research supervisor;
- I understand that the recording of the group conversation and the responses in my survey may be quoted in the publication of this thesis in full or in part;
- I may contribute up to 3.5 hours of my time in total, if I consent to participate in the research;
- The researcher assures me that my thinking and responses will be analysed in a culturally responsive manner;
- I will not be identified by their names in the research writing. However I will be invited to provide a pseudonym for research processes at the initial survey stage;
- The research constitutes a Masters thesis and will be electronically published at completion. There may be further dissemination of thesis findings through journals and professional forums such as conference presentations;
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study after the group conversation, my voice will still be on the recording but my responses cannot, in any way, contribute to the research findings or discussions. If I do withdraw, no information identifying me will be kept with the recording.
- I understand that under the terms of the Privacy Act 1993 I may have access to this recorded conversation and request amendment of any information about me contained within it.
- If I have any queries or concerns about the research processes, that I can contact Christina Reymer’s supervisor Philippa Hunter at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato: phunter@waikato.ac.nz

I grant informed consent to participate in the research: Name: Signature: Date:	I decline consent for the research to proceed Name: Signature: Date:
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