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A Classical Oversight?
**The appropriateness and accessibility of Classical Studies to female
students in Aotearoa New Zealand**

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

of

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Abstract

Classical Studies is a subject that has a predetermined ‘canon’ of traditional texts and subjects that are recommended *and* expected to be studied. It focuses on the men of ancient Greece and Rome, whilst classifying non-Greeks and Romans as ‘barbarians’ or ‘other’. Women of the ancient world live comfortably outside the margins of the Classical Studies curriculum. This perception, and the continuation of teaching from a narrow and biased perspective without rigorous discussion on the impact it has in the classroom, perpetuates the gender and racial stereotypes found within. It begs the question, how can girls see themselves and their values in such a subject? Despite the values of critical thinking facilitated by this curriculum area, the perpetuation of “the dominant values of the culture of power, while at the same time failing to validate those values of minority groups” (Porter-Samuels, 2013, p.19) will continue to hinder the opportunity to diversify and grow Classical Studies as a subject. At the start of 2019, I suggested on the New Zealand Classical Studies teacher page on Facebook that I was contemplating changing my focus from men to women within the ancient world as I thought it would be more appropriate for my students of an all girls’ school. There was some excitement but also pushback, one commentator pointed out that maybe I was teaching “my hobby horses rather than the traditional Classics”. It was implied that I would be doing a disservice to my students by not sticking to the ‘traditional’ topics.

Classical Studies is a Eurocentric subject that focuses on two civilisations that are inherently patriarchal and xenophobic. Two civilisations where the resources are dominated by men and everyone else has been ‘othered’. The purpose of this research is to uncover the lived experiences of female students within Classical Studies, in order to find out whether the subject is appropriate and accessible for them. It is a way to give a voice to the students. It is a way to hear their point of view on things like the curriculum, the pedagogy of their teachers and the environment. It is a way to remove assumptions, and replace them with genuine stories and experiences. It will hopefully be a catalyst for change. A way to give back to the amazing students I have had over the years.

For this research I explored the New Zealand Curriculum and how Classical Studies is presented within it. I have looked at the research around educational achievement of females in secondary schools. To gain an insight into the lived experiences of female students in a Classical Studies classroom in Aotearoa New Zealand, I have had *talanoa* conversations with ten volunteers from both Year 12 and Year 13.

These *talanoa* were eye-opening in their honesty and frustration. It is clear there needs to be change within Classical Studies, and the pedagogical approach of teachers. The participants were clear in their desire for women to be more visible.

*This thesis is dedicated to
all the strong and inspiring students I have taught.*

Continue to strive, continue to disrupt.

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The world is our playground!

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Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

Classical Studies is an enigma of a subject. It is unique in the fact that it can touch on a range of topics and skillsets that then draws on the experiences and interests of the diverse students found within a classroom in Aotearoa New Zealand. It looks at the civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome; their history, literature, architecture, art, drama, philosophy, religion, social classes, military strategy and legacy. The subject itself is simultaneously narrow and broad. Classical Studies defines these two civilisations, as 'classic' and classes them above all others. It is a Eurocentric subject that looks at two highly patriarchal and slave driven societies. Civilisations where xenophobia and misogyny are rife. Where the accounts in primary and secondary sources are dominated by men. Classical Studies walks a fine line between acceptable and inappropriate. For a female student, in a bicultural country, this line is often blurred.

It is not all doom and gloom though. There is scope to move within the subject to make it more appropriate. There are poets, politicians, military leaders and rulers that are women or men that live outside the margins of traditional ancient Greece and Rome. They can just as easily be studied. Broad themes can be explored; links can be made with the society we live in today. Is it time for teachers to take a good hard look at their pedagogical practice and approach to the Classical Studies curriculum to ensure the subject is appropriate, relevant and accessible to female students in Aotearoa New Zealand?

I think so.

Where can the information and the fire for change come from? The teacher is the catalyst but the student's lived experiences are the fuel. Researching with students means that care and consideration needs to be taken at all times during the research process. From the questions that are chosen, to the environment the participants are sitting in. No research takes place within a vacuum. The experiences, the social, political, religious, personal lives and backgrounds of both the researcher, and the participants can influence the outcome and the knowledge that is being created. With this in mind, it is integral for the researcher to approach their research from the right angle that will not only accept the outside influences, but also embrace them. The researcher must take care in selecting their methodology, method and the research paradigm that underpins everything. For these reasons, a culturally responsive methodology is an appropriate tool to be used by the researcher to ensure the right environment is created for experiences to be shared and authentic knowledge to be created.

1.2 Research Questions

The overarching guiding statement for this research:

“A Classical Oversight? The appropriateness and accessibility of Classical Studies to female students in Aotearoa New Zealand”.

To unpack this statement further research questions were used to help guide the research:

1. What are/were your experiences as a female student in a Classical Studies classroom?
2. Does Classical Studies meet the needs and expectations of female students in Aotearoa New Zealand?
3. If necessary, what pedagogical and/or curriculum changes could be implemented to help make Classical Studies more appropriate and accessible?

When I talk about ‘appropriateness’, I am talking about relevance; relevance to the learner and relevance within the context of living in Aotearoa New Zealand. When I talk about ‘accessibility’, I am referencing the environment, the syllabus, the pedagogy and curriculum found within a Classical Studies classroom in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods that were used during the research process. It is important to note that methodology and method cannot be used interchangeably; methodology refers to the underlining reasons for the method that is used within the research. The methodology is the why behind the method that is used; they need to co-exist for the research to succeed. For this research process, *talanoa* was the method that was used and a culturally appropriate methodology was the reasoning behind it. A culturally responsive methodology centers the participants and is built on a strong relationship between the researcher and the participants. The *talanoa* method is a safe space where the participants are given voice, with the idea their experiences and stories will be used for the benefit of the wider community. The research paradigm that underlines the research process is identified below.

1.3 Research paradigm

All research has an underlying current, a desire for it to achieve something and a way for that to occur. This desire can be looked at as something that is innate to the researcher; however, this has not stopped academics from attempting to define it. Due to the diverse range of belief systems within research, they have been placed under the umbrella term of ‘research paradigms’. According to Kuhn (1962) “a paradigm represents a particular way of thinking that is shared by a community of scientists in solving problems in their discipline” (as cited in Pabel et al, 2021, p.4).

This definition clearly states that it is something that has been identified by a group of scientists, a way of thinking that underlines the research being undertaken with the sole purpose of solving a problem. Killion and Fisher (2018:9) explain that all “research studies are shaped and molded within the parameters of the chosen research paradigm” (as cited in Pabel et al, 2021, p.1). This removes the idea that the researcher needs to be a part of a ‘community of scientists’ with the sole purpose of solving a problem and broadens the definition to show that a research paradigm is when you are operating under a clearly defined research framework.

It should be noted that not all researchers actively choose their research paradigm, sometimes they have one approach in mind and another naturally develops as the research progresses. With this in mind I prefer Sousa’s (et al, 2007: 503) broad definition, that it is a “school of thought” (as cited in Pabel, 2021, p.5). For me, this offers the opportunity for research to fall within multiple research paradigms, rather than trying to narrow it down to one.

1.4 Paradigm of choice

Within educational research, the researcher’s worldview “is the perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, that informs the meaning or interpretation of research data” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Four key paradigms that underlie educational research have been identified as, positivist, interpretivist/constructivist, critical/transformative and pragmatic.

Yoon Soo Park et al (2020) defines a positivist paradigm as one that is led by the scientific method. It is an outcomes driven paradigm that starts with a clear hypothesis (p.690). In this way, knowledge can only be found using a scientific method of inquiry. On the other hand, Schwandt (1998) defines the goal of interpretivist research as the attempt to “understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (221, as cited in McChesney & Aldridge, 2019, p.7).

The researcher is aware that they are not the expert of the lived experience, and therefore they need to work with the participants to gain that knowledge. The knowledge that is created is inextricably linked with the participants and the context of the research process. The results of the research are not applicable to “theories or laws, but, rather, rich and contextually situated understandings” (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019, p.7). I have approached this research from an interpretivist paradigm angle.

Chapter Two: Methodology and Method

2.1 Culturally Responsive Methodologies

For this research I have used a culturally responsive methodology. A key reason for this is because the “participants are viewed as experts of their own local knowledge” (Freire, 1922; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008 as cited in Berryman et al 2013, p.5). A culturally responsive methodology is a process where there is an understanding that other people’s experiences cannot always be defined or understood, “rather they must be understood instead through a wider lens of contextualization” (Berryman et al, 2013, p.17). The researcher is approaching the process from a place of wilful ignorance to the lived experiences of the participants, whilst simultaneously acknowledging and elevating the knowledge of the participants. This has close links to indigenous research and experiences. Cram (2001) suggests that “the research that is done by non-indigenous people, researching ‘down’ about indigenous peoples all too often results in judgements being made that are based on the cultural standpoint of the researcher rather than the lived reality of the indigenous population (p.37). It is a difference in culture that leads to a difference in understanding. There is always a risk that the non-indigenous researcher will make assumptions as they do not have the lived experiences of the indigenous participant. This is also seen within education research due to the different experiences of the teacher and student. It is necessary for the teacher to realise that they are not the expert when it comes to the lived experiences of their students.

When researching within education it is clear that a teacher will have their own values and opinions but the best source of information about the student’s experiences, are the students themselves. The researcher must shed their teacher self and enter the research process not to “teach or to transmit or to give anything, but rather to learn, with the people, about the people’s world” (Freire, 1998, p.180 as cited in Berryman et al 2005 p.5). They may have been a part of that world but they will never truly understand the experiences of the student. Knowledge, since the critique of the natural science model, is regarded not as a collection of facts (a disputed concept) but of an engagement with the world that produces meanings and understandings that are culturally, historically and temporally bound, but nonetheless allows human beings to orientate themselves in the world (Loxley & Seery, 2008)

As a male teacher in an all-girls school, I have the experience of working in the environment and my assumptions about the students are from my viewpoint, a viewpoint that has been created due to my lived experiences. It may so happen that I assume correctly but the experts are the female students who have the ‘lived reality’ of being at the centre of this experience. It is their voice that needs to be heard, not my assumptions.

One way to find out about this ‘lived reality’ is through a power sharing culturally responsive methodology in which the student is comfortable enough to share their experiences and ideas. A culturally responsive methodology champions the human dignity of the participants and offers an environment in which they are comfortable to share their experiences, and give a voice to their concerns. It is a dialogic encounter, a space where the research is given a human face and the relationship is emphasized.

Relationships are key to unlocking knowledge and therefore a high level of trust needs to be developed between the researcher and participant. As stated by Berryman et al (2013), “culturally responsive researchers work *with* others in service to the community *of* others” (p.17). The basis of the methodology is that you are working together; it is not a matter of studying an ‘other’, but a relationship that is built on trust. Through this relationship, the power dynamic shifts from researcher/participant to a power sharing scenario in which participants work collaboratively throughout the process. This means that participants are involved in co-creating the “research questions, design, data collection, and analysis, and collaborate on the interpretation and dissemination of findings” (Berryman et al, 2013, p.17).

2.2 Summary

In conclusion, a culturally responsive methodology is a way for non-indigenous researchers to work with indigenous peoples on a foundation of trust. As a teacher working with students, it makes sense for me to take on the role of a researcher and use a methodology that builds on the trust established over the years. There is also an obligation as a teacher (and as a human) to create a safe and trusting environment in which the participants can be their authentic selves.

It is important to establish, nurture and sustain relationships, as it “provides storying interactions where our truths (within that moment) become interconnected with participants’ storied realities” (San Pedro, 2018, p.1197). The relationship is the key for a successful culturally responsive methodology. This also rings true as a *Pāsifikā* researcher. The relationship that has been established, will enable new knowledge to be co-created, which in turn will be entrusted to the researcher for the benefit of the wider community.

2.3 *Talanoa and Faafaletui methodologies*

Talanoa and *faafaletui* were selected as the research method because I am a *Pāsifikā* researcher and also due to the personal relationship that has developed between the students and teacher. These methodologies require a high level of trust between the researcher and participants; often a trust that has been established over a number of years. Due to the research participants being volunteers, it is already clear that they have a trust in me to be honest, open and respectful of their experiences and the process.

Questionnaires and surveys were not selected for this research due to the risk of them being leading. It is too easy for a researcher to frame questions that can lead to a desired answer; even if it is unintentional. *Talanoa* enables a conversation to be had between researcher and participant/s in which a high level of trust and safety has been established and new knowledge can be co-created. Just as in a culturally responsive methodology, the relationship is key for *talanoa* to be successful. The desired result is to not only collect knowledge but to see it be naturally co-created in a safe environment. Knowledge that is born out of the conversations that are not led by hard, specific questions, but conversations that develop, grow, mutate and flow at the participants' behest. I do not want to be a collector of knowledge "to then make sense of the stories and retell them" (Vaiotei, 2006, p.22) but to provide a space for raw, unfiltered conversations to take place. A space where the natural flow of the conversations dictates where the conversation will go and what knowledge will be created.

Researchers run the risk of framing their research in a way that will get a desired result but also intentionally or unintentionally misinterpret the collection of data. There is the risk that the researcher has "the power to distort, make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions based, not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgements and often downright misunderstandings." (Smith, 1992, p.53). One way that *talanoa* avoids this is to allow the opportunity for the participants to read over the transcripts and check for accuracy. Participants will be given the opportunity to edit the transcripts, often emphasising key words to correctly establish tone or explain key points. Due to the spontaneous and casual nature of *talanoa*, words can be spoken that the participant may regret; and thus it is important to give the participant the opportunity to read through the transcript and remove anything they do not want repeated. This process could lead to a second or even third *talanoa* as the participants may wish to add more information post conversation. It is important for the researcher to offer this opportunity, an opportunity for clarification and/or expansion. This is the way for the researcher to establish accuracy and authenticity of the collected knowledge.

Furthermore, *talanoa* was selected as there is an innate desire by researchers, especially of *Pāsifikā* descent, to use their research to give back to the community. Knowledge that is created within *talanoa* is not to be locked away and have outside forces act as gatekeepers. The knowledge created in *talanoa* is a gift; and the expectation of the participants is that the knowledge will be “respected and honoured, and to be used well” (Vaioleti, p.26). Also, time taken by the participants and the knowledge imparted is not to be used purely for academic, personal or economic gain. *Talanoa* is a contract between the participant and researcher; but also a contract with myself. I entered this research process hoping to give back to the participants and community and *talanoa* was another way to hold myself accountable.

Within the research process, two methodologies were offered to the participants, *talanoa* and *faafaletui*. Each participant opted for the former and the reasoning why both were offered will be made clear in the next section.

2.4 What are *talanoa* and *faafaletui*?

Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea (2014) describe *talanoa* and *faafaletui* as “terms used by academic and social researchers in the Pacific or Oceanic region to describe two research methodologies that claim meaning and significance from a common indigenous Pacific, particularly Polynesian views” (2014, p.332). The word ‘*talanoa*’ itself is of Tongan origin combining two words to establish a new meaning. Vaioleti (2006) explains that ‘*Tala* means to inform, tell, relate and command, as well as to ask or apply. *Noa* means of any kind, ordinary, nothing in particular, purely imaginary or void’ (p23). When combined on the surface then, *talanoa* can be defined as being a casual conversation about nothing in particular (Vaioleti, 2006, p23).

However, this does not mean that the knowledge being created is insignificant or without worth. Whilst visiting Samoa in 2002, Vaioleti (2006) found that *talanoa* was an “ancient practise of multi-level and multi-layered critical discussions and free conversations” (p.24). Thus, despite the outward appearance of a casual conversation, *talanoa* is a way for information and new knowledge to be co-created and discussed with far reaching impacts on the wider community. *Talanoa* provides a safe environment of power sharing which “may lead to critical discussions or knowledge creation that allows rich contextual and inter-related information to surface” (Vaioleti, 2006, p.24).

Talanoa provides a space where collaboration can occur, and silences either add context or a stepping stone for someone else to contribute to the conversation. Mo’ungatonga (2005 as cited in Vaioleti, 2006) points out that *talanoa* is centered around the relationships. The success of the *talanoa* is determined by the trust established between the researcher and participants.

The casual nature of the conversation, and the time taken to establish the relationship and trust, will enable the information to come out when the participants are comfortable. Mo'ungatonga points out that it took a long time to establish the trust of the participants but “once they accepted and trusted me as a person, out came their stories, including the information I was wanting to know about. The stories around the information I was looking for were what made me know that the information was authentic” (as cited in Vaioleti, 2006, p.24). For Mo'ungatonga and Vaioleti, it is the authenticity of the information that shows the worth of *talanoa*. This ‘authentic’ knowledge was only made possible due to the trust developed, the safe environment, the time taken and the non-linear, non-rigid casual nature of *talanoa*. The ‘authentic’ knowledge may be hidden under layers of information that is not relevant to the researcher, but it was made visible, and co-created due to the environment.

2.5 *Faafaletui*

Faafaletui on the other hand provides a space for much more serious discussions to take place. It is made up of three component parts “*faa*, a causative prefix, *fale*, meaning a house or group of houses and *tui*, meaning weaving” (Tamasese et al, 2005, as cited in Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, p.334). Just like *talanoa*, *faafaletui* is about co-creating new knowledge with the intention of giving back to the community.

A clear difference between the two methodologies is that *faafaletui* tends to “involve closed group discussions of a serious nature” (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, p.334). Suaalii-Sauna and Fulu-Aiolupotea (2014) point out that the *faafaletui* methodology should be implemented when discussing something of a serious nature that needs a solution (p.335). In this case, a carefully selected group of people are chosen and the conversations targeted. In the context of this research, a *faafaletui* methodology was explained and offered to all participants before, during and after the research process. If a participant believed they needed a space with that type of understanding, then it was made clear to them that they had that opportunity.

2.6 *Summary*

On the surface, *talanoa* and *faafaletui* methodologies fit within social constructivist and phenomenological paradigms (Vaioleti, 2006). The arguments for where *talanoa* and *faafaletui* fit have been succinctly outlined by Suaalii-Sauna and Fulu-Aiolupotea and do not need to be repeated in full here (2014).

The key thing to take away from their statements, is that *Pāsifikā* research and *Pāsifikā* methodologies do not need be pigeon holed into pre-existing definitions that were created outside of a *Pāsifikā* worldview. *Pāsifikā* research and methodologies can operate within their own sphere and be defined by their own scholars. *Talanoa* and *faafaletui* can belong to one, to many or independent of all. It is not always necessary to classify and compartmentalize every aspect of our lives and processes.

The need to label everything often takes the focus off the more important things, in the case of this research, the relationships, the experiences, the co-created new knowledge and the giving back to the community. Patel (2015) explains that “we should see ourselves as stewards not of specific knowledge but rather of the productive and generative spaces that allow for finding knowledge” (p.7). *Talanoa* provides a space for this knowledge to be found.

2.7 Critique of the talanoa and faafaletui methodologies within this research

There is a clear power dynamic at play between the researcher and the participants. It is not only a researcher/participant dynamic, but a teacher/student one as well. The nature of the *talanoa* could be influenced by the fact that I was their teacher. This authority needs to be stripped away as much as possible for the *talanoa* to flow naturally. However, it would be foolish to suggest that it would be altogether non-existent. After being the teacher of the participants, in some cases for numerous years, my point of view on particular topics will be known to the participants and possibly influence what they will say. As a reflective teacher, I am constantly changing my pedagogy to what I consider the ‘needs’ of the environment I am operating within, and to be able to do this with any degree of success, honest discussions need to occur between the teacher and students. For *talanoa* to succeed, the relationship needs to be established and the trust formed so the participants will say what they want to say, rather than what they think I may want to hear.

There is the possibility that the flow of the *talanoa* will not develop or occur and that the dialogue will need to be directed by very specific questions. There is an expectation that the research questions will be used to help get the *talanoa* started, but there is also the chance that pre-determined questions will need to be ready just in case the dialogue falters. There is also a possibility that the dialogue heads in a direction that is not relevant to the research. This does not concern me as what some people may view as worthless, is actually something that is adding further context to the discussions. Context is a key element of experiences and helps with collaboration and storytelling.

Context is a way to set tone, to guide, and to inform the researcher and fellow participants of where you are stand. It can also be used as a way to relate to discussion and fellow participants and be used as building block for others. As stated by Suaalii-Sauna and Fulu-Aiolupotea (2014), it does not matter if the storying is “deep, serious or casual, (it) is carried out using a process that is focussed on building culturally appropriate and respectful relationships not only between researcher and participant, but also between researcher and themselves” (p.335). With any research there is always the possibility that something may be raised that is of concern or needs further consideration and support. *Faafaletui* is an opportunity for participants to engage in discussion they consider to be serious. I also have the support of my supervisor should something be said or occur to which I don’t have the expertise to deal with or need further assistance with.

2.8: *Participants and methodology in practice*

2.8.1 *Participants*

There were ten participants involved in this research. A mix of both Year 12 and 13, Level Two and Three Classical Studies students who attend an urban girls’ school. The idea of the research was first broached in class to give the students a chance to discuss what would be needed from them, how the research was going to be undertaken and why.

2.8.2 *Permission – School*

The first step of the research was to approach the Principal about the desire to work within the school. An appointment was made, the Principal received an information sheet (Appendix A) and a discussion was had in which the Principal gave their full support to the research taking place.

2.8.3 *Permission – Students*

The next step was to receive the informed consent of the students. After permission was given by the Principal, I actively started to find volunteers for the research. This is when the discussions within the classroom occurred. For any student that expressed an interest, they were given an information sheet (Appendix B) to take home and discuss with their parents/guardians/caregivers. The option was then given to hold a *fono/hui*/meeting for anyone interested and their parents/guardians/caregivers, in which I would be able to explain the research in greater detail. There was no interest in this but it was still important to give it as an option. Once students had expressed more than an interest, but a desire to take part, they were given a consent form to take home and get signed (Appendix C). Once consent was given, we could move forward with the *talanoa* conversations.

2.8.4 *Talanoa*

On the information sheet, there was a range of options for the participants to indicate a time and place that would work best for them. This option was given because when it comes to *talanoa*, a safe and comfortable environment is important, and working to the participant's wants is one way to ensure this happens. Each participant selected to have the *talanoa* within school hours (during a mutual free period or at lunchtime). A classroom or meeting room was selected by the participants, away from the crowds and to offer them a sense of safety, privacy and quiet. Once the *talanoa* were completed, I typed up the transcripts, trying to convey tone and context as much as possible. Once the transcripts were completed, I contacted the participants and asked them to look over the one they were associated with. This would allow them to take ownership of the data and ensure that it was genuine and accurate. Out of all the transcripts, there was only one that needed to be edited at the request of a participant.

2.8.5 *Ethical consideration*

Ethical consideration was sought and approved by the University of Waikato. It was a rigorous process due to the age of the participants and methodology used to ensure it was ethically safe and sound. As a researcher it is paramount that I do not plagiarise or falsify the data in anyway. For the *talanoa* method, it is important to create a safe environment for the participants, a space where they are comfortable to tell their experiences and ideas. Permission was sought from the Principal before undertaking any research with the students. Each student was a volunteer and permission was sought from their parents/guardian/caregiver if they were under the age of 18 years old. The transcripts were then offered to the participants to look over to ensure accuracy and that I had not falsified the data. If the participant felt the need to continue the *talanoa*, then there was the option for a second or third to occur. Finally, there was the opportunity for the participants to remove their data if they were unhappy or no longer wanted to be a part of the research.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Part One: The Curriculum

3.1 Introduction

If research is being conducted in education, defining the broad idea of the curriculum, is necessary. The reason for this is that the perception of what the curriculum is, is still up for debate. In fact, educators have been trying to define the curriculum for as long as education has been around. Even without a universal definition, the curriculum has morphed and mutated over the centuries as outside influences have gained or lost power. Therefore, the curriculum contains an element of power for those that wield it in or out of the classroom. But what is it?

3.2 The curriculum – a muddle of a definition

O’Neill (2005) points out that the curriculum is “most often understood (popularly and by many teachers) in a narrow, singular sense to refer to timetabled subjects and their content as part of a prescribed course” (p.112). The curriculum itself is the school content that is created and then administered by the teacher within the opening hours of the school. This is an objective view of the curriculum, one that “is designed elsewhere and provided to students by the teacher through the educational institution” (Grundy, 1994, as cited in O’Neill, p.113). This is reinforced by McGee (1997) who states that the curriculum includes all the “planned educational activities offered by a school and, the learning experiences that occur when the curriculum is put into practice” (p.15, as cited in Carpenter, 2001, p.110) The idea of ‘planned educational activities’ reinforces O’Neill’s original statement that most people believe that the curriculum is more to do with the syllabus than anything else. This narrow interpretation of the curriculum has been challenged by researchers with other definitions using curriculum as more of an umbrella term.

A counter definition to the one above, is a syllabus based definition that incorporates all aspects of being a teacher. This includes and is not limited to, the planning of the subject, the pedagogy and the relationship between the teacher and the student. It is seen as a “dynamic socio-cultural and interconnected process where beliefs and interactions constantly interact with one another” (Kincheloe, 2005, as cited in Hunter, 2011, p.5). Here Kincheloe suggests that the curriculum is a mixture of beliefs held by those in power and the processes and interactions that occur at the classroom level between the teacher and student. The curriculum grows and is adapted as the social, political, cultural and religious interactions occur in and outside of the school.

Kincheloe's definition is interesting for this research in that there is a possibility that the research participants may raise the point that it is not the content or subject per se that needs to change, but the teacher's approach, or ability to change and adapt to the needs of the students.

Grundy (1987) believes that behind the curriculum are innate ideas and values, "educational practices, and the curriculum does not exist apart from wording beliefs about people and the way in which they do and ought to interact in the world" (p.7). At the heart of her work is an intrinsic belief that there are moral guidelines behind all educational practices, and we need to consider that it is "arising out of a set of historical circumstances, and is a reflection of a particular social milieu" (Grundy, 1987, p.5). As time progresses and society changes, there is a need for subjects to grow and evolve as well as teacher pedagogy. To remain stagnant in an ever-changing world is a great way to, at best, alienate groups of people who have grown up in different circumstances, and at worse, the possible death knell of a subject as people view it as less relevant and/or accessible.

Forshay (2001) explains that "one's school curriculum includes all school experiences and there is no logical way to put boundaries around it (p.1). This is reinforced by Hunter (2011) who explains that the curriculum is everything that happens from the start of an idea right down to the implementation of the content and the interactions in the classroom. The curriculum is "more than just a framework, guideline, or research for teachers" (p.5). The curriculum is what is seen and not seen within the classroom, it is what is said and not said. The curriculum encompasses everything to do with the school's policy about educating their students. It is an umbrella term that covers the content, the subjects/co-curricular and extra-curricular subjects available to the students as well as the interactions in and out of the classroom. The language/s that are spoken within the school should also fall within the definition of the curriculum.

3.3 The 'Hidden Curriculum'

Something that needs to be talked about but is often overlooked is the 'hidden curriculum'. The learning in a school can be planned but not all things learned by students were a part of the plan. Carpenter (2001) explains that any unplanned learning is a part of the 'hidden curriculum' and the "subject content that is deliberately excluded is called 'null' curriculum" (p.110-11). The hidden curriculum is what the students learn from aspects of their education experiences that are not specifically linked to the syllabus, planned content or their physical environment. Vallance (1991) states that the hidden curriculum involves "practices and outcomes of schooling which, while not explicit in curriculum guides or school policy, nevertheless seem to be a regular and effective part of the school experience" (p.40 as cited in Carpenter, 2001, p.111). Carpenter (2001) points out that the "hidden curriculum can have good and bad effects, there is power involved in its manifestation" (p.111).

For example, if a teacher collects in 30 posters but only puts 10 up on the wall, then there is a message being conveyed to the class. This message can be interpreted in different ways by the students based on other factors in their lives. Do they view the 10 as a benchmark and something they want to strive for? Or do they view it as favouritism on behalf of the teacher? Both points can be simultaneously true depending on the student.

An example of null curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand specifically, would be the failure of the teacher to uphold their *Tiriti o Waitangi* obligations. If a teacher refuses to use *te reo Māori* within their classroom, then a possible outcome is that a student may view this omission as proof that the language is inferior to the one being spoken.

3.4 The 'Hidden Curriculum' and this research

The possibility of there being negative affects through the hidden and null curriculum, is one of the reasons why I chose to do this research. With Classical Studies being such a Eurocentric and patriarchal subject, are we as teachers doing harm? Are we reinforcing stereotypes by covering particular topics and neglecting others? These are important questions when considering teaching in the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Brown (2008) explains that most students struggle to find relevance in what they are asked to study. He believes the primary problem with education is that it is “too disconnected from adolescents’ lives to have meaning for them” (p.294).

If relevance is so important to a student’s ability to succeed within a subject, then why would an adolescent from Aotearoa New Zealand take a subject that looks at civilisations 1,000s of years ago and how could they possibly succeed? These questions become a lot more concerning when you are a teacher of Classical Studies and your students identify as female. Are they going to struggle to find a connection with the subject if it is not relevant to them? Or worse, am I doing a disservice to them if they take my subject and I do not make women more visible within the content? What kind of message am I conveying if we learn about women being treated poorly or men dominating politics and life in the ancient world? These are just some of the questions that form the basis for this research and the need for student voice.

3.5 Curriculum ideologies

3.5.1 Introduction

Curriculum ideologies are ways for scholars and educators to identify the underlying reasons for their education policies and implementation. It is the belief that underpins the pedagogy of the individual teacher. Schiro (2013) defines an ideology as “a collection of ideas, a comprehensive vision, a way of looking at things, or a worldview that embodies the way a person or a group of people believe the world should be organised and function” (p.8). With the curriculum, there are key belief systems that underpin education, and this has led to discourses amongst theorists about what those beliefs are and how they should be implemented. Basil Bernstein (1996) divided the curriculum into two models, performative and competence. The performance model has its origins in the behaviour objectives movement and has clear boundaries and traditional forms of knowledge. The competence model suggests that acquirers have some control over the curriculum (as cited in Scott, 2008, p.3-4). Elliott (1998) takes this a step further saying that the curriculum should be responsive to a pupil’s own thinking and “their emerging understandings and insights into human situations” (as cited in Scott, 2008, p.10). This links back to the earlier idea raised by Brown that a subject needs to be relevant for the student to be interested and to give them the best chance for success. These two theories have been expanded further by Schiro (2013), below.

3.6.2 Scholar Traditional/Academic Ideology

The first is the Scholar Traditional (Hunter, 2011) or Academic Ideology (Schiro, 2013). This is when we see that “the purpose of education is to help children learn the accumulated knowledge of our culture; that of the academic disciplines (Schiro, 2013, p.4), while the “discourses generally privilege great works of the humanities and liberal arts” (Hunter, 2011, Schubert, 2003, p.7). With this ideology, there is an inherent bias of which discourses are continuously taking place about, namely: ‘what are the academic disciplines or great works of the humanities? Who gets to decide which works, topics and subjects are taught and why are they championed above others? What are the criteria to be considered worthy of this academic tradition and which culture is being referred to? How will it make students feel if they do not identify or are not a part of the selected culture? What will it do for their achievement and growth as young adults? This subject is heavily imbedded within the traditional subjects considered to be ‘academic’, namely History, English, Maths, the Sciences and Classical Studies. Hunter (2011) points out with reference to the discourse surrounding History within the New Zealand Curriculum (from now on NZC), “critique of History’s identity and nature and purpose is viewed with suspicion” (p.8).

I found this out personally as I floated the idea of switching the focus from men to women in the ancient world to help make the subject more relevant for my female students and was told not to focus on ‘hobby horses’ and to stick to ‘traditional topics’. For the Academic Scholar, the passing on of key knowledge is more important than the questions raised earlier in this paragraph. As you can imagine, I am very interested in this ideology and whether the research participants raise any concerns over it.

3.6.3 Learner-Centered Ideology

The next ideology identified by Schiro (2013) is that of the Learner-Centered; this is where the curriculum and learning are tailored for the individual learner as the interactions with their environment are assumed to be unique to the individuals involved (Schiro, 2013, p.6). Hunter (2011) points out the “knowledge is theorised on personal development” (p.8) rather than on pre-determined criteria. The curriculum is something that is fluid and ever changing. It adapts and grows depending on the students within the classroom and the way in which the teacher caters to their individual needs.

Whilst on paper, this ideology appears to be perfect for creating a curriculum that would meet the needs of the students, it does come with some stipulations. Firstly, standard class sizes and teacher student ratios would make it impossible for the teacher to create and implement a different curriculum (syllabus, pedagogy and environment) for each and every student in each of their classes. The workload of a teacher is already high and time consuming without the added weight of creating and implementing an individualised curriculum for each of their students. When you considered that class sizes are around 30 students, with each teacher having five to six different classes, you can quickly see how this cannot work.

A possible solution to this could be a dialogue between the teacher and their students at the start of the year, that will identify key trends of wants and needs that could then be implemented at a class level. For example, at an all-girls school, maybe most of the students in the class would like to focus on an event that was significant to women, such as suffrage. In this scenario the teacher can adapt the curriculum to cater to this particular need for the majority of the students. Another example could be the changing of languages that are taught. If a school has a large percentage of *Pāsifikā* students, maybe offering Samoan or Tongan as a language class is preferable to that of French or Japanese.

3.6.4 Social (re)Constructivist Ideology

The Social (Re)Constructivist discourses are about preparing students for social change based on the “racial, gender, social and economic inequalities” (Schiro, 2013, p.5) found within their communities and society. This ideology focuses on “thinking about structures, social issues, social justice, social changes and social futures” (Hunter, 2011, p.8).

It is more about preparing students to be well-rounded individuals who can implement positive changes in society and “allow them to lead the good life” (Scott, 2008, p.16). Of course, a key issue here is what makes up a ‘good life’ but given that every student is an individual, then it is assumed it is negotiable.

At the surface level it is hard to see how a subject like Classical Studies can prepare students to implement social change. There are broad underlying themes and ideas within the subject that can be teased out if the teacher is willing. These include race, the treatment of ‘other’, historical bias, the role of women and their portrayal in literature. This could even include a discourse around the white-washing of history through the perceived ideals of race in ancient sculpture. The ideas are deep, enticing, and relevant. However, these can be easily overlooked, avoided, or neglected by the teacher and student during the seemingly everlasting pursuit of credits and external examination preparation. Brown (2008) believes in this ideology and would prefer that the role of education and the curriculum was “to prepare children to be social leaders, not blind followers; free critical thinkers, not easily brainwashed dolts; creative thinkers, not rote assembly-line workers; and actively engaged members of a political community, not apathetic, a-political zombies” (p.293).

With the way National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is structured, it is very easy for a Classical Studies teacher to implement a curriculum in which rote learning is king and reproduce “a body of disconnected experiences and transmitted facts” (Hunter & Farthing, 2004, 2009, as cited in Hunter, 2011, p.6). The transmission of facts, the remembrance of dates and quotes, is still the best way to achieve a good grade within the subject. It will be interesting to see if the research participants raise a desire to look at broader ideas and themes or if they are content with learning as much information as possible to help them get a good grade and credits.

3.6.5 Social Efficiency Ideology

The final ideology as identified by Schiro (2013) is Social Efficiency Education. In this ideology, is objectives based and linear. There is clear “sequencing of learning experiences and accountability” (Schiro, 2013, p.5). This has been identified by Tyler (1950) as he “advocated a means-end approach ... educational aims could only be articulated in terms of objectives” (as cited in Scott, 2008, p.6-7).

The purpose of education is to prepare the learner for their economic future with “skills and procedures they will need in the workplace” (Schiro, 2013, p.5). In this ideology, the aim of education is to help produce efficient workers for a capitalist society. The best result for a student, is to have the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. The assumption here is that the ‘success’ being discussed is the wealth that is generated from being in the workplace. For the employer, this is the work ethic and wealth generated from the employee. For the employee, this is the wealth they receive in wages that can then be used to participate in society. In this ideology, particular subjects are marketed as being of more value for students in their pursuit of future wealth.

They are portrayed as being better stepping stones for students to gain the necessary skills to meet the needs of employers of companies that have higher wages. This ideology pits one subject against another, an everlasting struggle of subject justification to the student, parent, fellow teachers, and themselves.

3.6.6 Where do I stand?

Being the teacher of Classical Studies, I can see the appeal of a Social Traditional/Academic ideology as it gives worth and value to my subject. However, as a *Pāsisifikā* educator and researcher in a bicultural country, this ideology makes me uncomfortable as it will champion one culture or point of view over another. The Learner-Centered Ideology is excellent on paper but unrealistic for a teacher to be able to implement word for word. To put it into context, last year I was the teacher of over 150 students. My stance is the same as Brown (2008) who believes that “schools can create empathetic and responsible critical thinkers who are also productive adults ... the kinds of people who meet the needs of all of society, not just those of employers” (P.293). I believe there is value in what I teach, and if approached correctly, Classical Studies can prepare students for the rigours of life beyond compulsory schooling.

3.7 A brief look at the history of education in Aotearoa New Zealand

3.7.1 Introduction

To fully comprehend the impact education can have on a student, a discussion needs to occur around the historical legacy of the education system for that country. The reason for this, is that the education system is never stagnant, it is forever changing. This change can be due to political policy, curriculum shifts, and even the desire of individual schools and teachers. The impact of education is lasting. Therefore, it is necessary to look at some of the major educational policy changes that have occurred within Aotearoa New Zealand, and their possible impact on students.

3.7.2 19th century Aotearoa New Zealand

The education system of early Aotearoa New Zealand has been described as a “form of control” (McKenzie, 1983, p.23 as cited in O’Neill, 2005, p.116). It was a way to uphold the “internationally derived ideologies of Social Darwinism and eugenics” (O’Neill, 2005, p.116). Political and economic power was wielded by the dominant elite landholders and business people, the new settlers in the land and society was based on Victorian values of class and gender stereotypes (O’Neill, 2005, p.116).

Those in power sought to direct *Māori* men into farming manual work and women into child-rearing and domesticity” (O’Neill, 2005, p.117). On a bizarre level, this is a Learner-Centred and Social Efficiency ideology; just one that is steeped in ideals of racial and gender superiority.

The 1877 Education Act in New Zealand was “couched in liberal rhetoric” (Codd, 2005, p.29) and made schooling compulsory for children aged six to twelve. The subjects offered were “reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, composition, history, geography, elementary science, drawing, object lessons, vocal music, sewing, needlework and domestic economy for girls and military drill for boys” (O’Neill, 2005, p.117). Stereotypes of gender and race were the foundation building blocks of the education system in 19th century Aotearoa New Zealand and this did not change much until the 20th century.

3.7.3 Stability?

Periods of relative stability around educational policies are often called periods of “educational settlement” (Codd, 2005, p.29). One such period was between the 1920s and 1980s following on from the first Labour Government. It was during this period, as O’Neill has pointed out that “secondary schooling change(d) from a minority experience to that of a majority one” and the curriculum policy was to prepare all students for “active participation as citizens in a democracy” (O’Neill, 2005, p.118). The government agreed upon a liberal approach to curriculum:

The Government’s objective....is that every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right, as a citizen, to a free education of the kind to which he is best fitted, and to the fullest extent of his power (Fraser, 1939).

Despite this sweeping statement, the education system was still inherently racist and sexist. The curriculum was based on the class ideas brought from England. Subjects were derived from those used in England and female students were expected to learn subjects that would make them successful wives and mothers. English was the dominant language in schools and *te reo Māori* was banned. For a student, the term ‘relevance’ is based on their race, gender and connection to the dominant culture.

3.7.4 Change is in the air

In the late 1980s we start to see a shift in the thinking around the curriculum and education in Aotearoa New Zealand. It started with the dismantling of the Curriculum Development Division and the Department of Education in 1989 (O’Neill, 2005, p.120). The National Government of the time wished to “appease and accommodate the demands of business and the corporate sector through the development of curriculum” (O’Neill, 2005, p.127).

They explained it through the statement “...(schools) failed to produce sufficient people with the advanced levels of skills and knowledge demanded by the highly competitive, high technology market place in which New Zealand must prosper” (Ministry of Education, 1991, p.3).

Numerous countries were experiencing booming economies in the 1980s and the Aotearoa New Zealand government saw the potential of students to become the next generation of workers. This is when we see the shift from a ‘liberal’ view on education, one that emphasises the worth in the learning itself, to an objective-based view. This was a way to mechanise the education system to meet the needs of the market economy and “to prepare students for the workforce” (Codd, 2005, p.31).

This was not wholly unique as the *Currie Report* of 1962 was the first major policy document to “begin to make tentative links between educational and economic performance” and it was also raised in the *Nordmeyer Report* at the Educational Development Conference in 1974 (Codd, 2005, p.32). The shifting views on the role of education and the potential of the students as workers, shows that the government was looking at the education system through the lens of a Social Efficiency ideology.

3.7.5 Summary

Over the last thirty years this has continued, as the curriculum is still used by successive governments as a political bargaining chip. With the introduction of the NCEA in 2002, we see the “most overt expression of an outcomes-driven curriculum one could find” (O’Neill, 2005, p.123). It was a continuation of the neoliberalism policy changes in the 1990s and its aim was to make education more socially and economically efficient (Lee, O’Neill & McKenzie, 2004). In the upper secondary school, the subjects have become a lot more competitive as teachers vie for their student’s attention and attendance. The term ‘relevance’ has suddenly developed twin meanings.

Firstly, relevance is something that is relatable to student’s lives, their backgrounds, culture, history, ethnicity, gender and religion. Secondly, it is seen as a term for the skills that are taught so students can go onto tertiary education and/or join the workforce after compulsory schooling. With the shift in ideology, the question now needs to be asked; how does Classical Studies fit in amongst all of this?

3.8 Classical Studies and the NZC

3.8.1 Introduction

Classical Studies operates comfortably within both the Social Sciences and English subject areas. It combines a study of literature, with history and art. Despite its narrow focus on two civilisations, it is a very diverse subject that offers a lot of opportunities for teachers and students to explore. For this chapter, we will see how Classical Studies is portrayed within the NZC and whether, on the surface, it is relevant and appropriate whilst also having the ability to meet the needs of female students in Aotearoa New Zealand.

On the Ministry of Education's (M.O.E) Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) website (n.d.), Classical Studies is explained as:

“To understand ourselves, and our place in a bicultural society, we need to know about the societies that have laid the foundations for the world in which we live.

Classical studies is the study of the people, places, and events of the classical world and how they influence the modern world.

Classical studies is an interdisciplinary subject: students engage with literature, languages, art, history, science, technology, religion, and philosophy.

Students explore community, cultural identity, values, and perspectives and think critically about human behaviour and relationships to appreciate the civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome, understand the past and the present, and to imagine possible futures”

As you can see from the definition given, Classical Studies provides ample opportunity for teachers and students to explore a range of interests, people, places and events. By this definition, Classical Studies also offers the opportunity for students with diverse skill sets and passions to thrive. It has opportunities for the philosophy patron, the budding politician, the artist, the drama student, the historian and even engineers.

The key to unlocking the full potential of the subject lies in the interpretation of the Achievement Standards (AS) found within the NCEA framework as well as adapting to the needs of the diverse student body. The first of these two points can be explored independently, the second needs the lived experiences of the students themselves.

3.9 Rationale

The TKI website also contains a section on why someone should study Classical Studies. It is divided into three sections around the key ideas of engagement, influence and challenge.

3.9.1 Classical Studies engages the minds and imaginations of students

“Classical studies encourages students to make links between past and present civilizations, to imagine a possible future. By exploring diverse values and traditions, viewed from their own cultural perspectives and those of others, classical studies prepare students for informed and active citizenship in New Zealand and the modern world” (M.O.E, TKI website, n.d.).

Making links between the ancient Greeks and Romans and today is fairly easy as we can see influences within architecture, movies, books, art and politics. More commonly these influences are indirect, an idea that has been passed down by earlier academics rather than a direct link to an ancient civilisation. It is hard for a diverse country, such as Aotearoa New Zealand, on the other side of the world to make direct links back 1,000s of years to one of the ancient Mediterranean civilisations of Greece or Rome. A notable exception to this point is the Auckland War Memorial Museum and its clear links to the Periklean temple of Athene, the Parthenon. The most obvious influence is the use of marble and *doric* columns, but there are also subtler influences, such as the use of *metopes* to display scenes of war.

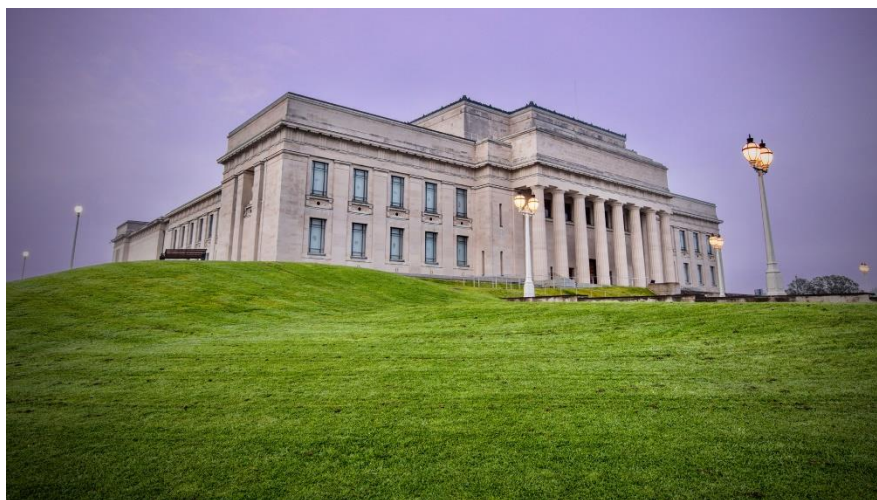


Figure 1. Auckland War Memorial Museum. You can clearly see the *doric* columns at the front of the museum. www.aucklandmuseum.com



Figure 2. The Parthenon on the acropolis of Athens. Author's own photo (July 9th, 2018).

The second sentence is much harder to unpack. On the surface, the ancient Greeks and Romans look like they have a diversity of “values and traditions” (Ministry of Education, TKI website, n.d), but in reality this is either untrue or misleading. Firstly, the ancient Greeks were not one united people, they were a range of different *poleis* (city-states) that had their own gods, customs, values, politics and even dialects. They did not even refer to themselves as Greeks; they were Hellenes. The Romans, traditionally were from Rome, but over the 100s of years this became more of a citizenship title, than an actual people. The size and scope of the Roman Empire meant that it was extremely diverse, containing Gauls, Spaniards, Italians, Greeks, Egyptians and Numidians to name a few. This first point actually does provide a range of diversity, but the problem arises around the accessibility of scholarship, the training of teachers and time. For ancient Greece, the majority of the scholarship is centred around one of the major *poleis*, such as Athens/Sparta, or the empire of Philip II/Alexander in Macedonia. For Rome, it focuses primarily on the lives of the key politicians in Rome. If a different culture is mentioned, it is generally because of war. Education is cyclical, and this comes into play here. What is considered as important in Classical Studies has been taught for over 100 years with little change, especially at the secondary level.

Finally, teachers have limited time. It is impossible for teachers to explore a range of *poleis* from ancient Greece, or look at all the different cultures found within the Roman Empire as there is simply not enough time. This greatly narrows down the opportunity to explore “diverse values and traditions”. When you combine it with the fact that the vast majority of the surviving literature only gives us a glimpse at military and/or political history, two areas dominated by men, the focus narrows even more. These points were raised by the participants of this research. A desire for visible women and a variety of perspectives were wanted.

3.9.2 New Zealand continues to be influenced by the classical world

For this section of the rationale I have divided it into two parts. The first is:

“By understanding the political, military, religious, philosophical, technological, artistic, and aesthetic developments of the ancient Greeks and Romans, students learn how the past continues to inform the present” (M.O.E, TKI website, n.d)

Direct influence implies that there are clear links between the past and present and is problematic if there are 1,000s of years between the original idea/product/design/text and the present version. To say that something so long ago can “inform the present” can be just as problematic for all the above reasons. Most of our perception of something from the past is informed by either our own experiences or the available scholarship. If we create something based on what we have seen or studied, our creation can have a positive or negative impact on our audience based on how we have interpreted the original.

For example, if you used an ancient marble sculpture as inspiration, you will most probably be using a paint free sculpture. Due to the vast distance in time, most ancient sculptures are weathered to the point that the original paint has faded, or gone altogether. Therefore, you will most likely create something that is without paint as well. This aesthetic is definitely appealing to some people; however, it could be reinforcing harmful stereotypes.

Dr Sarah Bond (2017) published an article within *Hyperallergic* – ‘Why We Need to Start Seeing the Classical World in Color’, which discusses the link between racism and Classical Studies. In her article, she argues that teachers need to be more inclusive and open to talking about the diversity of the ancient world to counter racist narratives. In the ancient world the sculptures, buildings and sarcophagi were all brightly coloured. Overtime, this colour has faded or been completely lost. With recent advancements in technology, Vinzenz Brinkmann was able to ‘analyse the minute vestiges of paint and then recreate polychrome versions’ of some of the ancient sculptures (as cited in Bond, 2017). This revelation of diversity through colour, is in contrast to many museum and textbooks that still perpetuate the idea that ‘the pristine whiteness of marble statues is the expectation and thus the classical ideal’ (Bond, 2017). This false perception of ‘whiteness’ in the classical world has been amplified throughout history and helped develop and spread ideas around eugenics, racism and (white) European superiority.



Figure 3. Augustus from Prima Porta. (n.d).
Musei Vaticani. Retrieved 12/4/2023.



Figure 4. Polychrome reconstruction of the Prima Porta statue of Augustus, 2004. Painted plaster cast made after a prototype by P. Liverani, Vatican Museums, Rome, Courtesy: Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford.

Dr Rebecca Futo Kennedy has been researching into the origin of the construct of ‘western civilisation’ and its ties to Classical Studies. She has found that the construct that is ‘western civ’ has close links to antiquity and white supremacy. Futo Kennedy (2019) states that “the idea of western civ and the classics as its foundation present it as a natural and somewhat eternal identity for Europe and European colonised places” (para. 2). She points out that the concept of western civ may claim to have its foundations in antiquity, but in reality it only first appears in the 1840s and was used as a way to not only separate Europeans from other peoples, but reinforce a belief in the inherent superiority of European peoples over indigenous peoples (2019). This is where the idea of a harmful stereotype comes into play in Classical Studies and the NZC. Does an artist creating a marble sculpture without paint, because they have never seen a painted marble sculpture before, unintentionally create a racist sculpture to an indigenous audience? Is Classical Studies complicit in reinforcing harmful stereotypes? Is a teacher teaching their students about ancient sculpture without informing them of the vibrant colours that used to be present, reinforcing the idea of a civilisation of white people, and therefore, through the hidden curriculum, the superiority of said people? If you are teaching female students about men from the ancient world, are you reinforcing the idea that they are more important? Is this the hidden or null curriculum in action again?

The next sentence of the rationale can be considered highly problematic

“From the rise and fall of powerful individuals and empires to the creativity and invention of artists and engineers and to the formulation of ethical systems and the evolution of social justice, students become increasingly aware of the debt owed to classical Greece and Rome” (M.O.E, TKI website, n.d).

There is no denying the first part of the sentence is one of the reasons why students take Classical Studies. The people and empires of ancient Greece and Rome are fascinating. The intrigue, mystery, heartbreak, heroism, betrayal, creativity and adventure is engaging and entertaining. It is the second half of the sentence that a key issue arises. This is that idea of “debt”. Debt, in this sense, can be closely linked to the earlier term ‘direct influence’ and I have already discussed how that can be problematic. There is no doubt that we have ideas, political foundations and architecture that has been built upon a Greek or Roman influence, or at least a modern interpretation of a Greek or Roman idea/design.

An example of this is democracy. Kleisthenes, an Athenian aristocrat of the powerful Alcmaeonid family, was slowly losing power in the late 6th century BCE, so for the first time “took the commons into his party” (Herodotus, 5.66). The people decided to support Kleisthenes in his bid for power as he promised them “control of the state” (Aristotle, XX). This moved helped Kleisthenes and proceeded to give the *Athēnaion de hoi lopoī* (the rest of the Athenians) a vote in the *ekklesia* and political power. This is widely considered the birth of democracy and something that civilisations have built upon throughout history. However, this comes with two stipulations.

Firstly, the democracy of Kleisthenes’ time was only for male citizens; no female citizens or *metics* (tax paying foreigners residing in Athens) were allowed to vote or take on any political roles. Secondly, there is an assumption that this is the birth of democracy and it is unique to ancient Athens. There is no doubt that the ancient Greeks invented the word as *demos* = people and *kratos* = power. However, it is highly contestable that there were no other civilisations or cultures using democracy in one form or another before, during this time and after.

If we consider the term “debt” as mention on the TKI website, then we must assume that our democracy owes its foundation to that of ancient Athens. Whereas, the democracy of Aotearoa New Zealand has is vastly different to that of the ancient Athenians. Firstly, women are allowed to vote. Secondly anyone that is a citizen or a permanent resident and over the age of 18 can vote. And finally, the form of democracy found within Aotearoa New Zealand is one based on Mixed Member Proportional (MMP), something vastly different, and more inclusive to that of ancient Athens.

3.9.3 Classical Studies students learn to ask questions and challenge ideas

This section of the rationale is built on ideas of critical thinking. Critical thinking within Classical Studies, usually centers itself around the reliability of evidence, the values of the ancient Greeks and Romans and their perceptions. This section is worded well and the ideas behind it, are something that were discussed in detail in the *talanoa*. It should be noted, that in Aotearoa New Zealand, there is a notable shift from rote learning ideas to exploring wider and deeper issues that are found when studying Classical Studies.

3.10 Achievement Standards

The backbone of achievement in NCEA are the Achievement Standards. Each subject has a range of internally or externally assessed Achievement Standards that “describe what a student needs to know, or what they must be able to achieve, in order to meet the standard (in order to) gain credits towards national qualifications” (NZQA, n.d). These standards are a way for schools to assess their students in an effort to measure their level of achievement. Once a student has passed an achievement Standard, they gain credits which can then be banked throughout the year(s) to gain one of the three national certificates. The certificates are in three levels, and start in Year 11. Each achievement standard is different and specific to a particular subject. Some achievement standards contain literacy or numeracy components which are also required in order to gain a national certificate.

NCEA level	Requirements
Level 1	80 credits are required at any level (level 1, 2 or 3) including literacy and numeracy. 10 credits for both literacy and numeracy.
Level 2	60 credits at level 2 or above + 20 credits from any level The Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements must also be met.
Level 3	60 credits at level 3 or above + 20 credits from level 2 or above

Table 1. Amount of credits and types of credits required to pass each level of NCEA. (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d)

For this research I am going to break down the Achievement Standards and recommendations of topics for Level 2 and 3 only. The first reason for this is that Level 1 is being dropped from the NZC. This was meant to happen over the last few years but has been postponed due to the issues around the ongoing Covid pandemic. Secondly, I have never personally taught Level 1 Classical Studies and the research participants have never studied it.

There are five Achievement Standards offered at both Level 2 and 3 with two of them (at each year level) being internally assessed. However, the credits available are different as there are 24 available at Level 2 (10 internally assessed, 14 externally) and 26 at Level 3 (12 internally assessed, 14 externally). Each of the five standards in both Level 2 and 3 count towards the literacy requirements mentioned in the table above. The five Achievement Standards at Level 3, are all University Entrance (UE) credits as well. This makes Classical Studies a highly desirable subject with regards to the credits available, the UE approval and literacy requirements. Table 2 shows the different Achievement Standards for Level 2 Classical Studies, the type of assessment and how many credits available.

Achievement Standard	Title/Credits/Assessment
91200	Examine ideas and values of the classical world 4 credits/External
91201	Examine the significance of features of work(s) of art in the classical world 4 credits/External
91202	Demonstrate understanding of a significant event in the classical world 4 credits/Internal
91203	Examine socio-political life in the classical world 6 credits/External
91204	Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between aspects of the classical world and aspects of other cultures 6 credits/Internal

3.10.1 Level 2

AS91200 (2.1). This Achievement Standard requires the students to use either Greek or Roman literary texts to show an understanding of the ideas and values of the ancient Greeks and/or Romans. Possible ideas and values are listed as “social relationships and the role of the individual, leadership and heroism, power and freedom, social and cultural traditions, religious beliefs, ideals of behaviour and national identity, literary conventions and the influence on other cultures” (NZQA website, n.d). The recommended literary texts are Homeric epic (the Iliad, the Odyssey), Greek tragedy and/or Roman love poetry. The most popular texts used are the Odyssey, the Iliad, Oedipus Rex and Antigone.

This Achievement Standard is broad in its scope, enabling teachers and students to look at a range of ideas, values and texts. Some limitations of this standard for female students, could be the subservient role women play in the texts recommended. This could then be interpreted by students as reinforcing patriarchal ideas. Antigone is the exception to this as she is the main antagonist of the tragedy, however, she may be perceived as a heroine in the modern sense, but to the Greek audience, a female character could not be a hero.

This is an issue that was brought up within the *talanoa* by some of the participants, as they wanted to talk about Antigone as a feminist hero, but were warned they may get marked down for that point of view.

AS91201 (2.2). This Achievement Standard requires students to explain aspects of work(s) of art from the ancient world. They will need to put them in context to their time period and draw conclusions about the wider life of the civilisations through the aesthetic. Recommended works of art are “Pompeian domestic and public art and architecture, Athenian sculpture and public architecture and/or Hellenistic sculpture and public architecture” (NZQA website, n.d). Two specific examples are given which are the Alexander mosaic (Hellenistic influence) and the Parthenon (Periklean propaganda). Once again, this Achievement Standard is broad enough for teachers and students to look at a range of artworks that cover broad and diverse themes. However, as mentioned earlier, there is a real risk to reinforce harmful stereotypes about identity, race and the patriarchy. When discussing aesthetics and the perception of beauty in the ancient world, the teacher needs to approach the themes with sensitivity to try and lessen the impact of the hidden or null curriculum.

AS91202 (2.3). This Achievement Standard requires students to show an understanding of a significant event from the classical world. Students need to place the event in context with the time period as well as discuss why their chosen event was so significant. The recommended events on the achievement standard are the Persian Wars, rebuilding of the acropolis under Perikles, the Peloponnesian War, the fall of the Republic, the eruption of Vesuvius and Masada (NZQA website, n.d). An interesting point for this Achievement Standard is the fact that a student’s understanding and choice of a significant event may differ to that of their teachers.

A positive is that this Achievement Standard is an internal assessment so a discussion between the teacher and student can take place to allow this diversity of choice. An obvious concern would be a teacher that digs their heels in about what they consider a significant event and therefore limit their students’ choices. Another concern is if a teacher limits the events then the students might be led to believe that those events are more important to others. A final concern would be the impact on indigenous students if an event was selected and multiple perspectives were not covered. For example, if the Persian Wars were studied and only the Greek perspective was given; with any non-Greek being called a barbarian, then the learning through the hidden curriculum may be that every non-Greek is barbaric. Finally, if the focus was on war or politics, then very few women feature in the texts. What is this telling our female students through the hidden or null curriculum?

AS91203 (2.4). For this Achievement Standard students need to be able to show an understanding of aspects of the socio-political life of either the ancient Greeks or the Romans. Aspects can include, social classes, and/or political life within the civilisation. There are no recommended topics on the achievement standard but I have personally taught the rise of Athenian democracy (Solon, Peisistratus, Kleisthenes, Perikles) and I know others have covered the role of women or slavery in ancient Rome.

Obviously these latter topics need to be covered with sensitivity to prevent the reinforcement of harmful ideas, however topics such as slavery and the role of women also offers the students an insight into two groups of people that tend to live outside the margins of history. These people existed. Bringing them to the fore is an opportunity to talk about stereotypes, racism, xenophobia and patriarchal ideas is a positive as these issues still affect some of our youth today.

AS91204 (2.5). Students are required to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between aspects of the classical world and other cultures. This Achievement Standard gives students the opportunities to find links between the past and present. I have already discussed the danger of trying to find direct influences within some aspects of the Classical world but that does not mean they do not exist. Links can be made, whether they are loose or direct. Recommendations on the Achievement Standard include mythology and religion, public entertainment, art and architecture, literature, rites of passage, justice and legal systems and science and ethics (NZQA website, n.d). This Achievement Standard allows students to find links between cultures that are relevant or interest them personally. It is up to the teacher to allow their students to explore their interests. This may seem like common sense, but you could be surprised.

When I first started teaching Classical Studies I used an Internal passed down from my Head of Department in which students needed to show links between the ancient sources on Spartacus and the Hollywood movie. I will admit that it took a few years of teaching this Internal before I realised (from student feedback) that the vast majority of students could not relate to a movie released over 60 years ago and the historical and societal factors that influenced it. When this became apparent, I created a new Internal based on the morals found within the myths of ancient Greece and Rome. Students needed to find links between the myths and movies of their own choosing.

3.10.2 Level 3

Table 3 shows the different Achievement Standards for Level 3 Classical Studies, the type of assessment and the credits available.

Achievement Standard	Title/Credits/Assessment
91394	Analyse ideas and values of the classical world 4 credits/External
91395	Analyse the significance of features of work(s) of art in the classical world 4 credits/External
91396	Analyse the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world 6 credits/External
91397	Demonstrate understanding of significant ideology(ies) in the classical world 6 credits/Internal
912398	Demonstrate understanding of the lasting influences of the classical world on other cultures across time 6 credits/Internal

AS91394 (3.1). This Achievement Standard is a continuation of the one offered at Level 2 (2.1) and has the same overall structure. The difference between the levels is that students need to establish textual connections, provide critical examination, show an understanding of wider implications and draw developed conclusions (NZQA, n.d). The ideas and values listed are the same as 2.1 but the recommended texts are Attic Old Comedy, Roman Epic and Roman Satire.

With regards to this research, there is a lack of female characters within Attic Old Comedy and the ones that do take a prominent role, such as Lysistrata, are a male parody of a female. The Aeneid is the text from Roman Epic that is studied and despite there being two significant female characters (Dido and Camilla) both meet tragic ends. There is also a tendency for students to overlook them and focus on the protagonist of the text, Aeneas.

During my time teaching at an all girls' school, the importance of Dido grew naturally within the classroom, and the amount of detail we went into grew as well. The assumption is that my students found the tragic character of Dido more relevant to them and were passionate about learning and writing on her. An issue with this is that they may get a marker that saw Dido as a secondary character and therefore they could have been (sub)consciously marked down.

There is always a risk during External exams that the marker has a point of view that is contrary to the students, and no amount of explaining will ever change that.

AS91395 (3.2). As above, this Achievement Standard is the next level up from the 2.2 in Year 12. The 3.2 is almost the same with the new descriptors being the same as the ones featured in the 3.1. The two recommended fields of study are Athenian vase painting and Roman art and architecture. Women feature within Athenian vase painting so there is the opportunity for female students to see themselves within the topic. Roman imperial art and architecture very rarely features women, and any non-Roman statesman or Roman for that matter, is generally shown in a subservient manner.

The perfect example of this is the very beautifully carved column of Trajan, in which the Dacians are displayed as either in the midst of war, killed, or enslaved. This topic is perfect for students that are passionate about the arts and teachers just need to be aware that they are not normalizing stereotypes and mediate discussion around ideas of race, ethnicity, otherness and propaganda.

AS91396 (3.3). This Achievement Standard requires students to analyse the impact of a significant figure from the classical world. Students need to provide context, explore more than one viewpoint and discuss socio-political factors that may have influenced their chosen figure (NZQA, n.d). The recommended significant historical figures are Socrates, Alexander the Great and Augustus. Other figures that have been taught include Julius Caesar and Spartacus. This Achievement Standard offers a lot of movement, in fact you can choose ANY historical figure from the classical world as long as you can show significance through your explanations and use more than one piece of primary evidence.

However, this Achievement Standard does have loopholes that hinder our students. The first is that the three most popular topics are the recommended topics. This could mean that if a student chose someone completely different, they may be entering the exam at a disadvantage due to the marker expecting one of the recommended historical figures.

Secondly, the marker may not be informed on the figure that was selected by the student and now have another layer of work as they try to verify what is being said. Another issue is that a character like Socrates, despite being an historical figure, is featured prominently within the philosophical and fictional texts of Plato and Xenophon. The Socrates that students study, is in fact a creation of Plato and not the historical Socrates. Cornelia de Vogel (1955) explains it as “The ‘real’ Socrates we have not: what we have is a set of interpretations each of which represents a ‘theoretically possible’ Socrates” (1955, 28). Another point that was raised earlier is the perception of these figures by students with different cultural backgrounds.

For an indigenous student, someone like Alexander the Great may be viewed as genocidal and a colonist. There is an argument that Alexander suppressed the rights of indigenous peoples, enslaved them or killed them. Something that may bring up trauma for non-*Pākehā* students.

Finally, and most obvious to my students, is the fact that none of the recommended figures are female. In fact, if we take this a step further and look at Scholarship, the three historical figures they need to choose from are Socrates, Alexander the Great and Augustus. If a female student wants to do Scholarship, she needs to study one of the three men above, and this will hamstring her in the External because the logical step would be to choose the same figure. The reason for this is that they do not want to do twice the work. For some people the military achievements of Alexander the Great are significant, and for others the ability of Livia (wife of Augustus) to not only survive but to thrive in the Roman political scene is significant. Women need to be visible within this Achievement Standard and the research participants reinforced this idea time and time again.

AS91397 (3.4). This Achievement Standard is centered around the ideology(ies) in the classical world. Ideologies are explained as being religious, philosophical or political beliefs. The examples that are given include religion, philosophy (Stoicism, Epicureanism), the Socratic method and Alexander's Oriental policy. This achievement standard gives an opportunity to explore a range of possibilities. Personally, I have taught Alexander's Oriental policy and the shifting political ideologies in the 1st century BCE of ancient Rome. Alexander's Oriental policy can be viewed as a genuine attempt to combine two cultures, to make a more harmonious empire.

However, it does not include the numerous other indigenous cultures that were found within the Persian Empire, nor do we have surviving perspectives that are non-Macedonian, non-Greek or non-Roman. The lack of an alternative perspective is of concern to the research participants. For some of them had studied the Greco-Persian Wars in Level 2 and were frustrated with the lack of non-Greek sources there. This same argument can be applied to the politics of Rome during the 1st century BCE. The vast majority of the sources we have are male and focus on powerful aristocratic men. The lack of visible women in this standard was raised again by the participants.

AS91398 (3.5). This Achievement Standard focuses on the lasting influences of the classical world across time. Students need to show links between the classical world and cultures from two other time periods. They are then required to draw conclusions, based on their research and point of view as to why the classical world is so influential. The two examples given are both based around drama. The first is the structure of the theatre and the second is the humour found within the plays themselves. An example is comparing the humour found within Aristophanes with Shakespeare and modern sitcoms.

A common alternative is the portrayal of mythological or historical events through art. Scenes from ancient Greek and Roman myth, as well as events from those two civilisations have greatly influenced artists for over a millennium. These events still influence artists, directors and writers today and the ability for students to find links between the classical world and two subsequent time periods, helps build a bridge of relevance to the topic.

Chapter Four: Literature Review

Part Two: Female Education and Achievement

4.1 Introduction

The achievement of students that identify as female in secondary education is often studied at a national level through the results of the New Zealand Qualification Association (NZQA), but at the school level, it is through the reflection of individual schools, departments and teachers. This allows reflective educators and researchers to identify trends and make necessary changes that have been identified. As a whole, female students have a tendency to achieve higher than their male counterparts which has ironically led to a problem with educational research. This issue is that funding for research or change, has a tendency to be spent on trying to find the reasons for why boy's achievement is lower than that of their female counterparts. You can view this as a necessary part of education; focusing on the group that is underperforming. However, this can also be viewed as deficit theorizing as you are now taking focus and funding away from the 'why' of the higher achieving group, and moving it to the 'why' of the lower achieving group. This funnelling of funding, research and attention can be harmful in the long run for female students as there may be incorrect assumptions about their success, which could then lead to underachievement. The question then, is how can we ensure that our female students continue to achieve to the best of their ability?

4.2 Female achievement

There are fears amongst researchers that the focus on boy's achievement will be detrimental to the continued achievement of females. Francis & Skelton (2005) claim that this shift in focus will "a) mask the continuing problems faced by girls in schools, b) justify a greater focus and expenditure on meeting boy's needs, and c) deflect attention from larger achievement gaps according to race and social class" (p.4). Let's address these three points raised. Firstly, girl's achievement may not be because of factors such as the environment or the curriculum, it may be in spite of these things. If we as researchers don't look at the reasons why a particular group is successful, then how are we supposed to ensure that those particular scenarios are repeated?

Secondly, education can be a policy for political parties, a ‘get rich quick’ scheme if you will. A way to garner votes quickly and a way to show successful policy. By focussing on the underachievement of boys, a political party can show their voting base that they have the needs of the community at heart; and even the slightest improvement is a direct result of their policy. Each percentage gained, each rung up the ladder taken, no matter how small, is a success. This is detrimental to the continued achievement of girls as the issues that have been largely ignored, whether they help or hinder female success in education, are left to fend for themselves or fester longer. Figure 1. shows the Merit and Excellence Endorsements by Gender for the 2021 educational year. The gender achievement gap is clearly obvious with females achieving higher than that of their male counterparts.

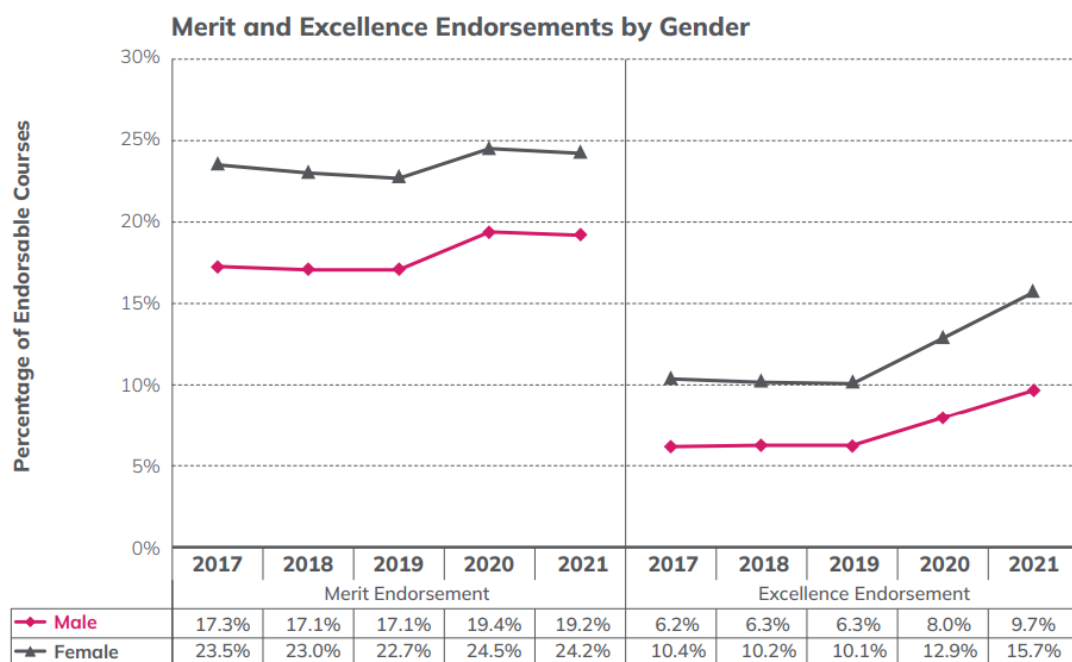


Figure 5. Merit and Excellence Endorsements by Gender. NCEA Annual Report (2021). How can we continue this success if we do not know the reasons behind it?

Finally, it is no secret that *Pākehā* students succeed at a higher level compared with their Māori or *Pāsifika* counterparts. For example, the Merit endorsement rates of Māori (17.6%) at Level 3 were 10% lower than their *Pākehā* (27.3%) counterparts; the gap between *Pākehā* and *Pāsifika* (15.3%) was wider still (NCEA Annual Report, 2021, p.42). By shifting the focus to one particular group, you are not only neglecting female students, but you are failing to identify and address wider educational, historical and societal issues. Figure 2 shows the achievement gap between students that identify as Asian, *Pākehā*, Māori or *Pāsifika* when it comes to Merit or Excellence endorsements in the 2021 educational year. Achievement gaps are of national importance and occupy educational policy. A follow up question to this is, *if* a subject, such as Classical Studies, is inappropriate and inaccessible for female students, does that mean that it could possibly be inappropriate and inaccessible for non-*Pākehā* students as well?

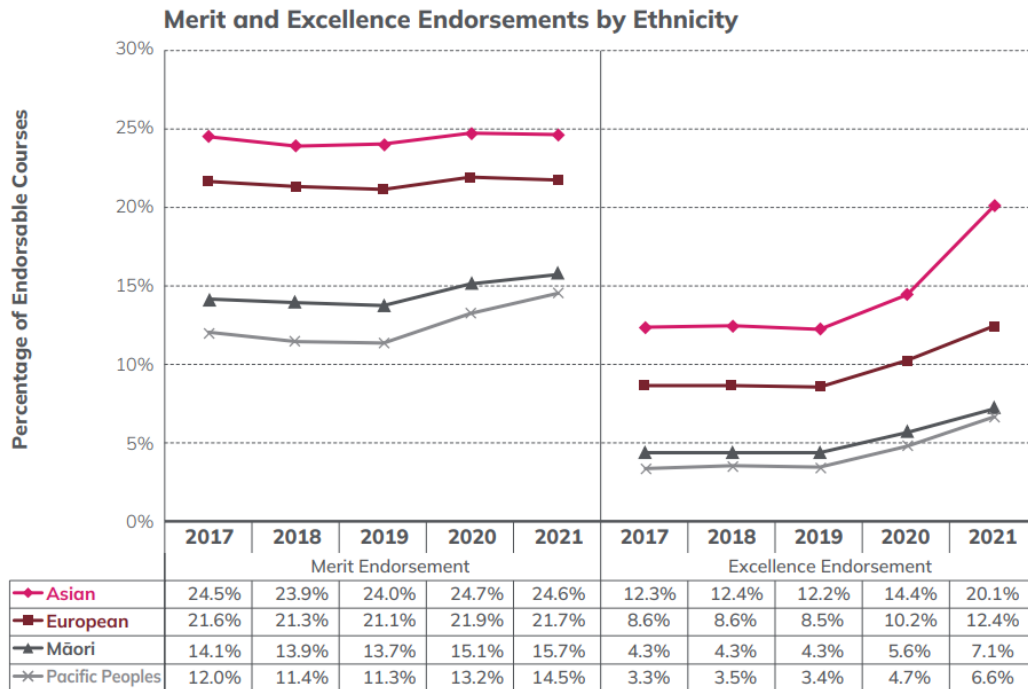


Figure 6. Merit and Excellence Endorsements by Ethnicity. NCEA Annual Report (2021). Should we be focusing less on the achievement rates by gender, in favour of ethnicity?

This is not to say that there has been, and is no research around female experiences and achievement in the classroom. It is just that that research has been “vastly outnumbered by research projects on boys (particularly in terms of funded research); the latter of which also gains far more attention from media and policy maker” (Francis & Skelton, 2005, p.104). The research process, just like education is cyclical. If the media picks up on an issue or trend then it will have greater exposure to society, which in turn will be seen as a policy issue for politicians, which governments will then pump funding into, which the media will cover, and the whole process begins again. In this sense, it is important for any research in education to be disruptive, to help break the cycles that have developed, and contribute to change.

4.3 Gender Identity and Education

The reason for female achievement in education falls into two categories. There are some researchers that view the success of girls in education from a psychology, evolutionary difference perspective. They believe that “gendered patterns of educational achievement are explained by inherent differences between male and females” (Francis & Skelton, 2005, p.76).

Others subscribe to the theory that the differences are due to socially constructed factors such as their background, culture, society they live in, religion and family history (Francis & Skelton, 2005, p.76). It is important to note that the differences in gender should be viewed from an “intersection of race, ethnicity, class and gender” so the researcher can gain a “critical understanding of the inequalities and experiences that relate to gender” (Eden, 2017, p.3). Mac an Ghaill & Haywood (1998) take this a step further and believe that we should implode “gender as the primary analytical category” altogether (p.219). They believe that this will allow other forms of social power and influence to come to the fore, such as race, ethnicity, age and class (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 1998). It is only when we approach the research from a broad view, one that shows race, ethnicity and gender as intertwined, we can start to peel back the layers of questions that surround the achievement of students.

4.3.1 Innate or Societal/Historical?

The two main schools of thought surrounding the success of females in education are around whether it is innate, or societal/historical. However, there is a third option, which is that maybe there is no one answer to this question. Students are a diverse group and even though there are some clear identifiers around under-achievement, such as English as a second language, it is much harder to pin point others, such as their social/historical backgrounds. What is clear though, is that the researcher needs to come into this space not only aware of the different theories, but preferably not subscribing to one over another. In fact, as pointed out by Mac an Ghaill & Haywood (1998), we could look beyond identity completely due to the “diversity of class locations, ethnicities, and investments in different sexualities, the meanings that surround male/boy and female/girl are no longer predictable” (p.220).

The diversity of our students is both a blessing and a curse. They bring a range of ideas and experiences to the classroom that can enrich the learning of their peers (and even the teacher), however, this diversity also means that teachers need to be more adaptable than ever to cater to the range of wants and needs of their students. Teachers (and researchers) should not be comfortable approaching research in education with a predetermined desire to categorize their participants. In fact, by emphasizing so much on the who, we lose focus on what is most important, and that is the lived experiences of the students themselves.

4.4 Implications for this Research

The purpose of this research was to look at the experiences of female students within a Classical Studies classroom. To make sure that I was able to undertake this research within the parameters set, each of the students started the *talanoa* sessions stating their age and how they identify. The who is obviously important for this research, because I was looking into their lived experiences within an all girls' school. Each participant identified as female, thus removing the need to go into any more detail. Classical Studies does offer an intriguing option to look at other student identifiers, such as race and ethnicity and the impact on their learning, but that is research for another day.

4.5 Subject Selection

Historically the gender gap has not always been a thing within education due to the fact that boys and girls were encouraged (and forced) to take different subjects. These subjects were based on stereotypes formed on the perceived abilities of the different genders as well as the belief that schooling should be set up in a way to prepare girls and boys for their ideal futures. Currently, students need to select a range of subjects that meet their needs in the senior school. These needs include the credits needed for NCEA (discussed in the next chapter) and subjects that actually interest them. For a subject to be relevant to a student, it needs to meet both of the above points.

An example of a gendered curriculum, is seen in the Thomas Report of 1944, in which “the core of the curriculum included English language and literature; social studies (preferably an integrated course of history and civics, geography and some descriptive economics); general science, elementary mathematics, music, a craft or one of the fine arts (or home crafts for girls); and physical education” (Openshaw et al, 1993, p.171, as cited in Tearney, 2016, p.26). In fact, right back to the foundation of compulsory education in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1877, we see a separation in subjects for boys and girls. In most cases boys were encouraged to take more academic subjects, whilst girls were encouraged to take more feminine subjects such as English. The reasoning behind this is that the male stereotype is one of a smarter individual that needs to be the breadwinner of the family. It is their role as the husband, father and worker, that means there are ‘masculine’ subjects. The female’s role was to be a wife and mother and therefore they needed to take subjects that would prepare them for this life beyond compulsory schooling. Eden (2017) states that the perception of masculine and feminine subjects still persists today with “physics, further mathematics, computer science and science are chosen by far more males, while home economics, sociology, psychology and law are preferred by females” (p.30).

This separation by gender not only limits the opportunities available for members of each gender but the more masculine subjects “such as maths and science have been invested with high prestige and historically women have been excluded from their study” (Skelton, 2005, p.84). This exclusion equals limited opportunities once girls leave school but also the careers that tend to need maths or science as prerequisites are higher paid.

4.6 Gendered Subjects

It is fundamentally important for education to be equitable if society wishes to offer both men and women equal opportunities (Eden, 2017). Subjects need to cater to the needs of both boys and girls. When we think of equity in education, we not only think of equal opportunities for girls and boys, but opportunities to build up one group so they are on equal terms with the other. When we look at the historical differences in subject selection, we see that those equitable opportunities have not been available. The rise of the feminist movement in the 1970s and 80s is when we see a shift in thinking about subject selection for females for the first time.

However, it was not until the neoliberal reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s that we see a shift towards a “globalised economy and the concomitant shift towards individualism (which) has encouraged countries in the western world to place greater emphasis on ‘achievement’ and ‘standards’” (Skelton, 2005, p.76). For this shift to be successful, both genders needed to be considered and were desired for the free-market workforce. It is here that we see females moving into the same educational spaces as the boys and an “overwhelmingly higher achievement at language and literacy subjects” (Skelton, 2005, p.3). This ‘opening’ up of subject areas is when we start to see the gender achievement gap start to develop and the shift of focus onto boy’s underachievement.

4.7 But, Why?

It was mentioned earlier that females were pushed into particular subject areas because of their femininity and society’s desire for them to take on particular roles outside of compulsory schooling. This has been called a ‘gendered curriculum’ by researchers such as Eden (2017), and within this framework we see layers of gender bias and sexism. Firstly, this is seen within the subject availability itself. Skelton (2017) believes that subjects such as English reaffirm a girl’s femininity, it is something that society has (un)intentionally guided her towards. Another example is that hard materials is seen as masculine, whilst textiles is seen as feminine.

Secondly, the content of the subjects themselves can be seen as reaffirming stereotypes around sexism. This is often seen through the hidden curriculum, a set of behaviours and “attitudes that are seen as ‘normal’ and as a major source of secondary gender socialisation” (Eden, 2017, p.71). The hidden curriculum begins before the student has even stepped into the classroom. It can be the advice that was given to the student around subject selection, the advertisement of the subject, the teacher and even the language used. As we have seen, a subject can be perceived as more masculine or feminine before a student even considers it. Another, and more obvious way the hidden curriculum can be sexist is the content of the subject itself.

It should be pointed out that the content of subjects can reinforce numerous stereotypes around race, ethnicity, gender and class, but for the purpose of this research I will be looking specifically at gender. Eden (2017) makes the point that “it is not just the expectation and sexist assumptions that perpetuate gendered subjects. The actual content often reflects assumptions about the dominance of men” (p.71). For example, in English, if the teacher focuses on all male poets who write about the lives of aristocratic gentlemen in Victorian England, this could be viewed by the student, as the teacher promoting and therefore showing the superiority of male poets over female and that it is more valuable to learn about Victorian gentlemen, than women. The argument for why they were selected in the first place may be innocent or ignorant, but the hidden curriculum reveals the extra layers.

Another example raised by Eden (2017) involves the content of the textbooks themselves. In this case it is not the topic or author of the texts that are reinforcing stereotypes, but the portrayal and therefore perception of the subjects/characters within the textbooks. Eden states that “in the 1970s and 1980s, girls were often depicted in passive roles with boys as active participants” and classroom teachers were encouraged to review these texts and the possible meanings that were being conveyed through the hidden curriculum (p.76).

4.8 Implications for this research

It is interesting to think where Classical Studies fits within the ‘masculine’ and feminine’ subject stereotypes. It is firmly entrenched within both the English and Social Studies departments and is traditionally seen as an academic subject. The range of topics covered within the subject, and the broad scope of possible themes confuses the possibility of it fitting within one niche area. However, if you dig a little deeper you will see that at the very least, it caters to a male audience more than a female one. The reason for this, is that it is a very Eurocentric subject which traditionally looks at the role of men. This emphasis of men over women could possibly reinforce the patriarchy through the hidden curriculum and make Classical Studies, (un)intentionally a sexist subject.

Specifically, the topics that are recommended by the NZQA have a tendency to focus on men who are heavily involved in politics or war. Even the characters that appear in myth follow traditional male/female stereotypes. Men such as Achilles or Perseus are held in high-regard for their prowess in battle and ability to kill people, whereas their counterparts, Helen and Medusa, are perceived as adulterers and monsters. The great events that are covered are generally wars of conquest over ‘barbarians’ by great men such as Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Or conversely, the focus on a ‘Civilised West vs Barbarian East’ narrative that is still played out today. The important historical figures focused on include Socrates and Augustus and the texts studied have either, strong male heroes as the protagonist (the Aeneid, Odyssey, Iliad) or female protagonists that cannot be considered heroes due to their gender (Antigone or Medea).

This issue of gender roles within the texts that are covered in Classical Studies was brought up by some of the participants in the *talanoa* as we will see shortly. I will discuss in detail the achievement standards and topics offered by Classical Studies in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) but you can see from this small selection that the hidden curriculum is quite telling, quite loud and the message is that women live outside the margins.

4.9 *(un)Intentionally*

I should preface this next section by saying that education is cyclical and you can be unintentionally harmful to the student. Every educator went through their schooling, experiencing it in their own unique way but still absorbing learning through the visible and hidden curriculums. If they are told one thing, or see something normalised by their teacher, it can leave a lasting impression on them. Now, if they choose to continue their schooling at the tertiary level and the same things are normalised again, the impression grows deeper. When the student leaves their teacher training, they will carry with them those impressions that have been developed over a number of years. The newly trained teacher now enters the workforce with this belief system and passes it on to their students through either, the visible or hidden curriculums. In this way the cycle begins again.

An example of this within Classical Studies is the learning centred around Alexander the Great. When I attended secondary school, I found Alexander the Great fascinating because of his victories in battle. As a student, I saw victory after victory, each one against ever growing odds and to me, Alexander was indeed great. When I moved onto university this idea was reinforced when I took an entire paper on him. We went into more detail about his life, the positives and negatives, but because of the approach of the teacher, and the sources used, the positives of his reign far outweighed the negatives. The negatives were looked at as flaws, never as something that could tarnish his legacy as a leader.

Graduating from teacher's training college, I then went into the classroom and the cycle started again. The way I approached the topic (either intentionally or unintentionally) was from an angle of a great military leader, who achieved much before his early demise. This continued for a number of years. It was only when I was teaching at an all girls' school that the cycle was disrupted.

One day I had a *Pāsifikā* student approach me and ask if Alexander the Great was a colonist and if his impact on the indigenous peoples in Asia was like that of the British in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. This caught me completely off-guard and I admitted that in my naivety, I had never even thought of Alexander from that angle. This led to a discussion around his possible negative impact on the indigenous peoples. Yes, he had killed a lot of Persians and their subjects, but what was his lasting impact on the survivors of those areas he had conquered? It was this discussion that planted the seed for this entire research thesis. In my case it was the dominance of one man and his army over indigenous peoples, but you could easily approach the topic from a gendered angle as well. Where were the women? What were they doing? Why was Alexander's mother Olympia portrayed so negatively? Why was his wife Roxane portrayed poorly as well? These are just a few questions that have arisen from the content of one topic within Classical Studies.

4.10 Female Students and Pathways

The societal acceptance of masculine and feminine subjects has made it increasingly difficult for females to get into particular sections of the labour market. When females do enter fields of work that have been traditionally masculine, they are often faced with continued discrimination (Unwin, 1998). Due to these experiences there is a reinforcement of gender ideals at the school level as students consider their future beyond compulsory schooling. Therefore, it is not just factors within education that influence a student's decisions around subject choice, but society as a whole. Unwin (1998) believes that "the act of choosing a pathway after compulsory schooling usually falls to someone other than the young person, or is, at least, heavily influenced by one or more adults" (p.167). These influential people can be teachers, guidance counsellors, parents, guardians, older siblings or acquaintances who have their own unique points of view from their own experiences within education and/or the job market.

As a Classical Studies teacher, there is, without fail, at least one parent that asks a variation of a question that revolves around the worth and vocational possibilities of the subject. In fact, I have experienced a Dean questioning a student on why they would take Classical Studies as the Dean failed to see how it would help the student beyond her compulsory schooling. Now, these types of questions are understandable (maybe not for a colleague or a Dean) due to the structure of NCEA and the traditional approach to teaching Classical Studies.

This ‘traditional approach’ will be touched on in the next chapter. These questions are also expected because the adults in a student’s life want to provide the best possible advice to give the student the best possible chance for achievement and therefore, their careers beyond compulsory secondary schooling.

All young people are influenced “by the culture of the society in which they live, the aspirations of the adults with whom they interact, the economic climate, and the ability of education...to provide them with the opportunities they desire” (Unwin, 1998, p.168). There is a constant external pressure on young people to make the right choices; and what is considered ‘right’ may very well differ from adult to adult, student to student and adult to student. A teacher should be aware of these influences and constantly reflecting on their practice to meet the needs of their students. However, young people are not stupid, they also make “pragmatic decisions based on their knowledge of local and sometimes national conditions in education and employment” (Unwin, 1996, p.175). They are often more up to speed with fluctuations in society and most understand the objectives based curriculum that they are faced with in their senior years of secondary school.

Students will make decisions based on success rates, credits, entertainment as well as their desire to learn a subject. Unwin (1998) explains that it is paramount for a teacher to find the perfect balance between respecting their student’s perception and understanding of the different options they face, with providing them an opportunity to explore alternatives. Therefore, it is important for a subject to provide opportunities for girls to not only thrive but also explore alternatives, to break notions of masculinity and femininity found within education and the job market.

With all the external pressures faced by our students, combined with their own wants and needs, it brings us back to this research. Is Classical Studies meeting the needs of female students in Aotearoa New Zealand? Does Classical Studies stand up to the scrutiny of an ever competitive education system and demanding job market? Is Classical studies appropriate and relevant for female students in Aotearoa New Zealand? To answer these questions a deep dive into Classical Studies in the NZC and NZQA is needed.

4.11 Summary

The research that is based around the experiences and achievement of female students is usually from a comparison point of view to the experiences and achievement of their male counterparts. This results in a deficit theorizing standpoint on boy’s achievement rather than looking at the ‘why’ of female student success. This perspective, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, greatly limits the scope of funding and research for study and exploration into female student success.

This missing link is crucial to not only understanding why females are succeeding, but also enable their continued success. Hammersley & Woods (1998), state that:

“there can be little doubt that pupil’s own interpretations of school processes represent a crucial link in the educational chain. Unless we understand how pupils respond to different forms of pedagogy and school organization and why they respond in the ways that they do, our efforts to increase the effectiveness or to change the impact of schooling will stand little chance of success”
(as cited in Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, p.217).

The purpose of this research was to give the participants a chance to talk about their experiences in an environment that was safe and comfortable. The results of this research will then be used to inform my own practice and possibly that of others. The idea was always to give back, and the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the research participants responses to a Classical Studies classroom experience will enable me (and possibly others) the chance to reflect on our own pedagogy and approach to the curriculum.

The NZC was founded in 1993 and was a dramatic policy shift to “focus on content, experiences and activities to curriculum policy based on outcomes” (Wylie, 2009, p.16 as cited in Tearney, 2016, p.33). It is clear that the NZC is outcomes based and that most students are aware of what the outcome of each level is. Students then choose their subjects based on the credits they need for the year. It has also been stated that students are heavily influenced by outside forces, such as the adults in their lives. The advice from a trusted adult or peer, can then shift the student towards a particular pathway of education and/or influence their subject choices further. If a subject fails to adapt to the ever-diverse student body, their interests, and vocational pathways, it runs the risk of losing the attention of students.

The Classical Studies curriculum is one that contains broad achievement standards that look at a range of interests and cater to a range of skill sets. It is appealing to students based on the diversity of topics selected and is only limited by the narrow set of recommendations, and the teachers themselves. This should not be perceived as an attack on the teachers or examination markers. Teaching is an all-consuming profession. Catering to the wants and needs of every student is impossible.

Bransford (2000) states that “expert teachers know the structure of their disciplines and this knowledge provides them with cognitive roadmaps that guide assessments they give students” (p.155). The expertise of a teacher needs to be paired with the knowledge of the experiences of their students. If a teacher is unwilling to adapt, then they run the risk of continuing the cycle of harm and reinforcement of stereotypes. It is important for teachers to not only know the ins and outs of their subject, but be open to new ideas. These new ideas can help break down “conceptual barriers likely to hinder others” (McDonald & Naso, 1986:8 as cited in Bransford, 2000, p.7).

Teachers must be aware of the links between their pedagogy and the learning of the students, otherwise it can bring about a “student learning that is counter to curriculum goals” (Alton-Lee & Timperley, 2008, p.7). This is often found within the hidden or null curriculums, something that teachers can be oblivious to *if* they do not know about the lived experiences of their students within their classes. Wright et al (1997) found that the best way to improve education was “by improving the effectiveness of teachers” (p.63). One way to achieve this is to make teachers aware of the experiences of the students and the impacts of their learning. Other ways to not only improve student academic achievement, but also social cohesion within the classroom (two things that are not mutually exclusive), have already been identified by researchers. These include:

“structured cooperative groups; reciprocal learning; performing arts; pedagogies that interweave care; respect for cultural identity, and academic challenge; and other approaches that support students to manage conflict productively; optimize peer supports for learning; exercise interpersonal respect and build learning community”

(e. Cohen, 1994; Colwell, 1999; Hohepa, Hingaroa Smith, Tohiwai Smith & McNaughton, 1992; Palinesar & Brown, 1984; as cited in Alton-Lee & Timperley, 2008).

With this in mind, it may seem like an insurmountable hill to climb for a teacher as they try to educate effectively and work with their diverse students (Alton-Lee & Timperley, 2008, p.7). However, the key could well be the students themselves. It is their experiences of what happens within the classroom that can unlock opportunities for self-reflection and growth of a teacher. It is the knowledge around the experiences of the students that can make a traditionally narrow-focused subject more appropriate and accessible for future generations. What do girls have to say about Classical Studies?

Chapter Five: Findings

5.1 Introduction

Up to now, I have explained methodology and methods I have employed for this research (Chapter Two), provided a detailed account of the curriculum and how it can be perceived alongside a critique of the Classical Studies Achievement Standards offered to senior students (Chapter Three) and the research surrounding girl's achievement in education (Chapter Four). In this chapter I will present extracts from the *talanoa* sessions and identify a range of themes found within. It is important to note that within a *talanoa* methodology, it is the participant's experiences and therefore their voice which is of utmost importance. Therefore, I will be keeping my explanations to a minimum with the aim of amplifying the participant's voices.

5.2 Presentation of the Data

When I present the information I will not explain the quotes; instead I will expand on the themes and ideas that were raised. In this way I will be trying my best to remove my own opinion from the conversation whilst bring the participants lived experiences to the forefront of the research. Following on from this idea, I will not be paraphrasing the words of the participants and I will be adding as much of the conversation that is necessary to add context, mood and tone. Within the quotes, some of the words have been capitalized whilst others have been underlined. The words that are capitalized are ones where the participant raised their voice. The words that are underlined are ones where the participant changed the tone of their voice. In both respects, the words were presented in this way, by the participants, to emphasis their point. To ensure the legitimacy of these, I transcribed the conversations in this way and presented the scripts to the participants with a clear explanation as to what I had done. The participants agreed with the approach and there was no editing required. Also, ellipses were added where quotes were interrupted by another participant. This was a good way to show the participants building on each other's ideas.

All participants were happy with the transcripts and no further *talanoa* sessions were requested. Finally, I have left in the pauses and moments where the participants broke out in laughter. The reasoning for leaving these parts of the conversations within the transcripts is so the reader can see the tone or context of the quotes. For some answers the participants needed time to answer and by adding where they paused, the reader can see that the idea either changed mid response or took some time to develop.

The reasoning for leaving in the laughter is to show the tone of the conversation, or at least that point in the conversation. Initially I will identify the participants as Participant A, Participant B and so forth, and then after that as A, B. The researcher will be identified as Researcher initially and then as R. This approach to qualitative research and the presentation is what Braun & Clarke (2021) explain as an experiential qualitative approach. This is where you “are focused on meaning and experience, what people think, do and feel, and how they make sense of their realities ... a way to ‘give voice’ to the ‘rich tapestry’ of people’s lives” (p.159).

5.3 Themes

When reviewing the transcripts, I was able to identify numerous themes that were raised by the participants. Some of these themes were developed and expanded on by the participants themselves, whilst others were touched on and then expanded through further questioning by myself. For these sections, I have left my questioning in so the reader can see the context of the participant’s responses. The following tables (4, 5 and 6) show the different themes that have been identified by myself, and the amount of times they were raised or covered by the participants.

Question One: What are/were your experiences as a female student in a Classical Studies classroom?

Theme	Times they were discussed within the <i>talanoa</i>
The foundation of society	One
Having a range of topic choices within the subject (these could be for the Internals or externals)	Five
Ideas and values within the myths topic	Three
Linking ideas to our society today/Students relating to the subject	Fifteen
Perspectives (differing perspectives on an event/person/idea)	Five
The environment of the classroom	Four
Women	Twenty-two
Broader ideas (such as gender, ethnicity, race)	Seven
Accessibility of Classical Studies	Two
Misogyny	Eight

Table 4. Themes that match the first research question.

Question Two: Does Classical Studies meet the needs and expectations of female students in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Theme	Times they were discussed within the <i>talanoa</i>
Linking ideas to our society today/Students relating to the subject	Sixteen
Pedagogy	One
Accessibility	Eight
Having a range of topic choices within the subject (these could be for the Internals or externals)	Nine
Appropriateness of the subject, topics, pedagogy	Three
Women	Thirteen
Broad ideas (such as gender, ethnicity, race)	Four
Teacher influence	Five
Environment	Two
Internals/Externals	Six
Misogyny	Four

Table 5. Themes that match the second research question.

Question Three: If necessary, what pedagogical and/or curriculum changes could be implemented to help make Classical Studies more appropriate and accessible?

Theme	Times they were discussed within the <i>talanoa</i>
Linking ideas to our society today/Students relating to the subject	Fifteen
Pedagogy	Twelve
Amount of content	Twelve
Having a range of topic choices within the subject (these could be for the Internals or externals)	Four
Perspectives	Six
Women	Fifteen
Accessibility	One

Table 6. Themes that match the third research question.

As you can see, a range of discussion points were raised within the *talanoa* with some similarities between the three questions. The two standout themes for question one and two were ‘Linking ideas with our society today/Students relating to the subject’ and ‘Women’.

For the final research question, the same themes were brought up but also ‘Pedagogy’ and ‘Amount of Content’. These two latter themes are to be expected with the type of research question being asked. I will endeavour to cover as much of the themes as possible but I will spend most of my time on the discussion points that occupied the participants the most.

5.3.1 Key theme: Linking Ideas to our Society/Students Relating to the Subject

The first major theme identified within the transcripts is around the idea of ‘relevance’. As discussed in previous chapters, relevance is extremely important to that of the learner. Being able to make links between their lives (historical, societal, passion, skillsets) and the learning is a very effective way to engage students within the classroom. This point was raised numerous times within the *talanoa* by participants from both year levels.

5.3.2 Key theme: Women

It should come as no surprise to anyone that the most talked about topic within the *talanoa* was that of the role, perception and visibility of women in the classical world. Each participant identified as female and attend an all girls’ school within Aotearoa New Zealand. As mentioned in previous chapters, Classical Studies is a Eurocentric subject that focuses on a patriarchal society. The possibility of this being an issue in an all girls’ school was one of the reasons why this research was undertaken in the first place.

5.3.3 Key theme: Having a Range of Choices within the Subject

Student choice within a subject is a way to cater to the diverse interests of the students within the classroom as well as provide a way for them to utilise their different skillsets. On the surface this can be viewed as a positive, a way for teachers to differentiate learning for their students. However, this can also be a negative as it can overwhelm students when it comes to topic choice, or even limit their ability to achieve.

What I mean by this latter point is that there could be a lack of perspectives on a topic that limit the student’s ability to write comprehensively on a topic; or they may be interested in a non-traditional topic which may hinder their grade in an External. This choice, or lack thereof, can be perceived as misogynistic and harmful to the student.

Chapter Six: Extracts from the *talanoa*

6.1 *Talanoa One: Participants A and B. Aged 16 years old. Identify as female. Level 2 Classical Studies students. September 8th 2022.*

In the first *talanoa* (2022) involving Year 12 participants, they clearly state that their enjoyment of the subject is associated to the links that they are able to make between the classical world and today.

Researcher: “How are you finding Classics this year?”

Participant A: “It’s fun, it’s enjoyable. I say it is a very interesting topic to learn about”.

Participant B: “Yeah, I agree with that”.

A: “Because, it is different to history in the way you get to look even further back into what we did as a society, as a species...”

B: “...and how the world kind of grew...and what’s the word?”

A: “Beginning?”

B: “No, it’s *pause* society, how society grew.

A: “Yeah, I really enjoyed it, like, learning the information is very fun *pause* and understanding how the world was at that time, and how different it is to how we are now is also very interesting, because...”

B: “Yeah”

A: “Because there are a lot of differences but there are a lot of similarities. For example, we are talking about democracy now (in class), we still have democracy!”

B: “Yeah, true”.

A: “A very different...”

B: “...kind of good...”

Together: “....BUT IT IS STILL DEMOCRACY”.

This is reinforced further when they are discussing linking myths with society today as seen below.

A: "...and linking it to nowadays was a very good one. It kind of introduced how, in Classics, you can, and you would link it to now and how some of the ideas even then, would link to now

*B: "...and how like *pause* we humans still think the same but differently*

A: "YEAH!"

B: "It's kind of interesting to learn..."

A: "...see how different or similar the ideas were".

B: "Yeah. See how it has changed but kind of stayed the same"

*B: and how like ummm *pause* we humans still think the same but differently.*

Participants A and B were even able to find enjoyment in the Greco-Persian War topic as they were able to make the connections to their own lives again.

*A: "I kind of found it really interesting how, how the wars started for one *pause* and how some of the wars we have had later on, have kind of started in similar ways. But I also found it interesting because, well, just the way they fought and the strategic way they would fight. It was quite interesting."*

A: "The differences in how war is now..."

B: "...to back then".

A: "It is very interesting"

B: "VERY interesting".

Something they did raise was the fact that it is up to the teacher to make the subject relevant or not. The teacher has a choice to make the links or teach the topics removed from modern day society and the lives of their students. In this sense, the power is held by the teacher to make the subject relevant or not.

R: "OK, as a subject, as a whole, do you think Classical Studies is a relevant subject for you?"

B: "I think it kind of depends".

*A: "It depends on what you *points to the researcher* cover.*

When it came to the theme of women, Participant A and B didn't have a lot to say, but what they did say, and how they said it was very telling.

R: *"What about the perception of women?"*

A: **Audible sigh**

B: *"oooooooohhhhh"*

A: *"Weeeeee"*

Both: **laughter**

A: *Kind of a LARGE ... kind of a large question I suppose"*

B: *"Yeah"*

A: *"They are not perceived particularly *pause* well they are not perceived very well."*

B: *"Yes"*

A: *"But I think that it is important that even though they were not perceived very well in what we were looking at, it's good to recognise that fact. And understand that, *pause* I don't know..."*

B: *"...we have to understand the fact that women still today, still do not have..."*

A: *"...as many privileges..."*

B: *"...and rights..."*

A: *"...rights a privileges..."*

B: *"...that men do, kind of thing..."*

A: *"...and how it reflects to back then where women have literally, well what we were looking at, they had little to no say..."*

long pause

A: *"Unfortunately".*

Here the participants are able to make the connection back to the society they live in today again. The participants clearly struggled with the fact that when women were talked about in Classical Studies, it was from a negative point of you.

I followed this part of the *talanoa* with a question about whether the subject was appropriate for them, as female students in Aotearoa New Zealand. Their response touched on the perception of women again and Participant A found worth within the subject as it still touched on ideas that were important to human nature.

*A: "I think it's fine. It doesn't just *pause*, the fact that women are unfortunately not included or ... a very Like ... a part that isn't As much..."*

B: "...a part of it".

A: "They're not seen much in Classical Studies. It doesn't redefine the fact that some of the stuff that happens during, or in Classical Studies is still an important part to human nature overall not just a gendered thing".

For the third major theme that was identified, Participants A and B discussed a lot of ideas around the content covered in class, the pedagogy of the teacher, perspectives and diversity of choice. For the participants, the topic of myth and the stories associated with the gods was something that really appealed to them.

*A: "I REALLY enjoyed it. I LOVED the stories. And I LOVED myths. And I find the fact that there's so many gods, whereas obviously in traditional, *correction* not traditional, the most common kind of religion nowadays is a singular god, would have so many gods and stories around them, I find it exceedingly interesting to study *pause* and to learn about".*

B: "Because it is different".

A: "YEAH! It's fresh".

*B: "Fresh *laughs* yeah".*

The myths helped ease the students into the topic of Classical Studies before moving onto more historical or political topics.

A: "And I think it was a good way to get into that without slamming you with a bunch of historical information... it does give you historical information but in a kind of fantastical way".

Perspectives in the classical world was something that was identified by the participants as they found it a problem that they were either, only given one perspective, or there was only one perspective available. After both participants explained how they enjoyed the Greco-Persian Wars topic, I asked them if they were given both sides of the story.

A: "I mean, we saw both sides"

B: "Yeah we saw both sides"

A: "But there are a lot of anecdotes from the Athenian side more or less, and the Greek side"

B: "There was more information from the Greek point of view than there was from the Persian point of view so it made it a lot more difficult to..."

A: "...gauge..."

B: "...write about them, and their experience..."

A: "...in comparison to the Greeks and the Athenians and especially considering there were only like, a handful of main sources. Anecdotal sources that we have for the wars".

R: "Is that a problem with Classics?"

Together: "YES!"

This section was then followed up by the participants explaining how the study of more than one perspective on an event in the classical world is a positive thing for their learning.

R: "Do you think that it would have a larger impact on student's learning that we only approach it from one angle?"

Together: "DEFINITELY!"

R: "A positive or a negative?"

A: "Probably a..."

Together: "Negative"

A: "Because you don't have as much evidence, and information is more or less power when it comes to understanding a situation such as wars..."

B: "Yeah, and if you have both perspectives then you have a bit more of an understanding of how it happened, you might consider both sides had good and bad reasons to fight each

*other. *pause* But, because we didn't have the Persians side of how, like their perspective we couldn't know *pause* so we just had to side with the..."*

A: "...Athenians"

pause

B: "If you introduced, or if you could find, a perspective from the Persians and learn both, then I think you'd get a lot more information in the Internal, if they're doing wars and have a bit more of an argument so that the student that is learning about the wars has better understanding and can write a better essay or whatever they are doing on it".

The idea of Classical Studies and the pedagogy of a teacher, influencing the student's points of view was raised within this *talanoa*. This manipulation often occurs through the hidden or null curriculums, and a teacher should be aware of the messages they are (un)intentionally passing on to the students through their pedagogy. One example raised by Participants A and B is the lack of perspectives used within Level 2 Classical Studies.

R: "So if you don't approach it (a topic) from the correct angle you can definitely influence your students?"

B: "Yes"

R: "...and direct the student's point of view?"

Both: "Yes!"

R: "Rather than developing their own?"

Both: "Yes!"

*A: "Honestly that is how people have been manipulated as they have not seen the whole picture. Like, in general, if you don't have the context of something it can really change *pause* what you believe. And we see that in history! That, people don't have the whole picture and it ends up affecting what they do and what they choose to believe and who they choose to believe".*

6.2 Talanoa Two: Participants C and D. Aged 17 years old. Identify as female. Level 2 Classical Studies students. September 16th 2022

This *talanoa* gravitated around the theme of women and the perception of women in Level 2 Classical Studies. Other ideas such as the pedagogy of the teacher and the environment of the classroom were touched on as well, but they were often under the umbrella theme of women. When asked about the presentation of women in Level 2 Classical Studies, the participants did not hold back their feelings.

Participant D: "Well, I knew women had been mistreated for thousands of years but you actually learn about all the things that can go against them and it's quite sad that it has taken that long to get even half of the rights that we deserve"

Participant C: "Up until now and it's been so long, and things have changed, but it's interesting to see the change and how things stay the same, like the roles of women and all that".

Following up on this point, I asked them if the overall portrayal of women in Level 2 Classical Studies was positive or negative.

C: "I would say it was negative because they went through so much mistreatment but also it has made me more aware of the mistreatment. It is quite upsetting to go back that far, in a subject that I was really looking forward to, I did not expect that and I probably should have seen it coming but I didn't".

Pause

D: "It is just quite depressing that in the past 100 years we are only slowly starting to get our rights back, and in some ways we are losing them again in some places".

Here Participant D makes the link back to today's society which shows that Classical Studies can be a good building block for understanding the society we live in. However, it is clear that positive female role models and/or anecdotes from the classical world are needed within the Level 2 curriculum.

Participant C and D both agreed that women should be featured more heavily within the curriculum at an all girls' school and not just famous women, but women in general.

*C: "I wanted to know if there was more information about females. It's always about war
pause not always about war but men and I didn't get to hear much about what the women did. The men go to war, we don't think about the women. Just the men going to war".*

D: "Yeah the men are out there saving their country while the women are at home".

R: "Like, what were they doing?"

Both: "YEAH!"

C: "Yeah, what were they doing? Were they just continuing with their lives? Waiting for them? What ARE they doing?"

D: "It's like we are always constantly focusing on what men are doing for the better of Greece we don't know what women are doing. The girls side..."

C: "...especially because we are females. We want to know more about females as well. Not just females, just have an equal side of both genders. IF there is any".

laughter

The idea of a positive female role model was mentioned by the participants when discussing the play Antigone.

C: "Yes! Antigone. That was cool to see a strong female character that would go against the law. So there are good parts to it where you can see women come through even with everything against them which is nice".

The conversation then turned into a discussion around the other topics that had been covered, namely the rise of democracy in ancient Athens topic. For Participants C and D, the xenophobia expressed by the different *poleis*, was very interesting to them.

C: "That was interesting to me, like they weren't racist but they just don't like other people"

D: "Yeah!"

C: "That was pretty interesting. I just thought that they were all like "Hello" to the outsiders"

laughter

C: "I thought they just shared the stuff they focused on and their crops and all that"

D: "Yeah yeah. Like, I wasn't actually aware of all the different ... I thought they were Greece as a whole"

And again later in the *talanoa*.

C: "Because, you know how it is generalised. Like Greece is seen as a whole. And finding out that they didn't like other people was interesting"

D: "I didn't know they had wars with each other all the time"

C: "Like all the time it seems like"

laughter

D: "Yeah"

C: "...and I just wondered why? Why they didn't like other people?"

The preconceived idea of what ancient Greece looked like was something that influenced Participants C and D to take the subject but it was the new learning about the diversity of the people that lived in and around ancient Greece that interested the students.

With such big ideas being discussed, I asked the participants about the environment of the classroom. They both said that the perception of women had made them sad, so I wanted to try understand whether that had made them feel unsafe, or uncomfortable.

R: "Did you ever feel uncomfortable? Or, unsafe? In the environment of the classroom because the subject was so focused on men?"

Both: "mmm"

D: "No, I did enjoy learning about everything but it was sad to only see the women when they were mistreated"

C: "When you talked about women in Greece it was sad"

D: "Because something had happened to them and they were going to pay for it while the men get away"

C: "That's what it feels like"

pause

R: "So you didn't feel unsafe, but you felt ..."

D: "Sad"

The comment "...while men get away" (Participant C, 2022), is in reference to the plays that were studied, *Ion* and *Antigone*. Both the plays were selected because the protagonists are female and in *Ion*,

Apollo is not punished for his sexual assault of Creusa and in Antigone, she loses her life. The comment “Sad” is confronting to a researcher, teacher, parent and human. You never want one of our young people to feel “sad” and obviously changes need to be made to my approach.

A slither of a silver lining is that real attempts were made to make the environment as safe and comfortable as possible. Something touched on by Participant C and D.

pause

C: “One more thing. You know when you were teaching us, I liked that you didn’t brush off the judgement, or the treatment of women wrong because we are an all girls’ school and all that. You did that really well. I like how you said “If you feel uncomfortable then say something”

D: “Yeah”

C: “I think all teachers should do that as well, not just in an all girls’ school. It could be a sensitive topic. Depending on what you were talking about”.

This is a clear message from both participants that an effort needs to be made by the teacher to prepare students for some of the content found within Classical Studies. The sensitivity of topics may differ from student to student and it is important for teachers to enter that environment from a place of care.

6.3 Talanoa Three: Participants E and F. Aged 17 years old. Both identify as female. Level 3 Classical Studies students. September 16th 2022.

Participants E and F found the broadness of the subject appealing and one of the reasons why they continued to take it after Level 2.

Researcher: *Thoughts on the subject?*

Participant E: *"I love it"*

F: *"Same"*

E: *"Hence why I'm taking it next year as one of my majors"*

R: *"Why?"*

E: *"Ummmm, it covers a lot more ideas that subjects like history don't. It looks more at the people as a whole, what the society wants rather than the key events it has. So with history, you have the event, causes and consequences. Whereas with Classics, you have what were the people feeling? What was a Republic? What was a Monarchy, if it was a Monarchy? How did the different layers and levels of the cursus honorum, *pause* how they were viewed and how it affected different people"*

F: *"Yeah, same"*

R: *"So it was the broadness of the subject that appealed to you?"*

E: *"It's more about the people and less about the event"*

F: *"It feels more human"*

E: *"YEAH! Even though it is ancient, nothing is fully known. The information that we have feels more realistic, knowing that we're human and we can relate to them on that level".*

This idea of it being more 'human' or involving 'humanity' on a broader level was brought up by Participants A and B in the first *talanoa*. This is interesting to note because they were Level 2 students, whereas Participants E and F are Level 3. It looks like the interconnectedness of humanity, past, present and future is something that Classical Studies does well and is appealing to students at either level.

For Participants E and F, making the subject relatable and linking it to the society that they live in and their lives, was something very important to them.

E: "I think it was important because it was the first internal that we did. It got you interested in ancient Greek myth and the people and the ideas and values that they had. And then to be able to bring it back to now so you're not fully just "Oh this is what had happened" it was more "this is what happened and this is how it affects us now". There were certain movies in which you could clearly see the morals - the fact that you could come up with a huge list based on one myth with so many different movies. That was quite interesting to look at those"

F: "Looking at the impact that it still has today"

This idea of 'relevance' was discussed by the participants as a way to get potential students interested in the subject as mentioned by Participant E:

E: "To make it relevant, especially the first Internal to hook people in and then they want to learn more about the ancient part - rather than just have it straight ancient".

Whereas Participant F gave us the bluntest reason for why the subject needs to be relevant to a female student in Aotearoa New Zealand:

F: "I think it would be harder to see its value if it wasn't relatable to today - if it's not relatable then really what is the point learning about a bunch of people living thousands of years ago?"

As we have seen in the previous two *talanoa*, the theme of women was something discussed in detail. Last year I tried something different for the 3.5 achievement standard in which I used one lesson a week to look at different people or events from the classical world that have influenced artists (painters, sculptors, directors, playwrights, poets and authors alike) over the last millennia. I made a conscious effort to include females such as the Amazons, Cleopatra VII Philopator and Medusa in an attempt to make the subject more relevant to female students. This idea of 'relevance' was from my lived experience, so the thoughts and experiences of the students, going through this unit, will allow me to be a reflective educator and see if I was on the right path.

F: "I feel like the first Internal was quite relatable because you could choose"

E: "Especially because with the first one (3.5 internal) you were able to focus on women, such as the Amazons. I really enjoyed doing that"

F: "Everyone had a choice and not many had the same person. It felt like that you could add in another person. For example, if Cleopatra wasn't taught to us, then we could've asked you "Hey, can we do that one if we have enough research behind it?" Most people wouldn't do that but we had the option there. You did the different talanoa, one each week and did enough for everyone to get a taste of what the Internal would involve"

E: "That was cool I liked that"

F: "Being able to learn a lot, and a couple of different people. Even if we didn't actually do the Internal on them we still learned about them and had an idea of what they did"

E: "Yeah, I didn't do Medusa but it was still really nice to learn about her and her lasting impact".

Talanoa three was the first one in which the participants linked the lack of women in the subject, with the perception that society, in the present day and in the classical world, is/was patriarchal.

R: "Ok, so you have mentioned women. As female students in Aotearoa, is visible women important to you in the classroom?"

Both: "VERY!"

E: "ABSOLUTELY"

F: "YES!"

laughter

F: "Very much so"

E: "I think representation is so important, not just for females, but for anything. If you are only learning about men in subjects, then you are not going to feel like you can do those same things. Whereas, if you are learning about women, you can relate to that, you can see what they're doing and their impacts. Then you can think "I can do that as well"

F: "It's a patriarchal society. Society has formed around men and their ability for only them to succeed. So to be able to see females taught..."

E: "...And succeeding..."

F: "...In that same environment. Or seeing the challenges they faced and how they overcame them to succeed. That's helpful. It makes it more relevant to female student".

The discussion then moved towards the benefits of learning about women in the classical world. This was not just for students at an all girls' school, but also for their male counterparts.

F: "Especially in male schools. If they're not already there. We have no idea. If they're not there, then they should at least be taught. They might not like it as much"

R: "So you think it would be beneficial in a boys' school as well..."

F: "Yep!"

R: "...to learn about women?"

E: "I 100% think it is important. If you're not aware of other people..."

F: "...and their struggles..."

E: "...then you're not going to be ..."

F: "...you are less empathetic"

E: "...I guess you will be less able to help or recognise those needs..."

F: "...it goes beyond learning about females in ancient culture and society. It goes beyond just learning about that time period and learning what they did. If people were able to see the impact women had back then and actually see it and question it, how it is used nowadays. That would actually make for ..."

E: "...understanding..."

F: "Yeah more understanding. It is not equal and it should be".

The enthusiasm of both participants to answer the question before it was even asked shows the passion they have for the idea of making women more visible. Both participants built on each other's ideas of incorporating women into the curriculum for the benefit of both male and female students, and came to the conclusion that it would create more empathy within the learner. The suggestion that male students would benefit from visible women within their Classical Studies curriculum was not something I had thought of.

The discussion now pivoted to diversity and the approach of the teacher to the curriculum. There were concerns raised about the approach of teachers that may be comfortable with what they have always done. This leans on the idea that education is cyclical, that the teacher is only comfortable with teaching what they have learned. There is also the possibility that the teacher may be more interested with teaching the 'traditional' topics or not concerned with the diversity within their classroom.

Either way, it should be an eye opener for teachers that at least two students are able to notice this, or get the impression that that *could* be happening.

F: "Yeah, because we have a teacher like you who is willing to go and find out about different people like Cleopatra, Medusa. You are able to go and find the "underdogs" of the ancient world. Whereas there may be other teachers that are less willing to go out and beyond and make the Internal apply what we want to learn. They will just go with the Internal that is in front of them and continue with that because that is easier, rather than actually make it relevant for female students".

The possibility of a teacher neglecting parts of the curriculum and the harm that it could cause, was discussed by Participants E and F. Their view was that it was only a disservice if it was intentional.

E: "I think it would only be a disservice if you were intentionally doing it. For example, if you were teaching at an all girls' school and you chose not to teach females from ancient Rome. Then I think that would be a disservice".

*F: "You'd have to have the passion for it. The teacher would have to have the passion for Classics to make it super relatable to the students. *pause* because the curriculum doesn't allow for there to be a lot of diversity"*

This idea of the curriculum lacking diversity was then expanded by the participants incorporating the pedagogy of the teacher.

R: "... and diversity is important?"

Both: "YES!"

E: "Always"

F: "Always".

Participant F goes on to explain that the appearance of the subject may be whitewashed and that it may be impacting on learners due to society becoming more diverse.

R: "Do you think there might be an issue with Classics around diversity?"

F: "Yes"

E: "Yeah"

F: "I also feel like it is slightly whitewashed. In my head it is whitewashed even though it is in a part of the world that isn't white as it is in the Mediterranean. I'm guessing it is because of the historians that noted it down? They have been white and men, so the diversity is not there. They are the ones that have recorded it and passed it on to the next generations who are getting more and more diverse. That's not doing us a service"

E: "I think it is important to look at how flawed it was. Even doing satire, looking at the xenophobia, when we have an understanding of what it was and why".

The final idea Participants E and F touched on was the need for the curriculum to be more diverse. They first raised this point when trying to remember what options were available to them in the Scholarship exam. Participants E and F were both studying towards the Scholarship exam and were frustrated at the lack of female representation.

F: "...only the three options. Aristotle?"

pause

E: "Oh, in scholarship? Socrates?"

R: "Socrates, Augustus and Alexander the Great"

E: "NONE of them are women and that's frustrating; especially at scholarship level"

F: "There should be equal opportunities for women to get scholarship alongside their male counterparts ... so why is there no diversity or inclusion?"

For the participants, the lack of diversity within the Scholarship exam hindered their ability to succeed. They viewed their success as directly linked to what was relatable to them, namely women.

The lack of women in the curriculum, and especially in the Scholarship exam, was an affront to them. So much so, that their closing comments were centred around the lack of diversity found within the Classical Studies curriculum.

F: "Options on who you can study"

R: "So in NCEA you do have the option to write about women but in the External it is not a recommendation or in the notes"

E: "Exactly. If it's not being actively encouraged, then it's not going to happen ... That's frustrating"

And the final comment from Participant F:

F: "Include more women. That's the main thing for us. Inclusivity and diversity. Make it more fun. Some teachers don't know how to have fun with Classics".

laughter

You can't get much clearer than that.

6.4 Talanoa four: Participant G. 17 years old. Identifies as female. Level 3 Classical Studies student. September 21st 2022.

This was the only *talanoa* that featured one participant. This means there is a lot of to and fro between myself and the participant as she does not have someone else to build her ideas on. For Participant G, the majority of the conversation was around the content of the subject, the relevance of the subject, and the (perceived) misogyny of Classical Studies.

Participant G preferred Level 2 Classical Studies to Level 3 due to the content covered. In Level 2, she learned about some of the myths of the classical world and compared it to modern society, she studied Antigone, architecture of ancient Athens and the destruction of Pompeii. At Level 3, she focused on Republican Rome and its transition to an empire under Augustus nee Octavian. Within this umbrella, she explored the architecture of ancient Rome as well as the satires of the Romans.

Researcher: *“Did you take Classics last year?”*

Participant G: *“Yeah, but I feel like it was different last yeah ... I think the content we covered was a bit different. Last year we did a lot of myths and stuff, then we touched on architecture. Whereas this year was a lot of politics and actual people”*

R: *“Which did you prefer?”*

G: *“Last year” *laughs**

R: *“Is there a reason why?”*

G: *“The politics was a bit boring, and they're all men which led to a lot of the same stuff happening over and over again I feel like”.*

Of note is the comment about men and how they did “the same stuff” over and over again. This is the opening exchange of the *talanoa* and already Participant G is commenting on the fact that men dominated the year. Remember, Participant G was a Level 3 student, the same level as the previous two participants in this research and went through the first Internal where I tried to bring women out of the margins.

In Participant G’s case, this did not matter. The men of Roman politics dominated her memory of Level 3 Classical Studies.

R: *“Do you think that if there was a conscious effort by the teacher to include the women of the time, then the politics would have become more interesting? Or is it just that for you, politics is boring?”*

G: "Maybe a bit of both. I do remember there was one point where we were reading a primary source and it touched on a woman and I thought "Oh that's interesting!" but then you said there was nothing else on her"

R: "The mother of the Gracchi. She was portrayed as this amazing person but that's all we know. We have two sentences of her"

G: "I feel like that happened a couple of times. Where I was like "Oh I think women could be really interesting" but there's nothing really on them"

R: "Is that really frustrating?"

G: "Yeah".

In an attempt to make ancient Roman women more visible within the subject, I unintentionally frustrated Participant G, as it reinforced the lack of evidence, and therefore visibility of them. Next Participant G raised a very interesting point about the portrayal of the few women that did have more than a couple of sentences written about them.

G: "Ummm, I think they were meant to be portrayed negatively but to me I was like "Hey this is kind of cool actually" you know? It had been written by men in a negative way but you know?"

This point was actually clarified by Participant G after reading the transcript.

Participant G (2023), "I mean that the women's actions may be viewed as undesirable by men, and so are written with that perspective (as the men were doing all of the writing), but to other women they may not view those actions as undesirable?" (email to the researcher).

This is a very interesting point raised. Participant G has picked up on the biased nature of history and the issues surrounding a subject dominated by literary sources written by men. Participant G found the women that we did look at in detail as entertaining as they were portrayed in a negative light. She was able to see through that filter and unpack the ideas behind it. This is not a simple idea of identifying bias, but one where she was able to see the bias and then use it to her advantage, and entertainment.

This discussion on the perception of women led to an idea that had been brought up earlier in *talanoa* three, the desire to write about a female from the classical world but the fear that it may hinder their grade.

G: *“I also, think, it was my last teacher last year, who said that we can write about women but the markers may not want to mark it as well because it is about a woman. Maybe they don’t think they are right?”*

R: *“They don’t consider it a part of Classics?”*

G: *“Yeah”*

R: *“Antigone as a hero - for modern Classicists she’s a hero but to the ancient Greeks, she probably wasn’t, and to some Classicists she’s not. There’s that bias that still exists. How does that make you feel?”*

G: *“That’s interesting because you want to be like “I don’t care I am going to write about a woman” to prove them wrong but also I don’t want to write about a woman and have them think “this is terrible and wrong; I’m going to give you a bad grade”*

R: *“That’s not OK for you to feel like that or be made to feel like that”*

G: *“It’s good to be aware but it definitely sucks”*

R: *“That’s really limiting. If you are a female student sitting in a classroom and you want to learn about more females and the few do learn about...”*

G: *“...you don’t want to write about them because you think it might hinder your grade”.*

The raw response of Participant G is quite confronting. She is aware, thanks to a past teacher, that writing about something she is passionate about may hinder her grade in the future. Writing about women in the classical world should not be a niche thing to do, it should be normalised alongside the recommendations that already exist. Women are not a niche, nor are they an anomaly, and therefore they should not appear as such within a subject.

Participant G’s interest in Classical Studies centred around the art and architecture topic of the 3.2 achievement standard. For her, the idea of being able to link to places that she knows of and has visited, added another layer of intrigue to the topic. Once again, we see that a topic that is relevant to a student, something they can connect to, peaks their interest in subject.

R: *“What about art and architecture. That’s your jam, that’s what you really like or liked”*

G: *“I just think it’s *pause* it’s not all men or all women. It’s just interesting. It’s not one thing or another. It’s nothing to do with that’s stuff. Obviously it reflects the politics of the time and stuff but more like “oh that’s a cool thing”*

R: *“More of a worldview? So when you travel there now you can be like “I know what this building is”*

G: *“Yeah and it’s cool to look it and know what it is reflecting. I really like the internal earlier this year, comparing the Parthenon with the Auckland Museum. That was real interesting”.*

6.5 Talanoa Five: Participants H, I and J. One 18 year old and two 17 year olds. All three identify as female. Level 3 Classical Studies students. September 27th 2022.

This was the first and only *talanoa* session to involve three participants and it is interesting to watch the dynamic surrounding how they worked together to create new information. Just like we have seen when there are two participants, they build on each other's ideas and finish each other's sentences. A risk with having three participants is that one may be overshadowed by the other two and therefore their voice is not heard. Luckily, this was not the case.

As previously seen in earlier *talanoa*, the idea, perception and reception of women in the classical world dominated the discourse of the participants. They discussed women in general, how it can be perceived as biased against them as students, the links they were able to make with the people or ideas studied and the need for women to be visible in the curriculum for both girls and boys. Participant H explains that

*H: "I enjoy Classics. I think I get frustrated with their perceptions on women but I can't change that. I actually find that I end up getting sucked into "this man is so great" and I just get sucked into it. I was writing my essay and thinking "man, I can't believe I am writing this" *laughs* as I completely disagree *laughs* but it's all they want".*

In this quote, the 'they' are referring to is the marker and Participant H believes that she needs to write from a particular angle to get the grade she wants.

There is possibly frustration behind the laughter of the above comment and Participant H expands on her desire to learn more about women.

H: "I'm sorry but this is going to be really mean but I wish we still learned more about women"

Participant I: "That's fair enough"

H: "Because it is so relevant to me. I think doing the Internal (3.5) where we all got to choose a person at the start of the year, I think most of us picked a woman. Did we not?"

I: "I agree. It is empowering to learn about stuff women have done".

Participant I goes on to explain that learning about women from the classical world is a double-edged sword; something that has been brought up in earlier *talanoa*. On one hand she finds it empowering but on the other hand, it has negative connotations to her own life. This came to light when discussing the lasting legacy of the Amazons with Participant H:

H: "How their armour was changed and stuff. How the presentation of them and stuff for the male gaze. I can 100% relate to that"

laughter

*I: "I got so angry because I was like "Argh! This is so gross". The men were so ugh *pause* The Amazons were just trying their best and they (historians) were so rude about them".*

Both participants are frustrated at how the primary and secondary sources portrayed the Amazons and Participant H was able to make the connection to her own experiences. This is a very sensitive issue and probably explains why there was an outburst of laughter in between the comments.

Participant I goes on to explain that strong women are essential for female students to learn about:

I: "It was kind of satisfying as well because "oh these women were really incredible" and so interesting to learn about them. I think it is very important for girls, young girls to see that kind of stuff. NOT sexualised. But that women had the ability to be as powerful, as strong, as capable as men if not more".

Participant I emphasised her point that girls need to learn about women from a non-sexualised view perspective. Discussion needs to occur around the portrayal of women in the classical world, rather than just presenting it as it is seen. By doing this, the teacher will be able to avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes through the hidden and null curriculums.

The conversation now turned to misogyny within the Classical Studies curriculum. The idea that there may be an inherent bias within the curriculum or the held by the marker is not something new, it was raised earlier in *talanoa* four. Participant H explained her experience around preparing for the External:

*H: "I remember last year, literally just writing. I remember just writing exactly what the examiner wanted to hear and like, YEAH I got a great mark but I literally wrote exactly what they wanted and so it was kind of like, *pause* you don't fear expressing your own opinions but you are sort of held back behind the grades and maybe I should just be a baddie and just wrote about a lady and if I get a bad grade and I can just be like "this so sexist!"*

Participant J actually linked this idea of writing to the exam to the experience of the teacher and the idea that education is cyclical.

J: "He had just come from university, so I think that a lot of how he taught was influenced by what he learned at university and he basically told us the structure of what you should write, to get the best mark possible. I found that I was just writing about stuff that I wasn't really interested in, just to get the good mark".

A specific example given by the participants is around the possible perception of Antigone by the marker in the External. This point was raised previously in *Talanoa* two and four.

R: "Do you think there's a bias ..."

I: "Definitely!"

R: "... amongst the markers and the teachers?"

I: "I remember there being a whole thing where you can't write heroine or you can't write hero..."

H: "...yeah for a female..."

I: "...because they are a woman. You can't have hero for women"

H: "You can't describe them. This is what was in whatsitcalled, the last one we did last year? The lady..."

R: "Antigone?"

*H: "Yeah Antigone. You couldn't write her as a heroine or in a positive light or something because you will get a sh*t mark"*

*I: "Yeah it's not appropriate. I know that a lot of the ummmm *pause* I don't know if I would call it discrimination but the markers..."*

H: "...can be misogynistic".

Once again we are confronted by the possibility that our students do not want to write about a topic they are passionate about because of the real or perceived fear that it will impact their grade.

To reinforce this point, I want to leave the reader with the final section from *talanoa* five in which the participants discuss the limitations to their learning. There is not much more that I can add to what they are saying, it is prudent that we stop, read and absorb their words.

J: "...there's a lot of bias in the system that makes it easier to write about a male"

I: "Yeah"

J: "Even the way questions are worded and stuff like that and how content is taught, the information that is given"

R: "What do you mean by limitations on the questions?"

pause

J: "I just think that some of the things they ask are almost directed towards a male"

H: "I think it seems like that in our head because we don't have the resources available to be able to twist it to the use of a female. Like an historical figure - that makes sense"

R: "Should you be doing that?"

I: "Should you have to twist the question?"

R: "Should you be in that position to begin with?"

J: "Do you have to make your essay so unique to be "I'm going to be different and write about a woman" but the question is obviously directed to be about a male. Like, how has a person in power changed society? A lot of what you read about women is not them changing society..."

H: "...and a lot of people in power are not women"

J: "Yeah. How can you write about a women if A) if they are not in power and B) they haven't changed society? What they want to hear is how has that person in power changed society as a whole but women don't have power in the society."

H: "And it's 'significant historical figure', is someone like Livia a significant historical figure? "

I: "Yeah that's a good point"

J: "Yeah you could twist the question, but why do you have to twist the question? Someone like me, it would be easier to just go in there and study someone like Augustus - I'm not interested in him at all - because you can use any of the questions and it is easier to use any

question. Whereas, if you study a woman, you might get in there and find that none of the questions are directed towards any of the information you have. So you have to pick one, twist the question to make it work with what you have”.

H: “Augustus is just the default”

I: “But he shouldn’t be”

H: “It’s what everyone falls back on”

I: “You shouldn’t have to work harder to talk about a woman”.

6.6 Summary

The interview data from the *talanoa* discussions covered a range of themes including the perception and portrayal of women, the ability for students to relate to the topics covered, the need for curriculum and pedagogical change and the accessibility of the learning. The lived experiences of Level 2 and 3 students were similar with both groups touching on the same themes. This pattern shows that an effort needs to be made by teachers to make Classical Studies more accessible and relevant to the diverse learners found within a secondary school in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Despite the fact that a lot of the topics covered were deeply personal or serious, the tone of the *talanoa* was often jovial and informal. The safety and comfortability of the participants was paramount and an environment was created to help them convey their lived experiences, often building off of each other. The interview data shows how the participants were able to work together to unlock new knowledge; knowledge that is often assumed or overlooked by the teacher. The next section will revisit the research questions.

6.7 Research questions: A discussion

6.7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to revisit the research questions and unpacking them using the lived experiences of the participants. I must acknowledge that my research questions were based around my own experiences as a Classical Studies teacher at an all girls’ school. This experience led to a range of assumptions about the impact I was having on my student’s lives. The student’s passion for learning and desire for the credits available in the subject are well known.

The possibility that my pedagogy or the topics covered having a negative impact on my students was of real concern. A *talanoa* approach to this study was the perfect way for me to give my students a voice. The safety of the environment, the relationship that had developed between myself and the participants, and the rapport developed between each other, in my eyes, enabled the participants to create genuine new knowledge. The findings of my study show that there is a need for Classical Studies teachers to cater to the needs of their diverse students, rather than regurgitating the same information or rote learning to the exam.

6.7.2 Research Question One: What are/were your experiences as a female student in a Classical Studies classroom?

The purpose of this question was to uncover the lived experiences of female students within a Classical Studies classroom in Aotearoa New Zealand. Before undertaking this research, I had formulated assumptions around their experiences; such as the need to look at more women in the curriculum and to have a greater variety of topics for students. My thinking was that Classical Studies, being a Eurocentric and patriarchal subject, could either be a) doing harm by reinforcing negative stereotypes, or b) be irrelevant to the learner in this day and age. However, as a male teacher within an all girls' school, there will always be a disconnect between my assumptions and the actual experiences of the learner.

Overall, the experiences of the students that undertook this research, was positive yet frustrating. There is a clear desire to learn more about women within the subject and create a safe environment for that learning to take place in. The research participants wished to unpack the perception and portrayal of women in the classical world in the belief that it would remove the frustration from the continuous negative portrayals by primary and secondary sources they are faced with. In their belief, this approach will help create a safer environment for the learning to occur as it is not reinforcing the negative stereotypes. It will give the students an opportunity to unpack and discuss the ideas behind the negative stereotypes, as well as compare it to their own lives.

6.7.3 Research Question Two: Does Classical Studies meet the needs and expectations of female students in Aotearoa New Zealand?

This question can be answered in one of two ways. If you are looking at Classical Studies as a means to an end, a way to achieve literacy credits as well as UE entrance than yes, Classical Studies is meeting the needs of female students in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Classical Studies offers an array of achievement standards with a high amount of credits available. Students can complete two Internals throughout the year, and have the option to attempt three Externals. From an objectives based view, Classical Studies does meet the needs of female studies in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The second part of the question is where the answer becomes a bit more complicated. Some of the participants of the *talanoa* made it clear that their expectations were different to what they studied. The Level 2 participants had a preconceived idea of what Classical Studies was, and their learning throughout the year did not match it. However, this is not necessarily a negative thing. They were thankful for the opportunity to look at the classical world from a different angle but, in some cases, the learning left them feeling ‘sad’. Obviously this is very concerning and a different pedagogical approach is needed to address this point.

The Level 3 participants on the other hand, knew what they were signing up for and enjoyed the majority of the learning. They understood the requirements of the achievement standards and the expectations of the teacher and markers. However, for all participants, there is a need to make the subject relevant and accessible for them, which the current approaches to the curriculum do not allow. All participants have a need to see more women included within the curriculum, both in the classroom and in the achievement standards. There is a need for females in the classical world to be visible, brought in from the margins, and equal to the men in the curriculum.

Finally, the participants want to see links between the classical world and their lives. This does not necessarily mean they want to see direct links between the two time periods. They want to be able to make connections with the past. These connections can be ideological, historical, societal or cultural. In their eyes, this will make the subject more relevant and enjoyable.

6.7.4 Research Question Three: If necessary, what pedagogical and/or curriculum changes could be implemented to help make Classical Studies more appropriate and accessible?

Firstly, the participants were clear and concise in their discussions that changes need to occur within a Classical Studies classroom. For the participants, there needs to be a change in the pedagogy of the teacher as well as in the curriculum.

Pedagogy

The participants of this study were clear in their desire for the teacher to make a conscious effort to include more women in their study. This inclusion will help make the subject more relatable for them as well as allow female students to view it as equitable. The participants also made it clear that they wish to have the teacher approach particular topics with greater care. For example, if there is going to be a study of women, then a discussion needs to be had of the perception and portrayal of the figure, rather than diving in head first and treating any literary source as fact.

Curriculum

The participants want curriculum change.

I could really just leave it at that but then I would be doing my participants a disservice as they covered a range of things that they would like to see improved within the Classical Studies curriculum. Firstly, they do not view the curriculum as equitable. This belief stems from the topics that are covered in class, to the recommendations of the Achievement Standards and even the topics available in the Scholarship exam. To the participants of this research, Classical Studies favours a male learner over them. What they would like to see is the inclusion of more women in the learning as well as visible women in the Externals. There is also a desire for their teachers to show an understanding of more than just the ‘traditional’ topics and an assurance that they will not be ‘punished’ or be ‘hindered’ by choosing ‘non-traditional’ topics. Another pedagogical/curriculum point of change highlighted by the participants, is for teachers to be aware of the hidden and null curriculum. The participants did not say those words specifically, but they did say that they are aware of the power a teacher has and how that influence can be used to persuade a student to think in a particular way. The participants want a range of perspectives, both primary and secondary, on people and events, to give them a broader view and add context. With the implementation of this strategy, they will be able to draw their own conclusions rather than absorb that of their teacher.

6.8 Summary

The *talanoa* conversations unlocked a space that was comfortable enough for the participants to voice their opinions. You can see from the extracts that the participants were able to build off of each other’s ideas and there was little contradiction. Our *talanoa* sessions uncovered some deep thinking around broader ideas such as misogyny, racism and xenophobia and the possibility that Classical Studies could be used as a way to look at those ideas.

However, the limited time and the topic of this research meant it was too difficult to go into greater detail about these ideas and how Classical Studies could explore them. That research can be for another day.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This research study was an exploration into the lived experiences of ten female students of Classical Studies, in an all girls' school, in Aotearoa New Zealand. The *talanoa* methodology was a way for the students to collaborate and co-create new knowledge in a safe environment. The key to *talanoa* being successful, is the relationship between the researcher to participant and participant to participant. The participants were generous in giving up their time and were honest in their contributions. For them, this was an opportunity to voice any concerns, express any positives and give back to the wider community. As mention previously, one of the reasons why *talanoa* was selected, is the expectation of the participants that the information collected will be used to benefit the wider community.

7.2 Significance of this Research

Currently, the only research around the lived experiences of female students in a Classical Studies classroom, in Aotearoa New Zealand is the quantitative data collected by NZQA around achievement and the qualitative data extracted through surveys, reflections and questioning by individual teachers, departments or schools. It has been pointed out previously that there is a tendency for government research to shift from that of female success, to male underachievement. Even though the data collected by NZQA is invaluable in being able to see the percentages of achievement based on gender, year level, decile of school and ethnicity; it does not tell us anything about the experiences of the students themselves.

The qualitative data collected by the individual teacher is often (from personal experience) through surveys which can be problematic. Surveys are a great way to canvas a large number of people but “researchers have to pay careful attention to survey design and administration so that the results they obtain are meaningful” (Hulland et al, 2018). The questioning around surveys can often, even if not intended, be leading by the researcher and direct the participant to respond in a particular way.

The way a *talanoa* conversation subverts this, is through the relationship that has been developed and the desire by the researcher to let the conversation flow naturally. Questioning is still needed, but often they are indirect or used to build on an idea that has already been created by the participant/s.

My research fills a gap in the literature around the lived experiences of female students in a Classical Studies classroom, in Aotearoa New Zealand. To my knowledge, this is the only research that has been conducted using a *talanoa* methodology where collaborative new knowledge can be created by female students of Classical Studies. This research has opened a conversation around the needs of female students within the subject, and how those needs can be met. This research has also allowed a space where a critical examination of broader ideas such as misogyny, racism and xenophobia, can and should occur around the pedagogy of teachers and the Classical Studies curriculum.

7.3 Implications of this Research

This research was built on a foundation of assumptions by a male teacher in an all girls' school. These assumptions had developed over a seven-year period of teaching Classical Studies to a diverse group of female students each year. Initially, my pedagogical approach and the syllabus used, was the same as the one I had used in a co-ed school. However, over time, I questioned my approach to teaching and the possible impact it was having on my students. My biggest concern was that I was doing a disservice to my students. This research shows that there needs to be a change within my own teaching practice, that of other teachers, and at the national level in the NZC.

I will continue to make more of an effort to bring women in from the margins and make them more visible to the learner. I will allow students to look at significant women from the classical world from a range of perspectives (if available) and foster discussion about their portrayal. I will encourage my students to follow the topics they are interested in in an attempt to disrupt the cyclical nature of education. The opportunities provided by Classical Studies goes beyond the select few topics recommended in the Achievement Standards. We should be encouraged by the scope of the subject, and the passion of our students to learn more. Finding a balance within the subject, due to the objectives based NCEA will be a challenge for teachers, but it should not be an excuse. A reflection on our practice can often be a confronting experience, but if you approach it with an open heart *and* mind, it can be a rewarding one.

Classical Studies teachers need to understand that what they teach in the classroom, is just as important as what they leave out. Our students are not stupid, they can see the hidden and null curriculums, and it directly influences their points of view. The hope is that this research will help inform the pedagogy of other Classical Studies teachers and/or the people behind the curriculum development within schools and the NZQA. This research also shows the necessity for wider critical research to be conducted around the lived experiences of female students within a Classical Studies classroom, in Aotearoa New Zealand. It also shows that there is a need for research into the impact of Classical Studies on students of diverse backgrounds, especially to do with race and ethnicity.

7.4 Limitations of this Research

This research is a snapshot, a glimpse at the lived experiences of ten female students in a Classical Studies classroom. Their experiences are directly linked to the society they live in, the curriculum of the school they attend and the pedagogy of the teacher/s they have in front of them. In the future, it would be beneficial to cast the net wider, to other all girls' schools in the nation as well as co-ed and all boys' schools. Another limitation is the assumptions I had as the teacher and researcher, about my participant's experiences. These preconceived ideas directly influenced this research through the research questions, and helped guide some of the *talanoa* discussions. Finally, the *talanoa* methodology itself is a limitation as it may have prevented some students from volunteering to take part in the research due to the conversational nature of the research with their teacher.

7.5 Concluding Thoughts

A *talanoa* methodology can only work when a trusted relationship has developed between researcher – participant and participant – participant. This research would never have worked had I not been teaching at the school for over half a decade. The relationship with some of the participants had grown over a period of five years. This allowed them to come into the collaborative space and provide a genuine insight into their lived experiences and ideas. Litts et al (2020) describes this process as a desettling of “traditional research methods by requiring a disruptive shift in ‘who’ counts as a partner or stakeholder, ‘how’ the work should be conducted and ‘what’ products are valued” (p.770). The stakeholder is not the researcher, the participants had a say in how the work should be conducted and what knowledge was valued.

The hope of this research is to give back to the community. The knowledge that has been co-created can be used as a building block for my own practice, but also that of other teachers in the profession. It is important for us as teachers to grow and adapt as our society changes, and our students become more diverse. It is no longer prudent for us to teach a version of Classical Studies that has been taught for the last 100 years. Society has changed, our students have changed, and we need to change. As Participant I so eloquently put it, “You shouldn’t have to work harder to talk about women” and hopefully they won’t have to in the near future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Research Project Information Sheet

Research topic: “A Classical Oversight?”

The Appropriateness and Accessibility of Classical Studies to female students in Aotearoa

New Zealand

Researcher: Rowan Oswald

Ko ‘eku ha’u keta talanoa ki he ... I have come so we can talk about....

Whakawhanaungatanga

Thank you, *ngā mihi, fa’afetai lava* for taking the time to hear my research proposal. This research project is part of a Masters thesis being undertaken within the School of Education at the University of Waikato in an effort to gain student voice. The purpose of this student voice is to gain feedback on the appropriateness and accessibility of Classical Studies for female students in Aotearoa New Zealand. The research will be undertaken using a *talanoa* methodology of participatory dialogues. A *talanoa* (Tala: to inform, tell, relate. Noa: of any kind, ordinary, nothing in particular) method is designed to remove the distance between the researcher and participant and provide a human face the participants can relate to.

Research questions

- What are/were your experiences as a female student in a Classical Studies classroom?
(With regards to environment, curriculum, *whakawhanaungatanga*, *vā*, safety, relevance.)
- Does Classical Studies meet the needs and expectations of female students in Aotearoa New Zealand?

- If necessary, what pedagogical and/or curriculum changes could be implemented to help make Classical Studies more appropriate and accessible?

Due to the nature of the research, past and present students will be needed to take part. For this, I am asking your permission to approach current students of School X that have taken Classical Studies in Year 12, if they would like to take part in the research. The *talanoa* will take place either in person, or via Zoom. With current students of School X, I would like to ask your permission to conduct the research on school grounds as it provides a safe environment that has set expectations and protocols. The students will have the opportunity to take part in an individual, group or Internet *talanoa* based on their needs. The timeframe for the sessions is to last between 30 - 60 mins depending on the participants. This timeframe is not set as the idea of *talanoa* is that they are flexible and free-flowing based on the nature of the discussion. There will also be at least one follow up session so the students can review the data I have collected. If they took part in a group session, then they will be provided with a summary of the discussion. The purpose of this follow up session is to ensure accuracy in the data around tone, placement of silences, emphasis etc. They will also have the opportunity to withdraw at any point up until the two weeks following the final session in which they have received their data. At all times Covid protocols will be adhered to.

I am more than happy to attend a Board of Trustees *hui/fono* to put forward my research thesis if their permission is needed.

Rowan Oswald

Email:

Contact ph:

"This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Division of Education Ethics Committee on [date]. Approval number: FEDUxxx/xx".

Appendix B

Research Project Information Sheet

Research topic: "A Classical Oversight?"

The appropriateness and accessibility of Classical Studies to female students in Aotearoa

New Zealand

Researcher: Rowan Oswald

Ko 'eku ha'u keta talanoa ki he ... I have come so we can talk about....

Whakawhanaungatanga

This research project is part of a Masters thesis being undertaken within the School of Education at the University of Waikato with the aim of gaining female student voice and their opinions about the subject, Classical Studies. The purpose of this is to see if the subject caters to the needs of the diverse female student population and to hear straight from the learner about what they like, did not like, and if necessary, would like to see change.

Thank you, *ngā mihi, fa'afetai lava* for your interest in this research project. You are invited to attend a *hui/fono* (meeting) to learn more about what this research is about and how it will be undertaken. This initial *hui/fono* will take place in the staffroom at School X and you are more than welcome to bring a support person. Kai will be provided as it is understood that I am taking time out of your busy schedule to attend. If you cannot attend in person, then the opportunity for you to attend via Zoom (or an equivalent platform) will be provided. You can also ask questions directly to me or via email if need be.

The main purpose of this *hui/fono* is to establish a relationship with you, the participant, as well as inform everyone of the research project. At all times it is culturally important that Māori (as *tangata whenua*), *Pākehā* (as bicultural partners to Māori) and Samoan (my own identity) traditions are followed such as the respect of elders and the opening and closing of the *hui/fono* with a *karakia*/prayer.

The first *hui/fono* is most importantly about establishing connections between the researcher and you, the participants. This may be through classroom, village or sport connections, as well as shared culture and experiences. It is an informal discussion that centers around building trust between myself and you and therefore there will be no time frame put on this discussion.

The next step will be to establish the research guidelines around the discussions that will take place in the near future. A culturally responsive method of research will be used and you will be informed of how a participatory dialogue looks and *talanoa* and *faafaletui* will be defined. A culturally responsive method such as *talanoa*, is one that focuses on the establishment of relationships, the discussion is flexible, the knowledge is co-constructed and I am ready to adapt and compromise to ensure positive outcomes for all involved. There are no time frames put on the discussions but they are expected to last around 30 minutes to one hour. Future dates and locations for *hui/fono* will be agreed upon together.

The *hui/fono* will then move on to discuss the purpose of the research project; namely to research using female voice, into how Classical Studies is and/or is not appropriate, relevant or accessible to female students in Aotearoa New Zealand. These discussions will also look at possible solutions to any issues that have arisen. Possible ideas may be raised but it is not essential at this stage in the research process.

I would like to record the discussions to ensure that there is an accurate representation of the conversations. These recordings will be transcribed word for word and when they are used, you will have access to the information to double check their accuracy. This means you will be presented with the information to read over and give your approval for its use. You will have full control over what you would like to share within the discussion as well as what information can be shared after the discussions. All information and recordings will be stored appropriately with access limited to myself and my supervisor. This information will be stored for five years after the research is completed and then they will be destroyed.

If there is anyone else you think I should approach, such as *kaumatua* or *whānau/aiga*, then please do not hesitate to let me know. With some *hui/fono* taking place on school grounds, it is important to note that there will be others that know you are taking part in the research. You will, however, be anonymous within the data itself. There is also the possibility that the completed thesis will be used for conference papers, conference presentations, professional learning presentations, academic articles and use in pedagogical and curriculum development.

I will contact you within a week to see if you are willing to take part in this research project. If you are, then I will provide you with the invitation letter which will give you the opportunity to indicate which method and time will work best for you as well as a consent form to sign.

Rowan Oswald

Email:

Contact ph:

"This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Division of Education Ethics Committee on [date]. Approval number: FEDUxxx/xx".

Appendix C

Invitation to Potential Participants

Participants name

Address

(Date)

Talofa malo le soifua i lau susuga (name),

My name is Rowan Oswald and I am a *Pākehā* and Samoan student at the University of Waikato completing my Master of Education. To complete my thesis, I am conducting a research project based on – “A Classical Oversight? - The Appropriateness and Accessibility of Classical Studies to female students in Aotearoa New Zealand”. I am excited that you are interested in taking part! This is your opportunity to voice your opinion around how, and if, you think female learners are reaching their educational aspirations within the subject area of Classical Studies. The collection of opinions from learners will be conducted through semi-structured discussions called *talanoa*, either in person or via an Internet meeting application such as Zoom. The discussions will be casual and have a broad topic; we will go where the conversation takes us. It will be a space for you to voice your concerns about the subject area, as well as provide a space for you to put forward your ideas around how Classical Studies can be more inclusive and relevant for female students.

It is my hope that the results from the research investigation will inform teaching pedagogy (practice) and influence curriculum changes to enhance the education experience and achievement of female learners. So what will be required of you? The research process will involve two to three *talanoa*. The first will be the opportunity to discuss the research questions and your point of view. This is the time to give voice to your opinion!

The second and third (if required) *talanoa* will give you the chance to review the data collected (if it is a group it will be a summary of key ideas) to ensure accuracy.

If you would like to discuss more ideas then the second *talanoa* will also give you that opportunity.

Action	Option	Yes No	Doesn't matter
First <i>talanoa</i>	I would like a face to face <i>talanoa</i> (individual)		
	I would like to be involved in a face to face group <i>talanoa</i>		
	I would like to take part in a Zoom/Meets <i>talanoa</i> (individual)		
	I would like to take part in a group Zoom/Meets <i>talanoa</i>		
Time	I would like to meet during school hours - lunchtime (30mins)		
	I would like to meet during school hours - free period (30-60mins)		
	I would like to meet after school hours in person within the school		
	I would like to meet after school hours via Zoom/Meets (if yes, indicate what time would suit)		
Second/third <i>talanoa</i>	I would like the opportunity to look over the data collected and/or continue the discussion.		

Each discussion will be flexible and we will follow the ebb and flow of the narrative. At the final *hui/fono* you will have the opportunity to review the transcripts and information to make sure it is accurate, the tone is captured and if need be, the text can be amended.

Once all the applications are in I will arrange the initial *talanoa* based on your choices above.

I want to stress that your participation in the research process is voluntary and your identity and information within the data will remain confidential. Please contact me if you have any questions. If you choose to participate please sign and date the consent form and return it to me in person, with the self-addressed envelope provided or a Google form can be provided. I look forward to working with you.

Faāfetai tele lava,

Ngā mihi nui,

Thank you,

Rowan Oswald

I _____ (your name) would like to / do not want to (circle one) participate in this research project.

"This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Division of Education Ethics Committee on [date]. Approval number: FEDUxxx/xx".