



***'E saili i tautai se agava'a -  
A true leader masters the art of navigation'***

**The Impact of Effective Leadership in Raising  
Engagement and Achievement of Pasifika  
Learners in New Zealand Schools**

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Leali'ie'e Tufulasifa'atafatafa Ova Taleni  
University of Canterbury

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## **DEDICATION**

Special acknowledgements to my much loved parents:



My father late Leali'ie'e Suafo'a Ova Taleni.

My mother Valaei Faloa'i Pritchard Taleni.

*Both influential and instrumental in laying a strong foundation for me, this has contributed immensely to my success in education.*

*They gave me a ‘basket of five things’ from my culture to bring to New Zealand when I first left Samoa in 1985. These five things have been true pearls of my memories of you – these have been instrumental to my successes.*

*Dad’s words – ‘Manatua lou aiga ma tausi i lou igoa – remember your family and look after your name’.*

*Your legacy through your inspiration and hard work will always be remembered.  
I dedicate this research thesis to you.*

*O alofa'aga molipo mo oulua matua peleina.*



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## ABSTRACT

Pasifika students' education performance in Aotearoa New Zealand continues to face on-going challenges and potential 'crisis'. For too long, Pasifika students have been trapped in a 'prison-like' environment of underachievement. The 'crisis' is that the status does not appear to have changed significantly since the 1960s and 70s, regardless of the endeavours by the New Zealand government and Ministry of Education to Pasifika education. Decade after decade, the educational status of Pasifika students overall has continued to maintain its position; one that places them at the very bottom in comparison to non-Pasifika students. Many teenagers continue to leave school with no qualifications, resulting in unemployment or poorly paid jobs. Consequently, more and more Pasifika families live in poverty in this country. The on-going unanswered question is: *Are Pasifika students failing the system or, is the New Zealand Education system failing Pasifika students?* When are 'we' as a 'community of learners' going to get this right?

This thesis is presented in a form of a voyage (folauga) to contextualize the true essence, depth and significance of the topic of this study in relation to the challenges and tests presented by a long hard fought voyage. Each chapter is referred to as Folauga. Four school principals, recognised as effective leaders who support Pasifika students, shared their leadership experiences and practices in a Talanoa setting. Interpretation and analysis of the Talanoa revealed seven major supports that effective school leaders need to transform their schools from a failing context to a successful, for Pasifika students. This research found that there was a significant need for effective leadership by principals to navigate educational changes that genuinely make a difference to unlock doors of opportunities in every school to raise achievement and wellbeing for all Pasifika learners. Furthermore, the analysis and interpretation based on the perspectives and data gathered through Talanoa with the Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Education Advisory Group (Pasifika community leaders) validated these key supports that the principals identified. The aim of the study was to address this issue through effective professional development for school leaders so they may navigate robust, vigorous and well-thought through changes and supports in schools to raise the engagement and achievement of Pasifika learners. Lifting Pasifika achievement is a great challenge for all but nothing is impossible.

*'E o'o lava i ogasami ile moana sausau e mafai lava ona folauina'*  
*'Even choppy sea can be navigated'.*



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# CHAPTER ONE – FOLAUGA MUAMUA

*Ua tu'u i tai le va'a tele*

*The big canoe has been put out to sea  
for the voyage*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 NAVIGATING MY VOYAGE SETS THE SCENE

Ia manua le malaga ma le fa'atamasoali'iiga (Samoan), Ke mou o mo ia (Tongan), vakanuinui vinaka na soko (Fijian), Malo te tiu (Tokelauan), Kia manua (Cook Island), Dirava se e namomu (Papua New Guinea) - these words from various Pasifika languages speak to me with blessings and messages of optimism, loyalty and devotion for the ‘Folauga’ (voyage) to go well. The Folauga is now sailing off with hopes, and blessings from my Pasifika peoples and communities who are doing the tapuaiga (prayers of hope) for a safe and prosperous voyage.

This thesis is a Folauga (voyage).

The richness of my Samoan heritage and culture is authentically intertwined within the narrative of this thesis and my spiritual and cultural connection with knowing that ‘e saili i tautai se agava'a – a true leader masters the art of navigation’.<sup>1</sup>

From the Pasifika people’s perspective, a ‘true leader’ in education is an effective leader, a leader with high integrity (mana, aloaia) and standing who is driven by culturally responsive principles, values, aspirations and world views of the students (Allen, Taleni & Robertson, 2009). Such a leader utilizes a personal approach of humanitarian with self-belief, courage, determination and perseverance to

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<sup>1</sup> In this ‘Introduction’ my thoughts and storying is woven throughout the manuscript as italicized text.



wholeheartedly take students from where they are currently at in learning, to where they need to be.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

Since the arrival of Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand after the second world war, Pasifika achievement has been attached to labels such as underachievement, disengagement, ‘the bottom stream’, ‘achievement tail’, priority learners, ‘kids at risk’, ‘students lagging behind’ and achievement disparity. These labels continue today in our education system, urging the on-going focus on trying to change the position of Pasifika student achievement. The sad news is that no matter how much the New Zealand education system puts into this, decade after decade Pasifika achievement continues to maintain its position at the very bottom in comparison to non-Pasifika students. Many Pasifika teenagers have left school with no qualifications and, as a result they have continued to contribute to the on-going patterns of Pasifika student underachievement and unemployment, which has consequently led to more and more Pasifika families living in poverty in this country. The on-going unanswered question is: *Are Pasifika students failing the system or is the New Zealand Education system failing Pasifika students?* When are ‘we’, as a ‘community of learners’ going to get this right? My own Pasifika colleague, the late Amosa Fa’afao’i in his own words once said – ‘I have already told you about my aspirations and dreams – so what have you done to them?’

## **1.3 FOCUS ON EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

The significance of this challenge is to be an educational leader who masters the art of navigation.

It is well-established that effective education leaders change the educational outcomes for low achieving students (Bishop, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; Bush, 2003; Fletcher & Nicholas, 2016; Lashway, 2006; Macfarlane, 2010; Robinson et al., 2009; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). In Aotearoa New Zealand such leaders are imperative for changing the educational underachievement of Pasifika students (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd (2009) report on an Education Review Office (ERO, 2012) finding:



*Leadership (has) to be one of the most frequently identified indicators of school effectiveness and student achievement (p.26)*

The principal's leadership is the most important and influential individual in the school. Principal leadership shapes the school's learning climate, the level of the relationship between staff, and the teacher morale (Korkmaz, 2007).

Bishop (2011) states a number of characteristics needed for effective leaders to reduce educational disparities, including ability to: establish and develop specific measurable goals; promote and support pedagogic reform; redesign the institutional and organizational framework; develop the capacity of people and systems; and take ownership of the programme (Bishop, 2011). Although these characteristics are favourable in leading the learning for Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand, it is essential to also incorporate traditional Pasifika leadership qualities embedded within cultural values, such as fa'amaoni (integrity), alofa (love), tautua (service), fetausia'i (reciprocity) fa'aleagaga (spirituality), fa'aaloalo (respect) ta'ita'i (leadership) and fa'asinomaga (belonging). The valuing, utilization and weaving of these qualities into educational leadership can result in effective leaders who can navigate educational changes, for the betterment of Pasifika students' learning and achievement.

#### **1.4 PASIFIKA ACHIEVEMENT – A CRISIS?**

Low educational performance for Pasifika students, in comparison with palagi (European), has been signalled since early Polynesian emigration to New Zealand in the 1960s, and remains today (Amituanai-Toloa, McNaughton, Lai, & Airini, 2010; Clay, 1985; Fergusson, Lloyd & Norwood, 1991; Fusitu'a & Coxon, 1998; Harker, 1978; Ministry of Education, 1995, 2015; Nash, 2000; Tamasese, Masoe-Clifford & Ne'emia-Garwood, 1988).

I knew that Pasifika achievement in education had been an issue for the past six decades. As a Pasifika Education Advisor for Education Plus at the University of Canterbury for the last 14 years it was constantly in my mind, heart and work focus.

My role as a Pasifika Education Advisor was to support schools to raise Pasifika educational achievement.

National and international assessment results show that Pasifika students are most at risk of not achieving in New Zealand schools (ERO, 2012). A Ministry of Education (MOE, 2013) report noted that one in six Pasifika students will not achieve basic literacy and numeracy skills by the age of ten. Almost one in five will leave school without any qualification; another one in five will leave with NCEA Level 1 only; and around one in five with NCEA Level 2. One in ten will become disengaged from education, employment, or training by the age of seventeen.

The Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) results (2012) for Pasifika learners, as compared to others OECD countries, is of great concern. In Mathematics Pasifika is rated 50<sup>th</sup>, compared to all New Zealand rated 23<sup>rd</sup>. Almost half of Pasifika learners scored less than level 2 and only 3% at level 5. In the area of reading Pasifika is rated 46<sup>th</sup>, all New Zealand rated 13<sup>th</sup> and Māori 43<sup>rd</sup>. Over a third of Pasifika learners performed below level 2 and only 4% at level 5. Pasifika is rated 50<sup>th</sup> in Science compared to all New Zealand rated 18<sup>th</sup>. Over a third performed below level 2 and only 3% at level 5.

Statistics New Zealand (2013) and the Ministry of Education (2011) suggest that Pasifika student achievement will be an on-going focus in the New Zealand education system, particularly so in primary and secondary schools.

This is the ‘crisis’ we all face as citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **1.5 THE FOCUS ON RAISING PASIFIKA ACHIEVEMENT**

In my Pasifika Education Advisor role, the need to improve Pasifika students' educational engagement and achievement broadened and deepened my thinking. I knew there was an urgency to improve learning environments for learners.

Since 2009 the Government has called for a much more active and urgent focus on lifting school performance for Pasifika students (MOE, 2009; 2014). Such

identification and prioritizing of Pasifika underachievement, as one of the key priority areas in education by the Government, is critical for the economic future and wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand (Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi, Taleni, & O'Regan, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2009, 2013, 2014; Robinson & Timperley, 2004). Currently, alongside Māori and low socio-economic background children, the Government positions Pasifika students' educational achievement as a key priority area (MOE, 2015):

*Equitable achievement for Māori, Pasifika and students from low socio-economic backgrounds is a major priority: and our focus is on ensuring that the system settings are in place to support these outcomes (p.17).*

Further, schools have been urged to recognise the cultural capital and funds of knowledge that students bring with them to the learning environment (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992), to create culturally appropriate programmes for different Pasifika groups, their identities, languages and cultures (ERO, 2012; MOE, 2013).

This is a huge undertaking for all involved because it comes with many challenges.

I met these challenges during my past fourteen years' experience, seeking ways to make greater sense of Pasifika students' educational 'underachievement' to my professional philosophy and practices. My thinking became increasingly metaphorical and theoretical about the centrality of Pasifika students' cultural context in connection with their learning and achievement, and the critical importance of quality leadership to raise it.

In my work I was confronted by school leaders' (principals and teachers) lack of knowledge about Pasifika culture, and how this knowledge could inform their culturally responsive leadership and teaching practices for the needs and aspirations of students and aiga (families). Many principals and teachers did not make sense of, or appeared to ignore, the connection between the importance of Pasifika students' cultural capital and funds of knowledge, and their leadership and teaching practices

in raising student engagement and achievement. I could see they wanted their Pasifika students to succeed at school, yet they could not ‘see’ how to do so within a Pasifika cultural context. They remained positioned in a western way of thinking about how to be culturally responsive.

This education context has characterized education for Pasifika students for the past six decades. Although programmes have been implemented by the Ministry of Education to improve education outcomes (Gorinski, 2005; Mara, 1998), the ‘same old’ realities have emerged again and again. Pasifika learners in Aotearoa New Zealand are not achieving at school and this is a national concern according to Best Evidence Synthesis (Alton-Lee, 2003).

However, a growing body of evidence over approximately the past 20 years repeatedly shows that an education system devoted to, and embedded in, the ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities of minority students is essential for their positive education outcomes (Au; 2006; Berryman, 2012; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Brayboy, 2005; Cowie & Glynn, 2012; Harris, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2005; Macfarlane, 2004, 2007, 2015; Su'a'ali'i, 2012). Sadly this has been misunderstood, dismissed or ignored by New Zealand’s Crown policy makers, politicians, and educators (Harris & Kaur, 2012; Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2015; Penetito, 2010).

Today’s world demands educators to take notice and create culturally and linguistically appropriate learning environments for ethnically diverse students (Berryman, 2012; Brayboy, 2005; Cowie & Glynn, 2012; Harris & Kaur, 2012; Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2015; Su'a'ali'i, 2012). Further, and as mentioned above, ‘true’, effective leadership is pivotal in lifting educational achievement for Pasifika students (Bishop, 2010). This critical necessity, that has such an impact on student learning and achievement, is being recognized as a phenomenon in the education system now.

### **1.5.1 THE CRITICAL ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

The role of the principal as a leader is of particular interest to me and in my Pasifika Advisor position I could support them to be effective leaders, to make genuine

changes in their schools. My Samoan cultural heritage and identity has gifted me rich experiences and my role as a Samoan matai (chief) has strengthened my ability and capacity in leadership. Becoming a Samoan matai involves a number of traditional responsibilities and obligations to the aiga (family), the nu'u (village) and the ekalesia (church). Holding a chiefly title enables me to better provide effective support for school principals around culturally responsive leadership.

There had been a number of questions raised in my mind as I thought of the importance of principals as leaders, at the same time recognizing and acknowledging the complexity and challenging task involved in lifting the engagement and achievement of Pasifika learners.

Although some principals showed enthusiasm and passion, the genuine commitment for some was often questionable. I was often struck by some well-used phrases by principals during conversation such as, 'we treat everyone the same here in this school', 'there is only 5% of our role here is Pasifika so don't worry about it', and 'every two years we look at Pasifika'. The lack of key documents in schools regarding a Pasifika strategic plan, annual plan, school charter, monitoring and evaluation, an action plan, as well as professional development of staff and performance management highlighted a lack of commitment for Pasifika students' learning by these school principals. Personally, I wondered how much the Ministry of Education's (MOE) professional development outputs focus was so overwhelming that the principals viewed Pasifika achievement as less important. However, for me there was a real need for some principals to be supported in the process of challenging their own beliefs and attitudes.

A number of international and national educationalists and academics (Macfarlane, 2004, 2007; Macfarlane, Macfarlane & Webber, 2015) advocate the need for school principals to embrace indigenous and minority (including Pasifika) students' diverse world views, cultural backgrounds, beliefs and values, and systems of working, for school-wide inclusion. Pasifika people themselves, community leaders, parents and families must also step up in challenging any hegemonic forces that may be presented by the culture of the school.



*At this point I think of my grandfather's experience as a 'true navigator' leader within our Samoan community, how passionate he was about voyaging and the many inspirational messages he passed on to my siblings and I. He built and designed his own outrigger, big and strong enough to conquer the ocean's trials. Very often my mother spoke with astonishment of her father's courage of the ocean, and the many hostile challenges he faced as he paddled his outrigger across the ocean from the island of Savaii to Upolu and return, and occasionally when he took my mother, her siblings and some villagers from the island of Savai'i to Apia.*

*In one horrific storm during a voyage from Savai'i to Upolu, on return after the school holidays, one of two outriggers was capsized. My mother was nine years old. It was a fearful experience. My grandfather swam out to save the sunk outrigger, then headed towards the nearby island of Manono for the night, before continuing on to Upolu the next morning.*

The art of navigation and confronting the trials of the ocean is significant. Just as the ocean presents unpredictable obstacles and uncertainties where seafarers must have courage, passion, commitment, confidence and relevant skills to help them strive to reach their destination, effective school leaders must persevere as they seek to raise Pasifika student achievement.

#### **1.5.2 PASIFIKA EDUCATION PLAN**

Most recently, the Pasifika Education Plan (PEP) 2013-2017 (MOE, 2012) was launched with the vision:

*Five out of five Pasifika learners participating, engaging and achieving in education, secure in their identities, languages and cultures and contributing fully to Aotearoa New Zealand's social, cultural and economic wellbeing (p.3).*

The Plan is embedded in the Ministry of Education's Statement of Intent Priority Outcomes 1 and 2 (MOE, 2012, p.4):

1. Improving education outcomes for Māori learners, Pasifika learners, learner with special education needs and learners from low socio-economic backgrounds.
2. Maximising the contribution of education to the New Zealand economy.

The PEP aims to ensure educational achievement for all Pasifika students - with the inclusion and participation of students, families, communities, school leaders and staff and MOE participating partners (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Education Review Office, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand Teachers Council, Careers New Zealand, New Zealand School Trustees Association) (MOE, 2012). It acknowledges Pasifika families and communities' aspirations to have high expectations for their Pasifika children to achieve well academically in their schools without losing their identities, languages and cultures. Pasifika learners from early childhood to tertiary level, their parents, families and communities are at the heart of the education system, where they can demand better outcomes.

In the past few years I have been able to develop and lead the Pasifika Education Initiative known as the Samoa Malaga (Samoa Trip) (Allen et al., 2009). Short journeys to Samoa were provided for teachers, school leaders and education advisors to experience cultural diversity and raise their capacity to be culturally responsive to the needs and aspirations of Pasifika learners.

This experience, leading the Samoa Malaga, has enabled me to create models of good practice around leadership and it is in this vein I advance the alagaapu (proverb):

*'Tu'utu'u le upega ile loloto - cast the net into deeper waters'.*

This alagaapu (proverb) is used as a metaphor to promote leadership values and attributes such as perseverance, hard work, going the extra mile and stepping up to achieve set goals. In the context of this research, the saying recognizes how the motivation of school leaders, together with change that comes from the heart, can

bring about a shift in understanding that translates into strong and effective leadership practice. An important part of this process involves a strong desire to experience and learn about the worldviews of Pasifika learners in relation to their cultures, languages and identities.

### **1.5.3 PASIFIKA SUCCESS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (PLD)**

The PEP allowed my net to be cast deep and wide, to develop the most recent: Professional Learning and Development (PLD) programme - the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project (PSTP) (MOE, 2011; Teleni, 2012, 2013, 2014). Its development was a deliberate response to the PEP, to support the focus on raising Pasifika engagement and achievement. While a Pasifika Education Advisory Group made up of representatives from various Pasifika groups was established to provide guidance and support for the PSTP, the New Zealand Curriculum and the PEP have been its guiding texts, with the practice of 'Teaching as Inquiry' an integral component.

The foundation of the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project is the alagaupu (proverb) 'fofola le fala se'i ta talanoa' or 'spread the mat so that we can talk'. Spreading the mat takes on a special relevance for Pasifika schools, families and communities because it enables them to come together for Talanoa and collaboration. Spreading the mat so we can talk is also about 'inquiry', teachers inquiring into their practice to find out about their students and levels of achievement, exploring possible reasons for achievement levels that do not meet expectations, and taking action to address these needs through classroom teaching and school wide practice.

The Pasifika Success Talanoa Project will be discussed further in the Folauga 2 (Literature Review) and 3 (Methodology and Method). See Appendix 1 for the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project flyer.

Spreading the mat so we can talk has special relevance for this study - which will explore the culturally responsive practices of principal leadership and the impact of such practices in raising Pasifika students' engagement and achievement. The influence of strong principal leadership on effective classroom practices for Pasifika learners, the development of extra curricula activities, and the provision of extra

resources to develop effective classroom interventions, programmes and school initiatives to raise Pasifika achievement, will be also considered.

This leads on to my main research question:

What are the supports that effective school leaders use in establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for the successful engagement and achievement of Pasifika students?

#### **1.6 THESIS OUTLINE**

This thesis is set out in five Folauga (chapters).

##### **Folauga One: Folasaga – Introduction**

This chapter has set the scene of this thesis, outlining the purpose and addressing the intention of the investigation. It presents a description of the relationship between the context of the topic to the metaphorical expression used – ‘a true leader masters the art of navigation,’ the main issue of the investigation. The aim of the project is also set out in this chapter with the questions that guide and support the aims.

##### **Folauga Two: Literature review:**

A review of literature will explore the past research related to the topic of this study. It is aligned with key themes of the research, the themes include; educational leadership practice, Pasifika student engagement and achievement, and the impact of community engagement and empowerment for learning. In addition, the literature review will draw on a number of national and international research and report findings regarding Pasifika educational underachievement, its cause and the impact of educational leadership in trying to lift achievement and success. Literature on the impact of the effectiveness of families and community engagement on raising Pasifika achievement is also presented here.

##### **Folauga Three: Data gathering method**

This chapter presents an outline of the qualitative methodology and research methods used in the study. It includes the analysis procedures used for the semi

structured interviews as well as the ethical considerations process. It also incorporates an outline of the ideology and features of qualitative research including Pasifika Talanoa research methodology.

### **Folauga Four: Discussion of Findings**

This chapter reports on the data from the research and the analysis messages and themes that emerge from the interactions and conversations with participants. A presentation of key findings based on the emerging themes will be examined. This chapter will be an opportunity to present relevant frameworks that can align to cultural imperatives that have application for Pasifika education.

### **Folauga Five: Conclusion and recommendations**

To complete the thesis this chapter will be a summary of the final conclusions of the investigation, an outline of its implications, a review of the strengths and limitations of the research, opportunities for future research in this area and the inclusion of recommendations for future practice.

Many years of teaching have provided me with a rich background of knowledge about teaching and learning. The experiences gained from my involvement in the development of education initiatives, programmes and models of good practice for Pasifika learners, and understanding Pasifika epistemologies, research and literature, have all informed my professional advisory practice and my direction with this research.

At the very heart of this thesis are the words:

*“O tu, aganu'u ma agafanua a le tamaitiiti e ao ona fa'aulufaleina muamua ile mafaufau o le faiaoga a'o le'i ulufale atu ile potu aoga.”*

*The culture of the child cannot enter the classroom until it has first entered the consciousness of the teacher, (Bernstein. 1970).*

With this in mind, I now move on to Folauga 2 to discuss a literature review about ‘true’ educational leadership and the educational situation for Pasifika students.

## **CHAPTER TWO – FOLAUGA LUA**

*E lutia i Puava, a e mapu i Fagalele*

*Hard-fought paddling in Puava, but at  
rest and peace in Fagalele*

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This folauga presents reviewed literature, in alignment with the metaphorical topic of this thesis, ‘A true leader masters the art of navigation’. The experienced, courageous navigator, who utilizes knowledge and experience of the ocean to lead the voyage through challenging encounters to safe destination, is similar to effective school leaders as they navigate the challenges in providing a safe journey for raising Pasifika students’ engagement and achievement in schools. This literature review involves the following: (1) What is effective educational leadership from a traditional Pasifika perspective? (2) What is effective educational leadership from a Western perspective? (3) Why focus on the engagement and achievement for Pasifika students in New Zealand; and (4) the need for the development of the Pasifika Education Plan and implementation of the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project.

#### **2.2 EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM A TRADITIONAL PASIFIKA PERSPECTIVE**

##### **2.2.1 FOREIGN ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP OVER SAMOA**

When you are born and brought up into a culture founded on key values and principles such as love (alofa), service (tautua), spirituality (ola fa'a'eagaga), respect (fa'aaloalo), integrity (aloaia), humility (agamalu), reciprocity (fetausia'i) perseverance (finau), belonging (fa'asinomaga), and leadership (ta'ita'i), your whole life is cultivated with commitment and sacrifice for your people, community, and society. Further, effective leadership provides motivation, nurtures a sense of pride,

and influences success and triumph. This Samoan worldview exemplifies Pasifika perspectives and will illustrate traditional Pasifika perspective re effective educational leadership.

*Samoa filemu pea ma si o'u toto ne'i tauvalea, a ia aoga lo'u ola mo lenei mea. My blood has been spilt for Samoa. I am proud to give it. Do not dream of avenging it, as it was spilt in peace. If I die, peace must be maintained at any price (Tuvale, n.d.).*

These are the famous and well documented words of one of Samoa's greatest leaders, Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III, who was killed in 1921 during Samoa's Mau movement uprising against foreign administration, a day that has been marked in Samoa's history, known as 'Black Saturday' -28 December 1929 (Macpherson, 1997; Meleisea, 1987). Although Tamasese Lealofi's words are at the heart of a socio-political context, they express effective leadership qualities from a Samoan perspective that are influential in educational leadership. These cultural leadership qualities will become transparent in this discussion. The Mau movement mentioned above, was a revolt of old Samoa against foreign domination, originating in the early nineteenth century (Meleisea, 1987; Tuvale, n.d.). The word 'Mau' literally means stand firm, 'opinion', 'unwavering', perseverance, 'to strive for' or 'testimony' denoting 'firm strength' necessary for independence and sovereignty struggles. The motto of the 'Mau Movement' was 'Samoa mo Samoa' meaning Samoa for Samoans.

Like many small countries experiencing the unwavering political turmoil through colonial powers and foreign administration, Samoa went through a long era of uncertainty, challenges and struggles brought in by the advent of Western powers - Britain, United States, Germany - all vying for control of Samoa (Watson-Gregeo & Feinberg). Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe, a paramount chief from the village of Safotulafai Savai'i, led the 'Mau a Pule' (Pule resistance) in the early 1900s with widespread support throughout the country by the late 1920s. He was known as a great warrior, a courageous leader who led the Mau a Pule against German's colonial powers.

In 1909, Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe and the other senior leaders of the 'Mau a Pule' were exiled to the German colonies in the Marianas (North West Pacific) where they were to stay until 1914, when New Zealand took over Samoa as part of its Empire duties at the outbreak of World War One. Many of those exiled leaders including Lauaki Namulauulu Mamoe died before returning to Samoa. Lauaki died on the route back to Samoa in 1915. Samoa achieved independence from New Zealand colonial rule in 1962 through leadership attributes such as courage (toa), perseverance (finau), service (tautua), love (alofa) and commitment (loto iai). Samoa's battle for independence has always been a trial for effective leadership - a validation of true leadership.

## **2.2.2 FA'AMATAI (CHIEFLY) LEADERSHIP**

Although colonial rule and domination set a socio-political context for great leaders to emerge, it was the matai (Samoan chief) system that created a strong foundation of support for them and the people (Hancock, 2003; Meleisea, 1987; White & Lindstrom, 1997). The fa'amatai (matai system) is the traditional indigenous form of governance in Samoa, central to the socio-political system of governance and organization of Samoan society, and the core of family settings. It is governed and led by matai who are the holders of family chief titles, fundamental to the welfare and well-being of the extended family (aiga) for the protection of measina (family treasures) pertaining to the family. The term 'aiga includes not only the immediate family (father, mother and children), but also the whole union of families of a clan and even those who although not related are subject to the family control. It is a respected but demanding role which includes taking care of the family as well as fulfilling external duties such as a mediator for the family in, and across, village affairs and customary events.

The Fa'amatai system has been greatly impacted upon by colonialism and Samoa's modern politics post-independence in 1962. Members of Parliament are elected in their constituency and must be matai (chiefs), performing critical roles as chiefs and modern politicians. In this sense the role of a matai is recognised outside the family, village and the district. The nu'u (village) is the home of the community, and a centre of cultural and traditional events. The influence of the matai's role impact not only in

the village but also in the district and beyond. The village council (fono a matai), formed and administered by matai, is the executive and judicial authority of every village in Samoa. High ranking matai head their families; represent their villages, communities and districts; and since the advent of Western powers and rivalry in the 19th century, have played a significant role in politics. In Samoan culture, the concept of serving and taking on the responsibility for the welfare of the family is integral to the fa'amatai system. Various members of the family are called upon in turn to support their matai in carrying out their role and responsibilities according to Samoan tradition, cultural obligations and duties.

Before the advent of European contact and influence, the authority (pule) of the matai was widely exercised, but this power was altered and absorbed by the Western-style and contemporary government (referred to as the malo), when the matai's authority was devalued and confined. Recognition of the matai's leadership in Samoan society today, continues to be acknowledged in the way responsibilities and commitments are accomplished – by means of the cultural values and principles - integrity, service, love, respect, reciprocity, 'going an extra mile', perseverance, 'casting the net deeper' and 'stand firm' for your aiga (family). Not all matai have had the opportunity to be exposed to formal education, and rely on cultural capital and funds of knowledge to guide their leadership. The navigation through challenging times experienced by families is a test of true matai (chief) leadership. The role of the matai is far more extensive now than previous years because of family dynamics and challenges to the social structure of families, the villages and the nation. This impacts on the way cultural practices are performed.

The leadership qualities and attributes of a traditional Samoan Matai found in cultural values and principles such as fa'aalo'alo (humility and respect), tautua (service), tofaliuli (flexibility), soalaupule (shared decision making), communal collaborative team work and positive reciprocal relationships form a strong foundation for effective educational leadership. Being inclusive, consensual and collaborative is an indigenous leadership style (Holmes & Holmes, 1992). According to Fullan (1993), the ability to collaborate is becoming one of the core requisites of post-modern society. This is encapsulated in the Samoan proverb "O le ala ile pule o le tautua"

(Huffer & Alfred, 2000) - meaning ‘the pathway to leadership or power is through service. From a Samoan perspective one must serve the aiga (family) and extended family first before entitlement to receiving a matai (chief) title. This unique and far-reaching role of Samoan matai within Samoan culture links strongly to the important role of school principals in leading learning and navigating effective changes for Pasifika students in New Zealand schools.

Effective educational leadership, from a Samoan perspective, is very similar to that of the matai – a person who gives service (tautua) to the school community (staff, parents/families and students) with courage, (toa), perseverance (finau), love (alofa) and commitment (loto iai). Such a leader has the ability to form positive reciprocal relationships and can inspire, challenge and motivate teachers to set high expectations for their students to perform to the best of their abilities. Further, the school leader goes about his/her work with fa'aalo'alo (humility and respect) and tofaliuliu (cultural inclusivity) to enact soalaupule (shared decision making) and communal collaborative team work.

These leadership qualities from a traditional Samoan perspective are vital to effective educational leadership. Just as Samoa has been guided by strong effective leaders with the sacrifice, love, service and perseverance to fight a long, hard political voyage through many colonial storms, effective educational Principals can battle the challenging voyage towards lifting student engagement in New Zealand. It involves those traditional Samoan values of effective leadership: courage, experience, perseverance, and the ability to lead transition to change as well as leading an implementation plan for these changes. This is affirmed by my own father's words of wisdom and leadership shared with me before I left Samoa to come to New Zealand, in 1985.

*“To become an effective leader, you must be a servant first, learn as much as you can while becoming a leader in the future - learn to care; learn to love; learn to respect; learn to persevere, learn to serve with humility. Never forget where you belong and always look after your name”.*

Within this research investigation in my thesis, the values and attitudes promoted by my father, an esteemed leader in Samoa, helped guide my data gathering, analysis and discussion. With this in mind, I hope to be able to support and guide 21<sup>st</sup> century era school principals to be effective leaders so they can articulate and enact the important values that Pasifika students bring to the classroom from their homes and cultures.

### **2.3 EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM A WESTERN PERSPECTIVE?**

#### **2.3.1 SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP**

From a Western perspective, effective school leadership is integral to achieving the vision and goals of a school and creating a positive learning culture for learners, staff and the school community (Education Review Office, 2012). Further, due to the nature of organizational learning in schools (Leithwood & Louis, 1998) and professional learning communities (Louis & Kruse, 1995; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Marks, Louis, & Printy, 2000; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009; Silins, Mulford, Zarins, & Bishop, 2000), strong successful leadership has the capacity to influence and drive change – to support and sustain the performance of staff, teachers and students. There are no solid answers to questions such as – how leadership matters and, what are the essential ingredients of this successful leadership, but what is clear in the research findings is that effective leadership makes a huge difference in promoting and improving learning for students (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Glynn, Cavanagh, Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2011; Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2016; Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd, 2009). Such leadership not only matters, it is second only to teaching among school-related factors, in its impact on student learning.

A number of Western researchers and educationalists have presented varying leadership characteristics that effectively impact on learners' education achievement. For example, Zammit, Sinclair, Cole, Singh, Costley, Brown a'Court and Rushton (2007) maintain that quality leadership sets directions by identifying and articulating a vision that creates high performance expectations; develops people by offering intellectual stimulation; demonstrates care for their staff; provides individual support;

establishes collaborative processes; provides opportunities for teacher leadership, professional learning, reflection and debate; understands their school's community; creates strong partnerships with stakeholders, including home-school linkages; and empowers learners by encouraging the school community to value learners' social and cultural capital through shared decision-making and 'students as leaders' support.

In their report Robinson et al. (2009) identify some of the characteristics of leadership that support good outcomes for students: an in-depth knowledge of the core business of teaching and learning; a detailed knowledge of the importance of positive home-school connections, and an ability to foster them, especially when the cultures of school and home are different. From a Western focus, and barring all other possible factors, such as the school curriculum, effective education leadership has emerged as the change broker for improving students' education engagement and achievement, especially for low performing schools. Interestingly, research has demonstrated that the effects of successful leadership are considerably greater in schools that are in more difficult circumstances (Anderson, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, (2004).

Indeed, there are virtually no documented cases of 'troubled' schools being turned around without intervention from a strong valuable leader. For example, in research in a low decile, multicultural New Zealand school, with a high percentage of Pasifika students which had been under review by Education Review Office (New Zealand term for an Inspectorate), a newly appointed principal led a remarkable change in the learning conditions and outcomes in the school (Fletcher, Grimley, Greenwood, & Parkhill, 2011). This validated the significant role a principal has in leadership, which flows on to effective teaching and the promotion of a safe and caring place where all children can succeed in their learning. The principal's background provided an unquestionable reputation in developing culturally appropriate relationships with the diverse communities, particularly Pasifika parents and students. On top of these much needed qualities, he had a track record of effective leadership.

Although other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, leadership is the catalyst. In high achieving schools, effective leaders exercise their influence on achievement gains through interpersonal relationships, structuring how teachers do their work, and securing and allocating resources that are aligned to the specific teaching practices they have determined will meet the needs of their students.

Further, Barrett and Breyer (2014) highlighted the importance of the comprehensive ‘Wallace Perspective’, with five key practices influencing effective school Principals.

*“The first is shaping a vision of academic success for all students. The second is creating a climate hospitable to education. A third is cultivating leadership in others; the fourth is improving instruction, and the fifth is managing people, data, and process to foster school improvement” (p.2).*

Shaping a climate hospitable to education signals the centrality and magnitude of effective principal leadership in developing and sustaining relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Relational trust opens the door to establishing mutual respect; acknowledging the vulnerabilities of others; actively listening to their concerns; having the ability to navigate effective actions. The consistency between words and follow-up actions affirms an effective leader’s personal integrity. School communities that are facing on-going challenges requires the Principal to be committed to relational trust, to jump-start and effectively navigate change – much needed in New Zealand.

The focus on effective leadership in New Zealand, in part, stems from the challenging and continuing underachievement plight of Māori and Pasifika students in the education system (Allen, et al., 2009; Harris 2008, 2009). Research findings support the influence of high quality leadership on all students’ increased engagement and achievement at school (Bishop & Berryman, 2010; 2012) – and this has become the catalyst for changing Māori and Pasifika students’ education performance. For example, the Te Kotahitanga project emphasized the importance of educational leadership that is committed to improving Māori achievement with

explicit academic goals for stable student-centred vision, as influential for creating effective changes in schools and reducing educational disparities for Māori learners (Bishop, 2011). This is because principals are in a position to foster greater collaboration among teachers, which often leads to improvements in teachers' instructional practices. In turn, these improvements enhance student learning. Further, the Education Review Office (2012) values the importance of effective leadership as best practice in schools with Māori enrolment. However, effective leadership is also needed for Pasifika students and the following discussion outlines why.

#### **2.4 THE FOCUS ON EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT FOR PASIFIKA STUDENTS**

As I pointed out in the introduction chapter, Pasifika students' performance in Aotearoa New Zealand education continues to face a potential crisis and because of this, it will take true leaders in education to lead the voyage to safe destinations. A safe destination for Pasifika achievement is when the education system successfully achieves its vision for Pasifika learners - as it states in the PEP (MOE, 2012) that – 'five out of five Pasifika learners, participating, engaging and achieving in education, secure in their identities and contributing fully to Aotearoa New Zealand's social, cultural and economic wellbeing' Pasifika Education Plan, (2012 – 2017).

Post-World War II, New Zealand's labour-market was in high demand for labourers, and subsequent immigration policies enabled a large influx of peoples from the Pacific Nations to fulfil that demand (Ferguson, Gorinski, Samu & Mara, 2008). Since this migration, Pasifika education achievement has been attached to labels such as underachievement, disengagement, 'the bottom stream', 'achievement tail', priority learners, 'kids at risk', 'students lagging behind' and achievement disparity (Amituanai-Toloa & McNaughton, 2008; Benton, 1988; Clay, 1985; Fergusson, Lloyd & Norwood, 1991; Fusitu'a & Coxon, 1998; Harker, 1978; Ministry of Education, 1995, 2015; Nash, 2000; New Zealand Council for Educational Research – NZCER, 1988; Tamasese, Masoe-Clifford & Ne'emia-Garwood, 1988). The sad news is that these labels regularly continue today in our education system, urging the on-going focus to change the position of Pasifika student achievement.

In the 1960s and 70s Pasifika peoples came, bringing with them their aspirations and dreams of a better and prosperous life for their families, and especially a better education for their children. Decades on, those dreams are yet to be fulfilled as Pasifika, along with Māori, continue to experience higher levels of educational disparity, performing poorly on both national and international assessments (Alton-Lee, 2003; ERO, 2012; Harris 2008 & 2009; PISA, 2012).

Pasifika students are most at risk of not achieving in New Zealand schools (ERO, 2012). At present, if the same pattern occurs, one in six Pasifika students will not achieve basic literacy and numeracy skills by the age of ten; almost one in five will leave school without any qualification; one in five will leave with NCEA Level 1 only; and one in five with NCEA Level 2 (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2013). Further, one in ten will become disengaged from education, employment, or training by the age of seventeen. Literacy and numeracy have been the two key curriculum areas of great concern regarding Pasifika underachievement. Pasifika student achievement levels in literacy and numeracy have been an area of National focus for the Ministry of Education, school leaders, teachers, teacher educators and the Pasifika community (Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi, Taleni, & O'Regan, 2009). Closing the gap in these two curriculum areas requires lifting teacher capability, particularly within the context of school-based professional learning communities working together to develop effective literacy instruction (McNaughton, Lai, Amituana-Toloa, & Farry, 2007; (Fletcher et al., 2009).

Although the New Zealand education system is considered to be among the best in the world, - schools, Boards of Trustees, families and communities face a serious and complex challenge. While many of our children receive a high-quality education, a significant number, often referred to as "the long tail of underachievement", still miss out (ERO, 2012). The achievement of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools has been an on-going concern for long time (Irving, 2013). The 'crisis' is that the situation has not changed significantly since the 1960s and 70s, and that no matter how much the New Zealand Ministry of Education has devoted to Pasifika education, decade after decade school performance has continued to maintain its position - at the very bottom in comparison to non-Pasifika students. Many teenagers

leave school with no qualifications, resulting in unemployment or poorly paid jobs. Consequently, more and more Pasifika families live in poverty in this country.

The on-going unanswered question is: *Are Pasifika students failing the system, or is the New Zealand Education system failing Pasifika students?* When are we, as a ‘community of learners’ going to get this right? My own Pasifika colleague, the late Amosa Fa’afao’i in his own words once said – ‘I have already told you about my aspirations and dreams – so what have you done to them?’

This educational status of Pasifika students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is of real concern (Allen et al., 2009), a situation that continues to challenge the education system to get it right. Pasifika peoples will make up 9.2 percent of New Zealand’s population by 2021 and 17 percent of all New Zealand children (Samu, 2006). It has been projected that by 2040 the majority of students in New Zealand primary schools will be Māori and Pasifika. The implications of this for classroom teachers and school leaders are enormous.

In 2009 the Government called for a much more active and urgent focus on lifting school performance for Pasifika students (MOE, 2009; 2014). Such identification and prioritizing of Pasifika underachievement as one of the key priority areas in education by the Government is critical for the economic well-being of Aotearoa New Zealand (Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi, Taleni, & O'Regan, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2009, 2013, 2014; Robinson & Timperley, 2004). Further, according to Statistics New Zealand (2013) and the Ministry of Education (2011) Pasifika student underachievement will continue to be a focus in the New Zealand education system, particularly so in primary and secondary schools.

However, a number of reports, including ERO (2009, 2012), have found that teachers and principals are experiencing huge challenges in addressing the needs of Pasifika students in order to raise engagement and achievement. It appears that many school leaders are not responding as proactively as they could to the achievement disparity of Pasifika students, are needing support to create appropriate

curriculum contexts that can provide opportunities for students to make connections with their identity, language and culture, and are struggling to actively engage parents in meaningful ways that will enhance achievement (Irving, 2013; Porter-Samuel, 2013).

Currently, alongside Māori and low socio-economic background children, the Government positions Pasifika students' educational achievement as a key priority area (MOE, 2015):

*Equitable achievement for Māori, Pasifika and students from low socio-economic backgrounds is a major priority: and our focus is on ensuring that the system settings are in place to support these outcomes (p.17).*

There is clearly much urgency for our education system to step up in designing and developing effective programmes and initiatives to reduce the high educational disparities among Pasifika learners. Effective school leadership is needed to achieve this. ERO reports (2009, 2012) on 'Improving education outcomes for Pacific learners' found that educational leadership is important in creating a positive and responsive learning culture for learners and teachers. Education achievement for Pasifika learners is highly dependent on the vision and expectations of school leaders (ERO, 2009, 2012).

Effective principal leadership should have the capacity to consider the following questions: What percentage of the students identify as Pasifika at our school?; What is their attendance like compared with other students?; How are they performing in terms of academic success compared with other students?; How are they performing in terms of Pasifika education and languages?; Which of the focus areas in the Pasifika education plan are relevant?; What is your school's current engagement with Pasifika families and communities?; Are they happy with the quality and level of this engagement?; Is this engagement supporting Pasifika students in their education?; Which of your school's current support activities or programs are specifically focused on Pasifika students? (MOE, 2013).

The importance of creating effective learning relationships within the school is clearly enhanced by quality and effective leadership (Glynn, 2013; Zammit et al., 2007). The role of quality leadership involves determining the goal content (task focus) in a manner that enables teachers and staff to understand and become dedicated to the goal (relationship focus). Building effective learning relationships are part and parcel of everyday activities that seek to improve student outcomes, whether we are focusing at classroom, school or system.

The education system's on-going challenge to address the needs of Pasifika students has continued to be a cause of national concern (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). Most recently the Ministry of Education established the PEP (2013-2017) (MOE, 2013) to address the education 'crisis'. Sitting alongside the Pasifika Education Plan, has been encouraging research evidence showing that culturally responsive pedagogies and effective leadership can make a difference to outcomes for our Pasifika children. In an analysis of Pasifika education research literature (Chu, Glasgow, Rimoni, Hodis, & Meyer, 2013) gaps in research were identified regarding ways to improve outcomes for Pasifika children. A major gap was the absence of studies on schools and classrooms with culturally responsive pedagogies and effective strategies to help Pasifika students, who are more highly represented in underachievement in learning outcomes.

Prior research in New Zealand schools (Fletcher, Parkhill & Fa'afoi, 2005; Parkhill, Fletcher, & Fa'afoi, 2005) found that Pasifika students at two schools in low socio-economic areas, using standardised test results, were achieving in reading at a higher level than is typical for similar schools, and for writing at or above average in comparison to all schools. Pivotal to success for these Pasifika students was leadership, where principals put strategic care and aroha (love) into ensuring their Pasifika students were highly valued. This was evidenced by the maintenance of cultural identity, high expectations from school staff and parents of Pasifika children's success, effective home-school relationships, the central role of the church and ICT-supported learning.

At one school, Pasifika children represented 54% of the school population, and the strong emphasis on the Pasifika culture was evident in the acceptance and use of the children's home languages in the school environment, the school's provision of Pasifika costumes for culturally significant occasions, the visible use of reading material about Pasifika people, and a religious ethos that aligned with the children's cultural beliefs and practices. At the other school, an intermediate, with only 3.1% Pasifika students, the Pasifika culture was fostered and celebrated through a cultural group led by a Samoan teacher, the head girl was Pasifika, and the Pasifika students expressed confidence and a sense of belonging. The expectations of parents, their church and the Pasifika community were that Pasifika children should be respectful and polite. Pasifika students who were underachieving in literacy in later research at four other schools (Fletcher et al., 2009) expressed concern at subtle bullying by peers, a lack of acknowledgement of their culture within the school and the context of their learning, and for some, noisy classroom environments where behaviour management concerns were an issue. Given the strong Pasifika values under which children respect and obey their elders, these children found learning environments antithetical to their cultural expectations which resulted in an uncomfortable and unwanted ongoing experience that hindered their learning. To make a difference, strong school leadership and governance focusing on Pasifika success, regardless of the percentages of Pasifika students at a school is critical, if as educators, we are to positively 'turn the tide' on the performance of Pasifika students, as evidenced by studies such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) PISA and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (May, Cowles & Lamy, 2013; Chamberlain, 2013).

## **2.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PASIFIKA EDUCATION PLAN**

The development of the PEP is an essential response to the ongoing Pasifika underachievement in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The PEP 2013–2017 (MOE, 2013; 2014) is a tool aimed at raising Pasifika learners' participation, engagement, and achievement from early learning through to tertiary education, with the key Government goal - to create the conditions for strong, vibrant, and successful Pasifika communities that can help build a more productive

and competitive economy for all New Zealanders. The vision is to "Drive change for Pasifika success" - to have "Five out of five Pasifika learners participating, engaging, and achieving in education, secure in their identities, languages, and cultures, and contributing fully to Aotearoa New Zealand's social, cultural, and economic wellbeing".

The New Zealand education community is well aware of Pasifika communities' aspirations for their children to perform well academically in our schools, without losing their identities, languages and cultures in the process of learning (MOE, 2013). The Plan puts Pasifika learners, their parents, families and communities at the centre of the education system where they can demand better outcomes (MOE, 2006). In doing so, it recognises that Pasifika education success requires the active involvement of parents, families, and communities, in collaboration with school leaders and teachers. Success in education is about positively harnessing Pasifika diversity and multiple world views within an enabling education system that works for young people, their families, and communities (MOE, 2011). In this sense The Pasifika Education Plan has its challenges.

Although Pasifika people form a diverse community with language and cultural differences, often intensified by differences in experiences, expectations, and aspirations between New Zealand-born and Pacific-born youth, as well as intergenerational differences, they generally share common core values that underpin their world view and how they engage and interact with others: spirituality (religious practices and church affiliation); the importance of family and community; reciprocity as the basis for nurturing social relationships; a consensus approach to decision making; respect for elders, authority, and status; relationships based on trust; and a high regard for community and social structures. Success in education needs to harness Pasifika diversity (and similarities) within an enabling education system – supported by high-quality education leadership and curricula - to start with the Pasifika learner and their family at the centre, drawing on the strength of their cultures, identities and languages. The more we understand the learner, the better we can respond to their needs, aspirations and achievement goals.

The entirety of these cultural values is succinctly defined by Bourdieu's (1973) theory of cultural capital and 'habitus'. This, and my Samoan authenticity, have played a strong influence in my involvement in the development and delivery of the Ministry of Education's Professional Learning and Development (PLDs), especially one of its many programmes – The Pasifika Success Professional Learning and Development (PLD) programme, highlighted the need to provide support to school leaders and teachers to practise in culturally responsive ways.

## **2.6 PASIFIKA SUCCESS TALANOA PROJECT (PSTP)**

The New Zealand Curriculum and the Pasifika Education Plan were guiding documents for the development of the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project (PSTP) (MOE, 2013). It enables participating school clusters to engage, and be challenged, in a programme that values the importance of knowing Pasifika learners' strengths, learning needs and aspirations. Such recognition motivates teachers, school leaders, families and community members to come together to build learning models that value Pasifika students' identities, languages and cultures. The collaborative weaving of knowledge through talanoa (Vaioleti, 2006) and fa'afaleletui (collaboration) (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave & Bush, 2005) helps to raise teachers' and leaders' capability and confidence.

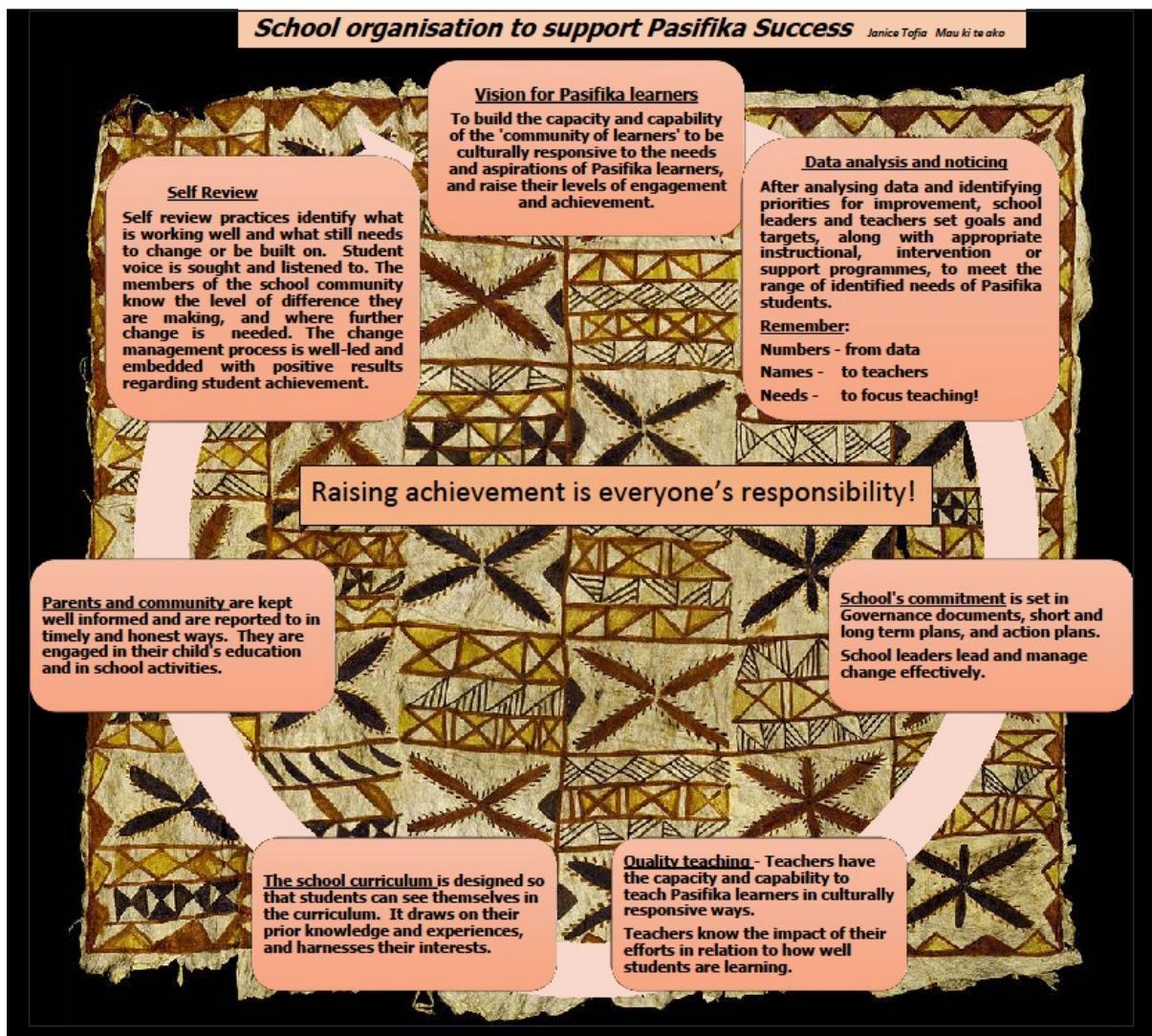
At the very foundation of the PTSP is the Pasifika notion of 'fofola le fala se'i ta talanoa' or 'spread the mat so that we can talk'. This notion of spreading the mat is about 'inquiry' - teachers inquiring into their practice and Pasifika contextual knowledge; challenging themselves to find out about their students and their levels of achievement; exploring possible reasons for achievement levels that do not meet expectations; and taking action to address these needs through classroom teaching and school wide practice.

The PSTP's framework is founded on the four domains of a Pasifika fale (house) - the foundation (fa'avae), floor (fola), pillars (pou) and roof (taualuga), this Fale model will be expanded in broad details in the methodology chapter. The underpinning theory of this PLD is based on the talanoa process where all involved are coming together to weave knowledge and hold discussions in meaningful ways to raise the

achievement of Pasifika students. A key aspect of PSTP methodology is the concept and practice of ‘Teaching as Inquiry’ as outlined in the Effective Pedagogy section of the New Zealand Curriculum. Further to this, in addition to workshops, school leaders are supported in conducting their own inquiry into how ‘Pasifika competent and proficient’ they are, enabling them to make a difference to their own leadership and the quality of teacher practice in order to shift Pasifika learners’ achievement levels. This has involved a review of key school documentation, including systems for managing teacher performance and leadership.

This literature review has embraced and acknowledged four selected key areas important to this research – (1) What is effective educational leadership from a traditional Pasifika perspective? (2) What is effective educational leadership from a Western perspective? (3) Why focus on the engagement and achievement for Pasifika students in New Zealand; and (4) the need for the development of the Pasifika Education Plan and the implementation of the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project.

My involvement in the development, planning and implementation as well as the monitoring of the PSTP inspired my thinking and direction for this study. In particular, my work with Janice Tofia in 2014, outlined in Figure 1 below, was fundamental to the direction I have taken with this study.



**Figure 1:** School organisation to support Pasifika Success  
(Tofia, Janice, 2014)

In my evaluation of the Project I experienced, in my view, what constitutes effective educational leadership practice for Pasifika students' school success. I have observed leaders navigating the required changes because they spread the mats wider and cast their nets deeper. It was my involvement in the PSTP that I explored the centrality and true value of effective leadership to effect and lead changes, at the same time explored that 'the true leader masters the art of navigation' and with this inspired my research question:

What are the supports that effective school leaders use in establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for the successful engagement and achievement of Pasifika students?

With this major question in mind, I now move on to Folauga 3: Methodology and Methods, to outline how I wove the talanoa mat and crafted the fishing nets - gathered and analysed my data.

## CHAPTER THREE – FOLAUGA TOLU

*O le upega e fili i le po, ‘ae talatala I le  
ao*

*The net that became entangled in the  
night will be disentangled in the  
morning.*

### 3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

##### 3.1.1 “LALAGA” - CULTURAL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

Moving into this folauga (voyage), it is the Samoan metaphorical and cultural concept of ‘Lalaga’ to weave or ‘Lagaga’ or ‘Lalagaina’ meaning ‘weaving or the ‘art of weaving’ that is central and crucial to this folauga. When building the va’ā (waka), lalaga is used to construct ropes to hold it and the sails together. Every folauga must have a strong, reliable va’ā for the navigation and without the ropes the va’ā is invalid.

I relate the concept of ‘Lalaga or Lagaga’ to the research methodology and methods because Lalaga is the weaving of many threads to make the ropes, just as there are many threads needed to interweave the methodology and methods. Without ropes this study could not be navigated on its malaga (journey).

#### 3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research determines the methodology and methods of that research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003; Tangaere, 2006). As such, educational research differs from other types of research in that it tends to draw from theoretical paradigms that are specific to learning and teaching, and located in naturalistic settings such as schools or classrooms. In keeping with my overall research aim - to

investigate the supports that school leaders within their schools for the successful educational engagement and achievement of Pasifika students, this study involves school principals and is located within school contexts. It draws from the qualitative research tradition, and is embedded in the ‘Lalaga’ of blended, critical, phenomenological, grounded and indigenous research theories - Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika Talanoa.

### **3.2.1 QUALITATIVE TRADITION**

Qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make meaning from their experiences in the world in which they live (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). It places an emphasis on exploration and experiential discovery about the world in its natural form; in its least intrusive state.

Johnson and Christensen (2000) propose that qualitative researchers view human behaviour as dynamic, and advocate studying human behaviour from close proximity over a period of time. The information offered by the participants is of significant importance because it is in-depth and information rich. The basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretive approach to social reality and in the description of the lived experience of human beings.

Researchers use qualitative approaches to explore peoples' lives - their behaviour and perspectives, and is particularly useful to use during change or conflict. Specifically, within the qualitative frame, ethnographers focus on culture and customs, grounded theorists investigate social processes and interaction, while phenomenologists consider the meanings of phenomena within life experiences. Most of these have the same aim, to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures.

### **3.2.2 CRITICAL THEORY**

This goal fits with the emancipatory goal of critical theory, in the way that the social reality of individuals and groups are understood in an attempt to free them from suppression. Critical theory seeks “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer, 1982, p.244). This idea was central to Freire’s

critical pedagogy to emancipate those in disadvantaged poverty stricken environments (Freire, 1970).

In line with these ideas my research seeks to free Pasifika students who have been in a prison-like environment where their learning and achievement outcomes in New Zealand have been constrained, and resulted in disadvantage for too long. The continuation and contribution of this disadvantaged pattern of underachievement has had a flow on influence to high Pasifika unemployment rates and subsequent poverty (Ministry of Education 2003, 2013). This is critical because Pasifika students have not been able to navigate the seas of opportunity. Who's got the answer to this? In this particular study, I appealed to the school principals as I believed they held the power and the keys to unlock these opportunities to free Pasifika students from the misery of trapping and enslaving.

### **3.2.3 PHENOMENOLOGY**

Phenomenology emphasises the importance of personal perspective and interpretation within a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity. My approach was to "illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in situation" (Lester, 1999, p.1). It is this understanding of the 'actors' perceptions about certain phenomena that give a rich data depth to the research. In my study, it is the 'actors' point of view that matters, their consciousness about the meanings they have regarding the school supports needed to enhance Pasifika students' learning.

From another angle, my study was underpinned by a desire to enable Pasifika students to navigate their own va'a (waka), by investigating what is happening in their schooling. I sought to explore principals' leadership in schools where Pasifika students are situated in their day-to-day lived reality of education. In the 21st century, principals set the climate of the pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning in their schools and are obliged to supply instructional leadership to raise all students' learning outcomes (Mora-Whitehurst, 2013). To better understand what New Zealand principals are putting in place to support Pasifika students' learning, may further advance educators', leaders' and teachers' knowledge in ways to

provide culturally appropriate, positive and supportive learning environments for Pasifika students.

### **3.3 INDIGENOUS THEORY AND RESEARCH**

#### **3.3.1 KAUPAPA MĀORI RESEARCH**

Kaupapa Māori theory and research emerged during the past three decades as a result of a growing consensus that research needed to be conducted in culturally appropriate ways that were relational to Māori views of the world. It legitimates Māori worldview with Māori principles and practices utilised in the research process (Smith, 1999). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) documented some key principles when activating Kaupapa Māori Research – the Principles of: whakapapa, te reo, tikanga Māori, whanau, and tino rangatiratanga. She outlined a number of critical questions to guide research: What research do we want to carry out? Who is that research for? What difference will it make? Who will carry out this research? How do we want the research to be done? How will we know it is a worthwhile piece of research? Who will own the research? Who will benefit?

#### **3.3.2 PASIFIKA TALANOA RESEARCH**

Pasifika Talanoa theory and research is an indigenous approach that is closely aligned with Kaupapa Māori theory and research in its utilization of culturally relevant methods. Both are a return to fundamental principles of inquiry that recognise the multiple modalities of social action and cultural representation located within a wider framework. Atkinson (2005) states that there is a need to understand and acknowledge the indigenous principles of organisation that are embedded in society.

Like Māori, Pasifika people have encountered negative past experiences as a result of the way Western research was conducted in bygone years. For example, the controversial research titled the ‘Coming of Age in Samoa’ (Mead, 1971) remains in the minds of Samoan people as research that was undertaken in ways that did not reflect a culturally responsive process, which challenged its reliability and validity. It was a study that did not encapsulate the true essence and core of Fa’asamoa (Samoan ways of being) culture which is founded and embedded in the value of

respect (fa'a'alo'alo, va tapuia) and integrity (aloaia ma taualoa). Pasifika people have therefore become wary of their participatory role as the givers of knowledge that often benefits the researcher, being on the side line rather than as being active players on the field.

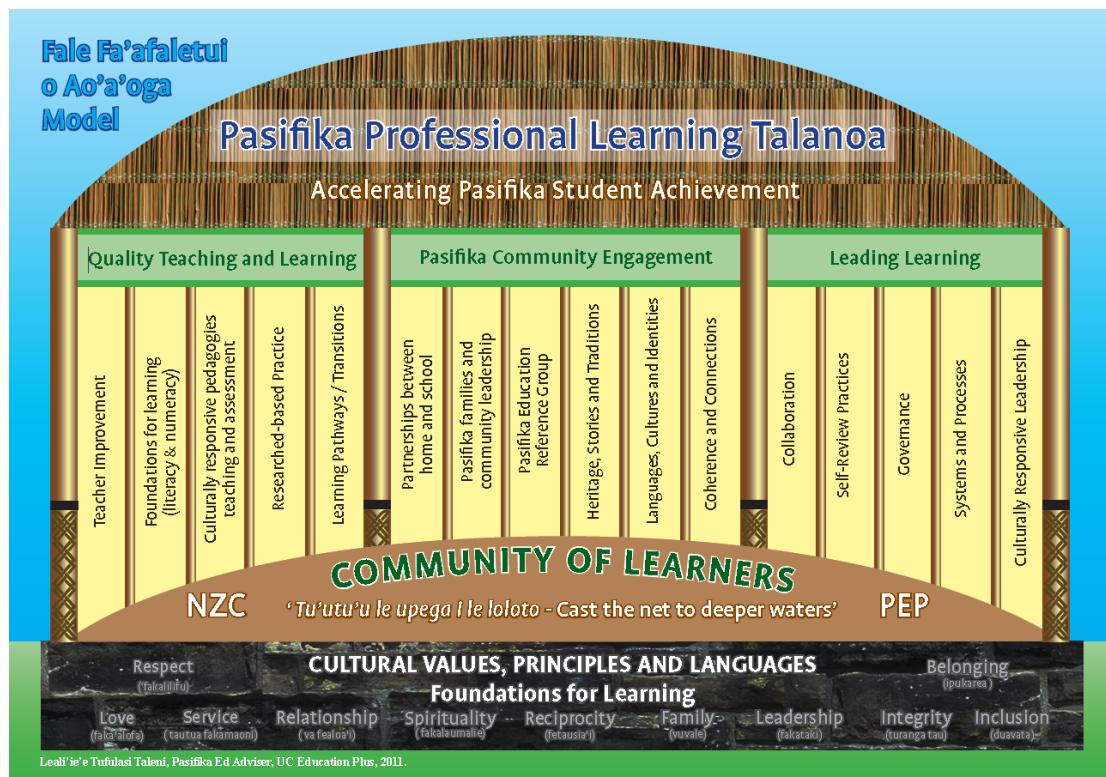
The utilization of Pasifika 'Talanoa' research (Vaiioleti, 2006) captures the essence of Pasifika epistemology as its foundation, as a way of developing the 'who' matters in the research, the 'what' matters, and the 'how' process – the methods used to carry it out. Talanoa research provides a "personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations" (Vaiioleti, 2006, p.1).

Talanoa is highly recommended by Pasifika researchers as a safe recognised methodology that is culturally appropriate (Vaiioleti, 2006). It is a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal, and usually happens in face to face situations where rich contextual information surfaces as co-constructed stories. It allows people to engage in social conversation which leads to critical discussions and knowledge creation, and is intricately fundamental to this study. Talanoa is also a form of 'Lagaga' (weaving of knowledge) which is built or woven from these ideas, to a more constructed and meaningful discourse.

*I recall Talanoa in my childhood, growing up in my Samoan village. I was present in Talanoa many times, learning from my elders as they modelled cultural values and principles through this Talanoa practice. At some time during the day a village chief would walk along the road. My father would call out to him to say hello and all of a sudden a conversation began. This conversation carried on and on, leading this chief closer towards our house and within the next few minutes my father invited him in. As they both settled in, the conversation started from a disorientated and unstructured agenda. Both created a conversation from nothing - from subjects such as 'talking about their children', 'the best crops to plant in their plantation', 'fishing methods', and 'village affairs.' Then it quietly changed into intensive, deeply conversation (Talanoa), including topics such as exploring indigenous epistemology through history, stories of migration and kinship, the impact of western ideologies on social structure, impact of Christianity on everyday life and genealogical connections*

*between villages and districts. The Talanoa carries on over lunch and many cocoa drinks. Towards the end of the day, more and more village chiefs would come to join the Talanoa bringing a richness of knowledge to contribute in weaving and blending the fabricated mat of Samoa society. I loved listening to my father and the chiefs talking.*

As a traditional cultural practice, Talanoa is a Pasifika research methodology that is authentic and natural in driving and leading conversations and collaborations with the participants in multiple ways. Talanoa sits within a variety of theoretical models, for example the Fale model I developed as a framework of the PSTP (Taleni, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015), which I have used in this research and depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 2:** The Fale Model for The Pasifika Success Talanoa Project framework (Taleni, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015)

### 3.3.3 THE FALE RESEARCH MODEL

Taking into account the Indigenous world view theorising that lies beneath the research paradigms in the work of Tangaere (2006), Smith, G.H. (1999), Smith, L.T.

(1999), Tillman (2002), and Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox and McRae (2014), it is appropriate to adopt a Pasifika indigenous world view approach to this research project – the Fale model for research design. It is affirming to see the linkages that are emerging across Indigenous cultures in their respective research activities and environment. Tillman (2002, cited in Macfarlane et al. (2014), refers to research affecting African-American communities - particularly the need to be cognisant of whose knowledge is being privileged and how cultural knowledge is perceived with integrity. The Fale model is premised on four interconnecting domains:

1. Fa'avae (foundation) of the Fale (house). Without doubt the foundation is crucial for stability and strength, where sound understanding is dug deep and is enshrined. Such foundations are paramount in today's diverse schools and classrooms where educational leaders must comprehend and preserve the values and principles that guide Pasifika communities and families. In terms of my study, it is here on the fale foundation that the school leaders navigate their learning about Pasifika students' identities, languages and cultures. The development of strategies and programmes for Pasifika students can then be realised.
2. Fola (floor) of the Fale. It is on the floor space that Talanoa is enacted. Discussion, collaboration, negotiation, weaving and blending of knowledge happens with an open-mindedness and respect for others' views. The fola provides a physical space for the Talanoa to take place and demonstrate the saying in Tongan and Samoan – 'Fofola le fala se'i ta Talanoa - Spread the mat so that we can talk', referring to the metaphorically presentation of challenges to be discussed through Talanoa. This is Talanoa. Further, it is a space that is in tune with this study where school leaders can engage with communities to advance Pasifika students' educational engagement and achievement. They can propound their aspirations for Pasifika learners while simultaneously accepting the right of Pasifika families and communities to submit their aspirations for their children and grandchildren. They can talk about what matters and take up challenges that need navigating discussion. This process of Talanoa on the fola builds relationships and collaborations – essential for school leaders and the communities.

3. Pou (pillars) of the Fale hold the building upright and sound within all weathers and natural disasters - representing strength and fortitude in the face of adversity. In this study, the adverse signs of underachievement, low retention rates and so on, can be offset by the implementation of three 'pillars of action': effective school leadership, quality teaching and learning, and sound community engagement.
4. Taualuga (roof) of the Fale raises the levels of each pillar. Such elevation from the Fa'avae (foundation) to the Taualuga (roof) – raises the questions: Will effective school leadership inspire teachers to teach better and learners to learn better? Will effective school leadership encourage more regular and authentic engagement from the community by way of the school reaching out, and the community reaching in? There is also this strong sense of celebration of achievement and successes as a fulfilment of Pasifika families' aspirations and dreams for their children, leaving behind their shores and navigating many waters in search of better future for their children. This is depicted on the Taualuga of the fale.

Here is the crunch and the backbone of the 'Pasifika Success Talanoa project' as discussed in the literature review chapter, Folauga 2. The lead teachers and teachers collaborated to weave and discuss ideas on how to raise and improve Pasifika student engagement and achievement. This Lagaga (weaving) strengthens the concept of a 'Nu'u' or 'Village' as referring to the saying, 'e mana'omia uma le nu'u atoa ile tapu'eina ole olaga manua o le tamaiti'iti - it takes a whole village to raise a child'.

After my involvement in providing professional development for educational leaders, so that they could sit on the mat to fully participate in this Talanoa process, coordinating the Talanoa, and providing ongoing support for the Project, I selected four school principals and the Pasifika Community Leaders from the Mau ki te Pasifika Education Advisory Group to have a conversation with me about the supports that they understood as essential to construct culturally responsive practices for Pasifika students. This formed the data collection and analysis of my research.

### 3.4 MY INSIDER POSITION

Qualitative researchers are entwined in their research in ways that can be close and deeply meaningful. It is important to understand this and for my part, to be clear about my insider position as a prominent person in the PSTP – developing, delivering and monitoring the project. Then as a Masters of Education student researching a group of the participants I must acknowledge my desire for ‘answers’ to meet Pasifika students’ needs. I am an ‘insider’ and because of this I believe I have had the advantage of knowing the participants and having working relationships with them - that has provided my research with richness of meaning. The wealth of knowing has allowed me to probe in ways an ‘outsider’ could not, ways to ensure all voices have been heard. The many stories of participants are immediate and real to my insider presence.

Further as a Samoan researcher my practices had to be authentic to me, to allow me to lay claim to the Talanoa process within the Fale Model of Research. The ‘outsider’ position would not have worked for me in this study. Such a distant research role would have run counter to all the lived experiences and cultural values, beliefs and practices that are ‘me’. The importance for me to be seen an insider (referred to as ‘kanohi kitea’ (Macfarlane et al., 2014)) was the essence of researcher well-being.

*Here I think about my father’s words of wisdom and leadership he voiced to me before I first left Samoa in 1985. They ring in my ear and remind me to feel honoured and strong, to stay true to my authenticity in this research. “To become an effective leader, you must be a servant first, learn as much as you can while becoming a leader in the future - learn to care; learn to love; learn to respect; learn to persevere, learn to serve with humility. Never forget where you belong and always look after your name.” These last words, especially, run deep within my being.*



*The art of lagaga or weaving – one of my mother Va Taleni's daily chores, the weaving of mats and finemats (lalagaina o fala ma ietoga)*



*A completed woven (lalaga) mat*

### 3.5 METHODS

#### 3.5.1 PARTICIPANTS

A Talanoa with the Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Advisory Group, represented by key members of each Pasifika community (the Community Leaders' Group), was organized prior to my research activities. The purpose was to discuss the significance of the research, the selection of the school leader participants and their locations, data collection and analysis, and any other matters of importance to the community. With their blessings and desires, I was able to continue on with this thesis project. In tune with the Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Advisory Group's wishes and within the realms of Pasifika research methodology I worked with two participant groups, the Pasifika Community Leaders and the School Principals. I will briefly discuss these groups before presenting my fieldwork activities, and finally I will introduce the participants more fully.

#### 3.5.2 SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Four school principals were invited to participate in my study. They had been engaged in the PSTP since its beginning and as such they knew me and I knew them. My close relationship with each of them over the years of many professional engagements really was a great advantage on my part to involve them as key participants for this study. I approached the principals after in-depth observations

and follow-up professional development discussions on their school sites as the PSTP had progressed over the three years.

These four school leaders had demonstrated to me their real commitment to the PSTP, and their ability to culturally engage with Pasifika students, families and communities. I looked at them as representatives of the many effective principals that I had been working with around the country on this kaupapa of raising Pasifika engagement and achievement. For the principals, they were familiar with the work and could participate with confidence that their thoughts were of great value. For me, the principals had lived through transformation and were putting in place positive supports for their students.

When I asked myself my research question: What are the supports that effective school leaders use in establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for the successful engagement and achievement of Pasifika students? it was perfectly clear to me that all that was left to do was to have a Talanoa with each Principal. I needed to explore their understandings and meanings related to what they had learned over the past few years, to what they are doing now.

### **3.5.3 MAU KI TE AKO PASIFIKA EDUCATION ADVISORY GROUP (PASIFIKA COMMUNITY LEADERS)**

The Pasifika Community Leaders, the ‘cultural experts’, representatives of the ‘Mau ki te Ako’ Pasifika Education Advisory Group, included one delegate from each Pacific Nation including: Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Cook Island, Niue, Tokelau and Papua New Guinea, and representatives from key government agencies: Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Pacific Peoples (MPP).

### **3.6 PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

The method of selecting participants for this research was crucial, as indicated above. Use of the ‘purposive sampling’ (Patton, 1990) method was fitting for the intention of this study was to concentrate on people with particular characteristics who will be best able to assist with the research question. The selection of relevant participants who have experiences in the researched field is vital for gathering

significant information about the investigation. This is what purposive sampling is concerned about. In addition, Patton (1990) has proposed purposive sampling as popular in qualitative research.

### **3.6.1 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Understanding the ethical issues in educational research is central to conducting it (Mutch, 2005). Since research often involves a great deal of co-ordination among different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical considerations must promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. According to Mutch (2005), "ethics is a moral principle or code of conduct that actually governs what people do and it is concerned with the way people act and behave" (p 76). Research ethics is specifically interested in the analysis of ethical issues that are raised when people are involved as participants in research (Walton, 2001). The key objectives of research ethics are to protect human participants, ensure that the research is conducted in a way that serves the interests of individuals, groups and a society as a whole, - the management of risks, protection of confidentiality and the process of informed consent (Walton, 2001). When it comes to culture, ethical issues become more complicated and researchers may acquire good knowledge of cultural practices that assist them with the formulation of necessary ethics appropriate to research, especially in this study which involved Pasifika participants.

For my study, ethical consideration around Talanoa Research with the four school leaders and eight community leaders in the Pasifika Advisory Group was paramount to doing the work. Using an indigenous research methodology embedded in the Fale Model was integral to ethics from the outset, as well as the ethical framework provided by the University of Canterbury research ethics principles and guidelines.

### **3.6.2 INFORMED AND VOLUNTARY CONSENT**

My close professional relationships with my selected participants played a huge part in the whole process of approaching, communicating and coordinating the interviews with them. It was important for the participants to understand that taking part in the research study was completely voluntary and needed their signed consent with the

option of withdrawing at any time, as stated on the consent form. Informed consent for my research required clear, open and honest communication between myself (the researcher) and my participants. The literature speaks loudly about the clarity and readability of the research information and consent document (Ohio State University, n.d.)

A copy of the information sheet for the School Principals (Appendix 2) and the Community Leaders (Appendix 3) and consent forms for each group (Appendices 4 and 5) were given to invited participants to read, with time given to each to answer any questions they had. The consent forms were signed and handed to me before fieldwork commenced.

### **3.6.3 ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

As outlined in the Consent Form, participants' anonymity and confidentiality would be ensured. Any personal information would be removed from papers, interview records/scripts, research notes and so on, and replaced with numbers and pseudonyms. The schools' identity and location would be anonymous and confidential – named South Island schools and given pseudonyms. While the participants were given the option to be identified, all wanted anonymity and confidentiality.

Further, the person who transcribed the audiotaped conversations was required to sign a privacy and confidentiality agreement prior to the work.

### **3.6.4 DATA STORAGE AND ACCESS**

The consent forms advised the participants that their consent forms, records and fieldwork data would be kept in a securely locked cabinet in the researcher's study room at the University. Transcripts of all interviews would also be kept on a computer file requiring a password entry. Lastly, records would be retained and stored as per the requirements of the University of Canterbury, and then destroyed.

### **3.6.5 USE OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Participants needed to know, as stated on the consent form, that this research would be written up as a study for a Masters of Education degree. Further, the process and findings may be used to inform change and improvement in lifting Pasifika engagement and achievement through effective leadership in New Zealand schools. In this sense, the findings may be presented at Conferences and for professional development with school personnel, and written as journal articles, book chapters, or as a book, in the future.

### **3.7 FIELDWORK PROCEDURES**

#### **Semi-Structured Interviews – the Talanoa**

Each of the four principals was involved in a one-to-one audio-recorded semi-structured interview with me during the school day, conducted in a room away from distractions and interruptions. A set of open-ended, free flowing and exploratory questions were developed with special attention given to questions related to the research objectives, using natural and familiar language, avoiding loaded questions, and using probes to draw the conversation towards the objectives (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). See Appendix 6 for an outline of the questions that guided me during these interviews with the Principals.

The questions needed to allow participants to explain their meanings about effective supports in schools to allow Pasifika students to engage and achieve, and from the perspective of school leadership. The interview was very close to the format of a Talanoa method of gathering data (Vaiioleti, 2006), and although it was set out as a one to one conversation, it was conducted in a true manner and in the spirit of a Talanoa process, where the participant and interviewer freely shared the same role.

It was not enough for me to only talk with the principals. I also needed to talk with the ‘cultural experts’ to know that the consistent flow of voices coming through from school principals’ perspectives - to the ‘cultural experts’ perspectives – was confirmation of what the principals were saying. To achieve this, one of my meetings with the Pasifika Community Leaders group was an audio taped focus group

Talanoa to ask – what does an effective principal for Pasifika learners look like? What are the values and qualities of an effective school principal from the Pasifika perspective? I needed to explore and identify the effective qualities, expectations and vision of effective leadership for Pasifika students from the Pasifika leaders. They came together, spread the mat to talk, and gave their collective wisdom. Appendix 7 outlines the interview schedule I used with the Pasifika Community Leaders. The focus group was more structured, in an attempt to search for comparable data to confirm the principal's perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Each audio-taped principal interview and the focus Pasifika Community Leaders group Talanoa were transcribed to create 'scripts', and analysed according to discourse analysis. In particular, the qualitative coding system developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was implemented. Two sequential coding systems, open and axial coding, are completed to establish concepts (or themes) and categories (or sub-themes).

#### **3.8.1 OPEN CODING**

Open coding is the process for breaking down the data into first level searching for concepts (larger theme type notions), and then second level which identifies categories (smaller sub-themes to the concept). Researchers read and repeatedly reread the interview scripts to identify and highlight the concepts and then the categories. Different highlight colours are used to differentiate the different concepts and categories. At the end of this process the scripts are covered with different colours. See Appendix 8 for examples of my open coding analysis.

#### **3.8.2 AXIAL CODING**

This coding is concentrated on defining concepts and categories to:

1. Endorse the identification of concepts and categories, to ensure they accurately illustrate the participants' responses.
2. Investigate the relationships and connections between the open coded concepts and categories. When doing this, it may be that you ask the

questions: What conditions caused or influenced concepts and categories? What is / was the social / political context? What are the associated effects or consequences?

After open coding I completed axial coding to identify the concepts and categories for their inter-relationships and connections, and then comparison with the categories analysed from the Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Education Advisory Group Talanoa script. This latter analysis was important for the rigor and robustness of my study – to confirm (or not) the principals' perspectives.

### **3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH**

#### **3.9.1 TIME**

While qualitative research examines social processes in-depth, the large amount of fieldwork data, and its analysis and interpretation can be time consuming. However, the richness and depth of information gathered in my study has made the process worthwhile. It is more culturally invaluable.

#### **3.9.2 PARTICIPANT SIZE**

Qualitative studies tend to have small numbers of participants – which can mean that the research is not taken seriously, or not recognized, by other academic researchers and policy makers (Griffin, 2004). These professionals tend to be glued to quantitative research methodologies and outcomes that are ‘scientific’. Although my research involved four participants, the large quantity of information gained was robust and sufficient for my research question.

#### **3.9.3 RESEARCHER-BIAS**

Antagonists of the qualitative methodology say that qualitative researchers are biased, because of their embeddedness in the research. The critique comes from the assumption that researchers can and should be objective and apolitical in their research activities (Griffin, 2004). I acknowledge that this was possible in my research. However, I established a rigorous system for cross-checking the

participant interview analysis and interpretation with the Cultural Leader's perspectives.

Further, from my Pasifika research position I knew that qualitative research is more appropriate for engagement in an indigenous cultural research framework. It is more respectful of the people and their cultures. I was aware of my need to be transparent about who I am, with all my cultural learning, bilingual knowledges and lived experiences that have shaped me to be here - researching this study. Willig (2001, p.10) affirms the need for:

*...reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life, and social identities have shaped the research... [and] how the research may have affected and possibly changed us, as people, and as researchers.*

In addition, the objective and apolitical assumption can be challenged as a myth. No researcher, whether qualitative or quantitative in action, can be absolutely objective, apolitical and value free. Regardless of the endeavour to be objective and without political thinking, in the act of being human, research cannot be value free.

### **3.10 PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT**

It was possible that the participants did not speak honestly about their thoughts, due to them knowing my thinking. In my interviews, I was always mindful of allowing the principals to speak their thoughts. I prompted them to speak their mind regardless of my presence, reminding them to say how it was for them. I had also closely observed the principals and listened to them in professional development prior to the research. I knew that they were providing supports in their schools for Pasifika students. Therefore, the principals I invited to participate allowed for my research question to be explored and answered.

In the following Folauga 4 “Discussion of Results” I present the themes analysed and re-analysed, that signal the supports used by school principals as they created

culturally responsive practices in their schools, to ensure achievement for Pasifika students. But first, I introduce the participants who were at the very heart of this study.

### **3.10.1 INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS**

The first time I worked with the Principals in the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project they seemed to be disorientated, confused and consequentially uninterested about the meaning in my words. As time went on this changed. There seemed to be a powerful connection to the kaupapa, an understanding that clicked, some ‘aha’ moments. The Principals became comfortable and attentive, questions related to what I was talking about. They realised their values were like mine – the hook that made the connection. My vision became theirs, which was understanding the connection of this kaupapa to their desire to lift engagement and achievement for Pasifika students at their schools. Tables 1, 2 and 3 provide more specific information about the Principals and their schools. Pseudonyms were given to each Principal: Iosefa, Filipo, Lopati and Tina; and each school: Moana, Mumu, Meamata, and Moli.

**Table 1:** Principals' Profiles

Principal	M/F	Birth Place	Age Range	Ancestors (Ethnicity)	Primary/ Secondary State / Integrate	No of Years as a Principal
Iosefa	M	Christchurch, NZ	56-65	Austria (NZEu)	Secondary/ State	
Tina	F	Wellington, NZ	56-65	Ireland (NZEu)	Secondary/ Integrate	10 years
Filipo	M	Matamata, NZ	56-65	United Kingdom (NZEu)	Primary/State	6 years
Lopati	M	Clyde NZ	36-45	Scotland & Ireland (NZEu)	Primary/State	10 years

**Table 2:** The Schools

Roll data July 2015					
School Name	Decile Rating	Total Roll	Pasifika %	Māori %	Non M/P %
Moana School	2	372	74 (19.89%)	138 (37.09%)	160 (43.01%)
Mumu School	8	572	45 (7.87%)	99 (17.3%)	428 (74.82%)
Meamata School	3	202	43 (21.28%)	60 (29.7%)	99 (49.0%)
Moli School	3	263	68 (25.85%)	64 (24.33%)	131 (49.82%)
		1409	230	361	818

**Table 3:** Indicative Roll Data Sept 2016  
*Sourced from [www.educationcounts.govt.nz](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz)*

Indicative Roll Data Sept 2016					
School Name	Decile Rating	Total Roll	Pasifika %	Māori %	Non M/P %
Moana School	2	313	64 (20.44%)	110 (35.14%)	139 (44.41%)
Mumu School	8	595	58 (9.75%)	98 (16.47%)	439 (73.78%)
Meamata School	3	229	38 (16.5%)	76 (33.1%)	115 (50.21%)
Moli School	3	289	64 (22.14%)	63 (21.79%)	162 (56.07%)
		1426	224	347	855

The Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Education Advisory Group (Pasifika Community Leaders) had been the established Advisory Group for three years within the Te Tapuae o Rēhua consortium, to provide cultural expertise and guidance for professional learning and development (PLD) to school leaders and teachers. I had known them a long time in the community and in my work. They had navigated the seas with me as I had worked in the PSTP, and had previously gifted to me a wealth of cultural knowledge, guidance and expertise from their nations. It was natural and culturally fitting to me that the Advisory Group continued to navigate this study with me. Table 4 outlines the Pasifika Community Leaders' Profiles.

**Table 4:** The Pasifika Community Leaders' Profiles

Community Leader	Ethnic Group	Gender	Region	Birth Place	Role
Afoa	Samoan	Male	Christchurch	Pacific	CPIT Christchurch/ Church Minister/ Community Leader
Mele	Samoan	Female	Dunedin	Pacific	CPIT Dunedin/ Community Leader
Ratu	Fijian	Male	Christchurch	Pacific	Community Leader
Kolo	Tongan	Male	Christchurch	Pacific	University of Canterbury
Mata	Cook Island	Female	Christchurch	New Zealand	Ministry of Pacific Peoples
Malia	Niuean	Female	Christchurch	Pacific	Community leader
Tolu	Papua New Guinea	Male	Christchurch	Pacific	Mortgage Broker
Pele	Samoan	Male	Christchurch	New Zealand	Ministry of Education
Mareko	Samoan	Male	Christchurch	New Zealand	Ministry of Education

*My grandfather comes to my mind now. His immense knowledge of the ocean and navigation gave him the tools to prepare thoroughly for the next folaua. For example, he knew that to get through the rips just offshore to the open ocean he would have to first count seven waves. It was at this point he could enter the space between the rips safely into the open ocean. My grandfather could read the direction of the winds, floating coconuts on the ocean currents and the movement of the clouds before deciding to launch the va'a. His application of this local knowledge was well respected by all the villagers whenever they wanted to journey to another island.*

*Just as my grandfather prepared for the folaua and the va'a, I have needed to build my knowledge and tools to prepare for my folaua in conducting my research.*

It is now time to embark on Folauga 4 to understand how my participants thought about their work, contributed their perspectives about the supports that effective school leaders put into place for the engagement and achievement of Pasifika students, and for me to Lalaga these ideas for interpretation.

# CHAPTER FOUR – FOLAUGA FA

*Saili matagi*

*Seeking the winds of educational  
changes*

## 4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

As my research is now drawing towards the end, I keep reminding myself not to lose track of the ‘navigation’ and ‘voyaging’ metaphor - ‘a true leader masters the art of navigation’ – ‘e saili i tautai se agava’ā’. Its relevance is not only in the ‘navigational’ and ‘voyaging’ challenges that I face in my thesis process, but also in the challenges laid out in front of school principals to be more effective leaders. In the va’ā (waka) a ‘true leader’ continues to persevere and battle hard through challenging encounters to reach the destination – just as in the school environment ‘a true leader’ steers the way for his or her school to reach the student success destination.

‘Saili Matagi’ or ‘seeking the winds’ in this thesis context relates to how the students’ success voyage relies on the winds to push the va’ā forward, and at the same time relies on the tautai (master navigator) to set the sails in the right direction. Although we ‘cannot change the direction of the wind we can change the sail of the ship’ – ‘E le mafai ona tatou suia le ala matagi, ae mafai ona tatou suia le la o lo tatou va’ā’. The tautai utilizes his skills and experiences to adjust the sail to the wind. The excitement of celebrating the findings from the voices of the participants is like celebrating the safe arrival of a long hard fought voyage in the sea.

With such an arrival in sight, this Folauga is presented in two parts: part 1 - a discussion of the seven major concepts and their categories analysed within the Principals’ Talanoa, and part 2 - a discussion of the concepts analysed within the Pasifika Community Leaders - Mau Ki te Ako Pasifika Education Advisory Group

Talanoa. Following this discussion will focus on how the Principals' concepts of support are aligned with those of the Community Leaders.

## **4.2 PRESENTING THE DATA (CONCEPTS AND CATEGORIES)**

### **4.2.1 PART 1: TALANOA WITH PRINCIPALS**

Seven major concepts analysed and identified from the Principals' Talanoa, provide strong supports for developing effective learning environments where Pasifika learners are engaged, achieve educational success and can fulfil their aspirations. These concepts and categories and (in brackets) are as follows: building dynamic relationships with students and families (cultural connection, knowing, caring); Understanding Pasifika cultural worldviews (being proactive, increase cultural capacity, being a learner); Effective use of achievement data information; Strengthening culturally responsive leadership; Creating robust community engagement; Setting high expectations for success and achievement; and Engaging in motivational professional development.

#### **Concept 1: Building Dynamic Relationships with Students and Families**

##### **Centrality of relationships**

Building rich, strong relationships is central to providing a warm, accepting and welcoming learning environment for Pasifika students. The principals talked directly or indirectly about the centrality of forming relationships with the community as crucial for their students' learning and wellbeing, as illustrated in the following quotes:

*...the one that is of utmost importance is my personal relationship with all of those families, in that if I see out in the car park a taxi van or a big Samoan van out there my automatic reaction is “get out there and go and talk to those people” or if they are in the school waiting to see another staff member, I sit down beside them and strike up a conversation... (losefa, 2015).*

*...So it's all about relationships (Tina, 2015).*

*...it was developing a relationship with the family (Filipo, 2015).*

*...if it's not working in your setting, in your school, you need to do things differently, be proactive, go forward, be out there, show interest, engage family and community. Don't sit and wait for them to come to you, because it won't happen (Filipo, 2015)*

### **Cultural Connection**

The way Principals talked about relationships showed an understanding about the diversity of children and families in their local communities – the importance of gaining a deep understanding of every child and their family's culture, and the need to make meaningful connections within the community. Such cultural bonding is deeply embedded in the work of a number of New Zealand academics and researchers, as signalled in Folauga 2, for example, Bishop and colleagues (Berryman & Bishop, 2011, Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Bishop & Glynn, 1999); and Macfarlane and colleagues (Glynn et al., 2011; Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2016).

In this study the Principals realized that building strong relationships requires their cultural connection with students, families and community:

*...and actually, the heart that I would share with you is really about my personal journey into an understanding about wanting to be a Principal who can stand in a particular place in a cultural connection where our Pasifika families can have a relationship where they feel that I get them, I understand where they are, I understand where they are coming from, I can greet them in their language, I appreciate their uniqueness... (losefa, 2015).*

losefa clearly signals relationships at the heart of leadership practice, with a dedication to honouring and respecting the students, families and community. It was important that families knew that the principal understood them.

For Tina, cultural connection was very much tied up with changing assumptions and world-views:

*...often people's assumptions don't shift until they really engage with the community.... So, when you engage with a genuine relationship with Pasifika people, and you want to engage properly....you can't but have your world view shifted (Tina, 2015)*

### **Knowing**

So often the Principals referred to knowing their students and families as critical to building effective relationships. Lopati emphasized this – in a way that has richness within the relationship:

*...it is really getting to know the students and knowing their backgrounds, knowing their families, ...it's about being able to form a relationship, a learning relationship with the child and then be able to scaffold their learning to improve their achievement (Lopati, 2015).*

*It's hugely about knowing the learner (Tina, 2015)*

*There is something in that you have to know the learner... It does take some time to get used to and to know about (Iosefa, 2015)*

In other words, relationships matter, and “In order to teach you, I must know you” (Allen et al., 2009, p. 47). This positioning by the Principals is supported by research illustrating the important role of teacher-child relationships and teacher-family relationships as a priority by teachers in schools (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

### **Caring**

Knowing the students and their families was very much linked to ‘caring’ as essential to relationship building, as Filipo so well-articulated:

*...embrace them and show that you care and are interested  
(Filipo, 2015)*

Lopati emphasizes that knowing the child and his family means that:

*...the child knows that you care about them as a person and also care about their learning (Lopati, 2015)*

He talked about caring relationships within a culture of care:

*I suppose just getting to know people and that culture of care, so I try and get to know as many students as I can and their families and to make school a welcoming and happy place....it's really based around a culture of care (Lopati, 2015).*

Lopati's quote highlighted his awareness about how knowing his students and families showed that he cared about them and their learning, and with this in place he could help students to achieve at school. Such relationships are, in fact, a prerequisite to learning (Hawk, Tumama Cowley, Hill, & Sutherland, 2005). In support of the Principals' thoughts about care in relationships, recent brain-development research has reiterated the importance of teachers building caring, responsive, and nurturing relationships with children that involves close and meaningful connections with families and home life (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2009; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Key to the effective engagement of Pasifika parents and communities in this revised approach to inclusive education, are the *relationships* that must be fostered amongst all partners. The literature that discusses how relationships can best be fostered, explores issues around communication, responsibility and roles (Gorinski & Fraser, 2006).

Take time to know your students to experience positive relationships with your students you need to take the time to get to know them and build connections. By

knowing your students well, you can understand their interests and plan learning experiences that reflect these interests. Knowing your students well helps you identify the best approaches to help them learn.

### **Concept 2: Understanding Pasifika cultural worldviews**

The Principals were very clear about their need to understand Pasifika worldviews and to show an interest in their students' cultures in a practical and meaningful way.

#### **Being Proactive**

When Pasifika aiga 'see' Principals being actively involved in learning about their students' culture and language, they feel safe and secure to step up in a participatory role in the school environment:

*...once our community knows that you have been to Samoa, have been pro-active and are interested in their children and culture, they will come forward, talk to you and embrace you and do appreciate you... (losefa, 2015).*

*It's all very well to stand at the gate or be in the playground and wave, our Pasifika families will smile and wave but generally they won't be proactive and approach you, so it is up to you to be proactive and approach them, embrace them and show that you care and are interested... (Filipo, 2015).*

*Learn a few phrases, learn about culture, language and identity (Filipo, 2015).*

In this sense knowing Pasifika worldview is about being a strong networker who is out there making connection with the school community, clearly signalled in the following quote.

*...I enjoy networking and I think I am a strong networker so I have developed some pretty strong networks since I arrived here, and I*

*think I can get people on side and work with me because they can see where I want to head. I'm not afraid to go and make a fool of myself. I'm happy to get involved, be visible. I'm in the playground, at sports, at performances, assemblies etc... (Filipo, 2015).*

What these Principals are saying is to get out there, out of the Principal's office, out of the school grounds, into the school car park and onto the street where they can use the opportunity to talk with families and be proactive in understanding Pasifika worldviews that are embedded in their identities, languages and cultures. These opportunities provide a platform for school principals and teachers to launch their work in finding out about students' learning needs, weaknesses, limitations, strengths and aspirations. It is this understanding that opens principals' hearts into the unique cultural values and principles of Pasifika students that drives learning and raises engagement and achievement. This aligns with the work of Zammit et al. (2007) and Fletcher et al. (2011).

*An outstanding example of this is ...., he stands at the gate of his school every afternoon, he says goodbye to every student when they are leaving and he is checking up on every kid about their credits. He knows all his kids well, he knows how many credits they have got and so he is a great example and a great role model of a Principal who really walks the talk in terms of knowing his kids and being determined that the kids in his school are going to be successful... (Iosefa, 2015).*

This reminds me of what I often say to principals and teachers:

*"Take the steps needed [be proactive] to increase my cultural capacity so that Pasifika culture is part of my everyday thinking and consideration; and part of the regular life of my classroom and school".*

### **Increase Cultural Capacity**

Increasing your cultural capacity is about being fully engaged in learning about the culture of your students and changing the way you ‘look’ at different worldviews, as signalled in Folauga 2 (Allen et al., 2009; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2016).

Iosefa’s quote shows how the Principals understood cultural capacity:

*...engaging with culture is about the lens we are using or the eyes that we have that we are looking at cross-cultural experiences (Iosefa, 2015).*

Tina articulates this further:

*A massive part of it is shifting assumptions, but firstly people have to be aware that they have those assumptions, because your world view is how you think things are....often people's assumptions don't shift until they are actually engaged with the community (Tina, 2015).*

The Principals understood the value of ‘looking’ and exploring the unique learning experiences that students contribute to learning – to increase their cultural competence and confidence.

*When you are a Pālagi principal you have to take off your Pālagi glasses and see the experience that Pasifika kids are bringing to school with them and understand where those kids are coming from (Iosefa, 2015).*

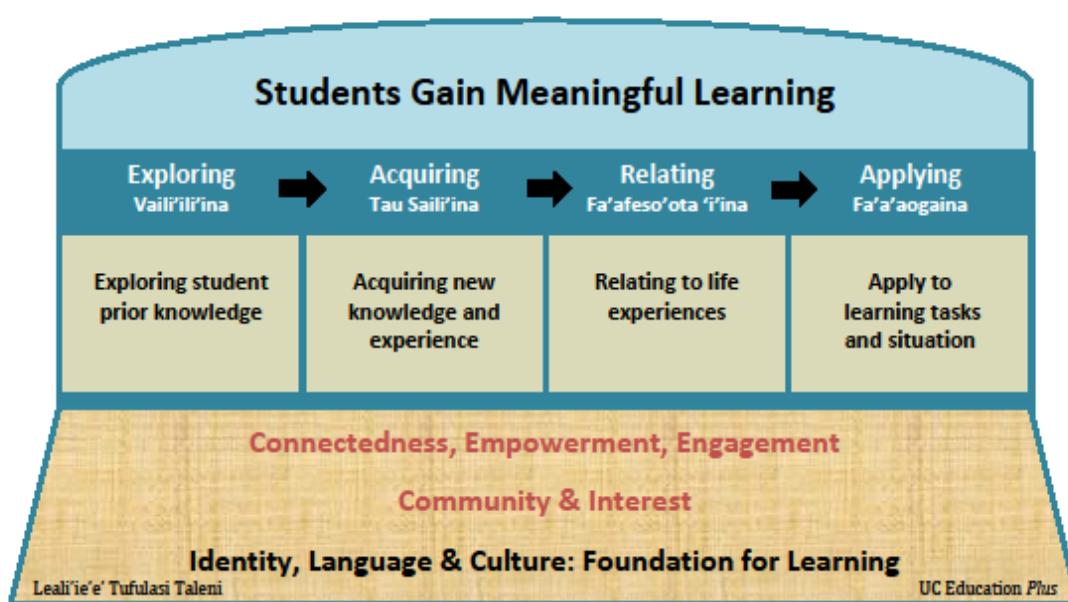
Using different lenses to gain knowledge and understanding of Pasifika student worldviews requires principals to dig deep in their thinking or casting their nets into deeper waters in order to find true pearls at the heart of the ocean, in other words – the consciousness of the teacher.

*...casting the net deeper has been a harvest of pearls for me. What I will say is when you cast the net deeper you find the pearls and some of that is the relationship that you create with your families, with your kids (which is something I will take with me for the rest of my life, and with the community... (Iosefa, 2015).*

Harvesting pearls is a complicated and challenging task, only achieved with courage and perseverance to ‘cast the net into deeper waters’. In a sense, Iosefa’s quote illustrates how pearls are at the heart of love and service for students.

When teachers and principals accomplish pearl harvest they demonstrate obligation and commitment to Pasifika education. Their desire to cast their nets deeper is a stepping up with a genuine willingness to explore and learn about Pasifika students’ cultural worldviews as a support to implement effective strategies and approaches to raise Pasifika student engagement and achievement.

This is the key, and is illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** Culturally Based Learning Model  
Taleni (2015)

*Here, I am reminded of my growing up experiences in Samoa, a particular experience that taught me a great lesson about the concept of going an ‘extra mile’ and ‘casting my net deeper’ to demonstrate genuine service and love for my family.*

*When I was growing up in Samoa, I was told to take the net out to sea in the va'a and leave it overnight in the hope of a good catch the next morning. Lacking knowledge of the sea, skill in fishing and confidence in the water, I left the net in shallow water and rushed back to join village friends to play late afternoon games before the sun sunk behind the mountains. The next morning I got into trouble with my father. I slept in and when I got up, he was already out looking for the net. He wasn't happy when he found the empty net in a very shallow part of the sea not far from home. The next evening my father took me out to cast the net again. We set out in our va'a and cast the net beyond the reef, several miles from the village.*

*The journey towards the reef was full of challenges and risks. It was difficult to cast the net because the current was strong and waves unsettled the va'a as we tried to untangle the net. In these difficult conditions, my father's water confidence and knowledge of the sea and fishing were very evident. He positioned and aligned the net according to the flow of the current, to catch the fish heading to the reef. Twelve hours later we came back and checked the net, which was absolutely full of fish. We had a big catch to take home for the family and the village, and we were able to sell some at the market.*

*What I learned from this experience is that I failed to cast the net deeper waters when I was told to do so, because my confidence, experience and skills were limited. I was uncertain about the task I was set but didn't admit that I needed support. I should of course have asked my father or other fishing experts in the village. I also lacked the commitment and perseverance necessary to fulfil my obligation as a family member trusted to provide food for the family.*

*When my father and I took the net out to sea there was challenge throughout. As I battled despair and discomfort and immense fear of the sea, my father gave me certain responsibilities that contributed to the success of our time at sea. This stretched me to my limit. There were times when I felt unsafe even though my father was present. Throughout the whole time my father kept saying – ‘we are going to do it’. It is nearly there, just about done’, fa’amatasi – keep going and be brave, you’ll feel good after accomplishing this”. He even said that we are doing this for our family and we are conquering it for love and service.*

This lesson was profound and captivated me. It stays with me now in my desire to guide school leaders on their own journey to successfully educate Pasifika students.

On this point, it is timely to highlight the school leaders’ professional development in the PSTP. As part of their professional development, two of my participant Principals took part in the Pasifika Education Initiative Samoa Malaga (trip) – a two week visit to Samoa to experience Samoan culture that I organize bi-annually. Lopati spoke about his Samoa experience when he took part in the Malaga 2013 (Samoa educational trip) and how this influenced and impacted on his learning as a principal of Pasifika students.

*...just the fact of going to Samoa, it gives you a chance to really understand the different culture and to really understand to a degree all the nuances of that culture and it enables you to see things through a different cultural lens and to see the qualities particularly of our Samoan students that perhaps sometimes in our education system we don’t see like the Samoan values of respect and service especially, also the place of religion in the culture and it really opened my eyes that we really have got to get to know the learner as a person rather than as just a learner. It’s just important that we do both and it’s important that the teacher has a good understanding of both but also activating that prior knowledge, and I think that’s different for every Pasifika student as well that you can’t assume things that they are all going to be totally immersed*

*in their own culture, but you need to find out about them and how they are going... (Lopati, 2015).*

Lopati's quote signals two major points. Firstly, that coming to understand Pasifika learners can be complex and challenging because of the diverse nature of Pasifika worldviews and cultural backgrounds, particularly in our increasingly multicultural classrooms (Allen et al., 2009). From my own cultural and personal experiences, I can understand how this can be for Principals in relation to the vitality and value of knowing and understanding Pasifika learners' worldviews.

Secondly, Lopati talked about the real understanding that comes from being in Samoa, immersed in his students' 'home' culture and increasing his cultural capacity. Samoa Malaga provided him an accessible way to learn more about students' cultural capital and funds of knowledge, mentioned in Foloaga Lua and Tolu, (Bourdieu, 1984) - that must be nurtured, cherished and attended to if principals genuinely desire to make a difference for students. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural capital suggests that if a school can accommodate and affirm the cultural values, principles, beliefs and attitudes of its students, it is more likely that the school will be able to make a difference to the students' learning and achievement. The acknowledgement and utilization of students' cultural capital in boosting academic achievement is shaped by the family's and the school's social and cultural resources (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977). 'Knowing the learner' is crucially important, as Lopati acknowledges.

### **Being a learner**

Principals and teachers are able to benefit from realizing the importance of 'being a learner themselves' when it comes to learning about their students' culture. There is power that comes from the reversal of role between students and teachers. The students can feel empowered by the fact that their teachers are learners themselves and committed to learning their culture.

Lopati valued his learner role:

*...it is good feeling for us to have that when we are in those fānau meetings that we feel a little bit uncomfortable and when we are trying to pronounce Samoan words and things like that it puts us in the role of the learner which makes us see things from our students' perspective, the students at the other end feel valued as being teachers teaching their culture to us... (Lopati, 2015).*

Iosefa talked about the rewards when being with the student, and indirectly, about being a learner.

*...I see how taking my time for that boy to be given the experience, how it has enriched his life and how that has enriched my life because of just taking the time and making the effort to work alongside him, and for his family that was very special. But the reward for me is really in the pearls that form part of the necklace of my memories, so that is what I will take with me when I leave here (Iosefa, 2015).*

In a different way, Tina talked indirectly about how empathy empowers the learner to learn.

*I think it's something to do with empathy....because thinking about what it's like in another person's shoes....sometimes I'll go into some places, some of them are schools, into the entrance area and I might be meeting the principal or whatever, and I am an empowered principal, and I can see myself how uncomfortable, if it was say one of our Pasifika parents coming I can see how hard it would be for them, but not everybody has that empathy to understand that.*

As categories in my analysis of the Principals' voices relate to Pasifika cultural worldviews, the essence of being proactive, increasing cultural capacity, and being a learner are at the leading edge for school leaders to implement culturally responsive

practices in their schools. The late Tufuga Lagatule, a prominent Pasifika community leader, so eloquently spoke to this when she said:

*As a teacher we must ask “who are you?, where are you from”. This breaks down the barrier, we then know who this child is, where he belongs and call out his name. The Village is where I belong, where I come from, where I lived with my family, where I slept beside my family and talked to God, and identifies all the little things that make this child special – every child is special. If we ask this of a child in our N.Z. Village, this then allows the child to realise they belong and in return he needs to ask the teachers who they are, where they are from and who are their parents? – it breaks down the barrier between the two. It establishes common ground. (Tufuga Lagatule, Pasifika Education Advisory group)*

Lagatule's definition of identity reminds me of a story I heard as a child - about a little eagle that grew up with five young chickens and their mother hen.

The story started when an old lady found a lonely eagle's egg lying in the forest. She picked it up and decided to take it home where she put it together with five hen's eggs. The old lady kept an eye on the eggs until they all hatched.

Time went by and the little chicks grew up becoming active, and wanting to explore their world. One day when the mother hen and her chickens walked along a riverbank, the five chickens suddenly stopped and watched with astonishment one of their siblings take off flying up into the air. They kept looking up for him, but he kept flying away far up in the sky. The five chickens tried to fly like him, but were unable to do so. After some attempts, they realized there was something different about them and their 'sibling chick'.

This story presents a message about the importance of understanding one's identity. Once an eagle always an eagle - an eagle is not a chicken and the chicken is not an eagle. The eagle's identity is always an eagle, just as it is for a chicken.

In the same way, Pasifika students have identities - a Samoan student is always Samoan, a Tongan student always Tongan and so on. What is important is being secure in one's identity. As leaders of Pasifika students, understanding students' identities is central to valuing students' cultural worldviews. Such valuing is an anchor of a va'a -just as our personal identities keeps us grounded and intact.

### **Concept 3: Effective use of Achievement data information**

#### **Need for data**

The Principals reflected on the importance of having student achievement data as paramount and at the forefront of teaching and learning, – as illustrated in these quotes by Iosefa and Filipo.

*...when a young Pasifika boy or girl walks through the gate of our school, we need data (Iosefa, 2015).*

*We insist that a family comes with their child to be interviewed in our school so we start with a knowledge base. We don't want this child that comes to us to be a stranger so we start with gathering data from the school that sent that child to us... (Filipo, 2015).*

Filipo's quote above signals the parent and family involvement and contribution of data information - that is so essential to developing effective school programmes and curriculum.

#### **Programme planning**

While the Principals saw the true value of information provided by data to assist in finding out the students' learning needs, more importantly they were most concerned about teachers to design their programs and kinds of support required, appropriate to the students' needs. The following quotes signpost these concerns.

*...so then we have a great pool of data, we then have the opportunity to plan what kind of class that child is going to go into. The Asttle data gives us indications of what the gaps are for that*

*child. We will be able to plan what sort of extra support that child is going to need - will that child require extra ESOL assistance, will that child be eligible for the extra Ministry of Education Migrant Assistant funding that schools can apply for... (Iosefa, 2015).*

*...we start off with using the assessment data to plan our teaching and learning program. And we make sure that we include the priority learners for our student achievement target each year. The last few years we have been linking it with teacher appraisal so our focus has been to raise student achievement for our priority learners and so teachers have chosen some students and targeted for special areas like writing. Part of the teachers' appraisal was to identify those children and the strategies they were going to use to raise student achievement... (Filipo, 2015).*

Principals also put emphasis on data collection as a way to monitor and review ongoing student progress, where teachers were expected to modify programmes for learners who were underachieving in the curriculum. The monitoring system allowed for programme modifications to ensure student progress throughout the year:

*...we have targets for Pasifika children who are underachieving in the curriculum and we get teachers to reflect on how those children are progressing throughout the year... (Iosefa, 2015).*

Part of the monitoring and review strategy for Pasifika students, is the involvement of parents and families in three-way Talanoa:

*Within our three-way interviews or learning conferences we put a much bigger onus on the children, talking to their parents about where they are in their learning and whānau engagement. This year we had 2 whānau activities with our Pasifika families and we also had a representative as far as our clusters go. So a combination of all of those things because it is really based around*

*highly effective teaching and high expectations for our Pasifika children... (Filipo, 2015).*

Integral to the monitoring approach is the involvement of parents in their contribution to school programmes, as Filipo said:

*...and it starts bringing the parents into the schools and creating relationships with them, making them assessment literate, we also run a reading recovery programme assisting families with reading strategies to use at home and use goal setting in ongoing learning conference... (Filipo, 2015).*

### **Pasifika Resources**

The Principals talked about creating a Pasifika Liaison person pastoral care role as part of their commitment to Pasifika students' learning support.

*...the role of the Pasifika Liaison person in terms of pastoral care is quite critical, particularly in the junior school and particularly because if there are concerns about that child and the family is asked to come in to the school, it is most important that we have a Samoan or Tongan speaker, it is critical that we have an individual there who is able to be family support to them... (losefa, 2015).*

The need for data, programme planning and Pasifika resources featured as the main categories within the concept of achievement data information. Throughout all categories was the Principals' inclusion of parents and family involvement in decisions about students' school progress.

### **Concept 4: Strengthening culturally responsive leadership (CRLP)**

Culturally responsive leadership interacts with the previous three concepts: building relationships; Pasifika world view; and assessment data information. The Principals in this study valued the importance of CRLP for the benefit of Pasifika students' learning.

### **Leadership support**

The importance of leadership support cannot be overstated, as it means that Palagi school leaders could implement culturally responsive practices into their schools. Iosefa's quote below acknowledged the absolute value of Pasifika advice in being able to be a culturally responsive leader:

*...if I look at the bigger picture of the brief of your thesis in terms of leadership and its impact on Pasifika student achievement, the role that you play and the role that other Pasifika educators play, I could not have done my job here without that because pālagi principals need good advice. Along with that, we have been very fortunate to have excellent Pasifika representatives on our Board of Trustees, we are very fortunate for that... (Iosefa, 2015)*

### **Parents and Families**

Responsive leadership practice was spoken about in the way parents and families' Talanoa (meetings) with teachers have been adopted and structured in culturally appropriate ways.

*...one of the things that we have done which we started last year which has been extremely useful is that we have restructured the way the children are organised in their whānau groups in school which has made it much easier to create that relationship between the whānau tutor and the family and we have also gotten rid of the old report nights, instead parents are invited to come into the school for the afternoon, they are given delicious food while they are sitting there waiting, they are entertained by the Pasifika students and then the parents are given a big slot of time where they can have really in-depth conversations about success... (Iosefa, 2015).*

*Just really that culturally responsive practice is effective pedagogy, it is really getting to know the students and knowing their*

*backgrounds, knowing their families, being able to identify their learning needs (Lopati, 2015)*

### **Leadership effectiveness**

School leaders of Pasifika students are encouraged, through the use of the ‘cast your net into deeper waters’ metaphor, to extend and deepen their thinking, to question the causes of disengagement and underachievement, and to explore effective culturally responsive pedagogies. Tina encapsulated the need to extend and deepen her thinking when she asked questions:

*...so a huge part of the journey is shifting of assumptions, so the programmes that we have put in place....was to replicate a really intensive ongoing programme for staff that is culturally responsive....it adds a number of arms. It looks at how our processes are culturally responsive. How's our curriculum and our pedagogy culturally responsive. How's our engagement with the community and how the community communicates with us, culturally responsive. And how do we bring all those things together to create a different experience for the young Pasifika people in our school (Tina, 2015).*

Tina knew her role as a school leader had a critical part to play in the process of leading learning and change for better Pasifika learners’ outcomes.

### **Concept 5: Creating robust community engagement**

As previously threaded throughout my writing, community involvement is a must within the school, as a key to Pasifika students enjoying being at school and achieving. This cannot be overstated.

### **Positive connection**

The power of a positive connection between school and community is undeniable, and needs to be initiated by school leaders. Iosefa and Filipo alluded to this when they said: -

*...the touchstone of my relationship is not going to work if the parents don't understand that I am there for them, and once that is sorted then the other things will fall into place... (losefa, 2015).*

*...developing relationships, getting parents into school, providing opportunities where they can come in and we can develop that relationship around the three-legged stool - community, school and family... (Filipo, 2015).*

losefa further talked about the positive influence of strong connections made with parents and families, as crucial in promoting the school to the community.

*...and when the parents start to develop those connections, those connections go in concentric rings because one of the things that has been a point of learning for me is the fact that those rings go outwards and families are talking to other families, and people will walk in off the street and have said "we have heard this is a good school for Samoan kids and we want to bring our kids to your school" (losefa, 2015).*

In a different way, Filipo referred to key messages in the Pasifika Education Plan – mainly that Principals lead the way for staff and school to connect with families and community for their engagement in the learning and achievement of their children. He reminded educators about their obligation to students, families and communities.

*...and it is about putting learners, families and communities at the centre of what we do which I think comes through in the Pasifika Education Plan. It is a moral imperative, it is our duty to make sure that every child that walks through this gate has the best possible opportunities, and in order to do that we need to get to know them and the wishes and aspirations for their family, whānau and aiga. I would like to think the whole staff have that moral obligation as well... (Filipo, 2015).*

Building and strengthening relationships between school and community can foster students' ongoing desire and commitment for their improvement in learning.

#### **Parents contribute to curriculum**

Effective Principals encourage the voice of parents and community in the development of the school curriculum, teaching programmes and units of work.

*...all of our families have a say in how the school runs and topics that are taught, so we do that through parent surveys, but looking at how we can get more parents engagement in, for instance, choosing the topics we teach and the varying aspects and looking at perspectives within the topics and things like that. But then also we want parents to become engaged in their children's learning so we are looking at ways that we can work with parents to help explain to them how they can help with their child's learning and to keep them better informed with where their kids are at, what they are doing well and things that they can do to help at home... (Filipo, 2015).*

Tina valued community knowledge and experience in her quest for parent contribution.

*...bringing their wisdom, bringing their expertise, having a voice about what they want education to look like for their young people, you know, and I watch the 'power-up' program where the communities devising what it looks like and the community is determining what it looks like, and also think of the Umu day. The community was so proud to be in here, to have dedicated time with the whole staff to be able to share their culture with us, there was pride in the way they showcase their culture... (Tina, 2015).*

Tina's contemplation above signposted the learning power that comes from effective engagement with Pasifika families and community. In reflection of this Talanoa with

Tina, I could see there was ‘value added’ to the fulfilment of the school vision, goals and set targets. I knew there have been times that the community and families came into the school willing to offer and share their cultural expertise and experiences, contributing to staff professional development. In this regard, this school Principal - and Iosefa, Filipo and Lopati - have learned a great deal from the manner in which school community and parents fono (meetings) were conducted. They have experienced the true essence of fa'a-Pasifika (Pasifika ways of doing things) in the way they participated and contributed in the meetings, very much in accordance with the Talanoa Model in Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Talanoa Model

Manuatu (2000), Vaiioleti (2006), Māhina (1992) and Seve-Williams (2009)

The Talanoa model represents a Tongan perspective and demonstrates the cultural ways of being and doing, of value to Pasifika people. It emphasizes the importance of these four key qualities: ofa (love), mafana (warmth), malie (humour) and faka'apa'apa (respect). This Talanoa model reflects the uniqueness of these values and attributes that are integral to all fa'a-Pasifika (Pasifika ways of life).

#### **Concept 6: Setting high expectations for success and achievement**

School Principals' high educational expectations can result in Pasifika students reaching their full potential.

### **Recipe for success**

Being Pasifika and belonging to Pasifika culture is a recipe for success not failure.

*...we tell the students that we have very high expectations that your culture will be one of achievement, so that is really important that when the kids walk into the classroom, being Samoan or Tongan or Māori etc is not a recipe for failure but it has got to be a recipe for success... So by virtue of the fact that a child in our school is Samoan, I will say to a child 'you're Samoan and Samoans are high achievers so there is no excuse for you'. There is no excuse for you to do this or that or miss a class or behave like this or whatever that is going to contribute to failure (losefa, 2015).*

*I always say in our school Samoan students are the top students so what are you doing? So that is establishing an understanding on the part of the kids that they are expected to be a success... (Filipo, 2015).*

It was of interest that both losefa and Filipo alluded to successful Pasifika student role models to motivate and encourage their students as key to the recipe for success idea. In other words, "I have high expectations for you to succeed. There have been successful Samoan students before you. You can do it too".

### **Motivated school leaders**

Dedicated and motivated school leaders always find ways to get their messages across to students. Principals have an obligation to provide motivation for teachers, reminding staff of the value of service.

*...and I guess the other thing is it comes back to that proverb "O le ala i le pule o le tautua, the pathway to leadership is through service" - so the idea of service, of....of being there to serve my community, what motivates me, that motivates me. I guess my*

*Catholic background, the whole idea of having a vocation was hugely important because I often feel that young teachers these days, when I talk to these teachers I tell them they have to have a sense of vocation, a sense of calling to be a teacher otherwise you are going to have a very unhappy time being a school teacher. So....years of being involved in education and I still believe that to be absolutely true, what motivates me is the fact that you are there to serve your community, (losefa, 2015).*

Further, motivated principals have a ‘sense of belief’ in their students - that they will succeed in everything they put their minds and efforts to, as expressed by Lopati, losefa and Tina:

*...because at every step of the way other people can find excuses why these students will not be successful, “because they spend too much time at church”, “because they spend too much time at sport”, “because they spend too much time at home looking after brothers and sisters”, etc. So you have to keep the faith with yourself and you have to have the determination yourself to give those kids those messages and I think that you have to do that on an individual level... (Lopati. 2015).*

*...because when that child walks into the classroom there is this sense that a successful child is coming into my room and my engagement and interaction with that child is going to be a positive one because we keep a very high profile of the successes of those students. I think the attribute you need the most if you want to see your Pasifika students succeed is determination (losefa, 2015).*

*...you see the potential and you want that potential fulfilled, you know, and it's, while we're doing it within our little environment here in the school, it's part of the Christchurch picture and then it's part of the National picture because we're a multi-cultural nation*

*and these young people are part of the future of New Zealand and for the country they've got to be achieving, you know they're part of the future, they're leaders of the future, so that starts being unleashed by a negative or a positive experience at school and home... (Tina, 2016).*

These quotes articulated self-belief and recognition of students' potential as major motivation in their leadership. There was clearly a determination to help these students to reach their full potential.

In a different vein, but still in line with motivated leadership, Tina and Lopati commented on what drives them to be highly motivated:

*...so for me it's a really strong social justice issue that we've got young people in our schools, young people in our nation and if they're not being liberated to reach their full potential it's a sadness for our nation as well as a sadness for our schools and a sadness for those young people. It's also something about the Pasifika community itself is a really beautiful community to work with, it's something about the values and the spirit in the community itself, it's a really uplifting engagement (Tina, 2016).*

*...my motivation comes from Pasifika children and families make up a really high proportion of our society and they generally come to New Zealand to work and contribute to New Zealand society so we want them to do as well as they can in school without losing their cultural identity, so I suppose there is an intrinsic motivation in that you want all of your children to do well but when you see a subgroup that is not performing as well as they could... (Lopati, 2015).*

Tina's words are very much aligned with critical theory and the centrality of emancipation of the oppressed, as I outlined in Folauga Tolu (three).

### **Success a priority**

Having high expectations for students to perform and achieve success is a priority for school principals and staff. Initiating conversations everywhere around the school about achievement is all part of setting high expectations for success.

*...the kids have to know that if they pass you in the corridor or the school grounds that you are going to stop them and you are going to ask them awkward questions about their credits... (losefa, 2015).*

*And so our expectation for Pasifika Learners is that they have to be the best (Filipo, 2015)*

*...there have been times when some of our kids have resented that and they haven't liked the pressure that I have put them under. Do I apologize for that? No, not one little bit because if I don't do that, then who will? And once again when I see a young Pasifika student, I do not see all the excuses and barriers that might suggest that they are not going to be successful, I only see the fact that they can be the best and I want that for them and their families... (losefa, 2015).*

Providing the best possible education for students with plenty of opportunities, strategies and resources help students achieve and reach their full potential.

*...we have an open mind-set so we believe all children can be successful and they deserve the best possible education in order to reach their full potential, and it is about not stereo-typing children as they are working and expectations are not lowered to fit their ethnicity, so we have the same expectations for all children and it is our job to make sure they reach their full potential... (losefa, 2015).*

*...as a Principal I think my part in that is to keep in the forefront of the consciousness of my teachers the success our Pasifika students enjoy at school and the way that they enrich the life of our school in particular because those two things give the teachers a positive, engaging disposition when that child walks into the classroom... (Iosefa, 2015).*

### **Personal and Professional philosophy**

Effective principals are driven by their own strong professional and personal philosophical beliefs about what drives success for their students, as Lopati and Tina discussed:

*...my philosophy is really around children learning as much as they can and achieving as well as they can when they are at school, but it is also doing that and being strong in their own culture and their own identity and being a good person, so I suppose all of that and my values aligns with all of that, they are only at school for a very short amount of time so they need to have a certain amount of fun and enjoy their time particularly at primary school... (Lopati, 2015).*

*...I use that moral purpose and it's about doing the right thing. So I believe if we have successful children, successful families and successful communities, then everyone benefits and we have a successful society. So that motivates me, driven by a sense of fairness and equity and everybody deserves the best possible education and I see that moral imperative that, that is what we are here to do... (Tina, 2016)*

*...for all children to reach their full potential, have a very clear school vision and set of values and characteristics, and we want all our children to be lifelong adaptable learners, individually*

*confident who have a good set of values from respect to kindness, operating to their personal best... (Lopati, 2016)*

It is within their own personal and professional philosophy that these Principals' self-beliefs and high expectations were enacted through commitment, service and love for their students. They will come through the other side of the tunnel achieving their goals for learning.

The principals articulated the importance of 'setting high expectations' for student success and achievement, that being Pasifika is a 'recipe for success' not a recipe for failure. What success looks like and feels like is important for Pasifika students' ongoing drive and motivation for learning. Pasifika community leaders' voiced their support from their Pasifika cultural perspective along with a strong reminder to educators and professionals about Pasifika parents and families' aspirations for their children to perform well academically without losing their identities, languages and cultures in the process of learning.

The concept of setting high expectation for success I often refer this to my Samoan alagaupu (saying), 'tu'utu'u le upega ile loloto – casting the net into deeper waters'. This presents a plea for teachers and school leaders to 'dig deeper' and go an 'extra mile' to explore ways to translate possibility into reality in regards to raising engagement and achievement of Pasifika learners. This encourages us all to challenge our own thinking and prepare to step out of our comfort zones in order to develop genuine, in-depth knowledge of our Pasifika students, their cultures and aiga (families).

### **Concept 7: Engaging in motivational professional development**

Professional development to build teachers' cultural capacity and capability can result in gaining and developing their competence and confidence.

#### **Culturally responsive practice**

Iosefa talked at length about planning and implementation of effective culturally responsive practice:

*...there is something in that where you have to know the learner and the cultural conversion between the two. It does take some time to get used to and to know about. Cultural conversion takes a long time to sink in... so around the school and its teachers we have the professional development that has been provided, we have the support from within our own staff and a growing number of Pasifika teachers. Those Pasifika teachers have actually played a very important role because when new parents and students walk in the gate of our school, we have tried to ensure that those students have been placed in the fānau groups of our Samoan speaking staff and that has given those students a lifeline. They come here and they are not just surrounded by a sea of predominantly white faces, they have people they can connect with... (Iosefa, 2015).*

### **Pedagogy**

A strong emphasis on implementing effective pedagogy for Pasifika students, including the principle of 'knowing the learners' we teach was signalled by Lopati:

*...we have quite a clear expectation of what effective pedagogy looks like at our school which includes quite an emphasis on getting to know the learner as a person and know their learning needs and it has quite an emphasis on scaffolding learning... (Lopati, 2015).*

### **Teaching as Inquiry**

A strong message that came through was the emphasis on 'teaching as inquiry' where teachers have the opportunity to lead their own professional inquiry on ways to improve practice.

*...another thing we do is we have quite a strong teacher as inquiry process where teachers have to identify children who are not achieving as well as they can and reflect on their own teaching in*

*regards to it and each of those groups needs to include Pasifika children... (Lopati, 2015).*

### **Prior knowledge**

The role of professional development led by effective principals was to work with prior knowledge to shift teachers' assumptions, perceptions and power – to understand that Pasifika students have their baskets of cultural capital.

*...we have looked at some school wide Professional Learning and Development with strategies that teachers can use to help with Pasifika students especially as far as collecting context and activating prior knowledge. We spend quite a lot of time in staff meetings with the whole staff unpacking those things and really getting down deep into things like text selection, reading and activating prior knowledge. We have a strong ESOL program so students with English as their Second Language and this year we have a bilingual Tongan, Samoan Teacher Aide which has really helped... (Filipo, 2015).*

Tina spoke with passion and intensity about shifting assumptions:

*...and that was hugely about shifting peoples' assumptions about how things are done, and why they should be done, and starting to understand, knowing what you don't know. It's hugely about knowing the learner. So first of all you had the journey, shifting the power and balance, the journey knowing the learner, so then when we came to working with our Pasifika community and engaging our community and engaging us with the community and shifting achievement, I think those two things, the journey was on the way and then it all coalesced...*

*...a massive part of it is shifting assumptions, but firstly people have to be aware that they have those assumptions, because your*

*world view is how you think things are. It's not just about delivering professional development programs because often people assumptions don't shift until they actually engage with the community, so it's all about relationships...*

*...the biggest barrier is trying to talk to people about a problem when you can see their world view. It's not that they are setting out any bad intent to disadvantage say Pasifika people, but their world view has never been exposed to a world view beyond the white majority. So they don't know what they don't know...*

*...it's holistic, and I think you get a chicken and egg effect. So that as your roll goes up, the Pasifika roll goes up and drives the imperative for change, so then you change, if you're any good at what you do. As you change, you attract more of a community. As more of the community comes, you change more. Once you get on the journey I think it becomes really powerful for everybody...*

*(Tina, 2015)*

In summary to this discussion about the findings to my Talanoa with Principals I need to first consider my research question: What are the supports that effective school leaders use in establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for the successful engagement and achievement of Pasifika students? Each concept discussed above represents one of seven key supports and are presented concisely in Figure 5. Further, a range of categories were analysed and interpreted, as integral to each concept, and these are presented in Table 5.



**Figure 5:** Key supports underpinning effective principal leadership for Pasifika learners

**Table 5:** The key concepts (supports) and categories underpinning effective Principal leadership for Pasifika learners

Key Concepts (supports) and Categories Underpinning Effective Principal Leadership for Pasifika Learners	
Concepts	Categories
<b>Concept 1:</b> Building dynamic relationships with students and families	Centrality of relationships
	Cultural connection
	Knowing
	Caring
<b>Concept 2:</b> Understanding Pasifika cultural worldviews	Being proactive
	Increase cultural capital
	Being a learner
<b>Concept 3:</b> Effective use of achievement data information	Need for data
	Programme planning
	Pasifika resources
<b>Concept 4:</b> Strengthening culturally responsive leadership practices	Leadership support
	Parents and families
	Leadership effectiveness
<b>Concept 5:</b> Creating robust community engagement	Positive connection
	Parents contribute to curriculum
<b>Concept 6:</b> Setting high expectations for success and achievement	Recipe for success
	Motivated school leaders
	Success a priority
	Personal and professional philosophy
<b>Concept 7:</b> Engaging in motivational professional development	Culturally responsive practice
	Pedagogy
	Teaching as inquiry
	Prior knowledge

I move on now to a brief outline of the concepts analysed and interpreted from my Talanoa with Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Education Advisory Group – Pasifika Community Leaders (hereon written as the ‘Community Leaders’ or ‘Advisory Group’). This part of my work was in essence to cross-check the concepts from the Principals’ Talanoa with those from the Advisory Talanoa, for endorsement of the Principals’ scripts and my interpretation. I wanted to determine how much of what the Principals had said was in alignment with the Advisory Group’s concepts.

#### **4.2.2 TALANOA WITH MAU KI TE AKO PASIFIKA EDUCATION ADVISORY GROUP – PASIFIKA COMMUNITY LEADERS**

Seven significant concepts were identified from the Community Leader’s Talanoa scripts, to provide strong recommendations and support for school principals regarding their role as leaders for Pasifika learners. The Community leaders’ voices signalled the importance of principals’ roles in being effective educational leaders to navigate better engagement and success for Pasifika learners in schools. Their voices echoed the depth of meaning in ‘a true leader masters the art of navigation’ when negotiating the winds and waves of educational change to better students’ outcomes.

The concepts are as follows and are depicted in Figure 6 below: Strengthening culturally responsive leadership; Pasifika ‘heart’; Deep knowledge of Pasifika cultural world views; Provision of quality teaching and learning; Strengthening community engagement and partnership; Setting high expectations for success and achievement; Advocating for the Pasifika Education Plan.

**Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Education Advisory Group – Pasifika Community Leaders**

**WHAT PASIFIKA LEADERS ADVOCATE MAKES AN EFFECTIVE PRINCIPAL FOR PASIFIKA LEARNERS**



**Figure 6:** What Pasifika leaders advocate makes an effective principal

#### 4.3 THE PRINCIPALS' CONCEPTS IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE ADVISORY GROUP

The Advisory Group's voices reflected wisdom, knowledge and experience of the cultural diversity that exists in the Pasifika. Their contribution was profound, and provided me with a 'Masters' Model (Figure 6) and much to reflect on in terms of the Principals' voices. The thinking and talking expressed by the two groups was stimulating and in many ways the Principals' thinking aligned with that of the Advisory Group – Community Leaders.

The 'Masters' Model is the anchor for comparison and I will now discuss the Principals' concepts in relation to this anchor. Six of the Principals' concepts resonated with the 'Masters' Model:

- Building dynamic relationships with students and families;
- Understanding Pasifika cultural worldviews;
- Engaging in motivational professional development;
- Strengthening culturally responsive leadership;
- Creating robust community engagement; and
- Setting high expectations for success and achievement.

It is of interest that the wording of these concepts differs to that of the ‘Masters’ Model – but are so similar in the ways participants talked about them and their underlying meanings – for example:

- ‘Building dynamic relationships with students and families’ is in essence similar to ‘Pasifika Heart’;
- ‘Understanding Pasifika cultural world views’ is similar to ‘Deep knowledge of Pasifika cultural worldviews’;
- ‘Engaging in motivational professional development’ similar to ‘Provision of quality teaching and learning’;
- ‘Strengthening culturally responsive leadership’ similar to ‘Culturally responsive leadership qualities;’
- ‘Creating robust community engagement’ is similar to ‘Strengthening community engagement and partnership’; and
- ‘Setting high expectations for success and achievement are worded the same.

The only real difference related to the ‘Masters’ Model and to what the Principals talked about was a focus on ‘Effective use of achievement data information’ – not a major concept in the ‘Masters’ Model. Instead the Advisory Group had concentrated on ‘Advocating for the Pasifika Education Plan’ – not evident in the Principals’ Talanoa.

With regard to ‘Advocating for the Pasifika Education Plan’ I can understand that this is a concept embedded in the Advisory Group’s Model and not the Principals’. As a key point the PEP was discussed at some length by the Advisory Group with a passion and sense of purpose, strongly urging and challenging school leaders to

revisit their leadership practice and demanding the elevation of Pasifika achievement. I understand that the Group members, as representatives of their Pasifika nations, have witnessed the ongoing education crisis for their children over several decades – and like me, they think it is time to change the record, set it right.

On the other hand, the Principals may not think about the PEP because they are already embedded in it through the professional development I have instigated over the past few years, and they have not necessarily witnessed, or been cognizant of, the same narrative that the Advisory Group members have. They probably have no consciousness about it and do not understand the theoretical notion of emancipation of Pasifika students locked in school ‘failure’.

To conclude this part of Folauga 4, there were seven concepts that are clearly the seven supports that effective school leaders use in establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for the successful engagement and achievement of Pasifika students. As previously stated these are:

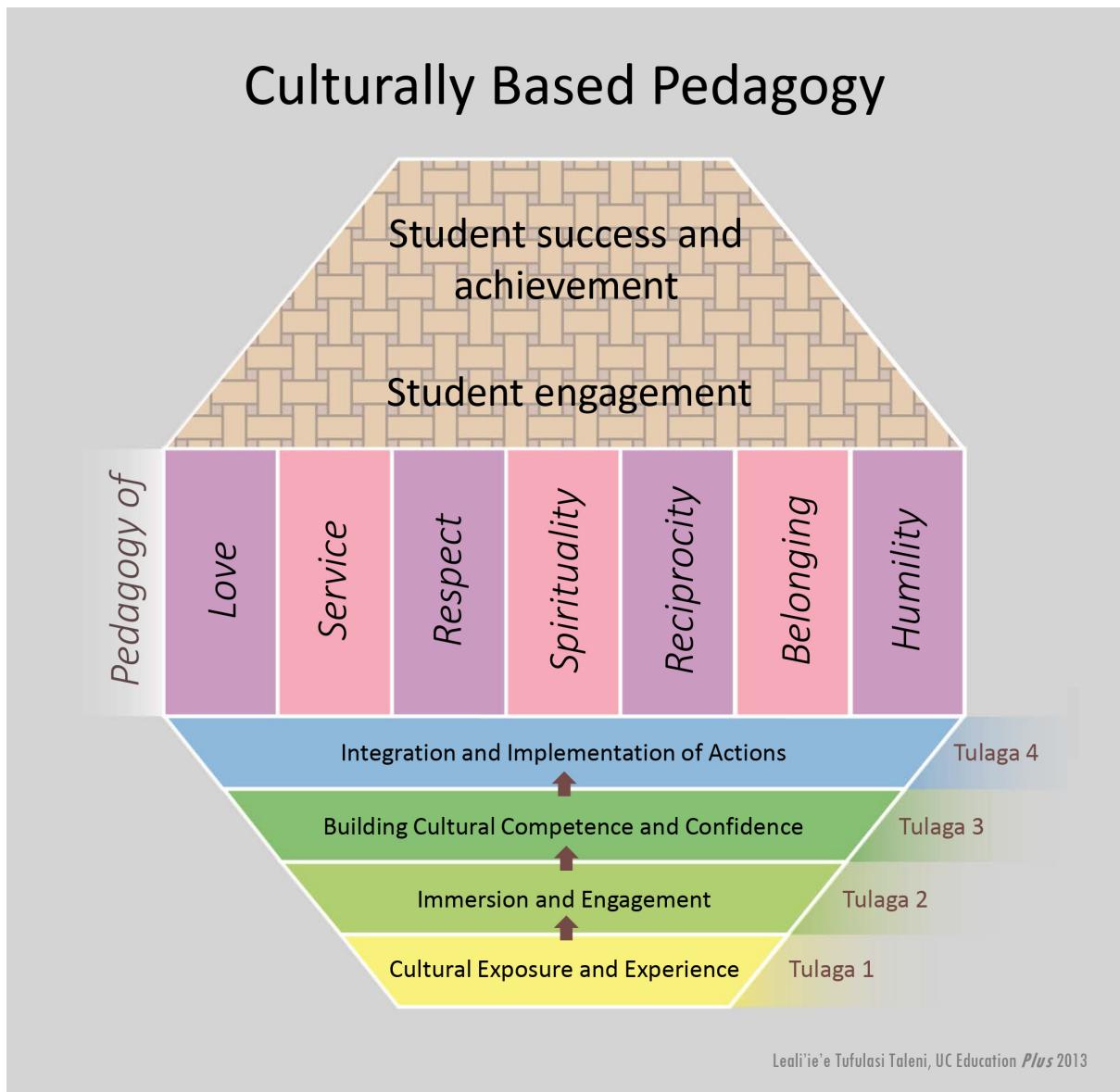
1. Building dynamic relationships with students and families;
2. Understanding Pasifika cultural worldviews;
3. Engaging in motivational professional development;
4. Strengthening culturally responsive leadership;
5. Creating robust community engagement;
6. Setting high expectations for success and achievement; and
7. Effective use of achievement data information.

With these seven supports ‘Saili I tautai se agava’ā – a true leader masters the art of navigation’.

A true leader (for Pasifika students), as I mentioned in Folauga 1, is a determined, courageous leader, who understands Pasifika students’ world views, their aspirations and success, and their needs, weaknesses and limitations. Such leaders tend to go the ‘extra mile’ to explore all the resources available, and lead the development, management and monitoring of educational programmes to ensure successful

Pasifika learners' outcomes. Navigation of the va'a requires these highly-regarded skills for effective educational leadership. When reflecting on the seven supports, I see the connection between them – as ropes in the va'a to manoeuvre and change all acts of doubt and uncertainty about Pasifika students' underachievement and disengagement.

At this point, it is essential to link this discussion to a Culturally Based Pedagogy Model (Figure 7) I developed as part of the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project professional learning and development programme. On reflection of the Principals' and Advisory Group's concepts and true leaders of Pasifika students, just discussed, it is clear that the culturally based pedagogies embrace all the seven supports. Love, service, respect, spirituality, reciprocity, belonging and humility are fundamentally at the heart of each support for effective leadership practice.



**Figure 7:** Culturally Based Pedagogy Model

Taleni (2013)

Before I complete Folauga 4 it is imperative to take a moment to point out two thoughts now uppermost in my thinking. First, that my interpretation of the Talanoa scripts, as discussed, represented all that I am, my cultural background, church, family and life experiences, - my authentic cultural validity. I knew that another person could well interpret the texts in a different way, according to all that they are and what they bring to the task. However, for me the analysis provided a rich interplay of interpretation based on my authenticity and the authenticity of the

participants, resulting in a set of seven supports that effective school leaders use to implement culturally responsive practices in schools to increase the engagement and educational achievement of Pasifika students.

Second, that the term ‘authentic cultural validity’ is the ‘soul’ of me and the ‘soul’ of the place I was born and grew up – my Samoa ‘home’. In my provision of professional development for school leaders and teachers, I hosted those who could travel to Samoa for two weeks, known as the Pasifika Education Initiative 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2013. See Appendix 9 for the information flyer given to teachers about the Pasifika education initiative. During these trips, I watched teachers and leaders immersed in the Samoan culture, falling in love with the people and place, absorbing some of my authentic cultural validity. The richness in this was that they also thought about their own authentic cultural validity. The Samoa ‘soul’ gave the leaders and teachers a genuine appreciation of cultural values such hospitality, generosity, respect and service, enveloped in the value of love. They experienced the real meaning and essence of building genuine and meaningful relationships with people, clearly visible in the few quotations that follow.

*...this trip meant such a lot to me and it really touched my heart deep down. Samoa and its people have truly stolen my heart. I will never ever forget this time, it really was so special to me and I have made friends over there that I will have for a lifetime.*

*The amount of love, service and respect was limitless. This love and service that they showed myself and the others on the trip, and their Grandmother, was incredible. They are so selfless, always putting everyone else above themselves. This is true love. The way that the family worked and interacted with each other really touched my heart. The service and respect shown to their Grandmother, was incredible. And because of this their life is full of love and respect... and experiencing the closeness of the family really made this very real to me and really pulled at my heartstrings deep down.*

*...this selfless sense of service and respect and love that I experienced in Samoa will enforce these beliefs and practices that I already hold. The Malaga revived my belief in the simple things that make a life so rich. Love, service, caring for others and putting them above yourself. The innocence in play and the simple things that make a life so full. Experiencing and being a part of this way of life has given me increased inspiration to teach these things to my students.*

*...in a Western world where the emphasis is on self and the pace is so fast it is easy to lose track of the importance of the simple things in life. And this seems to result in a lot of unhappy people. Kids just want to sit and watch TV. Play games. Be the people they see in the media. Trouble happens because people don't care or they get bored with their way of life. They are missing that simple life, that life full of love and selflessness and service. Children need to learn the importance of these things. Of 'fakalilifu, of faka'alofo, of tautua fakamaoni and vuuale. It is then that they will realize the true gem in life which I experienced in Samoa, (Anna-Belle, 2016).*

*...relationships were paramount. ....for example, aiga and spirituality were at the core of experiences such as the ava ceremony, curfew, grace before eating, and attending church. However, these values did not stand alone from inclusion, reciprocity and respect. The values were an indelible part of every experience. This was truly a remarkable opportunity that we will never forget. We have a deeper and more meaningful understanding of what identity, language and culture means and its significance for us as teachers and the children we influence. We will not only take this new learning into our own daily lives but also the work we do as facilitators... (Elizabeth, Barbara 2016)*

The depth of meanings in these, and many more, quotations continue to feed my endeavour to ensure the education system in New Zealand fronts up to Pasifika students for their school achievement. I now turn to Folauga 5 to conclude this thesis.

## CHAPTER FIVE – FOLAUGA LIMA

*Ua sau le va'a na tiu, 'ae tali le va'a na  
tau, o lo'o mamaulago i le va'a na  
faoafolau*

*The voyage has finally arrived to its  
destination with all glory and  
thanksgiving to the Master*

### 5. CONCLUSION

*'la tautai mai', malo le folau manuia ma le fa'atamasoali'iiga.*

These Samoan expressions of gratitude herald in the arrival of this ‘voyage’ to safety, conveying a deep sense of triumph in the spirit of homecoming, and acknowledgement to the Tautai and his leadership - e saili lava i tautai se agava'a ('a true leader masters the art of navigation').

#### 5.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This voyage has netted the answer to my major research question - What supports do effective school leaders use when establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for the successful engagement and achievement of Pasifika students. Seven key supports scaffold the foundation for effective ‘Principalship’ within the overall ‘umbrella’ commitment to the Pasifika Education Plan:

1. Building dynamic relationships with students and families;
2. Understanding Pasifika cultural worldviews;
3. Engaging in motivational professional development;
4. Strengthening culturally responsive leadership;
5. Creating robust community engagement;
6. Setting high expectations for success and achievement; and
7. Effective use of achievement data information.

Without doubt, these scaffolds underpin the actions of strong, vibrant, courageous, passionate and effective leadership – those who can navigate educational changes to unlock educational opportunities for Pasifika students, to free them from the agony of their underachievement crisis that has occurred for too long.

Furthermore, the seven key qualities of effective school leaders advocated by the Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Education Advisory Group, validated the Principals' scaffolds are:

1. Pasifika Heart;
2. Deep knowledge of Pasifika cultural worldviews;
3. Provision of quality teaching and learning;
4. Culturally responsive leadership qualities;
5. Strengthening community engagement and partnership;
6. Setting high expectations for success and achievement; and
7. Advocating for the implementation of the Pasifika Education Plan (PEP).

The only difference, number 7 acknowledgement of the PEP, is in fact the overriding ‘umbrella’ of the Principals’ seven scaffolds, as indicated in Folauga Four.

Effective school leadership needs to become the mantra of school leadership. Leaders who take up the position of master navigator in their va'a, are effectively able to use the seven scaffolds under the PEP banner, and enact culturally responsive teaching for Pasifika students’ school engagement and achievement.

This kaupapa has been challenging in my professional roles and experiences. True educational leaders for Pasifika students may still be hard to find, especially those who can demonstrate the true meaning of love and service for their students by casting the net deeper in order to provide genuine and meaningful support for their learning. However there is renewed hope that those who are true educational leaders are able to continue making a difference and provide hope to others. This research shows that this aspiration is indeed achievable.

## **5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

With this in mind, I now turn to the fact that this research may well be considered as limited in the sense that a small number of Principals participated in the fieldwork. How can seven scaffolds from the data of four participants dictate any future work? As I stated in the methodology Folauga Three, the research was qualitative within a critical, phenomenological, kaupapa Māori and Pasifika theoretical frame, utilizing interview conversations and discourse analysis. It was for me to gather rich in-depth and extensive information from the Principals that required intensive analysis and interpretation. This, and time limitations of a Masters project, meant that four participants were sought. Further, I involved the Advisory Group to cross check that the Principals' scaffolds were valid. In this sense, I believe that the Principals' seven scaffolds can be utilized to form a framework for future work with school leaders. Time and further research will modify this frame.

Involvement of the Advisory Group as a validation 'space' could also be charged with limitations – in that it was a collective with the PEP and past Pasifika educational underachievement prominent in their thinking – and as such their views reflected this. On the other hand, the Principals were individuals working within their schools – and their views would reflect specific contexts. I acknowledge this viewpoint. However, in defence, from a Pasifika research framework it was essential to have a Talanoa with the Advisory Group as a group – people who were experts in their cultural and linguistic 'knowledges'. I must honour Pasifika Talanoa as a research theory, with the Group members who were the best people to validate the Principals' words. I did have Talanoa with the Principals as individuals and I acknowledge this to be more of a Western research framework. The Principals were comfortable with this arrangement and further I needed to gain in-depth understanding about how each person was thinking about their work. Conversations with the Principals, one-to-one with me, achieved this. On reflection, and as it was, the Principals ideas could be cross-checked with the Advisory Groups' thinking, and I was able to see clearly that the PEP is the overriding feature of all that Principals can do at present, utilizing seven key supports. I had not thought specifically about this previously.

Again, on reflection, and after my analysis and interpretation of each Talanoa, I could have gathered the Principals together for a Talanoa in the Pasifika theoretical frame, to present them with the seven scaffolds. Discussion would establish the scaffolds in a model condoned by the participants. On completion of this thesis I will call a Talanoa with the Principals to do this.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The ending of this Folauga is the beginning of another. Continued effort is required to work with, and find, Principals who will commit to the seven scaffolds within the PEP – and provide them with ongoing support to engage in changing their school environments. Further research needs to focus on effective leadership and school transitions; developing the seven scaffolds; following Pasifika students' educational progress in schools where effective leaders are positioned; and how professional development can encourage Principals to become master navigators in their school va'a.

### **5.4 DISEMBARKING THE VOYAGE – THE END**

This Lalaga (weaving) comes to a close and the va'a (waka) will disembark from voyaging, for now. I conclude this entire Folauga with the 'Ola ole Malaga – Baskets of the journey' model that I shared in Folauga Four.

The model demonstrates the value and uniqueness of cultural values that Pasifika students bring into the classroom every day. My own cultural values 'basket' is a metaphorical representation of Pasifika students' culture, and I hope it reminds school leaders and teachers that Pasifika students bring their own baskets, that need to be embedded in the school va'a. If students don't see their cultural values and languages recognized, treasured and taken into their hearts by teachers and school leaders, the students 'baskets' will be left at the gate. Pedro Noguera (2003) said:

*All the evidence shows that unless we do this, nothing changes.  
That is – no matter what curriculum we introduce, or how many structural changes we make to the organisation – if we do not*

*transform the beliefs, the norms, and the relationships....nothing will change (p.455-456).*

As Bernstein (1970) so aptly summed up: 'The culture of the child cannot enter the classroom until it has first entered the consciousness of the teacher.'

*O tu, aganu'u ma agaifanua a fanau ole a le mafai ona faaulufaleina ile potu aoga, se'i vagana ai ua fa'aulufaleina muamua ile loto, mafaufau ma le agaga ole faiaoga (Allen et al., 2009, p.2).*

The leader who can do this is a true master navigator as my metaphorical thesis topic reminds us – e saili lava I tautai se agava'a – a true leader masters the art of navigation.

While this entire, long hard fought Folauga (voyage) has come to an end, it is now time to consider how these research findings can enhance and consolidate ways in which educators, principals and teachers provide learning environments for all Pasifika students to become confident and dynamic learners as they navigate their way in a more high quality, culturally responsive and supportive education system in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **EPILOGUE (MY FINAL WORD)**

The legacies of my cultural soul and authenticity - my parents, my siblings, my grandparents, Jane my wife, my village people of Vaiafai Iva, my extended family and all the ancestors before, gift this thesis to you - Lehman, Hiram, Seth and Sieni-Jane my children, my nieces and nephews and all the readers and learners to come.

While this thesis Folauga has come to an end, it is now the beginning of another.

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## GLOSSARY

- agamalu..... humility
- aiga..... family – immediate family, extended family
- alagaupu..... proverb, saying, whakataukī
- aloaia..... respect
- alofa..... love
- Apia ..... Capital of Samoa
- ekalesia ..... church, congregation, religion
- faaleagaga..... spirituality
- faamaoni..... integrity, sincerity, honest
- faamatai..... chiefly system
- faasinomaga..... belonging
- faavae..... foundation (of the house)
- fale..... house
- fetausiai ..... reciprocity
- finau..... perseverance
- fofola le fala sei ta talanoa..... spread the mat so that we can talk
- fola..... floor (of the house)
- folasaga..... introduction
- folauga..... voyage
- lagaga..... art of weaving
- lalaga..... to weave
- lalagaina ....., weaving
- loto iai ..... commitment
- malaga..... a journey, a trip

malo ..... government

Matai ..... a Samoan chief title holder

Mau a Pule ..... Pule resistance

nu'u ..... village

ole ala i le pule ole tautua ..... the pathway to leadership is through service

pou ..... pillars (of the house )

Samoa Malaga ..... Samoa trip

Savai'i ..... main island of Samoa

soalaupule ..... collaborate

taitai ..... leadership

taualoa ..... integrity, respect

taualuga ..... roof (of the house)

tautua ..... service

toa ..... courage

tofa liuliu ..... flexibility

tuutuu le upega ile loloto ..... cast the net deeper

va tapuia ..... respectful relationship

va'a ..... canoe, ship, boat

## **APPENDICES**

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## Appendix 1: Pasifika Success Talanoa Project flyer

# Pasifika Success Talanoa Project (PSTP) 2015



### Vision

Build capacity and capability of the 'community of learners' to be culturally responsive to the needs and aspirations, and raise the achievement, of Pasifika learners.

### Project focus

School leaders and teachers will be challenged to raise Pasifika student achievement by:

- holding high expectations for Pasifika learners
- implementing the intent of the Pasifika Education Plan (PEP)
- setting goals and targets to raise Pasifika achievement
- gathering, analysing and effectively using Pasifika student achievement data
- inquiring into and reflecting on school-wide and classroom practice as it impacts on Pasifika learners
- designing culturally responsive, contextually meaningful curricula to motivate and engage Pasifika learners to higher levels
- engaging in effective pedagogical practice to meet the needs of Pasifika students
- engaging with families of Pasifika students and the wider Pasifika community.

### Who is involved

School leaders, lead teachers, Boards of Trustees and Pasifika community leaders.

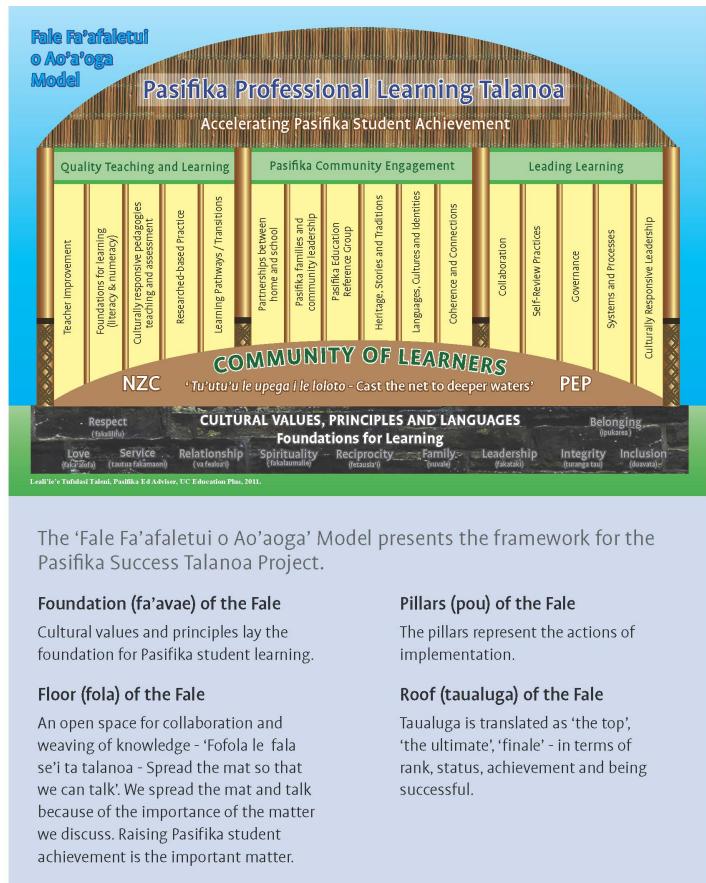
### How the project will operate

The project will be structured around key workshops which involve active engagement in the Talanoa process. During workshops participants will:

- discuss Pasifika student achievement data
- explore research findings
- build cultural capacity
- share progress and findings of teaching inquiries
- explore effective strategies for engaging with their students, families and communities.

In between the workshops participants will be expected to:

- implement successful strategies to engage with Pasifika students and the wider Pasifika community



The 'Fale Fa'afoletui o Ao'aoga' Model presents the framework for the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project.

#### Foundation (fa'avae) of the Fale

Cultural values and principles lay the foundation for Pasifika student learning.

#### Floor (fola) of the Fale

An open space for collaboration and weaving of knowledge - 'Fofola le fala se'i ta talanoa - Spread the mat so that we can talk'. We spread the mat and talk because of the importance of the matter we discuss. Raising Pasifika student achievement is the important matter.

#### Pillars (pou) of the Fale

The pillars represent the actions of implementation.

#### Roof (tau'aluga) of the Fale

Tau'aluga is translated as 'the top', 'the ultimate', 'finale' - in terms of rank, status, achievement and being successful.

*'The measure of success will be evidence of Pasifika students who are strong in their identity, language and culture and who are achieving to their full potential.'*

Lealī'e Tufulasi Taleni, UC Education Plus 2015

Mau Ki Te Ako project partners:  
[www.tetapuae.co.nz/projects/mau-ki-te-ako](http://www.tetapuae.co.nz/projects/mau-ki-te-ako)

Ngāi Tahu  
[ngaitahu.iwi.nz](http://ngaitahu.iwi.nz)

UC Education Plus  
[www.edplus.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.edplus.canterbury.ac.nz)

Education Support Services  
[www.otago.ac.nz/education/ess](http://www.otago.ac.nz/education/ess)

# How the project influences student achievement across the school



This project does not operate at the micro-level of the classroom. Rather it is designed to empower 'lead teachers' and school leaders to become change agents in their schools with regard to Pasifika student achievement which is directly influenced by effective classroom practice.

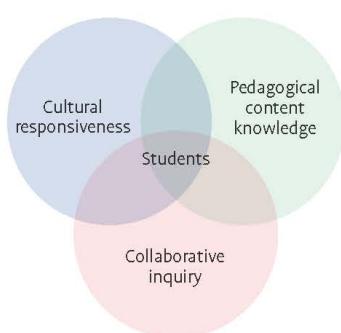
A key aspect of the project, therefore, is that participants will develop an **action plan** detailing how they will share their new learning with all staff and work with staff to develop in-school initiatives that will support Pasifika student learning. The PTP facilitators will support school leaders and lead teachers to develop an action plan for the school. The action plan may include some of the following suggestions:

- The lead teacher and school leader run a whole staff, Pasifika student learning workshop. HOD's (secondary schools) and syndicate leaders (primary & intermediate schools) can then take an active role in promoting initiatives to support Pasifika student learning across departments and syndicates.
- The lead teacher and school leader actively involve staff in their inquiry and/or encourage departments or syndicates to undertake their own inquiries for Pasifika learners.
- High quality teaching supported by appropriate evidence, has a positive impact on Pasifika student achievement.
- Project participants encourage a school-wide focus on the gathering, sharing and analysing of Pasifika student achievement data at regular intervals. This data is then used to inform classroom teaching/school policy.
- Pasifika facilitator conducts classroom visits as part of the PTP implementation, focusing on teaching and learning for Pasifika students. Discussion of observation to be given in the form of feedback and feed forward to the classroom teacher.
- School leader to support the lead teacher to provide on-going feedback about the Pasifika Success Talanoa on Student Achievement.
- Project participants initiate inter-cluster school visits.
- The lead teacher and school leader to work alongside key Pasifika parent/s to plan and develop educational programmes to build and strengthen the school and Pasifika community partnerships and engagement.

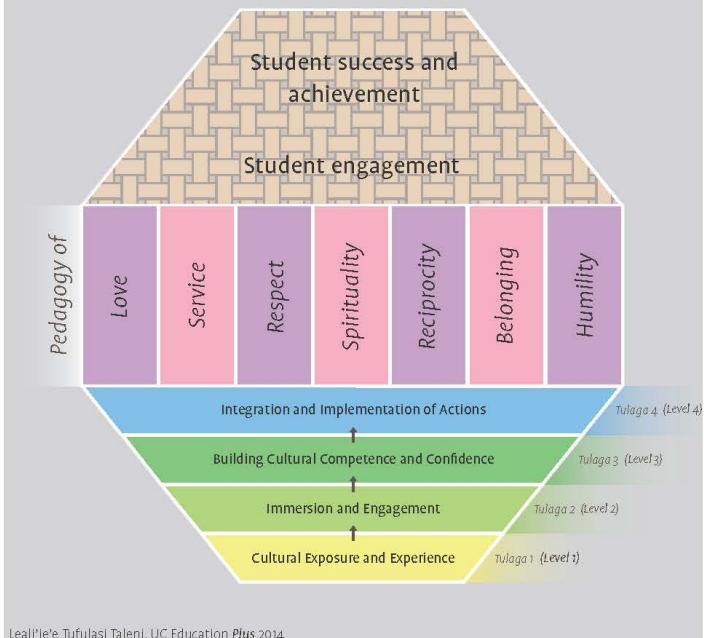
## Composition of professional learning workshops

- Discussing student achievement data - PEP / Scoping / Action Plans to support schools in becoming 'Pasifika proficient'.
- Identity, language and culture.
- Building cultural knowledge.
- Culturally Responsive pedagogy/teaching.
- Effective learning models for Pasifika learners.
- Wrap up; final reporting, final self-review.

In addition there will be Pasifika community events including project launch, a celebration evening and, possibly, parent workshops during the year.



## Culturally Based Pedagogy



Mau Ki Te Ako project partners:  
[www.tetapuae.co.nz/projects/mau-ki-te-ako](http://www.tetapuae.co.nz/projects/mau-ki-te-ako)

Ngāi Tahu  
[ngaitahu.iwi.nz](http://ngaitahu.iwi.nz)

UC Education Plus  
[www.edplus.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.edplus.canterbury.ac.nz)

Education Support Services  
[www.otago.ac.nz/education/ess](http://www.otago.ac.nz/education/ess)

## Teaching as Inquiry

### Teaching as Inquiry

The fundamental process of the Teaching as Inquiry Cycle is to achieve improved outcomes for all students, and particularly, in this project, for Pasifika students. Less obviously, but very importantly, the cycle is an organising framework that teachers can use to help them learn from their practice and build greater knowledge.

### Teaching as Inquiry process

Based on the data and evidence of Pasifika Student engagement and achievement you have already gathered, decide on a focus for your inquiry.

For example, you may decide to:

- find out more about the support a group of Pasifika students is getting at home and how you might help families to better engage with their children's learning
- focus on a number of underachieving students in a particular class
- find out more about the students and their families
- explore students' aspirations/ motivations/ needs and what teacher actions might enhance their learning.

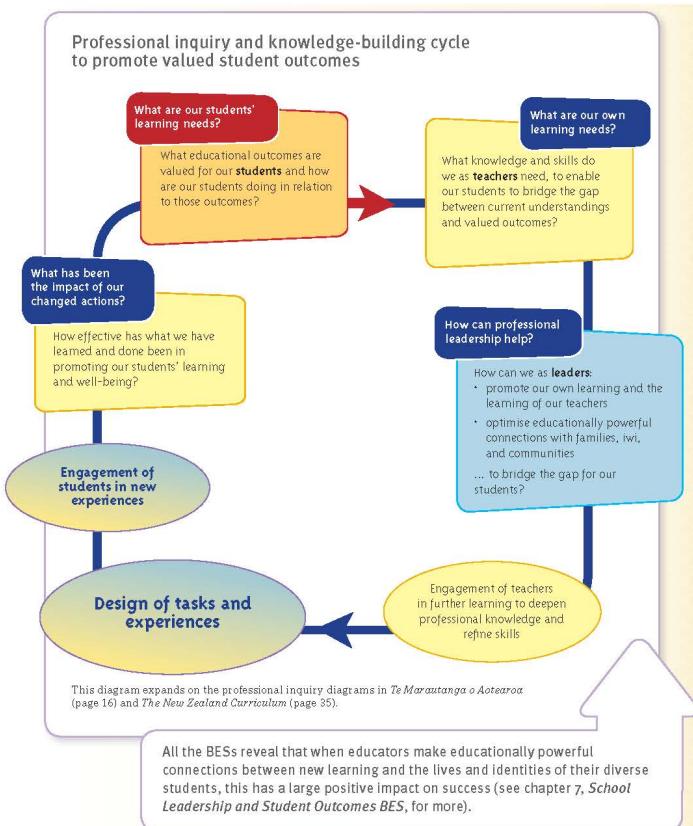
It may be that, within your school, groups of teachers work together on one or more inquiries focused on raising Pasifika student achievement.

The aim of an inquiry is to explore a particular issue of concern or interest to you/your school with a view to making a positive difference in Pasifika student learning outcomes. Therefore, your inquiry should be realistic in scope and achievable in relation to the outcome.

Use the following format to plan your inquiry.

- The question we want to ask is .....
- We plan to go about answering the question in the following ways .....

There is an expectation that schools will share the progress of their inquiries between workshops and at the end of the year. A template for this will be made available.



*'The culture of the child cannot enter the classroom until it has entered the consciousness of the teacher'*

-Basil Bernstein

Lealii'e Tufulasi Taleni, UC Education Plus 2015

Mau Ki Te Ako project partners:  
[www.tetapuae.co.nz/projects/mau-ki-te-ako](http://www.tetapuae.co.nz/projects/mau-ki-te-ako)

Ngāi Tahu  
[ngaitahu.iwi.nz](http://ngaitahu.iwi.nz)

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[www.edplus.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.edplus.canterbury.ac.nz)

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[www.otago.ac.nz/education/ess](http://www.otago.ac.nz/education/ess)

## Profiles (Agava'a)

The following categories provide some key areas of focus which can be used as a 'self review' tool to help evaluate your progress over the year (beginning, middle and end of year). Choose an aspect within the appropriate category as your focus area.

### Agava'a ma tomai o Faiaoga (teachers)

As a result of their engagement in the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project, teachers will develop the ability and confidence to:

- apply knowledge of Pasifika languages to write and pronounce Pasifika students' names correctly including surnames in the first language, greet students appropriately using basic greetings and simple commands
- use knowledge of Pasifika languages to help students make connections between their first language and their English learning
- encourage students to use their first language in real learning situations, experiences and tasks
- use knowledge of Pasifika cultures to better understand and appreciate Pasifika students' cultural identities
- use background knowledge of Pasifika culture, language and identity to better understand what influences student achievement and underachievement
- apply knowledge of Pasifika cultures, identities and languages to scaffold students' learning and build a strong base in literacy, numeracy, and across the curriculum
- use knowledge of Pasifika cultures, languages and identities to build genuine and sustainable learning relationships with Pasifika students
- use knowledge of Pasifika cultures to develop culturally responsive pedagogies that help Pasifika students align new learning to their prior learning and experiences
- use Pasifika knowledge to develop a 'model of learning' that is culturally based and research driven
- conduct a classroom or school-based inquiry using the 'Teaching as Inquiry model' to improve outcomes for Pasifika learners.

### Agava'a mo taitai o aoga (school leaders)

As a result of their engagement in the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project, school leaders will develop the ability and confidence to:

- deepen understanding of Pasifika values and develop self-efficacy and willingness to acknowledge and value Pasifika students' learning needs, identities, languages and cultures
- apply knowledge of Pasifika languages to write and pronounce Pasifika students' names correctly, including surnames in the first language, and greet students appropriately using basic greetings and simple commands
- develop a wealth of knowledge about Pasifika students, their families and cultures
- raise understanding of Pasifika identities, languages and cultures, and increase awareness of these in the development of programmes to accelerate student achievement
- build effective, genuine and sustained relationships with Pasifika students and their aiga (families)
- engage with Pasifika communities and families about the importance of their contribution and engagement in raising student achievement
- develop programmes, policies, practices, plans and reporting to make sure the Pasifika Education Plan's goals and targets are achieved
- plan and implement effective programmes and innovative strategies to lift Pasifika student achievement
- put in place systems of support to assist Pasifika students meet their learning needs including pastoral care, school wide student management systems, mentoring and assessment systems that students and their parents can contribute to.

### Agava'a mo aiga Pasifika (Pasifika families & community)

As a result of the Pasifika Success Talanoa Project, Pasifika families and communities will engage with students' learning by:

- providing time for students to study and a comfortable space for students to use for study
- supporting and helping students' learning at home (for example with homework, assignments, internal assessment work, research...)
- attending parent teacher interviews, school meetings and education programmes and workshops
- supporting and encouraging students involved in school camps, field trips, school sport and other curricular activities
- finding out how their own children are achieving at school
- being responsible for their own children's learning and achievement
- helping teachers and staff understand their culture and languages along with the correct pronunciation of their children's names
- creating rich opportunities for children to read, write, speak and listen in their home languages.

*Help Pasifika children achieve and reach their full potential.*

#### For further information contact:

Tufulasi Taleni  
UC Education Plus  
Phone: (03) 367 0787  
Email: tufulasi.taleni@canterbury.ac.nz

Janice Tofia  
Education Support Services  
Phone: (03) 479 4234  
Email: janice.tofia@otago.ac.nz

Lealīlie'e Tufulasi Taleni, UC Education Plus 2015

Mau Ki Te Ako project partners:  
[www.tetapuae.co.nz/projects/mau-ki-te-ako](http://www.tetapuae.co.nz/projects/mau-ki-te-ako)

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## **Appendix 2: Information sheet for Principals**

### **Saili I tautai se agava'a: impact of effective leadership in raising achievement and engagement of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools**

#### **Information Sheet for Principals**

Talofa, malo le soifua.

My name is Leali'ie'e Tufulasi Taleni, a Senior Advisor Pasifika Education at the Education Plus, University of Canterbury. I am currently enrolling for my Master of Education thesis at the University of Canterbury. I have a unique role in Education to provide professional development programmes and initiatives to help teachers, school leaders, families and community to lift the achievement of Pasifika learners.

My research is focusing on the impact of leadership in New Zealand schools in raising achievement. In this, I am particularly exploring the role of school principals and the impact of their practice in meeting outcomes for Pasifika learners. This involves principals' practices around culturally responsive leadership in leading learning for Pasifika students.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research. If you agree to take part you will be asked to do the following:

1. Be interviewed for approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be audio-taped so it can be transcribed.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw, we will do our best to remove any information relating to you, provided this is practically achievable.

We will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. We will also take care to ensure your anonymity in publications of the findings. All the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.

This research will be used for Master thesis purposes, and to improve educators, and policy-makers understanding of how effective leadership can raise the achievement and engagement of Pasifika students. The findings will be recorded in the thesis and reported nationally and internationally at conferences and in educational journal. All participants who have indicated on the consent form that would like to be sent a report of the study will be emailed a copy of the research.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Leali'ie'e Tufulasi Taleni, the principal researcher of this study (details above). If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to Leali'ie'e Tufulasi Taleni in the envelope provided by 22 May 2015.

Leali'ie'e Tufulasi Taleni (Principal Researcher)

**Appendix 3: Information sheet for Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Education Leaders Group (Pasifika Community Leaders)**

**Saili I tautai se agava'a: impact of effective leadership in raising achievement and engagement of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools**

**Information Sheet for Pasifika Community Leaders**

Talofa, malo le soifua.

My name is Leali'ie'e Tufulasi Taleni, a Senior Advisor Pasifika Education at the Education Plus, University of Canterbury. I am currently enrolling for my Master of Education thesis at the University of Canterbury. I have a unique role in Education to provide professional development programmes and initiatives to help teachers, school leaders, families and community to lift the achievement of Pasifika learners.

My research is focusing on the impact of leadership in New Zealand schools in raising achievement. In this, I am particularly exploring the role of school principals and the impact of their practice in meeting outcomes for Pasifika learners. This involves principals' practices around culturally responsive leadership in leading learning for Pasifika students.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research. If you agree to take part you will be asked to do the following:

1. Be interviewed in focus group Talanoa setting for approximately 60 minutes.  
The interview will be audio-taped so it can be transcribed.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw, we will do our best to remove any information relating to you, provided this is practically achievable.

We will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. We will also take care to ensure your anonymity in publications of the findings. All the data will be securely stored in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.

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If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to Leali'ie'e Tufulasi Taleni in the envelope provided by 22 May 2015.

Leali'ie'e Tufulasi Taleni (Principal Researcher)





**Appendix 4: Consent form for Principals**

**Saili i tautai se agava'a: Impact of effective leadership in raising achievement and engagement of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools**

**Consent Form for Principals**

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what will be required of me if I agree to take part in this project.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any stage without penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Tufulasi Taleni. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this completed consent form to Tufulasi Taleni in the envelope provided by 22 May 2015.

**Saili i tautai se agava'a: Impact of effective leadership in raising achievement and engagement of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools**

**Consent Form for Pasifika Community Leaders**

**(Mau ki te Ako Pasifika Education Advisory Group)**

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what will be required of me if I agree to take part in this project.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any stage without penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

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I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Tufulasi Taleni. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this completed consent form to Tufulasi Taleni in the envelope provided by 22 May 2015.

## **Appendix 6: Interview questions for Principals**

### **Demographics**

Name of School:

Name of principal:

School type:

Age range of students:

Decile rating:

Ethnic mix:

Catchment zone area:

Number of pupils:

Number of teachers:

Number of students in school:

Number of classes:

Profile of school community:

---

### **Principal demographics**

Gender:

Length of time at school:

Previous principal-ship/s:

Educational background:

Educational qualification:

Professional development focus for school:

- 
1. What are the supports in establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for Pasifika students?

2. What are the barriers and challenges in establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for Pasifika students?

*Sub questions*

1. How have you planned and implemented programmes, initiatives and interventions to help Pasifika student engagement and achievement?
2. What things have helped /supported you in establishing culturally responsive practices in New Zealand schools for Pasifika students?
3. How do your own personal values and aspirations as a principal align with the focus on improving Pasifika student engagement and achievement?
4. What motivates you to help your Pasifika students succeed in their learning?
5. What attributes and strengths do you have as a principal to help Pasifika students enjoy and be successful in their learning at school?
6. How do you cast your net deeper in raising Pasifika engagement and achievement?
7. What are your expectations for your Pasifika learners?
8. What are your aspirations as a principal to encourage more regular and authentic engagement from the community by way of reaching out and the community reaching in?
9. How can you develop a sound understanding of the basic touchstones that guide and drive the values and principles of Pasifika communities?
10. How is your school meeting the goals and targets set out in the Pasifika education plan?

## **Appendix 7: Interview questions for Pasifika Community Leaders**

Name of community leader:

Name of Ethnic community:

Gender:

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1. From your perspective as a Pasifika community leader, what are the qualities and attributes of a good principal for Pasifika students?
2. Why is a school principal's knowledge and understanding of Pasifika culture, identity and language important in raising engagement and achievement of Pasifika learners?
3. What do school principals need to do to lift the engagement of the Pasifika community and families?
4. From your perspective as a community leader, what do school principals need to do to improve the quality of teaching and learning for Pasifika learners?
5. What makes a competent Pasifika school for Pasifika learners from your perspective?
6. Given your background knowledge what changes would you like happen or suggest in school leadership?
7. Given that there is partnership in learning between school and Pasifika community, what do you think your role is and what are the barriers in making this happened?
8. If there are barriers, how do they come about?
9. The Ministry of Education has developed the Pasifika Education Plan, what advice do you give to school principals in their unique role regarding the goals of the Pasifika Education Plan?