



Pasifika students: teachers and parents voice their perceptions of what provides supports and barriers to Pasifika students' achievement in literacy and learning

Jo Fletcher^{a,*}, Faye Parkhill^{a,1}, Amosa Fa'afai^{d,2}, Leali'ie'e Tufulasi Taleni^{b,3}, Bridget O'Regan^{c,4}

^a School of Literacies and Arts in Education, University of Canterbury, Dovedale Avenue, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand

^b University of Canterbury, 155 Montreal Street, P.O. Box 3252, Christchurch, New Zealand

^c Ako Aotearoa, C/-University of Canterbury, Otakaro Annex, Solway Avenue, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand

^d School of Maori Social and Cultural Studies in Education, University of Canterbury, Dovedale Avenue, private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 12 March 2008

Received in revised form 9 June 2008

Accepted 18 June 2008

Keywords:

Language

Diverse students

Teachers' and parents' voices

Pasifika

Literacy

Learning

Raising achievement

ABSTRACT

The changing ethnic population of schools in New Zealand challenges our educators to respond proactively in reviewing how students from minority groups develop effective literacy and learning skills. Pasifika students' achievement levels in literacy, particularly reading and writing literacy, has been an area of national focus for the Ministry of Education, teachers, teacher educators and the Pasifika community. For many students from a minority ethnic group, the interpretation of texts from a different culture provides challenges for teachers that require mediation in the construction of meaning. Our previous research accordingly asked Years 5–9 Pasifika students in mainstream schools in the South Island of New Zealand to tell us what they saw as supports and barriers to their literacy learning. The study that is the subject of this present article built on that research by asking the teachers and parents of Pasifika students in a cluster of schools to state what they thought supported or hindered literacy learning for these youngsters. Our particular aim was to enhance identification and understanding of pedagogical practices and family/community factors which influence literacy learning outcomes for Pasifika students during the primary school years. The research found that Pasifika students' literacy learning, and overall learning, was more likely to be enhanced when Pasifika values, language identities and cultural knowledge were made an implicit part of teaching and learning practices.

© 2008 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Particular considerations that teachers need to take into account when endeavouring to help students from ethnic minority groups develop reading and writing literacy are often reported in the literature. The development of effective reading strategies that will allow these students to be adept members of today's multiliterate society is a common theme (Au, 2002; Kame'enui, Carnine, Dixon, Simmonds, & Coyne, 2002; McNaughton, 2002). Children from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds tend to perform at the lower range of achievement on standardised tests and other measures of literacy competency (Flockton & Crooks, 2003). As language is a medium of culture, it is a central element of society. This

approach to literacy education is supported by international research on literacy development (see e.g., Allison & Rehm, 2007; Au, 2002; Kong & Pearson, 2003). The achievement gap between children from lower and higher SES strata, and with (generally) concomitant levels of cultural capital, can be seen as early as school entry, and the gap tends to widen as children progress through the education system. Closing the gap requires lifting teacher capability particularly within the context of school-based professional learning communities working together to develop effective literacy instruction (McNaughton, Amituanai-Tolosa, & Lai, 2007). Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural capital furthermore suggests that students who have values and attitudes that accord with those of their school are more likely to succeed than are children whose cultural dispositions differ. The notion of cultural capital holds that students' academic achievements are shaped by the family's and the school's social and cultural resources (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Pasifika people in New Zealand derive from a range of unique cultural and language identities. In New Zealand, the Ministries of Education and Pacific Island Affairs use the term "Pasifika peoples" to describe people living in New Zealand who have migrated from the Pacific Islands or who identify with the Pacific Islands because of ancestry or heritage. According to the Ministry of Education

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +64 3 345 8284; fax: +64 3 343 7784.

E-mail addresses: jo.fletcher@canterbury.ac.nz (J. Fletcher), faye.parkhill@canterbury.ac.nz (F. Parkhill), amosa.faafoi@canterbury.ac.nz (A. Fa'afai), tufulasi.taleni@canterbury.ac.nz (Leali'ie'eT. Taleni), bridget.oregan@canterbury.ac.nz (B. O'Regan).

¹ Tel.: +64 3 345 8291.

² Tel.: +64 3 345 8276.

³ Tel.: +64 3 349 6431; fax: +64 3 349 1351.

⁴ Tel.: +64 3 345 8339; Mobile: +27 255 9889.

(MOE) (n. d.), the term does not refer to a single ethnicity, nationality or culture but is a term of convenience to encompass the diverse range of peoples from the South Pacific in New Zealand who derive from a range of unique cultural and language identities (e.g., Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan, Cook Island, Niuean).

The Pasifika population in New Zealand has shown a noticeable increase from 5% in 1991 to 6.9% in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). Samoans make up the largest proportion (49%), Cook Island Maori (22%), Tongans (19%), Niueans (8%), Fijians (4%), Tokelauans (3%), and Tuvaluans (1%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2008). New Zealand's Pasifika population comprises recently arrived immigrants and second or third-generation New Zealand born Pasifika. The language of instruction is predominantly English in all schools in New Zealand.

In the South Island of New Zealand, where this research took place, the percentage of Pasifika peoples is lower than the percentage residing in the North Island. Although the Pasifika students come from a range of cultural groups with their own languages, as they are usually a minority group within schools, particularly in the South Island, their individual languages are not often used for instructional purposes. They, therefore, tend to seek the support of fellow Pasifika students (Fletcher, Parkhill, & Fa'aoi, 2005; Fletcher, Parkhill, Taleni, & Fa'aoi, 2006; Parkhill, Fletcher, & Fa'aoi, 2005). Also, South Island Pasifika people tend to group together when working on community and educational issues rather than separate into their distinct cultural groups (e.g., Tongan, Samoan, Tahitian).

A prominent feature of literacy instruction in New Zealand for many years has been the recognition of the need to have a close fit between the text and the reader in terms of the text's level of difficulty, the student's interests, and the student's prior knowledge. Reading texts are provided free of charge to all schools in New Zealand by the Ministry of Education. These include an array of reading texts about the different ethnic groups within Pasifika and incorporate their unique languages and cultures (MacGibbon et al., 2008).

Pasifika students in New Zealand schools have a wide range of language proficiencies, both in their first language (L1) and in the language of instruction in schools (L2), in this case English. Students can transfer knowledge of language processes and strategies in L1 into learning to read in L2 (MOE, 2006). L2 learners, while learning to read, need to widen their linguistic knowledge and deal with transfer effects (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). However, for Samoan students, for example, their language has few similarities to English and therefore this transfer of L1 knowledge is more challenging (MOE, 2006). In many educational contexts, reading for English Second Language Learners (ESL) has tended to focus on basic skills such as decoding and linguistic forms, rather than on constructing meaning and critical responses to text (Kong & Pearson, 2003). This concurs with our prior research on Year 6–9 Pasifika students who reported that they had little difficulty decoding words, but often struggled with understanding meaning (Fletcher et al., 2005, 2006; Parkhill et al., 2005).

The world-wide phenomena, in Western countries, of unprecedented increases in cultural and ethnic diversities within societies and their education systems (Abbas, 2002; Allison & Rehm, 2007; Duursma, Romero-Contreras, Szuber, Proctor, & Snow, 2007; Hartoonian, 2007; Weisner, 2005) in what has traditionally been a European-dominated society with predominantly European-based education systems, challenges educators to ascertain pedagogical practices that more effectively meet the needs of the growing numbers of learners with diverse ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Pasifika children tend to be marginalised in the New Zealand classroom (Alton-Lee, 2003; Flockton & Crooks, 2003, 2005, 2006; MOE, 2003a; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2001; Timperley, 2003). In New Zealand, many

Pasifika students underachieve in literacy and exhibit disengagement and alienation at school (Alton-Lee, 2003; Flockton & Crooks, 2005, 2006; MOE, 2003a; OECD, 2001). Wylie and Hodgen's (2007) longitudinal research on competent learners over a 12-year period showed that Pasifika learners tended to be in the lower quartile groups at the onset of the study and that they generally were still in that band of achievement at age 16.

To promulgate a wider knowledge of the realities that these Pasifika students encounter, we thought it timely to listen to the voices of these students so we could add to the growing scholarship on the challenges that teachers face when working with students within a rapidly changing ethnic population (Gibbs, 2005; Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

We had previously undertaken an investigation (Fletcher et al., 2005; Parkhill et al., 2005) on Pasifika students, in Years 6–9, who were achieving in reading, to counteract the tendency to marginalize Pasifika children through a deficit view that is often portrayed in negative statistics on Pasifika students' achievement. Our study, using focus group interviews at two schools over a series of visits, revealed that many Pasifika students were attaining high levels of reading proficiency, and it unravelled some of the variables that they perceived as personally significant for success. These, in order of importance, included:

- the centrality of parental support and love,
- the maintenance of cultural identity for Pasifika people,
- the importance of high expectations from school staff and parents of Pasifika children's success,
- the importance of home–school relationships,
- the central role of the church,
- the value of an ICT-supported learning environment (Fletcher et al., 2005: 7).

Our study also revealed that the Pasifika parents and their children demonstrated a strong desire not only to engage with and succeed in the mainstream culture but also to maintain their own cultural identity. As Easting and Fleming (cited in Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003) have observed, Pasifika families, particularly in low-income areas, often have two or more sets of cultures to support—their own culture or cultures, and the culture of the wider New Zealand society, generally represented by the school.

The next stage of our overall programme of research on literacy achievement among Pasifika students involved a closer look at Pasifika students who were under-achieving in reading according to the results of a norm-referenced standardised test of reading (Elley, 2001).

[This] investigation raised a number of factors regarding Pasifika students' cultural identification, self-awareness and personal safety in classrooms that appeared to be limiting successful learning in literacy. The children perceived that a lack of Pasifika resources and learning contexts, excessive classroom noise, ineffective classroom management, bullying by classmates, and lack of parental understanding and support for school-related activities potentially inhibited their progress in reading and writing achievement. Their perceptions received support from comments made by the adults attending the community meetings convened to discuss the themes emerging from the children's comments (Fletcher et al., 2006: 177).

The findings of these two research investigations emphasised the importance of acknowledging the cultural capital of Pasifika students and their families in the school setting. Both the Pasifika values of respect for elders (such as parents, ministers and teachers) and the church, plus the centrality of the Bible and reading it at home and at church were highly evident. Compared to the Pasifika students in other schools who were achieving in

literacy, the Pasifika students who were under-achieving reported noisy classrooms and said they thought their teachers were not successfully managing the poor behaviour of classmates. This finding concurred with Wang, Haertel, and Walberg's (1993/1994) research on factors related to student learning. They analysed 179 chapters, interviewed 61 educational researchers and undertook over 90 research syntheses. The authors identified 28 characteristics that contributed to student learning. Of these, good classroom management was first in order of importance.

The other main finding of our research was the critical nature of home–school relationships in supporting and advancing Pasifika students' literacy learning. According to Biddulph et al. (2003) and McNaughton (2002), the development of effective partnerships between home and school is the most powerful way for schools to understand and meet the needs of diverse children. Biddulph et al. go on to claim that the most effective such programmes are those that are socially responsible, responsive to families and demonstrate an ongoing respect for parents and students. Fostering home–school partnerships, in fact, applies to all ethnic groups and can have a significant impact on literacy achievement (MOE, 2003a, 2003b, 2006).

Our research on Pasifika students' perceptions of barriers and supports to their literacy learning (Fletcher et al., 2005, 2006; Parkhill et al., 2005) led to the Pasifika community in which the research had taken place suggesting that we collaboratively explore with teachers of Pasifika students and Pasifika parents their perceptions of what supported or hindered Pasifika students' literacy learning. Ensuing discourse amongst the researchers, the Pasifika community and the regional Ministry of Education relative to this initiative provided further impetus for this follow-up research investigation. The timing of these conversations was fortuitous because the Ministry of Education had recently established a Pasifika education improvement initiative in a cluster of schools within the wider Pasifika community. We and the parties with whom we were collaborating all agreed that we should ask the teachers of the Pasifika students and their parents within the "Ministry" cluster of schools to share their ideas on supports for and barriers to the students' literacy learning. The parties also agreed that conducting the research in this inclusive participatory manner would not only help forge effective partnerships amongst educational providers, the Pasifika community and the Ministry of Education, but also allow all parties to have shared control and ownership of the research process and its outcomes.

2. Pasifika methodology

Pasifika researchers (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001) have advocated the use of Pasifika research methodologies that are sensitive to contemporary Pacific contexts, advance Pacific issues and include the Pacific concepts of collective ownership. Explanations of Pasifika research methodology commonly use terms and metaphors that Pasifika peoples are familiar with. Koloto (2003), for example, in her study uses the term *kakala* (information) in relation to data-gathering processes. Pasifika researchers such as Mahina (2004), Manu'atu and Kepa (2002), and Vaoleti (2003) favour a methodology that they call *talanoa*. This qualitative, oral interactive approach to research allows for continuity, authenticity and cultural integrity. The methodology provides a culturally appropriate setting for the researcher and those researched to talk spontaneously about whatever arises. Conversation flows freely without the intrusion of a formal structure comprising predetermined questions, such as a questionnaire. This process helps reduce the gap between the researched and researchers and gives the researched shared ownership over the direction and focus of the discourse.

According to Vaoleti (2003), non-Western groups of people who are the subject of research often lose power when (what he considers to be) Western methodologies are imposed on them. *Talanoa* helps avoid this loss of power. Thus, as Vaoleti goes on to explain, *poto he anga* (consultation and accountability) is an important part of the *talanoa* process, and is apparent at the earliest stages of the research through the researchers inviting the participants to contribute to the research design. The offer may be declined, but it nonetheless demonstrates the commitment to inclusiveness. The ultimate aim of research on the Pacific region and its peoples, says Vaoleti, is to constructively address issues facing these peoples in a manner that strives to ensure everyone involved (researchers, researched and any other stakeholders) is inter-accountable and that the research activities reflect this premise and align with the agreed purpose for and anticipated outcomes of the research.

In accordance with these and other Pasifika research guidelines (see, e.g., Anae et al., 2001; Tamasese, Peteru, & Waldegrave, cited in Mara, 1999; Tupuola, 1993; Vaoleti, 2003), we, the researchers, worked collaboratively with two *matai* (Samoan term for chief), both of whom held prominent roles in education and were key leaders in their own Samoan communities and also the wider South Island Pasifika communities. Together, the *matai*, Ministry of Education representatives, and we the researchers, discussed key issues surrounding the proposed research methodology. This included the selection of the research topic, methodological approach including sampling and instruments used to gather the data, analyzing the data and the dissemination of the research findings. The themes were shared with the *matai* and the Pasifika members of our research team disseminated the findings at both Pasifika community and national meetings.

3. Research aims

Our investigation had three main aims. First, we wanted to document the supports and barriers that teachers and Pasifika parents perceived as impacting on Pasifika students' achievement in literacy learning and learning in general in English-speaking classrooms. Second, we wanted to understand how the home environments of these students influenced their reading attainment and attitudes. Third, we wanted to discuss in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, a *matai* and the local Pasifika community the key issues arising out of our research and then to disseminate and discuss our conclusions to the wider Pasifika community and education policymakers in an effort to improve learning outcomes for Pasifika students.

4. Method

As mentioned above, based on our earlier studies of Pasifika students in Years 6–9, the Ministry of Education, in our region, had indicated to our research team that they would be interested for us to undertake some further research, but this time with teachers of Pasifika students and with Pasifika parents and community members in order to uncover what these groups perceived as supports or barriers to learning for Pasifika students. We collaboratively selected five schools, where there were higher percentages of Pasifika students, from which to "draw" teacher and parent participants. The selection included primary, intermediate and secondary levels of schooling. This selection was based on the advice of the Ministry of Education representatives who had a focus, in that low socioeconomic cluster of schools, on raising Pasifika achievement and lifting teacher capability. We have deleted the names of

Table 1
Percentages of different ethnic grouping of students in Schools A–E

	New Zealand/European	Māori	Pacific	Asian	Other
School A	47	32	17	0	4
School B	70	18	8	3	1
School C	61	21	13	0	5
School D	48	22	14	2	14
School E	63	22	11	0	4

the schools in the following Education Review Office (ERO, 2008)⁵ references, and instead referred to them as Schools A, B, C, D, and E. Table 1 contains the ethnic composition of students in each school.

At the time of the study,⁶ School A was a Year 1–6, Decile 3⁷ primary school with 228 students. According to the most recent ERO report of the school:

The trustees, teachers, support staff, parents, whānau⁸ and students of ... School [A] value cultural diversity and acknowledge learning and achievement. The Māori and Pacific communities strongly support their children at the school. Teachers, parents and whānau (family) have high expectations that all children will learn and achieve success. Students express pride in their school (ERO, 2007).

School B was a Decile 2, state secondary school with a roll of 910 students.

The school has implemented a number of strategies to support Pacific students in their learning. These include the appointment of personnel who provide effective liaison between teachers, students and the Pacific community and are positive role models for students. Pacific students also benefit from a wide range of support services within the school, such as the guidance network, careers department and the school's health services. Whole staff professional development, including the recent professional development on schooling from the perspective of a Pacific student, focuses teachers on meeting individual students' learning needs (ERO, 2005).

School C, a Decile 2 state intermediate (Year 7–8) school, had a roll of 191 students.

The principal and teachers have implemented many new strategies and practices to increase the quality of learning and teaching. A major emphasis has been placed on improving student behaviour in and out of classrooms. The school now provides a more ordered learning environment for students. The principal is employing teachers and other adults within the school in effective ways to lower teacher to student ratios during literacy and numeracy programmes or decrease the class sizes for other teaching programmes. The school has identified that there is a high proportion of Year 7 and Year 8 students with low levels of achievements in reading, written language and numeracy (ERO, 2006).

School D was a Decile 2, state primary contributing school with 301 students.

Significant numbers of students begin school with low levels of achievement in literacy. School-wide achievement data shows that most students, including Māori and Pacific students, make substantial gains by the end of their first year at school. By the time students leave school at Year 6, most are achieving at or above national expectations for their age in reading and written language. Teachers deliver a range of effective support programmes for underachieving students and offer learning opportunities for able students. A targeted programme of early intervention ensures that students' needs begin to be addressed in their first year at school (ERO, 2005).

School E, a Decile 2, state contributing school, had 296 students.

[The school] ... represents a diverse community and has a significant number of Māori and Pacific students ... The board and staff place a strong focus on meeting students' special learning needs and encouraging student participation in cultural and sporting pursuits. They are usually aware of their achievements and where they would like to improve further. The students have high standards of behaviour and attendance. They respect their teachers and are supported in their schoolwork by their families. Pacific students enjoy school and want to achieve success in their learning (ERO, 2006).

The principals of each school selected staff who had recent experience with Pasifika students in their classes to represent their school at the focus group interviews. A weakness in this method of selection may be that teachers who were more culturally responsive to Pasifika students' needs were chosen by the principals and therefore gave a more positive picture of the realities for Pasifika students in these New Zealand schools. Commitments in the five schools necessitated two separate times for the focus group interviews. These were held at a Pasifika venue at the researchers' tertiary institution. Release time for staff and food were provided by the researchers. The Pasifika culture has an expectation that food is shared and provided as a way of thanking the researched for their participation. Staff from Schools A, B and C attended the first focus group interview and staff from Schools D and E attended the second focus group interview. The staff present at the first meeting included the assistant principal from School A, the deputy principal and a specialist reading teacher from School B, and a teacher and the cluster Pasifika facilitator from School C. The staff at the second meeting included a teacher from School D and two teachers from School E. To start the dialogue, questions such as "What are the supports in place at your school for Pasifika students? What barriers do you believe Pasifika students encounter in their literacy learning and learning in general?" were asked.

After completion of the focus group interviews, the matai, in consultation with another matai, invited Pasifika parents from the five representative schools and other key stakeholders in the cluster of schools to be interviewed. Four mothers and one father from the schools within the cluster and the deputy principal of the secondary college attended. The schools within the cluster that the parents respectively came from were not identified to the researchers so that the parents would feel more confident to openly discuss issues. The researchers in consultation with the matai developed some questions to start the dialogue, such as "What do you believe are the supports and barriers to Pasifika students' literacy learning? How could schools improve the learning environment to better fit Pasifika students' needs? What role do you think parents should have in supporting Pasifika students' learning?"

The unstructured focus group interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed by a research assistant. All of us—the researchers—read the transcripts separately and then together compared the themes we had uncovered. The coding of the data was completed without prior expectations of possible emerging themes.

⁵ The Education Review Office (ERO, 2008) is a government department that reviews and reports publicly on the quality of education in all New Zealand schools.

⁶ We used the ERO reports most current at the time of our study to gain information about the respective schools.

⁷ Decile is the classification used to ascertain the overall socioeconomic status of a school's community based on population census data. The range of deciles is 1–10, with 1 drawing students from the lowest SES bracket and 10 from the highest SES bracket.

⁸ A Maori term for family groupings such as an extended family.

The themes were colour-coded and then correlated on a table/graph across the three interviews. They were then collaboratively shared between the researchers and the matai so meaning could be co-constructed to ensure cultural integrity and authenticity could be maintained (Anae et al., 2001). This process also allowed us to confirm the emerging themes and develop concepts and propositions in the interpretation of the data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). It gave shared ownership and inter-accountability to the findings (Tamasese et al., cited in Mara, 1999; Vaioleti, 2003) and helped maintain the ultimate goal of all Pasifika research, to improve outcomes for Pasifika peoples.

5. Limitation

A limitation of focus group research is generally associated with two concerns: firstly, the view that focus groups do not yield 'hard' quantitative data and secondly the concern that group members may not be representative of a larger population, because of both the small sample numbers and the idiosyncratic nature of the group discussion (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007).

6. Findings and discussion

The parents and teachers discussed various challenges and difficulties they perceived that impacted on Pasifika students reading and learning in general. The emerging issues included comprehension of text (particularly understanding the vocabulary); oral language use in the home; students feeling confident to take risks when unlocking reading texts; recognition of the Pasifika culture; valuing and using the students' first languages both in the classroom and in the discourse between parents and teachers; home-school partnerships; learning to read using the Bible; and behavioural mores.

6.1. Literacy issues

The teachers and parents perceived that, for Pasifika students, decoding words was a strength but that understanding the meaning of the words and comprehending the text were weaknesses. The comment of one mother in this regard was typical: "When they read the books and then you ask them something, they don't actually understand what they're actually reading. Most Pacific Islanders have problems because they can read (decode) and speak it (but) they don't always understand what they're reading." Some words in reading texts were said to relate to things that the Pasifika students had not yet experienced and/or were unfamiliar concepts, while other words may not be commonly used or have equivalent translations in their different Pasifika first languages: "They [some Pasifika students] don't actually understand. For example, 'wheelbarrow' or 'sidewalk', 'pavement' etc. They have no idea what this means. So those things are highlighted within your teaching programme. Like [the word] 'soil'; and the student and a teacher-aide got a plant and together they worked this out" (Teacher, School E). A teacher from another school (D) emphasised that: "It is very easy to fall into the trap of thinking that children have the language concept [word meaning], but they don't. They haven't had a chance to learn them yet."

The link between reading achievement and a child's exposure to oral language was clearly articulated by one teacher (from School A): "If they're not confident with the oral language, then they're not confident with the reading." The need for children to be in a rich text environment in their home where together the child and family members discuss issues was seen as enhancing reading: "... actually, what I hear that is happening in [our school's Pasifika] families, as happened in my family, is just reading books, and the grandparents would read books, and there was just endless books

in front of people—it is just those simple opportunities to discuss what you did during the day" (deputy principal, School B).

One teacher (School A), when discussing her more successful literacy-achieving Pasifika students, stated, "In a Samoan home, thinking about the higher achievers, they come from homes where things are talked about; there is openness in the home and kids are encouraged to talk. One of the concerns about parents is that they may not be talking with their kids, and if they're not talking to the kids, then the kids don't get oral language." Pasifika parents frequently have two or three low waged occupations to meet the financial demands of their families. It is not uncommon for Pasifika people to be also sending financial support home to their families in the Pacific Islands, as this is a cultural expectation (Fletcher, 2003). This compounding effect of working long hours and other cultural commitments may result in less time to support and engage in quality oral language discourse between parents and their children, in both L1 and L2.

6.2. Risk taking

Similar to a finding from our previous research (Fletcher et al., 2005, 2006; Parkhill et al., 2005), several of the teachers indicated that Pasifika students preferred not to take a risk or to put themselves in a position where their possible lack of knowledge would be exposed to their peers:

- "I have talked to students about the situation. They won't put their hand up, and they won't risk getting it wrong; they won't say anything if they are put in a position in the classroom and have to do something that they are not comfortable with. They will do almost anything to avoid it. They will make a fool of themselves almost deliberately to avoid it" (Teacher, School B).
- "I think risk taking is an issue, and we have to be aware of it; it could be possible that you could assume that they haven't got it [understanding of the concept]" (Teacher, School D).
- "Students feel themselves put on the line, embarrassing; it's a threat. They would rather appear as if they don't respect learning because it's not valuable if they feel they are going to look stupid doing something related to words. So they won't step into that arena because they don't want to be publicly exposed" (Teacher, School B).
- "... probably Pasifika children don't have the confidence and therefore they don't want to read in class because they are not sure that they can do it" (Teacher, School A).

From a social constructivist view of the reading process, the child is viewed as an active constructor of its own knowledge. Risk taking is considered to be an important component for successful acquisition of skills and strategies (Clay, 2001). Risk taking, such as anticipating what will come next in the text, requires drawing on prior knowledge, experience of the world, and knowledge of the text content (MOE, 2006). It is strongly related to meaning and involves making predictions quickly and often automatically. When students take risks both in oral reading and comprehension, effective teachers encourage this endeavour and acknowledge that they are learning how to unlock and predict increasingly complex text. This action of risk taking is an additional challenge for many Pasifika students where the content of the material may be outside their realm of experiences and compound their fear of making a mistake (Fletcher et al., 2006).

6.3. Recognition of the different Pasifika languages and cultures

The parents considered it important that their children were confident speakers of their first language, such as Samoan or Tongan. As a mother explained: "... if you are fluent in your language, it

allows you also to access, from your Tongan community or Samoan community, cultural and social skills that you need to take on board, and also other skills so that you can function in the world, with Palagi [European] people.” Another parent explained: “... I think the language is a gift of the tongue. It is part of belonging, the heritage and all of that. It’s giving something back to our children to be proud of, whether they can speak it fluently or not. It is part of their belonging to that place.”

This recognition of a student’s first language in their schooling appeared to play a key role in building Pasifika students’ confidence on the premise that when Pacific languages are used in the school, the students feel that the school really cares about their language and culture. In support of this notion, Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005) claim that raising Pasifika students’ self-esteem, self-discipline, and self-identity requires the inclusion of Pasifika language and cultural considerations in all aspects of Pasifika students’ education. Moreover, in line with Vaoleti’s (2003) assertion that learning is for the purpose of cultural continuity, the father suggested schools must recognise that Pasifika students need access to their own language at school but to have opportunity to know and appreciate the significance of their cultural practices, such as dance and music. This process, he said, celebrates the child’s heritage, which enhances their self-confidence: “... it might be another option, not only to teach the language but to teach the culture, the custom, and it would be helpful with their behaviour, their attitude within the environment of the school.”

Work by Clayton, Rata-Skudder, and Baral (2004) on best practices to support Pasifika students in online learning concurs with this claim. They found that a learning environment that nurtured the Pacific way of life made participants more confident and willing to try. As discussed earlier, in the South Island of New Zealand, where the Pasifika population is a much lower percentage, most schools would not have the resources and/or expertise to include the many different Pasifika languages. Also, all New Zealand schools are expected to use and teach Māori, the language of our indigenous population.

One of the mothers stated that if self-awareness and self-esteem were to be further developed among Pasifika students, “It is probably important for the children [to acknowledge] where they and their parents were brought up ... to have a better understanding of where they came from ... and having a culture group within the school.” Her comment accorded with our previous research (Fletcher et al., 2005, 2006; Parkhill et al., 2005), which showed that Pasifika students wanted to read and write about their own culture and that the students identified as successful in reading and writing were in schools where there was visible fostering, nurturing, appreciation of and respect for their cultures. A student’s cultural identity therefore needs to be acknowledged and valued in their schooling.

6.4. Cultural capital

Dooley, Exley, and Singh’s (2000) research reported that teachers and peers of Samoan students who neither acknowledged nor understood these students’ culture presented a racially based impediment to equitable education for the students. Several of the teachers in this study, however, mentioned the importance of acknowledging the cultural capital that the Pasifika students brought to their schools, and described how they attempted to do this.

- “My challenge is to locate and find ways of teaching literacy to Pasifika children in non-threatening ways to develop their confidence. Probably the most effective thing I have done has been with the oral language is being able to encourage the Pasifika children to use the things that they are aware of, the things they are confident with, and sharing with the classroom

their talents and culture and that sort of thing. I encourage the Pasifika kids to go away and find out things from their family or general environment to do with their culture and then report back” (Teacher, School C).

- “We use Pasifika stories because they contain the prior knowledge that their first generation students have had. We use them to build self-esteem” (Teacher, School D).

The Ministry of Education (2003b, 2006) stresses that teachers need to view diversity as enriching the classroom community and so allow students to utilise their prior knowledge as a foundation for scaffolding their learning. They emphasise that making connections between the meanings children gain from their own worlds and the meanings they gain from their school enhances learning. In similar vein, Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu, and Finau (2002) emphasise the importance of schools using Pasifika-based texts because these help legitimise and validate Pasifika students’ knowledge and experiences.

One of the teachers, from School D, where the majority of the Pasifika students were Samoan, described the mentoring buddy system her school had set up to provide support for newly arrived Samoan students: “We buddy the [Samoan] child with another fluent-speaking Samoan child so that that child can be helped. Another thing, in particular with Years 5 and 6 students, when that child reaches saturation point [using the English language in class], they go away and have a time with their buddy to speak their own language all the time and do something by themselves.” This practice would resonate with Tripp (cited in MOE, 2003b), who points out that students from non-English speaking backgrounds are often exhausted from struggling to make meaning and that they need to be provided with quiet periods away from this pressure.

As a group, the teachers offered a range of additional ways of integrating Pasifika cultures into their classroom programmes. These included bringing Pasifika music, drama, dance, journals, visual arts, myths and legends into classroom lessons and activities; having the class study the different countries represented by their Pasifika peers; using different languages to call the register; and establishing a “Pacific Studies” journal containing examples of phrases from the different Pasifika languages of the students in the school and what these phrases meant in English.

6.5. Family involvement with the school

Both the Pasifika parents and the teachers stressed the importance of strong family support and interest in the children’s progress at school. However, it was evident from the teachers’ and parents’ comments that two issues often limited parental interest and involvement. The first related to finding appropriate ways of helping all parents to acknowledge and understand their role in the home–school partnership, and the second concerned parents not having time to be involved. The father explained that Pasifika families in New Zealand tended to have all adults in the family working and usually did not have the support of the wider family that they would typically have in their home country: “From my own point of view it always starts from home, from the parents. Most of the [Pasifika] parents [in New Zealand] are busy. In Samoa, the family live together—grandparents, great grandparents, uncles, aunties, and other extended family; they all support the family ... but over here, [it’s] just the couple [mother and father] and the children, so if the parents spend a lot of time at work, the children just go to school and that is the only time the children study or have reading and writing.” Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005) concur. They stress that while parents tend to be children’s first teachers, the Samoan cultural context, particularly when living in Samoa, allows both parents and the wider family to be involved in supporting the child’s learning. This does not happen in New Zealand, where as

discussed earlier, parents are frequently juggling long hours of work and may have few family support members living nearby.

Two of the mothers stressed that Pasifika parents living in the New Zealand context needed to understand and acknowledge the important role they could play in aiding their children's learning:

- "I think every parent has to recognise their children's needs and help them out. We are all individual and we have our own way of helping our children."
- "... homework should be taken home for parents to continue the [their child's] education."

One of the teachers (School E) also suggested that Pasifika students were more likely than many other students to have both parents living together in the family home: "Pasifika families also seem a lot more joined. Pasifika parents are usually still together. They also have [the] backing of church as well." The deputy principal (School B) agreed with this, and noted that, overall at his school, the Pasifika students come from more secure homes with a strong Christian ethic. This, he said, positively influenced their behaviour and attitude to schooling. Another teacher (School E) considered that Pasifika fathers' expectations that their children behave well at school also advantaged Pasifika students: "Fathers are very disappointed if they get a phone call home to say there has been an incident at school. This has happened with Years 5 and 6 boys. There is a high expectation from the fathers that their son should be respectful of teachers."

The Pasifika members of our research team explained to the Palagi (non-Pasifika) team members the complexity of teachers reporting on students who misbehave and how this could lead to a beating by their parents.

The teachers and parents reported that many of the Pasifika parents at the schools in this research study were employed in shift work, often on low wages and at times having more than one job. This scenario affected the parents' ability to support their children's schoolwork. Three of the teachers explained the situation at their respective schools (A, D and E).

- "Pasifika families work shifts, so dad might work during the day and mum goes out at night, so the other parent was not available because they were at home looking after the children, so getting the Pasifika parents to the school is difficult. It didn't matter when we tried to run something. Both parents worked but usually worked at different times."
- "It can be [a problem] because often those parents can't attend interviews or meetings at school. They often feel insecure because they have no input into their education. Sometimes it's crossover [The time of day when one parent discharges responsibility of the children to the other parent] time at school when things are held and they can't be there."
- "... some Pasifika parents don't have input in their education because they are too busy. The notebooks come back to school signed by 14-year-olds or 12-year-olds, not mum or dad, who usually don't have any idea what children do at school."

This concurs with Harkness, Hughes, Muller, and Super's (2005) findings from a study of mainly immigrant parents in the United States, where they reported that many of their children were cared for by older siblings or relatives, family routines were restricted by work schedules, and the parents' limited educational backgrounds were a barrier in providing effective support with schooling.

One Pasifika mother described how she and her husband had managed to ensure that their daughter would still get quality time with her parents. "Her father works night time and I work daytime, so there is always one of us at home for her. When she comes home from school, she has time with her dad, and she goes through the

homework with him. When I come home, it's like a shift swap. He goes and I take over what she has to do to complete her stuff. Therefore, two of us participate in her learning."

All the teachers said it was difficult to find a way of encouraging Pasifika parents to come regularly into the classroom: "Parents will come to the event—Pasifika and cultural evenings—but being in the school, they will drop the child off in the car park ... I suspect part of it is a cultural thing. They have sent the children to school and then it's your responsibility while their children are there. What we have to impart is that coming into the school, being part of the school, is not interfering; it's showing your child you have an interest in their schooling" (Teacher, School A). In our previous research with Pasifika students who were under-achieving in reading (Fletcher et al., 2006), the children's parents said they did not always feel confident about entering the school. Similarly, Koki and Lee (cited in Coxon et al., 2002) found from their studies on parental involvement in schools that Pasifika parents felt uncomfortable and unwelcome in the school.

The Pasifika tradition of showing respect for people of high status, such as teachers and principals, by remaining silent and not challenging or questioning them may contribute to them not seeking consultation with teachers about their children. As Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005) caution, this respect should not be interpreted as agreement but as deference to those considered experts.

The deputy principal of the secondary school (School B) suggested that having Pasifika liaison officers in schools or school clusters could help resolve these issues: "They [the Ministry of Education] need to look seriously at employing people like Maria [pseudonym] [our Pasifika liaison person] to get families into the school so that the teachers can talk to them. Maria communicates with the families, liaises." Mara (cited in Coxon et al., 2002), in her evaluation of Pasifika school–parent–community liaison at 68 New Zealand schools in six clusters reported that all participants valued having a Pasifika person liaise between the Pasifika community and the school. One of the teachers (School A) in our study confirmed this: "... the parents are uncomfortable about coming in, in case they can't understand what was being talked about. Even though we insisted that the Samoan students spoke Samoan, they were still not comfortable. If we had somebody like Maria on site they may well be more comfortable about coming in." The need for their first language to be acknowledged and used in the school setting, particularly in opportunities for dialogue between parents and teachers, is a critical issue in building effective home–school relationships. McCaffery et al. (2003), emphasise that when Samoan parents are able to use their first language in meetings, the parents are more relaxed. Consequently they are more proactive and willing to question the teacher if they do not understand comments on their children's school reports.

According to McCaffery et al. (2003), parents are better able to advocate for their children if they can use their first language. Three of "our" parents explained how having a Pasifika person would support and encourage them and other Pasifika parents to feel more comfortable about being involved in their children's schooling. They suggested this approach would ease the disjuncture between the cultural and the class attributes of teachers and of Pasifika parents that make communication difficult (see Timperley & Robinson, 2004, in this regard). Comments from three of these parents provide greater specificity to this general advice:

- "That is why I feel it is important in the future to have a Pacific Island person to go to the home and explain to them [the parents] better in their own language. The parents would probably say, 'Oh OK, it's not that scary after all.'"
- "... over here we all relate to the church. Perhaps someone from here [i.e., one of the Pasifika-born researchers or the Pasifika parents at this group interview] could talk to the

minister or the pastor because they all respect him and they all listen to him, so someone ... could go over and speak to the minister. He would have the opportunity to talk in front of the congregation and let them know what he wanted to do with the children of the community.”

- “You can get someone perhaps from Samoa—someone qualified as a teacher that can teach them properly. Not a New Zealand-born one, because they do not know much.”

In line with these ideas, Dickie (cited in Coxon et al., 2002) stresses that raising the achievement of Samoan children requires not only the training and presence of more Samoan teachers, but also initiatives that establish partnerships between Samoan parents, the school and the wider school community. Dooley et al. (2000) similarly maintain that a cultural representative or Pasifika liaison person could “feed in” cultural information to better inform the school decision-making processes and pedagogical activities.

The deputy principal of the secondary college (School B) described the strategies his school had developed to encourage Pasifika parents to feel comfortable in his school.

“There are three waves. The first wave is to get the families and parents through the door of the school and to make them feel comfortable every time. We work amazingly hard. We ring up all the families. I think by now we must have contacted all the Pasifika families in [our school cluster group]! We invited them all in, and I think we have had amazing success ... We had a marvelous night a week or so ago ... one of the five or six-year-old children stole the show. The second wave is the part where teachers have conversations with parents about what has to be done for the learning. We know that the third wave is getting communication going between the home, the school and the student.”

The teachers also contributed to the discussion about the activities their schools had developed to encourage the involvement of their Pasifika parents. A teacher from School E described the school’s “computers in the home” project, wherein Pasifika parents attended a course at the school and were able to take the computer home. “The response was overwhelming. The parents were very keen to educate themselves.” The same teacher spoke of the Pasifika evening that her school had recently held. “We had food! We did a survey and made sure we had everything that was important to them [Pasifika peoples] ... a place for little children. We made sure we covered everything. We have one Pacific Island teacher on the staff, and she rang [the Pasifika parents].” The importance of providing food to share at Pasifika school events was reiterated by another teacher (School D): “We have a Pacific meeting yearly to meet families, and our principal shares achievement data with them. We eat together and share.”

6.6. Literacy through the Bible

Reading the Bible, both in their first language and in English, and reciting text segments accurately at church is a common contributor to learning to read for Pasifika children (McNaughton, Afeaki, & Wolfgramm, cited in MOE, 2003b). Many of the Pasifika parents explained how their children had learnt to read using the Bible. “With my children I started off [with the Bible], and I think most Pacific Island families are the same. We started off with the Bible, especially my daughters. And then from there it just sort of built up.” The father explained how reading the Bible has been a regular part of his family’s life. “I have two daughters at home ... I say Monday night is your turn. You lead our service. You read the Bible and you find a song to sing for our service. The Tuesday, the next daughter, then Wednesday, the mother, and Thursday myself, and Friday we carry on the same. So that’s an idea I have for my own

children at home, so I not only strive to hold the language but also because, I know you are all aware, that the mother tongue [first language] would be very, very helpful to pick up [to learn the] second language.”

These comments supported results from our previous studies (Fletcher et al., 2005, 2006; Parkhill et al., 2005) in which Pasifika students reported that they read the Bible at home from an early age and often learnt passages to read at church. Their comments and those of the participants in the present study indicated that Pasifika children’s earliest literacy experiences, reading in particular, relate to Bible reading at home and in church. Goldenberg, Gallimore, and Reese (2005) in a description of institutional connections and familiarity of contextual factors affecting literacy development and achievement noted that church attendance correlated with early reading achievement.

Pasifika children learn that questioning Biblical text in any form is considered completely inappropriate and seen as challenging *fa’asamoa* (traditional Samoan knowledge). There is thus a conflict between *fa’asamoa* where children listen and obey without question, and opportunities for discussion between children and adults that typically is encouraged in New Zealand classrooms. This dichotomy is another matter that schools need to recognise when endeavouring to facilitate Pasifika students’ literacy (McCaffery et al., 2003).

Such traditional perspectives challenge our view that critical literacy skills, strategies and understanding are essential for children in the modern world. Our belief is that an awareness and exploration of this problem is essential to help individuals find a resolution, a blend of both traditional and modern factors to help them achieve this goal (McCaffery et al., 2003: 83).

This issue is complex and challenges the disconnection that exists between Pasifika culture, including religious beliefs and values, and the importance of their children succeeding in today’s schooling in a Western society. In many cases the motivation for immigrating to New Zealand has been the strong desire not only to engage with and succeed in the mainstream European culture but also to maintain their own cultural identity where the values of the church holds a central role (Fletcher et al., 2006; Parkhill et al., 2005).

6.7. Behavioural mores

Cultural expectations of the pedagogic relationship between a teacher and student underpin Pasifika expectations. For example, the Samoan schooling system demands respect for teachers. Students do not talk back to teachers; they listen and do what they are told (Singh, Dooley, & Freebody, 2001). The teachers in our study reported that Pasifika students were well behaved in class and that this benefited their learning.

- “I have found Pasifika children I have taught to be the most respectful by a long way. That’s been my experience anyway” (School E).
- “A lot of our Pasifika children are extremely good citizens and we are very proud of them” (School D).
- “I enjoy working with Pacific Island children. They have respect and are always well behaved. They tidy the classroom without waiting to be asked. A lot of children [non-Pasifika] have lost that respect for adults” (School E).

Our previous research on Pasifika students’ perspectives of supports and barriers to their literacy learning (Fletcher et al., 2006) showed that many of the Pasifika students who were under-achieving in reading were concerned about the noisy classroom environments and the misbehaviour of some of their non-Pasifika

classmates. They stated a preference for being in a class with just Pasifika students and/or Pasifika and Asian students. Their concern fits with Pasifika cultural expectations that require children to listen and obey: "... traditionally children in Samoan society are to be seen and not heard" (McCaffery et al., 2003: 83). In New Zealand classrooms, where working collaboratively with peers, engaging in active discussion on relevant issues, and in-depth questioning are all expectations of effective practice (MOE, 2006), a dichotomy can occur for Pasifika students and particularly their parents whose schooling, in their islands of origin, would have comprised of a more authoritarian approach (Talen, Fletcher, Parkhill, & Fa'afai, 2005).

7. Conclusions

The Pasifika parents in this research study recognised several key issues: the challenge of comprehending text, the need for their children's individual Pasifika cultures and languages to be utilised and acknowledged, the tension between work commitments and supporting their children's schooling, the central role of the church, and that the Bible was seen as key text when learning to read. The teachers, similar to the parents, emphasised the problems the students had comprehending text but not decoding words, the need to acknowledge the Pasifika cultures, and the long work-hours of Pasifika parents which impinged on their ability to be involved in their children's schooling. However, the teachers also discussed the need for Pasifika students to be confident enough to take more risks in their learning; the need for oral language opportunities in the home; the need for a Pasifika Liaison person to help break down the language barriers between the home and school relationships; and in comparison to other ethnic groups in their classrooms, how Pasifika students were more likely to come from secure homes with both parents together as a family unit, and the noticeably better behavioural mores of Pasifika students.

The findings from this study indicate that Pasifika students' literacy learning (and overall academic learning for that matter) is likely to be enhanced when Pasifika values, languages and cultural knowledge are made an implicit part of teaching and learning practices throughout the school. The valuing and some use (e.g., greetings, songs, correct pronunciation of students' names) of the different Pasifika languages in their schooling acknowledge that their cultural capital and heritage are valued. It also provides a strong connection between their first language and English, the language of instruction. Sitting alongside this, is the need to develop positive home-school relationships to further support Pasifika students' literacy and overall academic achievement (Biddulph et al., 2003). These findings tally with our earlier research (Fletcher et al., 2005, 2006; Parkhill et al., 2005), which identified that Pasifika students who were achieving in reading were in schools that had strong home-school partnerships with Pasifika parents, while the Pasifika students who were under-achieving in reading had parents who reported a lack of understanding of school-related activities.

The teachers and parents in this study emphasised the need for a Pasifika liaison person who could help bridge the language barriers that the Pasifika parents said they and other Pasifika parents commonly experienced when attempting to develop a rapport with school staff. For the parents, the Pasifika values of showing respect for people of high status, such as teachers, can mean being silent and not questioning issues related to their children's schooling. A Pasifika liaison person, able to speak the parents' first language, could visit parents in their home and encourage a greater understanding of how teachers and parents can work together to support children's learning.

The parents and teachers agreed that decoding words was a strength for Pasifika students but that their lack of understanding

of the vocabulary and meanings imbedded in the variety of reading texts used, often impeded their reading achievement. The parents also reported that their children's early reading experiences centred on the Bible both at home and at church. The parents and teachers furthermore reported that the Pasifika students did not like putting themselves in a position where any possible lack of literacy knowledge would be exposed to their peers. This finding was a key issue for the Pasifika students who participated in our earlier research and applied whether they were under-achieving or achieving in reading (Fletcher et al., 2005, 2006; Parkhill et al., 2005).

The teachers reinforced that Pasifika children were obedient and attentive learners. The expectations of parents, their church and the Pasifika community were that Pasifika children should be respectful and polite. It is noteworthy that the Pasifika students who were under-achieving in literacy in our earlier studies expressed concern at the noisy classroom environments where behaviour management issues were an issue. Clearly, given the strong Pasifika values under which children respect and obey their elders, these children found learning environments antithetical to their cultural expectations resulted in an uncomfortable and unwanted ongoing experience that hindered their learning.

This present study confirmed some of what we found in our earlier studies. For example, the Pasifika students, similar to the parents and teachers, had emphasised the need for their cultures and languages to be an implicit part of their schooling. In regard to reading achievement, decoding the words was not a concern, but comprehending the text posed challenges. Across our body of work relating to the learning achievement of Pasifika students, the participating students', parents' and teachers' views align and point to ways of enhancing the support mechanisms presently in place and of removing the barriers. (This, our most recent, study has been particularly useful in offering some concrete suggestions in regard to fulfilling these aims.) We are particularly encouraged by this consensus of opinion, as we consider it augurs well for the future literacy and overall learning achievement of Pasifika students.

References

- Abbas, T. (2002). Teacher perceptions of South Asians in Birmingham schools and colleges. *Oxford Review of Education*, 28(4), 447–471.
- Allison, B. N., & Rehm, M. L. (2007). Effective teaching strategies for middle school learners in multicultural, multilingual classrooms. *Middle School Journal*, 39(2), 12–18.
- Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best evidence synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Anae, M., Coxon, E., Mara, D., Wendt-Samu, T., & Finau, C. (2001). *Pasifika education research guidelines: Final report*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Au, K. (2002). Multicultural factors and the effective instruction of students of diverse backgrounds. In A. E. Farstrup, & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading* (pp. 392–414). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J., & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best evidence synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passerson, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Clay, M. (2001). *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Auckland: Heinemann.
- Clayton, J. F., Rata-Skudder, N., & Baral, H. P. (2004). Pasifika communities online: issues and implications. Paper presented at the third Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Coxon, E., Anae, M., Mara, D., Wendt-Samu, T., & Finau, C. (2002). *Literature review on Pacific education issues: Final report (No. 8804.00)*. Auckland: Auckland Uni-services Limited.
- Dooley, K., Exley, B., & Singh, P. (2000). Social justice and curriculum renewal for Samoan students: an Australian case study. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 4(1), 23–41.
- Duursma, E., Romero-Contreras, S., Szuber, A., Proctor, P., & Snow, C. (2007). The role of home literacy and language environment on bi-linguals' English and Spanish vocabulary development. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 28, 170–190.

- Education Review Office (ERO). (2008). *ERO school and early childhood education reports*. Wellington: Education Review Office. Accessed 06.08.2007. <http://www.ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/Reports>.
- Elley, W. B. (2001). *STAR supplementary tests of achievement in reading years 4–9*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Fletcher, J. (2003). Tales and talanoa: using a culturally appropriate methodology to research the experiences of Pasifika and Māori second chance tertiary learners. Unpublished paper, Christchurch College of Education.
- Fletcher, J., Parkhill, F., & Fa'afai, A. (2005). What factors promote and support Pasifika students in reading and writing? *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, 2, 2–8.
- Fletcher, J., Parkhill, F., Taleni, T., & Fa'afai, A. (2006). Pasifika students' perceptions of barriers and support to reading and writing achievement in New Zealand schools. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 41(2), 163–182.
- Flockton, L., & Crooks, T. (2003). *Writing: National Education Monitoring Project: 2002 assessment results*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Flockton, L., & Crooks, T. (2005). *Reading and speaking: Assessment results 2004*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Flockton, L., & Crooks, T. (2006). *Writing: Assessment results 2006*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Gibbs, C. (2005). Teachers' cultural self-efficacy: teaching and learning in multi-cultural settings. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(1), 101–112.
- Goldenberg, C., Gallimore, R., & Reese, L. (2005). Using mixed methods to explore Latino children's literacy development. In T. S. Weisner (Ed.), *Discovering successful pathways in children's development: Mixed methods in the study of childhood and family life* (pp. 21–46). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. (2002). *Teaching and researching reading*. London: Pearson.
- Harkness, S., Hughes, M., Muller, B., & Super, C. M. (2005). Entering the developmental niche: mixed methods in an intervention program for inner-city children. In T. S. Weisner (Ed.), *Discovering successful pathways in children's development: Mixed methods in the study of childhood and family life* (pp. 329–358). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Hartoonian, H. M. (2007). Identity and the office of the citizen: Tensions, arguments, and multidimensional engagement. Paper presented at the 31st Annual Conference of the Pacific Circle Consortium, Hawai'i.
- Kame'enui, E. J., Carnine, D. W., Dixon, R. C., Simmonds, D. C., & Coyne, M. D. (2002). *Effective teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learners* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Koloto, A. (2003). *The needs of Pacific peoples when they are victims of crimes: Report for the Ministry of Justice*. Wellington: Ministry of Justice.
- Kong, A., & Pearson, P. D. (2003). The road to participation: the construction of a literacy practice in a learning community of linguistically diverse learners. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 38(1), 85–124.
- MacGibbon, L., Gilmore, F., Gilmore, A., Parkhill, F., Fletcher, J., & Johnson, J. (2008). An evaluation of the use of *school journal and ready to read series* to support effective literacy practice. Report to the Ministry of Education, Wellington.
- McCaffery, J., Tuafuti, P., & in association with Maihi, S., Elia, L., loapo, N., et al. (2003). Samoan children's bilingual language and literacy development. In R. Barnard, & T. Glynn (Eds.), *Bilingual children's language and literacy development* (pp. 80–107). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Mahina, O. (2004). Issues and challenges in Pacific research: some critical comments. In T. Baba, O. Mahina, N. Williams, & U. Nabobo-Baba (Eds.), *Researching the Pacific indigenous peoples: Issues and perspective* (pp. 186–200). Auckland: Centre for Pacific Studies, Auckland University.
- Manu'atu, L. & Kepa, M. (2002). Toward conceptualizing cultural diversity: An indigenous critique. Paper presented at the School of Maori and Pacific Development and International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS), India 7th Joint Conference "Preservation of Ancient Cultures and the Globalization Scenario", University of Walkathon, Hamilton, New Zealand, Te Whare Wananga o Waikato.
- Mara, D. (1999). Why research? Why educational research for/by/with Pacific communities in Aotearoa—New Zealand? Paper presented to the Pacific Islands Educators' Conference, Auckland, 13–15 April.
- McNaughton, S. (2002). *Meeting of minds*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- McNaughton, S., Amituanai-Tolosa, M., & Lai, M. (2007). Drawing implications for the Literacy Strategy from two schooling improvement projects: Final report. Paper presented at the National Literacy Symposium, Christchurch, September 2007.
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (2003a). *Raising the achievement of Pasifika students: Literacy leadership*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (2003b). *Meeting the needs of NESB students: A professional development module for schools*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (2006). *Effective literacy practice in Years 5 to 8*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (n.d.). Pasifika education (information pack). Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2001). *Knowledge and skills for life: First results from PISA 2000*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- Parkhill, F., Fletcher, J., & Fa'afai, A. (2005). What makes for success? Current literacy practices and the impact of family and community on Pasifika students' literacy learning. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 40(1&2), 61–84.
- Singh, P., Dooley, K., & Freebody, P. (2001). Literacy pedagogies that may "make a difference". *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 29(1), 49–71.
- Statistics New Zealand. (2006). Ethnic diversity. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/analytical-reports/monitoring-progress/nz-changing-popn/ethnic-diversity.htm>.
- Statistics New Zealand. (2007). QuickStats about culture and identity. Accessed 06.08.2007.
- Statistics New Zealand. (2008). Pacific profiles: 2006. Accessed 23.05.2008. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/analytical-reports/pacific-profiles-2006/default.htm>.
- Stewart, D. W., Shamdasani, P. N., & Rook, D. W. (2007). *Focus groups theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Taleni, T., Fletcher, J., Parkhill, F. and Fa'afai, A. (2005). Why are Pasifika children under-achieving in literacy? What the children and their community have to say. Paper presented 22 August 2005 to the Ministry of Education and Pasifika community stakeholders at the Convention Centre, Christchurch.
- Taylor, S. J., & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods*. New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Timperley, H. (2003). School improvement and teachers' expectations of student achievement. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 38(1), 73–88.
- Timperley, H. S., & Robinson, V. M. (2004). O le tala ia Lita/Lita's story: the challenge of reporting achievement to parents. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 39(1), 91–112.
- Tuafuti, P., & McCaffery, J. (2005). Family and community empowerment through bilingual education. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 8(5), 480–503.
- Tupuola, A. (1993). Raising research consciousness the Fa'aSamoa way. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, 3, 175–189.
- Vaiotei, T. M. (2003). Talanoa research methodology: A perspective on Pacific research. Paper presented to the Power, Politics and Practice Pasifika Conference, Auckland, April 2003.
- Wang, M. C., Haertel, G. D., & Walberg, H. J. (1993/1994). What helps students learn? *Educational Leadership*, Winter, 74–79.
- Weisner, T. S. (2005). *Discovering successful pathways in children's development: Mixed methods in the study of childhood and family*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Wylie, C., & Hodgen, E. (2007). *Competent learners @ 16: Competency levels and development over time*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Accessed 01.06.2007. www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/2107.