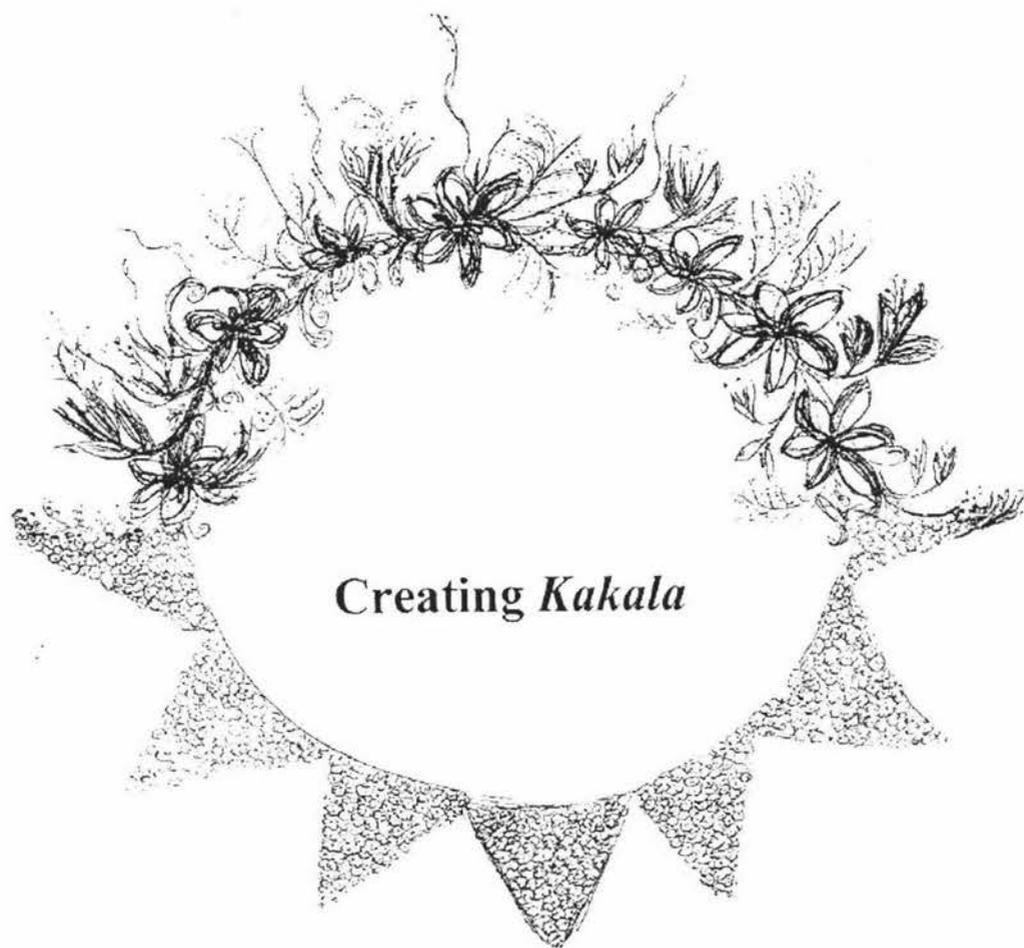


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**Creating *Kakala***

**Gifted and talented Tongan students in  
New Zealand secondary schools**

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

**Master in Education**

**Massey University, New Zealand**

**Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna, 2007**

## Acknowledgements:

### *Tākanga 'enau fohe*

#### **Their oars move in unison**

*'Oku 'uhinga ki ha kakai 'oku nau uouongataha.*

When people work together, helping each other (Mahina 2004).

Dr 'Ana Taufo'ulungaki, who appointed me to the position of HOD English at Tonga High School in 1993, I thank you for that life changing opportunity. In the first year at Tonga High School her USP colleague, Dr Konai Helu Thaman, an ex student and teacher of the school, spoke to Tonga High School students about her life, her academic career and her poetry. I was inspired by her ability to view many things through a metaphorical lens and feel privileged to have discovered, and been allowed to use, her *kakala* metaphor as a research framework.

The ongoing advice, guidance, support and friendship extended by my Massey University thesis supervisors Dr Tracy Riley and Lesieli Macintyre has sustained me through the complicated pathway of extra mural study, full time work and family commitments. I would have given up many times if not for their belief that what I was doing was worthwhile.

I am grateful to the Hawera High School BOT who gave me permission to take the study leave which kick started this research, and to the English teachers who coped admirably with my classes in my absence.

I'm also grateful to my team leaders in my role as Adviser to Schools, Colleen Douglas and Geoff Franks, who encouraged me to complete the thesis when I thought I just couldn't find the time. They made sure I did.

My husband Paul not only provided insights into Tongan language and concepts but held the domestic fort while I sat at my desk. *'Ofa lahi atu, 'ofa anga.*

Thank you to my sister in law Suliana Vi for help with translations and my cousin Susan Bingham making me welcome when I needed somewhere to stay.

Thank you to my four clever, wonderful children who continue to teach me important lessons about growing up as Tongans and New Zealanders.

And finally, to Julia and Seini, their families, teachers and friends – without you none of this would have been possible. I have learned much, much more from you than can be explained in the following pages.

Thank you, always.

## **Abstract:**

This thesis is an ethnographic case study investigation of two gifted and talented young Tongan women in New Zealand secondary schools. A motivation for the study was the researcher's personal and professional involvement with Tongan communities and a deep fascination for this rich and complex culture. The other motivating factors came from a yearning to see all gifted and talented students in New Zealand better catered for, and especially those from cultural minorities who, for many complex reasons, can be overlooked in our present education system.

A literature review considered two broad areas. 'The Tongan Way' considered issues related specifically to the way Tongans live their lives in New Zealand and elsewhere, while 'Gifted and Talented' explored Francoys Gagne's differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent as well as the situation for gifted and talented minority students and gifted and talented education in New Zealand. The review found no evidence of studies of gifted and talented Tongan students in New Zealand.

The following research questions guided the research:

- \* What gifts and talents are valued by Tongan communities?
- \* What catalysts operate in the development of Tongan students' talents?
  - At school? At home? In the community? Are any of these culturally specific?
  - How are the intrapersonal characteristics of giftedness exhibited within Tongan culture?

A case study approach was used to explore these questions. Two young Tongan women in Year 13 at different schools were selected as the central participants, one born in Tonga and one New Zealand-born. These students were interviewed and, during the initial interview, they nominated other participants. Such 'snowball sampling' ensures the researcher and participants are partners in the research process.

In Pasifika research, as in all cross-cultural research, ethical considerations are particularly important. Culturally appropriate methodology was developed including the use of a metaphorical framework developed by Tongan academic and poet Dr. Konai Helu Thaman. This was particularly important as the researcher was *Pālangi* and credibility within the Tongan community was needed for the research to have any kind of validity or purpose. Advice from Tongans was sought in all stages of the research from the initial proposal to the dispersal of the finished manuscript.

Data was gathered from interviews, questionnaires, observations, and documents. This was coded and presented according to the emerging themes of opportunities, achievement and leadership, personal qualities, motivation and identity.

The 'Tongan Way' was explained in depth as this influenced all aspects of the research. A descriptive account was given of the schools and the biographical details of the central participants. Data was analysed and interpreted in various ways including poems constructed from the voices of participants, diagrams and recommendations for schools.

Recommendations for further research included longitudinal studies with a larger sample in order to move beyond the limitations of the research as well as revisiting the effects of culturally specific catalysts since they may change over time.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction:

#### 1.1 The research problem:

Tongan students are underrepresented in programmes for the gifted in New Zealand schools (1996). It was hoped that an investigation into the lives of Tongan students who have been identified as gifted/talented in New Zealand secondary schools would enable educators to effectively develop the talents of more Tongan students in New Zealand.

Tongan students, whether they are born in Tonga or New Zealand, are largely brought up within *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* (Tongan culture) (Coxon and Fusitu'a 1998) and aspects of this upbringing that contribute to exceptional achievement were investigated. Since notions of giftedness are socially constructed and vary according to social norms and expectations (Niwa 1998/1999), the Tongan concept of being *poto* (clever, wise, socially competent) was considered along with western ideas of giftedness. Gagne's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent<sup>1</sup> (2003) with its emphasis on giftedness as natural abilities, transformed into talents by catalysts such as intrapersonal characteristics, environmental factors and chance, can be applied in western and Tongan contexts since the catalysts can be culturally influenced. This model provided a useful theoretical framework for the investigation and a basis for metaphorical descriptors of talent development.

The development of the potential of gifted and talented Tongan students in New Zealand secondary schools needed to be seen within a community context as *tokoni ki he kakai Tonga* (helping the Tongan people) is an important component in the possible 'products' (talents) through which giftedness is exhibited.

The questions that guided the investigation and exploration of environmental and intrapersonal catalysts for talent development from a Tongan perspective were:

- \* What gifts and talents are valued by Tongan communities?

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<sup>1</sup> Often referred to simply as the DMGT.

- \* What catalysts operate in the development of Tongan students' talents?
  - At school? At home? In the community? Are any of these culturally specific?
  - How are the intrapersonal characteristics of giftedness exhibited within Tongan culture?

## 1.2 Background:

Tongan secondary school students are generally performing poorly in the New Zealand education system which is based on western values, belief systems and epistemologies. My involvement with the Tongan community as HOD English at Tonga High School, Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga (1992 – 1997), member of a Tongan family, active member of a New Zealand Tongan community education programme, teacher of Tongan students in New Zealand secondary schools and mother of Tongan children, has motivated my interest in ensuring the potential of Tongan students is maximised. The students that I taught at Tonga High School were intelligent, willing to learn and fully supported by their families. There were stringent entry requirements to the school including a high level of English language proficiency. Families celebrated when their children were accepted into this school with its history of educating many of the leaders of the country. Many of my students went on to further education in New Zealand and other countries. Some succeeded, some did not. However, it seemed to me that those who were firmly grounded in their Tongan culture and language (*'ulungaanga faka-Tonga, lea faka-Tonga*), as well as having been exposed to western ways, more often achieved success in a variety of fields.

Tongan educators such as Thaman (1992; 1996; 1997; 2003b) and Taufe'ulungaki (1993; 2003) believe education for Tongan students must incorporate Tongan cultural values. With this idea in mind I considered my interest in gifted and talented education and wondered if the concept of being *poto* (the wisdom to know what to do, when to do it and how to do it well) needs to be fully understood, recognised and valued by New Zealand teachers in much the same way as Bevan-Brown (1996) believes that Maori children with special abilities cannot be nurtured by teachers who do not value and know about Maori values and culture. She says:

If teachers do not understand “mana tangata” (the power acquired by the individual according to his or her ability and effort to develop skills and gain knowledge in particular areas) how can they recognise it in their pupils? If they do not know what “manaakitanga” (hospitality) and “awhinatanga” (helping and serving others) are, how then can they incorporate programmes that incorporate them? (p 107)

Similarly, I believe teachers who do not understand *to'ongo faka-Tonga/’ulungaanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way, Tongan tradition and culture), complex Tongan concepts such as *poto* (social cleverness and competence) (Morton 1996) and *’ofa* (a manifestation of the theme of love and the overriding value of Tongan morality – the reasons for their behaviour and institutions) (Kavaliku 1977) or the expectation to demonstrate *faka’apa’apa* (respect, showing deference to those of higher status) and *fakama’uma’u* (be restrained, keep in one’s feelings) as well as be *fie’aonga* (useful to the Tongan community) (Coxon and Fusitu’a 1998) and *faka tō ki lalo* (show humility), cannot recognise or nurture giftedness in Tongan students.

The concept of *poto* has changed with exposure to western ideas. The evolution of the concept into *poto ako* (school cleverness) indicates a shift too in the way giftedness is viewed by Tongans but the extent of overlap between western ideas of giftedness and those embedded in *’ulungaanga faka-Tonga* is not always clear and often affected by the lack of equivalent English meanings for Tongan concepts. This is something I felt was important to explore. New Zealand is a dynamic, multi-cultural society and, with the recent Ministry of Education focus on gifted and talented education, it is obvious that western ideas of giftedness cannot do justice to all students. Concepts of giftedness must be more inclusive and ways of creating culturally responsive learning environments where the gifts and talents of students from all cultures can surface must be incorporated into teaching practice (Ministry 2000).

By exploring Tongan concepts of giftedness alongside Western ways of identifying and catering for giftedness, I expected to be able to discover ways in which schools could widen their concepts of giftedness so that more gifted and talented Tongan students are recognised and their talents nurtured and enhanced. This is in line with

the “blueprint” for gifted and talented education in New Zealand (Moltzen, Riley et al. 2001) outlined in the Ministry of Education handbook Gifted and Talented Students: Meeting their needs in New Zealand Schools (2000). I hoped that focusing on Tongan students who were already recognised as outstanding in at least one field would highlight educational practices that are more inclusive which other schools could emulate in their journey to adequately cater for all gifted and talented students. I also hoped to highlight family/community structures, culturally specific factors and language acquisition principles that enable/enhance talent development. Gagne (2003) believes intrapersonal characteristics and environmental factors can be critical for giftedness to evolve into demonstrated talent. Such factors can be culturally specific. The identification of such catalysts was essential in that they can then be incorporated into culturally responsive classrooms allowing talent to emerge. Professional development of teachers in providing such catalysts may mean more gifted Tongan students are identified and their specific needs subsequently met. Some of these catalysts are home-based and this information may be valuable to Tongan parents of gifted children.

In July, 2004 I attended a meeting of the Association of Tongan University Women, held in Nuku'alofa which Dr 'Ana Taufē'ulungaki (Director of the Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific) addressed. She expressed grave concerns at the inability of Tongan teenagers in Auckland to speak either Tongan or English proficiently. As an English teacher, I am particularly aware of literacy issues within the New Zealand Tongan community. The 1996 census indicated that, in Tonga, 98% of the population claimed Tongan as their first language and 99% of those were literate in Tongan. Over 70% of the total population were literate in Tongan and English (Taufē'ulungaki 2003). This high literacy rate is not replicated in the New Zealand Tongan community and the strategic plan for Pacific Islands Education “Ko e Ako 'a e Kakai Pasifika”, officially launched in 1995, has been implemented to help address these problems. One does not have to be fluent in English to be intelligent (Barkan and Bernal 1991) but bilingual education opportunities are limited and unlikely to meet LEP (Limited English Proficiency) gifted and talented students' needs. For academic and linguistic performance in a second language, a child's first language skills must be well developed (Baker 2001). I thought it important to explore

how *poto* Tongan students reach the high level of critical literacy required for exceptional achievement in New Zealand.

Research about successful gifted and talented Tongan students will not only be useful to teachers in promoting educational success, but may also be an inspirational antidote to research entirely focused on identifying apparent deficiencies in the Tongan population or New Zealand schools. Ideally, it may help New Zealand schools aspire to Barkan and Bernal's (1991) vision of a "society that is enriched by the linguistic and cultural heritage of all its citizens, participating on an equitable basis" (p147). I watch my own children integrating their two worlds and realise that many Tongan students do this to some degree. This inevitable integration of Tongan home-life and western schooling can be harmonious, beneficial and exciting rather than an excruciating cultural conflict (Helu 1999a). The case studies researched highlighted the variations possible in integrating Tongan and western cultures.

The Pacific Education Research Guidelines (Ministry 2001) claim that Pacific research should identify and promote a Pacific worldview by identifying Pacific values and the way Pacific societies create meaning, structure and construct reality. The case-study/ethnographic approach used (explained in chapter 3) ensured this was achieved. Those same guidelines also pointed out the need to interrogate the assumptions that underpin western structures and institutions. This descriptive account of Tongan students who do achieve excellence, highlights possible pathways for gifted and talented students and exposed some barriers inherent in New Zealand educational institutions, many of which are still firmly rooted in their colonial past.

Cummins(2000) believes both insider and outsider perspectives are needed and that dialogue that brings together what is seen from the outside with what is felt on the inside is necessary to articulate understandings. I was very aware of my insider/outsider status: the "insider" status gave me sufficient motivation and empathy, the "outsider" status enough curiosity about, and ignorance of, the culture of my informants so as to give a thorough ethnographic study.

## Chapter 2

### Literature review:

*Mu'omu'a puke fue.*

**To go in front holding back the branches.**

*'Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha 'oku tamu 'omu'a ke ne fai ē konga faingofua 'o ha ngāue.*

When someone does the easiest part of a task that involves a group (Mahina 2004).

**This chapter examines the literature related to gifted and talented Tongan students. It reviews the literature in two broad areas the first being 'The Tongan Way' which considers research practices, traditional culture and concepts of giftedness, migration issues within the Tongan Diaspora and Tongans in New Zealand schools. The second area, 'Gifted and Talented' discusses Gagne's Differentiated Model of Gifted and Talented, gifted minority groups, identification of, and provisions for, gifted and talented students in New Zealand and, finally, gifted and talented Tongan students in New Zealand.**

### 2.1 The 'Tongan Way':

This section explores the issues surrounding being Tongan and living the 'Tongan Way'. It discusses the best possible approaches when embarking on research with Tongan participants. Traditional culture and concepts of giftedness are explained followed by a discussion of the impact of migration and western epistemologies in contemporary Tonga and its Diaspora. The various provisions for Tongans in New Zealand institutions are then outlined.

#### 2.1.1 Research with Tongan participants:

Pasifika Education Research Guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2001) are essential reading before embarking on research involving Pasifika<sup>2</sup> students. They were written specifically for applicants for Ministry of education funding and explain in detail

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<sup>2</sup> Tongans are one of several groups of Pacific Island peoples in New Zealand. Collectively these groups are referred to, colloquially and in the literature, as Islanders, Pacific Islanders, Polynesians, Pacific people/s, Pasifikans or Pasifika people/s. I have chosen to use the term Pasifika (adj.) if unable to specifically refer to Tongans.

requirements of research proposals that will involve Pacific participants. However, the authors hope they will have wider application and I certainly found them useful in guiding my research.

The document is presented as a “living, growing document” – a starting point for Pasifika researchers to think about, consider and reflect on previous, current and future Pasifika research praxis. It presumes the best people to research Pasifika issues are Pasifika people and therefore reflexological issues were highlighted for this *Palangi* researcher, despite my strong links to the Tongan community. Cultural and philosophical contexts of Pasifika research are outlined followed by a discussion of the consultation process with suggestions about the forming of research partnerships: when, why and how to consult with Pasifika peoples and communities and framing research topics and design. The section titled “Pacific Research Methodology” considers the need to incorporate Pasifika epistemologies into the methodological framework. Because research should be a partnership between the researcher and other participants, snowball methods of sampling where the participants nominate other participants are advocated. This partnership became critical in deciding whether or not to include data as poetry – one of the participants was adamant it was an appropriate and true representation of her life and the researcher was obliged to take this into account. Outsider status of *Pālangi* researchers can be considerably overcome by adherence to the Pasifika Education Research Guidelines.

The guidelines confirmed much of what I already knew about the obligations of a researcher within the Tongan community, including that the establishment of trust between the interviewer and interviewee, was a much more complicated matter than signing consent forms. Face to face interviewing is considered the most appropriate method to capture cultural nuances. The practice of giving gifts in recognition and acknowledgement of the time and information provided by the participants is seen as an important way of giving tangible form to Pasifika principles of reciprocity, love and respect. *Fetokoni'aki* (reciprocity), *faka'apa'apa* (respect) and *'ofa* (love) are core Tongan values underpinning ‘the Tongan Way’. *Taufe'ulungaki* is cited claiming that if research is to make meaningful contributions to Pasifika societies, then its primary purpose is to reclaim Pasifika knowledges and values for Pasifika peoples and it must also:

- Increase our understanding of the issues at stake
- Lead and develop consistent scenarios by increasing awareness of problems and solutions
- Use research to improve the lives of Pasifika peoples
- Transform the practices of those in power and influencing policy
- Ensure that educational and social policies are informed by sound research outcomes
- Research in the Pacific must be aimed at transforming Pasifika societies in accordance with Pacific values and aspirations
- Take into account the need for social responsibility in addressing the technological, ecological and ethical questions of inquiry
- Use a holistic approach in gaining universal understanding of issues by focussing on interdisciplinary and intersectoral research
- expose the incongruences between Pasifika core values and those of dominant paradigms and educational programmes
- be educative in nature and practical in their uses
- enabling of and empowering to the researched
- responsive to changing Pasifika contexts

The guidelines point out that while ethnic-specific approaches will yield more depth and intra-ethnic and inter-generational nuances, the data provided will not allow for Pacific generalisations to be made for wider application. This study is limited to a Tongan context focused on Tongan participants.

Metaphorical frameworks are advocated for use in Pasifika research (Hau'ofa 1999; Mara 1999; Koloto 2003; Taufe'ulungaki 2003; Thaman 2003; Fonua 2005; Mafile'o 2005). In particular, Konai Helu Thaman's *kakala* is well developed and, in its three-fold construction – *toli*, the gathering, *tui*, the weaving, and *luva*, the giving away – is appropriate to the research process used in this study. Its use of Tongan words and concepts is particularly empowering for Tongan participants. This metaphor was adopted as the metaphorical framework for this study and is explained in detail in the methodology section.

*Heliaki* (Tongan proverbs) collected in the Reed Book of Tongan Proverbs (Mahina 2004), contemporary and ancient song lyrics (Kaepler 1993; Helu 1999; Zemke-White 2001; NesianMystyk 2002), myths and poetry (Thaman 1999) were considered as they reflect the voice of Tongan people over time and many Pasifika researchers make use of these in their English language work (Kavaliku 1977; Taufe'ulungaki 1993; Thaman 1996; Helu 1999; Samate 2005) adding some degree of the metaphoric depth and richness that would be found if their work was presented in the Tongan language. Proponents of ethnographic research methodology are in favour of leaving some words and phrases in the original language to ensure the participants' identities are not compromised. Spradley (1979) maintains every ethnographic description is a translation and as such must use both native terms and their meanings as well as those of the ethnographer. The meanings encoded in the original language must be represented as closely as possible and the descriptions should flow from the concepts and meanings native to that scene.

Samate (2005) claims that Tongan logic starts with who not what (or reasons why). It is a free process of thinking involving ideas, thoughts, imagery, languages and metaphors naturally expressed in poems, proverbs, songs and fables to be heard and not read, interpreted rather than taken literally. Linear (western) thinkers have called this "scatter head thinking" a dismissive, negative term for the underlying processes of *Talanoa*.

*Talanoa* is a research process largely developed by Dr. Sitiveni Halapua, a Tongan from the Niuaus and Director of the Pacific Islands development Programme at the East West Center in Hawai'i, first used in the Cook Islands in 1996 as a basis for reform in 1996/1997, used in 2000 in Fiji after the 2000 coup, currently being used in the Solomon Islands and used by the National Committee for Political Reform, a Tongan parliamentary committee, in 2005/2006 to establish a pathway for political change in Tonga. *Talanoa* consists of two words – *noa* to Tongans means nothing, talk about nothing and Halapua's interpretation of this is *noa* lies in your heart, it does not have any bias or discrimination; the process tries to get right to the *loto* (heart/mind). The *tala* (story) then, is the story of your *loto*. *Talanoa* is not about consensus: the outcome is not predetermined as it is in Western ideas of dialogue/meeting/consultation. He says:

It does not have a preconceived agenda, it is very open, you can tell your story. I think you have to remember that prior to the advent of the western civilisation and the coming of the missionaries, the only thing we had was *Talanoa*, that was how history was created, that was how we knew we were Tongan, that was how we knew we own the land, that was how we knew our *kainga*, that was how we knew our *hou'eiki*, that was how we knew our *Tu'i*, because of the *Talanoa*, nothing was written, without a predetermined agenda, it was very open.

He believes it is a universal phenomenon that if people know you respect their voice and will not twist their words around, they will share their stories if given the opportunity. It can take much longer than processes founded on western structures where an agenda is designed to achieve what you want. Because of its openness it does require skilful facilitation to extract the main points/ideas from the stories (Fonua 2005).

*Talanoa* is the antithesis of positivism and more in line with what Dr Max Rimoldi describes in his forward to Mahina's Reed Book of Tongan Proverbs (Mahina 2004) as a realism which emphasises complexity, an approach adopted by Tongan scholars at 'Atenisi University. Complexity for them is intrinsic to social existence – it is not a result of the evolution of society, whether towards capitalist democracy or centralised political coercion. The 'Atenisi scholars are all critics of the naturalisation of these conditions, and admirers of the sophistication of ancient Tongan practices. Rimoldi claims that many academics effectively ignore living oral traditions and *Talanoa* is a contemporary example of the movement away from research by those who think 'their science is better than oral history' (Mahina 2004).

### 2.1.2 Traditional culture and concepts of giftedness:

**It is a *fananga*, a riddle, a way of life**

**It is a god, our knowledge**

**our resistance**

**the lather of *tuitui***

**steaming on our skin.**

From 'Tuitui' (Niumeitolu 2003)

A pan-Pacific holistic view of academic giftedness (*poto ako*) is given in the Pasifika Education research Guidelines (Ministry 2001) describing scholarship within Pacific contexts as having the knowledge and expertise in Pacific protocol, values and etiquette, of one's family, village and ancestry and having this ability to transfer this knowledge on to future generations.

Thaman (2003) explains that the terms *ako*, (education) *'ilo* (knowledge and understanding) and *poto* (cleverness) and their derivatives have been widely used within the context of Tongan education for a long time. She claims that *poto* in the context of Tongan education (*ako*) may be achieved through the appropriate use of *'ilo*. Therefore *poto* may be defined as the positive application of *'ilo*, and the educated person (*tokotaha poto*) as the one who applies *'ilo* with positive and successful results. The traditional use of *poto* is the maintenance of good interpersonal relations, and not just being successful in school. Education is seen as valuable in its application to the betterment of families and communities.

Thaman further states that Tongan people still expect children to grow up learning important cultural knowledge and skills in order to live in Tongan society today: to become *poto*.

The word *poto* is used as an adjective or verb to mean clever, skilful, to understand what to do and be able to do it. As a noun it means socially competent. '*Atamai-vave* (adjective/verb) is explained as meaning quick at understanding, mentally keen, intelligent. '*Atamai* can mean intelligent (noun)

or mind, understanding, intellect, intelligence, reason (adjective) (Thompson 1992). Conversely, *'atamai kovi* means dumb or dull witted. *'Atamai* is akin to twentieth century western ideas of giftedness. However, giftedness in Tonga is much more closely aligned with the complicated concept of being *poto* than being simply *'atamai*. To be *poto* is the central aim of socialisation (Morton 1996). To be *'atamai poto* is to use intelligence with traditional wisdom and insight – the ultimate prize for culturally appropriate talent development.

Morton explains that becoming *poto* entails learning the skills necessary to daily life and acquiring a formal education, but most essentially it entails developing appropriate *anga* (habit; custom; nature; quality; character; characteristic; way; form; style; manner; method; behaviour; conduct) (Thompson 1992). One's *anga* should be *totonu* (right, proper), *fe'unga* (befitting, suitable) and *lelei* (good). Becoming *poto* also involves being able to match behaviour to context – knowing what to do, being able to do it, knowing when to do it and doing it well. Being *poto* means both learning the rules and learning how to manipulate them to one's advantage. Like the English term 'clever', the meaning of *poto* can shade into 'cunning', 'crafty' or 'astute'. Because protecting and enhancing the reputation of self and family, and avoiding *fakamā* (shame), are central motives for proper behaviour in Tonga, the need for children to develop proper *anga* and become *poto* tends to be explained in terms of the importance of other people's opinions and expectations. To be *poto* is a highly valued, ideal end point of socialisation and, like Gagne's talent development process (2002), perceived as a process of achievement and success, a movement from *vale* (foolish, silly, ignorant, immature, unskilled, incapable, incompetent), often considered the natural state of children although individuals of any age can be called *vale* or *anga-vale* when they have behaved foolishly or been socially inept. However, there is an acceptance of the idea that people are born with particular gifts that will eventually be realised as talent: Princess Salote Pilolevu Tuita in the forward to Poetry in Motion: Studies of Tongan Dance (Kaeppler 1993), says of talented dancers that they:

Possess an essential quality in Tongan dance known as *māfana* – a certain warmth, which excites one’s emotions into graceful expression. *Māfana* cannot be taught, you must be born with it.

This quality can be likened to the rhythm of waves against the shore (the repetitive action of the dance) and the *māfana* the bright, white, sparkling sea spray emitted from the particular momentary action of the waves. The sea spray is integral to the wave; it cannot exist alone just as *māfana* cannot be achieved or experienced by anyone but the dancer who has learned the actions well.

Morton(1996)<sup>3</sup> recognises and explains the tension that western education has created around being *poto*. She claims many parents think that getting an education was one of the most important goals they had for their children and helping them to do so was their *fatongia mamafa* (important duty). They wanted their children to *ako ke fa’iteliha* (study in order to please themselves – that is, to be able to make their own choices in life). This is not seen as contradictory to using one’s education to help the family, as education can enable their children to afford the material things they want – food, expensive clothes and the like – and to take care of their families when they marry. Becoming *poto* in this sense is a means to an end and is not highly prized in itself. Students who strive hard may be teased and told they are *fie poto* (think you’re clever) or *fie lahi* (imagine oneself to be important, proud/haughty). As with status relations in Tonga, there is marked tension between ambition and humility in people’s attitude to education. For instance to be *faka tō ki lalo* (show humility, being humble) is an admired characteristic – the life of Jesus being seen by Tongans as an example of this: the son of God as a lowly carpenter There is also considerable tension in becoming *poto* in the sense of acquiring a formal (Western) education and becoming *poto* in *anga faka-Tonga*.<sup>4</sup> Being *poto* in both senses is of course possible, and certain Tongans, most notably King Taufa’ahau IV and the Tongan scholar Futa Helu, are well versed in ‘*ulungaanga faka-Tonga* and are highly qualified scholars with western university education. Yet there is also a

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<sup>3</sup> Helen Morton is also known as Helen Kavapalu, Helen Morton-Lee and Helen Lee.

<sup>4</sup> Morton uses the spelling *anga fakatonga* but I have used *anga faka-Tonga* (or ‘*uluangaanga faka-Tonga*) throughout my research after consultation with Tongan language experts as to which is the most correct phrase.

widespread belief that the two forms of knowledge are somehow incompatible and that “new” knowledge will weaken or diminish the “old”, a belief that has its roots in the broader distinction between *anga faka-Tonga* and *anga faka-Pālangi*.

Since King Taufa’ahau IV died in 2006, the tensions inherent in the conflict created between the cultural values of obedience, respect and conformity and the questioning, critical thinking and independent expression entailed in Western education have been manifested recently in Tonga in protests and riots.

Tongan students, whether born in Tonga or New Zealand, are largely brought up within *‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga* (Tongan culture/customs/language)(Coxon and Fusitu'a 1998) where *faka‘apa‘apa* is an essential component of all Tongan social interactions. *Faka‘apa‘apa* is generally translated as respect but, as Kavaliku (1977) points out, it is a concept based on *‘ofa* (a complex manifestation of the theme of love and the overriding value of Tongan morality – the reason for their behaviour and institutions). It encompasses love, reverence, honour and humbleness. Respect is not earned as in *Pālangi* culture but is accorded to people through their status and role in kinship groups and society as a whole. Lita Foliaki (Tau'akipulu 2000) believes that “Tonga is the most hierarchical of all Polynesian cultures” and “domination has been from within”. While a questioning of this hierarchy has begun both in Tonga and the Diaspora, most families will insist on *faka‘apa‘apa* where *fakaongo* (submissiveness/obedience) is a sign of *‘ofa* for parents and family. Tongan children do not ‘backchat’ their parents. Children’s lives should be *mo‘ui fakaongoongo* (a life waiting for instructions) and they should carry out orders unquestioningly (Morton, 1996).

The compatible values of introduced Christian religions have been incorporated into these systems of morality. Rev. Dr. Asinate Samate, president of the Tonga History Association, believes the spiritual and intellectual, church and state exist side by side, drawing strength from each other (Samate 2005). The country’s motto is: “God and Tonga are my inheritance” and its laws are based on a constitution drawn up by King Tupou I and missionary advisers. Most

secondary schools and some primary schools are provided by churches and even in state run schools, sermons, prayers and hymns are a regular feature.

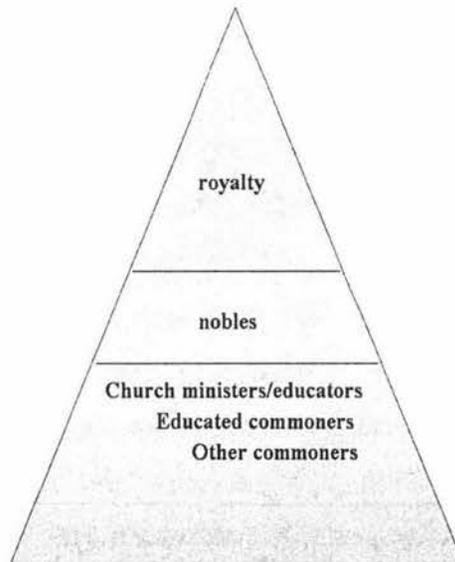
Futa Helu (1999; 1999b), a gifted Tongan academic, claims that Tongan youth are taught cooperation and interdependence which can lead to dependence and loss of confidence. For example, they may be unwilling to try an individual sport chosen to suit their identified superior sensori-motor skills or participate in a gifted students' programme that includes an individual research component. He believes they must also be taught self-reliance and independence. According to Helu, cultural values are culture-specific and time-specific and it is necessary for cultural survival to internalise not only traditional beliefs but their contraries as well – cultural adaptation by complementing. For instance, Tongan students may need to learn that *Pālangi* teachers expect ideas to be challenged within the boundaries of good classroom discussion by clever students and this does not compromise *faka'apa'apa*. The challenge for today's Tongan people is to achieve such cultural adaptation in Tonga and the Diaspora without hindrance or coercion from westernised countries or institutions. Helu (1999a; 1999g) believes that a culture contact situation is one where every culture taking part must undergo some change and this creates a challenge for countries such as New Zealand which have become home for thousands of people who identify as Tongan. Helu is a staunch defender, and great explainer, of traditional Tongan arts such as poetry, music and dance and oratory which he believes must be promoted and developed along characteristic lines. The traditional structures reflecting core Tongan values must not be destroyed or disfigured even when they have been adapted or remodelled – he concludes that the loss of verbal arts (and, presumably, by association, the other arts) would be equivalent to the loss of Tongan souls. Myths are discussed by Helu in various essays as he believes, as works of art, they reflect the society in which they arise. However, he believes that, because mythical thought fosters accepted ideas and preserves the status quo, it cannot handle the inevitability of social change whereas other arts are more adaptable.

The art, poetry, dance and music of Polynesia are a valuable indicator of cultural excellence. Artist and carver Filipe Tohi, carver Sitiveni Fehoko, singer Tu‘imala Kaho, musician Bill Sevesi, opera singer Ben Makisi, actress Mia Blake, poets Konai Helu Thaman and Epeli Hau‘ofa have attained international recognition of their talents. The hymns, songs and poetry written by Queen Sālote remain Tongan favourites and some are used to accompany traditional dances. While these are tangible products of giftedness they also provide metaphorical guidelines for creativity and problem solving. Even traditional navigation, astronomy, fishing, subsistence farming and building practices provide insight into cultural cognition such as in the fascinating essay The ethnoscience of the cultivation of the frail kahokaho (Helu 1999; Helu 1999c) or Through Polynesian Eyes (Fale 1989). Helu’s discussions of mythology, poetry and dance are intriguing windows into a complex body of knowledge, *‘ilo*, mastered through repeated practise, which leads to the *poto* (clever, wise, socially competent) Tongan. Consideration of this primary source material is imperative in widening concepts of giftedness to ensure identification of gifted and talented Tongan students.

While skill in the traditional arts, as well as in ancient practices such as fishing and canoe building, navigation, agriculture, weaving, carving, architecture and building, are still highly valued forms of knowledge, all of these exist within the parameters of an intrinsically hierarchical society. To be *poto* requires understanding that these skills and cultural practices are shaped by the complexities of the pervasive Tongan hierarchy which determines rank and status in the society.

Rank is fixed at birth and the most fundamental distinction is between *‘eiki* (chief/nobles) and *tu‘a* (commoner). *Tu‘i* (paramount chief, royalty) and *matāpule* (chief’s ceremonial attendants) are actually separate categories but are usually encompassed within the general category *hou‘eiki* (chiefly people). Over time, especially since the emergence of an educated middle class of commoners and church dignitaries, the power accorded to each rank has altered significantly. However, there is still a clear distinction between *hou‘eiki* and *tu‘a* that affects people’s everyday lives (Morton 1996). Traditional cultural conservation is based on traditional religious beliefs (especially the *tapu* system

and the claim to divine origin of *Tu'i*) and the politics of chiefly interests (seen clearly in the *taumafa kava* – royal *kava* ceremony) (Havea 1996). This characteristic of Tongan culture is crystallised in language with its three tiers of special vocabulary sets and functional locutions – one for the monarch, one for the chiefs, and one for the commoners. The monarch's regal language is similar to the polite language used among Samoan chiefs. Language the monarch would use for speaking to Tongan chiefs consists of rhetorical constructions. According to Helu, (1999a; 1999g) when referring to commoners the language used by monarchy is made up of derogatory terms for animals and animal behaviour. <sup>5</sup> Helu, a critic of Tonga's hierarchical social system, believes that there must be recognition of the natural inequalities of people in terms of their natal gifts – intelligence, strength, health etc. – but the moral concern of all Tongans must be to ensure that every Tongan receives their fair share of economic and social goods. Political upheaval in Tonga as these changes are wrought has already begun.



Rank in Tonga: a simple view.

Cutting across the ranking system is social differentiation based on status. In any given context, a person's status is relative to that of whoever else is present. It is

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<sup>5</sup> Other Tongans may have a different interpretation. Helu's opinion here may be viewed as *anga-fakatu'a* (typical of a commoner).

primarily determined by seniority (chronological or genealogical), gender and kinship relations. Another, more flexibly determined factor is reputation which can be enhanced by education, wealth, generosity, and involvement in church activities.

Futa Helu (1999; 1999d), savagely decries the traditional ways of determining rank and status in the community because, as far as Tongan culture is concerned, human beings are never born equal in dignity and rights and this is contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He believes something new came into the world with this declaration – the concept of the global individual, with the assumption that every person regardless of race, gender, nationality etc. fully internalises and lives by liberal and non-discriminatory principles – and this should be the aspiration of all human beings.

A *poto* person must be aware of the complexities of rank and status, including the current tensions arising from contact with other cultures, and the definition below would be considered within that social context.

Giftedness in Tonga includes the following:

- possession of knowledge that is worthwhile to society and therefore acknowledged by others
- ability to practise and pass that knowledge on to others
- social status within a group
- spiritual/mystical elements which give power/influence

This concept of giftedness encompasses many aspects of '*uluangaanga faka-Tonga* and may or may not include being '*atamai-vave*.

### 2.1.3 Migration and the Tongan Diaspora:

#### *Fe'ofa'aki 'a kakau.*

#### **The currents of love.**

*'Oku 'uhinga ki ha fe'ofa'aki 'a ha kakai 'oku nau nofo kehekehe 'i ha ngaahi 'otu motu mavahevahe.*

When the love between people is thought to travel between their islands of residence  
(Mahina 2004).

Samate (2005) explains that those born in Tonga (as well as some Tongans born overseas) find themselves spiritually tied to their homeland. Some older Tongans want to go home to die (*'Auto e manu ki toku*), to reclaim their past and their heritage. No matter where they are, they will always remain Tongan in their heart of hearts, even to their last breath.

Morton Lee (2003) explores in depth the experience of Tongan migrants, largely in Australia. Her central theme is cultural identity in the context of migration and she found that many Tongans assert that to be really “Tongan” a person must not have only Tongan ancestors, but also a knowledge of *To'onga faka-Tonga* or ‘the Tongan Way’. This concept encompasses all values, beliefs and practices that are regarded as elements of Tongan culture and tradition. It also usually presumes competence in Tongan language and affiliating with other Tongans no matter where. However, she also discovered that ‘the Tongan Way’ is a slippery concept, constantly under negotiation and reconstruction.

Thaman (1996) sees culture as the way of life of a discrete group of people including language, a body of accumulated knowledge and understandings, skills and values. Cultural identity encompasses the non-ethnic, intragroup distinctions Tongans use, such as those between bush and town people, *tu'a* (commoners) and *hou'eiki* (chiefly people), different religious denominations, educated and non-educated people (Morton Lee 2003). However Morton Lee also found that overseas Tongans are also adopting an ethnic identity, gradually blurring with cultural identity. This occurs as a response to the host nation’s ideology and practices of “multiculturalism” in which ethnicity is represented in

the public sphere primarily by the outward markers of cultural difference such as food, music, dance, clothing and so on. Increasingly, by asserting their positioning as an ethnic group, Tongans are asserting their difference while proclaiming their unity as a people in response to Tongan's sense of themselves as marginalised and disempowered. These feelings can be exacerbated by the government view of Pasifika people as one group when they are actually a diverse group of cultures. This tendency is part of the "internal colonisation" faced by minority groups in Western nations. Tongans' increasing awareness of postcolonial issues is arising not out of independence struggles in their own nation but through the process of migration and, in New Zealand, through affiliation with various Maori groups.

Tongans have mostly migrated to New Zealand, Australia and the United States with Tongan populations tending to be concentrated in particular cities and towns within those countries. A complex network of connections exists between Tongans in these places and in Tonga including the practice of sending remittances and extensive use of online communication such as forums on "Planet Tonga". My ten year old New Zealand born Tongan son is in daily contact with relations in Tonga via the internet. Few Tongans ever completely lose their connections – emotional, familial, economic, religious, and otherwise – to their homeland; they remain between two shores. Often the primary motivation for migration is to help the family. The idea of "family" encompasses a complex set of rights and obligations of Tongan kinship as well as the deep emotional connections between kin (Morton Lee 2003).

The largest group of Tongans living overseas is in New Zealand where they constitute 18% of the Pasifika population (Statistics retrieved 2007). The number of Pasifika people in New Zealand, as well as their concentration in particular areas has meant that they have had an impact on government structures and policies, most notably in the establishment of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (Morton Lee 2003).

According to the 2001 census, 80% of the 40,716 Tongans in New Zealand (Statistics retrieved 2007) live in Auckland, the biggest Polynesian city in the

world. Just over half of Tongan people in New Zealand are New Zealand born and the youthful population is rapidly increasing. Immigration to New Zealand is driven by economic aspirations and, although some return to Tonga, most have established families in New Zealand adapting their traditions of church life, kinship bonds and child rearing to the new environment (Tau'akipulu 2000).

A third of Tongan families in New Zealand would include the nuclear family, a grandparent and members of the *kāinga* (extended family). 92% of Tongans in New Zealand are affiliated with a religious group and are generally intensively involved in the church which is the mainstay of Tongan community life.

Samoan writer and academic Albert Wendt claimed “New Zealand is part of the Pacific. It ceased being part of the Pacific culturally and psychologically when it was colonised by the Pakeha. Now, in this post colonial period, we should return Aotearoa to the Pacific where it belongs” (Legat, 1988). Evidence of this return to the Pacific is clear particularly in Auckland. Highly visible Polynesian influences in music, art, food, fashion and architecture, the domination of Polynesians in sport, brown faces in positions of authority, in the street, in the offices and shops....Aotearoa, marketed as the “Pacific Rim”, is beginning its cultural and psychological journey back to the Pacific (Legat 1988).

### **Tongans in New Zealand Schools:**

In the 1980's comprehensive reviews of the curriculum, assessment and educational administration were carried out. According to the Ministry of Education website (<http://www.mined.govt.nz/index>) these sought “a more equitable curriculum, particularly for those found to be disadvantaged by the existing system such as girls, Maori students, Pacific Island students and students with different abilities and disabilities.”

The Education Amendment Act of 1991 established the New Zealand Curriculum as the official policy for teaching, learning and assessment in all New Zealand schools. The Ministry of Education website claims it is the “first statement in the history of our country to provide such an overview” and “it

acknowledges that individual students have unique learning needs”. The TKI website, also a Ministry of Education website, gives the complete document including the guiding principles one of which is “reflects the multicultural nature of New Zealand society”

<http://www.tki.org.nz/r/governance/nzcf/principles> and qualifies this further stating:

The school curriculum will encourage students to understand and respect the different cultures which make up the New Zealand society. It will ensure that the experiences, cultural traditions, histories and languages of all New Zealanders are respected and valued. It will acknowledge the place of Pacific Island communities in New Zealand society, and New Zealand’s relationship with the people of Asia and the South Pacific.

The establishment of this policy with its emphasis on meeting the learning needs of individual students and the freedom for schools to operate in the best interests of their particular communities, heralded a time of significant change in the education of Pasifika students as well as gifted and talented students.

The latest curriculum document, currently in draft form for consultation, (Ministry 2006) includes in its principles “cultural heritage” including a directive that students experience a curriculum that reflect New Zealand’s multicultural society, “equity” where all students’ identities, cultures, languages and talents are recognised and affirmed, and “connections” where all students are to experience a curriculum that makes connections with their lives and engages the support of families and communities. This refined curriculum document continues the emphasis on meeting the learning needs of individual students and the freedom for schools to operate in the best interests of their particular communities which should benefit Tongan students.

The Pasifika Education Plan, a government initiative, was first released in 1996 as *Ko e Ako a'e Kakai Pasifika* (Ministry 1996). Subsequently the Pasifika Education Plan has provided strategic direction for coordinating all policies that aim to improve education outcomes for Pasifika peoples. The first plan was

released in 2001 and the latest launched on 7 June, 2006 with the aim of building on progress made so far to raise participation and achievement (Ministry 2006).

The Literature Review on Pasifika Education Issues (Ministry 2002), commissioned by the Ministry of Education's Pasifika Research Framework Team, is an informative, well organised document designed to give an overview of which issues have been researched and which have not. The focus is on New Zealand material published in the ten years prior to 2002. The document defines the key concepts of "culture" and "ethnicity" and advocates the Ethnic Inter-face model devised by Tania Wendt-Samu as a way of appreciating the complexities of the interactions between groups of Pacific learners and educational institutions. The document considers early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary and teacher education separately.

The main concern of early childhood research is the gap in entry skills of Pasifika children. That gap is a negative one and no mention is made of the possibility of children with superior entry skills.

The material reviewed on primary schooling includes Max Galu's 1998 study which considered the perceptions of gifted and talented Maori and Pasifika students in segregated classes and cited the work of Jill Bevan-Brown in arguing for wider, more culturally grounded criteria in identifying such students. The conclusion was that "more research that focuses on Pasifika learners in this area is needed" (p62).

The section on secondary education focused on the areas of educational policy, culture and education, pedagogy, language, curriculum, identity and community-school relations. The education policy research has some relevance to gifted and talented education issues in its consideration of the de-zoning policies of the 1990's which led to concentrations of Maori and Pasifika students in low decile schools where socio-economic factors can serve to hinder identification of giftedness although a study by Mamoe is cited which shows that even Pasifika students in high decile schools did not achieve well. Most research regarding culture and education is general in nature with all Pasifikans lumped into one group. The work of Thaman (2003), and Coxon and Fusitu'a's (1998) study of a homework centre, give an understanding of

the mismatch between home and school cultures and the consequent negative effect on school performance. No study of how successful students have overcome these barriers has been undertaken. Hawk and Hill's study that has run alongside the ongoing AIMHI project (Ministry 2004) is valuable especially in defining effective teaching practice for Pasifika students. Other research by Pasikale (1998) Coxon and Fusitu'a (1998) and Douglas (2003) describes characteristics of "successful" teachers but no studies deal specifically with strategies employed by successful learners. The review describes several studies which support further development of bilingual education but only one New Zealand study is cited (T.W. Samu's 1998 thesis "Social Studies: the nebulous Cinderella subject of the New Zealand curriculum"), that refers to Pasifika curriculum content other than mathematics which has been the main subject-based research in Fiji, Tonga and New Zealand.

As in the United States, (Barkan and Bernal 1991) gifted children from language minority groups may only be identified once they have mastered English. However, there is no need to delay differentiated instruction of LEP (limited English proficient) gifted children if bilingually competent teachers of the gifted are available.

Research into identity is relatively important to any research of gifted and talented Pasifika learners in New Zealand and identity – traditional, New Zealand blend, New Zealand made (Pasikale 1998)– may well have a bearing on how gifted students are identified and nurtured in New Zealand secondary schools. These classifications lie on a continuum between those that participate fully in, and understand all aspects of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*, and those where understanding and participation is minimal.

The final thread in the literature referred to in the secondary school chapter is community-school relations. The participation of parents/community in schools is seen as obstructing Tongan student's academic progress according to some studies (Aitken 1996; Mafi 1998). However, other research and researchers present different points of view. The AIMHI project, for instance, has been successful in developing structures and pathways for greater parental involvement. The chapter on secondary schooling concludes with a list of seven recommendations for further research. Two of these are partially addressed in this research. They are:

- \* Which teaching and learning strategies, if any, do Pasifika students respond to most? What are some examples of “best practice”? What works across different subject areas?
- \* Does bilingualism enhance the performance of Pasifika students in New Zealand secondary schools?

The chapter discussing teacher education claims that research and critical analysis to date is very limited with the most significant being a 1977 UNESCO supported research survey undertaken by the University of the South Pacific which examined the extent to which teacher education curricular in the region incorporated elements of Pacific culture into content and pedagogy. Without these cultural elements it is difficult for teachers to create the culturally responsive classrooms in which giftedness can flourish.

The final area considered by the Literature Review on Pacific Education Issues is tertiary education. Studies were grouped into

- \* Issues of access, particularly secondary to tertiary transition, and barriers to participation
- \* Student experiences of tertiary education

Studies were considered “descriptive and subjective”, not moving beyond the “cultural deficit” position or too limited in scope. However, two research projects sponsored by the Education and Training Support Agency (now Skill New Zealand) Seen, But Not Heard: Voices of Pacific Learners (Pasikale 1998), and Weaving the Way (Pasikale 1998) are considered valuable resources for modelling the qualitative research model.

Overall the Literature Review on Pacific Education Issues is a useful document for general background to Pasifika education issues in New Zealand but is limited in its focus on issues specific to Tongan communities in New Zealand. There is a significant lack of any mention of literature focused on gifted and talented education for Pasifika students.

## **2.2 Gifted and Talented:**

### **2.2.1 Francoys Gagne: The Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent:**

Francoys Gagne first mooted the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent in 1985 (Gagne 1985) and has refined the model since. Its current form, as presented on page 46, is used extensively throughout the world as the theoretical framework for defining and identifying gifted and talented students. For educators, the advantage of this model over others is in its view of talent as a developmental process to which schools, among many other catalysts, can make positive or negative contributions.

Gagne (2003) provides a useful overview of the model which is summarised here. Firstly, Gagne argues against the prevalent use of ‘gifted’ and ‘talented’ as synonyms. He defines the two concepts as follows:

‘Giftedness’ designates the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts), in at least one ability domain, to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10 percent of age peers.

‘Talent’ designates the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities (or skills) and knowledge in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10 percent of age peers who are or who have been active in that field or fields.

He then explains that the two concepts share three characteristics: both refer to human activities, both target individuals who differ from the norm/average and both refer to outstanding behaviours and in order to accurately portray the talent development process, the model also incorporates four other concepts – intrapersonal catalysts, environmental catalysts, learning/practice and chance.

**Gifts:** The DMGT proposes four aptitude domains: intellectual, creative, socio-affective and sensorimotor. Each of these can be divided into any number of

categories and can be added to or deleted from as research proposes new taxonomies. Without fixed categories, it allows the model to incorporate categories derived from other cultural skill sets. Natural abilities are manifested to varying degrees in the course of all children's development but it is only when the level of expression becomes outstanding that the label 'gifted' can be used. Gagne maintains high aptitudes/gifts are observed more easily in young children while the influence of environmental factors (which may be negative) is still moderate and largely concern the speed and ease at which they gain skills in a particular domain. This is a good argument for early identification and consultation with parents. Many checklists based on sound research are available to identify the observable behaviours of giftedness. However, some caution needs to be taken to ensure these checklists are culturally inclusive – an attribute such as 'asks many questions' would not be appropriate to a Tongan child socialised to not interrupt adults. Gagne points out that psychometrically valid measures of natural abilities have been developed for some domains – IQ testing (again, there may be linguistic cultural bias) and fitness testing being considered the most reliable. There are less reliable measures in the other domains.

**Talents:** Measuring talent is a straightforward enterprise which corresponds to outstanding performance in the specific skills of any occupational field. During the developmental phase of any talent normative assessments such as exams, tests, competitions, scholarships present themselves. Beyond the training phase, however, assessments are much less formal and often word of mouth.

**Learning and Practising:** developmental processes can take four different forms – maturation, informal learning, formal non-institutional learning and formal institutional learning. Maturation is a process totally controlled by the genome but can be influenced by factors such as nutrition, disease and exposure to toxins. Informal learning corresponds essentially to knowledge and skills acquired during daily activities. Many of the attributes of a *poto* Tongan will have been acquired this way. Formal non-institutional learning corresponds to autodidactic or self-taught learning. For instance, the talent development of accomplished musical performers, The Kami's, a Tongan family in Australia has

followed this process. They are reported to “credit God for blessing them with the talent and gift to create and make music” “because none of the kids received professional lessons in music or in playing any of the instruments”(Ka'ili 2005). The most common learning process remains institutionally based and leads to some form of official recognition of competency: going to school, joining a sports team, enrolling in music lessons or a cooking academy are all examples of formal institutional learning. Many Tongan traditional skills are developed within church contexts which gives them widespread recognition in the Tongan community.

**‘Catalyst’** is a term Gagne has borrowed from chemistry. A catalyst designates chemical substances introduced into a chemical reaction usually to accelerate it. At the end, these contributors regain their initial state: catalysts contribute to a reaction without being constituents of the final product. In the case of talent development the constituent elements are the natural abilities, which are slowly transformed into specific skills. Talent is strictly measured through the level of skill mastery; neither the type of the contributing catalysts nor the strength of their contribution is relevant to that assessment. The DMGT recognises three types of catalysts: intrapersonal, environmental and chance.

Gagne divides the **intrapersonal catalysts** into physical and psychological factors. Physical templates, for instance, have been defined for many sports – height is advantageous in netball and basketball, strength and muscle mass in the front row of a rugby scrum. Psychological factors are numerous and Gagne admits that the categories created so far – motivation, volition, self-management and personality – may not be exhaustive.

**Environmental factors** can have positive or negative impact. Gagne distinguishes four distinct environmental inputs in the DMGT: milieu, persons, provisions and events. The ‘persons’ category has perhaps created the most controversy with many social scientists, who hold the belief that nurture is a more powerful agent than nature, demonstrating in the literature that significant people in the lives of the gifted and talented can have considerable influence on talent development.

Gagne credits the first extensive examination of the role of chance in talent development to Tannenbaum. He introduced it first into the DMGT among the environmental catalysts but soon realised its influence was greater than that. Most importantly, individuals have no control over their genetic inheritance or the circumstances into which they are born. There is some degree of chance in all the causal components of the model, except the LP process.

Gagne describes why the 10% threshold was chosen for the DMGT stressing that different reference groups need to be used for identifying gifted individuals and talented individuals. His 10% avoids restricting giftedness to exceptional giftedness, a rare phenomenon, and includes the “garden variety” of gifted and talented individuals. Pragmatic reasons dictate the use of a fairly broad prevalence estimate to protect the gifted and talented from an assumption that, if giftedness is so rare, time and money does not need to be allocated to cater to their special needs.

The relationships among the six elements of the model (gifts, chance, intrapersonal catalysts, environmental catalysts, learning and practising and talents) are expressed through a complex pattern of interactions. The most fundamental interaction is the causal impact of gifts on talents, gifts being the constituent elements (raw materials) of talent/s, the presence of talent/s implies underlying gift/s. However, the reverse is not true – gifts can remain undeveloped. After consideration of empirical data Gagne places the five components of the model in the following decreasing order of causal impact on talent emergence: chance, gifts, intrapersonal, learning/practice, environment. The relative importance of intrapersonal factors – motivation and self management especially – has implications for teachers of the gifted, and can be culturally influenced. Tongan students can be motivated by *fetokoni 'aki*, the desire to give back to Tongan society and their families.

All of the elements of the model can be interpreted through different cultural lenses and it is for this reason that I have used this model in my investigation of gifted and talented Tongan individuals.

### **2.2.2 Minority Groups:**

There is no universally accepted definition of giftedness (Riley, Bevan-Brown et al. 2004) and, in New Zealand, it is recognised that giftedness and talent may be recognised and developed in different communities and cultures.

In the United States (Maker 1996) educators and the public have negative stereotypes and inaccurate perceptions of children from ethnic, cultural and linguistic minority groups. The situation is repeated in New Zealand (Dale 1988; Reid 1990; Cathcart and Pou 1992) and can mean limited opportunities for gifted minority students.

Within the huge amount of scholarly literature about giftedness are clear considerations of “culturally diverse learners” (Clark 2002). Much of the literature focuses on the situation in the United States where gifted and talented programmes are highly competitive and, despite attempts to widen identification procedures, still rely heavily on standardised tests for entry (Barkan and Bernal 1991; Hunsaker 1994; Maker 1996; Ford 1998; Bernal 2002; Clark 2002; Castellano 2003). Since the publication of the Ministry of Education handbook Gifted and Talented Students: Meeting their needs in New Zealand Schools (Ministry 2000) New Zealand schools have been exhorted to ensure that a similar tendency in New Zealand is quickly turned around.

The recently published Ministry of Education report (Riley, Bevan-Brown et al. 2004) reviews the existing literature relating to provisions for gifted and talented students who do not belong to the dominant New Zealand culture. Because definitions/concepts of giftedness are socially constructed, the dominant culture can be favoured by non-inclusive identification practices and the report describes an increasing concern for cultural sensitivity and appropriateness when identifying and providing for gifted and talented students from minority groups internationally and in New Zealand.

Much of the New Zealand discussion of cultural concerns centres on Maori students. Bevan-Brown’s (1996) research into the qualities valued by Maori has clearly shown

that gifted Maori students may demonstrate exceptional qualities in ways that only their culture prizes and cultivates. This situation may apply to Tongan students also. More inclusive identification procedures in New Zealand schools are needed to ensure all gifted children are identified and then culturally appropriate provisions are planned, implemented and evaluated.

Multiculturalism is the development of understanding rather than the exchange of information (Cathcart and Pou 1992) and the provision of culturally appropriate programmes in a culturally supportive environment (cultural responsiveness) is considered paramount in allowing gifted minority students to flourish. Dale (1988) relating experiences at West Harbour School with a significant Tongan population, suggested identification of gifted students included being alert to unusual imagery in writing, the ability to think/problem solve, fluency in a language other than English, ability and interest in Music, sporting prowess, animated/knowledgeable speaking about their culture in their own language or English, and leadership in, or knowledge of, cultural activities.

Ford (2003) also presents approaches that denounce deficit thinking and cultural misunderstanding which limit access and opportunity. Ford believes giftedness is a social construct, therefore, inclusiveness is the philosophy of choice for ensuring equity and excellence. Research in New Zealand does not indicate how or why gifted Pasifika students have been identified. Most research focuses on the barriers, the deficits, which prevent inclusion in many aspects of education including gifted and talented programmes.

“The school environment is a powerful catalyst for the demonstration and development of talent” (p 277) the Ministry of Education report (Riley, Bevan-Brown et al. 2004) concludes. Research into the lives of gifted and talented students is needed to examine the nature and extent of the influence of the school environment. The same report also concludes “the definition, identification practices and provisions in many of the participating schools do not embody Maori perspectives and values” (p277). It seems likely that if New Zealand schools are not doing this, despite Treaty of Waitangi obligations, then they will not be embodying Tongan perspectives and values either – how then are these Tongan gifted students succeeding? Which aspects

of their school environment support their talent development, if any? The environmental catalysts identified in my research, could be built into gifted and talented programmes.

The Ministry of Education Handbook Gifted and Talented Students: Meeting their Needs in New Zealand Schools (Ministry 2000) is also an important base-line reference document in considering any aspect of gifted and talented education in New Zealand. It is a general overview of what New Zealand Schools should be doing for gifted and talented students and case study material can be compared to Ministry of Education expectations. Bell (2000), in her case-study based research of six Pacific Island girls in New Zealand, discusses the schooling of students who have succeeded well in their own Pacific Island education systems but in New Zealand do not live up to expectations and “their dreams become compromised” (p2). This is a pattern I have observed from the other end – teaching highly intelligent, successful students at Tonga High School who did not succeed as expected in overseas education institutes. The reasons are complex and Bell’s conclusions of how the difficulties can be bridged are clearly outlined as recommendations for New Zealand Schools. The extent of access to these “bridges” for both Tongan and New Zealand born Tongan high achievers as they acquire success is a key focus of this research.

The Hawaiian viewpoint about outstanding abilities begins with the belief that everyone is given gifts by those who come before. The individual recognised by the Hawaiian community for outstanding abilities is one who develops, uses, and shares inherited gifts knowingly and to the full (Martin, Sing et al. 2003). The study, Na Pua No’Eau: The Hawaiian Perspective of Giftedness, concluded that how a group of people view their world determines their areas of valued human qualities. The world view of a group should be considered as a legitimate part of understanding how gifts and talents are interpreted and recognised.

### **2.2.3 Gifted and Talented education in New Zealand:**

During the 1990’s the New Zealand Ministry of education came under increasing pressure from teachers, parents and others, to pay greater attention to the needs of gifted students. The last official document in this area was produced and distributed to

primary schools by the former Department of education in 1972. Secondary schools had never received guidance in this form. In response to this pressure, a national advisory Group on Gifted education was established in 1997 which saw the development and distribution of a set of 'gifted guidelines'. After a long process of consultation and drafting Gifted and Talented: Meeting their needs in New Zealand Schools was distributed to all schools in April 2000 (Moltzen, Riley et al. 2001).

These guidelines advocated a multicategorical approach to conceptualising giftedness because concepts of giftedness are sensitive to time, place and culture. The characteristics offered by researchers McAlpine and Reid (1996) were included as they were the most compatible with the multicategorical approach. These were:

1. Learning Characteristics (eg: displays logical and analytical thinking; is quick to see patterns and relationships)
2. Creative Thinking Characteristics (eg: produces original ideas; displays intellectual playfulness, imagination and fantasy)
3. Motivational Characteristics (eg: strives for high standards of personal achievement; is self directed)
4. Social Leadership Characteristics (eg: takes the initiative in social situations; actively seeks leadership in social situations)
5. Self-determination Characteristics (eg: is sceptical of authoritarian pronouncements; questions arbitrary decisions)

A multicategorical approach to defining giftedness demands a multimethod approach to identification and the guidelines maintain that each school develop its own identification policy and procedures. A continuum of provisions are advocated with much focus on differentiated programmes within the classroom, this being where a student will spend most of their learning time (Moltzen, Riley et al. 2001).

An amendment to the National Education Guidelines meant that from Term 1, 2005 it became mandatory for all state and state-integrated schools in New Zealand to be able to demonstrate how they are meeting the needs of their gifted and talented learners:

NEG 1

Each Board, through the principal and staff, is required to:

- iii) on the basis of good quality assessment information, identify students and groups of students:
  - a) who are not achieving;
  - b) who are at the risk of not achieving;
  - c) who have special needs (**including gifted and talented students**);
  - and
  - d) aspects of the curriculum which require special attention

New Zealand schools must now address the issue of gifted and talented education.

This directive is well supported by on line material on TKI. The Gifted and Talented community site (<http://www.tki.org.nz/e/community/gifted/>) is easily navigated and presents some excellent teaching strategies. Under the heading “Support for schools” is found the Ministry of Education handbook Gifted and Talented Students: Meeting their needs in New Zealand Schools and related on-line reading material at the end of each section. ([http://www.tki.org.nz/r/gifted/handbook/index\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/gifted/handbook/index_e.php)) related reading for the section ‘Cultural considerations’ includes theory, research, case studies, conference papers and Maori language readings. A link to ‘Twelve Traits of giftedness: A non-biased profile’ (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/gt12traitsofgiftedness.htm>) provides a set of characteristics of giftedness that transcends cultural and language differences. ‘Studies of gifted and talented Maori students’ includes links to papers by Janelle McKenzie, Catherine Rawlison and Jill Bevan-Brown all of whom address the issue of differing Maori and Pakeha perspectives of giftedness. A Tongan perspective of giftedness is not found in any on-line material except the powerpoint slide set that accompanied the workshop ‘Gifted and Talented Pacific Students in NZ: A Case Study of Tongans at the Secondary School Level’ that Lesieli MacIntyre and I presented at the Rising Tides National Gifted and Talented Education Conference in Wellington in August 2006.

Papers and workshop material from that conference is available on [www.giftedtalentedconf2006.org.nz](http://www.giftedtalentedconf2006.org.nz) and includes a wide range of information about many and varied current provisions for New Zealand gifted and talented students. The range of material is testimony to the multicategorical, multimethod approaches being

adopted for defining, identifying and providing for gifted and talented students in this country as first mooted in the Ministry of Education handbook Gifted and Talented Students: Meeting their needs in New Zealand Schools (Ministry 2000).

A link on TKI to an important paper by Jill Bevan-Brown first presented at the TEFANZ (Teacher Education Forum of Aotearoa New Zealand) Conference in July, 2004 (<http://www.tki.org.nz/r/gifted/PDF/Whatnag.pdf>) is provided. She reports that research consistently shows that gifted and talented minority students are being effectively identified and provided for when certain principles are adhered to. She then summarises those into “eight BE-attitudes”, principles that form the basis of culturally inclusive gifted and talented education. She also sums up research to date in New Zealand in the field of gifted and talented education in New Zealand for minority students. Many excellent resources are listed in a seven page bibliography.

The recent, very comprehensive Ministry of education report on gifted education in New Zealand (<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/gifted>) is available online or in hard copy (Riley, Bevan-Brown et al. 2004). The research was commissioned by the Ministry of Education to determine key issues in gifted and talented education and gaps in provisions. The outcomes are intended to guide future initiatives in policy, practice and research. The research encompassed a review of the literature, national survey and case studies and provided baseline data demonstrating progress in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students but also a need for continued growth and development in this area of education. The conclusions summarise the current state of gifted and talented education in New Zealand and are:

- There is a paucity of reported national or international research which evaluates the effectiveness of provisions for gifted and talented students in relation to social, **cultural**, emotional, creative and intellectual outcomes. Although there is a recent growth in New Zealand’s literature and research base in gifted and talented education, its dissemination and availability to practitioners is limited.
- There is a growing awareness of the need to provide gifted and talented students in New Zealand schools with an individualised and appropriate education, but this is impeded by a reported lack of professional development,

access to resources and support, funding, time and **cultural misunderstandings**.

- Reported definitions of giftedness and talent in New Zealand schools are broad and multi-categorical; however, **cultural, spiritual and emotional giftedness are often overlooked**. Additionally, many of the reported definitions, identification practices, and provisions do not embody Maori perspectives and values.
- Multiple approaches to identification of giftedness and talent are reported by New Zealand schools; however, there is **heavy reliance upon teacher identification and standardised testing across all areas of ability**.
- There is a reported preference in New Zealand for implementing a combined approach of enrichment and acceleration, but the implementation of these is rather limited, with a partiality to within-class provisions and withdrawal or pull-out programmes.
- Gifted and talented students from under-represented groups, especially Maori students and those of **other ethnic minority groups, are not being readily identified in New Zealand schools, and culturally appropriate provisions are not being planned, implemented or evaluated**.
- There is an awareness and recognition of the social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students; however, only isolated examples of provisions specific to these are reported by New Zealand schools. Additionally, some of the reported identification methods and provisions could have potential negative effects upon the social and emotional well-being of gifted and talented students.
- **The reported involvement of parents, caregivers, and whanau in the overall organisation and coordination, identification, and provisions for gifted and talented students in New Zealand schools is minimal**.
- Schools in New Zealand are cognisant of the need for the ongoing schoolwide professional development for all teachers and consider the lack of these opportunities a barrier to identification and provisions. Resources, funding, time and access are reported as barriers to professional development.

Those issues highlighted above are addressed to some degree in ‘Creating *Kakala*: Gifted and Talented Tongan students in New Zealand Secondary Schools’.

#### **2.2.4 Gifted and Talented education for Tongans in New Zealand:**

There is some discussion in the literature of the barriers to Tongan students’ success in New Zealand schools (Dale 1988; Esura 1996; Mafi 1998; Douglas 2003) but none focusing on the talent development of Tongan students’ outstanding abilities. This research addresses this gap in the literature.

**This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to gifted and talented Tongan students in New Zealand. It considered two broad areas which informed the design of the research by highlighting the cultural aspects of gifted and talented education. These areas were ‘The Tongan Way’ and ‘Gifted and Talented’.**

**These important ideas underpin this study:**

- **Research with Pasifika participants needs to be conducted within parameters determined by the participants and metaphorical frameworks are appropriate**
- **Tongans have traditional concepts of ‘giftedness’ and ‘talent’ that may differ from western concepts**
- **Tongans have a rich, complex history and hierarchical social structures influential in Tonga and the Diaspora which can cause conflict when intersecting with western ideology**
- **Gagne’s DMGT is an appropriate model for an analysis of giftedness that includes cultural dimensions**
- **Many minority groups are underrepresented in gifted and talented programmes for a variety of overlapping reasons**
- **Because gifted and talented education in New Zealand has only recently been given serious consideration by the Ministry of Education the literature in general is limited, and, with regard to Tongan students specifically, non-existent.**

## Chapter 3

### Methodology:

This chapter outlines the decisions that were made with regard to the design of the research. Thaman's *kakala* metaphorical framework and Gagne's theoretical framework are explained and the ethical considerations outlined. Details of the selection of participants and data gathering and analysis methods are explained.

### 3.1 Design considerations:

#### *Vaka ki uma*

#### From the boat to the shoulders

*'Oku 'uhinga ki he feitu 'u pē mo hono me 'a*

*'oku 'ave pē 'e he vaka ha uta 'I tahi pea ka tau ki 'uta pea 'e fetongi leva  
'a e uta mei he 'ave he vaka ki hono fetuku he uma.*

There is an appropriate pathway for doing things dictated by context.

Boats transport cargo at sea. When boats arrive at port, the cargo is lifted from the hold manually (Mahina 2004).

'Okustino Māhina, lecturer at 'Atenisi and Auckland Universities where he teaches courses in Tongan performing arts and language, is a recognised authority in the language and literature of Tonga. He has made a lifelong study of *heliaki* – Tongan proverbs – where the qualities of one thing point to another. *Heliaki* – not going straight, saying one thing and meaning another – encapsulate the complexities of the history of this ancient society as well as its present interaction with the western world. *Heliaki* illuminate many distinctly Tongan concepts. The proverb above summarises my search for the most appropriate research methods to address the research questions. Mahina claims “Tongan language is strictly poetical. This is in complete contrast to the English language, which is predominantly scientific”(2004). Language is the most important expression of culture and the rich, metaphorical Tongan language embodies concepts that are difficult to translate into precise and pragmatic English. Within the parameters of qualitative research there is enough flexibility to explore the vast, rich experiences of Tongan lives in a valid and respectful way. My own love of literature and language drew me to this way of research which can

include metaphorical and poetic expression within reliable, commonly accepted methods.

Quantitative methodology was considered and quickly discarded. Experimental methodology as used in social and educational research assumes that the context of human relations is not central to an understanding of it (Scott and Usher 2003). This assumption not only conflicts directly with the *heliaki* cited at the beginning of this chapter, it negates the recommendations of Pasifika Education Research Guidelines (Ministry 2001) so was deemed inappropriate along with a large scale survey approach which reduces complicated human activity to data sets expressed in numerical terms (Scott and Usher 2003). Neither approach would have done justice to the complexity of talent development of gifted Tongan students.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) believe that naturalistic, qualitative social research is the best way to study people in their ordinary settings, analyse what they have seen or heard, and then convey to others, in rich and realistic detail, the experiences and perspectives of those being studied. There is no universally accepted definition of giftedness (Gagne 2004; Riley, Bevan-Brown et al. 2004) as the concept of giftedness is dynamic being sensitive to time, place and culture (Riley, Bevan-Brown et al. 2004). The experiences of the participants in this research are highly influenced by time, place and culture – measurement of absolutes, as in quantitative research, was neither possible nor desirable.

There is a growing engagement amongst researchers in Pasifika communities with qualitative research methodologies such as ethnographic research approaches (Ministry 2001). The advantage of these methodologies over quantitative methods are explained in terms of the role of Pasifika research (research involving Pasifika participants) primarily being to identify and promote a Pacific worldview, beginning with identifying Pasifika values and the ways in which Pasifika peoples create meaning, structure and construct the reality of their world .

The research, while small in scope, had an ethnographic emphasis in understanding experiences from the point of view of the participants and providing detailed

descriptions of real life situations. An ethnographic approach can develop links with theory: in this case, Gagne's *Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent* (DMGT). In investigating how and why gifted and talented Tongan students in New Zealand have been identified, nurtured and have experienced effective talent development, an ethnographic case study approach was the most likely way to fulfil the goals of Pasifika research in that it would explore the unique experiences of Tongan students in a holistic way, encompassing their home and school lives as well as the Tongan values and belief systems that underpin the realisation of their giftedness in New Zealand educational systems.

An ethnographic case-study approach was therefore adopted. The case study strategy was chosen because of its ability to illuminate the general by looking at the particular (Denscombe 2003). Tongan students in New Zealand share to some extent culture, language and migratory history. All gifted students share certain characteristics (Ministry of Education 2000) and, if the developmental process has been favourable, demonstrate an exceptional talent in one or more fields. Because of this, it seemed logical that the findings would apply to other gifted Tongan students who were not participants in the study including those for whom the developmental process has not been positive and talent therefore never demonstrated. Other reasons for selecting a case-study strategy included the opportunity for in-depth and varied perspectives about the participants' lives, relationships, environments, intra- personal characteristics and the influence of chance. This detail was then analysed with reference to Francoys Gagne's *Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent* a model of giftedness that can be culturally inclusive.

Ethnographic elements in the approach included the investigation of cultural dimensions of the participants' lives: the seemingly ordinary and mundane but culturally specific events that can constitute the environmental catalysts for talent development. Ethnography emphasises the importance of understanding things from the point of view of the participants and that the researcher's identity, values and beliefs are integral to the process of the research (Denscombe 2003) helping to formulate the parameters of the research partnership. The research involved issues of reflexivity and an ethnographic approach was the most honest way to deal with these.

Reflexivity is reflection about the role of “the self, the researcher, the person who did it, the me or the I” (Wellington 2000). Denscombe, in his discussion of reflexivity with regard to ethnographers, states that “as researchers, the meanings we attach to things that happen and the language we use to describe them are the product of our own culture, social background and personal experiences”(2003). Scott and Usher (2003) believe “researchers are not able to bracket out completely their beliefs and epistemological frameworks through which they understand the world”. There were definite issues around reflexivity during the research process. I kept a journal where I recorded frustrations, scraps of poetry, Tongan words and phrases I needed to discuss with fluent Tongan speakers to ensure my correct understanding, delights and other such musings along with dates, mileage, procedures, strategies, ideas about emerging concepts and more concrete things. These issues are discussed further in the section on ethical considerations. I also kept a supervision log which detailed all my contact with my thesis supervisors.

One limitation of the ethnographic case study approach is defining the boundary of the case. The research questions were both complex and, while presented as closed questions, open ended if historical factors were to be considered. Implicit in the questions was a sense of here and now: a huge limitation. The lives of the participants in the study could justify an extended longitudinal study similar to Morton’s Becoming Tongan: An Ethnography of Childhood (1996), a *kakala* woven with much *heilala* and *langakali*, the most precious and complex Tongan flowers. In many ways, my very limited study, woven with *pua* and *siale*, more accessible everyday flowers, has not been able to capture all of the extraordinary richness and depth of the participants’ lives. A lack of resources and time, as well as my own deficiencies in knowledge of Tongan language, history and culture, did not allow such in depth work and the case was therefore bounded by these. Using snowball sampling, where the participants nominated other participants they felt could contribute to answering the research questions, gave natural, manageable boundaries to the case as well as ensuring the participants contributed to the emergent design.

### 3.2 *Kakala*: a metaphorical framework:

**Come  
take this *kakala*  
sacred symbol of our oneness  
tie it tightly around you  
where it will remain fresh  
in the nourishing flow  
only the sky knows**

**from 'Kakala folau' (Thaman 1999)**

In Tonga *kakala* are fragrant flowers or garlands woven from fragrant flowers for a special occasion or person. Several Pasifika researchers in New Zealand have used Konai Helu Thaman's *kakala* metaphor as part or all of a theoretical framework (Sharma 1 Nov, 2005; Koloto 2003; Mafile'o 2005). Koloto (2003) explains this metaphoric model with reference to a report to the Ministry of Justice:

Konai Helu Thaman's metaphor of *kakala* whereby the processes involved in research are likened to the processes involved in the making of *kakala*. These include:

*Toli* – the gathering of *kakala*. This would involve the researchers gathering and selecting the data, reviewing the interview data and preparation for analysis.

*Tui* – the making or weaving of the *kakala*. The actual process of putting together the data collected, discussions of the results and presenting them in the form of a final report.

*Luva* – The giving away of the *kakala*. This final process involves the presentation to the Ministry of Justice, key stakeholders and the participants in the research.

However, she also details its limitations in this instance in that the principal researcher should *tui* or weave the *kakala* together and *luva* (i.e. give it away) when it is completed. In Koloto's study, she worked with a team of Pasifika researchers supported by an Advisory Group, and the final product needed the expertise of the members of the Advisory Group to critique and make comments. She concluded that the *kakala* is more appropriate for the processes involved in the data collection of

researcher initiated research projects and other metaphorical frameworks such as the Cook Islands Tivaevae model and the Samoan Fa'afaletui model provided better frameworks for her report. Since my research was researcher initiated the *kakala* metaphor was applicable to the entire research process.

Thaman (2003b) uses the Tongan metaphor of *kakala* to underpin her own personal philosophy of teaching and research and her work as the UNESCO Chair. It is a useful metaphoric framework that counteracts what Thaman sees as the “flight from our cultural roots, from nature and from one another” (2003) that Tongans have experienced as a result of newly acquired views. She explains the metaphor fully:

Sourced from my own (Tongan) culture, *kakala* refers to fragrant flowers woven together to make a garland, and has many equivalent concepts in Oceania such as *lei* (Hawai'i), *hei* (Cook Islands) or *salusalu* (Fiji). There exist in Tonga and elsewhere, etiquette and mythology associated with *kakala* making. *Kakala* embodies physical, social and spiritual elements and reflects the integrated nature of indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems. *Kakala* are a weaving together of a variety of disparate elements which partake in a celebration of life, culture and aesthetic pleasure. Futa Helu (Wood 1998) has distinguished the *kakala* from that archetype of European flora, the rose, arguing that the *kakala* is more than a sweet smelling flower – it has the sanction of the ages as *kakala* came from Pulotu, the mythical abode of the dead and the gods in Polynesian mythologies.

There are three major processes associated with *kakala*: *toli*, *tui* and *luva*. *Toli* is the collection and selection of flowers and other plant material that are required for making a *kakala*: this would depend not only on the occasion but also on the person(s) for whom a *kakala* is being made. It will also depend on the availability of the materials themselves. *Tui* is the making or weaving of a *kakala*. The time taken to do this would also depend on the complexity and intricacies of the flowers and the type of *kakala* being made. In Tonga, flowers are ranked according to their cultural importance with the *heilala* having pride of place because of the mythology associated with it. *Luva* is the final process and is about giving the *kakala* away to someone as a sign of

peace, love and respect. *Kakala* provides me with a philosophy as well as a methodology of teaching and research that is rooted in my culture but has equivalents in others. *Kakala* requires me to utilise knowledge from global as well as Pacific (indigenous) cultures in order to weave something that is meaningful and culturally appropriate for my students. This is important because teaching, in my view, is essentially autobiographic: as teachers, we give of ourselves when we share our knowledge, skills and values with our students. If this is motivated by compassion, a commitment to peaceful and harmonious relationships, and respect for one another's cultures, then sharing will lead to wisdom and sustainable relationships (p15).

Before collecting any data, I sought Thaman's permission to use the *kakala* metaphor (via email) which she readily granted.

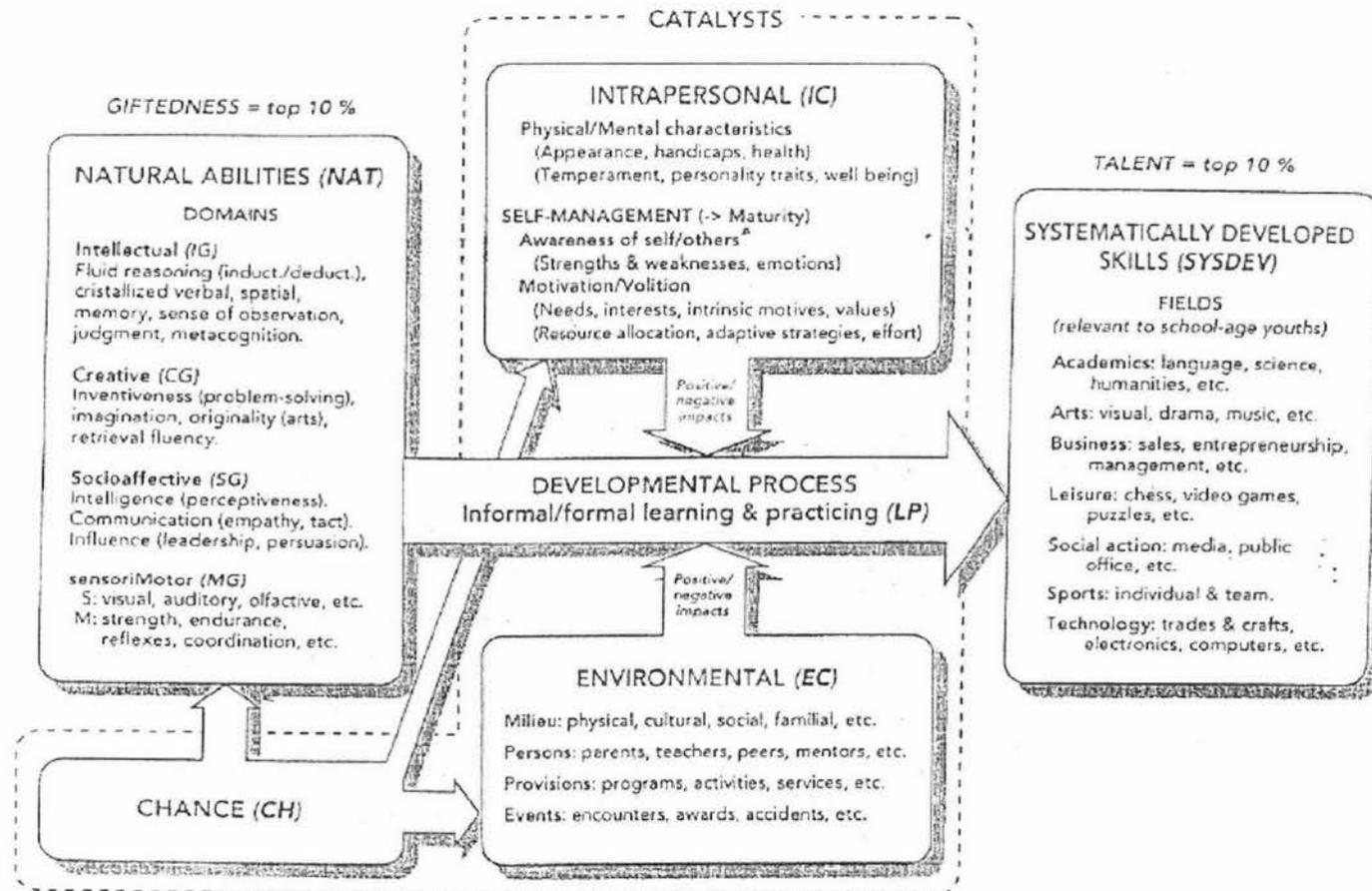
I have applied the metaphor in several ways. First, I used it as a framework for the research methodology where *toli* was the considered selection of the research approach, participants and data collection, *tui* was the analysis and presentation of the data in the thesis and *luva* the giving of the thesis to the education community and the Pasifika participants. Secondly, I viewed the two young women at the centre of the case studies as *kakala* created by the complex processes outlined in Gagne's DMGT model. The title of the thesis is derived from this adaptation of the metaphor.

### **3.3 Gagne's DMGT:**

As early as 1985, Francoys Gagne articulated a clear differentiation between giftedness and talent, claiming giftedness was associated with domains of abilities which foster and explain exceptional performance in varied fields of activities, that is, talents (Gagne 1985). At this point he critiqued the models generated by Renzulli and Cohn. His objections to Renzulli's model, still commonly used in New Zealand schools, were that it did not account for underachievement of the gifted and relied on creativity which may be regarded as a major determinant of exceptional performance in certain fields of endeavour but not in all. He dismissed Cohn's model on the basis that, in its hierarchical structure, one to one relations between abilities and talents tallied poorly with reality where the emergence of talent in many areas involves

several abilities. He felt that an adequate model of giftedness and talent must allow for multidirectional connections between abilities and talents. He also recognised that catalysts such as environment, personality and motivation were critical in giftedness developing into talent/s. The initial rudimentary graphic representation presented giftedness as exceptional competence in one or more domains of ability (listed simply as intellectual, creative, socio-emotional and sensori-motor and others) and talent as exceptional performance in one or more fields of human activity (no specific examples given). I chose to use Gagne's much later fleshed out version of the model (Gagne 2003) as an appropriate theoretical framework for the research as it allowed the exploration of school, family and culture (amongst other factors) as catalysts in talent development. I took care to avoid deficit theorising because I wanted to isolate success factors rather than barriers, yet the model does show how catalysts may act in a negative way upon talent development hence explaining underachievement. Even 'successful' students may not be fully realising their potential so this aspect of the model was still important.

Gagne's model accommodates the use of the *kakala* metaphor in that *toli* can be the natural abilities (materials) collected together at the moment of conception, *tui* the developmental process and influence of catalysts (weaving) and *luva* the recognised talent in a field of human endeavour (giving away of the finished product).



Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT.US.2003)

### 3.4 Ethical considerations:

(Hau'ofa 1999) articulates the agony of Pasifika peoples who have been exploited and marginalised by western ideas and their lives complicated by their migrant status:

Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still; Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean. We must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed places and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again and take away our freedom. (p37)

Consultation with the research participants, their families and communities was imperative to the success of this research. It had to be empowering to the participants, gifted Tongan students now and in the future and in no way confining. The benefit of the study in enabling teachers and learners to enter partnerships that would enhance achievement, needed to be clear in all stages of the research from the proposal through to *luga*, the dissemination of the final report. Information sheets in both languages were provided in advance of interviews. Written consent was sought from each interview participant and confirmed orally at the outset of every interview. Consent forms were written in Tongan and English. Written consent was also sought before any records/school reports, other relevant documents/items or observations were incorporated into the data collection. Participants had the option of withdrawing at any point.

Confidentiality has been assured with the use of pseudonyms for all participants and institutions involved but, while gathering data, the identity of the gifted and talented students at the centre of the research was known by the others contributing to the profile of that particular student. Using snowball sampling all other participants were selected in consultation with each student and their guardians.

Any researcher in the Tongan community needs an understanding of *'uluangaanga faka-Tonga*, particularly the relative status of members of one's *kāinga* (extended family) and between *'eiki* (those of chiefly rank) and *tu'a* (commoners). This was particularly important with Julia who was generally interviewed in her home with her father present. This researcher is also aware of the status accorded to an educated *Palangi* and documented insights into the possible influence of this. In all interview situations involving Tongan people food was given to them to say thank you. Food is one outward indication of *fetokoni'aki* (reciprocity - an essential Tongan value). The published thesis will be presented to the participants, in person if possible, and accompanied by *ngatu*, mats or food to show my gratitude for their involvement. My awareness of such customary ways to show appreciation as well as my ability to talk about people and places the participants knew, my own Tongan family and experiences living and working in Tonga, were paramount in establishing credibility. I was honest about my limited knowledge of Tongan language but able to assure participants that, when they chose to express themselves in Tongan, I had people at home who would ensure I understood the full meaning.

The fact that the research was focused on the catalysts that result in success, rather than barriers to achievement, meant that families felt *pōlepole* (proud) and there was little danger of people feeling *fakamā* (ashamed) by any of the details revealed. However, many gifted students succeed because of personal qualities such as motivation, volition, self-management and personality or environmental factors outside of school or chance, rather than any efforts on the part of the educational institutes with which they are involved. Therefore, the school's anonymity has been also preserved to ensure no negative judgements can be made concerning them.

The Pasifika Education Research Guidelines (Ministry 2001) were consulted frequently in the design of the research, the selection of data gathering tools and during the collection and analysis of the data. These broad pan-Pacific guidelines were easily adapted for the more specific Tongan context.

The research proposal was written according to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluation involving Human Participants (Ministry 2005). An application for ethics approval was

submitted to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee on 30 May, 2005. Provisional approval was granted on the 4 July, 2005 and, after amendments were completed, final approval was granted on 5 August, 2005. Surprisingly, the amendments required concerned the wording of letters to school Principals and non-selected nominees, not cultural issues. Suitable participants could only be located once ethics approval was obtained. I had been granted study leave from 2 May 2005 until 23 September 2005 and it was frustrating that the long ethics approval process consumed much of that time in which I had hoped to have the data both collected and analysed. I spent most of July in Tonga where I had intended to interview Tongan educators about their notions of giftedness. The lack of ethics approval thwarted this plan. However, I did talk informally with many people during that time and developed ideas about the concepts of *ako*, *'ilo* and *poto*, all essential qualities of giftedness and talent from a Tongan perspective, and discovered in local bookshops, and on friends' bookshelves, literature unobtainable elsewhere. This informal interaction qualified as participant observation and, according to May (2001), is the least likely method to lead a researcher to impose their own reality on the world they wish to explore and explain. He believes researchers must become part of the cultural environment they seek to understand as only then will they understand the actions of people who produce cultures, defined as the symbolic and learned aspects of human behaviour which include customs and language. The time in Tonga, with the research problem and questions uppermost in my mind, enabled me to be more empathetic with Tongan participants later; better able to *tui*, appreciating the complexity, uniqueness and beauty of the materials being gathered for the *kakala*.

### **3.5 Selecting participants:**

As soon as ethics approval was obtained letters were sent to the Principals of twenty-six secondary schools in areas of the North Island known to have high numbers of Pasifika people which had at least 10% Pasifika students. The statistics were gleaned from a search of ERO reports from those available on the Ministry of Education website. The letters to Principals (see appendix A) were accompanied by a letter to parents/guardians including a nomination form to be sent back to me (see appendix B). There were two quick replies- both polite refusals by Principals to participate due to other research commitments. I was dismayed at the lack of response and worried I

was not even going to get past the gatekeepers or that the research design was flawed. However, within three weeks I had an email recommending a Year 13 girl and saying she had been given the letter to parents/guardians, information sheets and nomination form (see Appendix C and D), a nomination form returned from a parent with the details of a Year 13 girl talented in music, sport and leadership and a phone call from a deputy principal with another possibility – yet another Year 13 girl. One of the girls did not return a nomination form and the two remaining nominees, one Tongan born and one New Zealand born residing at different ends of the North Island, became the central participants in the case study.

Further participants were nominated by the girls after the first interview. They were then contacted and interviewed at times and places suitable for them.

### **3.6 Data gathering and analysis: completing *toli***

Any and all methods of gathering data, from testing to interviewing, can be used in a case study (Merriam 1998). Triangulation involves gathering data from at least three different sources and ensures validity. This study used as sources interviews, documents and creative products, observations, questionnaires and my research diary.

Initial interviews with the girls were conducted using topic guides. These, like all other interviews, were recorded with an iriver MP3 player, an unobtrusive and high quality method. At the end of these interviews the girls nominated other people to interview whom they thought could contribute ideas about their talent development. These people included teachers, friends and parents. The girls were also interviewed again. All interviews and observations were conducted during September 2005 at times and places specified by the participants. MP3 files were converted to WAV files and I transcribed them using an Olympus transcription kit. Written consent to use the data was obtained (see Appendix H).

I obtained permission from the students and guardians to access school records, although in one school, the Principal denied access. Documents such as school reports and records of learning were sourced either from these records or from the girls. Julia also provided artwork and song and Seini ongoing email interaction. Limited

observations (see Appendix E) were conducted of the girls in their school settings. Seini was observed briefly in a classroom setting and Julia while conducting the choir. A one page questionnaire (see Appendix F) was given to all teachers who had not been nominated as interviewees. My own research diary included detailed reflection about the data gathering methods and the data itself and ensured the reflexive examination of research practices was a fundamental part of the data gathering process (May 2001).

Transcripts were annotated using the comment function in word with the DMGT catalysts and *'ulungaanaga* in mind. The themes of opportunities, achievement and leadership (initially two separate themes but overlapped so often in the data that they became inseparable), personal qualities, motivation and identity emerged and I then used a system of coloured sticky labels to code the themes in the transcripts and other data. Analysis of each theme in relation to each central participant was used to write a descriptive, narrative account of the findings. This included quite a few direct quotes of the participants to capture their actual voice. This seemed particularly important when attempting to capture the cultural nuances inherent in non-standard English. The data was also interpreted in poetic dialogue as an attempt to capture the emotional complexity of the situation of gifted Tongan students. Poetry requires an emotional response from the reader in the same way that students require an emotional connection with their teachers. The poems are presented without explanation – the reader is required to engage with the data from their own inner emotional and intellectual places. The data was also analysed in light of the DMGT and personalised versions of the model created. These personalised models showed clearly that catalysts, gifts and talents can be culturally specific. Ultimately the data was used to justify recommendations to schools that would benefit gifted and talented Tongan students.

**This chapter has explained the methodology used to construct and interpret the ethnographic case studies which form the core of the research.**

## Chapter 4

### The students and their schools:

**Seini and Julia: two very different seventeen year old young women situated at different ends of the North Island of New Zealand, but bound together forever in this document, having been identified as “gifted and talented” students by their schools. So who are these exceptional young women who have found their way into an academic analysis of gifted and talented students in New Zealand?**

**4.1 Seini**, tall, attractive, dignified, controlled, Seventh Form (Year 13) prefect in a Christian boarding school where she was enrolled for year 12 and 13 as one of a small number of female students. Prior to this she had attended two urban, decile ten, single sex schools, one public and one private. An academically high achieving student who was studying Level 3 Classics, Economics, Geography, English, Travel and Tourism and Website Design in 2005. She had completed Level 3 History in 2004 as a Year 12 student achieving some standards with excellence. The school does not generally accelerate students but the timetable did not allow her to do level 2 History and level 1 results had been outstanding so she was able to skip a level.

A competent sportsperson she played basketball, soccer and rugby at school. When in year 12 she was the only girl in the basketball team, as well as its coach, and her form teacher thought “she’d just had enough of being the only girl playing basketball” when “she got a lot of flack for that” and she didn’t play in Year 13 although it was also to focus on her studies. Her leadership skills flourished when she became leader of the girls’ Tongan cultural group in Year 12 and she was appointed school prefect in Year 13.

Seini was a full time boarder and all interviews with her were conducted at the school. Her parents were not involved in the research process with the Deputy Principal signing consent forms. Seini’s Tongan born parents were both from well known, respected, educated commoner families and had lived in New Zealand since they were university students. Both have degrees and white collar employment although one was a theology student at the time of the research. Seini was acutely aware of her middle

class background, very different to most other students at her school. Her only sibling, a younger brother, was also a boarder at the school. She was bilingual but English was spoken at home and her family attended a palangi church. One of her teachers described her as *anga faka-pālangi* (living the pālangi way).

Seini's controlled, calm, guarded demeanour fascinated me. Her wariness clearly links to her perfectionism as revealed in the data, and she would sometimes seek clarification of my deliberately open questions until she was asking more questions than giving information! However she was very forthcoming in areas she was passionate about and I respected the boundaries she drew. We had email contact after the data collection period and she was very interested in the thesis writing process.

#### **4.2 Seini's school:**

Seini was a senior border in a faith-based boarding school of about 380 students of whom 35 are female. The students were predominantly Polynesian, particularly Maori and Tongan. The school's educational style purports to:

- Regard education as 'whole of life', 'whole of person'; holistic
- Evoke gifts rather than provide information. Seek achievement in ways which acknowledge skill and progress, individual gifts, contribution and effort; not solely determined in academic and sporting terms
- Look to empower for living
- Seek to avoid undue competition, coercive method, use of violence and dominating power

In this atmosphere Seini was nominated by the school as 'gifted and talented' on the strengths of her leadership, academic achievement, public speaking, basketball coaching, organisational skills and cross-cultural relationships. There were no formal identification procedures for academically gifted and talented students in the school with them "noticed more by default than design" according to the Deputy Principal. However, with regard to sporting excellence, he reports that "talent is identified very soon in the piece and the kids are promoted through the teams and things so there's automatic recognition" and that the school is particularly blessed with good coaching and mentoring people.

**4.3 Julia**, Jules at school, Suli (from Sulia, the Tongan form of Julia) at home: a warm, smiling beautiful second child of very supportive parents who migrated to New Zealand when she was four. An older brother was also born in Tonga while two younger sisters and a younger brother were born in New Zealand. Her father, a bus driver and her mother, a carer in a rest home, worked hard doing shift work supported by an aunt who lived with them.

The family own their own home in an urban area some distance from the faith based girls' school Julia and the next youngest sister attend. Their home is a little dilapidated but clean, comfortable and welcoming. The dining room where we conducted interviews was next to the kitchen separated by a bench and was the hub of their busy household. Various religious icons, Tongan artefacts on the walls, a piano, children's cups and awards on display reflect the main concerns of the household – church, Tongan culture, music and education.

Julia was initially nominated by her school's Principal as "outstanding in the music field" and "House Captain". Her very proud father endorsed this and elaborated in his nomination: "*taleniti pe ki he hiva, lava kene tataki ha falukunga kakai 'oku vahe kene tokanga 'i oku toe sipoti*" (she is a talented singer, can lead a group of people and plays sport).

In 2005 Julia was studying Level 3 Art History, English, Art (painting), Music and Statistics. However, her academic performance had been variable and heavily affected by being too busy with extra-curricular things according to her music teacher<sup>6</sup> who believes she tends to over commit herself being somebody who likes to do "absolutely everything" except "that written stuff." Jules' list of achievements supports the emphasis on extra curricular achievements, beginning with her Form two award of a cup for extra-curricular achievement, followed by various high level awards (some at regional and national competitions) for public speaking, dragon boating, netball, barbershop quartet, conducting a barbershop chorus, other choirs and cultural groups. She plays the guitar and piano, sings and is very involved in the local church which

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<sup>6</sup> Julia's music teacher is referred to throughout the research as Ms. F.

often uses Tongan language and facilitates a Tongan community approach to worship and ritual.

She was one of the few Pasifika students at her primary school (although she says there are many more now) and the only Tongan Year 13 student at her high school where she was a prefect and house leader.

#### **4.4 Julia's school:**

A school of about 800 students with, according to a document prepared by the Deputy Principal on improving outcomes for Pacific Island students, 14% Pacific Island students in 2005. No further breakdown into ethnic groups was available. This document claims that “the school celebrates the diverse cultures that make up our community at special occasions. Speeches of welcome are made by students in their own languages. Songs and prayers, including actions, are performed in Maori and other Pacific languages by all students. The spiritual aspects of the college contribute towards a sense of self-worth and shared values. Students from all ethnic backgrounds are elected into leadership roles such as Head Girl and House Leaders by the student body and teachers.” For an accomplished Tongan orator such as Julia, the same report indicates that such a skill is well supported as “to watch a successful Maori or Pacific Island speaker deliver an animated ten minute speech to 800 plus students and teachers in a language relatively few understand is awe-inspiring. The audience is attentive and respectful, the applause long and genuine.” The report claims “Maori and Pacific Island students excel at sport, song and dance” at the school but that these aspects of their talents and culture have not been allowed to develop at the expense of academic studies. Julia echoes this when she says about music at the school “it’s not actually a big thing, it’s more big on ... like English and all that, so there are heaps of people who achieve in those areas and in music if we find talent it’s usually big talent.” But she goes on to say “there are heaps of girls that are real talented at music but some of them choose to take up science or something so they don’t really lean towards music but I chose music because I love it so!” Her passion for music, her big talent, seems to have overridden the school’s desire to curb the development of such talent in order to maximise academic performance.

For Julia's father the school has "done well, a lot for her" but, most importantly, reinforced "the Tongan way" / "respect" and states emphatically "that's the only thing I like" / "better than everything." He believes other schools "won't do that respect as they do now at..." and the most important things are "both religion and respect." Julia's immaculate uniform, neatly tied back hair, courteous demeanour and deference to authority indicate an important meshing of school and family values.

**This section introduced Seini and Julia and their school context. The research is a snapshot of their lives as 17 year old gifted young Tongan women in New Zealand. While the study focuses on a very short period of their lives it weaves their culture, their home lives and their early experiences in order to create a rich description.**

## Chapter 5

### The Tongan Way

**The world of the Tongan child in New Zealand, or elsewhere, is deeply affected by *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*. In order for educators to positively enable talent development of Tongan students some understanding of this epistemological viewpoint is needed.**

#### 5.1 Valued human qualities of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*, the Tongan way.

2005 in a letter to the Matangi Tonga, a contemporary Tongan news magazine, a young Tongan university student in Auckland expressed his disgust at the behaviour of a protestor outside 'Atalanga, the King of Tonga's residence in Auckland, saying "He is atomized by the masses of society following like a dog to the beckoning of a ignoramus and by doing so loses his cultural traditions, the sweet Tongan ingredients, which distinguishes US from the REST" (Lalo Casia Crew, 2005). These "sweet Tongan ingredients" are the metaphorical expression of the complex socialisation process *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga/to'onga faka-Tonga* or 'the Tongan way'. Futa Helu, (1999; 1999; 1999e; Helu 1999f), long time director of Atenisi University, defines cultural traditions as those forms of behaviour such as activities, beliefs, values and ideals, that change so slowly that they give the impression of not changing at all and are so because they are promoted throughout society. He maintains that the complete set of such forms of behaviour for a given social group or society is the culture of that group. Morton Lee (2003) reports that many Tongans assert that to be "really" Tongan a person must have not only Tongan ancestors, but also a knowledge of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*, or the Tongan Way. She explains that this concept encompasses all values, beliefs, and practices that are regarded as elements of Tongan culture and tradition. However, unlike Helu, she believes that such a broad definition is open to interpretation and is constantly under negotiation and reconstruction and she does not regard competence in Tongan language as essential. Furthermore, she believes that any attempt to list and measure the criteria that define Tongan identity would be futile as each individual has their own definition of that identity shaped by their social/cultural background and life experiences. For instance, Seini and Julia are

both proud to be Tongan yet coming from quite different backgrounds, have quite different exposure to, and understanding of, *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*. However, both girls crave leadership roles and in order to be seen as *poto* by other Tongans, and therefore have influence in their communities, they need to have some understanding of certain elements that are widely regarded as essentially Tongan, even though some of these elements are contested and subject to transformation (Morton Lee 2003).

These elements are:

***Feohi:*** ideals of closeness and togetherness (Morton 1996). This entails the interactions with immediate and extended family and the maintenance of kinship ties which promote an understanding of the hierarchical roles within the *kāinga*. This will also involve knowledge of language which brings a deeper understanding of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* and easy access to Tongan community functions and events. Within families each member has clearly defined roles and obligations based on *fetokoni 'aki* (the concept of reciprocity) and depending on their birth order, status, education level and access to resources (often aligned with opportunities afforded through migration).

***Faka'apa'apa:*** respect. This is a defining feature of all social relations which involves deference to those of higher status. It can be broadly seen as general good manners or in *tapu* ridden particular situations such as the traditional respect children should show their father by not touching his head, using his personal belongings that touch his body (clothes, gloves, shoes etc.), sharing his food or drink or being overly familiar with him. There are many *tapu* associated with brother/sister relationships (including all cousins, second cousins and relations of the same generation) and in Seini's boarding school these cultural traditions were used to define the relationships between male and female students although she felt the boys at the school were not as respectful as they should be. However, her friend Lopeti explained respect as "the way you act in front of your Tongan sisters and that 'cos that's the way I was brought up. I wasn't allowed to watch TV with my sisters and that kind of...all those other stuff..." That "stuff" includes not swearing, any kind of sexual references or banter, going into your sisters' rooms, girls not wearing shorts or other revealing clothes around their brothers, viewing sexuality (including kissing) in the media. These taboos are often broken inadvertently in New Zealand high schools and I remember

the shame felt by two young cousins (one male, one female) of my husband's, both in the same Year 13 English class, studying Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale. They had only been in New Zealand for a year and had come to me for English tutoring. Their problems with the text went well beyond difficulties with the language and I had to tutor them separately in order to discuss the underlying sexual issues. While teaching in Tonga I had taken a senior class to a film chosen for its apparent lack of sexual content and was horrified when the hero and heroine unexpectedly kissed near the end of the film and several of the boys got up and walked out as they had female cousins in the theatre. However, the incident that most emphasised the strictness of brother/sister taboos for me was my soon-to-be husband's horror when I gave his young female cousin a wedding invitation to deliver to her parents.

Lopeti's way of coping at school is to "just ignore the girls" and "don't care about them" and many Tongan families in New Zealand have relaxed these taboos. My own children happily climb all over their father, watch TV, bathe and swim together. However, my seven year old daughter will never be allowed to sleep in the garage loft with her brother and his friends and swearing at each other is a punishable offence. As Julia said of her parents "they've just sort of adapted to both worlds" and many Tongan parents have made many such adaptations to the Tongan way.

***Talangofua:*** obedience, listening properly and carrying out orders unquestioningly. Submissiveness as a sign of respect and obedience is a positively valued quality (Morton 1996) and children's lives should be *mo 'uifakaongoongo* (a life of waiting for instructions). Obedience to parents is first and foremost but this extends to all other authority within Tongan social hierarchy including the church. Such submissiveness can be maintained through harsh physical punishment (Kavapalu 1993) and is an area of direct conflict with *Pālangi* childrearing practice and, sometimes, New Zealand laws.

***Fluency in Tongan language:*** Young New Zealand-born Tongans may not consider fluency in the Tongan language essential to *anga faka-Tonga*. Seini, when asked if you have to speak Tongan to be Tongan, immediately responded "no" and (Morton Lee 2003) claims that young people are more willing to allow for lack of language. However, as fluency in Tongan language enables understanding of uniquely Tongan

concepts, including those encompassed by *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*, it seems to be a key element in defining Tongan identity. Despite Seini's adamant declaration here, she has gone on to study Tongan language at university, perhaps realising that she must be competent in the language to fulfil her ambition of being politically useful to Tongan women. The more Tongan language I learn, the more I understand about Tongan people and culture. Language is the paramount vehicle for culture, history and symbolic thought. Maori in New Zealand have realised that without Te Reo their culture, their identity as a people, would disappear – some Tongans have also come to this conclusion (Taufe'ulungaki 1993; Thaman 1996; Taufe'ulungaki 2003; Ministry 2005) and Tiatia, considering the situation of New Zealand-born Pasifika young people reports that a loss of one's language means a loss of culture, thus a displacement of identity (1998).

***Fatongia:*** duty. *Fatongia* involved the serfdom of commoners to chiefs until the 1862 Code of Laws but now commonly refers to obligations between kin which may involve remittances sent by migrants to family in Tonga. These remittances are generally driven by the concept of *fetokoni 'aki* (helping one another) and are a tangible marker of the love and respect between remitters and recipients. Evans (2001) explains that gift exchange is organised through the concepts of *'ofa* (love and generosity), *faka 'apa 'apa* and *fetokoni 'aki*, all essential elements of the Tongan way. *Fetokoni 'aki*, the quintessential form of generalised reciprocity, is often singled out by Tongans as the defining characteristic of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* with any and all social ties being best expressed through *fetokoni 'aki*. To practise *fetokoni 'aki* is to show mutual *'ofa* sometimes referred to as *'ofa faka-Tonga*. Gift giving often involves crops, fish, pigs and other foodstuffs. A family who has provided a feast will redistribute the left over food (usually plenty) to those who contribute food or labour or attend the feast. During funerals thousands of dollars worth of food, cash and *koloa* given to the family of the deceased will be carefully redistributed in accordance with the rank and status of those involved.

***'Ofa:*** A complex manifestation of the theme of love and the overriding value of Tongan morality – the reason for their behaviour and institutions. It encompasses love, reverence, honour and humbleness (Kavaliku 1977). Obedience, a sense of duty

and reciprocity are all derived from *'ofa*. Christianity in Tonga requires *faka'apa'apa* for God and God gives *'ofa* in return (Evans 2001).

*Anga 'ofa* (a loving nature), *anga faka'apa'apa* (a respectful disposition), *mamahi'i me'a* (zealousness in a good cause to the point of pain), *tauhi vaha'a* (maintaining good relations), *lototo* (to be humbly willing, deferential but kindly committed) were held up as core values in Tongan culture by Rev. Dr. 'Asinate F. Samate in her keynote address to the 11<sup>th</sup> Tongan History Conference in Melbourne (2005).

The mastery of Tongan dance, the preparation and cooking of traditional foods, the wearing of traditional clothing such as *ta'ovala* and *kiekie*, the production of *koloa* (mats, *tapa* etc.) and carvings, the *kava* circle, the composing of songs and poems, the skill of an orator in the pulpit, or at a *fono* or feast, are the most visible signs of Tongan culture. However, these inconstant human cultural expressions are deeply embedded in *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* and while in an isolated context they may still be a thing of beauty, their meaning is diminished without an understanding of their bedrock, the Tongan way. Such “sweet ingredients” (Lalo Kasia Crew 2005) as these cannot be fused into a *poto* human being without *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* to bind, shape them and define their purpose – to live as an effective person (Evans 2001) within their environment.

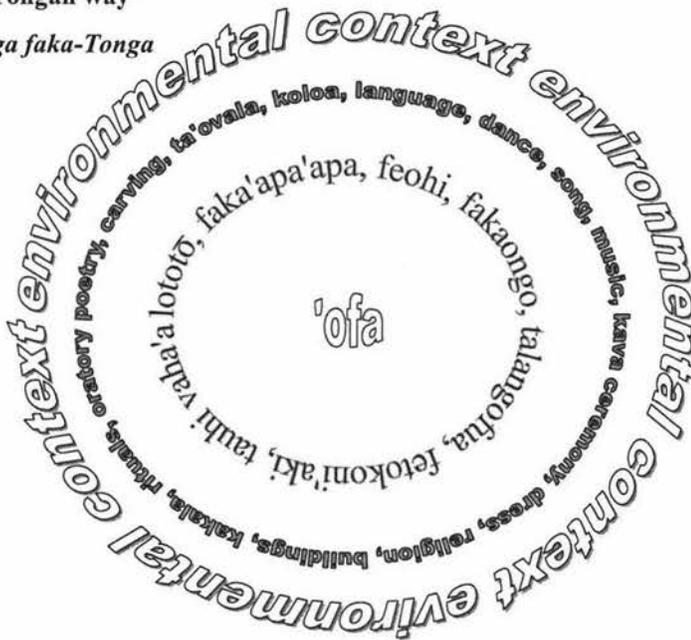
**This section has explained the core values of Tongan culture on which Tongan traditions, behaviours and beliefs are founded.**

## 5.2 A diagrammatic representation:

Tongan culture can be represented diagrammatically:

The “Tongan way”

*To'onga faka-Tonga*



If the outer layer, the environment, changes, other layers will change in response to the altered life experiences. Each person's sense of the Tongan way will be unique and will alter during their lifetime. Traditions or customs are generated empirically, being those ways of doing things, beliefs held etc. which we find to work in our particular geographic or social environment. Customs are generally environment-specific. Cultural traditions can cease to work in new or changed environments (Helu 1999g).

The model above can apply to both Seini and Julia although their lived experience of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* will be entirely different because of the differing outer layer. Julia's experience will have many of the elements of the diagram constructed here but Seini's will be quite different with concepts/understandings altered by *palangi* influences in her environment. Both girls identify as Tongan and their giftedness is demonstrated in ways valued by Tongans – through dance, music, oratory – despite their different epistemological viewpoints.

Tongan parents and communities need to be wary of intolerance of inevitable cultural change and support young people trying to secure their Tongan identities rather than deride them as *fie pālangi* or *pālangi loi*. Gifted young women such as Julia and Seini flourish with an acceptance of their ‘difference’ and many Tongans may then benefit from their willingness to contribute to their families and communities, their highly developed understanding of reciprocity/*fetokoni ‘aki*.

**The circular nature of the diagram presented in this section gives a clear representation of the relative importance of the core values in *To‘onga faka-Tonga*. Used during staff professional development where I have been facilitating, it is a diagram that has resonated well with *pālangi*, Maori and Pasifika teachers as they try to understand how knowledge of a child’s culture can be incorporated into pedagogy. They see that, because they can adapt it to fit their own culture, it has validity.**

## Chapter 6

### 6.1 Findings:

**This section discusses the data as it applied to the themes of opportunities, achievement and leadership, personal qualities, motivation and identity. These themes have been considered in relation to the DMGT as well as *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*.**

### 6.1 Opportunities:

*Taka 'i lalo hākanga.*

**Living under choreographers.**

*'Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha 'oku tofanga 'I ha fu'u lelei ko 'ene nofo tonu'i he feitu'u ko ia, 'o hangē ko ha taha 'oku lalalo holo 'i ha feitu'u 'oku fai ai ha faiva.*

Someone who benefits from being in the right place at the right time, as in someone who becomes a good dancer by following a choreographer (Mahina 2004).

Gagne's DMGT includes as one of its components a long process of learning and practice (LP) as well as the catalysts of intrapersonal factors, environmental factors and chance (Gagne 2003). The opportunities students have to develop gifts into talents are influenced by the effects of these catalysts on the learning and practice process.

Gagne believes in the "primacy of chance" (2003) in that it has the greatest causal impact on the emergence of talent, although he recognises that each talented person follows a unique path to excellence. It is chance that gave Seini and Julia their particular genetic heritage including shared Tongan ancestry. However, he relegates environmental influences, including culture and religion, to the bottom of the causal hierarchy. The extent to which culturally specific traits and behaviours are inherited is a contentious area but, in the cases of Seini and Julia, their culture is critical in their pathway to excellence.

Families are generally first and foremost provider of opportunities for talent development. Seini's parents came to New Zealand for their own education and

education continues to be one of the most significant reasons for moving temporarily or permanently away from Tonga (Morton Lee 2003). Julia's parents migrated to New Zealand, like many other Tongans, as a way of improving life chances for the family and a way of accessing opportunities overseas, particularly for the future through education. King George, the first King of modern Tonga, responsible for the 1875 constitution which still shapes the laws of the country, alongside missionaries, gave education a high priority. King George was convinced that the only thing that separated white man from others in ability and wisdom was their possession of superior knowledge (Lātūkefu 1974). It is this opportunity to access such 'superior knowledge' that has supported much of Tongan migration. The idea that western knowledge was 'superior' has recently disturbed Tongan academics (Thaman 1992; Thaman 1997; Hau'ofa 1999; Taufe'ulungaki 2003; Taufe'ulungaki 2004) as the negative consequences of abandoning traditional culture and knowledge become apparent through social unrest and economic deprivation. Seini and Julia are enmeshed in this post-colonial political arena and influenced by a resurgence of interest in traditional paradigms.

Seini's parents provided her with the opportunities available to many middle class New Zealanders within a small nuclear family. Her first three years of high school were spent in two prestigious girls' schools with some of the best academic results in the country. An avid reader, she had plenty of access to books written in English and although immersed in the English language at home, church and school, she believed her parents offered her a "bi-cultural view" and, while more comfortable and competent speaking English, she was to some extent bilingual. Her parents chose to send her to a boarding school with a strong Tongan cultural dimension in response to her growing need to affirm and explore her Tongan identity and improve her Tongan language skills. Her schooling provided opportunities to develop explore and demonstrate her intelligence, oratory skill, superior motor skills, spirituality, cultural knowledge and leadership.

Seini's well educated and socially successful family in New Zealand and Tonga provided high achieving academic role models. When asked about female role models Seini said "I think I just look to my cousins, the ones you taught in Tonga..." I had taught two of her cousins at Tonga High School – one went on to become a lawyer

and the other a journalist working in broadcasting. Her mother also has a Masters degree and a demonstrated commitment to adult formal learning.

The family also ensured she mastered some Tongan dance forms, particularly *tau'olunga*. *Tau'olunga* can be performed as a solo or group dance, choreographed or unchoreographed to westernised Tongan music. It is the informal dance type performed at almost any gathering and the emphasis is on beauty of movement particularly graceful, soft movements based on the rotation of the lower arm and extension and flexion of the wrist (Kaepler 1993). Tongan dance is seen as *faiva* – any kind of task, feat, craft or performance requiring skill or ability. Kaepler (1993) believes dance is a surface manifestation of the deep structure of society and Tongan dance in particular is a “visual manifestation of social relations” (p9). Seini’s dance skill, while a product of much learning and practice, would not have been possible without the social opportunities provided by her family and Tongan community.

Julia, too, can dance. Her father has taught her, and other children, and she could “do *tau'olunga*, *mā'ulu'ulu*, all the *sōkē*” in a church based group who perform locally and join up with “aunty’s group” in another large city. As with Seini, these culturally specific opportunities have an important impact on the development of talent especially, as discussed elsewhere, with respect to leadership.

Julia’s father was a self taught musician. At school he was interested in music but, once at high school, was streamed into the “*silapa* (syllabus) English” rather than “*silapa* Tongan” where no music was taught. When he came to New Zealand, he explains “the Tongan community, they choose me to be a/to be the choir/choir conductor. That’s where it make my eye open. Don’t know anything about music but I look/have to learn right for my interesting and my talent” always “learning by myself.” He explained that his mother’s family were musical and he “wish to play the piano and things but because not enough time for me...” so he “encouraged the others to do it.” Julia, one of those others, has been supported by her father in all her musical pursuits. All her early opportunities to learn and perform were provided by him at home and within the church community. He also encouraged her to practise regularly and paid for music lessons or instruments when necessary. Julia has “grown up with music” with her father, “the fun, musical, gets you happy guy”, as mentor. Liho-

Baumgardner (1994) maintains that musical behaviour must be valued and nurtured if there is to be successful musical development, let alone gifted development. Her study claims that New Zealand is now moving to establish a national comprehensive music program in the primary system, but the development of Julia's musical ability has been largely facilitated by her family and Tongan community. Primary schools have a long way to catch up on that level of support. Liho-Baumgardner's study concerning primary children recommended that identification checklists for the musically gifted need to be developed especially for those children with low academic ability and high musical aptitude. Secondary schools certainly have more comprehensive music programmes but recognition of musical giftedness is also not guaranteed. Julia's music teacher, when asked about the opportunities her school had provided to develop Julia as a musician, explained that she was doing voice as her first instrument but had she continued with that for level 3 music she wouldn't have passed. Fortunately, chance intervened. Her skill in conducting was identified when her teacher and itinerant choir conductor were occupied in conversation and Jules "just got up and started conducting this piece we'd been working on all year and we sort of turned around and looked and went...hang on a minute! This was the first I'd seen" – "she'd obviously been watching and they got to the end of the piece and it was all held together and we thought wow, so that was the answer. We thought well this is obviously an area where she wants to go..." Since then, Julia has had conducting lessons and conducted the barbershop chorus as well as the choir. Her music teacher maintains that recognising talent is fairly ad hoc but "has to be. For people like her I think. Like you notice what people are good at and if they're into what they enjoy doing." She believed with Julia "it's very hard not to notice that there's some pretty full on talent there" especially as "she's so in your face like, you know, there's/you go to a concert and there's (Julia) like every second item, that kind of thing." In the field of conducting she was considered "quite outstanding" yet chance was the critical factor in providing the opportunity for learning and practising that skill in the formal educational environment.

The opportunities Seini and Julia have had derive from chance and their environment. Although Gagne (2003) believes environmental influences are the least important catalyst for talent development, it is where schools can have some influence.

## 6.2 Achievement and leadership:

### *Haka he langi kuo tau.*

#### **Dance in exuberance.**

*'Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha 'oku i 'alu'alu 'ea pe ko 'ene fiefia 'i he'ene lavame'a.*

Someone who walks on air for joy at achieving something great (Mahina 2004).

Seini and Julia were nominated by their schools who perceived them as 'gifted and talented' in some way. In other words, they had achieved recognisable success within our formal New Zealand secondary school system.

Firstly, both girls were prefects. While The New Zealand Pocket Oxford Dictionary (Deverson 2003) defines a prefect as 'senior pupil in a school, helping to maintain order', most schools have a wider view of the role of a prefect. For instance, Seini had to sign an agreement with her school in which she declared she would be a role model for other students, be an agent of positive change and an enabler, assist with the management of the school and hostels, while 'working with and walking alongside an adult'. The same dictionary defines a leader as a 'person followed by others' and prefects are most certainly expected to be leaders.

Seini and Julia were outstanding leaders in their schools. They were both extremely attractive, well groomed girls who carried themselves with confidence and pride. Seini, according to her form teacher "wanted to shine" with her cultural performance group and Jules' music teacher described her as "an absolute show pony". However, neither girl was arrogant or rude. Julia's school report describes her as "courteous and cooperative", one who "thinks of others first and has an open heart". Seini is described variously as "friendly and polite", "cooperative", "polite, responsible" and "unfailingly polite".

These were young women not afraid to speak their minds and both were highly articulate. However, Julia's oratory skill was more developed in the Tongan language and she was a regional Tongan speech winner and overall winner for the entire Polynesian Speech Competition. She believed she learned public speaking skills from reading the bible and prayers of the faithful at church and her father supported this

saying she learned by “just go listen to talk/talking at the Tongan mass” “and mostly because the priest was preaching in Tongan and she can listen.” Seini was more competent in English and has also ranked highly in inter-school public speaking competitions including a third place in a 2005 Young Ambassadors Award speech competition. Her English teacher described her as “argumentative, expressive and eloquent” as well as a “fearless orator”. She was a member of the school’s first debating team to win a debating competition for twenty years or so. Her handsome athletic friend, Lopeti, claimed “she’s like the only girl who’ll stand up, she’ll just say what she wants” and another teacher claimed she “will always fight for the underdog and voice the opinions of those who cannot/will not speak for themselves.”

Seini and Julia both enjoyed sport and had excellent physical skills. Seini coaching and playing in the boy’s A basketball team was admirable. A focus on study diminished her involvement in sport although she continued to play volleyball and rugby to keep fit and have fun. Seini’s academic achievements were impressive, always near the top of the class, or at the top of the class and if she didn’t get excellence she’d want to do it again. She was awarded Best All Round Girl at her school in her final year.

Julia was very involved in sport throughout her secondary schooling. In her final year her netball team were medal winners in the collegiate competition, she was part of the dragon boating team who were fourth in the nationals and, against her father’s advice, also played rugby. When telling me about winning the Cobblestone Award in Form two for high achievement in extra-curricular activities she indicated her self-awareness “that’s what I actually am more high on than academic.” Still, this has “made them proud” (her family).

Seini formed and led the girl’s cultural group in her school – a school renowned for winning performances in cultural festivals. Her form teacher said that before Seini came to the school “the girls were always part of the group but they would make the costumes and help out at the back” and that it was “her desire and motivation of other people to join in that got them to actually start performing.”

Julia's leadership of the cultural group at her school was also noteworthy even though one teacher claimed that her potential as a leader of Pacific Islander students had been tested though perhaps not maximised. Jules said she "played a big leadership role" for the Polynesian group teaching them Tongan dancing. Her music teacher, Ms F., said "you just have to hand over the reins entirely and just trust her to go with it which has been very hard for me because I like to know exactly what's going on!" Ms F. was initially reluctant to trust her then realised "her standards are really high. She will do what she says she's gonna do" and "if it's not what you want her to do she'll probably go ahead and do it anyway." However, another teacher involved in the organising of the Polyfest wasn't that happy because Jules "wanted to go off and do her own thing and have her own group". Ms F. concluded "she wanted to have her own baby, really. And it's not always gonna/it doesn't always work that way." These conflicts could account for the perception that her leadership in this area was not maximised.

However, Julia's leadership was certainly maximised when conducting the barbershop chorus which came first in the regional competitions two years running (2004/2005) and fifth in the nationals in 2004. It was the only student led chorus and "they should have got a place this year – one of the team let them down very badly – which was quite sad" lamented Ms F. An observation of Jules conducting the chorus at a lunchtime practice in the school chapel revealed her amazing skill in directing eleven other Polynesian girls. Her enthusiasm and warmth complemented her focus with her hands, eyes and frequent one word reminders such as "eyebrows", "posture", "eyes". Her peers listened to her attentively and respectfully. Her music teacher, Ms F., explains "when you see her conduct the choir it's like everything is switched on and that's very much intellectual...but it's still, still the performer." This ability to hold her audience and direct them parallels another observation by Ms F. that "she's not quite a team player. She's a team player if she's the head of the team" yet "she'll work with people and get the best out of them".

Seini and Julia both displayed high levels of empathy. Combined with their well developed communication skills it made them effective leaders and superb role models. Seini's friend Lopeti said "she cares about a lot of students" and "when students come to ask her something she'll help them out and stuff" while her form teacher confirmed this - "she's got a good way of relating to all people of all different

age groups” and “she’s a really nice person and she’s approachable and she’ll talk to everybody but she’s not loud”, “not an extrovert type person.” Another teacher said “she is somewhat reserved and doesn’t display emotion” and yet another teacher claimed she saw Seini “in tears only once when she addressed the Tongan cultural group before performance.” This teacher also declared she was exceptional in her leadership, widely respected by her peers and an outstanding role model and mentor.

Julia was less aloof than Seini and actively cultivated demonstrative relationships with a wide range of people. She had a close group of friends in the seventh form. She claimed “people always say, oh you never think of yourself, you’re always making other people happy” and “when other people are happy, I’m happy!” She had friends in different year levels and declared “I love people! All people. Yeah. Black, white, yellow, green, purple....” She even loved “talking to so called handicapped people”. This loving supportiveness influenced her leadership style: “I’m sometimes leading from the front but I feel more comfortable leading from the back”. Not surprisingly, very similar to the way her parents have led her. Little wonder that her friend Freda declared “she’s just like a mom!” and “you can just relate to her the way she talks to you like she...you just feel like opening up to her and, she leads, the way she leads, like her style is very different from other girls.” Freda was happy to play classical music when Jules was around knowing “she won’t mock me.”

Ms F., unfamiliar with Pasifika cultures, was amazed that Jules was called “Auntie” by many of the other girls and “she calls them cousins and I said to her how many cousins do you actually have? And there’s no difference to her. If they’re actual blood relations or if they’re just people she really cares about.” Her year 12 Religious Studies teacher best summarised her empathetic leadership style: “She is a natural spiritual leader. She displays gospel values in word and deed. She thinks of others first and has an open heart.”

### **6.3 Personal qualities:**

**Go to the inner source  
so that you may listen to the power  
of your inner essence  
and be enlightened.**

**From: 'Go to the mountains'  
(McClutchie 2003)**

As well as the empathy both girls exhibited in their leadership styles, they shared several other personal qualities including competitiveness, determination, perfectionism, spirituality, a need for times of solitude and an individualistic/independent attitude that allowed them to resist 'tall poppy syndrome'.

Seini's form teacher believed Seini's only weakness was that she was too hard on herself and didn't like it when things didn't go her way. For this reason "she's always pushing herself where the others are just happy to go with the flow" and "whatever goal she'll set herself, she'll gain." Four of five of her teachers gave her very high ratings for task commitment and phrases such as "strong desire to succeed", "strive for excellence", "a real desire to do well", "diligent and hardworking", "very high work ethic" abounded in her school reports. The Deputy Principal said "she thinks things out, she has things clearly organised in her mind, she knows what has to be done and, if necessary, she'll do it if nobody else is going to." Seini believed she was driven by her competitiveness and her determined attitude meant she was a favoured competitor in the academic arena.

Julia was also a determined young woman who, although disappointing many of her teachers by not making "the most of opportunities available to her in the classroom" and being "not good on paper" was still driven to succeed. Her art teacher was "impressed with the high level of critical thought" and her music teacher considered her skill "very much intellectual". Jules gave her best to performance, and particularly leading others in performance. Her determination to bring out the best in others reflected her determination to excel in front of an audience.

Both young women were perfectionists. Seini's teachers all commented on her attention to detail and Suli's music teacher noted that "if she's got that connection with what she's doing, then she'll just keep doing it... practising all the time." Perfectionism has a negative side. With Julia it meant focusing on musical areas at the expense of other studies and with Seini it meant she would often write far more than necessary in assignment work.

The spiritual dimension of both girls' lives went far beyond the fact that they attended Christian schools and were regular church goers. Although Seini said "I wouldn't say I was hard out religious" and "if you asked me where this is in the bible I wouldn't be able to tell you", she had an intellectual interest in religion and intended to complete a double degree in Theology and Political studies consciously providing "a religious view to balance the worldly view." Julia was "now realising that church in my life is a big thing" and thought she was a spiritual person. She also professed to a connection with Tonga, where she was born, which was "spiritual."

Both the gregarious Julia and the more socially selective Seini needed solitude at times. When Julia was asked what her best times were her instant response was "Best time? Is just me in my room with my stereo." When reflecting on classroom learning she would "usually do that like after the lesson...just sit there and let it sink in." Seini, as a young child was always very quiet, always reading. Used to a much smaller household than Julia with her large extended family, she had to make time for herself at boarding school – "I just go into my room and close the door". Like Suli, she needed time to reflect, "a kind of time to recuperate, yeah, and gather my thoughts before going to the next subject."

Julia's music teacher and Seini's form teacher both pointed out their immunity to 'tall poppy syndrome'. In Julia's school Ms. F. noted that high achieving Pasifika students "get quite a lot of put downs and peer pressure not to succeed" but that "Julia has taken herself out of that completely." This linked well with another comment she made about Julia "wanting to do her own thing" and being unwilling to settle for what somebody else wants. She remained true to herself. Although brought up 'the Tongan way' with its insistence on respect and sexual taboos, (Julia accepted and openly discussed with her father that she will be a virgin until she marries and have no

boyfriends until she leaves school), Julia was given considerable freedom in her social life and claimed her parents “make us learn our own lessons, like learn from our mistakes.” She was encouraged to be an independent individual. Seini too “just does her own thing” according to her form teacher, “as long as she’s meeting her own standards.” Despite a lot of “teasing and mocking”, from the boys particularly, “it doesn’t worry her in the slightest” and “she doesn’t mind if people don’t like her, it doesn’t bother her at all”.

While they had many similar personal qualities, they were quite different in the way they managed their time and set priorities. Seini had supervised prep each night. She said “I just prioritise the things I like the most so I usually do those first even though I should look at the things I don’t like...” but if it comes to a clash between academic subjects and sport she gave schoolwork priority. She focused very well in the classroom. Her friend Lopeti said “she’s a good girl and...she does her work and stuff. Every time I walk past the class she’s always...doing her work.” Her form teacher elaborated: “she’s highly organised, she uses a diary without fail and writes everything down and ticks things off when they’re done and she’s very meticulous about making sure she has things done at the right time and hands things in on time at the right date, always asking what’s coming up and...very organised” “...if you’ve given her an assessment to do she wants to know the criteria – exactly what you’re looking for so that she can meet those.” “I would say that she expects to be taught correctly, you know, she doesn’t want anybody to muck her around, or, you know, she wants to be given clear instructions at all times and know exactly what’s happening...” Seini was the kind of well organised student who gains maximum benefit from the present NCEA system.

Julia, however, was much more focused on the cultural, social and extra-curricular aspects of schooling. The academic nature of traditional schooling in New Zealand had marginalised her particular talents in terms of recognition through assessment. Her high profile leadership and performance abilities may well have masked the growing gap between her goals “to go to uni” get “a BEd in music” “two degrees” and her teachers’ assessments: “I don’t think she’s so much cut out for university”, the problems being “she’s somebody who very much likes to do absolutely everything”, “...because she’s so good at, you know, the sort of cultural things and organising

people and she's such a great leader, people say...can you come and do this and she'll say yes. And she hasn't learnt to say no yet", "she's actually burnt herself out a lot", "she's exhausted", "she won't get university entry", "she's been too busy with extra-curricular things to put the effort into the actual schoolwork. So...but those were her priorities", "not applied herself consistently in her studies" and "has ability in this subject but needs to do more work". Julia told me her parents protested when she became involved in another extra-curricular activity saying "Why? Why have you done that for? You're already in this and this". However they did not forbid her, and continued to support her believing, as Julia said, that she and her siblings must "learn our own lessons."

When Julia was asked how she sets her priorities she replied: "I've got a diary that I write stuff in, see where things clash and say that I can't do stuff on that day." She did not write lists. Sporting, music and cultural activities filled Julia's diary. These were the passions that fuelled her life and academic pursuits were squeezed off the diary pages! With the talents she has she will surely find recognition and success, but the pathway she takes may well be unconventional in that university may not be an immediate possibility.

#### 6.4 Motivation:

**I'm sure  
someone's helping  
your dreams  
it shows on the  
pressed school uniform  
you wear and  
the coconut oil  
conditioning your hair.**

**From: 'Bus ride from Holeva to Neiafu' (Rasmussen 2003)**

Like many Tongan students (Coxon and Fusitu'a 1998) Seini and Julia are very motivated by a desire to help and please their families.

Julia said "How have I helped my family? ...I've made them proud" and "What motivates me? The two biggies...God and family". Julia was also motivated by a sense of love for her family. This considerateness and regard for her family, the desire to interact harmoniously with them, - *fe 'ofa 'ofaki* - an offspring of *'ofa* - is an underlying feature of traditional Tongan society (Kavaliku 1977). "So by me always worshipping my family and saying that it's because of them that I've got there I'm helping them in that sort of sense". Julia was also aware of, and motivated by, the reasons behind the family migrating to New Zealand. She said - "they came to New Zealand because they tell us it's because they wanted a better future for us" believing "it's the same for any Polynesian family that comes to New Zealand." In a later interview she said "the fact that we've moved from the islands to come here, it's sort of like we've done that move, now let's use it up" "grabbing them (opportunities) and holding on."

Seini, believed her parents "keep pushing and pushing..." Her parents expected her to do well at school and she believed all parents want this. She wanted to do her family name justice and make the family proud. Her parents would sometimes offer "materialistic incentives or they usually put the family pressure on". The family's

academic focus was clear in her mother's displeasure when Seini read books not directly to do with schoolwork.

Seini's form teacher described her parents as "a great support in terms of school. They like to be involved in knowing what she's doing and they always attend school functions and support her in that way." However, she also said Seini "has a lot of internal motivation" and described her as "determined" "always pushing herself" and added that "whatever goal she'll set herself, she'll gain. You know she'll attain them". Seini has very clear goals for herself hoping to "end up being some kind of leadership position especially, hopefully, influencing New Zealand born Tongan women in particular and hopefully in a position where I get to work with a lot of political issues." All Seini's teachers described her as independent and self motivated to a high degree.

Julia had little intrinsic motivation for traditional academic subjects but had plenty for developing her musical talent. Much of this motivation was entrenched in a need for expression of her culture and it is in the areas where school and culture overlapped where she achieved recognition of her talents. Much of her talent development took place within a very supportive family and Tongan church community and when I asked her how much support there was at school for her to express herself through her own culture she replied "I can just do it aye. Maybe when I was third form I wouldn't be able to. I think that was just because of me. But now it's just...aw, nothing. It's just there." Her cultural identity was strong enough to assert itself in the school environment. Tongan oratory was not taught at the school, yet she won the regional Tongan speech competition. The competition included topics like 'Pacific Island teachers – who needs them' and 'Pacific Island education in the twenty first century' enabling Pacific Island students to connect with the subject matter. Her music teacher remembered her "singing some Italian aria kind of thing and it was all pretty average but then she got up with her dad and sang a Tongan song with him on the guitar and I went is that the same person who just sang that other song?" and concluded "you can exactly feel when she is really inspired to do it and if she's not, if it's not her cup of tea, then no matter how much she practices it's just not gonna ..." and that she really needed the cultural context "... otherwise it's a waste of time her doing it and if she is motivated, if she's got that connection with what she's doing, then she'll just keep

doing it.” This teacher saw that she was “driven by the social and cultural side of school.” Ms F. explained that the barbershop chorus (consisting entirely of Polynesian students) which Julia conducts “have to work together so closely...it’s really good for them because it’s something they’re doing that is, I suppose, quite close to what they’re used to... but it’s different as well because it lets them excel” (presumably within the NZ school system). She claimed barbershop was “not something I’m interested in doing” and “unless somebody, unless a student came or somebody popped out of the woodwork to take that it just wouldn’t happen.” Julia “covered that area... and she’s been thinking about coming back next year to do that again.” Without Jules’ leadership, a whole musical area in which Pasifika students excel would be neglected. Jules’ leadership and success with conducting was a direct result of an available, culturally appropriate niche. She was intrinsically motivated by a need to lead and support others and please an audience. “You put her in front of a crowd and she loves it.” (Ms F.) Other teachers too recognised her “exemplary contributions to the life of the college” and that “she has excelled in the cultural activities she has undertaken.” Her important motivators were the desire to express her Tongan culture through music, oratory, dance and working alongside others in choir, team sports or at church. Even the individualistic nature of formal learning in New Zealand schools based on western values did not hamper her talent development. Indeed, she found her unique pathways through school motivated by her intrinsic need to follow her passions.

## 6.5 Identity:

**Then I realised  
that despite the many seas  
the many hills and gullies  
the many moons of time and change  
that separate us  
we are still one in Polynesia  
united more so now than ever  
in our quest for self**

**from: 'Two-in-one' (Simi 2003)**

The issue of identity for Tongan students in New Zealand is often problematic (Pasikale 1998) as a culture contact situation can be accompanied by tension as older people attempt to divert younger people from inevitable culture adaptation. One of the biggest issues facing Pasifika communities is how far their culture can be diluted as successive generations adapt to life in New Zealand (Schaer 2007). Tiatia (1998) believes young Pasifika people face a dilemma – on one hand they are toiling in a predominantly European society that does not seek to understand or fully acknowledge their cultural uniqueness and, on the other hand, within their own societies, they are the silenced Western educated voice, ignored because they may be a threat to cultural traditions. The failure to adhere to *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* may mean that one's identity is in question by those who do (Tiatia 1998). Julia, whose parents speak Tongan almost exclusively at home and have been in New Zealand for less time than Seini's parents, is much surer about her identity as a young Tongan woman than Seini who is troubled by shifting "cultural barriers", traditional restrictions on women and seeing things "differently".

Julia, was extremely competent speaking the Tongan language, sang Tongan songs, read western and Tongan music (which uses a numerical notation system – see appendix I) and had mastered a repertoire of Tongan dances. She was bilingual and spoke whichever language she was addressed in. She was the only Tongan in Year 13 at her school and "very, very proud of that. I just go round telling everyone that I'm Tongan." She still felt very connected to Tonga. "My grandma's still alive and she's

still there, Dad's family's still there. We still know our family there and I hope to go back." However, while kinship ties are the basis of the connection with Tonga, she thought if she'd been brought up the "*Pālangi* way" then "I won't be considering myself as a Tongan New Zealander, I reckon I'll be considering myself as a New Zealand Tongan". She was "brought up Tongan first then adapted into the rest of society." Home was securely Tongan.

The 'Tongan way' is a simple label used by Tongans and non-Tongans for a complex body of knowledge to do with traditions, values, beliefs, practices, social hierarchy and interactions. It encompasses culturally specific ways of understanding and expressing *faka'apa'apa* (respect), *fatongia* (duty), *talangofua* (obedience), *'ofa* (love and generosity), *fetokoni''aki* (reciprocity). When interviewing Julia's father he said to me: "you already know the Tongan way – respect" and went on to say "my children...they already know it. They listen what I am telling them. Do that. Do that. You know. And they do what I tell them to do. Because it's a respect..." In praising Julia's school he explained that it counters behaviour too hard for him to express in English: "*hange ko e / koe fa'a fakatāu ai e children ki he Mum and Dad*". (Children not knowing their place in relation to their parents.) He believed "they can learn a lot from there" in terms of generally knowing their place in relation to others, an essential part of the 'Tongan way' and becoming a *poto* (wise/clever/socially competent) person.

Initially Julia found it difficult to tell me of her achievements because "in the Tongan way it's really humble – like not talk about yourself". When asked how she learned about the Tongan ideas regarding *faka'apa'apa* (respect) she replied "basically from auntie, like the older people" who still say "you know back in the islands you wouldn't be able to do this and this". She believed their ways of being respectful made you a better person. However, while she accepted some traditional ideas she confessed at times she'd say "but that was back in the islands mum" or "leave that, we're in New Zealand now." She acknowledged that "now there's sort of joined with both so they still keep their own rules and stuff but they just...add on, adapting without refusing..." Despite restrictions like "dad is like you're not allowed a boyfriend until you're 18 or like when you leave school", she says "we're all sweet with that" and "we've taken up that (Tongan) culture. Like it's sort of adapted with

our lifestyle here” perhaps because her father believed “they already know we would give them a good example, good advice”.

Her music teacher was “quite interested to see that, instead of kind of rebelling against that expectation (no boyfriends) ... she just accepts it and goes ok what mum and dad says goes. They’re right. Because she actually does, she understands the repercussions of going and doing things and she doesn’t feel that she needs to go and try out, you know, other people’s mistakes, to make the same mistakes again or things like that. So that’s really impressed me actually.”

Julia’s upbringing in the ‘Tongan way’, a consequence of chance and her environment, shielded her well against the possible damage the New Zealand teenage culture of binge drinking and experimentation with drugs and sex can cause. She maintained “I’ve respected myself” and this self-respect, an important intrapersonal quality, has given her a secure platform from which to develop her gifts and present them in talented culturally based performances.

On the other hand, Seini was adamant she was “not a Tongan New Zealander – I’m a New Zealander” because “New Zealand’s all I know so I can’t really say much about Tonga or anything.” While she claimed being Tongan was important to her, important enough to change schools to affirm and develop her Tongan identity, she also saw that “how I view things will be different from how a Tongan New Zealander will view things”. Seini was “the only Tongan for a while in my intermediate and primary” At the schools she attended in years 9 – 11 she was involved in kapahaka and Rarotongan dancing and, while challenged academically, felt her Tongan identity was not affirmed in any way. Indeed, she felt conspicuous. Then, at the boarding school she attended in years 12 and 13, she felt conspicuous because of her middle class background although her Tongan identity was affirmed! When asked what makes a Tongan Tongan, she didn’t think you had to speak Tongan although “it’s better if you can speak the language” but “you’ve still got to accept that you’re Tongan with the Tongan values and ideals and so forth although it doesn’t exactly mean that you have to practise them.”

Her friend Lopeti who migrated to New Zealand when he was four, said “well I’m a Tongan born and most of the students that are Tongan at this school are born from Tonga and they know all the traditions and stuff about...the only thing I think she (Seini) knows about, that *fahu* thing but, other than that, I don’t really know if she knows anything else.” Seini’s parents “offered a bi-cultural view, like with everything, like even though they were both brought up in Tonga”. She described her relationship with them as very open and they discussed issues such as boy/girl relationships, sex and drugs. Such openness between parents and children would not be seen as conforming to the ‘Tongan way’ where unquestioning obedience to parental direction is expected (Morton 1996).

Seini’s main objective in changing schools was to speak better Tongan and she also intended to study Tongan language at university. In communities where language shift is in progress (as in New Zealand Pasifika communities) different generations may have varying linguistic repertoires and require extra tuition to become competent in their ethnic language (Holmes 1992). With regards to the role of Tongan women, she felt that within Tongan traditional ways even though “the time now is different from our parents and forefathers and so forth” women were still very restricted except “the *fahu* system was I think to me the only significant status thing where the women are high” and that “the males are still the breadwinners of the family”. She did not consider her well educated working/studying mother a “traditional Tongan woman” so these ideas about restrictions on Tongan women came from outside her immediate family. The female boarders at her school had many more restrictions than the boys, including more roll checks and earlier bedtimes which confirmed her perceptions of Tongan women being restricted. Her fledgling feminism may well develop as she delves into post-colonial politics at university. Her sense of self was somewhat troubled as she explored both her Tongan heritage and her womanhood. All her teachers rated her highly with regards to ‘a strong sense of justice and empathy/sensitivity towards others’, a common trait of the intellectually gifted, and perhaps the reason that she would not accept a belief system that she perceived to be founded on unfairness and inequity. She will discover though, particularly at university, that there are many Tongans in Tonga and its Diaspora questioning the validity of traditional politics and social practices in a rapidly changing world. Tonga, as a country, and Seini, as an individual, need to find their unique identities retaining

the best of the old and internalising the best of the new. I believe Seini has the intelligence to do this and the skills to lead others in doing the same.

## 6.6 Conclusions:

Julia and Seini both justified their nominations as “gifted and talented” students. However, their schools contributed to their talent development in a fairly ad hoc way. As the Deputy Principal at Seini’s school said “more by default than design.” In the DMGT formal schooling fits best as an environmental catalyst although it can contribute to intrapersonal catalysts by influencing such factors as motivation and self management. The schools were not neighbourhood schools for the girls and their parents deliberately chose schools that best fit with their family values. These values in both families included elements of *‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way). For Julia *‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga* was the basis of family life whereas Seini’s family were much more assimilated into *pālangi* lifestyle and western ways. She has, as Tiatia (1998) has identified, the unique identity of the New Zealand-born which requires that they need to construct for themselves a paradigm that is uniquely their own to grant them empowerment of voice and a visible presence. In order to give a more Tongan shape to this paradigm, Seini’s parents elected to send her to a school where Tongan culture was an integral part of school life in a deliberate effort to improve her knowledge of Tongan language and *‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga*. For both girls their culture became more important as they developed their adolescent identities.

Like Seini, Julia was a superb public speaker, sportswoman and outstanding leader but her particular musical gifts were not recognised until late in her schooling. Her music teacher was appreciative of the cultural context of her talent but had only superficial knowledge of Pasifika cultures and, while she could see Julia floundering in some aspects of academia, Ms F. could not help her develop better self management strategies. Much earlier intervention was needed to secure academic success including recognition of her non-English speaking background. Despite her apparent fluency in English, she did misuse some vocabulary and this may well be a reason why she was “not good on paper.” Julia, though, is truly *poto* (clever, socially competent) which Morton (1996) believes is the overarching aim of Tongan

socialisation. She understands and lives by the values associated with being *poto* – ‘*ofa*, (love, concern), respect, obedience and independence. Fortunately, many of these values are also important in the Christian schools she has attended all her life and this has enabled her socio-affective gifts to be transformed into talent recognised by the western school system although still largely demonstrated in, and developed by, Tongan culture.

Seini’s knowledge of ‘*ulungaanga faka-Tonga* was growing but will always be incomplete because of her childhood exposure to *pālangi* beliefs, attitudes and values and her lack of expertise in Tongan language. She may even be described as *fie poto* (someone pretending to be *poto*). Indeed, one of her teachers (a Tongan) described her as *anga faka-pālangi* and rated her as rarely demonstrating *anga faka-Tonga* adding “*Na’e tupu ia i Nu’usila pē!*” (grown up only in New Zealand). However, other Tongan children who have grown up in New Zealand, such as Julia, have extensive knowledge of ‘*ulungaanga faka-Tonga* especially if the family environment includes Tongan language spoken in the home, older relatives living with them and ongoing involvement in a church-based Tongan community. Seini felt very different to most other Tongan students because of her English speaking, small nuclear family and relative isolation from a New Zealand based Tongan community. However, her expression of self and her still forming identity, did include a growing awareness of ‘*ulungaanga faka-Tonga* and Tongan language learning in her formal and informal education. Her success in a traditional western based school system was enhanced by her extreme competence in using the English language suggesting, as does Tiatia (1998), that those who succeed in the New Zealand education system are acculturated into the dominant group. However, to achieve the award for “Best all round girl” at the multi-cultural co-ed boarding school after three years in predominantly mono-cultural girls’ schools, was testimony to her adaptability and cleverness in achieving a bi-cultural balance.

**This chapter has described two young women, beautiful *kakala*, carefully made over time. One a gorgeous, slightly modified, traditional pattern woven from ancient materials and the most beautiful of scented tropical flowers; the other an intriguing design of native New Zealand materials and those wonderful imported flowers that grow in our warmest backyards, amazing in its originality and**

boldness. It is with *'ofa* that I present these *kakala* - please contemplate their complex beauty and whenever there is a chance, contribute to such a wonderful creation. Do not be afraid to add a new flower, a new scent, a new pattern. A garland, a *kakala*, is a human endeavour that can involve many hands, many minds, and many hearts.

## Chapter 7

### Discussion:

This chapter discusses the findings in three distinct ways. The first is in poetic form where the data is presented in two poetic dialogues that encapsulate important aspects of the girls' lives. Central to Julia and her family is *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* and the dialogue between her and her father is constructed from their actual words to express this theme. As researcher/poet I have taken the participants' words and woven them into a new but truthful representation of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*. The poem about Seini uses several voices in order to represent the discord she felt in her life as she struggled to resolve the conflicts inherent in New Zealand born Tongan youth. I have not attempted to explain the poetry leaving it to make emotional connections with the reader, with their *loto* (heart/mind/soul). The second way applies Tongan concepts to the DGMT in order to validate its use as a theoretical framework for the research. Lastly, I give six recommendations for schools. Similar recommendations can be found in the literature but are not generally supported by such specific examples.



The LP factor: Tongan children learning by doing

## 7.1 A question of identity: Seini

A poem constructed from interviews with Seini, her teachers and friend, Lopeti.  
(others' voices in italics)

*Very supportive parents*

Both brought up in Tonga

They're really open

Offered a bi-cultural view

*anga faka-pālangi*

push me, incentives, family pressure

*they're big motivators*

I look to my cousins in Tonga

*She's competitive*

The time now is different from our parents and forefathers

*She won't let things, you know, stand in her way She thinks things out*

I just do the things I wanna do

*She'll just say what she wants*

Women are high but in a sense I still feel like it's really restricted

*They're quite strictly controlled, sometimes to their annoyance*

Just the way I was brought up will make me see things a lot differently

*The girls are quite frustrated about the way the hostel works*

The cultural barrier plays a large part in the injustices

*Will always fight for the underdog*

Academically different

*Unusually mature student*

A little bit more outspoken

*Fearless orator*

I wouldn't say I was hard out religious

*Participated in her quiet way*

Gave me a religious view to balance the worldly view

*Empower for living*

The way they just joke around

*I'm just here to play rugby*

They forget that we're there

*We just ignore the girls*

How I view the culture and the culture of the school is a lot different

*She has been challenged in this aspect of her life*

A lot of generation now are New Zealand born

*Argumentative, expressive and eloquent*

Some of them are Tongan born

*Most of the students that are at this school are born from Tonga*

The way we look at things are really different

*Wasn't allowed to watch TV with my sisters*

When I was younger and could speak some Tongan

*Had some experience with Tongan dancing*

You have to accept that you're Tongan

*There's a really strong emphasis on culture in this school*

My main objective to come here was just to speak better Tongan

*Voices the opinions of those who cannot/will not speak for themselves*

It's better if you can speak the language

*She doesn't really know all the traditions and stuff*

I'm not a Tongan New Zealander, I'm a New Zealander

*Outstanding role model*

I hope I end up being in some kind of leadership position

*Exceptional in her leadership, widely respected by her peers*

Influencing the New Zealand born Tongan women

*She'll help them out*

Will I always feel different?

*There's just something about her*

I don't know

*I just can't explain*

## 7.2 Living the Tongan way: Julia

A poem constructed from interviews with Julia and her father. Her father's voice is in italics.

Mum's more the discipliner

*And she's a good cook*

She's always thinking ahead of things

*She's making some good ideas*

He's more the fun guy

*I can play the drum. I can play the guitar. I can dance.*

He's always on the sideline

*She always know what my support was*

It's always through him

*She learnt from me first!*

I've made them proud

*The cup's still there*

I've helped them out

*They do what I tell them to do*

Always worshipping my family

*Just respect us and we respect you*

It's because of them that I've got there

*We know that she's a leader*

They wanted a better future for us

*Music – here it's very interesting and very interesting to the pālangi people*

And it's worked

*I'm looking for teaching*

What motivates me? God and family

*Go listen to talk at the Tongan mass*

They make us learn our own lessons

*But they already know we would give them a good example, good advice*

At church: the big singing started

*You are familiar with the people*

I guess I like performing

*I'll tell them to come after this and sing*

With their ways of being respectful, it makes you a better person

*Respect. That's the only thing I like. Better than everything.*

But like at times it'd be like "oh that was back in the islands"

*The island ways*

Not allowed a boyfriend until you're 18 or like when you leave school

*Do the study first*

I can see myself with a family

*The culture of the islands: should be virgin until you are gone from the house/ find a husband*

Every time we ring, they're there to pick us up

*Like 4 o'clock in the morning. It doesn't matter aye? You go pick them up.*

Brought up Tongan first then adapted into the rest of society

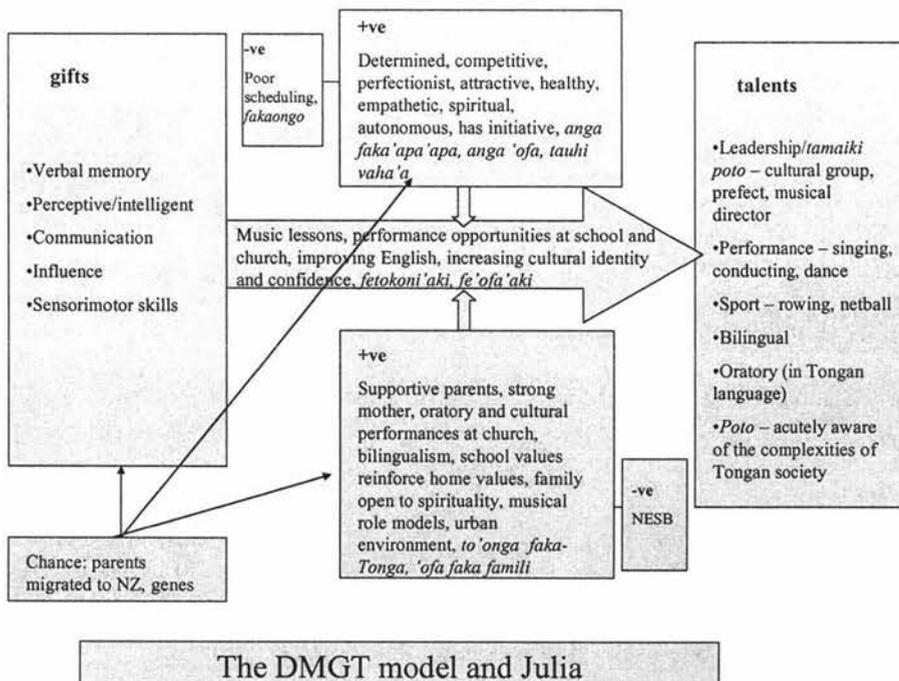
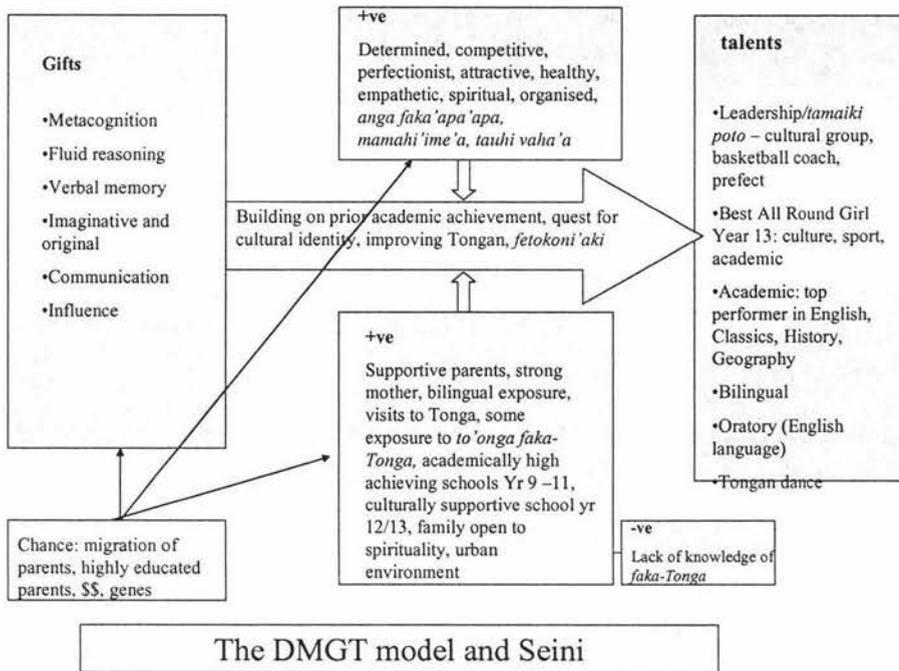
*But when you came to New Zealand you open eyes! Oh they are different things!*

A Tongan New Zealander

*The Tongan way*

### 7.3 Personalising the DMGT:

Gagne’s DMGT can be directly applied to the lives of Seini and Julia incorporating Tongan elements which clearly show the girls’ unique profiles. The ability of the model to include culturally specific catalysts is indicative of its flexibility and cultural validity.



## **7.4 Recommendations:**

It is clear that the development of Seini and Julia's gifts into talents has only partially been influenced by their schooling. However, some of their talents have been recognised and demonstrated in their particular schools and it is important to use these case studies as examples of how particular strategies/educational environments can allow talented Tongan students to achieve excellence. While these recommendations apply most clearly to Tongan students, they can be relevant to gifted and talented students from all cultural minority groups.

### **7.4.1 The cultural context:**

Futa Helu (1999a) believes Pacific cultures, which are the cultures of very small communities founded on values of cooperation and neighbourliness, are no match for world cultures which are based on the morality of competition and conflict. He maintains cultural adaptation is necessary, particularly in the Diaspora of Pacific Islanders, but, if this is guided by thoughtful, clear, fair policies about the process of acculturation then the best traits of both can be reactivated in the new mix. Indeed he maintains it can be a time of enrichment and great artistic activity as is seen in the gathering strength of a 'Pacific voice' as expressed in literature and performing arts. Helu advocates the promotion and development of Tongan arts along characteristic lines where borrowings, adaptations and remodelling not disfigure or destroy traditional structures and a very recent Air New Zealand in-flight magazine proclaimed to travellers that there are artists, writers, playwrights and dancers all interpreting a distinct New Zealand-Pasifika hybrid culture (Schaer 2007). Both Seini and Julia's schools encouraged them to express their culture in traditional music and dance that was adapted for New Zealand contexts in that they were performing for a multi-cultural audience and often in a competitive arena. The exceptional leadership skills of these girls were most effectively demonstrated within the parameters of traditional artistic expression.

Helu also advocates preservation of Tongan verbal arts such as oratory, repartee, humour and storytelling. He maintains it is a domain dominated by elders and yet Seini and Julia have demonstrated oratory talent while still at school. Another

adaptation to New Zealand culture. Their schools run formal speaking competitions, enter inter-school debating and speech competitions as well as use strategies such as debating within the classroom. Seini, for instance, debated the topic “That life is God’s greatest gift; no principle can justify the taking of it” in her English study of ‘The Crucible’ by Arthur Miller. She led the negative team who won. Julia was also encouraged by her school to enter a regional Tongan speech competition (which she won) giving her a chance to demonstrate her superior oratory skills in her first language.

Schools without opportunities for gifted Tongan students to demonstrate their particular ‘Pasifika voice’ will indeed be soul-less places for them. Many regions organise Polyfests or other such interschool Pasifika events and one of the best forums for the expression of the ‘Pasifika voice’ is the annual Pasifika festival in Auckland. Ole Maiava, the director, an artist, poet, teacher and broadcaster, believes the ‘third culture kids’ (third or fourth generation Pasifikans) will claim some parts of their culture without wanting all of it. He claims that a lot of Pasifika people are walking conflicts of interest having lost touch with parts of themselves and the important thing now is how to return to certain parts of the culture (Schaer 2007). Schools can help resolve this conflict of interest their students may have by encouraging them to express and explore their culture in the school context.

#### **7.4.2 Identification:**

Early identification of gifted students is important. Schools need to develop broad, culturally inclusive definitions which reflect their school communities. Identification must not exclude students for whom English is a second language and/or whose life is culturally different to the majority. Competence in their first language should be valued. Perceived differences in talent among groups of people are not entirely biologically determined as culture has a direct influence on the types of gifted behaviours that are valued and fostered (de Hahn 2002). An understanding of ‘the Tongan way’ is necessary in identifying gifted Tongan students. The quiet, tongue-tied Tongan student may be exhibiting *anga faka ‘apa ‘apa* - not a language deficit - and some items on widely used checklists such as “asks many unusual questions” are inappropriate. Consideration of how they play around with ideas, especially creating

unusual imagery, in written or visual work may reveal their insight, intelligence and creativity more effectively (Dale 1988). Tongan traditional knowledge may be extensive and early opportunities to demonstrate this are needed.

A narrow definition of giftedness based around superior academic skill would exclude a student such as Julia. The socio affective domain, where much of her giftedness originates, is well recognised in Tongan communities but subordinated by the intellectual nature of many New Zealand school programmes. Gardner, amongst others, (Von Karolyi 2003) points out that schools tend to cater to verbal and visual/spatial intelligences and ignore other intelligences. Fortunately, leadership skill is identified and developed in senior secondary school and Seini and Julia benefited from this. However, except in sport, leadership opportunities for junior secondary students are more limited and schools should address this. Provision of leadership opportunities, especially within a Tongan cultural context, early in secondary schooling should be encouraged. Leadership skill needs to be recognised by the qualification system (NCEA) and schools should be proactive in advocating this.

Gifted students are not talented in all areas. Julia's musical talents were largely developed within her family and church community, within her culture. Had her school recognised her giftedness earlier she may have been given more assistance with her less developed self management and writing skills in order for her to succeed at tertiary level.

### **7.4.3 Programmes:**

Seini was accelerated in History (completing level 3 successfully in year 12) because of an accident of the timetable. Some gifted students thrive on acceleration, some prefer enrichment. Secondary schools need to identify early on which student would benefit from which approach and offer them appropriate, individualised pathways. Accelerated students can be left with time at secondary school in Year 13 to concentrate on level 4 (scholarship) qualifications, pick up new subjects, enrol in extra mural university papers, be an exchange students overseas or select early entry to tertiary study. The NCEA has made multi-level study much easier to manage and facilitate. In fact, assessing smaller, specific areas of subjects has forced multi-level

assessment in senior classrooms. Multi-level courses that combine various curriculum areas can be designed to meet individual needs based on interests and ability. The adjustments secondary schools make as the NCEA becomes more established suits the flexibility required to adequately cater for gifted and talented students.

#### **7.4.4 School community bridges:**

Consultation with the homes of all students is imperative. Families know their children best and schools must be open to the talents that they recognise at home. Julia's father has been encouraging her to sing and perform since she was very young. Seini's parents encourage open discussion of contemporary social problems and will have been aware of her precocious reading ability. If schools are to aid the development of gifted students' talents they need the input from home. However, schools with Tongan students also need to be aware that Tongan parents will defer to the authority of the teacher and some will have poor English language skills requiring skilled interpreters. They may be reluctant to share information about their child's talents as they could be accused of being *fi'e'eiki* (acting in a chiefly manner, arrogant). Within families the importance of humility means children are rarely praised for their accomplishments (Morton 1996). Cultural knowledge and responsiveness of teachers could overcome some of these barriers between school and family and enable parental or *kāinga* nominations of gifted students. Many Pasifika parents are shift workers and, when Julia's school scheduled some day-time parent teacher interviews they found many more Pasifika parents attended. (Madgewick 2003) and (Tau'au 2003) suggest Pasifika parents and caregivers should be involved in their child's learning by being asked to help at school camps, on class trips and as guest speakers. While more commonly done at primary school, secondary schools need to explore these possibilities also. Schools must include their communities in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students.

Tongan students are often involved in church youth groups and some churches are attempting to focus on youth issues. Activities can include lessons in Tongan dances, songs and language as well as concerts, talent nights, barbeques, sports camps and outings (Morton Lee 2003). Schools who contact local churches can access valuable information about the successful ways they are engaging Tongan teenagers. For

instance, *Fakamē*, a special children's service in Methodist churches held in May, involves high quality drama presentations, singing and bible reading requiring many weeks of rehearsals. Such church activities may take precedence over schoolwork in some Tongan households and those responsible for youth programmes in churches will be able to provide insight into the leadership and oratory abilities of students who may be overlooked due to their disinterest or exhaustion in the classroom.

#### **7.4.5 School environments:**

Gifted students are constantly at risk of underachieving if their talents are not valued. The environment of a school should positively reflect the cultures within it. Tau'au (2003) advocates a 'Pasifika friendly pedagogy' where classrooms display the rich motifs, patterns and colour of the Pasifika culture, local Pasifika artists and performers are invited to demonstrate their skill to students and the themes of Pasifika literature and songs lyrics are studied. Tongan culture was highly visible in Seini's school but not immediately apparent in Julia's school. However, photographs of Polynesian performers in the Principal's office did indicate the pride the school has in its high achieving cultural group. Julia's strong sense of Tongan identity would weather the lack of environmental support at school but Seini, less immersed in *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* at home, benefits from an environment that exhibits cultural acceptance in its tangible form. The New Zealand born Tongan student with links to Tonga loosened by geography, can have their identity affirmed in school with simple changes to the environment.

My ten year old son's teacher has a *fala ako* (learning mat) in her classroom used for special activities. She approached us for a mat and the words to describe it which we were delighted to provide and our son, the only Tongan boy in his school, is proud to be associated with this simple but significant acknowledgement of his culture. New Zealand teachers must not be reluctant to open their classrooms to Pasifika culture and there are many secondary curriculum areas where Pasifika artefacts, language, stories, music and traditional practices can be integrated.

#### **7.4.6 Teachers:**

As well as the training of more Tongan teachers, teacher training courses must include discussion of and learning about the 'Tongan way' especially in relation to the perpetual 'talent search' teachers undertake. *Pālangi* teachers would then have an awareness of the complex social expectations, linguistic richness and other elements of a Tongan student's culture. Started on this journey of discovery, a teacher will be more open to students sharing their background and able to learn from them knowing that the teacher's way is not the only way.

Learning and teaching is a complex and beautiful process where the role of teacher and learner is constantly exchanged: like a dance, it makes no sense to have one partner standing still, just watching.

#### **7.4.7 Literacy issues:**

Some Tongan students, particularly New Zealand born, may not be literate in the Tongan language. Parents may have felt that mastering English was more important to educational success. Gifted Tongan students in this position can be offered Tongan language as an enrichment subject. Schools with Tongan students can have a standing order at no cost for Tongan language journals produced by Tupu books and ordered through Learning Media. The very recently released Tongan language curriculum (Ministry 2007) and The guidelines for Tongan language programmes (Ministry 2005) can be used to develop programmes for gifted Tongan students that include a Tongan language component.

Alana Madgewick, facilitator for the secondary literacy leadership programme, child of a Samoan father and New Zealand European mother, began the Pasifika Pride group at Onehunga High School in response to poor pass rates for Pasifika students which conflicted so much with the aspirations of migrant parents. She believes literacy strategies must be incorporated into all content areas (Madgewick 2003). For a gifted student such as Julia, exceptionally competent in her first language and competent enough in English to not signal ESOL assistance, strategies need to be incorporated into senior secondary level studies. According to Madgewick, this means

scaffolding and modelling, bringing in prior knowledge (including *anga faka-Tonga*), noting key vocabulary and motivating students to learn. It means giving feedback and feed forward and, most importantly for a student with poor organisational skills such as Julia, helping students to become independent learners by teaching metacognitive and organisational strategies. Julia's music teacher recognised that her exceptional musical talent, particularly in conducting, indicated intellectual giftedness, yet her school gave her no particular assistance in addressing her difficulties with high level literacy. She could read, write and speak English at an average level and was not a behaviour problem. Had her giftedness been identified much earlier and her weaknesses diagnosed and remedied, her dream to study music at university would have been assured. Schools must address literacy issues for gifted Tongan students.

**This chapter has summarised some of the issues New Zealand schools need to consider in their efforts to act as positive catalysts in the talent development of Tongan students.**

## Chapter 8

### Conclusions, limitations and recommendations:

What do I do now?

An old man close by whispers,

“Come fishing with me today

For you have a lot to learn yet.”

From ‘Reality’ (Thaman 2000)

This chapter considers the study in the light of the research questions. It discusses the contribution of this research to the literature and the limitations inherent in a small scale study. Because of these limitations, recommendations for further research are made that may move beyond the defined boundaries of the case study presented here.

### 8.1 The research questions:

The research questions that guided this study were:

- What gifts and talents are valued by Tongan communities?
- What catalysts operate in the development of Tongan students’ talents?
  - At school? At home? In the community? Are any of these culturally specific?
  - How are the intrapersonal characteristics of giftedness exhibited within Tongan culture?

It was found that the gifts and talents valued by Tongan communities may vary depending on where in the Diaspora the community is located. Due to environmental influences, talent may be exhibited in a variety of traditional and non-traditional ways. For instance academic, musical or artistic talent may be recognised in a western or traditional context and most sporting talent is now channelled into sports of western origins. However, in all Tongan communities, a person acknowledged as *poto* will have at least some understanding of *to’onga faka-Tonga* and its core values. This

could mean, for instance, that the gifted Tongan doctor who expertly treats their *pālangi* patients within the scientific framework of western medical practice, timetabled consultations and no house calls, will also exhibit *anga faka 'apa 'apa* (respectfulness) and *fationga* (duty) when quickly responding to a summons to a sick *hou 'eiki* (chief's) bedside.

The study has shown that the catalysts operating in the talent development of Tongan students are sometimes culturally specific. Tongan churches (the mainstay of Tongan communities throughout the Diaspora), in particular, supported by families, provide many opportunities for development of talent in oratory, dance, music and leadership as well as the reinforcing of Tongan values. Traditional Tongan rhetoric is perpetuated and maintained by the church which extends and validates the use of the Tongan language beyond the family. The students in this study both attended Christian schools with religious dimensions that reinforced Tongan values.

The need to avoid *fakamā*, (shame) and make families feel *pōlepole*, (proud) are strong motivating factors for success as measured in western and Tongan ways. It was explained how intrapersonal behaviours like these are based on the core Tongan value of *'ofa*. Some culturally specific factors such as *talangofua* (obedience) and *faka 'apa 'apa* (respect) may have a negative impact on talent development in school if not properly understood by teachers.

## **8.2 Contribution to the literature:**

No literature exists specifically concerning gifted and talented Tongan students in New Zealand although there are pan-Pasifika studies around achievement which have some relevance. A body of literature exists that explores the complex and intriguing components of Tongan culture and this has been drawn on extensively to explain the culturally specific catalysts that may be found in gifted Tongan students' lives. The use of a metaphorical framework and poetic structures is a non-western approach intended to design research that is both relevant to, and respectful of, Tongan people. The explanation of the talent development of these two gifted young Tongan women, with its specific focus on the influence of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*, partially addresses the gap in the literature.

### 8.3 Limitations of the research:

This study is limited by its small scope in terms of participants and time frame, and the lack of deep cultural knowledge of the researcher.

The sample size was very small. While this meant that considerable ethnographic depth was possible, generalising from the experiences of two case studies is problematic. Also, the central participants nominated the other participants, which may have created bias in the data. This was offset to some extent by data from anonymous teacher questionnaires, observations and documents. The use of the theoretical framework of the DMGT and detailed discussions of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* that underpin the discussion are more suitable for generalisations and also offset the limitations of the small sample size.

The two central participants were both female and, while efforts were made to explore aspects of talent development that were not gender specific, their gender will have influenced the experiences they have had. Therefore, the conclusions drawn may not be as relevant to Tongan boys.

The time frame of the research was limited. The data collection period was a few months reflecting only a portion of the girls' lives. Some historical data was included but largely the data is limited to their experience as year 13 students. This could restrict its relevance to younger secondary students. To overcome this limitation, a study with students from Year 9 to 13 could have been completed.

Culture is specific to time and place. The cultural parameters discussed in this study may be irrelevant at other times and in other places.

Much of the literature refers to Pasifika people as a collective group therefore some of the generalisations based on it may be of minimal relevance to some Tongans. On the other hand, this research focused on a Tongan context with Tongan participants and generalisations made may not be applicable to a wider Pasifika group.

The researcher is not Tongan and does not have the benefit of Tongan language proficiency or lifelong immersion in Tongan culture. I relied on the guidance of Tongan friends and relations and the wisdom of my Tongan university supervisor in many instances. Much of my limited knowledge of Tongan culture has come from the literature and only fifteen years of informal learning. I have been careful to use culturally appropriate research methodology and offence caused at any stage of the research was not intended.

#### **8.4 Recommendations for future research:**

This study has only begun to explore the complex issues in the education of gifted and talented Tongan students. Other research with larger samples and longitudinal approaches may confirm and expand upon the findings of this study. The situation for gifted and talented primary school or tertiary Tongan students could be addressed as well as issues surrounding the training of teachers for gifted and talented Tongan students.

This research has highlighted the importance of culturally specific catalysts in the talent development of gifted Tongan students. Culture is a dynamic rather than static feature of human societies and, especially in New Zealand where 'third culture kids' signal the growth of a whole new hybrid Pasifika culture (Schaer 2007), the issue should be revisited.

It would be worthwhile to build on this research by assessing the impact on talent development of gifted Tongan students when teachers have knowledge of *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* and schools provide culturally responsive environments.

## 8.5 Luva:

**This research is no longer my own. Having woven the words, thoughts and feelings of hundreds of people into this document, I now offer it to Tongan families and communities and, most importantly, teachers of gifted and talented Tongan secondary students in New Zealand, in the hope that it will give them insight into the rich and complex lives of these extraordinary young people.**

**And, especially for Julia and Seini,  
'ofa lahi atu.**

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## **Glossary of Tongan words:**

*ako ke fa'iteliha*: study to please oneself, independent

*ako*: (n.) learning, education, training, school, rehearsal, practice, (v.) to learn, to study, to receive education, to train

*anga faka-Pālangi*: act like a *Pālangi* (European/Pakeha)

*anga faka-Tonga*: customs peculiar to the Tongan way/Tongan culture

*anga fakatu'a*: typical of a commoner

*anga*: habit, custom, nature, quality, character, characteristic, way, form, style, manner, method, behaviour, conduct

*'atamai*: (adj.) intelligent, understanding, (n.) mind, intellect, reason

*'atamai kovi*: dumb, dim witted

*'atamai poto*: using intelligence with traditional wisdom

*'atamai-vave*: quick at understanding, mentally keen, intelligent

*fahu*: special status accorded to sisters, especially the eldest sister

*faiva*: task, feat, craft, performance or skill requiring skill or ability

*Faka'apa'apa*: respect

*fakamā*: shame

*fakama'uma'u*: be restrained, keep in one's feelings

*fakaongo*: to listen and obey

*faka tō ki lalo*: very humble, acting lower than the rank/status accorded to you, emulating the humility of Jesus Christ, the carpenter although the son of God

*fala ako*: learning mat

*fananga*: traditional tale

*fatongia mamafa*: important duty

*fatongia*: duty

*fe'unga*: befitting, suitable

*feohi*: closeness/togetherness

*fetokoni'aki*: to help each other, reciprocity

*fe'ofa'ofaki*: harmonious relationship/s

*fie lahi*: imagine oneself to be important, proud, haughty

*fie poto*: think you're clever

*fie'aonga*: useful to the Tongan people

*fie'eiki*: acting in a chiefly manner when not entitled to

*fiepālangi*: to be like a *pālangi*

*fono*: meeting

*heilala*: a rare, small, scented red native flower with mythological associations

*heliaki*: Tongan proverbs

*hou'eiki*: chiefs

*'ilo*: (n.)knowledge, (v.) to see, espy, glimpse, notice, perceive, to find, discover, to be conscious or aware of, to recognise, to know

*kahokaho*: a kind of yam

*kāinga*: extended family

*kakala*: fragrant flowers woven for a special person or occasion

*kava*: the plant, *piper methysiticum* - or its crushed root used to make a narcotic drink often used in traditional ceremonies

*kiekie*: traditional woven waist mat (smaller) worn as a sign of respect

*koloa*: treasures/heirlooms/taonga – mats, tapa

*langakali*: small, light brown native flower with strong perfume

*lea faka-Tonga*: Tongan language

*lelei*: good

*lototō*: whole hearted obligation/ commitment to a relationship

*luva*: the giving away/presentation of *kakala*

*māfana*: an emotional warmth/excitement exhibited in graceful expression (dance),  
heightened sensory state

*mamahi 'ime 'a*: zealousness for a cause

*matāpule*: chief's ceremonial attendants

*mo 'ui fakaongoongo*: a life waiting for instruction

*'ofa*: love, aroha, considerate, generous

*Pālangi loi*: pretending to be a *Pālangi*

*Pālangi*: European, Pakeha

*pōlepole*: proud

*poto ako*: school cleverness

*poto*: (adj.) clever, wise, able to, can do, socially competent (n.) wisdom, intelligence

*pua*: frangipani flower

*siale*: gardenia flower

*silapa*: syllabus

*ta 'ovala*: traditional woven waist mat symbolising respect

*talangofua*: obedience

*talanoa*: a research process devised from *tala* (story) and *noa* (nothing – the honesty  
which is in your heart) which tries to get to your *loto* (heart/mind)

*taki lelei*: good leadership

*tapu*: sacred, religious or traditional restriction

*tau 'olunga*: Tongan dance form

*tauhi vaha 'a*: maintaining good relations

*taumafa kava*: royal *kava* ceremony

*to 'onga faka-Tonga*: the Tongan way

*tokoni ki he kakai Tongan*: helping the Tongan people

*tokotaha poto*: educated person

*toli*: the collection of flowers, leaves, fruit and other decorative items needed to make

*kakala*

*totunu*: right, proper

*tu 'a*: commoner

*tu 'i*: monarch

*tui*: the making or weaving of *kakala*

*'ofa*: love, aroha, considerate, generous

*'ulungaanga faka-Tonga*: Tongan culture

*vale*: foolish, silly, ignorant, immature, unskilled, incapable, incompetent

### **Glossary of Maori words:**

*awhinatanga*: helping and serving others

*manaakitanga*: love and the concepts of hospitality and mutual obligation

*mana tangata*: the power acquired by the individual according to his or her ability and effort to develop skills and gain knowledge in particular areas

*Pakeha*: European, white person

*taonga*: treasure

## **Appendix A:**

### **Letter to Principals:**

Dear Principal

I am undertaking research to complete a Masters Thesis through Massey University College of Education. The research topic is gifted and talented Tongan students in New Zealand secondary schools. Although I am not Tongan, my interest in this area is propelled by my involvement in the Tongan community – I spent five years teaching at Tonga High School, am married to a Tongan and have Tongan children. I have always been interested in issues surrounding gifted and talented education.

My intention is to base my investigation around two Tongan students who have been identified as achieving excellence in one or more fields. These fields could include academic subjects, art, music, sport, leadership, spiritual or cultural arenas, technology, performing arts, or language/s. The focus is on isolating positive factors in nurturing giftedness rather than barriers to success. I would like to invite you to assist me in the nomination process by distributing the enclosed letter and information sheet to the parents/guardians of gifted and talented Tongan students.

Students nominated by their parents/guardians will be invited to participate and their participation will be voluntary. Interviews will be conducted with the student, members of their family and significant teachers/coaches/mentors. Permission from schools will be sought for any observations or access to school-based records/documents. As much as is possible, confidentiality and anonymity in the final publication for all participants, and the institutions they are involved with, is assured. My research has been reviewed and approved by the ethics committee (MUHEC) at Massey University and is being monitored by my research supervisors, Dr Tracy Riley and Lesieli Macintyre.

I hope you see this as an opportunity to contribute to this under researched field. If you could send copies of the enclosed letter and information sheet to parents/guardians, I would be very grateful. Alternatively, you could provide me with their contact details and I will contact them directly.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna

## **Appendix B:**

### **Letter to parents/guardians and nomination form (English and Tongan versions):**

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am completing research about gifted and talented Tongan secondary school students in New Zealand for a Masters thesis in Education through Massey University. I am married to Paula Vaipuna of Kolofo'ou and was Head of English at Tonga High School 1992 – 1997. We now live in South Taranaki and have four children - Hamish (23) Tessa (20) Tevita (9) and Kalilea (7). I am currently Head of English at Hawera High School.

This letter has been forwarded to you because it is recognised that your son/daughter is exceptionally talented in one or more areas. I would like to invite you to nominate your son/daughter as a participant in this research. My research will be based around two case studies. I will be investigating the positive influences, including cultural factors, which have contributed to your child's excellent achievement/s. The research will involve interviews and/or questionnaires with the student, family members and other people significant in developing their talent – teachers, coaches, ministers or youth leaders for instance. Some observations of the 'talent in action' will be made, and this will include analysis of school records and other important written documentation supporting his or her talent development. People, places and institutions will not be named in the final publication to protect all participants' identities.

I hope that my research will ultimately be useful to teachers, families and communities in ensuring that all gifted Tongan students are given more opportunities to develop their talent.

If you would like to nominate your son/daughter as a participant, please read the enclosed information sheet, complete the nomination form and send it to me as soon as possible using the self-addressed envelope. Alternatively, you could email me at [ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com](mailto:ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com) or phone me at 06 278 6893. I will then contact you to arrange a convenient time and place for an meeting to discuss the research. I am on study leave for term 3 and will be able to travel.

Yours faithfully

Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna.

'Ala si'i matua moe kau tauhi fanau

'Oku ou faka'apa'apa mo fakaha 'i he tohi ni 'a e kole ke ke loto lelei mu'a kae faka'ata ke kau mai ho'o tama 'i he fekumi ki he "Fanau Tonga Poto 'i he ngaahi Ako Ma'olunga 'i Nu'u Sila ni". 'Oku ou fai 'a e fekumi ni 'i he ako ki hoku mata'itohi Master in Education 'i he 'Univesiti Mesi (Massey University)

'Oku ou mali mo Paula Vaipuna mei Kolofo'ou, Tongatapu. Na'a ku faiako mo taki 'i he Va'a Lea Faka-Pilitania (English Language) 'i he Ako Ma'olunga 'O Tonga mei he 1992 ki he 1997. 'Oku 'iai e fanau 'e toko4. Hamish-23, Tessa-20, Tevita (9) mo Kaliea(7). 'Oku ou lolotonga faiako mo taki 'i he tafa'aki Lea Faka-Pilitania 'i he Ako Ma'olunga Hawera.

'Oku fai atu 'a e fakahoha'a ni koe 'uhi ko e mahino a e poto ho foha/ 'ofefine 'i he feinga fakaako, 'i he faka'atamai mo e ngaahi tafa'aki kehe, 'oku mahino 'a e poto mavahe ho'o tamasi/ta'ahine. 'Oku 'oatu 'a e kole pe teke loto lelei pe ke kau ho foha/ 'ofefine 'i he fekumi ko eni. Ko e fekumi 'e fai pe 'i he tamaiki Tonga 'e toko ua. 'E fai 'a e ngaahi faka'eke'eke 'o e fanau pea pehe foki ki he famili, kau faiako, kau faifekau, kau taki ha'ofanga, pea pehe foki ki he kakai kotoa pe 'oku 'I ai ha'a nau fekau'aki pea moe ola lelei oku ma'u 'e ho foha/ 'ofefine.

'E 'ikai ke ngaue 'aki 'a e ngaahi hingoa mo'oni ko e 'uhi ke malu'i ho'o tama.

'Oku ou 'amanaki pe ko e fekumi ni' 'e hoko 'o 'aonga ki he ngaahi famili, kau faiako pea pehe foki ki he ngaahi kolo, ke tokoni ki he lehilehi'i 'a e ngaahi poto 'a 'etau fanau tonga.

Kapau teke loto fiemalie ke kau ho'o tama 'i he fekumi ni' kataki 'o fakafonu 'a e foomu 'o li mai 'i he meili. Pe email ki he [ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com](mailto:ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com) pe telefoni ki he 06 278 6894. Teu fetu'utaki atu leva ke alea'i ha taimi ke fai ai ha fe'iloaki ke alea'i 'a e faka'eke'eke. 'Oku ou lolotonga malolo fakataimi mei he ako ke fai 'a e fekumi ni', ko ia ai 'e lava lelei pe ke fai ha fononga atu ki he feitu'u 'oku ke nofo ai.

Faka'apa'apa atu,

Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna.

**Gifted and Talented Tongan Secondary School Students in New Zealand  
Student Nomination Form**

Name of student participant/*Hingoa 'o e tokotaha ako:*

---

Age/*Ta'u motu 'a:*

---

Birthplace/*Fa'ele'i 'i Fe:*

---

School/*Hingoa 'o e 'Apiako:*

---

Names of parents/guardians/*Hingoa 'o e Matu'a pe Tauhi:*

---

Address/*Tu'asila:*

---

---

---

---

Telephone/*Telefoni:*

---

Email:

---

Best time to contact you/*Taimi lelei taha ke fai ai ha fetu'utaki atu:*

---

Please describe your son/daughter's exceptional abilities/achievements:

*Fakamatala 'i 'a e taleniti pe ko e poto ho'o tamasi'i pe 'ofefine:*

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## **Appendix C:**

### **Information sheet:**

#### **Gifted and Talented Tongan Secondary School Students in New Zealand**

**Researcher: Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna. Masters of Education Student, Massey University.**

#### **Information Sheet for parents/guardians/students**

I am completing a thesis for the Masters of Education degree which investigates the talent development of exceptional Tongan students. I would like to invite you to indicate your interest in being a participant in my research. My interest in Tongan students is motivated by my experience as Head of English at Tonga High School (1993 – 1998), my Tongan husband and children and our involvement in Tongan communities in Tonga and New Zealand. The research will investigate what enables natural ability to develop into exceptional talent, especially culturally significant factors.

#### **Recruitment of Participants:**

The experiences of two talented (gifted)Tongan students currently attending New Zealand secondary schools will each be the centre of a case study. A person is considered “gifted and talented” when they demonstrate exceptional ability in one or more academic, sporting, cultural, spiritual, musical or leadership areas. Schools, communities and cultural groups may have differing ideas about who is gifted/talented. The final two case study participants will be selected because they excel in the same area, are the same gender and age and one is Tongan-born while one is new Zealand-born. Your son/daughter has been nominated by their school and/or you at the invitation of the researcher. If they are selected they will be interviewed several times. The first interview with the student will be about an hour and will reveal people significant to their talent development such as family, teachers and community members. These people will also be invited to participate in interviews of about an hour or by completing a questionnaire which would take 10-15 minutes. Subsequent interviews with the student will explore in detail the factors that have enabled the development of giftedness. The number and length of these interviews will be determined by the themes that are raised in the first interview and negotiated with you. Interview questions will be in English or Tongan and participants can answer in either language. Interviews will be audiotaped (with permission of the participant) and tapes/transcripts provided to participants if they wish. To create a detailed and rich profile, observations will also be made of the student as they demonstrate their talent/gift. Permission will be sought from the student/school/coach etc. before observations are made. To add further depth to the profile documents such as school reports, portfolios of work, certificates and awards will be sought and copied with the participant’s permission. This means that, if you agree, I will ask the school principal for permission to access and copy selections from your school records.

#### **Procedures:**

While no individual or institution will be named in the final publication, neither anonymity nor confidentiality can be promised because of the depth and detail of the profiles. Nevertheless, every

effort will be made to protect the identities of the participants and institutions involved, and keep the confidentiality of information received. Transcripts of interviews and copies of field notes will be given to participants for verification before analysis. Consent forms, transcripts and audiotapes will be held at Massey University for a period of five years.

**The outcome of the research:**

The research will describe the positive factors in developing Tongan students' gifts and talents. I am hopeful that my research will inspire schools and families to help gifted Tongan students reach their full potential. The thesis will be held by Massey University library and copies given to you. I also hope it will help parents support and nurture their gifted offspring. The thesis will be held by Massey University library and copies presented to the student participants. Other participants will have a written summary of the thesis provided to them. The results of this research will only be published in this thesis and any other publications or presentations arising from the study.

**Participants' rights:**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- \* Answer questions in English or Tongan
- \* Decline to answer any particular question
- \* Withdraw from the study at any time
- \* Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation
- \* Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used
- \* Be provided with a copy of the thesis
- \* To ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the interview

This research is supervised by Dr Tracy Riley (Gifted and Talented Education) and Lesieli McIntyre (Pacific Education). If you have any questions about my research please contact myself or my supervisors:

Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna 06 278 6893 [ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com](mailto:ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com)

Dr Tracy Riley 06 3569099 ext 8625 [t.l.riley@massey.ac.nz](mailto:t.l.riley@massey.ac.nz)

Lesieli MacIntyre 06 3569099 ext 8735 [l.i.macintyre@massey.ac.nz](mailto:l.i.macintyre@massey.ac.nz)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, PN Application 05/50. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr John O'Neill, Chair, Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: Palmerston North, telephone 06 350 5799 ext 8635, email [humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz)

## Appendix D:

### Tongan information sheet:

**‘Ko e fanau ako Tonga ‘oku ‘atamai‘ia mo mohu taleniti ‘i he ngaahi Ako Ma‘olunga ‘o Nu‘u Sila’**

**Tokotaha Fekumi: Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna. Masters Student, Massey University.**

**Ko e pepa fakamatala ki he fanau ako, kau tauhi fanau, kau pule ako, kau faiako, kau pule ngaue.**

‘Oku fai ‘a e fekumi mo e fakatotolo ki he tupu‘anga mo e fakalalakaka ‘o e fanau ako Tonga ‘oku makehe atu ‘a e ola ‘o ‘enau ako mo mohu taleniti. Ne ma‘u ‘a e fakakaukau ni ko ‘eku taukei mei he ‘eku faiako mo Pule ‘i he va‘a lea fakapilitania ‘a e Ako Ma‘olunga ‘o Tonga (1993 – 1998), mo hoku Hoa Tonga pea pehe foki ki he ‘ema fanau. ‘Oku mau kau foki ki he Komiuniti Tonga ‘i Tonga pea pehe foki ki Nu‘u Sila ni. Ko e fekumi‘ ni, ‘e fakatotolo‘i ai ‘a e ngaahi me‘a ‘oku ne fakatupulaki ‘a e taleniti fakaenatula ke fakalalakaka ki ha taleniti ‘oku mahulu atu, tautautefito ki he ngaahi ‘ulungaanga fakafonua.

#### **Ko e fekumi ki he fanauako Tonga Poto mo mohu taleniti:**

Ko e fekumi ‘e fai mei he ongo tamaiki ako Tonga ‘e tokoua ‘a ia ‘oku na lolotonga ako ‘i ha Ako Ma‘olunga ‘i Nu‘u Sila ni ‘i he taimi ni. ‘Oku taku ko e ta‘ahine/tamasi‘i ‘atamai‘ia mo mohu taleniti ‘oka tu‘ukimu‘a ‘i ha mala‘e ‘e taha pe lahi hake ‘i he faka‘atamai, sipoti, ‘ulungaanga fakafonua, fakalaumalie, musika pe taki ‘o ha falukunga kakai. Ko e ngaahi ‘apiako, tukui kolo mo e ngaahi kulupu fakafonua ‘oku malava pe ke kehekehe ‘enau faka‘uhinga‘i ‘a e ‘atamai‘ia mo mohu taleniti. Ko e ongo savea ki mui, ‘e fili‘i ‘a e ongo tamaiki ako‘ makatu‘unga ‘i he‘ena tu‘ukimu‘a ‘i he mala‘e tatau, pea ko e ongo tamaiki fefine pe tangata fakatou‘osi ka kuo pau ko e tokotaha na‘e fanau‘i ‘i Tonga pea tokotaha na‘e fanau‘i ‘i Nu‘usila. ‘E fakahoko mai ‘a e ongo tamaiki ako ni me i he ‘ena Ako‘anga pe ko e matu‘a/ tauhi fanau ‘i he fakaafe mei he tokotaha fekumi. Ko e ongo tamaiki ako ‘e fili kuo pau ke fakahoko hona ngaahi faka‘eke‘eke. Ko e ‘uluaki faka‘eke‘eke ‘e ma‘u mei ai ‘a e kakai mahu‘inga ki he ongo tamaiki ako ni hange ko e kau fai ako pea mo e famili pe ko ha taha pe. ‘E fakaafe‘i kinautolu ko eni‘ ke nau kau mai ki ha faka‘eke‘eke, ‘a ia ‘e ‘i he houa ‘e taha pea ko hono fakafonu ‘o e pepa fehu‘i ‘e ‘i he miniti ‘e 10-15. Ko e ngaahi fehu‘i ‘e fai ‘i he lea faka pilitania pea mo e lea fakatonga, pea ‘e ‘ataa pe ‘a e tali ke fai pe ‘i ha taha ‘o e ongo lea. ‘E toe hoko atu ‘a e faka‘eke‘eke ‘o e ongo tamaiki ako ke fakaikiiki ange pea ‘e hiki tepi, ‘okapau ‘e fai ha felotoi kiai. Ko e tepi pea mo e tatau ‘o e talifehu‘i ‘e ‘oange ki he tokotaha tali fehu‘i.

‘E to e fai foki pea mo hono mamata‘i ‘o e tokotaha ako ‘i he lokiako pe ‘i ha feitu‘u pe ‘e faka‘ali‘ali ai ‘a ‘ene mohu taleniti pe poto. ‘E fai ‘a e fetu‘utaki ki mu‘a ki he tokotaha ako, ‘apiako pe ko e faiako sipoti.

'E fiema'u pea mo e ngaahi lipooti fakaako, fakamo'oniako mo e ngaahi pale. Kapau 'e loto ki ai 'a e tokotaha ako 'e fiema'u ha ngaahi tatau.

#### **Founga 'o e Fekumi:**

Neongo 'e 'ikai hā 'a e ngaahi hingoa pe kulupu 'i he tohi fekau'aki mo e fekumi' ni, 'e 'ikai malava ke malu' i 'a e fakapulipuli 'o e ngaahi fakamatala ko e'uhi ko e loloto mo e 'auliliki 'o e fekumi' ni. Ko e ngaahi fakamatala, talifehu'i, mamata'i ngaahi me'a kotoa pe fekau'aki pea mo e fekumi' ni 'e fai fakapulipuli. 'E 'ikai ke ngaue 'aki 'a e hingoa totonu 'o ha taha pe ko e ngaahi ako'anga' ke malu' i 'a e fanauako.

Ko e 'u pepa kotoa pe fekau'aki mo e fekumi' ni 'e mu'aki kole ma'u pe ha ngofua kimu'a pea toki fai hano hiki. Ko e tokotaha fakatonulea' 'e fiema'u ke fakamo'oni 'i ha aleapau ke fakapapau' i 'a e fakapulipuli 'o e faka'eke'eke. Ko e ngaahi foomu pea mo e tepi mei he faka'eke'eke 'e tauhi ia 'i he 'Univesiti Mesi fe'unga mo e ta'u 'e nima mei he taimi ni.

#### **Ko e ola 'o e fekumi:**

'E fakamatala' i 'i he fekumi ko eni 'a e ngaahi tefito' i me'a mahu'inga ne tokoni ki he fakalalakaka 'a e 'atamai'ia pea mo e mohu taleniti 'a e fanauako Tonga. Ko e ngaahi tefito' i me'a ko eni mahalo pe 'oku te'eki ai ke fakakau ia 'i he polokalama ako lolotonga 'a e ngaahi ako'anga. 'Oku ou 'amanaki pe 'e tokoni lahi 'a e fekumi ko eni ki he kau faiako pea moe ngaahi ako'anga ke fakalalakaka ange 'a hono tokoni' i 'o e fanau ako Tonga 'atamai'ia mo mohu taleniti.

Ko e lipooti 'o e fekumi 'e tauhi ia 'i he Laipeli 'a e'Univesiti Mesi. 'E 'ave 'a e tatau 'e ua ki he ongo tamaikiako Tonga ne fai kiai 'a e fekumi. Ko e ngaahi matu'a, tauhi fanau mo e kakai kotoa pe ne kau he fekumi 'e 'oange 'a e konga lalahi 'o e fekumi kia kinautolu. 'E pulusi 'a e lipooti pea pehe foki ki ha ngaahi pulusi kehe pe ha fakamatala 'e fai.

#### **Ko e totonu 'a e kakai kau 'i he fekumi:**

'Oku 'iai ho'o totonu ke tali 'a e fakafehu' i ni pe 'ikai. Kapau teke tali ke ke kau 'oku 'iai ho'o totonu ke fili ke

- \* Tali 'a e fehu' i 'i he lea faka Tonga pe lea faka Pilitania
- \* 'Oua 'e tali ha fehu' i 'oku 'ikai keke fie tali
- \* Mavahe 'aupito mei he fekumi 'i ha fa'ahinga taimi pe
- \* Fai ha fa'a hinga fehu' i ki ha me'a pe teke fie'ilo kiai fekau'aki moe fekumi
- \* Fai ha tali 'i he 'ilo 'e 'ikai ke ngaue'aki ho hingoa totonu,
- \* 'E 'oatu 'a e tohi kongokongalalahi 'o e fekumi.
- \* Kole ke 'oua 'e hiki tepi ha konga 'o e faka'eke'eke.

Ko e fekumi ko eni 'oku pule'i ia 'e Dr Tracy Riley (Gifted and Talented Education) mo Lesieli McIntyre (Pacific Education). Kapau 'oku 'iai ha'o fehu'i fekau'aki mo e fekumi' ni, pea ke kataki 'o fetu'utaki mai kia au pe ko hoku ongo pule:

Ingrid-Frengley-Vaipuna 06 278 6893 [ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com](mailto:ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com)

Dr Tracy Riley 06 356 9099 Extn 8625 [t.l.riley@massey.ac.nz](mailto:t.l.riley@massey.ac.nz)

Lesieli MacIntyre 06 356 9099 Extn 8735 [l.i.macintyre@massey.ac.nz](mailto:l.i.macintyre@massey.ac.nz)

Ko e fekumi ko eni ne vakai'i pea tali 'e he 'Massey University Human Ethics Committee, Palmerston North Application 05/50. Kapau 'oku 'iai ha me'a teke fie'ilo kiai pe ko ha me'a 'oku 'ikai teke fiemalie kiai pea ke fetu'utaki kia Toketa John O'Neil, Sea 'o e Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Palmerston North, telefoni 06 350 5799 ext 8635, email [humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz).

## **Appendix E:**

### **Observations:**

Dear

\_\_\_\_\_ has been selected to be the central participant in a case study I am completing as part of my research for a Masters thesis in Education titled "Gifted and Talented Tongan students in New Zealand Secondary schools". The focus is on isolating positive factors in nurturing giftedness and is based around two in-depth case studies. (An information sheet is included with this letter.) The student and their parents have given their consent to participate in the study. Data about the student is collected largely through interviews with them, their family and others significant to their talent development. However in order to ensure depth and detail about the student's talent I am requesting written permission to observe their "talent in action" on school premises.

Depending on the type of activity, the observation may take place in the classroom, sports field, music room or other relevant, appropriate setting at a time that causes the least disruption to staff and students. As well as making notes about the context, I will use the enclosed observation schedule (checklist). This focuses on the student's leadership qualities, questioning strategies, skill level, task commitment and interaction with peers and instructors. I will be as unobtrusive as possible and copies of my field notes will be made available to participants for comment/verification.

I also seek written permission to access the student's school records. The student and parents have consented to my requesting such access.

Thank you in anticipation of your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna

**Observation schedule:**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Characteristic</b>             | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Notes</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| affirms peers                     |                  |              |
| conflicts with peers              |                  |              |
| directs peers                     |                  |              |
| is directed by peers              |                  |              |
| shows enthusiasm for task/subject |                  |              |
| jokes with peers                  |                  |              |
| jokes with adults                 |                  |              |
| demonstrates superior skill       |                  |              |
| mastery attained easily           |                  |              |
| shows unusual concentration       |                  |              |
| asks for clarification            |                  |              |
| suggests new ideas                |                  |              |
| recognises problems               |                  |              |
| poses solutions                   |                  |              |
| makes generalisations             |                  |              |
| integrates subject knowledge      |                  |              |
| evaluates own performance         |                  |              |
| evaluates others performance      |                  |              |
| demonstrates active listening     |                  |              |
| interrupts peers                  |                  |              |
| interrupts adults                 |                  |              |
| uses Tongan language              |                  |              |
| is praised                        |                  |              |
| is reprimanded                    |                  |              |
| daydreams                         |                  |              |
| repeats/redrafts to improve       |                  |              |

## Appendix F:

### Questionnaire for teachers:

This information is being sought for the purposes of completing a thesis investigating the experiences of Tongan secondary school students in New Zealand. Your name will not be published in the final paper. If you could take a few minutes to read the information sheet and fill in the following questionnaire I'd really appreciate it. Thanks – Ingrid.

What subject do you teach or have you taught \_\_\_\_\_ or how else have you been involved with him/her? (Coach? Mentor? Employer? Dean? Etc)

Please circle the number for each item which best describes \_\_\_\_\_'s attitudes/characteristics/performance in your subject or activity:

- 5 – possesses this characteristic to a high degree
- 4 – often demonstrates this characteristic
- 3 – sometimes demonstrates this characteristic
- 2 – rarely demonstrates this characteristic
- 1 – has not been observed to demonstrate this characteristic

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learns easily and quickly   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Highly expressive with words  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Is bilingual or multilingual  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Highly expressive with numbers  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Highly expressive with symbols  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Moves quickly from concrete to abstract concepts; senses deeper meanings                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Asks unusual questions  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Shows attention to detail   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Has a sense of humour   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Independent, self-motivated   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Shows leadership skills   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Thinks <i>tikoni ki he kakai</i> (helping the Tongan people) is important/has a sense of duty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Uses creative thinking to solve problems in imaginative/logical ways                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Produces many original ideas  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| High level of task commitment   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Well organised: plans/uses time well  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Has unusual interests   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Has a lot of knowledge about many topics  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Has extensive knowledge of <i>anga faka-Tonga</i> (Tongan culture)                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strong sense of justice and empathy/sensitivity towards others                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please describe any extreme responses to emotional, intellectual, sensory, psychomotor or imaginative stimuli that you have observed eg: Tears when giving a speech , saying a prayer or watching a film.

Further comments:

(feel free to use the back!)

Eg: do you think \_\_\_'s potential has been maximised?

## **Appendix G:**

### **School information sheet:**

#### **Gifted and Talented Tongan Secondary School Students in New Zealand**

**Researcher: Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna. Masters of Education Student, Massey University.**

#### **Information Sheet for schools, teachers and Principals**

I am completing a thesis for the Masters of Education degree which investigates the talent development of exceptional Tongan students. My interest in Tongan students is motivated by my experience as Head of English at Tonga High School (1993 – 1998), my Tongan husband and children and our involvement in Tongan communities in Tonga and New Zealand. The research will investigate what enables natural ability to develop into exceptional talent, especially culturally significant factors.

#### **Recruitment of Participants:**

The experiences of two talented Tongan students currently attending New Zealand secondary schools will each be the centre of a case study. They have been nominated by their school and/or parents at the invitation of the researcher. The final two case study participants will be selected because they excel in the same area, are the same gender and age and one is Tongan-born while one is new Zealand-born. They will be interviewed several times. The first interview, of about an hour's duration, will reveal people significant to their talent development such as family, teachers and community members. These people will also be invited to participate in interviews or by completing a brief questionnaire. All questions will be in English or Tongan and participants can answer in either language. Subsequent interviews of the student will explore in detail the factors that have enabled the development of their giftedness. Interviews will be audiotaped (with permission of the participant) and tapes/transcripts provided to participants. To create a detailed and rich profile, observations will also be made of the student as they demonstrate their talent/gift. Permission will be sought from the student/school/coach etc. before observations are made. To add further depth to the profile documents such as school reports, portfolios of work, certificates and awards will be sought and copied with the participant's permission.

#### **Procedures:**

While no individual or institution will be named in the final publication, neither anonymity nor confidentiality can be promised because of the depth and detail of the profiles. Transcripts of interviews and copies of field notes will be given to participants for verification before analysis. Consent forms, transcripts and audiotapes will be held at Massey University for a period of five years.

#### **The outcome of the research:**

The research will describe the positive factors in developing Tongan students' gifts and talents. I am hopeful that my research will inspire schools to identify more gifted Tongan students and incorporate appropriate catalysts to enhance the development of their talent into their teaching practices. The thesis

will be held by Massey University library and copies presented to the student participants. Other participants will have a written summary of the thesis provided to them. The results of this research will only be published in this thesis and any other publications or presentations arising from the study.

**Participants' rights:**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- \* Answer interview questions in English or Tongan
- \* Decline to answer any particular question
- \* Withdraw from the study at any time
- \* Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation
- \* Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used
- \* Be provided with a written summary of the thesis
- \* To ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during an interview
- \* Completion and return of questionnaires implies consent. You have the right to decline to answer any particular question.

This research is supervised by Dr Tracy Riley (Gifted and Talented Education) and Lesieli McIntyre (Pacific Education). If you have any questions about my research please contact myself or my supervisors:

Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna 06 278 6893 [ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com](mailto:ifrengleyvaipuna@yahoo.com)

Dr Tracy Riley 06 3569099 ext 8625 [t.l.riley@massey.ac.nz](mailto:t.l.riley@massey.ac.nz)

Lesieli MacIntyre 06 3569099 ext 8735 [l.i.macintyre@massey.ac.nz](mailto:l.i.macintyre@massey.ac.nz)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, PN Application 05/50. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr John O'Neill, Chair, Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: Palmerston North, telephone 06 350 5799 ext 8635, email [humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz)

**APPENDIX H:**

**Consent forms:**

**Gifted and Talented Tongan Secondary School Students in New Zealand**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.

I understand that I can ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time.

I wish/do not wish to have my audio files returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Full Name - printed**

**Gifted and Talented Tongan Secondary School Students in New Zealand**

**AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TAPE TRANSCRIPTS**

**This form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview/s conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used by the researcher, Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna, in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....  
**Full Name - printed** .....

**Gifted and Talented Tongan Secondary School Students in New Zealand**

**Access to school records:**

We agree to the researcher, Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna, having access to the school records of  
xxxx

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....  
**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

Appendix I:

Example of Tongan numerical music notation:

This music sheet for the Lord's Prayer uses Tongan notation.

Key F, 4/4  
♩ = 72 Approx

**LORDS PRAYER.** by H. M. King Tanfaihanu Tupou IV

|        |            |         |         |          |         |         |            |
|--------|------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|------------|
| 1 5:55 | 33:-31:3   | 7:-16:- | 5:-1:-5 | 4:44:3:- | 6:-15:- | 4:-1:-4 | 4:-17:6-6  |
| 13:33  | 33:-31:3   | 3:-13:- | 3:-1:-3 | 2:22:3:- | 2:-13:- | 2:-1:-2 | 2:-144:4-4 |
| 17:77  | 77:-71:7:3 | 8:-18:- | 7:-1:-7 | 7:77:7:- | 7:-17:- | 7:-1:-7 | 7:-177:7-7 |
| 13:33  | 33:-31:3   | 2:-13:- | 3:-1:-3 | 7:66:5:- | 4:-13:- | 2:-1:-2 | 2:-192:4-9 |

—Cres—

|           |           |          |          |         |         |             |           |
|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|---------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| 55:-14:-4 | 5:-518:77 | 6:-619:9 | 7:-718:7 | 7:716:6 | 7:-1:-7 | 44:-4144:44 | 4:-1-4:44 |
| 23:-14:-4 | 3:-315:55 | 4:-414:4 | 5:-515:4 | 4:414:4 | 4:-1:-4 | 44:-144:44  | 4:-1-4:44 |
| 77:-17:-7 | 8:-818:88 | 8:-819:9 | 9:-913:9 | 8:9:3:3 | 9:-1:-9 | 99:-99:99   | 8:-1-8:88 |
| 33:-12:-2 | 8:-813:33 | 4:-419:9 | 5:-513:3 | 4:414:4 | 2:-1:-2 | 77:-177:77  | 7:-1-7:77 |

—Cres—

|           |               |          |                 |                 |           |           |               |
|-----------|---------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| 4:-13:-3  | 4444:44199:99 | 3:-1:-33 | 3-33:3319999:99 | 33:-13:33       | 22:-19:19 | 8:-18:-8  | 8888:88177:77 |
| 61:-51:-5 | 4444:44177:77 | 3:-1:-33 | 7-77:7717777:77 | 4-44:4414444:44 | 55:-15:55 | 61:-51:-5 | 4444:44177:77 |

—Cres—

|             |           |          |            |         |           |           |         |
|-------------|-----------|----------|------------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 33:-199:1-  | 8:-817:7  | 7:-16:14 | 5:-14:1-   | 3:-1:-3 | 33:-133:- | 33:314:44 | 5:-15:- |
| 23:-144:1-  | 3:-315:5  | 4:-13:3  | 3:-1-19:10 | 3:-1:-3 | 33:-188:- | 88:817:73 | 2:-13:- |
| 55:-5177:1- | 8:-818:8  | 8:-18:8  | 7:-1-16:10 | 5:-1:-5 | 55:-155:- | 66:616:66 | 7:-17:- |
| 88:-155:-   | 6:-613:13 | 4:-16:6  | 7:-17:1-   | 3:-1:-3 | 33:-133:- | 33:313:33 | 3:-13:- |

—Cres—

|            |          |           |          |           |         |          |           |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------|----------|-----------|
| 51:-5144:5 | 66:61-6  | 6:-615:5  | 5:-14:1- | 4:-1441-4 | 5:-1:-5 | 5:-5151- | 6:-16:1-6 |
| 3:-3133:3  | 33:31-13 | 2:-213:13 | 3:-19:1- | 2:-1991-9 | 3:-1:-3 | 3:-3131- | 3:-9:1-9  |
| 7:-7188:8  | 88:81-8  | 7:-717:7  | 7:-17:1- | 7:-1771-7 | 7:-1:-7 | 7:-7171- | 7:-17:7-  |
| 3:-3133:3  | 33:31-13 | 3:-313:3  | 2:-12:1- | 6:-172:7  | 3:-1:-3 | 3:-3131- | 4:-14:1-4 |

—Cres—

|          |          |           |           |           |           |            |          |
|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| 6:-16:1- | 7:-1-1-  | 7:-717:1- | 8:-1-1-8  | 8:-18:1-8 | 9:-1-1-9  | 8:-819:1-9 | 3:-1-1-  |
| 9:-19:1- | 3:-1-1-  | 3:-313:1- | 3:-1-1-3  | 6:-16:1-6 | 7:-1-1-7  | 7:-717:1-7 | 8:-15:1- |
| 7:-17:1- | 7:-18:1- | 8:-818:1- | 8:-1-1-8  | 4:-13:1-3 | 9:-1-1-9  | 5:-515:1-5 | 3:-1-1-  |
| 4:-14:1- | 5:-1-1-  | 5:-515:1- | 6:-15:1-5 | 4:-13:1-3 | 7:-16:1-6 | 5:-515:1-5 | 8:-1-1-  |

—Cres—

|         |         |          |         |         |         |         |          |
|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| 0:-1-1- | 5:-1-1- | 4:-1-1-  | 3:-1-1- | 3:-1-1- | 3:-1-1- | 4:-1-1- | 5:-1-1-5 |
| 4:-1-1- | 9:-1-1- | 3:-19:1- | 3:-1-1- | 3:-1-1- | 3:-1-1- | 3:-1-1- | 3:-1-1-3 |
| 3:-1-1- | 7:-1-1- | -:-16:1- | 5:-1-1- | 8:-1-1- | 8:-1-1- | 7:-1-1- | 7:-1-1-7 |
| 0:-14:- | 2:-1-1- | -:-1-1-  | 3:-1-1- | 3:-1-1- | 6:-1-1- | 6:-1-1- | 3:-1-1-3 |

PP(Rail)