Understanding Pasefika perceptions and experiences of the school system in Years 7 to 10

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Abstract

Drawing on questionnaires and interviews of Pasefika students, their parents, and teachers, this case study provides an understanding of their perceptions and experiences of the school system in Years 7 to 10 within a family resource framework. Essentially, the financial, social and cultural resources available to Pasefika students within the context of their family's *cultural capital*, and their prior cognitive ability and non-cognitive dispositions have greater influence on their engagement and success at school than their culture or ethnicity. Respondents' suggestions for changes to enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students, including the support for a middle-school structure and provision of an extra year prior to NCEA qualifications, reiterate similar multivariate recommendations and findings of other studies.

Acknowledgements

schools. May the Word of God continue to be a Lamp to your feet and a Light to your path (Psalms 119:105).

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

In 18 years of teaching maths at low-decile[1] colleges[2] and an alternative school with predominantly Pasefika and/or Mäori students, and as a mother of four children attending low-decile schools in Porirua and parent Board of Trustees member, I have found it saddening to watch the majority of our Pasefika/Mäori children leave school with no or low qualifications.

Pasefika students are capable of achieving as school leaver statistics have improved with the introduction of NCEA[3] in 2002, and at alternative schools such as *He Huarahi Tamariki*[4]. The question is why proportionally, after 30-plus years of educational reforms, research, reports, conferences, symposiums and professional development (P.D.), their achievement rate remains so low and why the achievement 'gap', which has not reduced, continues to exist between Pasefika and Asian or Palagi students?

Socio-economic status (SES) and ethnic/cultural explanations from research are available but these alone do not explain then the cause of high Asian[5] student achievement. It is clear that there are complex, interconnecting historical and social factors (such as employment, housing, living conditions, and health) which impact on Pasefika student achievement and cannot be fully discussed here. This is a multivariate problem. However, despite recognising family resources as the major issue in terms of educational inequality (Ministry of Education (MOE), 1998 cited Adams, Clark, Codd, O'Neill, Openshaw & Waitere-Ang, 2000:285), successive governments and the MOE have placed the blame for the failure of low-income, Mäori and Pasefika student underachievement onto the local school, teachers and the parents. By devolving responsibility for resolving educational inequalities, nobody assumes direct

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[1] Decile indicates the extent to which a school draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. Low decile = 1 to 3; Middle decile = 4 to 7; High decile = 8 to 10.

[2] Years 9 to 15, though most students leave after Year 13. Also called secondary schools.

[3] National Certificate in Educational Achievement.

[4] *He Huarahi Tamariki* (HHT), an alternative local school of predominantly Pasefika and Mäori teenage parents, has achieved almost 100% NCEA pass rate with students continuing to tertiary education (*HHT Newsletter* March 2003 & March 2004).

[5] Asian students represented 8.8% (65,583) of the domestic student population in New Zealand as at 1 July 2008 compared with 9.5% of Pasefika students. Asian students predominantly attend middle-high decile schools (decile 4-7 and 8-10) compared to Pasefika students who predominantly attend low-decile schools (decile 1-3) (MOE, 2008b). However, in Census 2006, the lowest median annual personal income for people aged 15 years and over was for those who identified with the Asian ethnic group ($14,500); Pasefika peoples was $20,500. The Asian ethnic group has higher proportions of people in the younger age groups (who tend to have lower incomes). People identifying with the Asian ethnic group had the highest proportion (58%) of people receiving under $20,000 a year (Statistics NZ, 2008b, Quickstats about Income).

responsibility for the failure of, and lack of, educational (and social and economic) policies and practices to *significantly* affect Pasefika educational achievement.

For years those at the 'chalk-face', such as former primary school Principal May (1993 cited Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2002:63), have advocated "structural as well as curriculum, pedagogical, and evaluation change... to make a difference for culturally diverse students". Tangaroa College Principal Jim Peters (1996:134) also boldly argued:

> ...in addition to addressing issues related to how students learn and how teachers teach, we need to look at other factors that impinge on the learning environment... we need to critically examine school structures and perhaps take a plunge at experimenting with some of the innovative structural changes that have been tried in schools in the USA in poor communities with high Black and Hispanic populations. Schools need to identify the systems and structures that are not working for Pacific Islands' students and change them. ...And... schools in the low socio-economic areas have to be better resourced. Teachers with up to 30 students in their classes, a very high proportion of them with learning difficulties and presenting challenging behaviours, cannot adequately meet the needs of all. ...We need more teachers and more money for basic learning resources.

School structures, the nature of teaching and learning, and resourcing are critical issues at the school site.

The focus of this thesis, '*Understanding Pasefika perceptions and experiences of the school system in Years 7 to 10*', is to explore the perceptions and experiences held by three Pasefika groups – students, their parents and teachers. Concentrating on Years 7 to 10, it draws on participant interviews and questionnaires to ascertain these groups' perceptions and experiences of the school system, its structures and processes and their suggestions for change to enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students. It will then explain the observed statistical patterns of Pasefika students' underachievement within the theoretical context of the Family Resource Framework (Nash & Harker, 1997). This Framework utilises explanations of family, school and social contexts.

1.2. <u>Research Problem & Questions</u>

The Family Resource Framework (FRF) in which Nash and Harker's (1997 & 1998) project was constructed provides for an understanding of educational inequality (FRF will be elaborated in chapter two). Briefly, FRF "allows for different methods, ...quantitative and qualitative, and for the integration of different theories" to explain the complex issues around differential educational achievement (O'Neill & Nash, 2005:344). Thus, to understand the

central question, 'what is going on?' for Pasefika students in Porirua schools in Years 7 to 10 prior to NCEA qualifications, and to understand the complexity of issues, the FRF approach using "numbers and narratives" underpins this study (Nash & Harker, 1998:2).

My specific questions focusing on Years 7 to 10 are:

1. How do Pasefika students, parents, and teachers perceive and experience mainstream schooling?

2. What positive changes could be made to enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students?

This study draws on New Zealand research such as Hill and Hawk's (1998) examination of the *Achievement in Multi-cultural High Schools* (AIMHI[6]) project, Nash and Harker's (1997) *Progress at School*[7] study, and the *Competent Children, Competent Learners*[8] project by Wylie, Hodgen and Ferral (2006b) and Wylie and Hodgen (2007). From these studies, I believe the best explanation for the observed Pasefika differences in school attainment is recognising the importance of the complex structural inequalities in our society generated by economic, political, and socio-cultural systems, in which the family and school are located. It is with Pierre Bourdieu's *cultural capital* and *habitus* concepts and Basil Bernstein's *socio-linguistic* theory – to be discussed in chapter two – and strongly influenced by Nash and Harker's (1998) work that this thesis will engage. Briefly, students' differentially developed prior cognitive abilities (particularly in literacy) and *non-cognitive dispositions* (aspirations, academic self-concepts, and perceptions of the school and teachers (Nash 2002:95)), located within social class and cultural practices (particularly influenced by 'maternal qualification'), that the school recognises/ignores, accounts for differential outcomes in education. In simple terms, to succeed at school a student's *cultural capital* needs to match the school's *cultural capital*; the converse unfortunately is less likely to occur. Hence, despite social class, Asian

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[6] *Achievement in Multi-cultural High Schools* is a development project initiated and funded by the MOE to raise the achievement levels of students at eight low-decile secondary schools with high ratios of Mäori and Pasefika students (seven colleges in South Auckland, and one in Porirua).

[7] The 1991 New Zealand project followed 5388 students in 37 secondary schools from third form to seventh form (ages 13 to 17 years or Years 9 to 13). The research was designed to investigate school effects and its specific focus was on those inequalities that seem to be associated with individual schools. The research also had wider concerns with central policy issues concerned with social access to education.

[8] *Competent Children* project focused on 500 Wellington region children. The study charted their cognitive, social and attitudinal competencies from when they were close to 5 years of age and still in early childhood education, until age 16. Its main aims are to explore the roles of home and education in the development of children's competencies and to investigate if these roles change over time and as children have other experiences. Summary reports of the findings for the fifth stage has been presented in "*Twelve Years Old and Competent 2004*" (Wylie, 2004), the sixth stage in "*Growing Independence: A summary of key findings from the Competent learners at 14 project*" (Wylie et al., 2006a) and "*Completely different or a bigger version? Experiences and effects of the transition to secondary school*" (Wylie et al., 2006b), and the seventh stage in "*Competent learners @ 16: Competency levels and development over time*" (Wylie & Hodgen, 2007).

students' *cultural capital*, which Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) have briefly identified (and beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss), have the best match to the school's *cultural capital* than non-Asian students. The most satisfying explanation of ethnic differences in educational attainment is from Nash and Harker (1997:13):

> ...it is crucial to have regard to the evidence that the family practices causally related to the development of cognitive skills and scholastic forms of learning are not associated in the same way with social class in all ethnic communities.

Studies such as Nash (1999b) and Wylie, Hodgen, Ferral, Dingle, Thompson, and Hipkins (2006a) demonstrate that when solid foundations for learning are established early (preschool and primary school) children are likely to perform well later. Harkess, Murray, Parkin, and Dalgety (2005:6) note international studies for Pasefika students who reached senior secondary schooling, showed they had achieved less in primary and junior secondary school. The local assessment data of Years 7 to 10 Pasefika students (discussed in chapter four) also support these findings.

It is clear the majority of Pasefika children need more time to acquire curriculum knowledge and skills to levels necessary to meet the academic demands of senior college (I suggest more time to mean postponing NCEA Level 1 to Year 12 rather than the current Year 11. This will be discussed further in the next chapter). Early low achievement has a cumulative effect on college achievement, and secondary schooling is obviously not meeting Pasefika students' needs.

Education Review Office (ERO) reports (1994, 2001, 2003) reveal unresolved issues about the educational needs of students in Years 7 to 10. Middle-schools had not been established at the time of the 1994 Office report which stated "...no particular type of schooling arrangement has necessarily addressed the specific needs of Form 1 to 4 students successfully" (ERO, 1994:section 6[9]). However, while noting four middle-schools had no statistical significance, of interest in a later Office report (ERO, 2003:section 4[10]) was the quality of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in these schools which were found to be "significantly higher than in any other form of school" and organisation "was significantly more responsive than that found in Years 7 to 13 and Years 9 to 13 secondary schools". Nolan, Brown, Stewart and Beane (2000 cited ERO, 2001:section 4[11], italics mine) argue:

> Over 40 years of school-based research and experience with hundreds of thousands of students in over 10,000 middle schools show that separate three

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[9] 'Overall conclusions' par.2.
[10] 'Overall findings across all school types' par.3, 4.
[11] 'The argument for middle schools' par.5.

to four year age span middle schools, *when properly planned and led*, are the most appropriate way to meet the educational needs of emerging adolescents.

Though predominantly from overseas, the literature on middle-schooling for ethnic minorities indicates possible solutions for positive change and towards early successful achievement at levels required for success at senior college. This is briefly discussed in chapter two.

The solution therefore lies in part with Pasefika students and their parents but for the most part with schools and government to address social inequalities. Conventional schooling is not working for Pasefika students and this thesis provides evidence of the need for multifaceted solutions, including cultural change within schools – values, habits, skills, structures and processes – and improved resourcing (particularly in low-decile schools), to increase academic achievement.

1.3. **'Pasefika' defined**

Pasefika students in New Zealand include those whose heritages are from Pacific Nations but usually excluding New Zealand Mäori. Within-group diversity by gender, recency of migration and various stages of adaptation to New Zealand society, socio-economic status, combination of ethnicities, individual differences and other characteristics create wide diversity under the term Pasefika. In addition, the varying degrees to which Pasefika students identify themselves create wide diversity within the Pasefika student population that exists in New Zealand schools. Participants in this study identify with their Pacific Nation not 'Pasefika' and not 'New Zealand/Pacific Island born'. Readers should bear in mind that cultural and academic patterns described in this study should not be taken as applying to all individuals indiscriminately.

Various terms are used in New Zealand to describe Pasefika peoples (Pacific Nations peoples, Polynesian, Pacific Islander, Pasifika) but I use 'Pasefika' because it is the 'correct' spelling taken from my mother rather than the Palagi/European spelling 'Pasifika'. Quotes using the term 'Pasifika' have not been altered.

The Samoan term 'Palagi'[12] is used in reference to European and New Zealand European/Päkehä peoples.

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[12] The correct Samoan term is Papälagi meaning foreigner, European, white man.

1.4. Thesis Outline

Chapter one introduces this study and argues that the educational achievement 'gap' between ethnic groups has multivariate causes that are wider than the school and include family resource and socio-political explanations.   The literature review in chapter two presents school statistics concerning Pasefika students and what is being done to 'close the gap'. Theoretical foundations are introduced to explain educational inequalities and an introduction of Nash and Harker's (1998) work.   The argument for middle-schools and an extra year for Pasefika students are made as structural solutions for underachievement.   The methodological foundations of the research design and methods, including the implications of the Family Resource Framework (FRF), are provided in chapter three.   The introduction in chapter four provides the format for chapters four to six which analyse and discuss the data from the three groups of Pasefika participants.   Answers to my research questions are briefly discussed in chapter seven, drawing on the key theoretical foundations and concepts from the literature research.   Recommendations focus on school changes.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This review is set out in four sections. It begins with an analysis of national school statistics to identify Pasefika students as a group compared with other student groups in New Zealand. It then examines responses to this, which seek to close ethnic 'gaps' in educational achievement. Research on Pasefika perceptions and experiences of the school system in Years 7 to 10 is limited. Following this, theoretical understandings and key concepts which enable an understanding of the creation and perpetuation of social and economic inequalities within society is discussed. The role of school and family resourcing as part of this process in relation to social and cultural reproduction theories is discussed. The final two sections argue for middle-school education and more time for learning. Middle-schooling research in New Zealand is limited but growing, including the recent publication of Cox and Kennedy (2008)[13]. Most of the literature in this area is based on Australian and United States school systems.

2.1. School Statistics of Pasefika students

While the top New Zealand students score highly in key areas of international surveys, such as the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA[14]) and the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS[15]), the low scores of those in the lowest quartile, mainly Pasefika and Māori students, are "disturbing in a country that prides itself on opportunity for all" (Alcorn, 2007:14). In 1996 Dr Judith Aitken (1996:34), the Chief Review Officer at the ERO, stated "Official reports continue to identify [Pacific Islands] students as less successful and achieving less than palagi and tagata asia". Of a MOE research report in relation to 550 Pasefika peoples' views in Auckland and Wellington on some aspects of schooling, Aitken questioned how only 6% of Pasefika parents/guardians could be dissatisfied with their children's schooling when "schools plainly do not deliver" (ibid). Even earlier, the Pacific Islands Peoples' Perspective recommended to the 1988 Royal Commission on Social Policy that "schools which are failing Pacific Islands students must be called to account and culturally appropriate educational solutions introduced and monitored" (Tamasese et al., 1988:566 cited Fusitu'a & Coxon, 1998).

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[13] *Students' Achievement as they Transition from Primary to Secondary Schooling* is mentioned here but too recent to be included in this thesis.
[14] PISA in 2000 and 2003 for 15-year-olds (Year 11 students) indicates levels of reading literacy.
[15] PIRLS in 2001 for 9 and 10-year-olds (Year 5 students) indicates levels of early reading attainment.

The outcomes of Government and MOE policies, strategies, plans and initiatives over at least the last 20 years should indicate raised educational achievement and reduced disparity. While statistics show Pasefika student achievement is gradually improving, so are the achievement rates of other groups of students[16]. However, there has not been a reduction, or widening, in disparity between the ethnic student groups.

International studies (PIRLS; PISA; and *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS)[17]) in general show similar trends of improvement with significant gaps between ethnic and socio-economic groups: Pasefika and Mäori score lower than Palagi and Asian groups, and students attending high-decile schools score higher than those at low-decile schools. The *National Educational Monitoring Project* (NEMP[18]) similarly noted "substantial disparities across the curriculum by school decile and ethnicity" (Education Counts Indicators, 2005a). MOE (2008a) statistics between 1993 to 2007 show more Pasefika students[19], compared with Asian and Palagi students, leave school with no or lower academic achievements and qualify to attend university at lower rates.

Sixty two percent of Pasefika students in New Zealand attend a decile 1-3 school compared with 10% of Palagi, 15% Asian, and 47% Mäori; only 10% of Pasefika students attend a decile 8-10 school (MOE, 2008b). This is evident among target schools involved in this thesis[20]. An Education Report (MOE, 2008a:9) stated "Students who leave from a high-decile school are much more likely to leave school with U.E.[21] or a Level 3 qualification or higher, while low-decile schools are more likely to have students leave with little or no formal attainment"[22]. This is concerning because the student population at low-decile colleges are

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[16] Percentages of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above by ethnic group and with little or no formal attainment by ethnic group for 1993-2007 can be seen more clearly in the graphs found in Appendix 2. Tables containing actual figures follow graphs. A brief discussion concerning Pasefika student statistics follows the graphs and tables.

[17] TIMSS in 2002-2003 for Year 5 and Year 9 students in mathematics and science was the third cycle to measure trends in achievement by comparing performance in 1994-1995 and 1998-1999 (MOE, 2006f). The fourth cycle for Year 5 mathematics achievement completed in 2006-2007 key findings were: "Asian and Pākehā/European students demonstrated significantly higher mean mathematics scores than Māori and Pasifika students. Asian students performed significantly higher than Pākehā/European students. Māori students performed significantly higher than Pasifika students. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds [had] higher mean mathematics achievement than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds... In addition, the decile of the school they attended... was positively related to mathematics achievement" (Education Counts Indicators, 2008).

[18] NEMP for Years 4 and 8 students is conducted each year, over a four-year period, assessing different areas related to the New Zealand curriculum.

[19] As at 1 July 2005, Pasefika students in New Zealand (66,088) made up 8.8% of the total domestic student population of 762,790 (MOE, 2006a:55, 56 Table 35 & 36). Over the 12 year period 1993 to 2005 the average percentage of students leaving school with at least sixth form certificate for Pasefika was 55.3%, compared to 70.7% Palagi and 84.2% Asian. Those students leaving school in the same period with no qualification for Pasefika was 23.7%, compared to 11.9% Palagi and 8.5% Asian.

[20] Refer Appendix 3.

[21] University Entrance.

[22] The Report stated "In Decile 10 schools, 66% of the school leavers left with UE or a Level 3 qualification or higher, while only one per cent left with little or no formal attainment. In Decile 1 schools, 17% of the school leavers left with UE or a Level 3 qualification or higher, while 11 per cent left with little or no formal attainment" (MOE, 2008a:9).

predominantly Pasefika (16%) and Mäori (10%) students compared with Palagi (3%) and Asian (3%) students (MOE, 2008b).

Gilmore's (1998 cited Harker, 2002:205) analysis of 6,541 new entrants found:

> The differences in performance between new entrants to schools in different decile bands ['High', 'Medium' and 'Low'] were consistent and statistically significant. Those new entrants in high-decile schools performed better than those in middle-decile schools who, in turn, performed better than those in low-decile schools.

Consistent and statistically significant achievement differences were also found between ethnic groups: higher levels for Palagi and Asian than for Mäori and Pasefika students (ibid:206). Similar results were found between 1997 and 2000 from the analyses of *School Entry Assessment* (SEA[23]) showing consistent trends of higher levels of ability across three key learning areas for Palagi children, followed by Asian children, then Mäori, with Pasefika children consistently achieving the lowest average scores (Codd & Adams, 2005:300). In relation to school decile, children attending lower decile schools achieved the lowest mean scores across all SEA areas.

Of all Year 1 students attending schools at July 2007, 77.2% of Pasefika students had attended some form of early childhood education (ECE) compared with 94.4% Palagi students, 89.7% Asian, and 83.9% of Mäori students (MOE, 2008b). In relation to school decile, Pasefika and Mäori children attending low-decile schools were less likely to have attended an ECE than their counterparts attending higher decile schools (Biddulph et al., 2003 cited Codd & Adams, 2005:299). It is argued that participation of children in quality ECE is important for social and academic achievement and future school success (ibid). The *Competent Children* project findings show high-quality ECE has an enduring influence on children's competencies from ages 5 to 16 (Wylie & Hodgen, 2007).

Related to the statistics concerning low-decile schools is the issue of quality teaching. Quality teaching makes a difference and is well researched (Alton-Lee, 2003). Evidence shows the level of secondary teacher qualification and pedagogical knowledge influences student achievement. Of significance is that students in high-decile schools appear to be taught by the highest qualified teachers (Education Counts Indicators, 2005b). Low-decile schools in Porirua struggle to attract and retain quality teachers who are highly qualified and able to exercise pedagogical knowledge strategies well-suited to the challenges students present in these schools. In suggesting the need to examine school assessment practices

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[23] SEA tasks are administered to new entrants at about six weeks to measure knowledge and skills developed prior to beginning school in three learning areas (oral language, early literacy, and numeracy).

Coxon et al. (2002:62) ask the key question whether "what we are measuring through assessment of Pacific student performance is lack of ability by some to learn, or lack of ability by others to teach". Wylie (2003:11) argued "Educational policy that is centred on enriching teaching practice and teacher development (and ensuring good quality teacher supply), is likely to make the most difference for 'low' achieving children from low-income homes".

On average the pattern of national and international achievement results reveals a New Zealand schooling system performing less well for Pasefika students (Alton-Lee, 2003; CERU, 2004; MOE, 2007; Talanoa Ako, 2004). Data regarding rates for stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions[24] and expulsions[25] between 2000 and 2005 also reveals high, and in some areas increasing, Pasefika rates, particularly Pasefika males, compared to Palagi and Asian students (Education Counts Indicators, 2006a,b). Truancy rates are substantially higher amongst Pasefika (and Māori) students and students from low-decile schools (ibid:2006c). A positive aspect is Pasefika students are staying at school longer than total students (MOE, 2008a). The level of education achieved by Pasefika students has a direct impact on their employment rates, types of occupations and thus the levels of income received.

Recently the MOE has been focusing on raising educational achievement and reducing disparity among all groups in New Zealand. The release of the MOE's *2001-2005 Pasifika Education Plan* provided strategies to meet Government goals for Pacific education: increased participation, retention and achievement across all education sectors[26] and improving teaching strategies in early literacy and numeracy. The Plan's sub-goals focused on increasing the availability, quality and provision of information to Pasefika peoples, their families, communities and education providers (Coxon et al., 2002:1). Since then, two other Plans (2006-2010 and 2008-2012) have been launched with continued focus on effective teaching, quality education providers and increasing family/community engagement in education.

Additionally, various research projects have presented a number of reasons to account for the disparity among certain groups in achievement. This has resulted in the implementation of Ministry initiatives and resourcing of school initiatives such as *Home-School Partnerships* (HSP[27]), *Team Up* and the *Pasifika School Community Parent Liaison Project* (PSCPL[28]) to

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[24] Students aged under 16 years.

[25] Students aged 16 years or over.

[26] Early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary.

[27] HSP is discussed in chapter six under the section 'Home-school communication'.

[28] Originally named Pacific Islands School Community Parent Liaison (PISCPL) in 1996, the goals are to "foster and encourage a closer relationship between school and Pacific Island communities, and improve and increase Pacific Islands student achievement across the curriculum" (MoE RFP Document, 2004:2 cited Gorinski, 2005:5). It does this by:

improve parental involvement in children's learning; the numeracy and literacy projects; AIMHI; and the development of Pacific language curricula.

The statistics, however, of educational outcomes are evidence of the cumulative nature of advantaged and disadvantaged communities. Pasefika, Mäori and children from low-income families are less likely to participate in ECE, achieve lower assessment scores, are on average more likely to attend low-decile schools which are likely to have less resources and fewer quality teachers, and more likely to leave school with low or no formal qualification. One only need visit a high-decile school and, literally, over the hill a low-decile school in Porirua to see the material differences in classroom resources and school property. It is clear that children are not receiving equal educational opportunities. And while the continued significant existence of disparities between ethnic and socio-economic groups is much the same throughout the school system, it does not appear to be 'caused' by the school system but it appears schools and government policies maintain, or rather reproduce, the 'gap' than reduce it. After all the studies and reports discussed above and the detailed evidence of Pasefika underachievement in comparison to other groups, it is politically significant that "seventy five percent of schools had not put in place any specific programmes to improve the achievement of Pacific students" (ERO, 2006:10).

Schools need to identify systems, structures, and teaching and management practices that can be changed. The major 'player' though is Government who needs to recognise educational success is about "one class competing against another in the 'educational race'" (Codd & Adams, 2005:325), a reflection of a competitive market. As Nash (1997b:62) points out:

> working class families, on the whole, cannot compete with the superior resources of the middle class and in all probability would not be able to compete on equal terms no matter what changes might be made to the educational system.

Therefore, Government and the MOE need to address economic and social inequalities and those issues negatively impacting on low-decile schools not addressed in the *Pasifika Education Plans*, such as few quality teachers, large class sizes, increasing disruptive behaviours by 'at risk' students, insufficient learning resources, learning support staff, and resourcing for support services. What this thesis demonstrates is that these are salient issues.

- ensuring a target is included in each school's Charter about improved Pasifika student learning outcomes, that resources are committed to this, and a comment on progress towards these targeted outcomes is part of each school's Annual Report;
- promoting evidence-based quality teaching for Pasifika students;
- improving school and teacher liaison with Pasifika parents and communities; and
- developing partnerships between Pasifika communities and schools to improve Pasifika student learning outcomes with a particular focus on literacy.

Currently, six clusters are involved in PSCPL: three in Auckland, one in Porirua and two in Christchurch. The Porirua cluster involves two Years 1 to 6 primary schools and one college (Years 7 to 13).

Consideration of the causal factors on Pasefika student underachievement such as socio-economic, school, family and Government policy factors are the focus of discussion in the next section.

2.2. Theoretical foundations: Understanding social and cultural reproduction

Ineffective and inefficient governance, management systems, poor teaching practices, and the like do account for some variance[29] in academic outcomes (Harker, 2002).   However, inequalities exist within the school system embedded in social, cultural and political contexts that are beyond the control of schools.   This section considers some social, cultural and political explanations for differential outcomes in education drawing on a critical theoretical and realist approach, briefly defined below.

In social science theorising, critical theory "looks beneath 'taken for granted' institutions, processes, theories, meanings or assumptions [through which we make sense of the world], to expose the contradictions 'between the world as it is portrayed and the world as it actually exists'" (O'Neill & O'Neill, 2008 cited St. George, Brown & O'Neill, 2008:3) and seeks "to develop a discourse of social transformation and emancipation" (Giroux, 2001:8).   Critical educationalists seek to uncover and understand how social structures of inequality are created and reproduced, the "what is", to make changes and work for "what should be" (ibid:9).

Realism acknowledges that social structures (economic, cultural, political, social), like physical structures, have a *real* existence and produce real effects.   Nash (2002:275) explains "realists argue that the social relations that unite people are real and that their properties affect the ways in which social organisations behave".   This thesis is located in a critical exploration of real social structures and social relations as the origins of multiple causes for low educational attainment by Pasefika students within a Western education system.

Culture

The term 'culture' refers to "the norms, values, beliefs, ideas and artifacts of a given society, the assumptions, ideas, belief systems and social and cultural practices through which it operates" (O'Neill, 2001:14).   Culture is learned and shared.   It describes the "way we do things around here" (ibid).   School, family, social and political contexts are not devoid of culture and culture is not relegated to ethnic groups alone (Department of Māori &

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[29] Harker (2002:208) stated the findings from the *Progress at School* project showed that about 3-5% of the academic outcome variance was related to the school's policies, practices and pedagogies.

Multicultural Education, 2005).   Although many factors contribute to differences in the performance of educational institutions, research on student learning affirms the importance of the match or mismatch of culture working both through the school and the student (Alton-Lee, 2003; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

School culture is complex and can be 'seen' in "the ways people relate to and work together; the management of school structures, systems and physical environment" (Stoll, 2000:10), and school practices around what is taught (curriculum), how it is taught (pedagogy), and how it is evaluated to test the success of the transmission (evaluation) (Nash, 1999a).   For the majority of New Zealand schools, school culture emerges from the policies and style of structures, systems and practices implemented by those with the power (Government, MOE, BOT[30], principals, teachers) who reflect the dominant Palagi culture.   Since the majority of decision-makers are Palagi middle-class then their framework of thought, and therefore their practices, are *different* from the students and families of Pasefika origins, who also tend to be working-class; the cultural and life beliefs are not congruent.   For instance, when the teaching process used by teachers assumes as an aspect of learning that students 'ask when they don't know', then if students do not ask, the teacher has a difficult task in evaluating students' knowledge (Jones, 1991).   So why not change school culture and practices?   The answer for social and cultural reproduction theorists lies in the concept of *hegemony*[31].

Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci's (1971 cited Darder, 1991) *cultural hegemony* theory describes how a ruling class maintains power over subordinate classes by means of political and ideological leadership through consent or persuasion.   For Gramsci, by taking control of key institutions such as schools, the state was the chief instrument of generating consent, or social and political compliance, "by ideological domination" rather than domination by force (O'Neill, 2001:30).   Key institutions create an ethos or culture reflecting social ideologies – particular sets of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, opinions and values – of the dominant power and by systematically establishing its worldview as universal, of what is 'normal', the dominant group maintains its position through the complicity of those who are dominated.   This may

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[30] Board of Trustees.

[31] Adams et al., (2005:49) in discussing social stratification state:
"Any system that gives some groups more resources than others usually has some reasonably convincing explanations, beliefs and social practices that seek to justify this unfairness (i.e. an *ideology*). The aim is that those groups that have been disadvantaged 'naturally' accept that the particular allocation system is a fair one (this type of sway or subtle power is called *hegemony*). For example, Western societies often explain differences in wealth on the basis of hard work or natural ability alone – not on inheritance, SES differences, or differential access to the social, economic and educational resources of a society". *Hegemony* is inherent in almost all societies (and ethnic groups) because it is about power and control by the advantaged over disadvantaged.

answer Aitken's (1996) earlier question as to why only 6% of Pasefika parents were dissatisfied with their children's schooling; that is, parents 'naturally' accept that the school system is a fair one in which success depends on students' individual hard work and is not attributable to teachers, teaching or the schooling system. This is demonstrated in chapter five.

Hegemony is actualised through the school curriculum and 'hidden-curricular' practices, defined as the "informal learning that occurs in formal contexts" (Adams et al., 2000:242). Hidden-curricular practices include design and layout of school buildings (the positioning of the school marae on campus, if it exists at all), timetabling and allocation of time, style of school organisation, leadership and management, and teacher expectations and practices within classrooms. It unconsciously communicates to students the school's attitudes towards males, females, disabled and exceptional students, and those from religious, cultural and ethnic groups (Banks & Banks, 2004:24). Consequently, as the school curriculum and 'hidden-curricular' is embedded in the 'natural' and 'taken-for-granted' social order of the school (Adams et al., 2000), Pasefika students unconsciously come to believe their knowledge, values, beliefs, ideas and attitudes are subordinate to those of the dominant group. This is the process of 'assimilation' – an individual or group completely take on the traits of another culture, leaving behind the original cultural identity.

Assimilation "asserts that a particular cultural view of the world, that of the dominant group, is the view of the world which all groups ought to adopt [and] no concessions are made to non-dominant cultures" (Irwin, 1989:4). Assimilation in New Zealand education essentially converts a communal culture to an individualistic one, fosters new forms of leadership and educates Pasefika students out of their essential 'Pasefikaness' (Department of Social Welfare, 1988:57). Thus, in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, certain groups of students are marginalised[32] as their cultural knowledge, language, and ways of viewing the world are marked as different, less important, inferior and deficient in relation to the natural, unmarked, neutral, important and superior category of 'Palaginess' (Powell, 2001:87).

Underlying assimilation and integration policies is the entrenched philosophy and beliefs of *ethnocentrism*[33]. Its form in New Zealand is the assumption that Palagi culture, lifestyle and values are superior to those found in Pasefika societies. It assumes Palagi values, beliefs and systems are 'normal', 'common sense', 'just the way things are', while Pasefika are an

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[32] Marginalise as defined by Martin (2002:81): "to relegate to the fringes, out of the mainstream; make seem unimportant".
[33] Ethnocentrism is defined as viewing "the world only from the 'point of view' or through the lens of the group of which one is a member. One's group is assumed to be the centre of everything and all other groups, view points, positions or world views are scaled, rated and assessed with reference to it" (O'Neill, 2001:24).

'extra', something 'exotic'. Ethnocentrism is manifested, for instance, in the belief that to improve academic achievement at college with predominantly Pasefika students requires increasing Palagi student numbers. To combat this *ethnocentrism* in schools requires that they change the systems, structures and dominating power of Palagi culture through acknowledging, referencing and reflecting of Pasefika culture. This transformation can only occur unless there is a change of attitude by those with the power. As chapter six in this study details through the perceptions and experiences of Pasefika teachers, this process still has a long way to go in New Zealand education.

Bourdieu: Cultural capital

Gramsci focused on the ways in which privileged and subordinated groups come to accept institutional norms as natural and inevitable. Pierre Bourdieu's theorising of social reproduction processes is based on family reproduction strategies through the social institutions of education, occupation and marriage and the amassing of *cultural capital.* Bourdieu argues that social classes recognise their own *distinction* in terms of linguistic styles, dress, manners, taste, sayings, beliefs and so on, rather than only economic or occupational factors, and differences between and within classes become intensified through variations in lifestyle and 'taste' (Bourdieu, 1977 & 1984).

Just as the inheritance of real property in the form of land or financial assets by children from their parents illustrates how family reproduction is managed through deliberate strategies, Bourdieu would argue that all family assets are *forms of capital* with value in their appropriate markets. As Nash (1997b:34) states "These assets include not only real and financial property but also the skills and knowledge transmitted within families from one generation to another". This *cultural capital*, the non-material assets, is nurtured and "is inherited, is invested in the educational system and generates a return in the form of credentialed knowledge which may be exchanged in the labour market for an elite occupation" (ibid).

Bourdieu (1977:187) asserts that "academic qualifications are to *cultural capital* what money is to economic capital" and that each family transmits to its children, indirectly rather than directly, a certain *cultural capital* and a certain *ethos.* The latter is a system of implicit and deeply interiorised values helping to define the *cultural capital* and subsequent attitudes towards educational institutions.

The school, Bourdieu (1976:110) maintains, is "one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern", as it justifies social inequalities and "gives recognition to the cultural heritage... as a natural one". Briefly, "students enter school with the habits characteristic of their class, and the school rewards those with the 'correct' habits and neglects those with the 'wrong' ones" (Adams et al, 2000:270). In other words, Bourdieu's theory claims:

> ...schools are not neutral institutions: rather, their mission, aims, ethos and practices reflect the values of the ruling order of a nation. A pupil who learns the school's values is consequently rewarded... such a pupil is usually one whose home reflects the norms – or prejudices – of the ruling class in society... The implication is that the success or failure of a student or a group... may have as much to do with reflecting the norms and values... (of) the education system as it has to do with being clever, working hard or having an effective teacher (Henderson, 2002:57).

Bourdieu also introduces the term '*symbolic violence*'. Henderson (ibid) explains:

> ...for pupils whose lives originate in a different social setting or cultural base, schools perform acts of "symbolic violence", ...they intellectually and culturally violate the child and the child's traditional values. The "acoustics" (ethos, culture, practices, etc.) of the school echo a minority's deficiencies and breadth of deviance from the acceptable norm.

The school curriculum is imbued with the 'acoustics' of the dominant class. Therefore, the 'dominant culture curriculum' demands that a student has the "social and cultural skills of subtlety, nuance, taste and manner which some children acquire 'naturally' from their own cultural milieu" (Whitty, 1985:67 cited Allen, 2004:260). Bourdieu (1976) concludes that in practice, education is essentially concerned with the reproduction of the established order through objective processes; processes that are *acquired*.

Habitus

To explain how social structures order and regulate the actions of individuals, Bourdieu (1977) proposes his key concept of *habitus*. Some prefer to define *habitus* in terms of practices, dispositions or the organising code although Bourdieu is ambiguous on the point. *Habitus* is defined by Nash (1997b:30; italics mine) as "the set of embodied social, emotional, and cognitive dispositions, *acquired* through socialisation, which is so organised as to generate unreflected practices that have the effect of maintaining the overall tendency of a society to reproduce its necessary structures". O'Neill and Nash (2005:332) explain it as:

> ...a set of deep-seated internalised dispositions learned during one's upbringing; that... promote[s] behaviours that are often carried out 'naturally'

as a part of everyday life; and the reproductive aspect, where those individual and group behaviours help maintain the existing social structures in society.

Essentially *habitus* is the way a culture is internalised in the individual and operates at the subconscious level where individuals have 'agency' to do what they can but is "constantly reinforced by calls to order from the group" (Bourdieu, 1977:15), that is, by the socialising 'agents' (family members, peer group and media).

Theoretically, *habitus* shapes the *practices* individuals use to live out their lives influenced by "the world of tradition experienced as a 'natural world' and taken for granted" (Bourdieu, 1977:164).   Linking home life with the generation of *cultural capital* and a child's educational success, then "some *habitus* constitute *cultural capital* in …schools and other *habitus* do not.   The *cultural capital* of the education system is the *habitus* of the dominant group" (Clark, 2005:147).   Bourdieu (1977:87) asserts:

> …the *habitus* acquired in the family underlies the structuring of school experiences (in particular the reception and assimilation of the specifically pedagogic message), and the *habitus* transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences (e.g. the reception and assimilation of the messages of the culture industry or work experiences), and so on, from restructuring to restructuring.

As Nash (1993:31) states, "Bourdieu's theory of schooling is essentially an exclusion theory; working-class and cultural minority children, in general, fail in the school system because it is specifically designed to exclude them by neglect".   However, this raises the question of why educational and occupational destinations of family members are often dissimilar when family members have been presented with the same familial *cultural capital* (Nash, 1993).   Bourdieu (1976:116) contends:

> The exceptional success of those few individuals who escape the collective fate of their class apparently justifies educational selection and gives credence to the myth of the school as a liberating force among those who have been eliminated, by giving the impression that success is exclusively a matter of gifts and work.

Rather, young people experience significant relationships with parents, other adults, peers and the media that greatly influence their dispositions and practices (though not necessarily the consequences of such actions), which can create a variety of sub-cultures very different from mainstream culture and the *habitus* of the home, and thus influence the outcomes of their educational position and hence social class.

Cognitive and non-cognitive habitus

To excel in the academic environment requires a particular kind of *cultural capital* i.e. schools require students to possess certain *cognitive habitus* or to have developed intellectual skills – acquisition and use of language, ability to learn knowledge, engage in questioning and answering, formulate ideas, syllogism skills, certain IQ level, aspirations and the like. This is clearly demonstrated by often vague, but familiar, comments by teachers[34] when reporting on student progress ("could do better", "has the ability", "is thinking intelligently", "able to interpret and understand ideas", "needs to work on writing skills"). Students also intuitively recognise these requirements by statements such as "you have to work really hard", "you've got to do the work", "you have to be brainy to do..."

As demonstrated by research (Gilmore, 1998 cited Harker, 2002; Nash & Harker, 1998; McGee & Silva, 1983 cited Nash, 2003; Wylie & Hodgen, 2007) Harker (2002:205) argues that "the best predictor of achievement is the level of previous achievement, which is entirely in line with the cumulative argument (also called the 'Matthew Effect')". The results in chapter four support this argument. Nash's (2003:188) work showed the contribution of the *cognitive habitus* to school achievement, certainly before schooling has begun, is "developed differentially in family environments and... is exercised in the performance of academic schoolwork". He argues "Class-associated differences in cognitive socialization are almost certainly a fundamental cause of inequality/difference" (ibid).

The *Progress at School* project (Nash & Harker, 1998) demonstrated that relative progress at college was strongly associated with "certain non-cognitive personal dispositions of students", elements of the *habitus* (Nash, 2002a:27). Nash (ibid:28) argues:

> It is not an accident that ambitious, self-confident, and responsive pupils, at every level of ability, achieve higher marks in national examinations than those with exactly contrary dispositions. The reason why some students make more progress than others is... some *want* to be educated more than others and possess an effective *habitus* that generates practices in accordance with that desire.

Although students ultimately choose whether to participate or not, the argument that Nash (ibid), based on Bourdieu (1977), is making is that their participation is influenced by deep-seated *cognitive* and *non-cognitive habitus* (including attitude to life and to themselves, aspirations, academic self-concepts, and perceptions of the school and teachers) and their family origins to 'fit' with school practices and structures. Many Pasefika families have not developed the specific forms of *cultural capital* required to use the school successfully as this

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[34] Quotes from student school reports.

study will demonstrate (Nash, 2000a:80). Hence, the effect of this is education "may facilitate the transfer of individuals across social and cultural boundaries, but through its actions reinforces the existence of those boundaries between groups" (Department of Education, 1981:60).

An important element of an effective *cognitive habitus*, as recent studies have indicated, is literate socialisation (resources, knowledge and specialised practices) in early childhood which is critical in educational achievement at school (Gilmore, 1998 cited Harker, 2002; Nash, 1993; Snow et al., 1991 cited Adams et al., 2000; Wylie, 2004). Nash (1993:122) concludes, "It seems likely that the development of reading is greatly facilitated by early childhood experiences which also generate distinctive modes of conceptual organisation functionally useful to the successful assimilation of school knowledge". Adams et al. (2000:279) note the importance of the home literacy environment "Literacy practices are family, social and cultural reproduction in action". Such practices within the home literacy environment have a greater effect on beginning reading achievement, which in turn helps a child engage with the school system quicker and progress faster in reading development, than income status alone (Adams et al., 2000; Nash, 2002b).

Wylie (2003:8) found a major difference affecting children's educational achievement between low-income and high-income families, particularly in reading and mathematics, is 'maternal qualification'. This is a powerful family resource shaping literacy practices, which in turn shape *cognitive* and *non-cognitive habitus*, and is generally differentially developed in highly resourced and poorly resourced family environments (Nash, 2000b).

Although these are developed in families, schools must pay attention to the existence of 'ability' (the *cognitive* skills and knowledge *developed* during the schooling years) and the *non-cognitive dispositions*, discussed previously, associated with school success as shown in chapter six. Nash (2001a:59) suggests:

> The relative progress of students at school rests on the capacity of the school to generate positive dispositions towards education and schooling, and these dispositions are, to some extent at least, developed and expressed in social contexts that lie within the control of the school.

It is arguable whether schools 'ensure' working-class failure and higher-class success. All groups have an opportunity to succeed in the sense that none are formally excluded from the system on the grounds of class or ethnicity. But the best way to understand this is to recognise that not all groups compete on equal terms in terms of resources and some do not

therefore enjoy an equivalent degree of success as demonstrated in chapters four to six (Nash, 1993). It is highly likely that a student from a well-resourced background – providing appropriate concrete and symbolic family resources, knowledge and practices – will do better educationally than another student from a less well-resourced background as the studies referred to previously have demonstrated (Adams et al., 2000:275; Nash, 2000b; Wylie, 2003). The value of Bourdieu's theory is the recognition that social differences in educational attainment can be explained by "the reproduction strategies of class-located and hence differentially resourced families" rather than deficit theorising of individuals and families (Nash, 1993:33).

Cultural deficit

Cultural deficit explanations argue that particular physiological, cognitive and cultural qualities in children from Pasefika and low-income families obstruct their educational advancement rather than the 'social system' (Waitere-Ang, 2005:362). This ethnocentric view essentially blames the victims for their lack of success. Historically programmes were designed to rectify such deficits by 'enculturating[35]' the 'problem' student with mainstream values through various events and activities.

Current policy in New Zealand has been the implementation of initiatives focussing on improving pedagogy and teacher-student relationship and interaction patterns to address the 'problem' teacher, such as *Te Kotahitanga* project which contends that the central issue in Māori educational underachievement is teachers' adherence to deficit theorising (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003; Openshaw, 2007). For example, a P.D. programme in literacy at a decile one primary school in Mangere where the majority of the 750 students were Pasefika was evaluated by Symes et al. (2001 cited Coxon et al., 2002:59). Many students were achieving well below the national literacy levels and an assessment of the students' entry skills in 1998 showed "teachers had seriously underestimated the children's skill levels" (ibid). A consequence of students' family backgrounds was the explanation given by some teachers for the low literacy levels. With assistance the school developed to improve student achievement by changing teacher expectations and practices.

While these initiatives have had support by many teachers, the positive results benefit all students, not just Pasefika learners. The educational achievements of Asian students indicate

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[35] "Enculturation: to take as your own another culture; to become part of this culture" (Allen, 2004:429).

that 'cultural deficit' or 'mono-cultural school' arguments alone are inadequate to explain ethnic and SES effects on achievement. For instance, Hobbs' (2001) investigation of literacy achievement of 1,194 children turning six in Wellington found the Chinese and Indian students consistently performed equally or better than the New Zealand European and Other European students in a number of literacy tasks. As observed in national qualifications statistics, Asian students outperform all students.

Socio-linguistic theory

Studies by Fletcher, Parkhill and Fa'afoi (2005), Hobbs (2001), Wylie et al., (2006a,b) and the review by Biddulph, Biddulph and Biddulph (2003) of the role of family resources in children's achievement, similarly identify links between students' literacy resources and experiences in the home, and students' positive school engagement and learning. Indeed all teachers understand Nash's (2002b:245) statements:

> Reading is fundamental to success at school. If children cannot read more or less at their age-appropriate level they are unable to keep pace with the curriculum and almost invariably leave with poor qualifications.

From my interviews, Porirua teachers are aware of Pasefika students' low reading comprehension assessment results and the cumulative effect this has on their progress and attitude through their schooling years. Wylie and Hodgen (2007:23) found students who had left school by age 16 "had lower average cognitive scores from age 5, and the gap grew wider with time" with "decreasing attitudinal scores" over time. They state "where students become disengaged in learning, they tend to do so before age 12, with the lack of engagement escalating in adolescence and at secondary level" (ibid). Bernstein's 'knowledge code' research and theory has an important explanation to offer here.

Bernstein theorised "systematic variations in the language of thought and meaning employed in cognitive operations" are derived from class differences in educational achievement (Nash, 2002b:202). In other words, middle-class children acquire "specific cognitive schemes associated with abstract thought"; they learn to become "good thinkers in ways that influence their success at school" (ibid:194). Nash provides an example from Lock et al.'s (1990 cited ibid:199) study of the strong association between a particular style of mother-child interaction and developmental progress which I argue qualifies as 'maternal qualification' and specific elements of *cognitive habitus*:

> ...when a mother interacts with her child using a book, even before the child can properly talk, she will relate the objects represented in the text to the child's reality. Mothers engage in symbolic play ('go on, give teddy a drink'), draw the child's attention to functional, mechanical causation when pointing to

the actions of a moving toy ('that one goes up, and that one goes up, and then down'), decontextualise ('it's like the clock at home'), and so on, providing in this manner a context for conceptual learning of a special kind.

The *cognitive* dispositions acquired through numerous interactions of this nature must provide an educational advantage for students as they proceed through school in comparison with, in my experience, Pasefika children who are unlikely to have experienced this style of interaction when reading with their mothers.

Bernstein (Jones, 1991) observed particular 'communication codes' used by parents from different classes. Middle-class children tended to use a theoretical, analytical and abstract form of language, which Bernstein called an 'elaborated' code. Working-class children's speech form tended to contain 'limited' vocabulary, was less descriptive, less abstract, and relied on unspoken meanings assumed to be shared; a 'restricted' code. Some New Zealand studies demonstrate the validity of this theory.

In her study of Pasefika and Palagi girls, Jones (1991) observed Pasefika girls' speech had characteristics of a 'restricted code'; for instance, answers to teachers' questions were usually brief, unelaborated and fragmented. By comparison, the middle-class Palagi girls' talk often had characteristics of an 'elaborated code' with students discussing syllabus topics using generalised and abstract statements. Consequently, Jones (1991) found teachers, who were trying to be sensitive and accommodating, tended not to ask questions that demanded interpretations of the work or require Pasefika girls' opinions; teachers were more directive asking more 'lower-order'[36] and less 'higher-order' questions. Palagi girls were often asked and answered substantive questions requiring interpretive thought. The Pasefika girls had less opportunity to "talk their knowledge into place" (Jones, 1991 cited Bailey, 1998:8) but rather listened and copied teachers' blackboard notes. Coxon et al. (2002:82) summarise the study:

> Jones was able to demonstrate how teaching and learning processes in the classroom advantage some students and disadvantage others, and that this occurs along class/ethnicity lines... formal schooling consists of cultural processes which are incompatible with the different cultures and ways of knowing of subordinate social groups.

Bailey's (1998) small project investigating Pasefika students' approaches to literature and English examinations found students lacked confidence and understanding of questions in exams. She found students' inferential and analytical skills, vocabulary, and "talk about abstract ideas like the theme of jealousy in literature" were poorly developed and "not part of their day to day experiences" (ibid:17).

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[36] A lower-order question requires recall or 'yes/no' answers, and a higher-order question requires thinking processes such as analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Bailey also noted similarities between Heath's (1992, cited Bailey, 1998:6) pre-literacy skills of three class communities in the United States and Pasefika communities. Some Pasefika communities are similar to "Trackton" a working-class black community whose children lacked exposure to structured reading and had difficulty understanding ideas in reading texts (ibid). As a result their own stories lacked structure, the rules of writing, and appropriate expression. Pasefika families who "treasure literacy" are similar to the "Roadville" white working-class community who concentrated on basic recall skills from books (ibid). These children "talked less of the details in books, and made little connection with real life events outside the book. Their parents shaped storytelling according to their particular context, which was often rigid and moralistic; questioning and... curiosity were avoided..." (ibid). "Maintown" students from a white middle-class community knew how to take meaning from books and how to talk about it before entering school. They practised turn-taking and reasoning skills, and were successful at reading, comprehension, picking out topic sentences, tests, writing outlines and questioning; skills necessary for school success.

Bell (2000) studied the senior college experiences of six Pasefika girls from professional backgrounds who had succeeded in their home Island schools. She concluded that during exams students were confused by differences in layout, language was too complex, greater analysis, justification and discussion was expected, and applying the information to questions was difficult. In the classroom teachers often spoke too fast, English language was a significant problem and so students were embarrassed to ask questions in front of the class, and they had difficulties using language to understand expository texts, formulate arguments, analyse, synthesise and evaluate ideas. One teacher described the different style of Pacific Islands' education:

> It's still heavily chalk and talk. Students are used to right/wrong answers and answers that fit the question. They learn by rote for tests and are rarely called upon to understand what they are taught. They have no idea of rationalising, of explaining, of discussing. They are not taught to question, investigate, form opinions, *think* (ibid:148).

As a number of studies discussed in this chapter argue, the foundational acquisition of socio-linguistic skills and experiences most valued by the school begins in the home. Hill and Hawk (1998:1) aptly illustrate the difficulty for Pasefika students when the values, customs and expectations from home and school are in conflict with each other:

> What parents say is to be accepted with respect, without question, and acted on immediately. Children are not expected to challenge or question in their homes or at church. In school, however, they are expected to do both these

things as an integral part of the learning process. Our National Curriculum Framework document says that students should:

> ...develop skills of discrimination and critical analysis, argue a case clearly, analyse, process information, evaluate, interpret different points of view, distinguish fact from opinion, think critically, exercise initiative, analyse problems from a variety of perspectives, enquire, test ideas and solutions, adapt to new ideas, and develop the ability to negotiate and reach consensus.
>
> Since these tend to be skills that students will not learn at home, they need to be taught at school. At the same time as learning and being encouraged to use them at school, they are expected not to use them at home.

For schools, it is important to note that if students use these particular skills at home then they are being '*fa'apälagi*'[37] and acting '*fiapoto*'[38], as discussed in chapter five.

From their *Competent Children* study, Wylie and Hodgen (2007:23) concluded:

> Differences in competency levels at age 16, and patterns over time, also point to differences in experiences and opportunities. Maternal qualification levels are by far the most important indicators of these differences; to a lesser extent, early family income... Ethnicity has an association with levels of literacy, and attitudes, with our results consistent with other research showing Mäori and Pacific students performing at lower levels in the school environment.

These New Zealand studies indicate Pasefika students, dependent on 'maternal qualification', acquire a *different*, rather than deficit or deprived, set of *cognitive habitus* from early childhood for learning. This does not align well with the objectives of the school thus we see the reproduction of inequality/differences in school attainment. Nash (1999b:115) argues that the most powerful cause of difference in the eventual educational success of different social classes is the earlier level of *cognitive habitus* or academic competence nurtured or influenced by family culture and upbringing; that is, *cultural capital* of the family. He reiterates that *non-cognitive dispositions* are also strongly associated with school success.

Schools can make some difference to the social patterns of achievement that studies clearly regard as a barrier to learning. For instance, Wylie et al. (2006b) and Nash and Harker (1997) used a self-assessment instrument based on a *Quality of School Life*[39] (QSL) questionnaire. A set of 30 items extracted factors on perceptions of: satisfaction with school/teachers, personal status, unhappiness at school, academic self-concept, being safe at school, and recognition of being able to do better. Of this instrument Nash (2001a:50) argues:

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[37] Samoan term meaning like a European, according to the ideas or customs of Europeans. The connotation is a person who is considered to be working for personal gain and forsaking Samoan ways.

[38] Samoan term meaning conceited or trying to be too clever or smart. The connotation is a person who has gained knowledge but is not humble or wise.

[39] Originally developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (Williams & Batten, 1981 cited Nash & Harker, 1997:10) and used in New Zealand (Wagemaker, 1993 cited ibid).

> It is possible to predict correctly the progress or decline trajectory of almost
> three out of four mid-ability students from their responses to the fourth form
> questionnaire, and the pattern is much the same in all ethnic groups.

The use of such an instrument monitoring students' dispositions towards school would assist schools to develop effective strategies to address some aspects of the reproductive nature of educational inequality/difference. This thesis included some factors from Wylie et al.'s (2006b) QSL for the Pasefika students' questionnaire with positive findings at intermediate and college, though school success in terms of NCEA results were not available at the time of interviewing.

A discussion of the theoretical framework emerging out of these theories of social and cultural reproduction is set out in the following section.

2.3. Theoretical Framework: Realism and Family Resource Framework (FRF)

Emerging from the theoretical foundations discussed is a realist approach for the sociology of education that specifically explores the causes of social differences in educational attainment (Nash, 1999b). Elliott (1996 cited Nash, 2001a:100) argues the research into specific school practices that contribute to school effectiveness typically generates lists; for example, an 'effective school' is characterised by 'purposeful' leadership, 'consistency' of teaching and discipline, 'structured' lessons, and good record keeping. No doubt 'good' management and teaching are responsible for contributing to school 'success' as validated by many research studies, or is it, as Nash (ibid:101) poses and was perceived by one teacher in my study, "more a product of efficiency at the level of attracting the pupils and staff most able to learn and teach?" The list of terms above can be uninformative "if not actually tautologous" (ibid) considering achievement 'gaps' between ethnic groups still exist despite improvement in these school practices.

In examining the empirical data from the *Progress at School* project, Nash (1999b:120; italics mine) argues there is strong evidence demonstrating:

> ...that what happens at secondary school has little additional effect in creating
> the patterns of difference observed and that they must, to the extent that their
> origin lies in the educational system at all, be formed at an *earlier point*.

As mentioned earlier, school statistics show patterns of difference occurring among new entrants. Nash (ibid) concluded that school and classroom processes are not greatly involved in the overall *production* of social differences in attainment but rather their *reproduction*. From other studies he argues "the fundamental mechanism in the generation of social inequality in attainment is shown to be differences in intellectual skills *developed*, in the case

of the data reported..., at least *before* secondary school, and, ...in early childhood" (ibid:123; italics mine). Rather, schools fail to interrupt the processes of socially differentiated cognitive development and act to reproduce social and cultural structures (ibid).

Nash (2001b:23) states, "To some extent, the ability of the educational system to bring about tangible changes in the existing state of affairs – to "close the gaps" – depends on having a correct theory about causes". Adams et al. (2005) argue a combination of explanations, such as biological, school, family and socio-political, provides an answer to explain differential outcomes in education. As Nash (1993:15 cited Adams et al., 2005:256) points out, "These competing discourses tend to be supported by academics from different specialist disciplines, are associated with characteristic research methods, and generate distinct policies for intervention; but they are not necessarily incompatible".

The most compelling model explaining socially differentiated educational access and outcomes, based on Bourdieu's social theorising, is the Family Resource Framework (FRF) upon which the *Progress at School* project was constructed. The FRF is not a 'deficit' theory which views the victim as the cause of the problem but suggests blame should be placed on more complex areas as "inequality in society, the class location of the family, the competitive nature of the education system, and the cultural capital of the dominant group(s)" (O'Neill & Nash, 2005:346). The FRF is explained by Nash and Harker (1998:3) and Nash (1999b:123) that:

> The economic class structure generates social classes; families are located in the class structure; as a result, families have access differentially to resources (financial, educational, and social); families are engaged in long-term actions with the strategic purpose (broadly known to them) of enabling their children to maintain and improve their economic, cultural, and social position; and, as agents with superior resources are advantaged in their endeavours, middle class families, as a group, are more successful than working class families; schools are involved in this process of differentiation by affording recognition to the skills acquired through a literacy-focused socialisation (a recognition that is not arbitrary, but in all essential respects given by the nature of the techniques, necessary to gain an adequate scientific knowledge of social and physical reality).

Nash and Harker (ibid) explain that "the social relations and processes referred to in this sketch can be studied through a 'numbers and narratives' methodology" (use of statistical models and examination of structures, dispositions, and practices generally through interviews with participants) in order to "identify the effective social structures causally involved in generating the particular phenomenon under investigation" (ibid).

Nash (2000b:25) presents four hypotheses within the FRF:

(i)   children naturally differ to some extent in their ability to acquire the skills and cognitive concepts of the school;

(ii) families are located in social classes and typically differ in their degree [of] involvement with the culture of literacy, and ... as a result their children acquire specialised cognitive skills to a differential extent;

(iii) the school, which must teach an abstract and universal form of knowledge, gradually excludes children poorly endowed with this essential cultural capital; and

(iv) as children from different social classes come to learn who they are and what they can do, as they become ... young people with an identity derived at least partly from their class location, they adopt responses to school and embark on trajectories that will take them in characteristically different directions.

Chapters four to six present evidence for Nash's (2000b) hypotheses which, as I have pointed out, provides explanations of educational differences in terms of the strategic importance of "social practices, socialised dispositions, and the social structures that generate them" (ibid:253).

The following section, middle-school and time span for learning, are structural considerations addressing Pasefika adolescents' developmental and cognitive needs.

2.4. Middle-School Education

The academic and social development of students in the middle years[40] prior to senior college and NCEA qualifications is important. Within the past 11 years the MOE has opened six 'junior highs'[41] in New Zealand and plans for two more in Manukau City which has the highest Pasefika population in New Zealand (Larson, 2007). The argument for middle schooling is to provide an appropriate learning environment, stability and a sense of continuity that specifically meets the needs of the emerging adolescent, and to reduce the risk factors that can cause disengagement from learning at a critical age (Braggett, 1997; Carrington, 2006; Cumming, 1998; ERO, 2001 & 2003; Milne, 2004; Stewart & Nolan, 1992).

Highlighting the need for a learning environment that caters specifically for the needs of the emerging adolescent is the recognition that these learners experience an immense amount of developmental change (physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually) to navigate through compared to other periods of development (Scott & Grice, 2005). Adolescence is also

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[40] Ages 11 to 15 or Years 7 to 10.
[41] Known as Years 7 to 10 middle-schools or restricted composite schools.

occurring at a younger age. In reflection of this Trissel Mayor, Director of Palmerston North's YOSS[42], stated "What we noticed back in the early 2000s was that the age of clients utilising our services was decreasing from an average age of 16 to 12, as younger people began experiencing "adolescent issues" earlier" (MYD, 2008:10).

In relation to Pasefika children, Ministry of Health (2003) information stated that generally, Pasefika females experience earlier onset of puberty and Pasefika students have a higher mean body mass index (taller and heavier) than Palagi and Asian peers. Dr Tuohy (2008:par.6), Chief Advisor for Child and Youth Health, stated "Recent research found that Pacific children born in New Zealand are bigger and grow at a faster rate than other New Zealand children".

McGee, Ward, Gibbons, and Harlow (2003:30) found research evidence indicating "a close connection between school structure and student achievement and attitude". Ward (2001, cited ibid:34) monitored the transition of a Year 10 middle-school class into Year 11 finding "the perceptions of pupils and their parents overwhelmingly supported the notion of delayed transition to secondary school, and especially for those pupils who foresaw difficulty in coping with secondary school at year 9". Passes in School Certificate exams confirmed these pupils were prepared scholastically for Year 11. Wylie et al. (2006b:x) found "students moving from a full primary school took longer to settle in on average than those moving to secondary from an intermediate". Studies also indicated transition to college more problematic among Pasefika, Māori and lower SES students (McGee et al., 2003; Wylie et al., 2006b). Stewart and Nolan (1992) and the ERO reports (1994, 2001, 2003) on Years 7 to 10 strongly recommended the need to address the quality of teaching and learning for the emerging adolescent. There is also strong evidence from the literature that single-sex middle-schools have positive academic effects for ethnic minority students, in particular African-American males (Hudley, 1998; Gurian, 2002).

As mentioned previously, 40 years of middle-school research suggests this structure may be more suited for engaging Pasefika students in learning to meet their academic and social (including cultural, non-cognitive dispositions, and pubescent) needs in preparation for entry to senior college and achievement in the National Qualifications Framework. The majority of respondents in this study were supportive of a separate school from Years 7 to 10 with students providing clear educational reasons as discussed in chapter four.

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[42] YOSS, Youth One Stop Shop, is a place which provides young people aged 10 to 24 years of age with a range of services such as free and youth friendly counselling, alcohol and drug support, information, advice, support, youth health services (free doctors and nurses and a clinical psychologist) and life skills programmes.

2.5.   **Time span for learning**

If the cumulative argument in educational outcomes is accepted, that observed achievement differences between Pasefika and Asian or Palagi students widen as schooling progresses, then the time span in which learning occurs is a factor not discussed in the literature. The typical student is expected to take about two years to advance through each curriculum Level (refer to Appendix 13 for a diagram describing the general relationship between curriculum Levels (1 to 8) and Years (1 to 13)). Students are expected to achieve proficiency in four curriculum levels between Years 1 to 8; that is seven years of schooling to achieve Levels 1 to 4. During Years 9 and 10 (two years) students are expected to achieve proficiency at Levels 4, 5 and 6 (three levels) in a number of subjects, not just numeracy and literacy, in preparation for NCEA at Year 11. From national and local assessment data the majority of Pasefika students are not meeting these expectations.

Drawing on local assessment data attained in this thesis I argue that more time to adequately cover curriculum Level objectives is needed to enable the majority of Pasefika students to acquire cognitive skills and experiences required for NCEA. Providing more timetabled hours, particularly at Years 7 to 10, in the core subjects of English and Maths may address this accompanied by other provisions such as smaller classes and quality, specialist teachers. Alternatively, creating an additional year at senior college and effectively delaying NCEA Level 1[43] to Year 12 would provide many Pasefika students time to achieve proficiency in curriculum Levels 5 and 6 as well as address transition issues students may experience from a middle-school environment before facing national examinations.

The debate concerning social promotion (an extra year or holding students back a year rather than automatic promotion with age cohort) is usually not concerned about students' needs but about Government/MOE/school/union regulations and requirements, such as protecting school rolls, funding, and other non-educational factors. The current debate against social promotion is based on perceived concerns about the negative effects on students (though it needs to be stated here the existing negative effects on students who are not achieving are more important). Such concerns, however, are quickly forgotten in current senior college classes consisting of mixed age cohorts. Students choose subjects and levels suited for their attainment of NCEA qualifications so that, for example, a Year 12 student may attend Year 11 Maths and English classes, and Year 12 Biology, Physics and Sports Studies classes. Interestingly, a MOE (2006c) analysis shows Pasefika students continue to have the highest

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[43] Not to be confused with curriculum Level 1.

retention rates at college and, from Nash's (2000a) study, high aspirations[44], a reflection of the importance that Pasefika families place on their children gaining credentials as more important.

Given consideration of the above and my experiences as a teacher, it is my belief that the majority of Pasefika students need more time, experiences and opportunities to acquire proficiency of particular cognitive skills in preparation for NCEA qualifications and to develop non-cognitive dispositions that support engaged learning in an environment that specifically caters for Years 7 to 10. This thesis investigates Pasefika perceptions regarding middle-schools and the provision of an extra year before NCEA qualifications, as structural solutions towards improving Pasefika students' scholastic readiness for NCEA.

2.6.   Conclusion

Explaining differential outcomes in education is multivariate. Explanations for school success and failure lie in understanding the complex factors of wider social structure and political contexts that exist beyond the school gate. As Nash (1997b:9; italics mine) argues:

> ...this is not to say there are no differences between schools in their effects on student attainment, but it is to say that the difference in educational attainment observed between social classes is, although continually *reproduced*, not to any great extent *created* by practices of the school.

Government policy must address causes of underachievement residing in the level of resources in families and communities rather than placing all the responsibility on schools and teachers. It is at the level of social and economic policy that government needs "to provide greater support for children from homes without the advantages of good levels of 'maternal qualification' and reasonable levels of family income, and to continue to provide it, rather than limit it to one-off interventions" (Wylie & Hodgen, 2007:23). Educational policy promoting programmes and initiatives to provide parents with more understanding of activities and support they can give to complement school learning would be beneficial on the basis of the arguments set out in this thesis, as long as schools are not burdened to implement these at current resourcing levels.

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[44] Nash (2001a:54) found "aspirations throughout the working class are higher, at least at the age of 14, in low-SES schools than high-SES schools. This is only partly due to the greater proportion of Pacific Island students in low-SES schools, but should be noted". Nash and Harker (1997:28) reported differences in aspirations between ethnic groups from the *Progress at School* project: Asian students have the highest aspirations, close to 60% intended to study at university and 27% at polytechnic; Pasefika students 42% aspiring to university and 25% to polytechnic; by contrast European students 37% intend to enter university and 26% polytechnic; Māori 28% aspiring to university and 26% to polytechnic.

Intrinsic behind this thesis investigating Pasefika perceptions and experiences of the school system in Years 7 to 10, is the idea that school structures, systems and practices do not fit the needs of this diverse Pasefika group of learners in preparation for their entry to senior college. Chapter three details the methodology of this investigation.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Drawing on Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Denscombe (2005), this chapter presents a rationale for the use of a case study as the methodology (style of research), the methods (instruments) used for data collection and analysis and their design, the methodological implications of the theoretical foundations, the ethical procedures and considerations, and a description of the stages of the investigation.

3.1. Research design rationale

3.1.1. Definition of case study

The intention of a case study research strategy is to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon that is 'naturally occurring' in order to explain why certain outcomes might happen (Denscombe, 2005:32). Cohen et al. (2007:253) define a case study as "a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle, ...it is the study of an instance in action". Yin (1989:unknown) defines case study as "a method for exploring and describing the views and experiences of participants in specific initiatives, especially when the researcher does not need to control events and when 'how' and 'why' questions are a focus of the study". Case studies investigate "complex dynamic... interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance" not always available from numerical only analysis (Cohen et al., 2007:253).

3.1.2. Purpose of case study

The strength of a case study is to recognise that context is influential in determining cause and effect (Cohen et al., 2007). The aim is to find out 'what is going on here?' and "to illuminate particular features and characteristics of the phenomena under study" (Bouma, 1996:89) thus providing rich and vivid descriptive data to validate causal relationships of the particular rather than a number of instances for generalisability to other cases of the same type.

3.1.3. Data methods used

A case study approach allows for use of a variety of sources, a variety of types of data (subjective and objective) and data-gathering methods to investigate things as they naturally occur without manipulation of variables or controls. The case study suits small numbers for in-depth investigation and analysis (Denscombe, 2005).

The quantitative data and analysis (numbers, tables, charts and statistical procedures) for this study highlight particular characteristics in student performance. Quantitative information does not provide a full understanding of what lies behind differences/similarities in student performance and requires explanatory accounts from individuals of the social practices, events, phenomena, and processes occurring. Whereas quantitative data measures objective quantities that can be compared, qualitative data is subjective, providing 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973 cited Denscombe, 2005) in order to explain patterns of behaviour in context.

The particular focus of this case study on a group of Pasefika students, their parents and teachers, is to understand their perceptions and experiences of schooling in Years 7 to 10. The rich and vivid descriptive data and numerical data demonstrated and provided some understanding of the complex relationships of factors causing different educational outcomes as discussed in chapter two.

3.1.4. Qualitative data and analysis

The material for analysis in a case study is usually generated through qualitative methods – in this study the use of questionnaires and interviews (transformed into 'narratives' as the unit for analysis), and documentation from some recent New Zealand studies.

Qualitative data is the basis for this research because existing studies (such as Wylie et al., 2006a,b) do not adequately explain Pasefika perceptions and experiences in the middle-school years (although Bailey (1998), Bell (2000), Douglas (2003), and Randerson (1992) do contain some comparative data) and no known studies record the 'voices' of Years 7 to 10 Pasefika teachers and parents.

Perceptions provide an understanding of Pasefika participants' insights, awareness, views, opinions, observations, interpretations, and impressions of mainstream schooling in Years 7 to 10 and of middle-schools, extra time, and the importance and influence of students' and school cultures on student achievement. Perceptions convey what is important and not important, and a picture of the issues apprehended by the participant. Experiences though, provide an understanding of how Pasefika participants encounter and live through Years 7 to 10 schooling. Experiences express feelings towards incidents, and actual observation of events at school that are unique to individuals. A limitation of this data collection method is the inability to check whether participants' perceptions and experiences match with what they actually did, or what actually occurred.

3.1.4.1. Questionnaires[45]

Questionnaires were used as part of the investigation process. Denscombe (2005:159) presents some advantages of questionnaires: economical (materials, cost and time); standardised answers; "speedy collation and analysis of data"; and choice of answers provide a relatively easy task for respondents. Potential disadvantages are: pre-coded questions for respondents may be restricting and frustrating, and can bias the findings to fit with a researcher's line of thinking; and it may not be possible to check the truthfulness of respondents' answers. For this study, the disadvantages have been mitigated by the interview process allowing respondents to discuss their answers further, and the researcher to check supplied answers.

Questionnaires were used to ensure participants met the selection criteria, to save time during interviewing and to collect information and attitudes for analysis. The questionnaire corroborated or questioned interview responses. They collected basic demographic information for three participant groups.

Rank order questions and Likert scales identify options from which respondents can choose and identify priorities. These are useful for "tapping attitudes, perceptions and opinions" (Cohen et al., 2007:328). One unavoidable limitation is "there is no assumption of equal intervals between the categories" (Cohen et al., 2007:327). For instance, a rating of 4 does not indicate a feeling twice as powerful as 2 nor twice as strongly felt. Only rank order can be inferred in a Likert-type scale; the cause of the order is not known, or by how much they differ (Denscombe 2005:237).

In this study, Likert-type scale questions collected ordinal[46] data for three factors:
Pasefika students' engagement, confidence and academic ability in school based on the QSL instrument used by Wylie et al. (2006b); Pasefika parents' perceptions of schools meeting the academic and social needs of Pasefika students; and the importance and influence of culture on school achievement. Respondents were given the opportunity to explain responses during interviews. In addition, open questions explored cultural identity, aspirations, learning and achievement, and social and educational needs of students at school.

Questionnaires were delivered after receiving consent forms and two weeks given to complete. When collecting questionnaires, participants were given the opportunity to ask

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[45] Refer Appendix 6.
[46] Ordinal data are based on counts of things assigned to specific categories in an ordered, ranked relationship. The categories are 'in order'. This means that the data in each category can be compared with data in the other categories as being higher or lower than, more or less than etc., those in the other categories (Denscombe, 2005:237).

questions. After discussion with the researcher some completed unanswered questions. A variety of reasons for unanswered questions were: forgot to write an answer, did not have an answer to write, and did not want to answer. One family were given three copies each of the parent and student questionnaires due to mislaying them. Interviews were arranged after questionnaires were collected, although two students gave their questionnaires at the interview.

3.1.4.2.   Interviews[47]

In his critique of interview as a research tool, Kitwood (1977 cited Cohen et al., 2007:153) argues that in:

> ...an interpersonal encounter people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feelings and values, than they would in a less human situation.

Hence its importance to this project as a tool preferred by many Pasefika people; to converse than write to express themselves. A friendly, relaxed transaction is important so respondents feel at ease and responses are more genuine rather than a respondent attempting to respond with what the interviewer wants to hear.

Tuckman (1972 cited Cohen et al., 2007:153) observed some problems around interviews: a question might influence respondents to show themselves in a good light; it might ask for information they are not certain or likely to know; there is an assumption of insight into the cause of behaviour. It did not appear that participants in this study responded as such. In fact, some participants admitted not knowing how to answer a question, and most were enthusiastic to provide honest opinions and personal experiences. However, one parent had difficulty answering some questions. Understanding of these questions was sought. The parent may not have been sure how to answer or had the interview been conducted in Samoan perhaps responses may have been forthcoming.

Power permeates the interview situation, where typically more power resides with the interviewer who generates the questions, defines the topic and the course of the interview. Cohen et al. (ibid:154) list some examples of problems involving the interviewing of children including overcoming reticence, the giving and receiving of non-verbal cues, the interviewer being seen as an authority, and keeping to the point. I believe the language, social and cultural factors of the interviewer and interviewee are important in addressing the problems identified by Cohen et al. (ibid). Consequently the interview process for this project was designed in the following way based on my experience with Pasefika peoples:

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[47] Refer Appendix 6.

- Face-to-face interviews captured the social elements (particularly the non-verbal cues of facial expression, gestures, significance of silences and pauses) that may bolster its salient conduct (ibid:153). This is the preferred form of communication among many Pasefika peoples as relationship is important thus determining the confidence to contribute information and the pace of the interview.

- Face-to-face meetings to deliver and collect the information sheet, consent form and questionnaire and to arrange interviews established a relationship and some trust in the researcher and confidence by participants to agree to participate. It also provided an easier, less formal start to the interview process.

- Interviews clarified issues raised in the questionnaire, including a check that reading ability was not a concern.

- Students were offered the opportunity to be interviewed in pairs with the choice of having friends attend to overcome reticence. An interview with two students in this study included a friend. Only participating students' responses were recorded.

- Student questions were presented on large poster paper to keep interviews clear and focused. Parents and teachers were given a copy of questions for similar reasons.

- For confidentiality six parents were interviewed as couples, two parents were interviewed alone, and all teachers were interviewed separately.

- Choice of surroundings was offered to provide a more congenial, familiar and easily accessible environment. Two teachers were interviewed at school, and three teachers were interviewed at a cafe/restaurant. Except for one couple, who were interviewed at a local drop-in centre, parents were interviewed at home. Four students were interviewed at their college, three at home with parents present, and one at the public library.

- An interview time convenient to participants was arranged. Teachers' interviews included two mornings, two afternoons, one late evening and one on a Saturday. Three parent interviews were held after 6:00 p.m., one at lunchtime, another interview in the morning, and all held during the week. Students were interviewed outside of school hours: four were after-school, two in the morning when college started late, one during the school holidays in the morning, and one at lunchtime.

- Interview length was guided by the researcher to be up to an hour, but was flexible allowing participants to decide how much information to give or withhold. The majority of the 18 interviews were longer than one hour ranging from 51 minutes to two hours, the mean interview time being 1 hour 11 minutes.

- Participants had an opportunity to ask questions about the researcher's background before the interview commenced. Questions were asked during the interview or at its conclusion including teaching background, ethnicity, number of children and home suburb.

- During interview analysis some participants were contacted to clarify or validate statements or information. After signing-off edited interview transcripts for accuracy and analysis of interviews were completed, participants were presented with a '*meaalofa*'[48].

Parents are more likely to vary their language according to the status of the person being spoken to but this did not appear to occur perhaps since the interviewer is of Pasefika descent, a mother, or known by three participants with similar lifestyle experiences. The eight students were open and forthcoming perhaps due to the familiar setting, the researcher being known by four students, and by one student's older siblings. Four of the five teachers were known to the researcher thus the problems often encountered in interviewing were minimal, although familiarity may also be considered an influence on responses.

Transcribing and analysis of data was time-consuming due to the number of participants. The last question on the interview schedule was not included in the final analysis as it was found to be irrelevant to the research questions.

Pilot participants were included as interviewees because of difficulties obtaining students who met the selection criteria at two colleges.

3.1.5. Quantitative data and analysis

The quantitative data ('numbers') collated, namely *STAR*[49] and *asTTle*[50] scores, examines actual achievement levels for most Pasefika students in Porirua and to enable comparison with non-Pasefika groups. The data for analysis are stanine reading levels achieved by Pasefika, Māori, Palagi, Asian and other students at ten schools in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. Observed differences between groups do not explain educational inequalities. Student achievement levels prior to and during middle-school years impact on NCEA qualifications at college as discussed earlier.

PAT (Progressive Achievement Tests) data was to be collected but only a few colleges and no primary/intermediate schools use this assessment. Mathematics data was also to be collected but primary/intermediate schools do not have common whole school maths assessments. As the majority of schools use *STAR* stanines the *asTTle* data was converted[51] to stanines.

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[48] Samoan term meaning gift, equivalent to the Māori *koha*.
[49] Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading.
[50] Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning.
[51] Refer Appendix 7.

Data collection was difficult due to schools using different software systems to extract data, variance between schools in the type of data collected, varying dates of testing, the two different assessment tools used, and availability of staff with access to data. Data was not collected from medium-high decile Porirua schools due to Pasefika student rolls being less than 20%, nor from schools with a school roll less than 100. No national statistics were known to be available in reading for Years 7 to 10; however, national qualifications statistics gathered describe trends in the national educational landscape for Pasefika students.

A comparison of Pasefika with non-Pasefika students locally would identify differences or similarities between groups. Although Palagi student numbers from primary/intermediate schools were low, small trends for comparison were made. The small numbers of Asian and 'Other' students was not significant for comparison. I assumed that analysing the data by separate Pasefika ethnic groups would identify differences or similarities between each group. However, except for Samoan student data, other Pasefika groups were too small to provide comparison.

It is not the purpose or focus of this study to compare Years 7 and 8 school structures as the sample of schools is too small (five full-primary[52] schools, two Intermediates[53] and one Years 7 to 13 college). In addition, one Intermediate declined to provide student assessment data.

Questionnaires contained rank ordered and Likert-type scale questions to collect participants' attitudes on three items as mentioned earlier.

3.1.6. Generalisation of findings and Limitations of the study

Given the uniqueness of situations, the main criticism of the case study approach is the extent to which findings can be generalised. The small number of participants (eight students, eight parents and five teachers), the diversity of the participants as Pasefika rather than a focus on one ethnic group, and diversity of participants' experiences from a number of schools (two full-primary state schools, one Intermediate state school, three state colleges, and one Years 7 to 15 state-integrated college) limits the extent to which the case is similar to, or contrasts with, others of its type (Denscombe, 2005).

Generalisations about Pasefika peoples cannot be made from the results of this study but, as already mentioned, by "illuminating particular features and characteristics" of Years 7 to 10 schooling, results provide an understanding of possible causal relationships affecting Pasefika

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[52] Years 1 to 8.
[53] Years 7 and 8 only.

achievement (Bouma, 1996:89). The value of a case study offers the opportunity "to explain *why* certain outcomes might happen – more than just find out what those outcomes are" (Denscombe, 2005:31). My findings support explanations in the literature research that should be applicable to schools with large Pasefika student populations in the middle-school years.

Another limitation of this study is the size of the samples for the three groups of Pasefika participants, and the number of schools involved. A larger sample of participants from the Years 7 to 10 Pasefika student population of 928[54] in Porirua would be required to ascertain whether descriptions from this study are typical to be generalisable.

3.1.7. Representative case study

Representativeness of the case with others is not a necessary criterion since the boundaries of a case restrict what is to be contained within the investigation and what is to be excluded, or it may be the significance rather than frequency of a variable that might be crucial to the understanding of the case (Cohen et al., 2007:257; Denscombe, 2005:36).

The selection of participants and, consequently, their perceptions and experiences will not reflect and represent all the various groupings and identities that constitute Pasefika peoples in Porirua nor in New Zealand. The selection of questions concerning the school system in Years 7 to 10 is general, and in particular there is not an emphasis on teacher pedagogy and teacher-student relationships due to the many studies already available in this field. However, it is the significance of the responses that are important to the understanding of schooling in Years 7 to 10. This does make it difficult to cross-check; hence this case study is selective (participants, questions, schools/colleges, and geographical location), and contains some bias due to the characteristics of the interviewer and respondents, and the substantive content of the questions (Cohen et al., 2007:150, 256).

3.1.8. Reliability and Validity

The trustworthiness of a case study refers to the requirement for reliability and validity. Validity of research data is concerned with whether or not the data reflects reality and covers the elements under investigation, and the methods for data-gathering are deemed accurate, honest and on target (Cohen et al., 2007).

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[54]As at July 2006, requested from Data Management and Analysis Division, Ministry of Education, 2007

To be reliable and replicable qualitative research must demonstrate that if the same research instruments are used on a similar sample in a similar context, then similar results would occur and similar conclusions obtained. Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited Denscombe, 2005) suggest an audit trail be constructed that records the decision process from conception of the research through to the findings and conclusions so it is more trustworthy. The major procedures are thus recorded in the section 'Stages of the investigation'.

A case study is reliable if the researcher's interpretation is 'correct' (Denscombe, 2000). To enhance 'correct' interpretation the process included respondent validation by reviewing transcripts (ensures depth of response and meaningfulness to the respondents), debriefing by peers (in this project, two supervisors), and triangulation (involves a number of research methods - questionnaires, interviews and documents - to allow findings to be corroborated or questioned by comparing the data produced by different methods).

For this case study the data gathered is valid (no ambiguity and misinterpretation of questions) through the piloting of questionnaires and interview schedules and through the consistency with each interview - each semi-structured interview was conducted by the researcher. The information from questionnaires acted to corroborate interview findings and vice versa to enhance validity. Some of the data was compared to other New Zealand studies (Cox, Kennedy, Bishop, and Porteners, 2005; Nash, 1999a; Randerson, 1992; Wylie et al., 2006a,b). To preserve the continuity of interviews and to ensure details of responses were not forgotten or distorted, I audio-taped and transcribed the interviews, used notes and students' written interview responses.

The role of the researcher requires consideration in the validity of case studies. Researchers and research are not neutral. Both influence explanations of educational practice as the legitimacy and validity of research is based on differing values and perspectives about knowledge and learning. As Denscombe (2005:268) states "the researcher's self plays a significant role in the production and interpretation of qualitative data". Hitchcock and Hughes (1989 cited Cohen et al., 2007:150) argue that "because interviews are interpersonal, humans interacting with humans, it is inevitable that the researcher will have some influence on the interviewee, and thereby, on the data". Cohen et al. (ibid) use 'interviewer effects' to refer to this bias.

My research process, as discussed earlier, is summarised by Smith (1999:193) who argues that when researchers are indigenous peoples (or 'insiders') the activity of research is

transformed where "questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, people participate on different terms". Merriam (1998:6 cited in Bell, 2000:58) states "the key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds". Hence, this case study is subjective as my personal experiences and social backgrounds as a Samoan/Palagi, mathematics/science teacher, eldest daughter, sister, wife, mother, Christian, and researcher have shaped a world view and an insight into educational social issues that are unique and different from the Palagi majority of researchers and teachers in education, and play a role in the production and analysis of the qualitative data produced for this thesis. For instance, what is often taken for granted in a Pasefika context by this researcher, such as body language, may not be an obvious phenomenon in a non-Pasefika context and may be overlooked when interpreting the responses to questions in the data. Recognising 'self' as an influence upon the interpretation of the perceptions, experiences, and data, is to recognise that interpretations are never 'pure' (Denscombe, 2005).

3.2. Research Site

Porirua is situated north of Wellington City. Its socio-economic boundaries and small population, provide opportunities for unity, collaboration, and pooling of resources. From the first Pasefika migrant families who settled in Porirua, third and fourth generations of mixed heritages (mainly Pasefika, Māori, Palagi) now exist forming a close-knit 'village' concentrated in West and East Porirua where family names are recognisable as people socialise at family and community events, local sports clubs, churches, schools, and work. This sense of community was particularly noticeable after a tragic car accident claimed the lives of two Pasefika 19 year-olds on their way to work in 2008. The funerals were attended by many students from the four Porirua colleges and families connected to the boys in this 'village'.

3.3. Methodological implications: Realism and Family Resource Framework (FRF)

The interpretive emphasis of case studies is criticised against the positivist view of reliability (Cohen et al., 2007:257). However, Mitchell (2000, cited Cohen et al., 2000:183) argues that criticism has arisen because of a failure to appreciate statistical inference – the confidence that relationships observed in the sample will occur in the population – and logical or scientific inference – the confidence that the theoretical or logical connection among observed features in the sample will occur in the population. Mitchell (ibid) concludes that statistical inference

is not invoked in case studies rather they may be used analytically to validate theoretical reasoning.

As I outlined in chapter two, Nash and Harker's (1998) studies of inequality/difference in education are based on a theoretical position of *realism* underlying the FRF which this thesis draws on. This is a methodology incorporating explanations of differential achievement and in a realist sociology of education there is "no explanation without a detailed account of the socially structured human practices that generate observed statistical patterns" (Nash, 2002b:3). Thus, the methodology is described as a "numbers and narratives" approach, drawing on statistical data (local *STAR/asTTle* data and national statistics) and the theoretical foundations discussed previously (Nash & Harker, 1998:2). These are actioned through the methods outlined in this chapter to examine these 'socially structured human practices' and to answer the specific research questions informing this study.

3.4. Ethical procedures & considerations

Social researchers are expected to be ethical in data-gathering, data analysis and reporting of findings. The *Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants* at Massey University is intended to provide protection for all participants in research (respecting and protecting rights, dignity, autonomy, privacy and justice, and avoiding harm or risk) as well as to protect researchers and institutions (operating honestly and with integrity, and avoiding misrepresentation). There are a number of specific rights relating to this project. These are detailed in the forms to participants (refer to Appendix 5).

The *Pasifika Education Research Guidelines* (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu & Finau, 2001) highlight significant issues researchers should be aware of when carrying out research with Pasefika peoples. For this project, culturally appropriate practices were observed (such as *meaalofa*, following of etiquette within homes such as removing shoes at the door and polite conversation before discussing the purpose of the visit), and ownership, use and benefit of knowledge was verbally conveyed to participants. This research complies with both Code and Guidelines. In particular, for ethical considerations of anonymity some information has been omitted or disguised and descriptions of each interviewee have not been provided. The ethical procedures followed for this research are those prescribed in Massey University's *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of a thesis* (2008:17-31) and are described in the following sections 'Stages of the investigation' and 'Access to information'.

3.5. <u>Access to information and participants</u>

Negotiation of access, consultation and open communication with Principals, Pasefika students, parents and teachers has been important to ensure accurate data is gathered. Associated with access is the issue of privacy and confidentiality – a participant's 'right to privacy' requires their informed consent to have information made public or not. Case studies require explicit authorisation of participants' points of view or quotes when transcripts of interviews are made. This raises key issues of representation, trust and power-relations as the participants involved are students, parents, and professional 'colleagues', and are from ethnic minority groups.

Face-to-face interviews require consent from all participants and guarantees given that all steps will be taken to preserve confidentiality for all participants and schools. However, though the identity of the schools and research subjects are anonymous it is not possible to give an absolute guarantee but an assurance of confidentiality. Identification, though highly unlikely, may be made from the locale and researcher's name on the report.

All participants were given an information sheet about the research – broad details of what the research is investigating, how it is to be conducted, expected participant contribution, the right to withdraw from the research, and confidentiality and security of data. Consent forms were attached to the information sheets.

Consent forms were required from eleven school Principals to access *STAR/asTTle* results by Year levels (7 to 10) and by ethnicity, and an assurance of confidentiality of school data was given. Ten schools granted consent. A summary report will be made available to schools at a later date and on request an electronic copy of the thesis. Consent from four college Principals to identify student participants and access contact details was sought and granted.

After identifying students for participation, consent was sought from parents to participate which was granted by eight parents. Students' consent was required after parental consent was given. Teachers' consent was also sought. Consent forms were collected in person to ensure participants understood the information given and allowed an opportunity for questions to be asked about the research and researcher.

All participants were given the opportunity to verify transcript statements to ensure accuracy of information. A summary report will be made available to participants at a later date. Permission will be sought from participants should the question of publication arise.

Possible conflict of role was the interviewing of colleagues and students at one college where the researcher had been employed but was on study leave during interviewing. Written support from the Principal and verbal support by four Pasefika teachers were given to involve the College in the research with the suggestion that selected students were not students I had taught. This suggestion was accepted. Students were not in a dependent relationship with me. In other words, I was not in a position to exert any influence over students' educational outcomes at the College.   In addition, I had no departmental/subject or management relationship with any of the Pasefika teachers.

The research was conducted in a New Zealand Palagi context involving school Principals and in a Pasefika context involving teachers, students and their parents. Respect for appropriate cultural processes was necessary in both contexts which I am accustomed to operating in, for instance Pasefika participants were presented with a *meaalofa* after contributing to the study.

Finally, Smith (1999:10) raises issues for indigenous researchers seeking to work within indigenous contexts: "If they are 'insiders' they are frequently judged on insider criteria; their family background, status, politics, age, gender, religion as well as their technical ability." With these issues in mind, since I was unknown to half the participants it was important to provide participants the opportunity to ask questions about me as an 'insider' researcher. The consent and cooperation from leaders/elders of different Pasefika communities was not necessary for this study, however, a Samoan *matai*[55] and elder had granted consent. Cultural guidance was also provided by my Tongan supervisor.   I identify as an 'insider' for researching Samoan participants, and as an 'outsider' for researching other Pasefika ethnic groups.

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[55] Village and family chief.

3.6. Selection of participants and schools

Five full-primary state schools, two Intermediates, one state-integrated college of Years 7 to 15, and three state colleges[56] were identified for involvement based on the following features (refer to Appendix 3):

❖ Had any of the Year levels 7 to 10;

❖ Over 20% of the student population identified as Pasefika; and

❖ Total student population not less than 100.

Although one Intermediate had 10% Pasefika students it was included in the study as there are only two Intermediates in Porirua.

One boy and one girl from each college (total of four boys and four girls) were to be selected based on the following criteria:

❖ Pacific Islands only descent;

❖ Currently in Year 11 at one of the four colleges;

❖ Achieved a *STAR* result of stanine 5 (average) or *asTTle* curriculum level 5 in Year 9 and/or 10;

❖ Attended one of eight selected full-primary or Intermediate schools;

❖ Parents were available to participate and were fairly fluent in the English language; and

❖ Parents had given consent for their child to participate.

Year 11 students were selected for their overall experiences of schooling in Years 7 to 10 in preparation for senior college. Selection on the basis of *STAR/asTTle* results was to ensure students selected were of similar 'average' ability and to reduce variance in student ability.

There were unanticipated and anticipated difficulties encountered in selecting students. Few Pasefika students met the *STAR/asTTle* criterion of stanine 5/level 5 and at two colleges small Pasefika student rolls reduced the chance of students achieving the criterion (an unanticipated difficulty). Some had left the college and few male Pasefika students met the criteria (unanticipated difficulties). Many students identified by the college as Pasefika were mixed non-Pasefika ethnicity, students had not attended a selected intermediate, and some declined to participate (anticipated difficulties). Thus, of 25 students contacted only one student each from two colleges, and three students including two pilots from two other colleges were selected; a total of three girls and five boys (refer chapter four for students' profiles).

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[56] Years 9 to 15.

Parents of students were selected based on the following criteria (refer chapter five for parents' profiles):

❖ Of Pacific Islands only descent;

❖ Available for participation;

❖ Fairly fluent in the English language; and

❖ Had consented to their child participating.

Two parents declined to be interviewed though one completed the questionnaire. One pilot parent was not included in the final analysis as the interview had not been audio-taped. Due to time, cost and size constraints of this research, translating and interpreting forms, interviews and transcriptions was not possible, hence the need for parents to be fairly fluent in the English language.

One full-primary, two Intermediate (including pilot), and two college teachers participated based on the following criteria (refer chapter six for teachers' profiles):

❖ Of Pacific Islands only descent; and

❖ Deputy/Assistant Principal or teacher of any Year levels 7, 8, 9 and/or 10 at one of the selected schools.

It would have been desirable to have included a male Pasefika secondary teacher and a few non-Samoan teachers. However, there are few Pasefika teachers and limited diversity by ethnicity and gender restricted selection. The community of Pasefika teachers in Porirua is fairly small and most are known to one-another. Hence, four of the participating teachers were known to the researcher and one participant was contacted via the teacher involved in the pilot process. Contact with teachers was independent of schools.

3.7. Stages of the investigation

There were four principle stages in this case study research. Only major steps are mentioned at each stage.

3.7.1. Stage One: Research proposal and approval

• Research problem and questions posed.

• Draft proposal written including a literature review, methodology outline, selection criteria of participants, identification of target schools, data collection methods, ethical considerations, and proposed data analysis approach.

• Schools, teachers and pilot participants identified for involvement.

- The literature review involved national and international studies of Pasefika students, middle-schooling years, and statistical data on national and local student outcomes.
- Questionnaires and interview schedules drafted for each group of participants.
- Application to undertake the research approved 20 March 2008 and received on 1 April 2008.

Stage One process took one-and-a-half years to complete.

3.7.2.   Stage Two: Access to participants and information

- Questionnaires and interviews piloted: two Year 11 male students, their parents, and a teacher.   The questionnaire took up to 30 minutes to complete and interviews were just over an hour.
- Information sheets with consent forms for access to student information (*STAR/asTTle* data by Year level and ethnicity; selection of college students based on a criterion) were sent to 11 Principals.   One Principal declined consent.
- Students and parents identified for participation.
- Information sheets and consent forms delivered to selected teachers.   All consented to participate.   Teacher interviews were completed first.
- Information sheets and consent forms were delivered to the parents and collected after two weeks.   Parents of eight students, including pilots, agreed to participate and interviews were conducted before student interviews.
- Information sheets and consent forms were delivered to eight students after parental consent was received.   Forms were collected after two weeks or at the interview.

Stage Two was completed between April and June 2008.

3.7.3.   Stage Three: Data collection and analysis

- *STAR/asTTle* data for 2007/08 gathered from ten schools and analysed.
- Interviews conducted and transcribed.   Two transcribers employed and confidentiality agreements signed.
- Transcripts of interviews sent to participants for editing and collected.   Authority for release of audio-tape transcripts signed.
- Questionnaires and interviews analysed.
- School profiles and statistical data on national and local student outcomes collated from electronic and printed data (refer Appendices 1 to 4).

Stage Three was completed in five months.

3.7.4. Stage Four: Findings, conclusion and summary

- Methodology completed.

- Teachers, parents and student interviews analysed and completed.

- Findings, discussion and conclusion written.

- Submission of thesis.

- Draft summary report to be sent to participants after marking completed.

Stage Four was completed June 2009.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF STUDENT FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

Chapters four to six present an analysis and discussion of the findings from Stage Three of my investigation. All data from questionnaires and interviews was sorted by questions. For instance, all student responses to a question were collected together, and similarly for parent and teacher responses. Responses were then organised for analysis under the following categories for each group of participants, or chapters:

1. Perceptions and experiences of intermediate (Years 7 and 8) and junior college (Years 9 and 10) schooling;

2. Perceptions of the importance and influence of student's and school cultures on student achievement;

3. Perceptions of the causes for Pasefika students not doing as well as Palagi and Asian students;

4. Positive changes which could enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students:

    (a) What must Pasefika students do to become good learners and to achieve?

    (b) What must Pasefika parents do to help their child become a good learner and to achieve? and

    (c) What must schools do to help Pasefika students become good learners and achievers?

    Perceptions about middle-schools and an extra year are included in this section since they are related to change and the majority of participants' responses were favourable; and

5. A concluding summary of key findings and emerging issues are identified.

Findings are analysed and discussed as the issues emerge. The nature of this process is one of discovery, to look for commonalities and differences within categories and then across the whole of the data, and to explain and seek causality. This process is not without its concerns (refer Cohen et al., 2007:467).

This chapter has two sections. First, *STAR/asTTle* stanines results of Years 7 to 10 students from ten local schools for 2007/2008 are analysed. This data shows 'below average'[57] reading achievement by Pasefika students compared with non-Pasefika students. A discussion follows about the relevancy of these findings to my argument for an extra year and

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[57] 'Below average' = stanines 1, 2 or 3; 'Average' = stanines 4, 5 or 6; 'Above average' = stanines 7, 8 or 9. Refer to Appendix 7 for an explanation of stanines.

a separate middle-school to specifically address Pasefika students' academic needs before NCEA qualifications (refer chapter two).

The second part presents an analysis and discussion of eight students' perceptions and experiences in five categories as outlined above at four colleges, two full-primary schools and one Intermediate. Seven students lived in two parent families, and one in a solo-father family. Students' families ranged from four to seven children with one student the oldest child. Three students are Samoan, two students are Tokelauan, one is Cook Islands, one is Samoan/Tokelauan and another Tokelauan/Samoan. The order of ethnic identification is based on the ethnicity of the student's mother first then their father. Five students regularly attend church[58]. All students were born in New Zealand and schooled in Porirua. All scored stanine five in *STAR* at the beginning or end of Year 9 and were in Year 11 when interviewed. Only two students were interviewed together with a friend.

4.2. *STAR/asTTle* stanines results of Years 7 to 10 students

Five full-primaries, one Intermediate, and two colleges provided *STAR* reading comprehension stanine data and two colleges provided *asTTle* reading curriculum levels data which were converted to stanine scores.

Years 7 and 8 data collected was based on testing in October/November 2007 by one full-primary school (n=93 students) and February 2008 by six schools (n=519). Years 9 and 10 data collected was based on testing in October/November 2007 by two colleges (n=493) and February 2008 by two colleges (n=507). Different testing dates may have caused some variance in results because October/November testing should produce progressed results from February results (i.e. a Year 9 group tested in November should theoretically have progressed from their February test).

Student demographics are presented next, followed by an analysis of Years 7 and 8 then Years 9 and 10. A brief conclusion discusses these findings. (Supporting tables and graphs are in Appendix 8. A brief explanation concerning *asTTle* scale score conversion to stanine norm-referenced score is in Appendix 7).

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[58] Catholic, Elim, Pacific Islands Presbyterian Church, and Seventh Day Adventist.

4.2.1. Years 7 to 10 student demographics

The small numbers of Asian (total of 56 Years 7 to 10 students) and 'Other' (n=8) students did not provide significant trends for comparison.

Years 7 and 8 Palagi student populations (n=90) were very small at participating schools and data showed small trends for comparison (data from non-participating schools may have provided significant trends for comparison). Except for one college, Years 9 and 10 Palagi student populations (n=6, 19, 19, 165) were very small though combined data (n=209) showed trends for comparison.

From the data gathered the majority of the 683 Years 7 to 10 Pasefika students were Samoan (n=404) followed by Tokelauan (n=112) and Cook Islands (n=107), a reflection of the Pasefika population in Porirua. The category 'Other Pacific Islands' included Admiralty Islanders and those unspecified. Due to small numbers, comparison between Pasefika groups was not possible. Students who identified with more than one ethnicity were categorised according to individual school guidelines; for instance, one school used only the first ethnicity parents had identified. (However, some Pasefika peoples determine a child's identity by the ethnicity of the mother or woman who raises the child). Some primary schools' data had Pasefika students as one homogenous group rather than by separate ethnicity. By approaching teachers at these schools students' ethnicity was identified. (Refer to Appendix 8 for Table 1 listing the number of students in each Pasefika ethnic group by Year level. Tables 2 to 5 list in Year levels the number of students in each Pasefika ethnic group by stanine levels).

4.2.2. Analysis of Years 7 and 8 stanine scores

Data collected from seven intermediate schools involved a total of 321 Year 7 students and 291 Year 8 students for 2007/2008. (Refer to Appendix 8, Tables 6 and 7 and Graphs 1 to 4).

Overall, Years 7 and 8 medians[59] stanine score was 4, the majority of Pasefika students achieving 'below average'. It is important to note the majority of Year 7 students were assessed in February indicating most were entering Year 7 with low reading comprehension scores from Year 6.

Of all Pasefika Year 8 students only 29% achieved stanine 5 or better compared with 71% achieving stanine 4 or less. Although Year 8 testing was taken in February 2008 by six of the

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[59] Half of all students are achieving below the middle value.

seven schools, to progress students from 'below average' to achieve at least stanine 5 in preparation for Year 9 will require a movement of between 1 to 3 stanine levels within one year, an almost impossible task.

These results supported Pasefika teachers' comments that Pasefika students enter and leave intermediate with low literacy scores and the difficulty they have preparing students for college to proficiency at Level 4.

4.2.3. Analysis of Years 9 and 10 stanine scores

Data collected from four colleges involved 529 Year 9 students and 471 Year 10 students for 2007/2008. The Asian student population is very small at the four colleges (n=37), so trends for comparison were not possible. Of all the Palagi students, 81% Year 9 (n=96) and 76% Year 10 (n=69) were from one college. Similarly, Māori students dominated another college with 44% of all Year 9 Māori students (n=79) and 53% Year 10 (n=87). A third college had 48% of all Year 9 Pasefika students (n=101) and 40% Year 10 (n=78). The fourth college also had predominantly Pasefika students. (Refer to Appendix 8, Tables 8 and 9 and Graphs 5 to 8).

Comparisons of stanine spreads by ethnicity for Years 9 and 10 showed Pasefika students did not do as well as other groups. For both years, Pasefika data clusters in the 2 to 5 stanine range with a Year 9 median of stanine 3 and Year 10 median of 4. Years 9 and 10 Māori data is a stanine better than Pasefika while Palagi data showed scores 'above average'. Of all Pasefika Year 9 students 58% achieved 'below average' and 39% of Year 10 students scored stanine 5 or better.

These results supported Pasefika teachers' comments that Pasefika students enter Year 9 with 'below average' literacy scores. The cumulative effect of these results is that students enter Year 11 below the required proficiency Levels for NCEA study.

4.2.4. Discussion of Years 7 to 10 student stanines results

The Titahi Bay Learning Links Cluster[60] noted two cohorts (2006 Year 6 – 2007 Year 7 and 2006 Year 8 – 2007 Year 9) achieving less well than other year groups and suggested results reflected the effect transition had on student achievement. Transition[61] from contributing

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[60] Powerpoint handout "Titahi Bay Learning Links Cluster: STAR Results Tracked Students 2006-2007" presented to the cluster 2008.
[61] Transition effects as researched by Cox et al. (2005), Cox & Kennedy (2008), McGee et al. (2003), Wylie et al. (2006b) have included learning and achievement, social and adolescent development, attitudes towards school, linkages between schools, organisational issues, cultural and socio-economic factors, gender differences, and perceptions of pupils and parents.

schools may explain my findings for 41% (n=131) of Year 7 students at two schools, but it does not explain the findings for 190 Year 7 students at full-primary schools.

Two possible explanations for Pasefika Year 9 results are first, the effects of transition and 'summer effect[62]' particularly at two colleges testing in February 2008, and secondly the arrival of students for college education from the Pacific Islands with English as a second language particularly at two colleges testing in October/November 2007. However, research indicates students' prior performance and engagement, and the nature of learning and teaching in low-decile colleges "carry more weight in early secondary performance and engagement than the transition itself" (Wylie et al., 2006b:xiii).

Students are expected to take about two years to advance through each Curriculum Level 2 to 5. NCEA academic demands require students proficiently achieving Curriculum Level 5 (about stanine 5) at the end of Year 10. From my Years 7 to 10 student stanine results each Pasefika Year group was generally 'below average' thus they were not achieving proficiency at each Curriculum Level. The results from PISA 2000 (CERU, 2004:5) of the educational outcomes for Pasefika 15-year-olds show, in reading literacy, lower achievement than for non-Pasefika with the report stating "The larger proportion of Pasifika students at the lower end of the reading literacy scale is potentially a concern... school leavers with lower literacy skills may have poorer prospects of employment". The cumulative effect of 'below average' literacy achievement from primary school and junior college is that students are less likely to achieve NCEA Level 1 in Year 11 which is supported by Nash (1999b) and Wylie et al. (2006a). These findings support my argument that more time is needed by most Pasefika students to gain knowledge and skills at levels expected prior to NCEA in an environment that specifically addresses their learning and engagement needs. The next section presents Pasefika students' perceptions and experiences of their schooling in Years 7 to 10.

4.3. Students' perceptions and experiences of intermediate[63] (Years 7 & 8) and college (Years 9 & 10) schooling

Interviews reflected similarities in organisation and the way things were done between intermediate schools and between the four colleges such as assembly, lunch breaks, discipline, and class organisation. In general, most students found learning at college less enjoyable, had

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[62] Long summer holiday of about seven weeks from mid-December to the end of January has been suggested to contribute to students' decline in academic achievement.
[63] Where the term 'Intermediate' is capitalised, this refers to a Years 7 and 8 school, otherwise 'intermediate' refers to Years 7 and 8 in general.

lower concentration and interest levels, and that boredom became an issue. Friends were an important aspect of the enjoyment of schooling but family was most important.

4.3.1. Things that were great at each school

Students' positive descriptors about intermediate were fun, colourful, interactive, helpful, lively, energetic, cool, exciting, friendly, teachers related to the things you did, school rules fair. More negative descriptors were used for college as hard, strict, not that strict, unsafe, boring, unfair teachers, heaps of work. Responses about each school were consistent with Wylie et al.'s (2006b:45, 46) findings concerning the importance of friendships, family, and sport/extra-curricular activities among Pasefika students.

4.3.2. Things that were dumb at each school

Most students had enjoyable memories of intermediate. Students were critical about college observing some students thinking they were "better than everyone else", friends becoming involved in negative behaviour (drugs, alcohol, smoking, wagging, disrespecting teachers), having to do subjects or activities that they did not enjoy or were not good at, "unfair teachers", wearing uniform, bullying, gangs, and less free time because of the amount of schoolwork and sports practices. Discipline and doing homework or core subjects were not mentioned.

4.3.3. Things that were different between intermediate and college

Responses indicated more rules and peers' changing behaviour at college. With more students and older students at colleges there were more negative aspects: more or "scarier" bullying; bigger and scary seniors made students feel inferior and afraid; smoking; wagging; alcohol consumption; ethnic tensions; students acting 'cool'; disrespectful and disruptive classroom behaviour.

Responses of typical structural differences were similar to Wylie et al.'s (2006b:x) study that "Secondary school offered the students more – more subject choice, and more challenging work, as well as more teachers, students, work, and shifting between classes".

4.3.4. Things students knew they were good at and not good at

Most enjoyed participating in extra-curricular activities offered by all schools such as Poly[64] Club, choir/barbershop, learning an instrument, and sports because they were generally good

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[64] Poly Club (Polynesian Club) is a dance group representative of the school's Pasefika students.

at these. A range of intermediate/college subjects exposed students' vulnerability and self-confidence but this was dependent on subjects offered.

Students believed that if they were not good at one aspect of a subject then they were not good at the whole subject. For instance, a student states "I don't know anything at all... I do know like the basics...", and others commented they were no good at English until it was identified that giving speeches, comprehension, explaining, being a talker and critical writing were topics they were not good at. One student stated "I suck at maths" yet enjoyed a class because "it's fun", and was good at computers "even though I don't like it". Other aspects students were not good at were interacting with new students, managing time to do homework, and school plays.

Generally, students knew they were good/not good at something because of talent/no talent ("I can...", "I'm not good at...", "I can't...", "I suck at..."), had an interest/no interest ("I wanted to play...", "I liked...", "didn't like it", "didn't want to do it"), and others told them ("people call me science freak...", "'cos I always get excellence in it", "the teacher wrote it in my report (that I'm not good at it)"). Increased awareness of not being good at something occurred at college, particularly with more assessments and resulting low marks. This may explain why students' responses to attitudinal competencies[65] at college were slightly less positive compared with intermediate.

4.3.5. Things students had to be good at doing or knowing at intermediate and college

Focus was on having to be good at 'doing': speaking English; reading; writing in your own words; understanding questions; science, P.E., social studies, music, maths; doing homework; passing tests/exams; recalling information; focusing, listening and paying attention; working together; getting along with teachers and students you don't like; knowing and following school rules; being organised; time management at college; and being responsible. Knowing and using specific learning and thinking skills was noticeably absent from students' responses.

4.3.6. What happened when students were not good at doing or knowing things at intermediate and college?

Students would respond by: talking to others; trying to forget the problem; "shut down"; feeling worthless or a failure; stressed; going blank or panic; unable to ask for help; refusing to do any work; getting behind on work; losing track of the work and failing more. Such

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[65] Refer to 'Attitudinal competencies' section in this chapter.

behaviours resulted in: detention or being kept in after class; given extra work as punishment or as a help; being moved to a special class; or attending a homework centre.

Only one student received teacher aide and teacher support for reading at intermediate. No support was given for maths at intermediate or college. Students were usually punished because of misbehaving or not given support when they were not good at doing or knowing things. College particularly was viewed as a negative place, and little help was provided for individuals, except in reading and homework centres at some intermediates/colleges. This aspect of schooling was in contrast to the positive attitudinal competencies[66].

Responses provide some understanding for misbehaviours in class and suggest the need to focus on providing more positive support in class, such as teacher aides, and identifying areas that require development particularly at college. These students were unlikely to openly seek help but withdrew to less positive behaviours because they have learnt to 'be quiet' and submit to authority. It is clear that teachers must be proactive by approaching students and engaging with them rather than waiting for students to 'ask when they don't know' (Jones, 1991). I would argue more emphasis be placed on rewarding and recognising thinking skills and processes rather than on knowing school rules, finishing exercises, and decorating pages.

4.3.7. Things the intermediate school did to help students learn and achieve

Intermediates provided booklets for maths and English, after-school help from teachers or a homework centre, extra time to complete or understand work, extra-curricular activities, work that "was a little hard" in preparation for college, certain subjects, and detention. Teachers related to students, were encouraging and fun, ready to teach, and gave good lessons to make understanding easier such as good examples and activities.

4.3.8. Things the intermediate school did that got in the way of learning and achieving

These included: interruptions for extra-curricular activities during or in place of class time; certain subjects; and some teachers who were "not very good at explaining certain topic" and "weren't very strict". Students also admitted being hindered by themselves and friends, "...kind of took me off track for a bit".

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[66] Refer to 'Attitudinal competencies' section in this chapter.

4.3.9. College organisation and the way things were done

College contrasted greatly from intermediate for all students. Students were grouped into horizontal form[67] classes. Individual timetables which "...sometimes it's hard to read..." moved students to different classrooms for different subjects with five or six different teachers each day, which they gradually liked. Students were often separated from friends and family each year which they did not like. There were more students at college and it was less friendly (students and teachers did not know everyone within a class). Core subject classes[68] were large (over 25[69] students) and often crowded, while other classes had 20[70] or less students.

4.3.9.1. Core subjects and options at college

Unlike intermediates where classes were often differentiated[71] for maths and reading, some colleges differentiate[72] (stream) form classes for core subjects and other colleges were mixed ability. Some students felt ignored or bored in mixed ability classes while some did not like "streaming". These colleges appeared to have greater behavioural problems with students in lower streams tending to be Pasefika and Māori. Nolan and Brown (2002:42) suggest colleges should:

> ...avoid ability groups and streaming... The latter have only marginal benefits for high achieving students in the middle years and disproportionate negative effects for almost all other students and their teachers. Such avoidance is vital moreover, for any gains that might accrue through streaming tend to lead to a balkanized school culture, which is antithetical to middle level education...

However, college option choices (languages, technology, music, art, computers) were better than intermediate. Some were considered a waste of time if students were disinterested and had to attend because they could not get into another option. All colleges offered computer studies in a computer suite[73].

Science was more enjoyable in a lab[74] because students did practicals, handled chemicals, and did real science compared with intermediate where "we just wrote stuff about animals".

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[67] 'Form' is used to refer to students Year level. Year 9 form classes may be identified by a numbering system – 901, 902 – or by the initials of the form class teacher – 9DO, 9BC. And similarly for other Year levels.

[68] English, maths, social studies, science, and P.E/Health.

[69] Most students had experienced about 30 students in their classes since early primary school.

[70] This was usually experienced in some option classes.

[71] Classes are rearranged into groups in relation to individual students' performance levels of individual subjects.

[72] Students are permanently grouped by ability usually according to reading comprehension levels.

[73] These Primary and Intermediates did not have computer suites. The intermediate at the Years 7 to 13 College did use the computer suites.

[74] These Primary and Intermediates did not have science laboratories. The intermediate at the Years 7 to 13 College did not use the science labs.

4.3.9.2.   Relievers and quality teachers at college

Students were less tolerant of relievers and teachers who did not know the subject, who were boring (gave worksheets, made students copy work from the board), who could not control the class, and did not discipline fairly or ignored wrong behaviour (smoking, wagging, fighting). This raises the issue of shortages of quality teachers in some subjects. It was not unusual for students to experience two or three long-term relievers or teachers each year in a core subject. Quality teacher supply is a pressing issue in low-decile schools as highlighted earlier (Wylie, 2003:11).

4.3.9.3.   Extra-curricular opportunities at college

Colleges offered more extra-curricular opportunities (though these were not catered for in college timetables) and were usually held after-school or during class time. Students were attracted to more opportunities on offer but increased schoolwork meant having to learn time management which was difficult for some. Some students "kind of study" relying instead on teacher notes, explanations and provision of "the questions in the tests" rather than forfeit activities. Fewer students participated in Poly Club/culture groups at college compared with intermediate. Students from two colleges believed their colleges were looked down upon by other students because they were "poor" or not good at sports, resulting in low participation and commitment. This contributed to a lack of pride in their college.

4.3.9.4.   College discipline

While students were generally more respectful and well behaved at intermediate, all students referred to bad behaviours at college and friends changing for the worse under bad influences. Students were more likely to be able to get away with bad behaviour and to "just run off" or "sneak off". Discipline was viewed by most as "uncontrollable".

Disciplinary processes appeared to be more complicated with colleges implementing similar systems of detentions, referral rooms, report cards, and reporting to Deans. Instead of one teacher, students were disciplined by many: a form teacher, at least five subject teachers, Heads of Departments, a Dean, and a Deputy/Assistant Principal. Application of rules and punishments were inconsistent between teachers (including senior managers) or poorly communicated, varying between extreme and near non-existent. College discipline affected students' feelings of safety[75], and their sense of pride and fairness in their school. Reward systems were not mentioned by students.

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[75] Refer to 'Attitudinal competencies' section in this chapter.

4.3.10. Things colleges did to help students learn and achieve

Students identified mainly the activity of learning: providing work and activities to do; provision of booklets, homework, after-school study facilities, time, study skills, and help; setting standards; and having quality teachers. Extra-curricular activities and trips also helped students learn and achieve. It was interesting to note what students did not voluntarily mention in relation to learning and achieving – Poly Club, Pasefika language classes, cultural identity, and the like.

4.3.11. Things colleges did that got in the way of students learning and achieving

School and student factors were identified as hindering learning and achievement: time out of class or in place of class for extra-curricular activities; shorter periods when school started late or finished early once a week; lack of school resources such as computers and teacher aides; doing certain subjects; lack of school pride; some teachers (including senior managers); some friends, and self.

One student's interview deserves noting.

> Anna[76] articulately expressed frustration about the way her college hindered her (and others) motivations and aspirations to take subjects that would benefit her future and her family; subjects she had recognised herself, as well as by a few teachers and by assessment results. She was placed in the "lower class" and forced to do subjects she had no interest or ability in. Consequently Anna wagged class or found herself on detention. Her frustration continued to reveal that some college teachers had no knowledge about the subject they were teaching, some did not want to teach certain groups of students, and some tended to make her feel inferior. Sometimes she could not understand the broad accent of a teacher who often displayed angry emotions towards students. She was denied sitting some exams, which she had studied hard for, because of absences due to ill health and received zero NCEA credits from a number of exams she had passed in five subjects. She commented on the inconsistent discipline between teachers, and students being allowed to stay in school when she felt they should have been expelled. Anna told teachers the reasons for her wagging was because of the subjects she had been made to take, the attitude of some teachers towards her, and the poor physical environment ("it's too cold or too hot, the windows won't open, or the heaters don't work) that when students made a comment the teacher would "tell them to like, get over it..." Form classes that had become "a whole family" were changed each year separating friends and relatives which she and her peers did not like.

I wonder had someone listened and addressed this intelligent student's needs in Years 9 and 10 whether this student (and perhaps others) would be doing better than she is currently.

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[76] Not her real name.

Anna enjoyed Intermediate, identified issues at college indicative of Bourdieu's '*symbolic violence*', and supported a middle-school structure with strong reasons. It is clear changes are necessary in the college structure and practices to alleviate the problems Anna, and others, encountered.

4.3.12. Doing well at intermediate and college

Students knew they were doing well at intermediate/college by: teachers' marking their books; tests such as *STAR, PAT* and *asTTle*; results from subject topic tests; school reports; placement in streamed classes; certificates or awards at assembly; and affirmation by friends and some teachers.

Students explained the causes for their bad college reports: they would "shut down", "muck around", distract others, or talk a lot because of boredom and not understanding work. Students suggested teachers needed to change their style of teaching by making learning more fun and including activities to help with understanding. They suggested schools could provide afterschool classes to help students "catch-up".

These students had a genuine desire to do well at college. This can be seen in an awareness of the importance of qualifications. However, all acknowledged struggling in one or two areas such as understanding a subject, certain teachers, attendance, keeping focused and not distracted by peers, and, for some, not having time to fit homework in with sport, paid employment, church and family commitments.

4.3.13. What happened when students did not learn things at intermediate and college?

Common behaviours and school responses were observed. Students would draw, not do class work or homework, resist learning, distract others or fail tests. Some would go to a teacher, friends or parents for help. Teachers would reprimand, issue detentions, ignore students, give "special work", give more time at intermediate, pair students to help each other, or, rarely, give teacher aide support. There exist clear differences between intermediate and college in relation to helping students who do not learn: the college environment appeared to be less tolerant of students not learning, and lacking in resources (time, teacher aides, and teacher assistance) to adequately meet students' learning needs. Additionally, there were consequences at home if parents knew that homework was not handed in, students would likely get hidings from parents. One student stated that his parents learnt that harsh punishment did not work after watching 'Dr Phil' and 'Oprah' on TV.

4.3.14. Students needing help with schoolwork and other matters

Students generally asked a teacher who was friendly or "funny", friends, family members, work through problems alone, or attend a homework centre.   For other matters the main response was to ask friends and family.   They may also talk to a teacher, a coach, or ignore the problem rather than talk to anyone.   Students would not approach the guidance counsellor[77].

4.3.15. Time for learning

Responses focused on college rather than intermediate where students enjoyed learning and were less concerned about time to learn a topic or class time.   Intermediates attempted to ensure students learned skills and knowledge by pairing them, grouping by ability for particular lessons, and providing more time and repetition.   The emphasis at college was on independent learning, keeping up, catching up on work when absent or behind, and on teachers getting through the curriculum.   Students said there was not enough time in subjects they found difficult such as maths and English.   After-school activities tended to also take precedence over college work.

4.3.16. Academic and Social Skills preparation for college and NCEA

This aspect investigated how well prepared or ready for college and then NCEA students were academically and socially.   Social skills preparation refers to study skills, independent learning skills, organisational skills, responsibility for self, and being able to handle college life.   Academic skills preparation refers to proficiency at curriculum Levels 4 and 5.

4.3.16.1. Intermediate preparation for College

Six students felt informed, ready and well prepared academically and socially for college, though two were not confident making friends.   Students were prepared because of having family[78] at college, achieving high marks at intermediate, having knowledge, or being familiar with the school environment at the Years 7 to 13 College.   However, reasons for being unprepared related to a lack of understanding and attention or disorganisation (arriving on time, bringing equipment, or using a diary).

Most students did their homework due to parental support.

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[77] Discussed further in 'General' section of Part 4.6 (iii) 'What do schools need to do to help Pasefika students be good learners and to achieve?'
[78] Older siblings or cousins.

4.3.16.2. Transition from Year 8 to Year 9

There were mixed feelings about transition from intermediate to college: "pretty normal" to "pretty hard..." Having intermediate friends or relatives attend the same college was very important for all students to help with adjustment. Transition was difficult for those struggling academically and/or socially although two students at the Years 7 to 13 College found the change easy. Aspects of this transition that were hard to get used to reflected Wylie et al.'s (2006b:12-14) study with students having more extra-curricular activities, no longer being the oldest in the school, a new mix of students, changing teachers between subjects or getting to know teachers, moving to five or six different classrooms each day, learning at a faster pace, more work, and more tests. Wylie et al. (ibid:14) argued that:

> ...the few differences that are evident are less about schoolwork than about personal knowledge of others in the school environment – and being known to them. This is consistent with research emphasising the importance of relationships for Mäori students (e.g. Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003).

For example, as evidence of this most students "don't really talk" to college teachers in the way they did to their intermediate teacher.

4.3.16.3. College preparation for NCEA

Teachers were communicating to students NCEA expectations prior to Year 11 with most understanding the system by mid-Year 11. Four out of eight students believed they were prepared for NCEA. These students attributed NCEA preparedness to what they learnt in Year 10 and to subjects they were good at; unpreparedness was associated with the opposite. Most were hoping for a pass result.

However, an awareness of relevant subjects for future study and careers needed improving. For instance, a student was not sure which subjects would contribute to sports studies at university stating "I don't know if, (science has), got anything to do with sports, like, in terms of the... chemicals and stuff, biology". Another felt limited by college subject choices, such as enduring two years of detention in P.E., and lack of support to fulfil a dream to study towards a career in journalism using art and geography.

4.3.16.4. Things during Years 7 to 10 that helped students to be ready for Year 11

During Years 7 to 10 family, friends, certain teachers, some subjects, Year 10 Unit Standards exams, class detentions during Year 10, homework centre, sitting alone, and getting into studying, writing notes and revising were the various things that helped students prepare for Year 11. Out of eight students, five mentioned a teacher and three mentioned family as being

significant in helping prepare for Year 11. The way teachers taught and related to students in class was important.

4.3.17. Attitudinal competencies

Students rated three attitudinal competencies relating to their approach to learning at intermediate and college: engagement, confidence, and academic ability in school. They were also asked what schools did to make them feel safe, to make them feel they belonged, and to make it interesting to be at school. (Refer to Appendix 9 for an analysis and discussion of each competency with student responses presented in Tables 10 and 11). In summary, students' ratings of the three competencies were generally positive. Their approaches to learning were more positive at intermediate school compared with college, although Anna[79] was much less positive towards college. Boredom increased and academic ability declined at college. Wylie et al. (2006b) found students were generally positive about school although attitudes toward college declined by age 14 with Mäori, Pasefika and low-decile school students increasingly less satisfied about college. But, unlike my study, Wylie et al. (2006b:40) reported:

> [Mäori and Pacific students] were less likely to think their school's discipline rules were fair (52 percent cf. 73 percent)... Students from low-income homes were most likely to think that their school's discipline rules were only occasionally or rarely/never fair (52 percent cf. 27 percent of others).

Pasefika students in my study believed school discipline rules were fair, but they did not think teachers were consistent in applying rules and punishments.

Feeling safe at intermediate/college was determined by strict discipline, helpful teachers and having Pasefika friends. College was unsafe because of senior students, gangs, bad influences (smoking, drugs, alcohol) and teachers not enforcing the rules. Students felt they belonged at school because of friends, some teachers and at intermediate where it was a fun, free environment. Not belonging was associated with having different interests and abilities from others and not participating in bad influences. Fun classes, extra-curricular activities and friends made it interesting to be at intermediate/college, while at college it was not interesting because of boredom, no friends in a class, attending some classes, and some teachers.

4.3.18. Characteristics of a good teacher

Students ranked in order nine statements they considered to be really important to make a good teacher. (Refer Appendix 10, Table 12). Rather than ethnicity and culture being most important, it was that teachers had a sense of fairness and respect, were well organised and

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[79] This student's interview is elaborated earlier in 'Things colleges did that got in the way of students' learning and achieving'.

prepared, knew their subject, were able to relate to students, provided lessons that were fun and creative which were most important. These results may be compared with a study of 'at risk' youth in a Porirua college by Martin, Sullivan and Norton (1998:210). The *Crash Project* findings indicated "inward qualities" to be the most important characteristics for a youth worker rather than "identifying features" of ethnicity and age. Although this thesis involved only eight students compared with Martin et al.'s (ibid) research of 47, results are very similar: "inward qualities" were most important about a good teacher. Similarly, Pasikale's (1998:x) study of 80 Pasefika TOPS[80] learners valued "teacher awareness and empathy", not ethnicity, as important factors enabling successful learning. The attitudes and attributes of a good teacher identified by AIMHI[81] students in Hill and Hawk's (1998:3) study can also be classified as "inward qualities".

4.4. Perceptions of the importance and influence of student's and school cultures on student achievement

Culture was simply defined for participants as 'the way things are done' at home and at school. Students were asked to indicate: 'how important is it for you that the school and teachers know your culture?', 'how much does the culture of the school (the way things are done) influence how well you do at school?', and 'how much does your culture influence how well you do at school?' (Refer to Appendix 11, Tables 13 to 15). While students ranked as least important to be a good teacher the characteristic "knows my cultural background", six rated as 'important' or 'quite important' that schools and teachers know their culture. The cultures of the school and student were perceived as more likely to have 'more influence' on how well students did at college than at intermediate.

Students' perceptions of what identifies them as Pasefika were: grouping together or mixing with their own kind, having a different sense of humour and music taste from Palagi students, and talking differently. They did not notice cultural differences at intermediate where most schools had large Pasefika student populations. There is some research on Pasefika identity issues in relation to education (Anae 1995 & 1998, Pasikale 1999, Tiatia 1998, Tupuola 1993

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[80] Training Opportunities Programmes (TOPS) were government-funded courses designed to assist persons with low skills gain recognised qualifications, or credits towards qualifications, and employment. TOPS courses targeted school-leavers and long-term unemployed people. 44 participants were in the 15-20 year age group in Pasikale's study.
[81] Hill and Hawk (1998:3) identified key qualities and skills that help learning and achievement, stating "...the teachers in schools with high proportions of Pacific Island and Maori students are able to apply these qualities and skills in a special way that acknowledges and respects the backgrounds and experiences of these particular students". Teacher attitudes and attributes were: high levels of subject and pedagogical knowledge, showing respect for students and treating them as individuals, being able to relate to cultures other than their own, being able to relate to them as young adults, showing kindness and caring, maintaining confidentiality, a commitment to preparing well for lessons, and a sense of humour.

& 2000 cited Coxon et al., 2002:91), however, its importance to successful learning is not a "critical issue" for Pasefika learners in this study as Pasikale (ibid:92) asserts.

A student questioned why Samoan, Tokelauan, Cook Islands or other Pasefika cultures were not taught in Social Studies when the majority of students at the college were Pasefika. A teacher also commented on the positive interest students had when teaching about Samoan and Tokelauan history during Social Studies. In critiquing the New Zealand Social Studies curriculum and the location of Pacific knowledge and experience Samu (1998 cited Coxon et al., 2002:90) noted:

> ...at secondary school level, Social Studies programmes must include the Pacific as a setting...at least once over the two-year core programme (Years 9 and 10). However, Australia is included in... 'south west Pacific', so... programmes could omit... specific Pacific studies...

From her analyses Samu (ibid) concluded:

> ...schools are open to developing Pacific learning programmes that are simplistic and stereotypical. The cultural and social diversities that are a vital feature of the communities within New Zealand (let alone the nations of the Pacific Region) are at risk of being rendered invisible due to the way 'culture' is conceptualised in the document... Pacific young people in schools... may be hindered in terms of what they learn about themselves and how they learn about themselves via the school-based Social Studies curriculum.

From her research examining the ways primary and secondary social studies syllabuses were interpreted together with the views and intentions of the teachers, Simon (1992:259) found issues dealing with Māori-Pākehā relations were avoided as a result of "teachers' efforts to avoid controversy". The majority of social studies teachers also had "little or no training in history" (ibid:260). Simon (ibid:268) concludes:

> ...through the curriculum and the practices of teachers, the New Zealand education system largely shields students from the knowledge of the history of Māori-Pākehā relations. Without this knowledge and understanding, Pākehā students are given no imperative to seek social justice in these relations in the present.

In reflection of the student's and teacher's responses, I suggest most teachers do not deliver a non-simplistic and non-stereotypical Pasefika programme because they do not know enough about these histories and cultures and adhere to "continuing the policy of avoiding conflict situations" (ibid:269).

4.5. Students' perceptions of the causes for Pasefika students not doing as well as Palagi and Asian students

Students found this question difficult to answer but, as Nash and Harker (1997:55) similarly found, they have "formed some clear views about the nature of their own experiences". One stated "...I was gonna say English but, Chinese, and Indian... /people have to learn English as well..." another saying "...'cos I know it's not a cultural thing... but it's just... 'cos, I think that, all humans are the same, it's just... the only difference is that we're from different places..." Adding to this was the knowledge that many Asian students at the colleges were not achieving as most were refugees with little or no English language. Students tended to consider Palagi and Pasefika ethnic differences as a cause. The students, their parents, and culture were suggested multiple causes to this complex issue as discussed below that is consistent with studies discussed in the literature research.

4.5.1. Student causes for underachievement

Reference was made to students' inability to do the work, attitudes towards learning and school ("...they're not like, focusing properly... they just like ... too much $ka'a$[82]and... too much... thinking that they're, cool..."), peer influence and after-school demands on their time. Responses hinted of students' 'self-fulfilling prophecy' about their own ability – their prior ability and comparison with the "successful ones" either motivates them to achieve or just give up. Despite positive attitudinal competencies, perhaps Pasefika students soon realise their aspirations do not match their academic performance that has some importance in shaping their response to schooling. However, as Nash (2000a:82) observed of Pasefika students, which can be applied to many students in this thesis "Their relative inability to meet the academic demands of the school was not due to their lack of application".

Students who took responsibility for dealing with distracting influences and "attitude" of peers were determined to do well. They accommodate to the school in the way their parents and teachers had instructed but many struggled to consistently practise forms of behaviour they knew they ought to follow. It is not a failure of motivation but as Nash and Harker (1998:82) describe "of the ability to act according to one's best judgement in pursuit of desired ends".

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[82] Samoan slang term for *ta'a* meaning run freely, be loose, unchaste. Used here as mucking around.

4.5.2. Parent causes for student underachievement

It was perceived that students who did well had parents with high educational achievements and good jobs to role model for their children, were strict about their children's schooling (attendance, homework, uniform), and raised their children well.   Lack of parental involvement in education was believed to be a result of parents not being role models, not knowing what to do, or not strict about schooling and allowing children to "do whatever they want..."

4.5.3. Culture as a cause for student underachievement

Students perceived culture to be about what happens at home and the differences between ethnic groups.   Two suggested school and home cultures were causes for Pasefika students underachieving, four suggested school culture only and one suggested home and racism as causes.

One student made a very perceptive comment: "...like who goes to that school, culture..." as a cause for underachievement suggesting what the literature refers to as 'composition effect' or 'school mix'.   There is a belief that "...working class students grouped together in "working class schools" will underachieve in comparison to those... in schools... of middle class students" (Nash & Harker, 1998:52) though Nash and Harker (ibid) state "...our research lends the hypothesis little support".

Students thought "the school attitude... the way stuff is done", timetables, streaming, poor discipline, and lack of foreign language classes could be problems.   Students also mentioned as causes: Pasefika parents' expectations and different treatment of children compared with Palagi and Asian parents, for instance, "a lot is expected" from the eldest child as a role model for siblings; family dysfunction as a result of Pacific and Māori families being "broken", "divorces", "the mum's not there", or death of a family member; and racism in society as seen on TV.

4.5.4. School causes for student underachievement

Although students' dispositions in this study were generally favourable towards school they were critical of some aspects of college: particular teachers and styles of teaching, discipline, organisation (such as inflexible subject choice, class interruptions), negative peer behaviours in and out of the classroom, and lack of school pride.

4.6. Positive changes which could enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students

As stated in the introduction, this section covers the findings of three specific questions, and perceptions about a middle-school and an extra year.

4.6.1. What must Pasefika students do to become good learners and to achieve?

Students made reference to 'doing' things: studying, doing homework, taking notes, learning and trying, work harder; paying attention, focusing and not being distracted in class, listening more; attending class and staying in school; asking the teacher for help; learning to speak and understand English; having good friends and resisting peer pressure; setting goals; and looking to the future or having a dream. Reference was also made to students' attitude ("not to be thrown off...", "don't let bad influences effect you", "determination", "confidence", and "...try and copy the way that they (good students) learn") and behaviour ("adapt to how they do things around here" rather than getting into fights). Students' responses suggest they are to be 'spoon-fed' knowledge which is learnt by listening and memorising for regurgitation at exam time. Students' thoughts were similar to parents' expectations of what it is to be a good learner – pay attention, focus, listen, do homework, ask the teacher for help. Students did not mention the need to read more, knowing how to study and take notes, and how to think and learn. No students referred to goals achieved perhaps indicating a developmental characteristic of teenagers living for today or of Pasefika peoples that tomorrow takes care of itself, or that school is not relevant except for learning to read and write.

4.6.2. What must Pasefika parents do to help their child become a good learner and to achieve?

Perceptions were based on what parents' were doing or not doing positively. Seven students used "encourage" meaning parents needed to push students more, to push students to do homework, to ensure students "keep coming to school", and to help students "have a dream". Five mentioned parents to help with homework. Two said "support" meaning parents should talk with their child to find out what they were learning and doing, provide equipment, and to "be there for them". However, even though one student acknowledged as important his mother's active support of parent meetings with the school and membership of the Tokelauan parents' group, he believed his parents were not really involved at school.

Also mentioned was the need for parents to reward and listen to their child and "not be as violent". Although one student mentioned having time to do homework despite *"fe'aus*[83]*"*, sport and "Bible studies" another student believed some parents placed unnecessary demands on children at home that detracted from study time and homework.

Students know their parents expect and desire them to "become successful". Though they did not define 'successful', most implied going to University and getting a well paid job.

4.6.3. What must schools do to help Pasefika students become good learners and achievers?

Responses to questions asking students about changes or improvements to aspects of schooling, such as getting help with schoolwork and transition, are included here. Findings are grouped under three headings: school organisation and the way schools do things, teachers and teaching, and general thoughts. (Students' varied answers focused on college and referred to classroom rather than extra-curricular activities, such as Poly Club, as a main part of learning and achieving).

4.6.3.1. School organisation and the way schools do things

One stated "when I went to third form and fourth and fifth it feels normal, I'm not saying it was o.k, just saying it's normal", and another concerning transition said "You can't change anything, it feels weird but, just the way it is". These statements reflect Gramsci's *hegemony*, the embeddedness of 'natural' and 'taken-for-granted' social order of schools through the 'hidden-curricular' that is 'not o.k.' but is 'normal', to schools.

Transition to college

Five students did not see a need to change anything around transition. Having friends, orientation programmes, senior peer mentors, a junior college, a Year 9 transition class, or an end-of-year camp for Year 8 and prospective Year 9 students helped.

English language programmes

Four students referred to language courses to aide with learning and reading for Pasefika students such as extending ESOL[84] to include students "that aren't really learning well".

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[83] Samoan term meaning things to be done such as housework and lawn mowing.
[84] English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Subject choice

Five mentioned more flexibility in choosing subjects in Years 9 and 10 that they were interested in, good at and would help in the future so they would "start going to classes and they might get somewhere..."

Homework centre

A common response was the need at colleges to establish them.

Year 8, 9 and 10 specialist teachers

The majority liked having different subject teachers from Year 8, and one suggested "changing classes and timetables" from Year 8 in preparation for college.

It was suggested that some subjects in Years 9 and10 have the same teacher (i.e. a maths and science teacher; an English and social studies teacher).

Home room

Years 8 to 10 core subjects to be in one classroom (a home room), except for science, technology, options, and P.E.

Form classes

Students liked being with friends and relatives in the junior college form classes because "...like all us looked after each other".

Mixed ability classes

Some students wanted mixed ability classes while one suggested ability classes where age did not matter. 'Streaming' was not well supported.

One student's concern was about a college preferring "the high students" to become Head Boy/Girl or student mentors rather than recognising all abilities. For example, at the intermediate Student Council "everyone was the same, but then at College everyone's different..."

Extra-curricular activity practices

Cultural, choir/music, drama practices to be part of the college timetable so students did not miss time in academic subjects. They wanted sports practices to be kept after-school.

Student autonomy

Allowing senior college students to "do assembly" would build their confidence as leaders. A Student Council could suggest and be responsible for decisions and implementing them for the common interest of all students, such as sports tournaments and art competitions at college.

More time

Students wanted more learning time and free time: longer lunch break at college, more time on topics that students struggle in at college such as maths, and "more learning time, like, longer periods" or more periods in college subjects "...just so you can understand it more".

Smaller class sizes

Reduced class numbers allowing more one-on-one teaching and reducing misbehaviour.

College discipline

Students found inconsistent discipline and strictness a concern at the four colleges and at some intermediates. Discipline processes should be applied consistently between all teachers and at all levels of authority.

Locating the reason for continual detentions and wagging of certain classes is needed. A student explained wagging class was because students were unable to understand the subject or a teacher's accent, or being forced to do a subject they felt inadequate in such as P.E.

Students wanted punishments to reflect the crime; that is, attendance issues should not be the same as drinking, smoking, being stoned, or fighting, and "doing lines" did not change behaviour but the time could be used on catching up on schoolwork or learning.

Absence during tests/exams

A student complained about a college not accommodating her for being absent due to illness and missing an exam. She had studied hard and was disappointed that she could not sit it. No homework was sent home while she was away. If it is likely that students will fail, a known practice at college is to withdraw them from particular Unit Standards/Achievement Standards exams. This makes college and student results look good. The high absenteeism may have justified some teachers into believing the likelihood of failure so withdrew the student from sitting exams, hence the "zero credits" result mentioned earlier.

4.6.3.2.   Teachers and teaching

One comment was for "more activities" at intermediate to prepare for college. The need for improved teaching at college was a common response: more fun lessons; easier ways to help with understanding for those that did not have very good vocabulary; using technology to assist faster learning; enthusiastic and interesting teachers (rather than "they just give out worksheets"); teachers who believe the best of students (rather than "...some of them will probably look down on you, just 'cos how you are..."); qualified subject teachers ("if we have a teacher that doesn't know it then, it's just a waste of time"); tolerant teachers who can teach repetitively, listen and are without favouritism; and only one student preferred having Samoan teachers to teach "those Pasifika students".

College relievers were seen by students as boring and contributing to classroom problems unlike most intermediate school relievers. Most students felt they were not engaged by teachers or the work as Wylie et al. (2006b:81) found from students among their low-income group and, overlapping to some extent, among those attending low-decile schools. Jones (1991) observed Pasefika students preferred passive classroom activities, like copying from the board, as useful forms of learning. This is not consistent with my study or Nash and Harker (1998:83) who found "students have nothing complimentary to say about teachers who set this activity day after day". Students in my study were not proactive about their learning in the sense of questioning the teacher or telling the teacher they were not happy because they have learnt to be compliant, to be 'spoon-fed', not question a teacher's methods and accept that is "just the way it is". Students believed they were 'trying hard' but their teachers' perceptions of this was not the same. However, when asked they stated their preferred forms of learning were games, activities, technology usage, and explanations that helped understanding. There is clearly a disjunction between students' learning aspirations (*non-cognitive* disposition) and how teachers expect students to learn, such as 'asking when they don't know'.

4.6.3.3.   General changes to schooling (intermediate and college)

Supporting students

Students suggested that schools should build students' confidence so they are able to relate to others and ask for help with schoolwork. Schools should motivate students by having them set goals, by inviting high profile speakers, and providing mentors.

Resources

Students' perceptions of being a 'poor' school dampened school pride and motivation to learn. They suggested schools provide: resources ("interactive stuff") and games to help learn things faster; technology and trained teachers, such as CAS calculator in maths at three colleges because it was helpful but teachers with limited CAS knowledge setback students' learning; on-site technology and science labs at intermediates; and more teacher aides and assistance from teachers during class.

Peer mentors, youth workers

Guidance counsellors were not mentioned as helping to address needs, like the "drama" of girls fighting at school. Peer mentors, youth workers, someone students would listen to, and "a Oprah show" were mentioned that suggests the ineffectiveness of college counselling practices for Pasefika students. Martin (2002:15) defines youth workers from other professionals working with youth such as counsellors or teachers:

> It is the place of relationships that defines youthwork. Other professionals will
> build a relationship in order to effectively deliver a service. A youthworker
> will offer a service in order to build a relationship.

Hence, the effectiveness of a guidance counsellor's service for Pasefika students "will be measured by the quality of relationships that are established through it" (ibid).

Other school improvements

Improvements included: developing pride in the college which eliminates embarrassment; senior college students to set a better example for juniors; and disruptive students needing "something else for them to do" so quality time can be spent with those wishing to learn. Alternative schools should be recognised as necessary for many students unable to be adequately accommodated by mainstream education. Porirua has three alternative[85] schools where learning needs and behavioural issues are better accommodated but are limited to college students and by roll size.

4.6.4. Students' perceptions about a separate middle-school (Years 7 to 10)

A diagram[86] was used to explain the difference between the current structure and a middle-school. Six students favoured a separate school for Years 7 to 10, including those at the Years 7 to 13 College. Reasons of support were: a change for the better; intermediate students would be "learning the College work... making steps towards... Year 11"; disciplined learning habits developed; transition from Year 10 to 11 would be easier; age groups would

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[85] These are the Alternative School, the Activity Centre, and *He Huarahi Tamariki*.
[86] Appendix 12.

be more similar and "less intimidating", less gangs and bullying, and no access to alcohol from senior students; and "...the senior high school, would be better because they're all doing NCEA..."

Support also included keeping certain structural and social features of intermediate and college. Students preferred: specialist subject teachers from Year 8; quality teaching like intermediate; remaining in one classroom for some subjects; on-site science labs, technology block, computer rooms and gymnasium; and being separate from senior students.

Two students not in favour viewed no difference between a middle-school and current structures. They believed a middle-school would not change what students had to learn, achievement is dependent on students rather than school structure, a Year 11 junior at a senior school would be no different to a Year 9 junior, "...be like starting back at the bottom 'cos... you're like the youngest" (though students are older and physically more developed by Year 11 and senior college classes are vertically organised), and uniform change is costly (Intermediate school students currently experience a change of uniform after two years and the student recognised having to change to a larger sized uniform after Year 10). The first two points are valid. Changes in what students learn must be relevant, build on prior experiences, focus on developing *cognitive* skills needed for academic success, and focus on developing positive *non-cognitive* dispositions and practices toward engaged learning prior to senior college.

4.6.5. Students' perceptions about an extra year (more time) for students to prepare for NCEA

A diagram[87] was used to ask students their thoughts about an extra year to prepare for NCEA; that is, postponing NCEA Level 1 to Year 12 in effect extending Years 9 and 10 to three years. Some explanation concerning low achievement levels on entry to Year 11 and many students needing to repeat Level 1 at Year 12 was given so students could provide an informed answer. An extra year was favoured by all but one student, who felt it would be repetitive and "you'll get tired of it". One student said he did not need more time and was ready for NCEA this year but felt others needed more time.

Students mentioned the need for more time due to absences from class or from struggling in certain subjects since Year 9 or earlier. A student felt class mates let themselves down by not studying, focusing on schoolwork, or listening, and therefore needed extra time. Another

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[87] Appendix 12.

belief was more time would provide a better understanding about subjects to make passing NCEA easier. Most agreed to retaining current practice of students attempting NCEA earlier if they were ready.

4.7. <u>Conclusion</u>

While Pasefika students live in the worlds of their family, their culture, their church (for many), the school, part-time paid employment (for some), and most of all, their peer world (Hill and Hawk, 1998), students in my study found it challenging to live across these worlds but they coped with the support of friends, family, sometimes parents and rarely teachers. These worlds were distinctively different and demanding. Their parents were familiar with the worlds of family, culture, church, and some jobs. Five parents maintained they had some understanding of New Zealand schools and of students' peer world, others had no understanding of these worlds. It was perceived that most non-Pasefika teachers understood students' work, school, and a little of their peer worlds, but in most cases had little knowledge of students' family, culture and church. Most students were not heard by the adults in these worlds, and they were active gatekeepers between college and their parents.

Students understood the 'rules of the game' at intermediate/college and desired to do well – get good reports and pass exams. But while they had enjoyed intermediate, participated in extra-curricular activities and felt prepared, a demarcation occurred at college. Their attitudes to learning and participation declined as they experienced problems at college with delivery of programmes, school organisation, themselves, their peers and parenting. They realised their weaknesses were greater than their strengths but were motivated to "try hard" and "do the work" the way their parents and teachers expect though not as well as they hoped. These students had aspirations but did not plan ahead, or have a mentor to guide them, although some mothers 'pushed' them. Wylie et al. (2006b:39) found at age 14, more students were expressing boredom and restlessness because of the nature of the work, and the way it was presented at college, as were the students in my study.

Students, however, identified practices at intermediate and college that helped and hindered them from learning and achieving, as this chapter discussed. Specific learning and thinking skills were not recognised by them as central to their learning and strategising. To be a good learner and to achieve was to be passive and compliant because they perceived 'doing' tasks was important. As a result, students would not challenge poor teaching or ask teachers for help. These reflected key elements of their *habitus*. Consequently, when experiencing failure

in subjects some assumed they were dumb and "suck at it", so they "shut down", became bored, lost interest, misbehaved, or ignored it by getting involved in activities or by hanging out with peers.   This ineffective *habitus* hindered their aspirations and practices around learning.

The diverse abilities and interests of these students were no different from non-Pasefika peers, as opposed to the stereotypes about Pasefika students as only good at sport, dance or music. Some were busy with extra-curricular activities, including church, while others did not have the financial resources or interest to participate.   Time management became a problem for busy students, particularly homework completion.   They identified what they were good at and not good at but at college it was academically hard in many ways and, for most, frustrating having to do subjects that they did not like, were not good at, or in which they perceived the teacher was "useless", as similarly observed by Nash (1999a:59).

Many peers changed at college and began to fail in schoolwork, but most understood the cause of peers' negative behaviours and did not approve or became distracted by them.   If these mid-ability respondents were struggling at college (half now expressed feeling prepared for Year 11) and sometimes misbehaving, then one can begin to appreciate the difficulties 'below average' Pasefika achievers may encounter.   Drawing from the Years 7 to 10 reading results, the cumulative effect of 'below average' prior cognitive ability is that students are less likely to be prepared with the necessary cognitive concepts required for NCEA Level 1 attainment and are most likely to adjust their aspirations and to lose interest and motivation. They need a school structure that provides more time and supporting conditions to acquire these skills prior to NCEA.

Teacher relationships were important as this impacted upon whether students enjoyed and learned a subject, especially at college.   A longitudinal Australian study found students' experiences at the end of the first year of secondary schooling focused on comparisons between different teachers stating:

> What students thought about a subject was dictated by what they thought about its teacher; a reminder of the impact of teachers. [and] student comments showed that they... needed more care and attention from teachers to help their academic achievement (McGee et al., 2003:33).

In this study, Pasefika students had favourable comments about intermediate schooling perhaps because of the caring and closer relationships with teachers and peers.   Perceptions of college subjects were greatly influenced by their relationship with subject teachers, the teacher's knowledge of the subject, the number of

relievers/teachers experienced during the year, and to a lesser extent, peer relationships. Problems in these areas caused some students to wag class.

The characteristics of a good teacher were identified as being 'inward qualities' as similarly found by Hill and Hawk (1998:3). From my experience, 'good' teachers also interact with students outside of the classroom, such as coaching a sports team, or living and participating in the same community as students, enabling deliberate informal connections to occur with students and parents. These connections are less threatening, allowing students to see teachers living life. In such contexts teachers build a rapport that is not functionally driven – more than a "one-dimensional" relationship as ex-school teacher Martin (2002:118) argues:

> ..."If one looks at the structure of a traditional large urban school, one sees that intimate primary relationships have been supplanted by an impersonal bureaucracy. Students and teachers do not relate to one another as whole persons but in narrow, circumscribed roles. Communication is restricted to what one can and must do in a 50-minute period, where a highly structured setting is a sanction against all but teacher-directed behaviour" (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 1992:13). ...Young people who experience healthy and holistic relationships with adults elsewhere seem able to cope with a set of functionally driven relationships with professionals.

This "one-dimensional relationship" restricts most Pasefika students approaching college teachers for help with their learning and other matters outside of the classroom, hence the comment that most students "don't really talk" to them. This emphasises the importance of relationships for students, a central element of their familial *cultural capital*.

Students gave strong supporting reasons for a middle-school that recognised some issues causing their discontent at college and Pasefika underachievement. Responses described a middle-school structure that was less secondary and more intermediate at Years 9 and 10, and reciprocally less primary and more secondary at Years 7 and 8. Some aspects of both types of school were seen as beneficial. A separate senior college was preferred where all students would be focused on NCEA, careers and employment. It was believed that a middle-school would address some factors at college contributing to students' difficulties such as college pedagogy, pace of learning, amount of work, and time to cover the curriculum. Provision of an extra year (delaying NCEA to Year 12) to address these and other factors already discussed was supported.

It is clear from students' responses that the 'acoustics' of the college is different from what they have *acquired* from intermediate and home. Colleges performed acts of '*symbolic violence*' as they demanded and expected from students particular *acquired* social, cultural,

cognitive and *non-cognitive* skills. Anna was an example of lost potential as a result of school structures, dispositions and practices indicative of *'symbolic violence'*; that is, streaming, inflexible subject choice, poor physical environment, rearrangement of form classes, favouritism for "the high students", inconsistent discipline, racism, and teacher issues were mentioned. These mid-ability students had the 'desire' to be educated and recognised themselves as part of the cause for not doing well, but they essentially did not possess what Nash (2002a) argues were essential *non-cognitive* personal dispositions associated with relative progress at college: ambition, self-confidence and responsiveness.

In relation to the research questions, it is clear that schools, teachers, parents, students and their peers are engaged in complex relationships and processes which are greatly affected by the resources (financial, educational, social, and cultural) available to each of them.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF PARENT FINDINGS

The analysis and discussion of parents' perceptions and experiences, as set out in the introduction of chapter four, are presented in this chapter.

5.1. Introduction

There were 14 parents for the eight students involved in the study. Parents of five students were interviewed (three fathers and five mothers) and parents of seven students completed the questionnaire.

Ten parents were Pacific Islands-born, with five arriving in New Zealand in the 1980s. Five had been schooled in New Zealand, one in Samoa, and two from other Pacific Islands completed their schooling in Porirua, one in what were then Forms 3 to 7 (Years 9 to 13), and the other 7th Form only. Seven parents had experienced Years 7 to 10 in Porirua, either as a student, or through their children.

Samoan is the first language of seven parents, Tokelauan that of three, Cook Islands Māori one, and English of three. English is used most at three homes, a Pacific language only was spoken in two, and in three, both English and a Pacific language were spoken. Four parents stated that their child was fluent in their Pacific language. Two said their child did not speak the language, while one said their child was "okay" in speaking their language.

Parents' educational qualifications ranged from no qualifications to diplomas. Seven were in full-time paid employment[88].

5.2. Parents' perceptions and experiences of intermediate (Years 7 & 8) and college (Years 9 & 10) schooling

5.2.1. Years 7 and 8 (intermediate) schooling

Most comments about the two full-primary schools, an Intermediate, and Years 7 to 13 College were positive and unconcerned: "it was alright"; "we didn't have any problems"; "...in general all is fine"; "...it's just, a good school..." Positive aspects of schools included the presence of five Pacific teachers who understood students' backgrounds and could speak

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[88] Parents were not asked about their employment details.

their language; motivating teachers; good parent-teacher relationships and "social sides" such as cultural groups. Less positive aspects included non-motivating teachers who did not push students in terms of schoolwork "to make them get to their full potential" and lack of school discipline, though parents' wondered whether these were "the kids' fault". Compared with their own school experience most felt there was not the same "pushing" (encouragement), "competition", and discipline by schools.

Relationships with teachers were important to parents in order to feel welcomed and part of their child's school. Being "always informed" through newsletters, having positive interactions with teachers who knew them ("the way they talk to you"), and being encouraged to support school activities, visit classrooms at any time, and to join in parents' barbeques were examples.

Parents faced increased challenges as they became more knowledgeable "about the system", "the teachers" and lobbying for improved standards. Some teachers were not being "challenged in what they're doing" and required more professional development (P.D.), "being comfortable and staying where they are because it was easy is not good enough".

Moving a child from a contributing[89] primary school to an intermediate was considered "hard work" because of the adjustments needed to succeed in a new environment and new community that have the "...same sort of Polynesian but different mob, they have their own culture down there". Teachers as sports coaches who were not familiar with the sport and/or coaching, was frustrating, "they don't know what they're talking about, or... what they're doing... it could be more... structured". One family felt that an "altercation" at school involving their child was not dealt with appropriately, but had not voiced their concerns because the other child was a relative.

Generally, parents believed intermediates provided adequate support in relation to students' academic and social (independent learning, study and organisational skills) needs, and recognised areas for improvement.

5.2.2. Years 9 and 10 (college) schooling

All parents attended *pöwhiri*[90] for Year 9 and new students. One college invited Year 9 parents to a barbeque where "...you're... able to mingle with the other parents... meet all the

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[89] Years 1 to 6 school.
[90] Mäori word for welcome, invite, beckon, wave; invitation, rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae. Used here as a welcome ceremony on a school marae.

Deans and those introductory processes..." Staff greeting parents by name, "knowing who your children are", and being friendly, were viewed as welcoming. Colleges communicated to parents via newsletters and parent-teacher interviews, though there was "very little social stuff happening together with parents" and parents did not "go into the classes as much". One college encouraged parental involvement with their Pasefika parents' groups, organised by its BOT[91].

A Tokelauan parents' group member, who had put her tertiary studies on hold, compared their lack of numbers with that of a Samoan parents' group. In an attempt to understand why so few were involved, this parent surmises:

> ...we've tried... to get the parents involved... with their Polyfest coming up... [child]'s only doing it for the credits... [he's] not really a dancer... it's just really hard to get the parents involved... it's in Tokelauan/ and we are teaching Tokelauan, dances and culture... it's... puzzling/ ...we all have commitments but... when it comes to the kids... I do put my kids, education first... it's very important... /I'm hoping, they'll have... a better chance than... I did... I... didn't, do my work as... hard as I should have... I don't think it was (the English)... because that was one of, my top subjects, English and maths... now with my kids the way I support them I didn't have that support, because my parents weren't here... that's why... I'm, really strong about the support... I had no one there for me, so... I have to be there always for my children... that made me really homesick not having... my parents... they're here now... they came after I left school... we had our own place but then we had to come... and look after, my elderly father, and, [child] did a lot... for him/ like his insulin... they love being around their grandparents... he... passed away... they took it really hard, specially [child], he was... their baby... they... have, Sunday School exams as well/... five years in a row he's topped...

Despite overcrowded living conditions, family illness and death, and church commitments, this parent believed in "education first", was "really strong about the support... because I didn't have it", and "hoping, they'll have... a better chance". Clearly this parental involvement equates with prioritising education, support and hope. This parent had a deep-seated understanding of her role and her children's role in education. The schools were seen as "doing their job" and any problems were perceived as a result of children or parents not "doing their job". The *habitus* held by this parent was shaping dispositions and practices of a certain kind toward acquiring qualifications as she read to her children prior to starting school so that they were reading fluently at Year 1, and she ensured her children attended church and a Tokelauan pre-school so that they developed skills and values that would support their learning and maintain the family's cultural beliefs.

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[91] Board of Trustees.

Increased schoolwork was a noticeable difference for all parents. Coping with change (Year 9 academic demands, uniform, more students, bigger students, "from being senior to now being junior", moving to different classrooms and teachers for each subject, timetable system, rules and routines) created stress, and was "a shock" and "traumatic", for students who did not adjust well and who had arrived with low academic levels. Others "adjusted but it's taken a lot of time" because of behaviours such as not listening, being a perfectionist or needing more time to complete tasks. Three students, who had friends and older siblings, were reported to have adjusted well. No comments were made by parents concerning college strategies in helping students adjust to college life. These 12 to 13 year-old students were expected to cope with adjustment problems.

Parents felt comfortable attending parent-teacher interviews, although most listened and did not ask questions. A few preferred that teachers inform them if their children misbehaved and viewed teachers as "second parents", believing that children submit to authority, be quiet and behave, in order to learn.

Parents rarely met with teachers or principals to discuss concerns. College structure and communication were deemed difficult compared with intermediate, where "there wasn't so many teachers". In Year 9 "it was harder for us to get to the teachers that had the issues with our kids..." Contact was by phone or email. Parents cited personal shyness, ignorance of meeting processes, lack of confidence in speaking English, and trusting teachers to "know what they're doing" as reasons for not contacting the college.

Healthy parent-teacher relationships, high teacher expectations and a positive attitude about students were important to parents. Most trust teachers to do a good job, and were unlikely to challenge them concerning academic results, assuming any problem lay with their child. Parents who were "more assertive and getting the information that I want from teachers", had encountered issues with teachers who: did not "push" students to "compete with the Palagi kids that were up there"; had no "drive"; "only do this much"; "some... older ones... that've been there for a long time" who had set ideas; were negative and intimidating; had "categorised our kids into a square", and those who had "tried it before.... been-there-done-that".

Since no two children are the same, then an arsenal of teaching strategies needs to be continually amassed and updated, in order to understand the way a student thinks and learns, particularly if a child's ethnicity is different from that of the teacher. Liaising with parents is

a start. Teachers must know their 'use-by-date' before they become "stiff-necked" towards children and parents. The *Perceptions of Teachers and Teaching* research project found teachers "who have lost their edge, who are less than committed and who portray explicit lack of enthusiasm, can impact significantly on the quality of the outcomes they achieve..." (Kane & Mallon, 2006:vii).

Parents were concerned about lack of school pride due to poor sports coaching ("where I'm from it makes you feel like going to school and working hard because you're proud... everyone's keen to do well..."); the college's reputation ("kids... wagging... smoking... banned [College] from some shops... because they've been shoplifting"), and "a communication problem" (colleges should provide information "in layman's terms... breaking down the/ terminology" and have systems explained). One college, which did not reflect its dominant Pasefika enrolment, was described as "sterile", continuing with a "one system fits all that doesn't work", and "they're not wanting to learn from us 'cos they're the experts... and they get paid to do that but if you're not teachable yourself as a teacher, what a waste of time".

Despite concerns, most believed it was parents' responsibility to "make a commitment" to be involved with their child's college. Likewise, a student's success was dependent on the student's willingness to learn, listen and obey the teacher because "teachers are doing their job", and colleges were providing good support in relation to students' academic and social needs, though areas of improvement were recognised.

5.2.3. Academic and Social Skills preparation for college and NCEA

Parents' perceptions about intermediate preparing students for college, and college preparation for NCEA are presented in this section.

5.2.3.1.   Intermediate school preparation for College

Parents' responses were mixed, with three families satisfied with their child's school. Being well prepared was evident in teachers and parents working together, children receiving awards, and children doing their work. Several issues were raised by those dissatisfied with the preparation: low academic standards, long serving teachers who had lost their "drive" to be effective, schools being "...'*kia ora koutou whanau*[92]' all that sort of stuff but if you're not doing the work behind it, it's just surface...", the loss of great Pasefika teachers because of lack of support from peers and not receiving what they need from P.D., parents and good

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[92] Mäori phrase meaning welcome family. Parent referring to the token gesture of teachers appearing to be inclusive of Mäori and Pasefika cultures in school life.

teachers "battling the school system" for improvements, and parents struggling to get information from teachers.

Academic preparation for College

School reports, teachers' comments, and their child's attitude towards schoolwork indicated to parents whether their children were academically prepared. Parents viewed themselves, the child or the intermediate as being responsible for children being ill-prepared for college. According to parents, two children were academically prepared for college, while three were not. If a child had been struggling in a subject or "could've done better", the onus to improve was on the child to do the work, complete homework and have the right attitude. Families attempted to help their children but found communication with particular teachers and some reports unhelpful. Two families assisted children with reading and English skills.

Social[93] Skills preparation for College

Older siblings at college helped prepare some students socially, while others were "always prepared... very organised...", or parents talked to their child about working hard and not to "muck around at school". For all parents, the child is responsible for learning, preparedness, organisational skills and work ethic; however, parents believed that schools should impart these life skills to students as a matter of course. Two families believed that their children were socially ill-prepared for college. One had started school too early, advancing rapidly without a solid foundation in early numeracy and literacy, which impacted negatively throughout his primary and college years. Had the parent known that children "didn't have to legally start... 'til six..." they "would've started him later". Another family believed their child was not "mature enough", not "responsible enough", that it was "a guy thing" or "it was too much" to deal with alone.

5.2.3.2.   College preparation for NCEA

Being prepared for NCEA was conveyed by teachers' comments, and reports; the student's attitude towards schoolwork and knowing what to do; being offered Tokelauan Government scholarships, and aspiring to attend university. All parents recognised their children's capability to achieve, to become university graduates and to progress to a career with tertiary qualifications, despite having no previous family members qualify for university or being employed in white collar careers. Parents held high expectations and a belief that their children would attend university. Parents supported their children by: being "a strict mum"; going to the college to ensure children were in attendance; encouraging afterschool study;

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[93] Social skills preparation refers to study skills, independent learning skills, organisational skills, responsibility for self, and being able to handle college life.

ensuring homework was completed; providing necessary stationery and ensuring nothing got "in the way of them reaching their goals".

Three parents believed colleges had prepared their children for NCEA with one father commenting otherwise "either he's not understanding it or they're not preparing him well... some teachers have tried".   Most parents remarked that their children were primarily responsible for how well they performed at school, in that "the school can only do so much", and that the school was "doing a good job".

Three families encountered problems with their child during junior years, particularly Year 10. Academic failure was to blame for their troublemaking or being "big seniors... big kids now they're in college so they try things on... but they always get caught..." Families not satisfied with college preparation for NCEA believed it was the school's responsibility to address students' needs, "...I pay the fees... so the school's supposed to (be responsible)!" As a BOT member, "fighting that battle" for improvements, one parent claims that "they don't want to change but they want us to change..." One family felt the poor standard set at primary school, "how they're teaching, how they engage with our children", was affecting students' achievement at college.

One family highlighted their school's frustrating and confusing decision-making practice of placing students in subject classes without the parents', or student's, full understanding or consent. Miscommunication arose when parents and students were unfamiliar with school systems, such as timetable clashes. My interviews with parents were frequently paused to explain aspects of college life, such as junior options, NCEA, fees, assisting with maths, questions to ask at parent-teacher interviews, or explaining the term 'decile'. Most parents were reluctant to question teachers about their child's schooling, but were confident in questioning the interviewer, and often relayed stories about certain teachers. Clearly, most of the parents did not possess the *cultural capital* to engage confidently with the school.

From personal experience, Pasefika mothers would seek help or ask questions, with the expectation that as a teacher, I would fix the problem. Parents refrained from contacting non-Pasefika teachers because they were too shy and did not know what to ask, were unsure of how to solve their child's academic problems, were embarrassed by their lack of English fluency, or believed the school knew best. Two mothers provide insight into parents' preference for liaising with Pasefika teachers:

> (we) relate to a P.I. teacher... it's about comfort and relationships... Palagis... can be stand-offish;

> Parents are understood and received better by P.I. teachers... (they) connect
> with me... it's about conserving energy and not wasting time... when... seeing a
> Palagi teacher I have to think about getting my point across... with a P.I.
> teacher I'll hit the mark... Palagi teachers... I think "oh stuff it"... P.I. parents
> expect kids to know what to do... at school... when I'm with a P.I. teacher I feel
> like the expert, but with non-P.I. teachers nothing affirms me... they're not
> sincere that my child will make it, there's not that belief... our P.I. teachers...
> refer to 'our' kids, 'our' families, not like the Palagi 'the' kid, 'the' family...
> it's that ownership thing...

Positive relationships, being understood, received, connected, and affirmed as parent experts, empowered these mothers to meet teachers and discuss their child's progress openly. Teachers develop these skills in Pasefika communities, rather than from workshops.

Questionnaire responses to 'what things might stop your child from getting NCEA?' included "not attending school", "distractions", "laziness", "lack of understanding", "lost interest", "attitude", "not doing work". Only two parents mentioned the school ("lack of support" and poor standards).

5.3. Perceptions of the importance and influence of student's and school cultures on student achievement

Parents rated the importance of schools and teachers knowing their child's cultural background, and whether the school culture (the way things are done), and the child's culture influenced a child's success at school. (Refer Appendix 11, Tables 16 to 18). School and teacher knowledge of children's cultural background was 'important', or 'definitely important' to parents. The majority believed the culture of the school and that of the child, had 'quite a lot', or 'a lot' of influence on how well children performed at school. One parent wrote:

> If teachers/school understand my child's cultural background, it may help...
> teachers in their planning and approach – not just with students but their
> families too. The culture of the school has a major effect on how well the
> student does. The school sets the standards and lets the child know whether
> they will make it or not – if the school culture is sterile or harsh in its treatment
> of the students they can become harsh back. As a Catholic school, the values
> of Christ SHOULD be portrayed in and throughout the school – that's the ideal
> – but not reality!

Being of Christian faith, the "values of Christ" are an integral facet of most parents' culture. Parents expect students and teachers at Catholic schools to abide by those values. This is a challenge for Catholic schools that employ teachers who may not necessarily believe in Christ or His values.

5.4. <u>Parents' perceptions of the causes for Pasefika students not doing as well as Palagi and Asian students</u>

Parents believed the underachievement of Pasefika students was attributable to students, their parents, culture, and some school issues.

5.4.1. <u>Student causes for underachievement</u>

For students to achieve and learn at school, parents opine it necessary that time and effort be spent on schoolwork: research, questioning, working hard and listening. One parent believed Asians "know more" despite language barriers, because they do that which is necessary for learning.

Even with parental support, one parent lamented that students were "not working" and "that's their job to work, to succeed... if they put their mind into it". Peer pressure should not be an excuse for failure. Another parent believed pride "gets in the way", as children "don't want to ask questions... be known as the dumb kid... it's instilled into you from your parents... if you don't understand you just, be quiet..." Having more freedom, "too much TV", working part-time, having money to spend, and being "more advanced" were not benefiting students, "I mean it's not showing in the stats you know?"

Language barriers impacted on communication between teachers and students, and schools and parents. It was believed that students used language as an excuse to hinder communication, or lacked understanding and/or language skills to communicate school information back to them. Some teachers expected students to translate during parent-teacher interviews. This is unethical and problematic for those who may not understand teacher comments, who may lack translation skills (using appropriate formal language), or who may be fearful in communicating criticisms to parents. In my opinion schools must communicate directly, face-to-face, with parents rather than through students. Schools should consult with and/or be accompanied by, Pasefika teachers/elders concerning protocols for home visits and meetings involving Pasefika parents, and be prepared to meet families outside of school hours.

5.4.2. <u>Parent causes for underachievement</u>

Factors contributing to students' underachievement were expressed as: absent parents after-school; no plan/schedule/routines for children; children given adult responsibilities such as looking after younger children; no time for homework because children are expected to "do

all the *fe'aus*[94]"; poor English language skills; costs for stationery, activities and computers; parents not supporting, not involved, or over-involved in school activities; isolation from extended family and culture; poor parenting skills; and that "Parents have to be there for the children... to talk and making sure they don't fall..." Family illness and lack of funds prevented students from participating in extra-curricular activities and accessing educational resources.

5.4.3. Culture as a cause for underachievement

Some parents thought that "culture to a certain extent" was a barrier, and that schools should not over emphasise Pasefika cultures, as parents were responsible for teaching children their culture. Some students had the option of learning their language at school. Other parents viewed cultural differences as a major hindrance for student success. One parent states that Palagi, as with Greek people, have generations of academic history, whereas Pasefika peoples have "only just started with the Palagi system" and coming to New Zealand was a "huge clash of cultures between what we came from and the Palagi world... we are the ones that have to adapt..." Working in tertiary institutions, this parent sees Asian students "going toe-to-toe with the Palagi" but "Islanders... get scared and run... in a classroom situation where they don't... know the answer and... get ridiculed for it... Palagi and Asians... laughing at them and it... makes them go further into their cave". The parent also recognised other factors contributing to Pasefika failure.

Another parent believed students "don't see it because... everyone's doing it and thinking it and... not until they get older... they start to see the differences". The parent shared a story of an older child noticing cultural differences on the first day at college stating "..."I'm the only one that hangs out with the Palagis"... "...it's all the Islanders here and the Palagis [t]here"..."

Parents recognised their culture was different from the school and teachers and indicated it was important[95] and influential on student achievement. However, for most, rather than challenge school culture they reinforced their cultural practices and beliefs, including Christian values, by not accepting unfavourable 'school' behaviours at home.

5.4.4. School causes for underachievement

Most parents did not hold schools accountable for students not achieving, although most

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[94] Samoan term meaning things to be done, such as domestic chores.
[95] Refer to the earlier section 'Perceptions of the importance and influence of student's culture and school culture on student achievement'.

commented on particular teachers and school culture. For example, schools needed to provide time to develop students' skills, support to "unlock" their potential, and a balance of sports.

As one parent said "we're lazy... we got the potential..." Pasefika peoples display a strong work ethic at community, church, and family events and labour long hours to provide for their families (including family in the Pacific Islands). Rather than 'lazy', the term 'passivity' should be used, i.e. "a lack of feeling, a lack of desire, general apathy, lukewarmness, and laziness" (Meyer, 1995:173). 'Passivity' defined here relates to an absence of feeling towards doing, without motivation to accomplish tasks because people are physically and materially content; "if they don't feel like it, they don't" (ibid:173-175).

Motivation and a vision for their future could be the keys to overcome passivity, to "unlock" student potential and to foster learning. In Nash's (1997a) study, students who lacked motivation and a vision for their future did not continue to higher education, regardless of their class-cultural background. Some such students did not have a 'coach' or 'mentor' to help identify and nurture their abilities and to help define goals. Two successful students identified a particular teacher who provided that motivation and support. Similarly, some students in my study did not have the support of a 'coach' or 'mentor'.

Martin (2002) operated a mentoring programme (*Crash*) with 'at-risk' students at a low-decile college in Porirua. A Pasefika youth worker involved in this described how an 'at-risk' Pasefika female student who "...is now thinking about university, whereas a year ago the idea was impossible... you have to re-programme their thinking..." (pers. comm., 2004). If families are unable to provide the 'coaching/mentoring' then 'learning coaches' should be sourced (Claxton cited NZCER, 2003:37), to instil positive thinking in students (the *non-cognitive dispositions*), and resourcing to schools be provided to facilitate programmes such as *Crash*.

The 1998 MOE funded *"Feso'otaiga Academic and Community Leadership"* programme in three colleges, identified and implemented practical methods and strategies to assist Pasefika students in achieving academic success. Year 12 students' literacy learning was enhanced with the recruitment of Pasefika university students as mentors, who helped raise awareness and aspiration among their charges, of continuing their educational path to university. The project was discontinued when the MOE ceased funding and colleges were unable to resource it. Victoria University's *"Outreach Programme"* for Mäori and Pasefika secondary students

who express an interest in tertiary study is another mentoring initiative Porirua colleges utilise with some success.

Although most parents 'naturally' accept that school success depends primarily on students' hard work and is less attributable to teachers, teaching or the schooling system, they expect the school to provide knowledge, skills, support, motivation, and encouragement for their children. Nash and Harker (1998) demonstrated that relative progress at college was strongly associated with *non-cognitive habitus*[96]. Programmes, such as *Crash* and *Feso'otaiga*, have shown colleges can play an active role to develop these dispositions as they are not being formed in the context of family *cultural capital* and internalised as part of their *habitus*. Resourcing to implement these programmes is the barrier for colleges.

5.5. Positive changes which could enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students

As I outlined in the introduction of chapter four, this section covers the findings of three specific questions, and perceptions about a middle-school and an extra year.

5.5.1. What must Pasefika students do to become good learners and to achieve?

Parents communicate to their children that in order to be good learners and to achieve they must: go to school; learn school systems and processes; be attentive in class; work diligently in class; be disciplined in completing homework and schoolwork; have a routine; and ask for assistance. Students were active in many of these behaviours and still fell short of what schools constitute as a good learner. By themselves these behaviours are not enough. Students need to be interested and confident in subjects and they need more time and assistance to understand and acquire concepts, skills and knowledge. For instance, one parent perceived how "English is very easy" and "Geography is easy" but "with the other work" the children were not faring as well because they were not listening, yet quotes her child having said "I'm getting tired of doing this I don't understand".

Parental pressure on children to succeed at school did not translate to better marks. One parent stated that it was "real confusing" for children to cope with "protocols from the islands" and the "cultural thing" (adult-child relationships whereby the child does not question adult authority), while at school they were expected to form opinions, discuss ideas and ask questions, which they were ill-prepared to do, having not been exposed to those

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[96] Discussed in chapter two.

dynamics at home. Other issues mentioned were puberty (hormones, "a male thing") and lack of confidence. It is evident that Pasefika families have not developed the specific forms of *cultural capital* required to use the school successfully (Nash, 2000a:80).

5.5.2. What must Pasefika parents do to help their child become a good learner and to achieve?

All parents had high aspirations for their children to attend university and were aware that in order for their children to become good learners and to achieve, they as parents were obligated to provide "equipments", nutritious meals and a safe home environment; liaise with teachers and college deans; support and help with homework; make time for homework; remove distractions; make time to talk with children; "be there for them"; encourage with positive words "instead of back then, *fa'avalea*[97]"; encourage reading and use of the library; attend school activities; be involved in college parents' groups; and understand the school's system. One parent realised the need to "ask more questions" of teachers and to "put some pressure on things I don't agree with. I'd do a lot more challenging..." of the school.

Parents described the importance of a stable, encouraging, loving family environment in helping children succeed at school and the effects of negative behaviour on students, such as drinking parties. One parent believed parents "play a big part" because "kids listen... to us... more than they do... teachers..."

One couple discussed how Pasefika parenting today is "totally different" from a generation ago. They were home in the evenings, attended parent-teacher interviews, communicated well in English, did not have other family living with them, were less involved with church, and focused on their own children. The father from Samoa describes "competitiveness, to try and, get somewhere...", family name, and "fear of failing..." as reasons for village children aiming to do well at school, which he tried to instil in his own children.

Parents were essentially expressing that the *cultural capital* of the home influences how a child participates in school as discussed in chapter two. Parents believed particular behaviours by children and parents would help students to become good learners and to achieve. Some acknowledged the difficulties for children achieving were to do with puberty, lack of confidence, and Pasefika "protocols" which did not match school expectations for learning. Parents with good English skills and personal experience of New Zealand's school system were more confident than their migrant parents were when meeting teachers and had

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[97] Samoan term meaning be stupid, foolish.

developed slightly different parenting styles and skills from their own upbringing. They came "from that culture where we've watched our parents... and so we still have part of that with us..." The demographics of Pasefika households have not changed significantly and neither have parent aspirations for their children to do well, for the family name, but clearly their perceptions of how children are to do well have not changed significantly either; that is, their *cultural capital*.

5.5.3. What must schools do to help Pasefika students become good learners and achievers?

With regards to how schools could help Pasefika students become avid learners and achievers, parents gave various responses, including their support of current school strategies. Responses are grouped under school organisation and the way schools do things; and teachers and pedagogy.

5.5.3.1. School organisation and the way schools do things

Homework centre

Provision of a homework centre for those struggling in certain subjects was a common request as some students attended church or school homework centres with teachers who volunteered to tutor after-school. Although many could not help their children academically, especially at college level, parents supported these centres, particularly church-based ones. They wanted teachers who were good with students. Perceived benefits were: to prepare for college and for NCEA; "...gives them the get-up-and go... they'll learn and do better..."; "...sometimes they gave the children.... some hard work... some teachers can help them, go through with it..."; "...[child's] very/ weak, in maths..."; and "...they can, stay at school... and parents can come... and pick them up after study/ instead of going to the Centre... or *ka'a!*[98]"

Home-school communication

A "brochure" or "a running segment in their newsletter" written in "layman's terms", explaining curriculum expectations, school processes, "the way education is structured", and "little handy hints" for parents to help their children was recommended.

Attendance at parent-teacher interviews helped "get to know teachers and, the teachers, to get to know the parents..." and also to "find out what the boys have been up to in class..." The appointment of a Pasefika Principal at a contributing school had "been a breath of fresh air",

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[98] Informal Samoan term for *ta'a* meaning run freely, be loose, unchaste. Used here as mucking around.

with more parents involved and "makes things exciting" because of "incentives for parents to come there..." such as prizes. Some preferred more informal school functions but were often unable to attend because of work, "other commitments", and children's activities for those with large families[99]. Most parents were happy with their level of involvement at intermediate and college.

Incidents at school needed to be investigated and discussed thoroughly with parents, as expressed by one father who was "quite upset" when his child was accused of being in "an altercation" when the other child was the alleged offender. Some Pasefika parents have their own processes for solving problems unfamiliar to schools.

Responses to 'what makes it difficult for parents to help support their child's learning?' were: "Classes (at college) don't seem to be very open to parents coming in..."; "...lack of communication with teachers (and miscommunication)"; irregular communication by teachers concerning test/exam/NCEA results and progress; "Relationships between parent/teachers are a lot harder (at college) – communication takes... more time – which people don't seem to have... – but absolutely necessary!!"; Teachers not open to "...the way we know (things) would work for our children"; and students not attending after-school study with teachers.

Parents understood the importance of "working together with the teachers" and appreciated contact when students were "behind in... assignments". Perhaps home-school communication difficulties, particularly at college, arose because of time constraints. Concerned parents and teachers should set aside times to meet in order to "reinforce the relationship".

Parents were reluctant to attend meetings at college when: they lacked "enough understanding to ask the questions"; meetings were not Pasefika-friendly, and were poorly presented; and Colleges were "only doing it to tick the box". After providing feedback to a college on its NCEA presentation, one parent felt the school was not prepared to explore other methods of presenting "because it's just too much work". In contrast, a MOE presentation by Pasefika staff on NCEA at PIPC[100] was "actually helpful" to Pasefika attendees.

Preparation for Intermediate

More prior information by schools was needed for some parents. Only one parent answered "I was happy... with the information that I was given" from a booklet provided by the child's primary school.

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[99] Census 2006 found the average Pasefika family has four children.
[100] Pacific Islands Presbyterian Church, Porirua.

Parent suggestions for improvement included: meeting with teachers at the start of the year to "put faces to the names"; providing information about the school culture and curriculum expectations, without "throwing jargon at us" as "I don't know anything really in terms of the school system... all I have to work from is what I went through"; being included in helping their child meet curriculum goals; and being informed earlier by the school, and not only when problems arose.

Preparation for College

For two parents, the manner in which intermediates prepared children for college centred on their children's efforts and themselves as parents, rather than the school. Another parent was satisfied, stating "I don't see any improvements to be made".

Raising academic standards and providing P.D.[101] to challenge teachers and schools in their nurturing of Pasefika learners was mentioned. Suggestions for social skills preparation included study tips "so that she can learn quicker... gain more..." and "so that they can understand the work... and it sticks in their head...", and earlier implementation of a reading recovery programme.

Discipline

Most parents, particularly those raised in the Pacific Islands, favoured stricter behaviour standards at school, such as zero tolerance for incomplete work, incorrect uniform, disrespectful behaviour towards teachers, and inappropriate conduct such as swearing, smoking, and bullying. Misbehaviour brought shame on the family and "it's taking the school name, a bad name..." indicating to parents a school lacking in discipline with their child receiving a poor education.

College sports teams and school pride

It was perceived that improving provision and organisation of college sports teams would create pride in school and thus lift students' motivation to achieve.

Motivation, learning "the system" and incentive system

Motivation "starts at home, starts with the person" though one parent added that if colleges motivated students "to learn the system" and "work to it" then success would follow, otherwise they were setting students up to fail.

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[101] Professional Development.

One suggestion was the implementation of a "weekly notes" incentive system used by a college outside the area. Each term the reward system rated "behaviour, homework, punctuality... how well you're doing in your subjects" creating a competitive school environment. Students were also motivated by "good teachers", particularly Pasefika teachers, who informed families of positive achievements and who encouraged students "...to ...get out there..."

Academic push and higher standards

Parents mentioned the absence of a "push with the schoolwork" and the lack of encouragement for students to "compete with the Palagi kids". However, they found it "hard" advocating for higher standards and challenging schools "...in what they're doing..." Perhaps there is a need for a parent advocacy service by ERO.

Some parents recognised the organisational role schools played to improve student learning and achievement. Academic and discipline standards needed improving, and aspects of home-school communication. All parents suggested the need for homework centres.

5.5.3.2. Teachers and pedagogy

Cultural awareness and participation

Teachers should be "...seen out there in the communities" not just within the school/college community for the following reasons: to develop relationships with families and community members by attending community events; to learn and understand how the family and extended family function because "...we are certainly, a lot different, than... Palagi or... other ethnic groups..."; to develop an understanding of Pasefika lifestyles and culture in Porirua, "how we do things", and "...being culturally sensitive"; to be seen "occasionally" at church events because "that's the way they (teachers) learn"; and having teachers supporting "Pacific events... it makes the kids feel important too... seeing their teachers there..."

Viewed as a vocation, teaching was about "engaging with the community" so that "good changes happen"; that is, "being more about *whanau*[102]", to "embrace how we live", to "work it together", being "involved", being a "part of their life", because "work (teaching) is part of everything".

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[102] Māori term meaning to be born, give birth; extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people. Used here to mean family group.

Homework centres, where "teachers can help", and schools communicating to parents are elements of being in the community, whereby the school is "moving towards parents" and "changing in how they think". West Auckland Pacific Liaison Police Officer Glenn Compain (2008:130) emphasised for schools "to see how their pupils are living; they need to be aware of the child's home environment" as part of a "robust" "two-way" communication between schools and parents. This point was similarly expressed by the Pasefika teachers. Communication was usually from school to home and with families involved in school events, yet teachers rarely participated in family/community events.

Pasefika teachers and studies

Pasefika teachers provided parents with a sense of security, in that, their children were behaving accordingly, and were cared for to ensure school success, "...[Samoan teacher is] a good role model... encouraging (Samoan students) to... do well... she looks, out for... the Samoan bad, behaviour".

Parents were more comfortable with Pasefika teachers when accessing information about school and a child's progress. Likewise, language classes (Samoan and Tokelauan) and Pacific Studies[103] provided some parents better communication access with their children and upheld their language and culture.

Teacher attitude and relationship with students

Teachers were categorised as those who were "more willing to be open and friendly than others" and those who had a set idea of how students should progress and who categorised them into a square if this did not eventuate. The need for a "better relationship with teachers" and "teachers who have a passion to teach and care for our kids and where they're going" was reiterated by all parents.

Improve teaching skills and standards

Narratives drew attention to improving teaching skills and standards: "...Maths... they just give... things to do... it's boring for her because... the teachers just... talks... then give them... assignment... she's confused, because... she needs to... know how to.... work out... the maths..."; "Hands on activities. She is good with her hands"; "...discipline, encouragement, support from parent and teacher"; "...they're not getting what they need to get from... the decile one schools..."; long-serving teachers need refresher courses, time out, and to realise when it is time to move on from teaching; schools to be accountable, and better resourced, to

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[103] One college has a Pacific Studies department with a Pasefika teacher in charge.

maintain and to support high academic and teacher standards; and safer home and school environments.

Teachers were perceived as being central to providing students with knowledge, skills and motivation to learn and achieve at school. Cultural understanding, participation in the Pasefika community, teacher attitudes and relationships with students, and teaching standards were identified as areas for improvement. Some parents were experiencing difficulty with some schools and teachers who embraced a monocultural *modus operandi*.

5.5.4. Parents' perceptions about a separate middle-school (Years 7 to 10)

A diagram[104] was used to explain the current and proposed middle-school structures. Four parents "like the idea" of a middle-school, one thought "it's quite good... but, I don't know if it'll work", and one parent liked the Years 7 to 13 College structure. Ideas in support were: the smaller age range at contributing, middle and senior schools so students would be mixing "closer in age" and would "...grow with (their) own age group..."; a separate four year structure would ensure students being "well prepared", "they'd have/ better understanding...", and more focus on consolidating for Year 11; transition at Year 11 preferred, than Year 9, when students would be more mature; teachers would be focused on this group's academic and developmental needs rather than NCEA; staffing and structure "it works quite well at [Years 7 to 13 college]"; and "...it just sounds... better!"

One parent who approved of the idea questioned whether students would continue with the uniform when moving from contributing schools to the middle-school. The only uniformed contributing schools are state-integrated which currently change uniform for Years 7 to 13.

Although the Years 7 to 13 structure is preferred by some parents, reasons were similar to those given in favour of a middle-school – students do not experience a "culture shock" at Year 9 as they are "in the school" from Year 7 and they are being prepared for Year 9 by both intermediate and college teachers. One parent thought Years 7 and 8 students "mixing with the seniors" was positive, another thought it could be positive or negative, while four parents preferred Years 7 to 10 students to be separated from Years 11 to 13 students.

Parents recognised this time, Years 7 to 10 "'cos we just struggle as parents... heaps of change", when "everything starts to turn into custard... adolescence, this is a problem group..." Puberty is a recognised period of change and growth in human development

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[104] Appendix 12.

literature. The stresses and strains of adolescence are associated with "biological and social forces"; that is, physiological and psychological developments, academic pressure, peer pressure and identity crisis (Berk, 2006:199). To answer a father's question, "is there focus at the moment in terms of schools and how they, relate to adolescence?", the answer would be dependent on resources available after reading recovery, ICT, other academic demands and school compliance requirements; in other words, probably not. One parent observed colleges focusing more on NCEA than Years 9 and 10 students' needs as recognised by the ERO (2001:no page[105]) stating:

> The education of students in Years 7 and 8 cannot be considered in isolation from that of students in Years 9 and 10. These years have been characterised as the "forgotten years" in the New Zealand education system. The focus of many secondary schools and of government policies for these schools is the education of senior students. Important issues for secondary schools are how to bridge the gap between Years 8 and 9 and how to ensure that Years 9 and 10 students are consistently challenged and extended.

Arguing for middle-school education in New Zealand, Nolan and Brown (2002:42) stated:

> The reasons come primarily from human development researchers (Barratt, 1998; Clark & Clark, 1993; Kellough & Kellough, 1999) who say that students aged 10 to 15 years experience growth and development second only to infancy in its significance for ongoing learning and development. We maintain that emerging adolescence is our second best and probably the last chance... to keep students "switched-on" to education and lay the motivational foundations for ongoing educational success, at this critical point in their lives (Jackson & Davis, 2000).

With proper planning and quality practices, middle-schools could focus on and better cater for the developing Pasefika adolescent and their academic needs, as recognised by most of the parents.

5.5.5. Parents' perceptions about an extra year (more time) for students to prepare for NCEA

A diagram[106] was used to gauge parents' thoughts about an extra year for students to prepare for NCEA, in effect, postponing NCEA Level 1 to Year 12. Details of low achievement levels at Year 11 entry and students repeating Level 1 at Year 12 were described so parents could provide informed answers. The mixed responses included:

- Two who approved of the status quo but then changed to support an extra year after reflecting on their own child's needs. For example, an older child had achieved only to NCEA Level 2 by the end of Year 13. Three agreed with an extra year to prepare and provide "more time to get some understanding, get that routine drilled into them". One

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[105] Section 14 The establishment of middle schools par.3.
[106] Appendix 12.

comment was an extra year "would be good for them" with the provision that "those that are doing well at Year 10 continue with their schooling and not be held back";

- One suggested primary school end at Year 7 then middle-school be Years 8 to 11; and

- One parent preferred a four year middle-school as adequate time in preparation for NCEA because "Year 11's are very capable of... the work... they're just not working..."; and

5.6. <u>Conclusion</u>

Parents believed learning and achievement were primarily the responsibility of their child despite their strong comments about certain teachers and school practices. Their specific beliefs about how students should learn and achieve at school originated from their own upbringing. Parents expected students to listen, watch, obey, be submissive and compliant, and complete the work in order to gain knowledge; knowledge itself was important but not the processes of acquiring knowledge. Similarly, Utumapu's (1992 cited Coxon et al., 2002:64) study on the attitudes of Samoan families to the New Zealand education system concluded that "parents... hold a 'deficit model' view of education and schooling; that success depends on students' individual effort and is not attributable to teachers, teaching or the schooling system".

Mothers played a significant and active role in this process of educating their children, as did some fathers. Although these mothers did not possess the 'maternal qualifications' described by Wylie (2004), they did possess 'maternal cultural qualifications' which I believe is a powerful family resource shaping *cognitive* and *non-cognitive habitus* in the context of their own social and cultural understandings. Mothers highly endowed with 'maternal cultural qualifications' were *'le poutü o le aiga'* (the family's pillar of strength), or *'te fakavae o te kaiga'* (the foundation of the family) and so they ensured their children did their homework and attended school, and they engaged with the school by meeting teachers, attending school events, or joining the BOT or a parents' group.

Pasefika parents perceived the teacher's role was to set high academic and discipline standards, to have high standards of teaching, to motivate and care for students, and participate in the Pasefika community. Most parents believed that most teachers were doing their job and were viewed as "second parents". Consequently, few parents approached teachers concerning their child's progress, believing that any problems lay with the child. However, all but one parent described personal negative experiences with a teacher(s). Positive parent-teacher relationships were vital but parent and school barriers hindered these

relationships. Parents encountered greater difficulty communicating with the many college teachers, and finding a time to meet was difficult. Parents were also less comfortable being involved and supporting children at college compared with when they were at intermediate, for a variety of reasons.

Parents understood their role in helping their children to achieve but most did not participate at school. For instance, some felt that relating to non-Pasefika teachers would be counter-productive if they were not "understood and received", connecting or affirmed as parent experts. Foliaki (1993 cited ibid:93) captures the complexity of this in relation to Tongan parents who:

> ...saw the importance of being involved but they didn't have the language skills to take part. It was simply unrealistic to expect Tongan parents to turn up to board meetings. ...the parents wanted to be involved, but they often didn't have the skills to.

Coxon et al., (ibid) also noted that low-decile school communities:

> ...invariably had severe limitations in terms of the professional skills and expertise (not to mention confidence) that parents had to contribute. It was not unusual for principals in decile 1 schools, with high proportions of Pacific students, to be in the position where they were required to explain processes and procedures to parents, for many of whom English was a second language.

MacIntyre (1999 cited ibid:97) explored a group of Tongan mothers' participation and contribution to their children's education. These mothers' involvement was "less direct, less intensive and less intimate with schooling and so they did not have a clear idea of what went on in secondary schools in particular". However, parents in my study who were confident with English and the school system did experience resistance by schools to address their concerns and to make some changes. In one sense there were parents without the *cultural capital* to confidently engage with the school, and in another sense there were acts of *symbolic violence* by schools towards parents engaging and attempting to contribute to change. As Bourdieu (1976) would conclude, schools were reproducing the established order through objective processes.

Parents held high aspirations for their children, believing that a supportive, encouraging and routine home environment was important but were unable to help with schoolwork, particularly that requiring questioning and answering, critiquing, discussing, debating, forming opinions, justifying answers, investigating, or writing essays, because they had not developed these skills at school themselves and were not encouraged to do so by their own parents. It was expected that schools teach these skills and students were to learn them but few would be able to practice these skills with their parents, which is why parents were

supportive of homework centres. For example, one family described how a Pasefika teacher at a centre helped students to pass their English exam. Parents in this study were providing an environment at home for students to study, but without the *cultural capital* recognised by the school most were unable to lay the foundations for the necessary *cognitive habitus* to 'do the work'. Coxon et al. (2002:96) reported on the influence a homework centre had on Tokelauan girls' achieving external exams, coupled with their families interacting more with college staff, "...what occurred was a 'normalising' of two very different worlds..." Parents felt part of the school, in that they could walk in confidently because the processes/procedures were familiar to them and they determined how the school engaged with them (Henderson, 1996). These examples show that schools can make a difference to Pasefika student achievement when processes/procedures are familiar to the community and when barriers to learning (*cognitive habitus*) are identified and addressed.

While most parents aspired for their children to be successful at school they also expected children to adhere to their Pasefika heritage rather than becoming "lost in the New Zealand way" (Fusitu'a & Coxon, 1998:28). Hence, parents were pleased with Pasefika teachers who brought home values into the classroom, "especially regarding expectations of behaviour", provided culturally based interactions with students and whom they automatically felt more comfortable with (Coxon et al., 2002:85). However, the impact of this *cultural capital* was that school became second priority to family, church and community events for some parents. The concentration of groups in New Zealand reflects the priority Pasefika peoples place on the family clan and the maintenance of language and culture. From the interviews with Tongan parents Fusitu'a and Coxon (1998:28) found:

> ...that the parents still favoured *tauhi faka-Tonga* (Tongan child-rearing methods), stating that if this was not adhered to, *anga faka-Palangi* (Palangi ways of behaving) would be a consequence. They maintained that the Palangi way was inferior; that disobedience and disrespectfulness was inherent in it...

Evidence of '*fa'apälagi*'[107] ways from school and acting '*fiapoto*'[108] were voiced by parents and students in my study when referring to poor school discipline and reputation, as with Randerson's (1992) study. Students and their parents did not approve of schools' lenient treatment of students who smoke, drink alcohol, and behave badly because a misbehaving child brings shame on the family and the school. Schools were expected to ensure all teachers were consistent with discipline processes and standards, and that all were committed to them. Parents expected offending children to be punished at school, as their communities would punish them, with the expectation by most, that schools contact families to meet and discuss

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[107] Samoan term meaning like a European, according to the ideas or customs of Europeans. The connotation is a person who is considered to be working for personal gain and forsaking Samoan ways.
[108] Samoan term meaning conceited or trying to be too clever or smart. The connotation is a person who has gained knowledge but is not humble or wise.

serious cases.   Perceived Palagi school practices and values violated Pasefika practices and values but rather than challenge the school, Pasefika *habitus*[109] was constantly reinforced by calls to order from the socialising 'agents' of family and community (Bourdieu, 1977:15).

Finally, most parents recognised the need for more time to acquire knowledge and skills to succeed in NCEA and the need for a middle-school catering for the specific learning, cultural and particularly developmental needs of students in Years 7 to 10.

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[109] As discussed in chapter two.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF TEACHER FINDINGS

The analysis and discussion of teachers' perceptions and experiences, as set out in the introduction of chapter four, are presented after details on their background.

6.1. Introduction

Five teachers were interviewed: one from a full-primary school, and two each from an Intermediate and colleges. Two were senior managers and one a senior teacher. Their teaching experiences ranged from 2.5 years to 20 years. One had taught in Tokelau. One was Samoan-born, others New Zealand-born, with English as their first language. Three were Samoan, one Tokelauan and one Samoan/Tokelauan. One teacher was male. All lived and were educated in Porirua.

6.2. Teachers' perceptions and experiences of intermediate (Years 7 & 8) or college (Years 9 & 10) schooling

Sub-headings reflect interview questions and emerging responses.

6.2.1. Connections and transition for Pasefika students from Year 8 to Year 9

Colleges approached contributing schools to run end-of-year transition programmes for Year 8 students. An enrolment process by some colleges of assessing Year 8 students and obtaining student information from teachers was "good" though inconsistent from year to year. At times information provided was ignored. Transition from some intermediates to colleges "happens at a certain level but not/fully" and some contributing schools were not proactive.

Colleges organised Year 9 orientation programmes; the most popular being *STARS* run by *Project K*[110]. Although "...there were/... cultural sensitivity type activities and sessions... focussed on the differences..." there was nothing specific for Pasefika students which one teacher comments "...there should be... I don't know how it should be..."

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[110] *Project K*, founded in 1995 by New Zealanders Graeme Dingle and Jo-anne Wilkinson, is a Foundation for Youth Development programme designed to inspire 14-15 year-olds to maximise their full potential. Through the 14-month programme that consists of three core components, Wilderness Adventure, Community Challenge, and Mentoring, students learn: self-reliance, team building, self-confidence, perseverance, goal setting, good health and life skills. Developed in consultation with educationalists and youth workers it is a catalyst for positive change. Students do not pay to take part. Retrieved September 9, 2008, from http://www.projectk.org.nz/

Teachers in this study perceived students' transition difficulties associated with academic and social skills as continuing into Year 10, as Wylie et al. (2006b:32) also noted.

6.2.2. Communication and collaboration between intermediate schools and colleges

Collaboration between school sectors to ensure continuity of student progress and learning programmes, so that students did not "fall through the gaps", was wanting. Communication clearly needed improving. College teachers felt some schools did not provide "important information about students" leading to difficulties such as with those who had had no schooling for six months. Intermediate teachers expressed concern that student records provided to colleges were not being used, and that colleges made "the phone calls when they're having trouble" with students. Colleges did not use student "portfolios" but instead, conducted their own assessments. McGee et al. (2003:24) discuss similar issues about linkages between primary and secondary schools. Documentation was often received by colleges from students' prior school but not utilised because of the variety in assessment data, "summer fade", it did not get to the classroom teacher, or it was ignored. Anecdotal evidence suggested college teachers favoured a "fresh start" approach of "disregarding previous experience or achievement... particularly in areas such as maths and science" (ibid:22). There was also a perception that "there is a primary school curriculum and a secondary school curriculum" and preparation for external examinations began "at the start of Year 9" (ibid).

6.2.3. Students' Literacy Levels

Teachers said that most Year 7's entering intermediate had reading, comprehension, writing and grammar levels that were below "chronological age" or "below Level 3", requiring "serious intervention". This placed increasing demand on limited resources such as ESOL and Reading Recovery specialists. As reflected in studies on socio-linguistic practices, many Pasefika students could recall scriptures and information for Bible exams and "decode brilliantly" but there was no "inferencing". The structures and conventions of language needed to be learnt, meaning intermediates must "work really hard" to prepare students for college as "only a small group" met the requirements while others would "still be... at Level 2 or 3".

College teachers found many Year 9 entrants struggled at Level 4, and were reading at six to eight year old levels. Therefore, because it was unlikely to happen at home, the onus was on schools "to find a solution" such as encouraging reading and providing after-school reading programmes.

School clusters[111] shared data, resources, and invested in projects, particularly Reading Recovery programmes and ICT[112]. One school cluster experienced small improvements in literacy and numeracy. Problems identified included transition, truancy, issues relating to health, behaviour and learning, and the MOE discontinuing funding for reading and mentoring programmes.

6.2.4. Numeracy Project

One teacher "had reservations about the (Years 7 and 8) Numeracy Project" which was at the expense of other maths strands not covered adequately for college. Deans at the receiving college found that Year 8 maths test results were "not as high as they used to be". However, another teacher supported the Project acknowledging poor literacy lowered numeracy results.

6.2.5. Over-full curriculum

An over-full and "busy" two year curriculum (at intermediate and junior college) for students entering with low academic levels, raised concerns. With no practice or "you're not covering stuff", some students' skills, retention and recall of knowledge and skills was "not that good". The curriculum content needed to be reduced or parts removed with one teacher commenting that the new curriculum "presents itself for less teacher stress and development of a core curriculum that is better".

6.2.6. Academic and Social Skills preparation for College

Intermediates prepared students as best they could for college; however, proficiency at Level 4 at the end of Year 8 was "the exception rather than the rule".

Social skills programmes covered time management, goal setting, expected behaviour, developing routines, habits, leadership and team skills. Trips enhanced skills through wider experiences though schools "sometimes can't afford it". External agencies facilitated programmes, including Life Education[113] and DARE[114], yet costs prevented low-decile

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[111] Titahi Bay school cluster involves primary schools, one intermediate and two colleges in the Western Ward (no primary schools from this cluster are involved in this study). Porirua East school cluster involves some primary schools, one intermediate and one college in the Eastern Ward (two full-primary schools from this cluster and two full-primary schools not part of the cluster are involved in this study). From the third school cluster in the Northern Ward, one full-primary school and one college is involved in this study.

[112] Information Computer Technology.

[113] Life Education is a charitable trust to "engender every child with a sense of their own worth, and to teach them that they are utterly unique, that their body systems are both miraculous and vulnerable, and that respect for themselves and others is the key to happy survival in a complex world" (Scott and Grice, 2005:128). It is a health resource for pre-school, primary and intermediate schools that fits in closely with the Ministry of Education's Health and Physical Education Curriculum and Science Curriculum, and is delivered using multi-sensory teaching techniques to encourage all learning styles and help with retention of knowledge. The Trust delivers the programme using the Life Education Van, a mobile classroom with Harold the Giraffe as the Trust's mascot and an educator, which visits schools only by invitation. The preventative approach is used by many schools to address alcohol and drug abuse issues.

schools from utilising other programmes addressing social issues which prevented or hindered students' potential. Past pupils and the community provided role models toward careers.

6.2.7. Academic and Social Skills preparation for NCEA

It was perceived one college did very little to prepare Pasefika students for NCEA as most Year 9 entrants were at Levels 2 and 3. In contrast, with its encouraging Level 1 NCEA results, one college was commended by a teacher in its preparation of students for NCEA, despite low Year 9 academic entry levels. Students' success was attributed to the college striving to alleviate "high levels of performance anxiety around external exams in NCEA", flexible NCEA programmes, internal assessment, and "teachers going out of their way to help kids, out of school, in the classroom... and... Saturday School[115]". At junior level, problems revolved around "getting kids to do their homework... so much of it has to be driven by... teacher effort..." Vertically grouping Years 9 and 10 was piloted, based on observations at *Unlimited*[116]. Students completed "Foundation courses", including numeracy and literacy, and "Advanced courses" at "Levels 1, 2 and 3 NCEA" so Year 9 students could be "doing NCEA credits at Level 3".

Primary and intermediate students were usually in composite classes or vertical groupings, while NCEA classes were "multi-level". The horizontal structure of Years 9 and 10 (i.e. not multi-levelled, composite or vertically grouped) at most colleges was due to "a timetabling issue".

It was perceived that many junior college students were not reaching teacher standards and expectations such as making an effort to do simple tasks like a title page, underlining headings and presenting neat and tidy work. Students were not working "for self... benefit", and not understanding that "workbooks are... there for them and that they need to go back and read it... for an exam..." However, teachers should be making an extra effort such as marking books, rewarding students with stickers and stamps, and issuing consequences to off-task behaviour because students "...realise which teachers expect a lot from them and which

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[114] DARE programmes are run by the Police assisting schools to promote the non-use of illegal drugs, and to help students develop skills for life such as decision making, assertiveness and handling peer pressure particularly when alcohol and illegal drugs are involved. They are designed to cater for particular Year levels, such as 'DARE to make a Choice' for middle and senior primary schools, 'DARE Reducing the Harm' for secondary schools, and 'DARE to Drive to Survive' for senior secondary students.

[115] Saturday School is held from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the college in terms three and four with senior students arriving at any time to complete or catch-up on work with the assistance of teachers and Deans.

[116] *Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti (UPT)* a decile 6 'special character' co-educational Year 9-13 state school in Christchurch is based on the "21st Century Learning kind of momentum" (teacher's quote) currently being explored by NZCER. In 2003 the school opened with 40 Years 9 and 10 students with the roll growing rapidly to its maximum of 400 students. 80% of students are Palagi, 10% Māori, and 9% Other. Students meet one-to-one with a Learning Advisor to support their Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed in consultation with students, parents and Advisors. Students don't spend their day sitting at desks in classrooms. The school does not have set timetables, uniforms, or corridors. Retrieved September 12, 2008, from http://www.unlimited.school.nz/home.html

teachers don't..."   Similarly, it was perceived by three-quarters of teachers in Wylie et al.'s (2006b:31) study that differences in teacher expectations were a difficult change for students starting college, although the nature of these differences was not specified.

College teachers felt juniors lacked the necessary social skills for college and NCEA.   The college model of "cells and bells" and "individual curriculum areas" did not promote independent learning skills or decision-making.   The development of these skills would thus be realised through "teachers' efforts and, willingness of... students to comply... to perform...", and because students needed constant support, a teacher recommended that *STARS* continue to Year 10.

6.2.8.   Schools as welcoming places

For Pasefika teachers

Years 7 and 8 teachers felt welcomed and part of their schools, with one teacher crediting her/his eight teaching staff, including the sole Palagi who had "had a massive/ education because the P.I. staff are very strong".   Another teacher reflected that "at times I'm not taken... seriously/... it (as AP[117]) sort of feels token..."

Senior managers, teachers and support staff were predominantly Palagi at the four colleges, although one college had a Samoan Deputy Principal and eight Pasefika teaching staff who were "...very highly respected and.... welcomed... really seen as/.... a treasure..."   At another college they were welcomed and "...very much part of the group", though one teacher revealed that when colleagues said "horrid things about students and... their backgrounds..." at departmental meetings and questioned her/his ability, s/he was "not part of the team" but "with the students", as opposed to another Pasefika colleague, whose department had one Palagi teacher and four non-Palagi teachers.

Racism was overt within some intermediates/colleges.   While most teachers believed that quality leadership and teachers made a difference, one suggested that the ideal school environment with mostly Pasefika students be "more of our own teaching our own", rather than "educational dinosaurs who don't want to change... they've got this preconception of our people..." and will not "view our kids as anything more..."

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[117] Assistant Principal.

Some were allocated classes with learning and behaviour issues and were more likely to be involved with students and their families outside of school hours, than Palagi teachers.

<u>For Pasefika students</u>

Intermediates welcomed students with open days, *pöwhiri*[118] and the established "*kawa*[119] of the school". One school's "strong Pacific element" empowered students to feel "safe culturally" and validated their heritages by providing language options in Samoan, Cook Islands Mäori, and Tokelauan. Some schools invited Pasefika speakers as inspirational role models from business, academia, the arts, science, technology and sport.

At one college, where Pasefika students were the majority, respectful relationships between them, and Mäori and Palagi groups, were actively encouraged. This school was unique with its Pacific Studies Department, appointing Pasefika and Mäori to senior management over the years, and establishing active Pasefika parents' groups. Some parents and a teacher at another college stated that their environment and syllabus did not reflect Pasefika students and "...we're almost discouraged from... putting up that we're a Pasefika school..."

<u>For Pasefika parents</u>

Intermediates welcomed parents "...to come in for positive reasons not just for negative stuff" though they "...don't tend to at this age group get parents who want to volunteer in the school, we would love it..."

A school's first contact person, usually office staff, determined how welcoming it was. Views differed on how colleges welcomed and encouraged parents. "A few instances" in two colleges were observed where a front person spoke to Pasefika parents with "that tone of voice... like... you're a nuisance... you're stopping me from doing my job..." which resulted in diminished student respect for office staff.

The welcoming office staff, who "are pretty exceptional" and "really excellent", and environment at another college reflected its Pasefika makeup. A teacher acknowledged "...systemically we, could do better/ but we do have structures in place... to.... make the experience... good... because we have the different (Pasefika) parent groups... who, invite... their people to come... and take part in the community within the school..."

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[118] Mäori term meaning invitation, rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae.
[119] Mäori term referring to the set of protocols by which a tribe governs themselves.

6.2.9. Teaching and learning

Using AIMHI research for effective teaching and learning, P.D.[120] to address Pasefika students' literacy, and employing Pasefika/Mäori teachers, strengthened the calibre of some schools.

6.2.10. Teacher and department expectations and standards

Concerns were expressed regarding some teachers disparagement of students' home background and low academic levels. Non-Pasefika teachers had "to go the extra mile for our kids... you can't expect to be meeting them half way". Colleges needed "...the cultural tools..." to properly educate Pasefika students and department heads should ensure consistent, high teacher expectations and standards. The inconsistency of some colleagues and senior managers, was counteracted by a few hard working teachers and departments. Kane and Mallon (2006:ix) have argued:

> ...the absence of appropriate strategies to deal with less than effective teachers, incompetent teachers and those who have become negative and withdrawn... is... highly frustrating to good teachers...

6.2.11. Support workers, Specialist Teachers and Support Time resourcing

For intermediates/colleges to focus on their core purpose, effective pastoral systems, with support from SWIS[121], health and youth workers, were essential to reducing barriers to learning.

RTLB[122] and ESOL staff, teacher aides, learning assistants, and specialist teachers were vital in supporting teachers with large classes and in supporting those who "need the basics" and the few high achievers. This was a huge issue for all schools because support teaching hours were cut and schools struggled to meet learning demands "which just... squeezed us even more". For instance, Years 7 and 8 students numbered 96 in one school, with one full and two part-time teachers. Without support these students' learning needs were not being adequately met.

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[120] Professional Development.

[121] Social Workers in Schools (SWiS), a government programme begun in 1999, is contract managed and led by Child, Youth and Family and supported by the Ministries of Education, Health, Pacific Island Affairs and Te Puni Kokiri. It is run in partnership with service providers around the country who directly employ the social workers. The goal is: "To enhance life outcomes for children whose social and family circumstances place at risk their chances of achieving good health, education and wellbeing outcomes." SWiS is targeted to low-decile (1-5) primary and intermediate schools and recognises the special needs of Maori and Pacific children and families within these schools. Social workers partner with children and families to build on strengths, resolve issues or concerns, and focus on areas such as reducing anti-social behaviour, improving life skills and health and fitness, and understanding domestic violence. A key advantage is the opportunity for prevention and early intervention and its key purpose is to reduce the barriers to learning. Retrieved March 13, 2009, from http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/evaluation/social-workers-in-schools/

[122] Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour.

6.2.12. School structure

Some schools reorganised their operations to facilitate "social development and motivation for learning" in Years 7 to 10 including an academy structure focusing on literacy and numeracy through four mediums, a 'Junior College[123]' programme with appointed leader, and grouping Years 9 and 10 vertically for a new "learning design" were implemented.

Full-primary versus Intermediate

Full-primary schools were preferred over Intermediates for one teacher because of their provision of information on incoming students and their previous teachers, and transitioning straight to college. This teacher foresees Intermediates as "a thing of the past within a few years" because of dropping school rolls.

6.2.13. Home-school communication

All schools strived to involve Pasefika parents whether through HSP at primary level, PSCPL, or activities such as camps, sports days, productions, picnics and assemblies, but all acknowledged it was "a struggle to get parents through the door".

Parent-teacher interviews, visiting homes (usually by Māori and Pasefika teachers), and inviting parents with "expertise" into the classroom, were used to communicate and increase their participation in children's learning. Parents felt confident in sharing their concerns if "teachers are friendly and open".

Other forms of communication included newsletters, phone calls, letters, reports, and goals sheet in preparation for 'Three-Way Reporting'. 'Three-Way Reporting' resulted in a "higher rate of participation...", as goal sheets were sent home for parent input and discussion at parent-teacher interviews. Student issues discussed readiness "to move on", self-management, behaviour, organisational and social skills. Students were reminded that their parents attend 'Three-Way Reporting', with one teacher using with humour a "favourite line", "I will turn up to your house, get my food ready and my coffee ay?" Students were aware that this was not a threat but that Pasefika teachers, who all lived locally, would connect with their parents at home, church, family occasions or community events.

Home-School Partnerships (HSP)

Researcher Keren Brooking (2007:14) describes HSP as:

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[123] This management strategy is known as 'ring fencing' (Nolan & Brown, 2001 cited Nolan & Brown, 2002:40).

...ideas and initiatives schools have implemented that involve parents, families, and whänau in their children's learning, in an effort to form closer relationships between schools and homes. Some of these have been initiated by the Ministry of Education... such as... literacy and numeracy in primary schools... while others... schools themselves have set up.

She cites research (Biddulph et al. 2003, Desforges & Abouchaar 2003, and Epstein 1996, 2006, cited ibid:14) that acknowledges comments by teachers' and parents' in my study that families significantly affect children's learning and achievement at school. The MOE's *Schooling Strategy 2005-2010* to raise student achievement (particularly Mäori and Pasefika students), prioritises parents' involvement in this process (ibid).

HSP was effective in "breaking down the barriers" by involving parents as ethnic group facilitators, combating "language issues", and embracing "the culture of/ that group... and what's accepted as being[124], that they're comfortable with or appropriate..." HSP addressed particular schools' issues, such as student attendance and engagement in schoolwork, with consensus among the teachers interviewed that it was helping parents help their children. Teachers in this study did not indicate causative connections between HSP and improved student outcomes as described by Brooking (ibid). However, in their experience all believed that students whose parents were involved in their learning achieved better academic outcomes and that those for whom the value of education was not reinforced at home learnt more slowly. Therefore, homework was viewed as a student's opportunity to practice her/his learning, and for parents to assist by encouraging their child "to build a habit".

A teacher believed potential existed for "better... partnerships... with the community... supporting education as a priority... once education is more reflective of the cultural diversity of our students..." HSP was a key to this, though it was financially targeted at primary schools. Pasefika parents' groups at one college supported the "cultural lives of the students", but they needed to be educated on how to support, encourage and monitor their child's learning and development, the importance of routines, such as arriving to school on-time, regular attendance, and regular sleep.

"The same parents" or the "highly motivated parents" were involved in children's learning and activities. Lack of involvement by parents whose children struggled or misbehaved at school frustrated all teachers who had often exhausted all forms of communication. Explanations for non-responsive parents were: school "goes in the 'too hard basket'..." for those who were "just surviving"; perceiving intermediate schoolchildren as not needing their

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[124] The teacher was referring here to what is accepted as being 'normal' to Pasefika parents, such as meeting procedures.

support compared to when starting school at five years and at Year 9; Pacific-educated parents believe "the school knows everything leave it to them... so they don't need to participate fully..."; newsletters not in their language and poor English language skills; feeling uncomfortable, intimidated, or *whakamä[125]*, with educational institutions and being "too scared to ask"; laziness – being "personally invited" to attend HSP meetings, with provision of dinner and childcare but "they have not bothered to turn up..."; attitude – "..."I don't care what my kids are getting up to, I don't care about this sort of stuff"... There's a lot of "I don't have to"... "that's his... or her problem and... they should learn all that... between nine and three"..."; poor parenting skills, particularly by young parents; work and family commitments; and family dysfunction.

Gorinski and Fraser (2006) identified similar barriers to Pasefika parents and communities engagement in education, and identified a number of similar supporting strategies. However, these methods were time-consuming and demanding on busy teachers with limited resources. They recommended "a fundamental change... from a monocultural to a multicultural lens, in order to promote effective parent community-school engagement in Pasifika contexts" (ibid:32).

6.2.14. Poor student behaviour

Numerous students with inappropriate behaviours affecting learning, who were from gang-affiliated, dysfunctional, and poor parented families "across the board", were a concern. Intermediate teachers were concerned about students' " freedom... in everything" outside of school, without boundaries on the types of music, TV entertainment, DVDs, or computer and playstation games etc., they were exposed to and "the fact that some... are allowed to stay out as long as they are..." late at night.

Family behaviours were "definitely affecting how they behave at school". Addressing unacceptable behaviours lessened academic learning time for programmes such as "Roots for Empathy"[126], which parents should be teaching and practicing. Teachers working with some families identified negative behaviours, such as swearing and violence, stemmed from parents' low expectations, poor parenting, and were "more a socio-economic thing" than "a cultural thing". One teacher who advocated that families be responsible for their children's behaviours and learning, was accused of 'deficit thinking'. In defence he explained that

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[125] Mäori term meaning ashamed, shame, embarrassed, shy.

[126] Roots of Empathy (ROE) is an evidence-based classroom programme from Canada that reduces levels of aggression among school children by raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy. It also provides children with a clear understanding of the needs of a baby and what it is to be a good parent, thus offering the potential to break intergenerational cycles of family abuse. The programme is on a three year trial in NZ starting in 2007 in Auckland and 2008 in Wellington. http://www.peace.net.nz/index.php?pageID=25

though his family were poor, his parents held high expectations of their children, insisting that "you make do with what you've got and then you jump ahead... no excuses..."

Intermediate Pasefika boys particularly, displayed poor listening, attention, and concentration skills, and rarely completed homework, with reasons offered being: poor diet, lack of sleep, boredom because they could not do the work, and boys distracting each other. Homework was not done when students had no one at home monitoring homework, or they just "can't be bothered doing it".

Youth culture of "impressing other kids...", "the social popular, thing" and "more important to be that" than school learning (as similarly found by Wylie et al. (2006b:45) for the low-income student group), was the priority for students.

Students ill-prepared for college academically, socially or both, and those who were ready, but "change" to follow others involved in negative behaviours, were a concern.

6.2.15. Well-grounded families

Students from "well-grounded" families generally performed better academically, than students from "families that are transient". They had strong family and community ties supporting "their development, and it could be a church or a culture group, and also they have a strong sense of who they are". These students were recognised by "the way they talk and the way they interact with others and have come prepared for learning". The inappropriate behaviours of others created issues that "take, a little bit longer to address..." as schools struggled to adequately cater for them.

Students from "mixed heritage families" who had "a conflict, within themselves" were also at risk, when these families compromised "to accommodate for where they've come from" or family and community ties to provide support and cultural values, had not been established.

6.2.16. Family socialisation practices

Articulating life experiences and development of social skills was poor amongst children who did not converse with, or had few positive experiences with adults, though in different circumstances they responded differently. This was due to the belief that children are "seen and not heard" which impacts upon how they learn. A teacher stated "...we New Zealand-born tend to implement this as parents so our children want to be spoon-fed at learning and they keep quiet". As one teacher explained:

...there's a moment in Year 11 where... things finally fall into place... and they get the idea and grow up... but it takes... a... while and... it's because we're brought up differently and/... culturally... we're seen to be children/ for lot longer... you're still an *'autalavou*[127]... but because of that, we as teachers/... need to... be a bit more accommodating...

This Samoan concept of *'autalavou* operates in a "hierarchical system" that ensures everyone has a place of function. It affects children's "relationships with adults" and "the autonomy to make a choice... so that you can... weigh the benefits... and then coming to a conclusion... the effectiveness of your process to come to that decision". Without opportunities and experiences, students did not develop the "skills we operate with" at college such as discussing, giving an opinion, and critiquing. Consequently:

our kids are not very good at putting up their hands... taking a risk with the answer... because they don't have a lot of experience of getting it wrong and it's still being o.k... When they get it wrong... it's like major punishment... there's no... "let's learn from this experience now, what we'll do... next time" kind of discussion...

Pasefika students were "highly developed, highly complex within their own worlds" but because students lacked experiences, such as making choices, they were often "characterised as being really stupid... or cognitively... underdeveloped because they don't know how to make wise choices..." Ex-school teacher Martin (2002:31) espouses how learned experiences and cultural practices at home may not be relevant in a school context:

It is like being told that you must sit a test which will determine your social status in life, then finding out that you studied for the wrong exam. You have lots of information, but it does not fit.

The significant comment below continues this understanding of the place of children for many Pasefika parents, and significantly, the mother:

Look at the Palagi mothers – everything revolves around their kids... That's why those kids do better, their mothers focus on them. But us... everything revolves around our life and the kids fit into that life... When there's practice (cultural items), church, ...language class, and I'm the oldest I... take my parents... for... appointments and church things... then the kids are part of that. We are so community related, our kids aren't the main focus.

The difference in focus between Palagi and Pasefika mothers would therefore impact on children's schooling achievement. Hence, for "those who make it, education is valuable in the home... those things parents value they'll push in their kids", "...to fulfil dreams...", but when "everything revolves around our life and the kids fit into that life", then the priority shifted to family and community. The role of a mother, as the primary nurturer, in many Pasefika cultures is significant in understanding this practice. It is reflected in the following

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[127] Samoan term meaning a company or group of youth. Youth in this context refers to a group of people of the same generation so ages may range from 13 to 40 years. A similar concept exists for Tongan *potungaue talavou*, Tokelauan *kautalavou*, Cook Islands *mäpü*, and Niuean *fanau fuata*.

sayings focusing on family/community: in Samoan, "*O le tinä o le poutü o le aiga*" – "The mother is the family's pillar of strength"; Tokelauan, "*Te fatupaepae te fakavae o te kaiga ma te nuku*" – "The mother is the foundation of the family and the village"; and Tongan, "*Tama tu'u he fa'e*" – "The status of the mother breeds the status of the child". Pasefika mothers possess 'maternal cultural qualifications' that greatly influences the *cultural capital* of the family. Hence, as mentioned in chapter four, a child's identity is often determined by the ethnicity of the woman raising the child.

Some parents' perceptions "...that it's a teacher's responsibility... to make the homework happen..." and the switching of priorities from education to "*fa'alavelave*[128]", the church or to family were worrying for some teachers. For instance, a teacher comments:

> ...big issues... like nobody cooked tea or an uncle was at home until 2 a.m. and (child) had to cook... cause major problems... I take my kids home early during practice for the ...celebrations... and others are saying "where's the kids?", I put them to bed because kids need their sleep... but they want all the kids to be part of the practice and social life... but it doesn't help the kids function at school.

Education was a priority for this teacher. "Being like Palagi" she balanced the "normal" practice of "social life" together as a family, village or community. Students with home support arrived at school "independent ... organised" and "very socially adapted" and the highly motivated were mature and successful in self-management, but "only a few are like this".

6.2.17. Homework Centre

One teacher experienced resistance by the BOT with an off-site homework centre established for Pasefika students because "...there shouldn't be/... favouritism... if there is anything for P.I. students then it's biased..." What needed to be understood by the Palagi dominated BOT were the challenges encountered by immigrant populations, whose children entered school "behind the starting line" with substandard "language skills" and "adapting to the culture (and) to the lifestyle", which were different from their own "working-class family background".

6.2.18. Polynesian Club

Most intermediates had Poly Clubs with very good student participation, though availability of Pasefika staff or parents, determined their success.

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[128] Samoan term meaning anything which interferes with normal life and calls for special activity. A wide range of events, ranging from a wedding, birth or funeral to a canoe lost at sea is covered by this concept – accident, important occasion, danger, trouble.

Colleges participated in the annual Northern Regional Polynesian Festival. Some offered NCEA credits in dance performance. However, senior students were often relied upon to organise and lead groups. It was suggested that the festival be held over a weekend so families could attend.

6.2.19. ICT resourcing

Small school size and poor resourcing prevented low-decile intermediates from developing computer literate students, "ICT/ at our school is pretty much... nil... there is none... we have... two computers and you'd be lucky if both of them are actually working".

6.3. Perceptions of the importance and influence of student's and school cultures on student achievement

Teachers rated the importance to their school of students' cultural background, the importance of schools and teachers knowing students' cultural background, and whether the school culture (the way things are done) and student's culture influenced a student's success. (Refer Appendix 11, Tables 19 to 22). School and teacher knowledge of students' cultural background was 'definitely important' to four teachers. All teachers believed the culture of the school, and four teachers that of the student, had 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' of influence on how well students performed. It was perceived by intermediate teachers that their schools considered students' cultural background as 'important'/'quite important' and one college teacher as 'definitely important', another college teacher as 'a little important'.

Pasefika teachers consider students' cultures important and influential on how well they perform at school. However, it appears some schools are better than others in recognising and using students' cultures to accommodate their learning needs.

6.4. Teachers' perceptions of the causes for Pasefika students not doing as well as Palagi and Asian students

Multiple causes for low educational attainment by ethnic minorities within a Western education system are detailed in various studies (Adams et al., 2005; Banks & Banks, 2004; Bishop et al., 2002; Hill & Hawk, 1998; Nash & Harker, 1997 & 1998; Nuthall, 2007). Pasefika teachers' offered similar causes that are often "a combination of a lot of factors": schools and teachers ("the biggest factor"), home ("like, routines, organisation" and socialisation practices), students, social policy, and excuses and political correctness.

6.4.1. Schools and teachers as causes for Pasefika underachievement

School and teacher factors, as mentioned through section 6.2, are briefly summarised:

- Poor literacy development before Years 7 and 9;

- Poor continuity and development of academic and social skills between and during intermediate and college;

- Insufficient time to learn in an over-full curriculum;

- Interruptions to learning of core subjects (extra-curricular and social skills programmes prioritised over essential skills learning; absenteeism through suspension, expulsion, wagging, or family activities);

- Inadequate, and cuts in, school resources (ICT resourcing, specialist teachers, support time, teacher aides, reading and mentoring programmes and school trips);

- Large class[129] sizes with high needs students;

- Low school and teacher standards and expectations;

- Schools unable to attract and retain quality teachers (excellent pedagogical skills for low-decile schools and degree-qualified in specialist teaching subjects);

- Poor teacher knowledge about Pasefika *cultural capital* for teaching and learning experiences;

- Curriculum topics and ideas not connecting with students' experiences (i.e. English, Social Studies, Home Economics);

- Teacher attitudes of racism and "deficit thinking"; and

- Schools "designed, for, middle-class white kids..."

6.4.2. Home as a cause for Pasefika underachievement

6.4.2.1. Prioritising education

One teacher's view was despite "huge aspirations" of Pasefika parents for their children, the prioritising of education and student motivation were not 'embedded' within their cultures unlike Asians who defied the system because education had been "embedded within their culture" as a priority for thousands of years. In order for Pasefika children to succeed, "some shifts... have to happen/ in terms of our (school)/... ability to support them..." Of prioritising education in a Pasefika context the teacher commented:

> ...is not the same as, aspire to... their aspiration has always been for the education and success of their kids, but prioritising means a task list where one thing/ sits above another... for example... a financial priority list, lower on the list might be... the electricity and telephone bill... higher on the list... the

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[129] It was not unusual for teachers to experience classes of 32 students.

läfoga[130]... to the *faifeau*[131]... the phone might get cut off but that's o.k.... if we want... our Pacific kids... achieving... to their potential... then... our priority lists might need to change, to support that...

These teachers were suggesting that children were required to fit school into their communal culture which prioritises family/community, often at odds to school's individualistic culture.

Student motivation was related to the "message" of "why Pacific Islanders came here". Educational and employment opportunities were not emphasised to students by parents, whereas those "from the islands" and Chinese "...have the motivation, they know why they're here". Although education may not be a high priority, there was an unspoken expectation that students be motivated and succeed at school.

Nash and Harker (1997:25, 28, Appendix D) discuss differences in aspirations by social class and ethnicity. Of relevance to this study, they argue:

> There is... a strong association between level of academic performance and aspiration for further education but this is much weaker for Polynesian students than those from other ethnic communities.... The aspirations of Pacific Island students have... been sharply adjusted [by sixth form] and it appears that a half of those who once intended to enter university have abandoned the idea... Social class is markedly associated with aspiration at fourth form and sixth form... students from the professional class... are more than twice as likely as those from families not in paid employment to aspire to university when they are in fourth form and more than three times as likely when they are in sixth form (ibid:29).

It is evident that Pasefika parents' aspirations for and expectations of their children of how to 'do' school, that is, 'no talking, listen to the teacher', and their lower priority of education compared with family/community, does not translate into academic success. Pasefika students' aspirations more likely were adjusted with the reality of academic performance, thus affecting their motivation to further education.

6.4.2.2.   Other home causes

Other aspects contributing to Pasefika student underachievement were low parental expectations, parents' work ethic "not communicated" to students for application at school, and lack of domestic routines, structure and boundaries. The role of families was neglected "physically" and "socially" because of "socio-economic issues" and "...neglect in... that knowledge that/ actually, you've gotta be a part of... your child's education... "Go and do your homework" is not good enough if they're not... providing an environment that is conducive to that..." Some parents did not encourage homework nor attend parent-teacher interviews,

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[130] Samoan word meaning contribution.
[131] Samoan word meaning church minister.

were unaware of their child's progress and their whereabouts after-school. 'Brain flight' was also seen as a cause where parents who were able to send their children to what they perceived as being better schools, usually away from low-decile schools, created an imbalance of knowledge and skill abilities in low-decile schools; that is, middle-high decile schools attracted more academically able students, creating classrooms of students motivating one another to achieve at a higher level.

6.4.3. Student causes for underachievement

Teachers had less to say about student factors. Some causes for poor achievement were students' lack of purpose, dreams, vision, motivation and identity.

Dreams, vision, motivation

The "dream" of "parents from the islands for education and a better life" was not communicated to their children. "Our kids are not dreaming" and appeared to lack motivation. "An air of competitiveness", an attitude of "I can be the best", and the drive "to push themselves to complete tasks let alone do them well", was needed by students.

Identity

"They don't know where they fit in this world; that identity thing. They are constantly having to switch between... family, school, peers".

6.4.4. Social policy as a cause for underachievement

Two teachers acknowledged that social policy was an underlying issue for underachievement because of "...inequalities in healthcare... living standards and wages..." For instance, students with hearing problems because homes were cold and "they don't get to the doctor" became "embedded into lifelong issues for kids...", or by morning tea students were "...lying down to have a sleep/ just can't cope..." because they had had little sleep or nourishment.

Teachers in this study, and newspaper articles[132], reported low-decile schools "having to" provide breakfast for hungry students, and students in poor health. That students arrive in such states was inexcusable and "shouldn't be happening". Hill and Hawk's (1998:1) report on the AIMHI research project for the MOE explained the impact of government policies

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[132] Long (1991:1) *'Porirua school to provide breakfast for children'*. KapiMana (9 September 2008:33) *'Fuel for learning'* stated "Every school morning across the country, New Zealand Red Cross, together with volunteers and Countdown supermarkets, is helping children to reach their learning potential by serving up a healthy breakfast". The Red Cross' *Breakfast in Schools* programme is offered to all decile one primary schools. It is already active in the Porirua community with "at least 20, sometimes 40" kids attending at one school.

on students, families and eight[133] low-decile high schools:

> ...the research demonstrated a number of powerful influences on student achievement over which schools have little control. Many of them linked back to poverty: parents and caregivers without jobs, poor standards of accommodation, lack of disposable dollars to provide basic gear and equipment that middle-class students take for granted, poor standards of student health, and family dysfunction. Some of the influences are a direct result of policy in areas like health, employment, housing, and social policy. Some are the result of education policies.

The causes of Pasefika underachievement as "socio-economic" rather than "cultural" (that is, ethnicity) is reiterated by Adams et al. (2000:275), Biddulph et al. (2003), Harker (2006), Wylie (2003) and Wylie et al. (2006a,b).

6.4.5. Excuses and political correctness as causes for underachievement

A teacher believed some explanations for Pasefika student failure were "ridiculous" and about political correctness. Past "factors" were addressed but now "new ones" evolved to explain Pasefika results so "nothing's gonna get done". Some excuses were unacceptable. Successful Pasefika peers had "...teachers who pushed us and then we also had at home, making sure... what was being put in front of us at school was also being practiced (at home), and that's simple basic..."

6.5. Positive changes which could enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students

This section covers the findings from specific questions, and perceptions about a middle-school and an extra year, as set out in chapter four. Teachers focused mainly on what adults should do to support Years 7 to 10 students.

6.5.1. What must Pasefika students do to become good learners and to achieve?

The most common recommendation was that students "make learning a priority" by "getting their homework done before they go to youth (church)", "organising themselves to have their... gear", "getting to school on time/ even though they stayed up late... because they had to...", having routines, reducing "habits like being on playstation for hours", "accept teachers... as people who are there to help", performing as "Palagi kids do", "ask more questions", listen intently, "ask for help... be more vocal... and assertive", have high expectations of themselves, read, be focused to learn, have aspirations, dreams and be motivated "to carry on".

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[133] Seven high schools from Auckland, and one college from Porirua.

6.5.2. What must Pasefika parents do to help their child become a good learner and to achieve?

Comments were closely associated with teachers' experiences as parents.   Perceptions emphasised prioritising education and child-rearing practices.

6.5.2.1.   Prioritising education

Families "need to know" to prioritise school, particularly during exams, rather than halt academic study altogether when White Sunday[134], sports or family/community/church events occurred.   Prioritising education means parents should: understand, listen to, support, encourage and converse with their children; "Be involved" in their child's life by attending extra-curricular activities, reading with and to them, and being aware of their whereabouts after-school; provide "time and physical space for homework", a year's supply of stationery, healthy meals, routines and structures, so children know when and where they are going; and be aware of their child's progress by speaking with them and discussing with teachers specific strategies to "raise their kids stanine level".

6.5.2.2.   Parenting practices

With the move from a Pacific communal village lifestyle to New Zealand's individual nuclear family lifestyle a change in child-rearing practices has occurred.   While once the village trained up the child (particularly older mothers teaching younger mothers essential parenting skills and cultural knowledge), many Pasefika families in New Zealand are unable to rely on that structure for support as distance, work, and disconnection separated and isolated families. Also eroding Pasefika customary values, norms and principles was the adoption of those portrayed in the media and determined by government law.

Consequently, poor parenting, poor parental involvement in children's learning, and "the gang stuff" were of great concern to teachers and contributed to underachievement. HSP attempted to address these issues but parents needed to attend sessions. Colleges lacked resources to address these problems adequately and therefore needed parents to take a more active role, such as learning to be parents and setting an example of appropriate behaviour. Pasefika parenting programmes needed to be a priority and perhaps compulsory for 'at risk' families.

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[134] White Sunday (Samoan *Lotu Tamaiti,* Tokelauan *Aho o Tamaiti,* Niuean *Aho tapu fanau,* Tongan *Faka Mē,*) is a Church based Children's Day when children dress in white and adults serve the children, introduced by missionaries to the Pacific Islands . It is held in October for Samoa, Tokelau, and Niue, in May for Tonga, and in June for Cook Islands.

6.5.3. <u>What must schools do to help Pasefika students become good learners and achievers?</u>

Teachers were passionate about the need for strong school leaders, "strong management structures", highly trained, accountable, positive, supported and supportive teachers, and a learning environment that was fun, motivating, dynamic, and with "*aroha*[135]... *manaakitanga*[136] belonging".

Sub-headings in this section reflect multivariate interconnecting aspects perceived by teachers to improve Pasefika achievement.

6.5.3.1.   <u>Improve communication between intermediates and colleges</u>

Improved communication, especially of student information, was needed between school sectors, to ensure continued academic progress and to address Year 9 student problems at some colleges.   Open communication between schools was needed with regards to best evidence research in literacy and to ensure continuity for transitioning students.   Colleges should offer orientation at the beginning of Year 8, and invite intermediates to attend productions and other events to develop relationships.

Primary and intermediate schools did not have "sector wide... standardised testing" or common systems for the collection of student assessments in literacy and numeracy, although *asTTle* and *STAR* assessment tools for literacy were becoming "quite well established" in primary and secondary sectors.   As a result of variations and updated information, colleges conducted their own literacy and numeracy assessments (such as *asTTle*, *STAR*, *PAT*, and *Paul Nation*) at the beginning of Year 9 and did not compare these with similar intermediate assessments.   This area clearly needed improving.

An intermediate teacher suggested that students who were not ready for college be held back at intermediate "to develop social and academic (skills)... to save them from leaving early later on at college..."

Another concern was students who had been suspended, excluded and truant, "which seems to be... more often the case... a trend that NZEI, have picked up on....", and inappropriate behaviours.   Receiving schools/colleges needed student information from contributing schools

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[135] Mäori word meaning affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy.
[136] Mäori word meaning hospitality, kindness.

and agencies working with families, such as *Strengthening Families*[137], in order to access resources to meet some students' needs. This was made more difficult when families did not inform contributing schools of the school their child was moving to. A student education number, similar to a NHI[138] number, is required to enable schools to gather academic information and previous schooling details.

Communication and continuity of programmes between some intermediates and colleges, and student readiness for college were clearly issues that had not been resolved. One school cluster appeared to be addressing this with support from the *Achievement Porirua*[139] initiative funded by the MOE. However, of the initiative Education Minister Trevor Mallard stated "...measurable change should be apparent within 18 months, with significant improvements against national achievement levels achieved within five years" (Mallard, 2002:no page). I would argue that '*significant* improvements' for Pasefika students in Years 7 to 10 have not been achieved after seven years. This raises the point for a middle-school that would be long-term, not an initiative, and address communication, continuity, and student readiness issues for Years 7 to 10.

6.5.3.2. Increase core curriculum focus and time

Extra emphasis, focused time and teacher aides were needed to develop core essential skills in reading and maths. Programmes addressing social issues (bullying, drugs, violence, etc.), the addition of foreign languages as a subject, and extra-curricular activities, had reduced learning time in essential skills. Interruption of class learning time was a major concern at colleges, particularly in core subjects which amounted to four hours per week. It was preferred that English and maths be increased to five hours per week with no interruptions. To reduce interruptions, extra-curricular activities should be incorporated into the junior college timetable, as was the practice at primary/intermediate schools. The argument for more time is clearly evident here.

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[137] Since 1999, the goal of *Strengthening Families* is to improve the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of children and young people within families. It is administered by the Family and Community Services (FACS) unit within the Ministry of Social Development. Agencies work jointly with the family to provide support and develop joint solutions to issues, rather than each agency dealing with one part of the problem and never seeing the bigger picture. Both government and non-government/community organisations participate, with the family in control of the process and supported by a facilitator or a *Strengthening Families* coordinator. Retrieved September 9, 2008, from http://www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz/about/

[138] The National Health Index (NHI) is a system used by public hospitals and other health and disability support services to assign an alpha-numeric identifier (the NHI number) to users. Health professionals have used the NHI for many years, and people now receive their NHI number at birth. It holds information on: names and addresses, ethnicity, gender, date of birth, New Zealand resident status. Retrieved March 12, 2009, from http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/wpg_Index/About-NIR+National+Health+Index

[139] A school-improvement project from early childhood to tertiary it aimed to raise student achievement, with a particular focus on Pasefika and Māori, by the Porirua City community and funded by the MOE from 2002 to June 2009.

6.5.3.3.   Funding for extra-curricular and learning experiences

Schools relied on community grants for sports gear, books, camps and trips, though "unfortunately the grants starting to dry up now so it's getting worse..." Lack of funding limits low-decile schools from providing learning experiences and opportunities unlikely to be provided from home. If funding was available experienced coaches could be paid to relieve teachers from coaching in which they often have no experience.

6.5.3.4.   Improve teacher involvement in extra-curricular activities

Those who viewed after-school and weekends as "my time" needed to recognise and be involved in, activities that kept students busy, developed social skills, time management, and encouraged exercise. Non-academic pursuits enabled students "to shine" and identify with "something" at which they were talented. Teachers who were involved saw students "in a different light", and gained their respect. It is clear that some teachers catered for the needs of students but "...there's only so much that could happen..." More parental involvement and improved parenting were required to support teachers' work. However, attracting and keeping effective, "better" teachers, and providing an environment for them to get on with their job without the social issues was problematic.

Most teachers are required to be involved in extra-curricular activities. However, this is a political issue as it necessitates teachers working beyond their working hours, such as Saturday netball coaching or transporting students to and from venues late at night during weekdays.

6.5.3.5.   Smaller class sizes

Class sizes of up to 32 students needed reducing to below 25. Smaller classes were essential to improving basic learning needs in literacy and numeracy, particularly at intermediate, for students to acquire proficiency at Level 4 in readiness for college, and also to address Years 7 to 10 students' developmental needs. Compact physical spaces such as prefabricated units, which presented health and safety hazards, necessitated smaller class sizes to accommodate the larger physicality of Pasefika and Mäori students, especially boys.

6.5.3.6.   Develop curriculum content and learning environments inclusive of Pasefika culture

Without being tokenistic and recognising only symbolic (i.e. cultural groups and artwork) cultural dimensions, schools must value, appreciate and include Pasefika cultures, history and literature in the syllabus, promote Pasefika languages, develop "stronger links with P.I.

community", and adapt school culture to increase student interest, to a much greater extent than they do. Many students "...don't have their language, have no idea how they got to be in New Zealand... and know very little about their own cultures".

A teacher stated "...if you focus on those things they know like prior knowledge you've got them hooked..." and similarly expressed by Nuthall (2007:153): "If we are to understand how teaching relates to learning, we have to begin at the closest point to that learning, and that is students' experience". Dickie (2007:121) states:

> It is a moot point whether just knowing about a student's background will assist a teacher to make a difference to the student's learning. However, knowing something of the literacy practices that students may experience in their homes and communities may bring recognition of how much they may miss if they do not know their students and communities sufficiently well. If teachers recognise that there are skills and social practices in literacy that are transferable from communities to school contexts they must develop a clear understanding of how these practices operate.

Connecting curriculum ideas to Pasefika students' experiences requires "educating" teachers about Pasefika students' *cultural capital.*

To promote learning, to develop decision-making skills, to provide opportunities to practice these skills, and to cater for Pasefika students educational requirements, the learning environment needed a major overhaul to be "reflective of the cultural diversity of our students". For instance, teachers needed to "build them up", and know "what's happening... at home", such as White Sunday, sports, church/family/community events. Knowing about these activities could help teachers set homework associated with those activities and set exams or tests outside of these busy times.

6.5.3.7.   **Improve Pasefika cultural sensitivity, awareness, and understanding by teachers**

BOT, principals, teachers, and support staff needed to understand and use Pasefika students' cultures to develop a school culture that suits its Pasefika community. For example, P.D. "centering on cultural sensitivity": pronunciation of Pasefika names, understanding of Pasefika students' world and humour, understanding that sometimes what is perceived as misbehaviour "...could be a misunderstanding...", and the importance of relationships and the group. Most Palagi teachers had minimal or no knowledge of cultural behaviours, values, attitudes, patterns of interaction, histories, literary traditions, traditional knowledge, and foods Pasefika students brought to the classroom, nor how these affect students' responses to instructional situations (Banks & Banks, 2004; Hill and Hawk, 1998:1; Powell, 2001).

One example which illustrates the world of home-life for many Pasefika students can be seen in Richards' (1998) article explaining her Samoan upbringing in New Zealand:

> We had a three-bedroom house that... managed to sleep nine children, our parents, at least two or three adult working boarders living in the garage and a regular stream of overseas relatives and other titled families who always stayed indefinitely. That meant it was hard to find space to study. I never had room for a study desk, seldom got to bed early... because of household noises, endless chores, babysitting and visitors disrupting sleeptime. Just as burdensome was getting regularly scolded by teachers for not concentrating and applying myself fully. How could I? I was usually sleepy or worried about stuff at home. Teachers never knew. Not that it mattered, because I never would have told them.

Another example in Douglas' (2003:18) study noted the importance of humour among Pasefika students as a means of solving problems and enhancing the enjoyment of school which often offended teachers who did not understand it. Pasefika teachers in my study mentioned their laughter was loud, and often annoyed some Palagi staff members.

6.5.3.8.   Address deficit thinking

Some teachers should "understand that their role is... not to/ fill a deficit.... in the lives of their students, but to help them... achieve their potential... and... there's been lots of well-meaning teachers..., whose paradigm has been, "there's something wrong with these kids that I need to put right"..." Teachers should recognise "the capita[l] that's within their classroom" when preparing and thinking through students' learning needs, as opposed to the "deficit".

6.5.3.9.   Provide Homework centres

Provision of on-site homework centres, with parent supervision, and tutors addressing students' academic needs was required.

6.5.3.10.   Improve home-school communication

Continuation of HSP, PSPCL, and *Team Up* initiatives, culturally welcoming office staff and reception environment, improved advertising of school meetings, and teachers educated in Pasefika etiquette in relation to greetings and home visits, were suggested. Other improvements that could be made included: colleges providing a parents' room with a computer so they could meet together, access their child's information, and contact teachers; regular "community outreach type programme" in parents' languages to inform them "about NCEA", "options", "goal setting", "how to help students with time management", allowing students time away from chores, and "...to see stats..."; focusing on "talking to parents" to help their child achieve competency in Level 1 NCEA; using non-ambiguous clear English or Pasefika languages in school newsletters; conducting meetings in "P.I. languages" at

convenient venues and times; and Pasefika people in senior management positions to tell parents "...your son/daughter is ...capable of reaching here and we need you to help them... and don't listen to this stuff (excuses)..."

6.5.3.11. Other school improvements to help Pasefika students achieve

Further suggestions included providing wider learning experiences such as "opportunities to be independent", acknowledging and applauding students "...who are invisible... those qualities that aren't so obvious like a librarian", emphasising the health curriculum, especially "emotional intelligence"[140] and greater school awareness of Years 7 to 10 learning needs in specialist subject areas.   More resourcing was very important in terms of teacher aides, learning assistants, specialist teachers and hours for support teachers, and ICT equipment, full-time technicians, and ICT teachers.

6.5.4. Teachers' perceptions about a separate middle-school (Years 7 to 10)

Intermediate teachers were in favour of establishing middle-schools.   One college teacher believed "it could work", while another did "a lot of reading about the pros and cons of middle schools". For this teacher, PPTA was "very anti middle-school" and although the idea contained a "whole lot of good reasons for... having that kind of system..." the divisions between NZEI and PPTA around staffing needed to be eliminated. Teachers identified Years 7 to 10 as crucial developmental years for improving Pasefika achievement results, and that current school structures, organisation, and cultures hindered this development. The "pluses" and "minuses" of middle-schooling by teachers follow.

6.5.4.1. A special age group

Years 7 to 10 are "transition years" and "a special age group" so targeting a smaller age range to cater for students developmental and learning needs using an "integrated curriculum" or specialised subjects would be beneficial.

6.5.4.2. More time and continuity provided to develop academic and social skills

More time, a sense of continuity and consistency, a more seamless curriculum for the "development of social and academic needs" with numeracy and literacy "right from Year 7" were integral for a middle-school. Benefits of four years "instead of two" in separate school systems were: better preparation for college as students required a different and more demanding learning environment, not adequately provided at full-primary schools; "...Kids

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[140] Theory made popular by psychologist Daniel Goleman's 1995 book "Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ". The theory suggests some people are more successful than others due to emotional and social factors rather than intelligence alone. Goleman describes four domains of EI that are not innate talents but learned abilities: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

are known..." and therefore have their needs better met; lessening loss of learning time and trauma of transition for Pasefika students who are "more socially wired"; employment of qualified specialised subject teachers from Year 7; "Year 10 is often the zero year but it wouldn't be at a middle-school; "Bullying would decrease because the age gap's not so vast"; "...A lot of the well to do... Palagi colleges are from five to [17 years]... maybe there's something to be said about that... I've spoken to (Years 1 to 6) teachers... they're glad to see the back of some of their Year 6's..."; and placing students in composite classes to meet their social and academic needs, especially for Years 9 and 10, rather than ability/streamed groups.

6.5.4.3. Provision of resources (technicraft, ICT, science labs, and extra-curricular activities)

Problems arose when sending students to an Intermediate or local college for Technicraft. These included college timetable changes, costs, and intimidation, threats or "standing over" by students at receiving schools. Middle-school would provide Technicraft on-site, as well as better ICT and science lab resources unavailable at full-primary/intermediate schools. Middle-schools could reduce interruptions to core classes by incorporating extra-curricular (choir, music lessons, drama, dance, culture groups) activities, practices and events into the timetable.

6.5.4.4. Disadvantages of middle-school

Disadvantages related to cost factors, transition issues at Years 7 and 11, and adjustment from an integrated curriculum to subject specialisation at senior college; however, these factors already exist in the current structure.

6.5.5. Teachers' perceptions about an extra year (more time) for students to prepare for NCEA

The need for students to have more time to improve academic achievement was mentioned frequently. Most Pasefika students entered college below Level 4 and were less prepared for NCEA Level 1. Those who achieved NCEA Level 1 in English and maths often did not cope with NCEA Level 2. If "readiness is the key" for students to prepare for NCEA, then "time is a huge factor" "to consolidate", provide "more depth and richness than rushing them through a curriculum", to "do more", to fit things in, "it wouldn't be so daunting for them (students)", and "the maturity too".

Allocating more hours to literacy and numeracy while reducing other non-essential curricula, and deferring NCEA Level 1 to Year 12 was mooted. More time was needed for most

Pasefika boys because they tended to be "less mature", have "poor work habits", and were "lazy".

Caution was advised in extending Years 7 to 10 by another year, as it should "be properly managed" because of increased teacher workload and the "danger of student boredom". Most believed an extra year would "save" students repeating NCEA, leaving early, and increase numbers attempting Level 3.

Although some flexibility exists within NCEA, such as offering Level 1 numeracy at Year 10, more flexibility was needed as Government was "trying to make it back into/ an 'us' and 'them' kind of 50%... 'pass fail' kind of system again..." Colleges should develop policy and structures that provided increased subject choices for students' levels of readiness and interest at Years 9 and 10.

Literacy achievement

Crucial to 'readiness' is literacy achievement. Reading Recovery is a literacy intervention offered primarily to 6-year-olds of low-decile schools. However, large numbers of students in such schools are also missing out on this programme (McDowall, 2006). In exploring possible reasons for its lower uptake in such schools, McDowall (2006) identified two main challenges for schools. There is difficulty providing enough places to meet student need (greater cost), and students are less likely to reach the point at which their lessons could be discontinued. These challenges resulted in long waiting lists, students entering Reading Recovery after the age considered optimal and some students missing out altogether (ibid). These findings reflect the large numbers of students needing literacy intervention and suggest the cumulative effects on school achievement at intermediate and college. One recommended solution was "to increase the staffing allocation provided by MOE to low-decile schools" focussing on literacy instruction in Years 1 and 2 for teachers, students and parents (ibid:27). More resourcing and time are critical factors for students' early literacy learning and achievement at low-decile schools. As discussed in the literature research (Fletcher et al., 2005; Harker, 2002; Hobbs, 2001; Nash, 2002b; Wylie et al., 2006a) early literacy resources and experiences have a cumulative effect on students' future school engagement, learning and progress.

6.6. Conclusion

Pasefika teachers recognised the multi-faceted family and school practices and limited resources hindering student achievement but persevered hoping to make a difference for the sake of "our" kids. Teachers held strong beliefs of required changes, mostly with school and some with parents.

Teachers perceived and experienced that learning was likely to occur when students were raised in "strong", "well-grounded" families and who had "highly motivated parents" involved in their learning and activities. Students from 'at risk' families required more resourcing to deal with inappropriate behaviours and learning difficulties. Alternative schools were preferable for these students, with social agencies working alongside the family. HSP and Pasefika parenting programmes were important for families who failed to teach and practice values that assisted learning. Families also needed to make "some shifts" in terms of prioritising education if their aspirations for their children to succeed were to be fulfilled. However, teachers recognised socio-economic issues impacting on families that created barriers for students' learning and achievement, as identified in the literature research.

Teachers' experiences revealed poor practices, attitudes and expectations by some schools and colleagues. They experienced a lack of knowledge and understanding by many colleagues about Pasefika cultural practices for use in connecting curriculum ideas to students' experiences, and in meeting with Pasefika parents. Resourcing for outdoor experiences and various additional support, and employment of quality teachers were issues for all teachers. In addition, interruption of class learning time, large class sizes, and insufficient time to prepare students for college and NCEA compounded problems at these schools.

Some teachers' comments reflect Wylie's (2003:11) suggestion that teachers of 'low' achieving children from low-income homes "do not always know how to do things most effectively, and do not always have the best conditions to allow them to do so". Educational policy must address conditions and teacher issues at low-decile schools as described in this chapter and the literature research.

While the MOE and government need to address factors over which schools have little control, the literature research demonstrates that historical and demographic reasons for Pasefika children underachieving are no reason for schools not to do better in some areas.

Some teachers and schools were endeavouring to improve Pasefika student achievement and involve parents in education as described by Pasefika teachers. However, in 2006 the ERO (2006:1, 10) found 20% of schools engaged effectively with Pasefika families and communities and a quarter of schools implemented specific initiatives to improve Pasefika student achievement. They concluded:

> The small group of schools that were improving the achievement of their Pacific students, collecting and analysing information about their achievement, engaging them in learning and also engaging their families and communities show that other schools can improve their practices in response to the achievement of their Pacific students (ibid:18).

Nash and Harker (1998:57-58) acknowledge "some schools work in more difficult environments than others", but conclude "evidence of variance between schools in their School Certificate examination performance... cannot entirely be accounted for by the intake characteristics of their students when considered at both the individual level and the aggregate level". Teachers were clear that schools have the capacity to interrupt "unfavourable dispositions" by their "willingness to create a context in which students are able to recognise their own image in the mirror it [the school] holds up to their view" (ibid:104).

Despite the data and theory linking cultural incompatibility with educational failure, few teachers considered students' cultural backgrounds in their teaching (Powell, 2001:150-152) or were unconfident in making meaningful connections with their learning contexts (McGee, 2003:39). Teachers' responses in my investigation indicated similar findings. This could be reflective of teachers not being challenged to critically examine ethnicity and power and to understand how their personal cultural frame impacts on the way instructional goals, knowledge, information, and learning are culturally contextualised. Most Palagi teachers forget that many Pasefika students live marginally in mainstream culture, and most parents are unable to help how to 'do' schooling successfully because they did not experience it themselves and/or have different expectations and cultural socialisation practices of how children should learn. Nuthall (2007:17-19) reiterates this in relation to classroom learning arguing:

> There is no evidence that, given the same experiences, Afro-American, Polynesian, Māori, Pacific Island, or Asian students do not learn in the same way. ...the differences in attainment arise from the experiences that these students have... the teaching and learning experiences of students have much more impact on their achievement than their ethnicity does.

Hence, teachers need to provide wider meaningful experiences that connect with students' cultural background and to develop those skills not experienced within their families, for successful learning.

Most of the Pasefika teachers recognised that a middle-school would provide a better learning environment for Years 7 to 10 Pasefika students in which social codes (culture, rules of behaviour, school expectations), culturally and developmentally relevant and effective pedagogies suitable for emerging Pasefika adolescents, and socio-linguistic dispositions not practiced at home were employed to reduce gaps that mediate against effective teaching and learning (Banks & Banks, 2004:228). Transition difficulties, communication, and consistency between intermediates and colleges, and student readiness issues would be mitigated. Some schools were attempting to meet this age group's specific needs by restructuring and reorganising classes and delivery of programmes. Teachers also acknowledged more time (delaying NCEA to Year 12) as necessary for improving student achievement.

Students of all origins are not identical in cultural, historical, social and family traits therefore one cannot assume that providing the same education in the same way provides equal opportunity towards successful academic outcomes (ibid). As Blackmun (1978, cited ibid:228) suggest, "In order to treat persons equally, we must treat them differently". It is clear from the comments of Pasefika teachers that some families need to make adjustments but greater responsibility lies with schools, the MOE and government to commit to interrupting their practices, dispositions, and structures that inhibit Pasefika academic accomplishment.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study on Pasefika participants' perceptions and experiences of the school system in Years 7 to 10 has demonstrated the complex influence and interplay between objective social structures, and the development of particular dispositions and practices around education that have their locus in the family (Nash, 2000b). Parents of the students in this study differed in their levels of involvement with the schools, yet they engaged in similar actions to support their children's learning by providing a viable and supportive home environment within the limits of their financial, social and cultural resources; they were doing "the best for the kids" (Nash, 1993:29). They maintained their Pasefika cultures of "...a 'people centredness', an understanding of community which is radically social" (Randerson, 1992:27) and of children being "seen and not heard" and well disciplined.

Mothers were primarily nurturing these actions because of their role in Pasefika cultures. I believe these mothers' 'maternal cultural qualifications' heavily influenced the constitution of their family's *cultural capital* as is clearly evident in chapters five and six. 'Maternal qualifications' and the resources available to children were demonstrated by Wylie (2004) as being of greater relevance than family income, for children's competency levels at age 12 as opposed to their culture or ethnicity (Wylie, 2001 cited Biddulph et al., 2003:53). In other words, students who acquire at home the fundamental skills salient in the school situation are able to adapt more readily and successfully to school. All participants clearly identified family factors that did/did not support children's learning in the context of their own social and cultural understandings and experiences, as Biddulph et al. (2003) similarly found. However, as chapter four demonstrated, the practices and dispositions that students developed were not deep-seated enough in that their *cognitive* and *non-cognitive habitus* did not fully allow them to access school knowledge at the level required for recognised success. It was this deeper form of *cognitive habitus* that teachers referred to in chapter six.

Consequently, students *acquired* a set of dispositions within the context of their family's *cultural capital*, which shaped their practices of reception and assimilation of the specifically pedagogic messages that the school demands for success: to be compliant and quiet, to listen, and to 'do the work' were not enough. Prior cognitive ability becomes cumulatively more important as students progress through their schooling as a number of studies cited in this research argue. The contribution of the *cognitive habitus* to Pasefika students' academic schoolwork was evidenced by the local *STAR/asTTle* reading results in which overall 69% of

Years 7 to 10 Pasefika[141] students scored a stanine 4 or less. It is clear that early low achievement has a cumulative effect on NCEA achievement. Delaying NCEA to Year 12 was supported by participants to allow more time for the majority of Pasefika students to develop the literacy-related cognitive skills and experiences necessary for gaining qualifications. Chapter four demonstrated that students recognised their abilities and inadequacies in gaining credentials, as well as the influence of peers and the practices, attitudes and resources of their schools. Yet, many essentially believed, like their parents, in 'meritocracy' – "the belief that anyone with reasonable intelligence, who works hard, will do well at school (Adams et al., 2000:237).

Intermediates and colleges afforded recognition to the dominant *cultural capital*, in particular specialised literacy-related cognitive skills necessary to acquire school knowledge successfully and negotiate the schools' structures, systems, and practices. All participants recognised those structures, systems, practices, and attitudes of the schools and teachers that reflected the *hegemony* (Gramsci, 1971 cited Darder, 1991) of the dominant group/culture as well as '*symbolic violence*' (Bourdieu, 1984) in inconsistent and "uncontrollable" discipline, racism, and a reluctance to recognise Pasefika histories in Social Studies. Pasefika teachers recognised the limitations of their schools that were outside the school's control but they had clear ideas about the learning strategies and environment that could be more helpful and inclusive, and the developmental issues and limited experiences of Pasefika students that needed focused attention by the school. The depth of these teachers' perceptions and experiences reflected deep-seated understandings of the importance of resources, favourable dispositions towards learning, the culture of the home and the need for greater teacher professionalism and responsiveness to Pasefika students.

The generation of dispositions and practices through familial capital is a process that occurs in the significant context of students' interaction with peers, teachers and the general routines and culture of the school. Pasefika teachers recognised those processes of home, peers and school which hindered student achievement. As this study demonstrates there are complex real causal relationships and processes involved in generating Pasefika student underachievement: the class location and *habitus* of many Pasefika families did not constitute *cultural capital* in schools; schools and teachers did not understand, and in some cases were resistant to understanding, the *cultural capital* of Pasefika families; and, the powerful impact of government policies and "socio-economic" issues of poverty on families and schools over

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[141] There were 683 Years 7 to 10 Pasefika students of which 45% (310 students) scored 'below average' (stanine 1, 2 or 3) and 24% (162 students) scored stanine 4 (Refer Appendix 8).

which schools have little control (Hill and Hawk, 1998; Biddulph et al., 2003; Harker, 2006; Wylie, 2003; Wylie et al., 2006a,b).

Participants' positive changes which could enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Years 7 to 10 Pasefika students reiterated similar multivariate recommendations and findings of other studies (Bailey, 1998; Bell, 2000; Hill & Hawk, 1998; Hyde-Hills, 1992; Nash & Harker, 1997 & 1998; Randerson, 1992; Wylie, 2003; Wylie et al., 2006a,b). Participants recognised changes needed by students and parents in terms of family practices – "which necessarily depend on resources" (Nash, 1993:4) – but it was schools that were given more attention. They affirmed some positive school practices helping to remove barriers to achievement for Pasefika students as well as aspects that needed addressing.

Drawing on Peters (1996) in my introduction, school systems and structures that are not working for Pasefika students must change and consideration be given to experiment with structural changes that have been tried in schools in the USA with high Black and Hispanic populations.   A separate four-year middle-school and an extra year before NCEA qualifications were structural changes supported by the majority of participants to meet Pasefika adolescent developmental, academic, social and resourcing needs. Educational advantages for middle-school outweighed disadvantages of administrative issues, as discussed in chapters four to six.

Recommendations

Educational inequality can be partially interrupted through effective policies that intervene at the levels of structure – social, economic and educational policies – and practice at the sites of government, the MOE, and schools. These have flow-on effects that reverberate within the practical constitution of familial *cultural habitus*. On the basis of this study I make the following recommendations:

1. The state not just recognise family resources as the major issue underlying educational achievement (MOE, 1998 cited Adams et al., 2000:285), but actively intervene to ensure social, economic and educational policies treat the social structures as real, as discussed in chapters four to six (e.g. Working for Families, Parents As First Teachers);

2. The state to reduce class sizes to 20 and provide additional resources of finance and of other forms of support (such as increasing staffing allocation) particularly directed to literacy and numeracy cognitive skills development in low SES areas; and provide an extra year prior to NCEA;

3. Porirua schools to work together to develop middle-schools[142] and a senior college;

4. Porirua schools to provide homework centres; to develop strategies and practices to improve Pasefika students' *non-cognitive* dispositions; to focus on literacy instruction and developing cognitive skills in partnership with parents; to improve home-school communication and relationships; to develop a school culture of processes/procedures/practices that are familiar to Pasefika parents; to improve school standards and expectations; to develop non-simplistic, non-stereotypical Pasefika learning programmes and experiences within subject syllabuses; and, as Nash (2000a:84) asserts:

> What is necessary to education within the Pacific culture should be recognised by the school, and what is arbitrary – and alien to Pacific culture – in the school's practices should be abandoned precisely in order to protect and realise its own necessary educational function.

Using the analogy of gardening, different seed types are planted and nurtured in different environments in order to grow. A good gardener has acquired knowledge about the conditions best suited for cultivating each seed. In like manner, Pasefika students belong to families that possess different resources of wealth, education, knowledge, practices and social connections – their *cultural capital* – from the *cultural capital* of the dominant group, which is that of the school. Therefore, the school environments in Porirua *must* change in order to arrest the long-tail of Pasefika underachievement in school statistics and to interrupt the reproduction of educational differentiation between differentially resourced social groups. The call for change has been repeated for over three decades. However, the greatest challenge for change is the need for structural and attitudinal change (Hirsch and Scott, 1988) – change with a different cultural lens needs to come from all those participating directly and indirectly within the education system, after all, schools were made for kids not kids for schools.

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[142] There is strong evidence from the literature that single-sex middle-schools have positive academic effects for ethnic minority students, in particular African-American males (Hudley, 1998; Gurian, 2002).

GLOSSARY

AIMHI	Achievement in Multi-cultural High Schools.
aroha	Māori word meaning affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy.
asTTle	Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning.
'autalavou	Samoan term meaning a company or group of youth. Youth in this context refers to a group of people of the same generation so ages may range from 13 to 40 years. Similar concept exists for Tongan *potungaue talavou*, Tokelauan *kautalavou*, Cook Islands *māpū*, and Niuean *fanau fuata*.
BOT	Board of Trustees.
college/secondary school	Years 9 to 15 (or old terms Forms 3 to 7, hence third, fourth, fifth forms etc.). Junior secondary school is Years 9 and 10. Senior secondary school is Years 11 to 15.
contributing primary school	Years 1 to 6 school.
Decile	A school's Decile indicates the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. Low decile = 1 to 3; Middle decile = 4 to 7; High decile = 8 to 10.
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages.
exclusions	Students aged under-16 years.
expulsions	Students aged 16 years or over.
fa'alavelave	Samoan term meaning anything which interferes with normal life and calls for special activity. A wide range of events, ranging from a wedding, birth or funeral to a canoe lost at sea is covered by this concept – accident, important occasion, danger, trouble.
fa'apālagi	Samoan term meaning "like a European, according to the ideas or customs of Europeans". The connotation is a person who is considered to be working for personal gain and forsaking Samoan ways.
fa'avalea	Samoan term meaning be stupid, foolish.
faifeau	Samoan term meaning church minister.
fiapoto	Samoan term meaning "conceited" or "trying to be too clever or smart". The connotation is a person who has gained knowledge but is not humble or wise.
fe'au	Samoan term meaning things to be done such as housework, lawn mowing.
full-primary school	Years 1 to 8.
HOD	Head of Department.
ICT	Information Computer Technology.
Intermediate	Years 7 and 8 only.

inter-quartile range	The difference between the upper quartile and the lower quartile i.e. UQ less LQ.
ka'a	Samoan slang for ta'a meaning run freely, be loose, unchaste. Used here as mucking around.
kawa	Māori term referring to the set of protocols by which a tribe governs themselves.
kia ora koutou whānau	Māori phrase meaning "welcome family". Parent referring to the token gesture of appearing to be inclusive of Māori and Pasefika cultures in school life.
läfoga	Samoan term meaning contribution.
lower quartile	A quarter of all students are achieving below the lower quartile value.
manaakitanga	Māori term meaning hospitality, kindness.
matai	Samoan term meaning village and family chief.
meaalofa	Samoan term meaning gift, equivalent to the Māori *koha*.
median	Half of all students are achieving below the middle value.
middle years	ages 11 to 15 or Years 7 to 10.
middle-school	In New Zealand, Years 7 to 10 (ages 11 to 15 years). Also known as 'junior high' schools or 'restricted composite' schools. Forms 1 to 4 is the old equivalent.
NCEA	National Certificate in Educational Achievement.
NEMP	National Educational Monitoring Project for Years 4 and 8 students is conducted each year, over a four-year period, assessing different areas related to the New Zealand curriculum.
NZCER	New Zealand Council of Educational Research.
ordinal	Ordinal data are based on counts of things assigned to specific categories in an ordered, ranked relationship. The categories are 'in order'. This means that the data in each category can be compared with data in the other categories as being higher or lower than, more or less than etc., those in the other categories (Denscombe, 2005:237).
Palagi	The correct Samoan term is Papälagi meaning foreigner, European, white man.
PSCPL	Pasifika School Community Parent Liaison Project. Originally named Pacific Islands School Community Parent Liaison (PISCPL) in 1996, the goals of the project are to "foster and encourage a closer relationship between school and Pacific Island communities, and improve and increase Pacific Islands student achievement across the curriculum" (MoE RFP Document, 2004:2 cited Gorinski, 2005:5). Currently, six clusters are involved in PSCPL: three in Auckland, one in Porirua and two in Christchurch. The Porirua cluster involves two contributing primary schools (Years 1 to 6) and one college (Years 7 to 13).

P.D.	Professional Development.
PIPC	Pacific Islands Presbyterian Church, Porirua.
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment in 2000 and 2003 for 15-year-olds (Year 11 students) indicates levels of reading literacy.
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study in 2001 for 9 and 10-year-olds (Year 5 students) indicates levels of early reading attainment.
Poly Club	Polynesian Club is a dance group representative of the school's Pasefika students
pöwhiri	Mäori term meaning to welcome, invite, beckon, wave; invitation, rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae. Used here as a welcome ceremony on a school marae.
QSL	Quality of School Life originally developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (Williams & Batten, 1981 cited Nash & Harker, 1997:10) and used in New Zealand (Wagemaker, 1993 cited ibid). QSL instrument refer Nash and Harker (1998:174) appendix.
RTLB	Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour were established in schools in 1999 as part of the Special Education 2000 policy. The primary role of an RTLB is to provide itinerant specialist support to, and work with, students and teachers in order to improve the education outcomes for students with moderate learning and/or behaviour difficulties. An RTLB works with a cluster of schools. Currently there are 781 RTLB positions in 197 clusters of schools. Retrieved August 28, 2008, from http://www.tki.org.nz/r/governance/rtlb/
SEA	School Entry Assessment tasks are administered to new entrants at about six weeks to measure knowledge and skills developed prior to beginning school in three learning areas (oral language, early literacy, and numeracy).
SES	Socio-economic status.
stanine	A norm-referenced score. Stanines 1 to 3 represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 represent 'above average' range.
STAR	Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading.
streaming/streamed classes	Now known as 'differentiated' classes while "..."streaming" implies a sorting of students into different channels that continue over time. For example, previous New Zealand generations were sorted at entry into secondary school into a stream defined by a common set of subjects that also defined their later possibilities for national examinations and entrance into tertiary education (e.g. an "academic" stream whose set of subjects would include Latin, and a "technology" group whose set of subjects would include typing or woodcraft, but no languages)" (Wylie, Hodgen & Ferral, 2006:27). Differentiated classes sort students usually by reading ability

	and all do a common set of subjects at curriculum levels that meet students' ability.
summer effect	Long summer holiday of about seven weeks from December to January.
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study in 2002-2003 for Year 5 and Year 9 students in mathematics and science was the third cycle to measure trends in achievement by comparing performance in 1994-1995 and 1998-1999.
U.E.	University Entrance.
upper quartile	Three-quarters of all students are achieving below the upper quartile value.
whakamä	Mäori term meaning ashamed, shame, embarrassed, shy.
whänau	Mäori term meaning to be born, give birth; extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people. Used here to mean family group.
White Sunday	(Samoan *Lotu Tamaiti*, Tokelauan *Aho o Tamaiti*, Niuean *Aho tapu fanau*, Tongan *Faka Më*) is a Church based Children's Day when children dress in white and adults serve the children, introduced by missionaries to the Pacific Islands . It is held in October for Samoa, Tokelau, and Niue, in May for Tonga, and in June for Cook Islands.
YOSS	Youth One Stop Shop in Palmerston North is a place which provides young people aged 10 to 24 years of age with a range of services such as free and youth friendly counselling, alcohol and drug support, information, advice, support, youth health services (free doctors and nurses and a clinical psychologist) and life skills programmes.

APPENDIX 1

Pasefika Peoples Statistics Census 2006

Sources

- Porirua Council. (2008). *Porirua Profile 2008.* Porirua Council (based on Census 2006).
- "Pacific Profiles 2006" retrieved August 12, 2008 from http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/5F1F873C-5D36-4E54-9405-34503A2C0AF6/0/quickstatsaboutcultureandidentity.pdf
- "QuickStats about Pacific Peoples" tables retrieved August 13, 2008 from http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/2006-census-data/quickstats-about-pacific-peoples/quickstats-about-pacific-peoples.htm

New Zealand Pasefika peoples statistics Census 2006

- There were 265,974 people of Pacific ethnicity living in New Zealand at the time of the 2006 Census, representing 6.9% of the total New Zealand population.
- At the time of the 2006 Census, 60% of people of Pacific ethnicity were born in New Zealand. The majority of Niueans (74%) and Cook Islands peoples (73%) were New Zealand-born.
- Wellington is the second most common region for Pasefika peoples to live in at 13% (34,752), while 66.9% live in the Auckland region.
- Porirua is the fourth most common city for Pasefika peoples to live in with a population of 12,267, after Manukau (86,616), Auckland (50,166) and Waitakere (26,823) cities.
- The median[143] age of Pasefika peoples in 2006 was 21.1 years, which is considerably lower than the median age of the New Zealand population overall (35.9 years). Thirty-eight percent of Pasefika peoples (100,344 people) were aged under-15 years. This was much higher than for the New Zealand population overall (22%).
- The proportion of Pasefika peoples who could speak more than one language (49%) was much higher than for the overall New Zealand population (18%).
- In the 2006 Census, 81% of Pasefika peoples identified with the Christian religion.
- As at 1 July 2006[144] Pasefika students represented 9.1% (68,059) of the primary and secondary school population in New Zealand and at 1 July 2007 there were 9.3% (69,888) Pasefika students.
- In 2006, 22% of Pasefika peoples aged 15 years and over had a post-school qualification, up from 17% in 2001. However, the proportion with no formal qualification has remained stable, at 36% in 2001 and 35% in 2006.
- In the 2004 Teachers' Census[145], 2% of the 43 759 teachers who took part (a response rate of 91% of teachers who were teaching) identified as Pasefika.
- Sixty-five percent of adults (people aged 15 years and over) of Pacific ethnicity were in the labour force in 2006 (107,613 people).
- The median annual income for adults (people aged 15 years and over) of Pacific ethnicity was $20,500 in 2006. This was lower than the median annual income for New Zealand overall ($24,400).

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[143] Median age means half are younger, and half are older, than this age.
[144] "Schools Numbers Tables 2007" retrieved August 25, 2008, from
http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/july_school_roll_returns/6028/student_numbers_as_at_1_july_2007
[145] "Teachers Census 2004" retrieved August 26, 2008, from
http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/teacher_census

Porirua population statistics Census 2006

Porirua population: 48,546
8.7% (4209) of the population are 10 to 14 years of age.
8.2% (3987) of the population are 15 to 19 years of age.
34.5% of the population are under 20 years of age.

Porirua Pasefika peoples statistics[146] Census 2006

Population

- 26.6% (12,267) of people in Porirua belong to the Pasefika ethnic group, representing 8.0% in the Wellington Region.   The Pasefika population ranks second in size to European in Porirua.
- Porirua's Pasefika population is very youthful with 36.8% under 20 years of age, 22.2% aged 20 to 64, and 14.7% aged over 65 years of age.
- The majority of Pasefika peoples, 56.1%, live in the Eastern Ward where seven (two colleges, one intermediate, and four full-primary schools) of the 11 participating schools in this research are situated.   17.7% live in the Western Ward where two colleges and one Intermediate are located, and 4.0% live in the Northern Ward where one full-primary school is located.
- The Pasefika peoples ethnic groups[147] in Porirua at Census 2006 is represented in the following table:

Pasefika peoples ethnic groups in Porirua	Population Census 2006
Samoan	7,338
Cook Islands	3,036
Tokelauan	2,004
Niuean	459
Tongan	348
Fijian (except Fiji Indian/Indo-Fijian)	156
Tuvalu Islander	207
Other Pasefika Peoples	249
Total People, Pacific Peoples in Porirua	**12,267**
Total People, All Ethnic Groups in Porirua	**48,546**
Source: Statistics NZ, Census 2006, Pacific Peoples Tables, table 3	

- Of the seven largest Pacific ethnic groups, Tokelauans were the only group who were most likely to live somewhere other than the Auckland region.   Tokelauans were most likely to live in the Wellington region, with just over half (51%) living in the Wellington region and 27% living in the Auckland region.   Porirua was the most common city or district for people of Tokelauan ethnicity to live in, at 29%.

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[146] People can choose to identify with more than one ethnic group, therefore figures may not sum to totals or to 100%.
[147] The Pacific peoples ethnic group population includes all of the people who stated one or more Pacific peoples ethnic groups.   Some of these people may also belong to other ethnic groups.

Language
- The second most common language spoken in Porirua is Samoan, spoken by 10.8% of the population.

Religion
- 84.2% of Pasefika Peoples in Porirua identify as Christian.

Income
- 51.0% of Pasefika Peoples in Porirua aged 15 years and over have a personal income of $20,000 or less, and 5.3% of $50,000 or more. The median personal income in Porirua is $26,300 and $28,000 for the Wellington Region.

Education
- Mäori (36.9%) and Pasefika Peoples (36.4%) had the highest percentages of people aged 15 years and over with no school qualifications in Porirua, compared to Asian (21.7%) and European (21.3%).
- Pasefika Peoples (42.1%) and Asian (40.5%) had the highest percentages of people aged 15 years and over with a school qualification in Porirua, compared to European (34.2%) and Mäori (33.2%).
- Pasefika Peoples (21.5%) had the lowest percentage of people aged 15 years and over with a post-school qualification, compared to Mäori (30.0%), Asian (37.6%), and European (44.4%).
- Porirua school rolls as at July 2006 for Years 7 to 10 and Years 11 to 15 is represented in the following table:

Years 7-15 students by ethnicity in Porirua – July 2006			
Ethnic groups in Porirua	Years 7 to 10	Years 11 to 15	Total Years 7 to 15
Samoan	454	328	782
Cook Islands	201	85	286
Tokelauan	198	100	298
Niuean	18	9	27
Fijian	18	9	27
Tongan	15	7	22
Other Pasefika peoples	24	19	43
Total Pasefika students	**928**	**557**	**1485**
Mäori	**863**	**364**	**1227**
New Zealand & Other European	**850**	**291**	**1141**
Southeast Asian, Chinese, Indian, Other Asian	**92**	**60**	**152**
Other Ethnicity	**39**	**18**	**57**
Total Years 7 to 15 students in Porirua all ethnicities	**2772**	**1290**	**4062**
Source: requested from Data Management and Analysis Division, Ministry of Education, 2007			

APPENDIX 2

School leaver statistics 1993-2007

Source: Ministry of Education. (2008a). *Education Report: 2007 school leaver statistics.* Ministry of Education: Wellington. (Retrieved August 25, 2008, from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/school_leavers2/school_leavers/2896 4/28965/5)

Percentage of school leavers qualified to attend university, by ethnic group (1993-2007)

Percentage of school leavers qualified to attend university, by ethnic group (1993 to 2007)					
Year	Ethnic Group				
	Māori	Pasifika	Asian	NZ European /Pākehā	Total
1993	7.5	9.1	46.8	29.8	25.1
1994	7.9	10.0	48.1	31.3	26.6
1995	7.5	11.0	46.9	31.4	26.4
1996	7.9	9.9	52.2	32.7	27.7
1997	8.2	10.3	54.0	34.0	29.3
1998	8.9	11.0	56.3	33.8	29.3
1999	8.5	9.1	54.1	31.5	27.5
2000	7.3	9.5	52.2	30.4	26.7
2001	7.4	9.7	53.6	29.9	26.0
2002	7.7	8.5	52.2	31.2	27.0
2003	8.9	9.4	54.1	33.2	28.7
2004	11.7	14.0	56.2	37.1	32.1
2005	11.9	14.5	58.5	38.1	32.9
2006	14.8	16.8	63.0	41.3	36.3
2007	18.3	20.2	65.7	44.0	39.0
Source: MOE (2008a:12)					

Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above, by ethnic group (1993-2007)
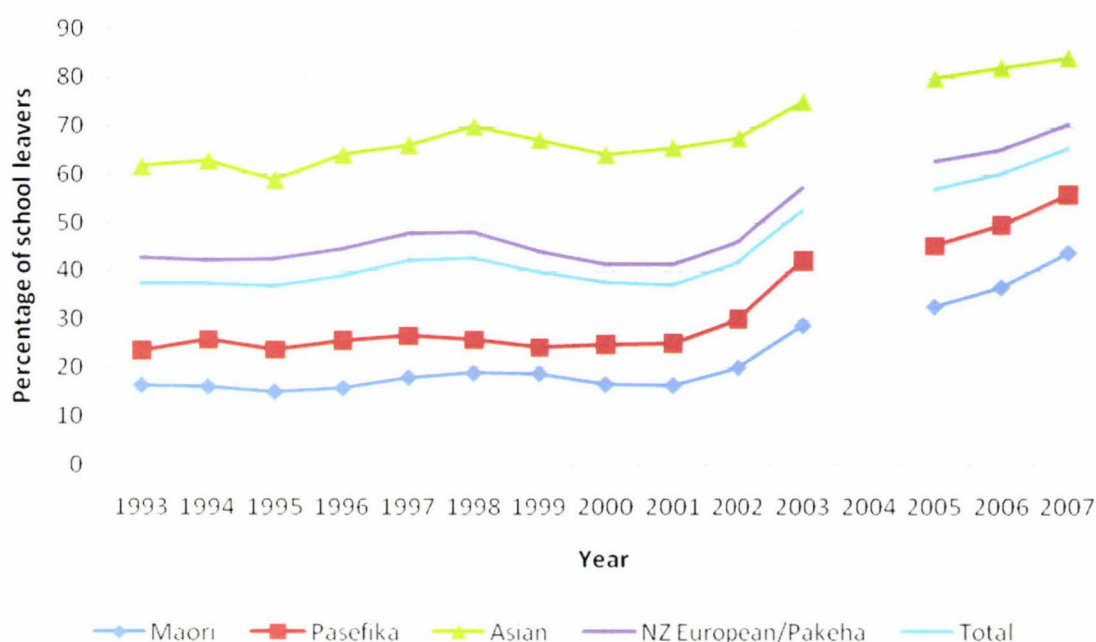
Note: Due to methodological changes in the allocation of attainment levels in 2004, for leavers achieving a qualification between little or no formal attainment and UE standard, the percentages of leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 in 2004 is not comparable with other years, and has been omitted.
Due to changes in the qualification structure, a direct comparison cannot be made between rates up to and including 2002 with rates from 2003

Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above, by ethnic group (1993 to 2007)					
	Ethnic Group				
Year	Māori	Pasifika	Asian	NZ European /Pākehā	Total
1993	16.3	23.5	61.7	42.6	37.5
1994	16.0	25.8	62.9	42.3	37.5
1995	14.9	23.7	58.9	42.5	37.0
1996	15.7	25.6	64.1	44.6	39.1
1997	17.9	26.6	66.1	47.8	42.3
1998	18.8	25.8	69.9	48.0	42.7
1999	18.7	24.2	67.2	44.0	39.8
2000	16.5	24.9	64.2	41.5	37.8
2001	16.3	25.2	65.6	41.4	37.3
2002	20.0	30.2	67.6	46.2	42.0
2003	28.8	42.3	75.1	57.4	52.6
2004*					
2005	32.7	45.3	79.9	63.0	57.1
2006	36.7	49.6	82.2	65.4	60.2
2007	43.9	56.0	84.2	70.6	65.5

*Notes:
i)   Due to methodological changes in the allocation of attainment levels in 2004, for leavers achieving a qualification between little or no formal attainment and UE standard, the percentages of leavers with at least NCEA Level 2 in 2004 is not comparable with other years, and has been omitted.
ii) Due to changes in the qualification structure, a direct comparison cannot be made between rates up to and including 2002 with rates from 2003.
Source: MOE (2008a:12)

Percentage of school leavers with little or no formal attainment, by ethnic group (1993 to 2007)

Percentage of school leavers with little or no formal attainment, by ethnic group (1993 to 2007)					
Year	Ethnic Group				
	Mäori	Pasifika	Asian	NZ European /Pākehā	Total
1993	33.5	24.8	10.8	10.9	16.0
1994	34.6	23.7	10.3	11.1	16.3
1995	35.4	24.3	14.6	12.8	18.1
1996	39.0	26.6	9.7	13.6	19.1
1997	37.7	26.2	8.8	12.2	17.6
1998	38.2	27.4	6.9	12.6	18.1
1999	35.0	26.7	7.6	12.3	17.2
2000	32.5	24.4	7.4	12.5	16.5
2001	33.4	24.8	8.0	12.4	17.0
2002	34.9	26.3	9.1	13.8	18.2
2003	30.2	21.4	7.4	11.5	15.3
2004	25.4	15.9	5.2	9.6	12.8
2005	25.0	15.2	4.6	9.9	12.9
2006	21.8	12.2	4.5	8.8	11.1
2007	10.1	6.3	2.5	3.5	4.9
Source: MOE (2008a:12)					

For the period between 1993 to 2001 school leaver statistics by ethnic group were consistent: 14.9% to 18.8% range of Mäori students attaining NCEA Level 2 or above; 23.5% to 26.6% range of Pasefika students; 41.4% to 48% range of NZ European/Pākehā students; 58.9% to 69.9% range of Asian; and 37.0% to 42.7% of total school leavers. Pasefika (and Mäori) students were under-represented in this group.

The school leaver statistics in recent years have reflected a qualifications system that is in transition due to the phased rollout of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) between 2002 and 2004 (Education Counts Indicators, 2008:1). Between 2002 and 2007 the percentage of all school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above has been improving and the proportion leaving with low or no formal attainment has been decreasing. Pasefika (and Māori) school leavers however are consistently under-represented in all statistic groups. Only 56% of Pasefika leavers attained NCEA Level 2 or above in 2007 (compared to 65.5% of total school leavers, 84.2% Asian and 70.6% NZ European/Pākehā school leavers). For school leavers with low or no formal attainment, Pasefika school leavers have been declining since 2002 from 26.3% to 12.2% in 2006 and, significantly, 6.3% in 2007. Pasefika results are slightly higher than the 4.9% for total school leavers, 2.5% Asian and 3.5% NZ European/Pākehā. The proportion of Pasefika school leavers who left school without reaching a Level 1 qualification dropped from 32% in 2006 to 26% in 2007, slightly higher than the 24% and 18% for total school leavers, 9% and 7% for Asian, and 20% and 14% for NZ European/Pākehā school leavers.

NCEA attainment levels impact on the number of school leavers qualifying to attend university. Percentages of school leavers qualified to attend university have improved since 2002 for all ethnic groups. Although 20.2% of Pasefika school leavers in 2007 represents the largest percentage qualified to attend university since 1993, Pasefika are under-represented in this group compared with 65.7% of Asian school leavers, 44.0% of NZ European/Pākehā, and 39.0% of total school leavers.

At July 2007, of the 69,888 Pasefika domestic student population there was a total of 43,105 Pasefika students attending decile 1-3 schools, 19,115 attending decile 4-7 schools, and 7,155 attending decile 8-10 schools (MOE, 2008b:table 40). In other words, 62% of Pasefika students attend decile 1-3 schools compared with 10% of NZ European/Pākehā, 15% of Asian, and 47% of Māori students.

At 1 July 2008 there was a total of 71,322 (9.5%) Pasefika domestic student population.

APPENDIX 3

Features of target schools in Porirua

The following features of schools were obtained from ERO reports retrieved July 2, 2007, from www.tki.org.nz/e/schools/graphical_search.php?gs_region=Porirua_City.
Features are correct as at last ERO report to the end of 2007.

A school's Decile indicates the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. (Retrieved March 18, 2008, from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=7693&data=1;)

Full-primary (Years 1 to 8)	Decile	School Roll	Pasefika Student Ethnicity	Pasefika percentage of total student population
A	1	301	Samoan: 36% Tokelauan: 14% Cook Islands: 11%	61%
B	1	245	Samoan: 30% Cook Islands: 13% Tokelauan: 7% Tongan: 3% Niuean: 2%	55%
C	1	389	Samoan: 25% Cook Islands: 14% Tokelauan: 7%	46%
D	3	270	Samoan: 25% Cook Islands: 12% Tokelauan: 6% Tongan & Niuean: 1%	44%
E	2	364	Samoan: 16% Tokelauan: 13% Cook Islands: 9% Tongan: 3%	41%

Intermediate (Years 7 & 8)	Decile	School Roll	Pasefika Ethnicity	Pasefika percentage of total student population
F	1	229	Samoan: 31% Cook Islands: 18% Tokelauan: 12% Other Pasefika: 2%	63%
G	3	158	Samoan: 7% Tokelauan: 2% Other Pasefika: 1%	10%

College (Years 9 to 15)	Decile	School Roll	Pasefika Ethnicity	Pasefika percentage of total student population
H	1	591	Samoan: 35% Cook Islands: 14% Tokelauan: 16% Tuvaluan: 2% Fijian: 1% Niuean: 1%	69%
I	2	478	Samoan: 42% Tokelauan: 8% Cook Islands: 4% Other Pasefika (Tongan, Niuean, Tuvaluan, Kiribati):5%	59%
J	5	955	Samoan: 19% Cook Islands: 6% Tokelauan: 4%	29%
K	2	512	Samoan: 13% Cook Islands: 5% Tokelauan: 1% Fijian: 1% Other Pasefika: 1%	21%

Not included for this research were eight full-primary state schools all with a school roll over 100 (ranging from 163 to 426 students) and with a Pasefika student population below 20% (ranging from 1% to 11%). Of these eight schools five are decile 10, two are decile 9, and one is decile 2. One decile 2 state-integrated school with a Pasefika student population of 41% (34% Samoan, 4% Fijian, and 3% Tongan) was not included as it had a school roll of 58. The one private college from Year 7 to 15 was not included as it had no Pasefika students and a school roll of 71.

The Years 7 to 15 College and two contributing state-integrated primary schools are part of the Ministry of Education's *Pasifika School Community Parent Liaison Project* (PSCPL) since mid-2006. No other Porirua school is involved in the pilot project. The Coordinator is a qualified Samoan teacher, originally from Western Samoa, and currently teaching Samoan language at the College.

APPENDIX 4

Data publications and websites

School profiles and statistical data on national and local student outcomes (stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions, academic achievement outcomes etc) collated from electronic and printed data:

Ministry of Education publications and websites:

Achievement Porirua reports.

Education Statistics of New Zealand for 2005: Data management and analysis division,

http://educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz/indicators/engagement/simu20.htm

http://educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/hp-school-leavers.html

http://educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz/indicators/edachievmnt/simu6.html

ERO reports and school profiles obtained from

http://www.tki.org.nz/e/schools/graphical_search.php?gs_region=Porirua_City

Census 2006 for national, regional and city data obtained from Statistics NZ and Porirua Council City Profiles:

http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/2006-census-data/quickstats-about-nzs-pop-and-dwellings/quickstats-about-nzs-pop-and-dwellings.htm

http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/census-outputs/quickstats/snapshotplace2.htm?type=region&id=1000009&tab=CulturalDiversity?pdf=y

(QuickStats of Wellington Region)

http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/census-outputs/quickstats/snapshotplace2.htm?id=2000044&type=ta&ParentID=1000009

(QuickStats of Porirua)

www.pcc.govt.nz

APPENDIX 5

Information sheets to participants

The ethical procedures followed for this research are those prescribed in Massey University's *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of a thesis* (2008:19, 29, 30):

1. Completion of Screening Questionnaire to determine the approval procedure which required for this research the submission of an application to Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) as human participants were involved;

2. Completion of MUHEC Application form in consultation with two supervisors;

3. Completion of attachments to the Application form including:

   a. Information sheets for participants: parents/caregivers, teachers and students;

   b. Consent forms for participants and principals of schools, intermediates and colleges;

   c. Questionnaires and interview schedules for each group of participants;

   d. Transcriber's agreement;

   e. Authority for the release of audio-tape transcripts for participants; and

   f. Letter to principals requesting approval for use of database.

4. Submission of the original plus 12 copies of the Screening Questionnaire, Application form and attachments with the prior approval and signature of my supervisor to MUHEC.

This research project was reviewed and approved by Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 08/04 on 20 March 2008.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AND TEACHERS

Title*: Pasefika perceptions and experiences of the school system in Years 7 to 10.*

Malo le Soifua, Kia Orana, Taloha ni, Faka-alofa atu kia mutolu osi, Malo e lelei, Ni sa bula vinaka, Hello

My name is Dinah Ostler-Malaulau. I am completing a Master of Education degree at Massey University.

My thesis supervisor is Lesieli MacIntyre, Graduate School of Education at Massey University.

What is the Research about?
My research is to investigate the perceptions and experiences of eight Pasefika students, parents of four students and four Pasefika teachers about the school system in Years 7 to 10.

The questions that this research will attempt to answer focus on Years 7 to 10 in Porirua City:

1. How do Pasefika students and parents perceive and experience mainstream schooling?

2. What positive changes could be made to enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students?

How participants will be chosen

1. Student selection criteria

I will be contacting the four College Principals and Board of Trustees to ask for permission to select students according to the criteria below, and to obtain students' names and contact details for participation.

A total of four boys and four girls will be asked to take part in the study if they meet all of the following conditions:
- Pacific Islands only descent; and
- Currently in Year 11 at one of the four colleges; and
- Achieved a PAT (Progressive Achievement Test) Reading Comprehension result of stanine 5 (average) in Year 9 and/or 10; and
- Attended one of the following schools[148] for Years 7 & 8: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H; and
- Parents are available to participate and are fairly fluent in the English language; and
- Parents have given their consent for their child to participate.

Students cannot participate unless their parents have filled in the consent form and given it to their child to bring back to school.

---

[148] For the purpose of confidentiality school names are represented here by letters.

2. Parent/Caregiver selection criteria

I will be asking parents of four students to participate if they are:
1. of Pacific Islands only descent; and
2. available for participation; and
3. fairly fluent in the English language; and
4. consent to their child participating.

I won't be able to involve all eight parents/caregivers due to time constraints.

3. Educator selection criteria

From my contacts with Pasefika teachers I will be asking four educators (teachers, Deputy/Assistant Principals and Principals) of Pacific Islands only descent if they are able to participate (two from the intermediate level and two from the college level). Any teachers involved need to be teaching any of the Year levels 7, 8, 9 and/or 10 at one of the following schools and any Deputy/Assistant Principals involved need to be currently at one of the following schools[149]: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, or K.

What will you be asked to do?

Once students and parents have given consent to participate, students will be asked to fill in a 30-minute questionnaire that helps look at issues for the study. Students' personal information to be given is the student's age, ethnicity, birth place, if born overseas the length of time in New Zealand, and confirmation that they meet the selection criteria. A one-hour interview will be arranged later involving two students from the same school to clarify any issues raised in the questionnaire and discuss further other experiences and perceptions of schooling in Years 7 to 10. The student interviews will be held after-school. Students are allowed to have a friend attend the interview on the understanding that comments made by their friend will not be included in the research.

When parents have given their consent to participate, a 30-minute questionnaire will be given to fill out that helps look at issues for the study. Parents' personal information to be given is ethnicity, birth place, if born overseas the length of time in New Zealand, and level of education achieved. A one-hour interview at a place and time of parents' convenience will be arranged later.

Teachers available for participation will be given a questionnaire that helps look at issues for the study. Teachers' personal information to be given is ethnicity, birth place, if born overseas the length of time in New Zealand, level of education achieved, length of teaching experience, and position at school. A one-hour interview at a place and time of teachers' convenience will be arranged later.

There will be an audio-tape of the interview and I will also take notes of the interview. I will treat all information given in the interviews and from the questionnaires anonymously in my written research report.

---

[149] For the purpose of confidentiality school names are represented here by letters.

What will happen afterwards?

When the Principals of the schools and colleges have given their permission I will collect and present PAT data by year levels and ethnicity. PAT data will be gathered to find out what levels Pasefika students are achieving in Reading Comprehension and maths. This data will be compared with other statistics of Pasefika students nationally and non-Pasefika students locally and nationally. Schools will not be identified from the PAT data. The information collected will be stored for five years after which time it will be destroyed.

What are your rights?

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:
- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the research at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded;
- ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

When you complete and return the questionnaire it means that you have given your consent to be involved in the study. You have the right to decline to answer any particular question.

Human Ethics Committee Approval
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 08/04. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact:

Professor John O'Neill
Chair
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A
Telephone: (06) 350 5799 extension 8771
Email: humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz

How to contact the Researcher

Please contact me, Dinah Ostler-Malaulau or my supervisor, Lesieli MacIntyre, if you have any questions about the research:

Dinah Ostler-Malaulau
Telephone:
Email:

Lesieli MacIntyre
Graduate School of Education
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North
Telephone:
Email:

I will contact you in the next few days to see if you are interested in being involved in this study or you can contact me at any time.
Thank you for your time and I look forward to your contribution to this study.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS

Title: *Pasefika perceptions and experiences of the school system in Years 7 to 10.*

Malo le Soifua, Kia Orana, Taloha ni, Faka-alofa atu kia mutolu osi, Malo e lelei, Ni sa bula vinaka, Hi

My name is Dinah Ostler-Malaulau. I am completing a Master of Education degree at Massey University.

What's the Research for?

My research is to find out how eight Pasefika students, parents of four students and four Pasefika teachers have found the school system in Years 7 to 10.

I have three main questions to try and answer focusing on Years 7 to 10 in Porirua City:

1. How do Pasefika students and parents perceive and experience mainstream schooling?

2. What positive changes could be made to enhance schooling and the social and educational needs of Pasefika students?

Who is involved?

1. Students
I have to get permission from Principals to contact students for participation. Students must meet the following conditions:
- Pacific Islands only descent; and
- Currently in Year 11 at one of the four colleges; and
- Achieved a PAT (Progressive Achievement Test) Reading Comprehension result of stanine 5 (average) in Year 9 and/or 10; and
- Attended one of the following schools for Years 7 & 8: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H; and
- Your parents are available to participate and are fairly fluent in the English language; and
- Your parents have given consent for you to participate.

You cannot participate unless your parents have filled in the consent form and you have returned the consent form to school.

2. Parents
The parents of four students will be asked if they would like to participate and they need to be fairly fluent in the English language. I will not be able to involve all parents because of time.

3. Teachers
Four Pasefika teachers from some schools in Porirua City will be asked to participate also.

What will you be asked to do?

When your parents have given permission for you to participate, and if you would like to participate, then you will be asked to fill in a 30-minute questionnaire about the issues in this study. You will be asked some personal information such as your age, ethnicity, birth place, if

you were born overseas and the length of time you have been in New Zealand, and confirmation that you meet the selection conditions.

Later, I will interview you with another student at your college. The one-hour interview will be a time for you to ask questions you may have about the questionnaire and we will talk about other schooling experiences you had in Years 7 to 10. There will be an audio-tape of the interview and I will be taking notes. All information given in the interview and from the questionnaire will be treated anonymously in the written report. You can bring a friend, but your friend's ideas will not be recorded.

Parents and teachers will be given a questionnaire that helps look at issues for the study and later they will be interviewed.

What will happen afterwards?

When all the information has been collected I will write a report. There will be a summary of the findings available to you. Your name will not be used in the report. The information collected will be stored for five years and then destroyed.

What are your rights?

You do not have to participate. If you decide to participate you have the right to:
- not answer any particular question;
- pull out of the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the research at any time;
- give information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given a summary of the research findings when it is finished;
- ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

If your parents give their permission to let you be involved in the study and you complete and return the questionnaire, then you agree to participate. You do not have to answer any particular question.

Who approves this project?

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 08/04. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact
> Professor John O'Neill
> Chair
> Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A
> Telephone: (06) 350 5799 extension 8771
> Email: humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz

How to contact the Researcher

Please contact me, Dinah Ostler-Malaulau or my supervisor, Lesieli MacIntyre, if you have any questions about the research:

Dinah Ostler-Malaulau
Telephone:
Email:

Lesieli MacIntyre
Graduate School of Education
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North
Telephone:
Email:

I will contact you once your parents have given their consent for you to be involved.
Thank you for your time and I look forward to your contribution to the study.

APPENDIX 6

Questionnaire & Interview Schedules

Student questionnaire

1.   If you make a mistake put a cross through the error.
   Thinking about your school in YEARS 7 & 8, tick the box that best describes how you felt about an item:

Years 7 & 8 MY LAST SCHOOL WAS A PLACE WHERE....	Always	Almost Always	Usually	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never
Engagement in school					
The discipline rules were fair					
I liked the teachers					
I enjoyed learning					
I got tired of trying					
I got too much work to do					
I got too much homework					
I wanted to leave as soon as I could					
It was boring					
We kept doing the same things without learning anything new					
Confidence in school					
I felt I belonged					
I felt safe					
I got all the help I needed					
It was important to do my best					
My teachers taught me all the things I needed for college					
I liked my class					
I liked school					
I liked the way school did things					
Academic ability in school					
I was confident I could master the skills taught					
Most things were pretty easy to learn					
I didn't know how to do the work					
I understood the language used at Years 7 & 8					
We were taught to be organised and prepared for learning at school					
When we finished our work, we had to check to see it was correct					
When we had to write something, we had to think about whether we understood what we were doing					
Assessments (like tests) were used to help us work on the things we hadn't learned.					
I needed more time to learn the skills taught					
When I didn't learn the skills taught, I got extra time and help until I learned it.					

Based on Wylie & Hipkins (2006) "Growing Independence: Competent Learners @ 14" and Wylie, Hodgen & Ferral (2006) "Completely different or a bigger version" Experiences and effects of the transition to secondary school"

2. If you make a mistake put a cross through the error.

Thinking about your college in YEARS 9 & 10, tick the box that best describes how you feel about an item:

Years 9 & 10 MY COLLEGE IS A PLACE WHERE....	Always	Almost Always	Usually	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never
Engagement in school					
The discipline rules are fair					
I like the teachers					
I enjoy learning					
I get tired of trying					
I get too much work to do					
I get too much homework					
I want to leave as soon as I can					
It is boring					
We keep doing the same things without learning anything new					
Confidence in school					
I feel I belong					
I feel safe					
I get all the help I need					
It is important to do my best					
My teachers teach me all the things I need for NCEA					
I like my class					
I like college					
I like the way college does things					
Academic ability in school					
I am confident I can master the skills taught					
Most things are pretty easy to learn					
I don't know how to do the work					
I understand the language used at Years 9 & 10					
We are taught to be organised and prepared for learning at college					
When we finish our work, we have to check to see it is correct					
When we have to write something, we have to think about whether we understand what we are doing					
Assessments (like tests) are used to help us work on the things we haven't learned.					
I need more time to learn the skills taught					
When I don't learn the skills taught, I get extra time and help until I have learned it.					

Based on Wylie & Hipkins (2006) "Growing Independence: Competent Learners @ 14" and Wylie, Hodgen & Ferral (2006) "Completely different or a bigger version" Experiences and effects of the transition to secondary school"

3. Thinking about what makes a good teacher, list in order of preference from 1 (really important) to 9 (not at all important) the following things:

☐ Sense of humour
☐ Knows my cultural background
☐ Well organised and prepared for lessons
☐ Knows the subject
☐ Able to relate to the students
☐ Fairness and respect
☐ A Pasefika teacher
☐ Fun & creative lessons
☐ Uses examples of my culture to help me understand

4. Make a list of the things your school did to help you to learn and achieve well in Years 7 & 8.

5. Make a list of the things your college does to help you to learn and achieve well in Years 9 & 10.

6. Make a list of the things your school did that got in the way of you learning and achieving well in Years 7 & 8.

7. Make a list of the things your school does that gets in the way of you learning and achieving well in Years 9 & 10.

Identity

8. Tick how important it is for you that the school and teachers know your culture:

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ Not important	☐ Not important
☐ A little important	☐ A little important
☐ Important	☐ Important
☐ Quite important	☐ Quite important
☐ Definitely important	☐ Definitely important

9. Tick how much the culture of the school (the way things are done) influences how well you do at school?

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ No influence	☐ No influence
☐ A little influence	☐ A little influence
☐ Some influence	☐ Some influence
☐ Quite a lot of influence	☐ Quite a lot of influence
☐ A lot of influence	☐ A lot of influence

10. Tick how much your culture influences how well you do at school?

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ No influence	☐ No influence
☐ A little influence	☐ A little influence
☐ Some influence	☐ Some influence
☐ Quite a lot of influence	☐ Quite a lot of influence
☐ A lot of influence	☐ A lot of influence

11. What things do you do or things about you that identify you as a Pasefika student?

12. How does your ability to speak and understand English affect how well you do at school?

13. How does your ability to speak and understand a Pacific Islands language affect how well you do at school?

14. How does your home life prepare and help you with school?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.
I will contact you after one week to arrange collection of the questionnaire.
Thank you for your time.

Student interview

Instructions
- For each question you can talk and write your answers on your sheet. You don't have to write if you don't want to.
- If you have the same answers that's o.k. There are no right or wrong answers. There's no put downs about someone's answers.
- For each question answer for both sides of your sheet.

Questions for the sheets
Do you have any questions about the questionnaire?

1. What words would you use to describe each school?
2. What things were
     (a) the same at each school
     (b) different at each school
     (c) great at each school
     (d) dumb at each school?

3. (a) Tell me about how each school was organised and the way it did things (classes, timetable - for playtime, class time, library, computer time, sports, music and cultural practices, number of teachers, discipline)?
     (b) What changes would you make about any of these things (like the number of teachers you have, moving to different classrooms each period)?

4. What did the schools do to make you feel
     (a) safe?
     (b) you belonged?
     (c) it was interesting?

5. How did you know when you were doing well at school?
6. What things at school did you know you were
     (a) good at?
     (b) not good at?
7. What things did you have to be good at doing or knowing? What happened when you weren't good at doing or knowing these things?
8. What happened when:
     (a) You didn't learn stuff?
     (b) You needed help with schoolwork?
     (c) You needed help with other things?
     (d) What would you change about any of these things?
9. Was there enough time to do all the things you had to do at school (like learning Maths and English)? What happened when there wasn't enough time? What would you change?

10. How well prepared or ready for college were you (academically and socially)?
11. Tell me about the transition between Year 8 and Year 9 for you? What would you change?

12. Is there anything you can suggest that would make each school better/easier/improve for students around academic and social needs in the future and why?

Student interview

General Questions

1. Explain how prepared you are for NCEA this year?

2. What things during Years 7 to 10 helped you to be ready this year?

3. What do PASEFIKA STUDENTS need to do to be good learners and to achieve?

4. What do PASEFIKA PARENTS need to do to help their child to be good learners and to achieve?

5. What do SCHOOLS need to do to help Pasefika students to be good learners and to achieve?

6. Is there anything you know now, that would have been useful if you'd been told about it before Year 9? Before Year 11?

7. What do you think causes Pasefika students not to do as well as Palagi, Chinese or Indian students? (the way the school is structured, its processes, the way students are grouped by age/year levels, parents involvement, school culture and attitude...)

8. (Diagram) At the moment we have primary schools up to Year 8, intermediates and a college starting at Year 7. What do you think about a separate school that would go from Years 7 to 10?

9. If there was a separate school with just Years 7 to 10, what would make it better than what we have now?

10. What do you think about an extra year (more time) for students to prepare for NCEA? i.e. if Years 9 & 10 say was spread over three years instead of two years so students would be at the level needed to do NCEA or say an extra year after Year 8?

11. Would you be concerned at how long you stayed at school to get all the NCEA qualifications? Why?

12. Is there anything else you'd like to mention?

Thank you/Fa'afetai lava

Parent/caregiver questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
It should take up to 30 minutes to complete.
Please write clearly.
Use the other side of the paper if you need to.
If you have any problems answering the questions please contact me:
    Dinah Ostler-Malaulau
    Phone:
    Email:

Name:

Relationship to the student:

Country of Birth:

If you were born overseas, when did you arrive in New Zealand?

What is your highest educational qualification?

Ethnicity (tick the ethnic groups you identify with):
- □ Samoan
- □ Cook Islands
- □ Tokelauan
- □ Niuean
- □ Tongan
- □ Fijian
- □ Kiribati
- □ Tuvaluan
- □ Other Pasefika (please state):

What is your first language?

Does your child speak your first language well?

Which language is used most at home?

Parent/caregiver questionnaire

1. What do you hope for your child while they are at college?

2. What do you hope for your child when they finish college?

3. What things might stop your child from getting NCEA?

4. What things help your child to learn and achieve?

5. Do you have expectations or rules about homework?   Yes/No
6. Did you help your child with homework when they were in Years 7 & 8?   Yes/No
7. Did you help your child with homework when they were in Years 9 & 10?   Yes/No
8. In what ways do you help your child with homework, studying or school work?

9. Are there any things about intermediate and college that makes it easy for you to help support your child's learning?

10. Are there any things about intermediate or college that makes it difficult for you to help support your child's learning?

11. Which subjects and level do you help your child with?

12. Which subjects and level do you have difficulty helping your child with?

13. Thinking about the support your child gets from their school in relation to ACADEMIC NEEDS tick one of the following for each of the year levels:

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ No support at all	☐ No support at all
☐ Little support	☐ Little support
☐ Good support	☐ Good support
☐ Very Good support	☐ Very Good support
☐ Fantastic support	☐ Fantastic support

14. Thinking about the support your child gets from their school in relation to SOCIAL NEEDS, tick one of the following for each of the year levels:

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ No support at all	☐ No support at all
☐ Little support	☐ Little support
☐ Good support	☐ Good support
☐ Very Good support	☐ Very Good support
☐ Fantastic support	☐ Fantastic support

15. Tick the types of involvement you have had at your child's schools for each year level:

	YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
Parent-Teacher interviews		
Attendance at school meetings and functions		
Regular talks with teacher		
Irregular contact/very little contact		
Voluntary work at school other than the classroom		
No involvement		
Board of Trustees'/Parents' Association member		
Paid work at school		
Voluntary work at school in the classroom		
Other (please state):		

16. Tick how important it is for you that the school and teachers know your child's cultural background:

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ Not important	☐ Not important
☐ A little important	☐ A little important
☐ Important	☐ Important
☐ Quite important	☐ Quite important
☐ Definitely important	☐ Definitely important

17. Tick how much the culture of the school (the way things are done) influences how well the child does at school?

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ No influence	☐ No influence
☐ A little influence	☐ A little influence
☐ Some influence	☐ Some influence
☐ Quite a lot of influence	☐ Quite a lot of influence
☐ A lot of influence	☐ A lot of influence

18. Tick how much the child's culture influences how well the child does at school?

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
No influence	No influence
A little influence	A little influence
Some influence	Some influence
Quite a lot of influence	Quite a lot of influence
A lot of influence	A lot of influence

19. What changes, if any, would you make during Years 7 to 10 to make schooling better?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.
I will contact you after one week to arrange collection of the questionnaire.
Thank you for your time.

Parent/caregiver interview

Do you have any questions from the questionnaire?

Years 7 & 8
These questions are about your child's school in Years 7 & 8.

1. What was your child's intermediate school like? (Discuss, if needed, answers from the questionnaire)

2. How did your child's Years 7 & 8 school make you feel welcomed and part of the school? What changes would you make?

3. How well do you think your child's intermediate school prepared your child for college? What changes would you make?

4. Is there anything you know now about your child's intermediate that would have been useful if you'd been told about it before your child started intermediate?

Years 9 & 10
These questions are about your child's college in Years 9 & 10.

5. What has your child's college been like? (Discuss, if needed, answers from the questionnaire)

6. How did your child's college make you feel welcomed and part of the college? What changes would you make?

7. How ACADEMICALLY prepared was your child for college (could they handle the work)? What changes would you make?

8. How SOCIALLY prepared was your child for college (did they have study skills, independent learning skills, organisational skills, was old enough to handle college life)? What changes would you make?

9. How well did your child adjust to college?

10. How well do you think your child's college has prepared your child for NCEA this year? What changes would you make?

11. Is there anything you know now about your child's college that would have been useful if you'd been told about it before your child started college?

Parent/caregiver interview

General
These are general questions.

12. What do PASEFIKA STUDENTS need to do to be good learners and to achieve?

13. What do PASEFIKA PARENTS need to do to help their child to be good learners and to achieve?

14. What do SCHOOLS need to do to help Pasefika students to be good learners and to achieve?

15. What do you think causes Pasefika students not to do as well as Palagi, Chinese & Indian students? (the way the school is structured, its processes, the way students are grouped by age/year levels, parents involvement, school culture and attitude…)

16. At the moment we have primary schools up to Year 8, intermediates and a college starting at Year 7. What do you think about a separate school that would go from Years 7 to 10?

17. If there was a separate school with just Years 7 to 10, what would make it better than what we have now?

18. What do you think about an extra year (more time) for students to prepare for NCEA? i.e. if Years 9 & 10 say was spread over three years instead of two years so students would be at the level needed to do NCEA or say an extra year after Year 8?

19. Would you be concerned at how long your child stayed at school to get all the NCEA qualifications? Why?

20. Is there anything else you would like to mention?

Thank you/Fa'afetai lava

Teacher questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

It should take up to 30-minutes to complete.

Please write clearly.

Use the other side of the paper if you need to.

If you have any problems answering the questions please contact me:

       Dinah Ostler-Malaulau

       Phone:

       Email:

Name:

Country of Birth:

If you were born overseas, when did you arrive in New Zealand?

What is your first language?

What is your position at the school?

How long have you been a teacher?

Have you taught in the Pacific Islands?

Ethnicity (tick the ethnic groups you identify with):

- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Cook Islands
- ☐ Tokelauan
- ☐ Niuean
- ☐ Tongan
- ☐ Fijian
- ☐ Kiribati
- ☐ Tuvaluan
- ☐ Other Pasefika (please state):

Tick the appropriate box or boxes to indicate the year level(s) you work with:

       Year 7 & 8

       Year 9 & 10

Teacher questionnaire

1. Make a list of the things your school/college does well to improve Pasefika students' social and educational needs?

2. Make a list of the things your school/college needs to do to improve Pasefika students' social and educational needs?

3. Tick in the appropriate column(s) the types of involvement available to parents at your school:

	YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
Parent-Teacher interviews		
Attendance at school meetings and functions		
Regular talks with teacher		
Irregular contact/very little contact		
Voluntary work at school other than the classroom		
No involvement		
Board of Trustees'/Parents' Association member		
Paid work at school		
Voluntary work at school in the classroom		
Other (please state):		

4. Thinking about how important students' cultural background is to the school, tick one of the following statements:

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ Not important	☐ Not important
☐ A little important	☐ A little important
☐ Important	☐ Important
☐ Quite important	☐ Quite important
☐ Definitely important	☐ Definitely important

5. Tick how important it is for you that the school and teachers know children's cultural background:

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ Not important	☐ Not important
☐ A little important	☐ A little important
☐ Important	☐ Important
☐ Quite important	☐ Quite important
☐ Definitely important	☐ Definitely important

6. Tick how much the culture of the school (the way things are done) influences how well the child does at school?

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ No influence	☐ No influence
☐ A little influence	☐ A little influence
☐ Some influence	☐ Some influence
☐ Quite a lot of influence	☐ Quite a lot of influence
☐ A lot of influence	☐ A lot of influence

7. Tick how much the child's culture influences how well the child does at school?

YEARS 7 & 8	YEARS 9 & 10
☐ No influence	☐ No influence
☐ A little influence	☐ A little influence
☐ Some influence	☐ Some influence
☐ Quite a lot of influence	☐ Quite a lot of influence
☐ A lot of influence	☐ A lot of influence

8. General comments:

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.
Please phone me when to collect the questionnaire, otherwise I will contact you after one week.

Teacher interview

Do you have any questions from the questionnaire?

Years 7 & 8 Teachers' questions

1. How well do you think your school prepares Pasefika students for college ACADEMICALLY (proficient at Level 4 knowledge and skills)? What changes would you make?

2. How well do you think your school prepares Pasefika students for college SOCIALLY (study skills, independent learning skills, organisational skills, responsibility for self)? What changes would you make?

3. What issues, if any, do you find with Pasefika students ACADEMIC work?

4. What issues, if any, do you find with Pasefika students SOCIAL skills (study skills, independent learning skills, organisational skills, mature enough to handle school/college life)?

5. Tell me about the connections and transition for Pasefika students between your school and the colleges? What changes would you make?

Years 9 & 10 Teachers' questions

1. Tell me about the connections and transition for Pasefika students from Year 8 to Year 9? What changes would you make?

2. How well do you think your college prepares Pasefika students for NCEA ACADEMICALLY (proficiency at Level 4/5 knowledge and skills)?

3. How well do you think your college prepares Pasefika students for NCEA SOCIALLY (study skills, independent learning skills, organisational skills, responsibility for self)?

4. What issues, if any, do you find with Pasefika students ACADEMIC work?

5. What issues, if any, do you find with Pasefika students SOCIAL skills (study skills, independent learning skills, organisational skills, mature enough to handle school/college life)?

Teacher interview

General Questions

1. How well do you think Pasefika PARENTS are welcomed and made to feel part of your school/college? What changes would you make?

2. How well do you think Pasefika STUDENTS are welcomed and made to feel part of your school/college? What changes would you make?

3. How well do you think Pasefika EDUCATORS are welcomed and made to feel part of your school/college? What changes would you make?

4. Can you tell me more about your answers to questions 1 and 2 from the questionnaire?

5. What do PASEFIKA STUDENTS need to do to be good learners and to achieve?

6. What do PASEFIKA PARENTS need to do to help their child be good learners and to achieve?

7. What do SCHOOLS need to do to help Pasefika students be good learners and to achieve?

8. What do you think causes Pasefika students not to do as well as Palagi, Chinese & Indian students? (the way the school is structured, its processes, the way students are grouped by age/year levels, parents involvement, school culture and attitude…)

9. (Diagram) At the moment we have full primary schools, intermediates and a college starting at Year 7. What do you think about a separate school that would go from Years 7 to 10?

10. If there was a separate school with just Years 7 to 10, what would make it better than what we have now?

11. What do you think about an extra year (more time) for students to prepare for NCEA? i.e. if Years 9 & 10 say was spread over three years instead of two years so students would be at the level needed to do NCEA or say an extra year after Year 8?

12. Would you be concerned at how long should children stayed at school to get all the NCEA qualifications? Why?

13. Is there anything else you'd like to mention?

Thank you/Fa'afetai lava

APPENDIX 7

asTTle[150] conversion to stanine norm-reference score

The following conversion table was created to convert *asTTle* data from two colleges into stanines:

Curriculum Level	*asTTle* Reading scale score	Year 7 Stanine score	Year 8 Stanine score	Year 9 Stanine score	Year 10 Stanine score
< 2B	100-305	1	1	1	1
2B	306-370	2	1	1	1
2P	371-445	3	2	1	1
2A	446-484	4	3	2	1
3B	485-525	5	4	3	2
3P	526-550	6	5	4	2
3A	551-575	6	6	4	3
4B	576-614	7	7	5	4
4P	615-655	8	8	6	4
4A	656-705	9	9	6	5
5B	706-742	9	9	7	6
5P	743-772			8	6
5A	773-813			9	7
6B	814-845			9	8
6P	846-886			9	9
6A	887-950			9	9
>6A	951+				

Notes:
1. In reality there are no lower bounds for <2B and no upper bounds for >6A.
2. The terms Basic, Proficient and Advanced (B, P, A) label student progress through the levels, referring to the early, middle and late stages of development within each curriculum level.
3. Stanine scores 1 to 3 measure 'below average' (red), 4 to 6 'average' (yellow), and 7 to 9 'above average' (blue). Stanines match close to *STAR* stanines. Very small variance exists between *asTTle* and *STAR* stanines.

asTTle is an educational software resource for assessing literacy and numeracy in Years 5 to 10 developed for the MOE by the University of Auckland. Briefly, the 'paper and pencil tests' provides teachers, students and parents with information about a student's level of achievement, relative to the curriculum achievement outcomes for Levels 2 to 6 and national norms of performance for students in Years 4 to 12.

A stanine is a type of scaled score used in many norm-referenced standardized tests. The underlying basis for obtaining stanines is that a normal distribution is divided into nine intervals. The mean lies approximately in the centre of the fifth interval. The nine stanine units (the term is short for "standard nine-point scale"), range from 9 to 1. Typically, stanine scores are interpreted as 'above average' (9, 8, 7) of which 23% of the population will lie

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[150] *Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning.*

theoretically, 'average' (6, 5, 4) representing 54% of the population, and 'below average' (3, 2, 1) representing 23% of the population.

asTTle scale scores are converted to curriculum level scores (Level 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) and vice versa. Using *asTTle V4 Manual 1.1, Chapter 4*[151] curriculum level scores were converted to stanine norm-referenced scores peculiar to *asTTle*. Most schools in this study use *STAR* which helps teachers to make more accurate judgments about different aspects of a student's reading ability in Years 3 to 9. It is difficult to equate stanines across assessment tools (from *asTTle* to *STAR*) hence the conversion table should be undertaken with caution.

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[151] Table 4.8 "Levels Cut Scores for Reading, Writing and Mathematics by Scale Scores" p.17 and Figure 4.5 "Stanine Distribution of asTTle Reading Scale Scores by Year" p.19. retrieved June 10, 2008, from http://www.tki.org.nz/r/asttle/pdf/chapter4.pdf

APPENDIX 8

Findings of Years 7 to 10 *STAR/asTTle* stanines results

Table 1 lists the number of students in each Pasefika ethnic group by Year level.
Tables 2 to 5 list in Year levels the number of students in each Pasefika ethnic group by stanine levels.

Table 1: Number of Pasefika students by Year Level	Year Levels				
Ethnicity	7	8	9	10	Total students by ethnicity
Samoan	101	71	123	109	404
Cook Islands	14	20	28	45	107
Tongan	5	3	3	3	14
Niuean	2	1	6	1	10
Fijian	2	1	2	1	6
Tokelauan	25	20	36	31	112
Tuvaluan	4	3	0	1	8
Kiribati	0	1	6	1	8
Other PI	2	2	7	3	14
Total Pasefika students by Year Level	155	122	211	195	683

Table 2: Number of Year 7 Pasefika students by Stanine Levels	Stanine Levels									Total students by ethnicity
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Samoan	7	13	27	23	14	12	3	1	1	101
Cook Islands	0	3	3	5	0	2	0	1	0	14
Tongan	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	5
Niuean	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Fijian	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Tokelauan	1	6	3	8	3	3	0	1	0	25
Tuvaluan	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Kiribati	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other PI	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total students by stanine	11	23	36	40	18	17	5	4	1	155

Stanines 1 to 3 (in red) represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 (in yellow) represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 (in blue) represent 'above average' range.

Table 3: Number of Year 8 Pasefika students by Stanine Levels	Stanine Levels									Total students by ethnicity
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Samoan	6	7	16	23	10	6	2	1	0	71
Cook Islands	1	1	4	8	4	0	1	1	0	20
Tongan	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Niuean	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Fijian	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Tokelauan	2	2	2	6	6	2	0	0	0	20
Tuvaluan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Kiribati	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other PI	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total students by stanine	13	11	24	39	21	8	3	2	1	122

Stanines 1 to 3 (in red) represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 (in yellow) represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 (in blue) represent 'above average' range.

Table 4: Number of Year 9 Pasefika students by Stanine Levels	Stanine Levels									
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total students by ethnicity
Samoan	32	21	17	20	12	13	7	0	1	123
Cook Islands	1	4	9	7	1	3	3	0	0	28
Tongan	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Niuean	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	6
Fijian	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Tokelauan	9	3	11	4	4	3	2	0	0	36
Tuvaluan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kiribati	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Other PI	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	7
Total students by stanine	48	30	44	34	20	21	12	0	2	211

Stanines 1 to 3 (in red) represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 (in yellow) represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 (in blue) represent 'above average' range.

Table 5: Number of Year 10 Pasefika students by Stanine Levels	Stanine Levels									
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total students by ethnicity
Samoan	11	16	14	26	20	14	8	0	0	109
Cook Islands	4	7	2	12	13	2	5	0	0	45
Tongan	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
Niuean	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fijian	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tokelauan	4	6	4	7	5	5	0	0	0	31
Tuvaluan	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Kiribati	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other PI	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Total students by stanine	21	29	20	49	40	23	13	0	0	195

Stanines 1 to 3 (in red) represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 (in yellow) represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 (in blue) represent 'above average' range.

1.   Findings of Years 7 and 8 *STAR/asTTle* stanine scores

Tables 6 and 7 show data collected from seven schools, involving a total of 321 Year 7 students and 291 Year 8 students for 2007/8. Palagi student data shows small trends for comparison, although data from non-participating schools may have provided significant trends for comparison. Linear trends by ethnicity are shown in Graphs 1 and 2, and box-plots of stanine spreads by ethnicity are shown in Graphs 3 and 4. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 6: Number of all Year 7 students by Stanine Levels	Stanine Levels									
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total students by ethnicity
Pasefika	11	23	36	40	18	17	5	4	1	155
Mäori	4	11	16	34	30	11	12	3	3	124
Palagi/European	1	2	3	11	5	5	6	0	1	34
Asian	0	1	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	7
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total students by stanine	16	37	55	88	54	35	24	7	5	321

Stanines 1 to 3 (in red) represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 (in yellow) represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 (in blue) represent 'above average' range.
'Asian' students consisted of the following ethnicities: Indian, Indian-Fijian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino, Burmese/Myanmar, Laotian, and Afghani.

Table 7: Number of all Year 8 students by Stanine Levels	Stanine Levels									
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total students by ethnicity
Pasefika	13	11	24	39	21	8	3	2	1	122
Mäori	3	6	11	31	21	18	8	0	1	99
Palagi/European	6	2	5	9	12	6	7	6	3	56
Asian	2	3	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	12
Other	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total students by stanine	25	22	42	81	58	32	18	8	5	291

Stanines 1 to 3 (in red) represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 (in yellow) represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 (in blue) represent 'above average' range.
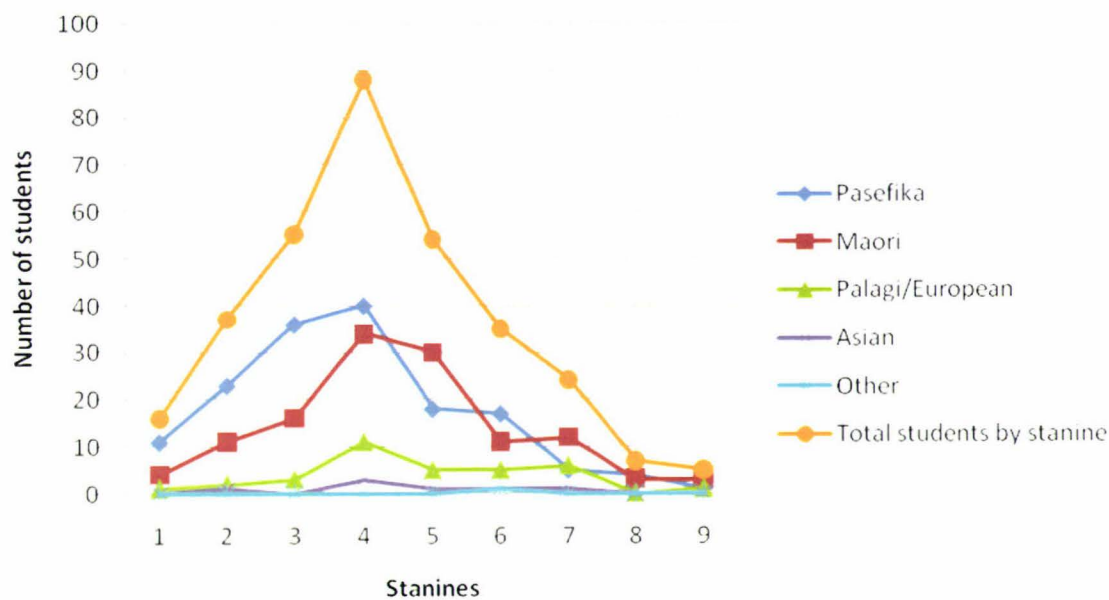'Asian' students consisted of the following ethnicities: Indian, Indian-Fijian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino, Burmese/Myanmar, Laotian, and Afghani.

Graph 1: **Year 7 Stanines by ethnicity**

Graph 2: **Year 8 Stanines by ethnicity**

Graph 3: **Year 7 Stanine spreads by ethnicity**
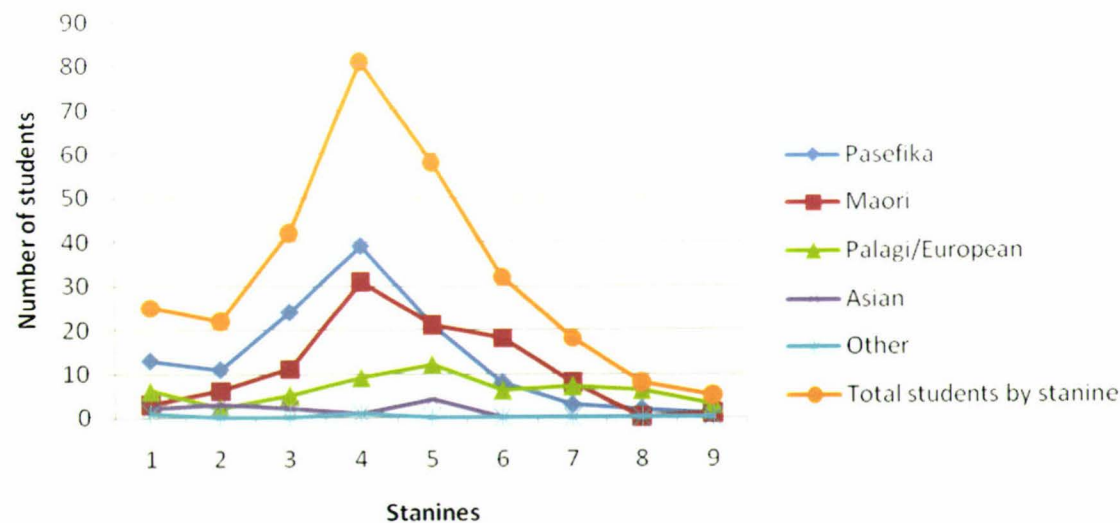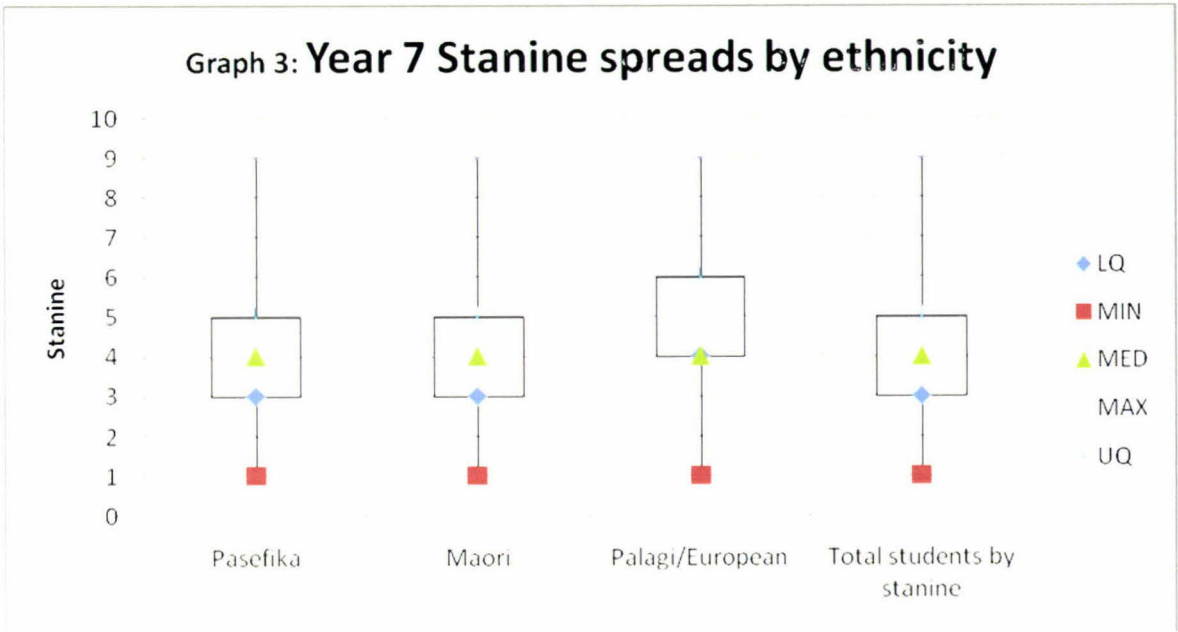
LQ=lower quartile; MIN=minimum; MED=median; MAX=maximum; UQ=upper quartile

Graph 4: **Year 8 Stanine spreads by ethnicity**
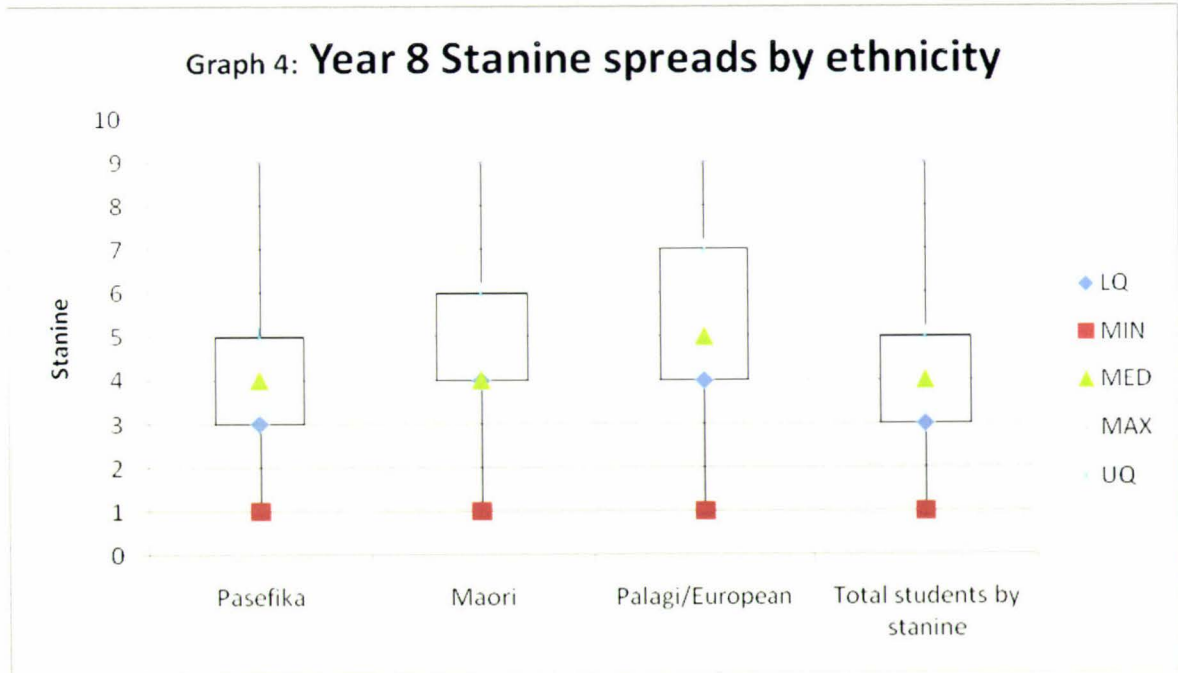
1.1.   Year 7 findings

Of the 155 Year 7 Pasefika students, 45% (70 students) achieved 'below average' reading stanine scores, 48% (75 students) 'average', and only 6.5% (10 students) achieved 'above average'.   Of the 'average' students just over half (40 students) scored stanine 4 hence median[152] of 4.   Ninety-four students (61%) achieved between the lower quartile[153] (stanine 3) and the upper quartile[154] (stanine 5), and the skewed linear graph represents the three-quarters of students achieving below stanine 5.   The achievements of Mäori (n=124) and Palagi (n=34) students were better: 60% and 62% respectively achieved 'average' scores; 15% and 21% respectively achieved 'above average' scores.

The majority of all students achieving 'below average' were Pasefika students (65%) followed by Mäori (29%).   Pasefika and Mäori students each represented 42% of all students achieving 'average' stanine scores.   Fifty percent of all students achieving 'above average' were Mäori students while only 28% were Pasefika.   The graph for all students fits a normal distribution though skewed left of 'average', centred at the median stanine 4 with 61% of all students scoring between the quartiles (stanines 3 and 5).

1.2.   Year 8 findings

Thirty-nine percent of the 122 Year 8 Pasefika students scored 'below average', 56% scored 'average', but only 5% achieved 'above average' scores.   69% achieved in the quartile range stanine 3 to 5.   The data fits a normal distribution graph centred at the median, stanine 4. Again, Mäori (n=99) and Palagi (n=56) results were better: 71% and 48% respectively achieving 'average'; 9% and 29% 'above average' scores.

The majority of all 89 students achieving 'below average' were Pasefika students (54%), compared with Mäori (22%) and Palagi (15%).   Year 8 'average' score results were 40% Pasefika and 41% Mäori students.   Of all the students achieving 'above average' scores few were Pasefika and Mäori students, 19% and 29 % respectively, while 52% were Palagi students.   Only 42% of all Year 8 students achieved stanine 5 or better compared with 58% of all Year 8 students achieving stanine 4 or less.   The graph for all students fits a normal distribution at the median stanine 4, with 62% of students scoring between the quartiles, stanines 3 and 5.

2.   Findings of Years 9 and 10 *STAR/asTTle* stanine scores

Tables 8 and 9 represent data collected from four colleges involving a total of 529 Year 9 students and 471 Year 10 students for 2007/2008.   The Asian student population is very small at the four colleges (n=37), so trends for comparison are not possible.   Of all the Palagi students 81% (96 students) Year 9 and 76% (69 students) Year 10 are from one college. Similarly, Mäori students dominate another college with 44% (79) of all Year 9 Mäori students and 53% (87) Year 10.   A third college has 48% (101) of all Year 9 Pasefika students and 40% (78) Year 10.   The fourth college also has predominantly Pasefika students.   Linear trends by ethnicity are shown in Graphs 5 and 6, and box-plots of stanine spreads by ethnicity are shown in Graphs 7 and 8.   Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

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[152] Half of all students are achieving below the middle value
[153] A quarter of all students are achieving below the lower quartile value
[154] Three-quarters of all students are achieving below the upper quartile value

Table 8: Number of all Year 9 students by Stanine Levels	Stanine Levels									Total students by ethnicity
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Pasefika	48	30	44	34	20	21	12	0	2	211
Mäori	23	19	19	37	28	31	10	5	6	178
Palagi/European	3	3	4	8	6	32	18	11	33	118
Asian	4	1	2	3	0	4	2	1	2	19
Other	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Total students by stanine	80	53	69	82	54	88	43	17	43	529

Stanines 1 to 3 (in red) represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 (in yellow) represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 (in blue) represent 'above average' range.
'Asian' students consisted of the following ethnicities: Indian, Indian-Fijian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino, Burmese/Myanmar, Laotian, and Afghani.

Table 9: Number of all Year 10 students by Stanine Levels	Stanine Levels									Total students by ethnicity
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Pasefika	21	29	20	49	40	23	13	0	0	195
Mäori	14	8	20	27	38	34	12	10	2	165
Palagi/European	0	3	2	7	15	28	23	8	5	91
Asian	1	4	1	5	0	2	4	1	0	18
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total students by stanine	36	44	43	88	94	87	53	19	7	471

Stanines 1 to 3 (in red) represent 'below average' range, stanines 4 to 6 (in yellow) represent 'average' range, stanines 7 to 9 (in blue) represent 'above average' range.
'Asian' students consisted of the following ethnicities: Indian, Indian-Fijian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino, Burmese/Myanmar, Laotian, and Afghani.

Graph 5: **Year 9 Stanines by ethnicity**
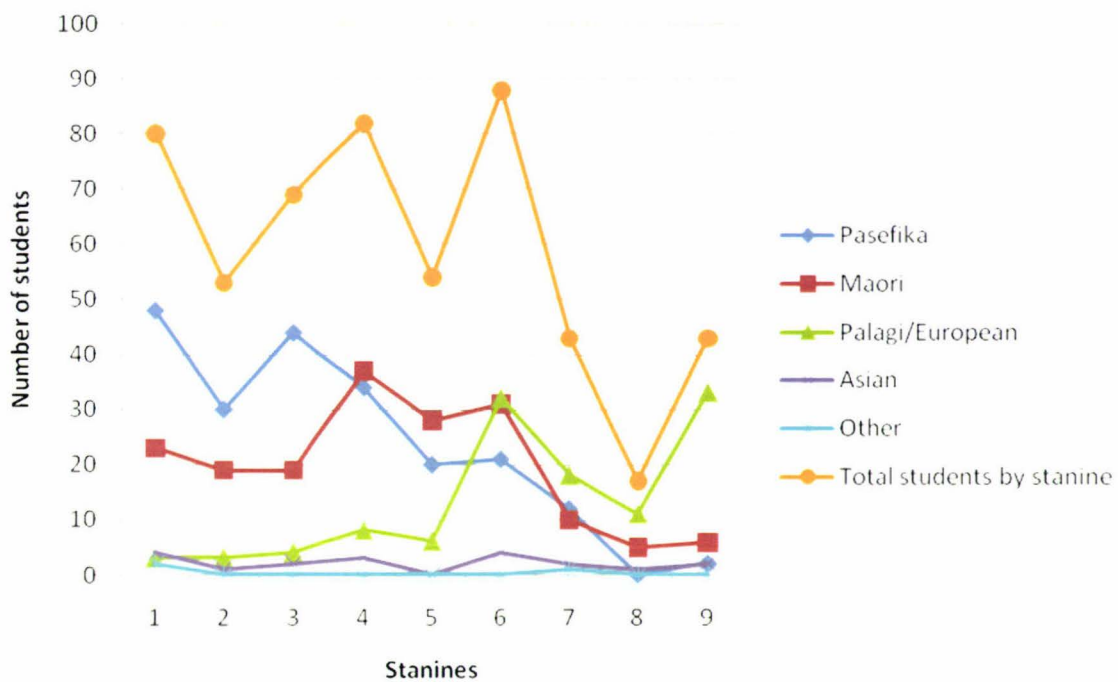
Graph 6: **Year 10 Stanines by ethnicity**
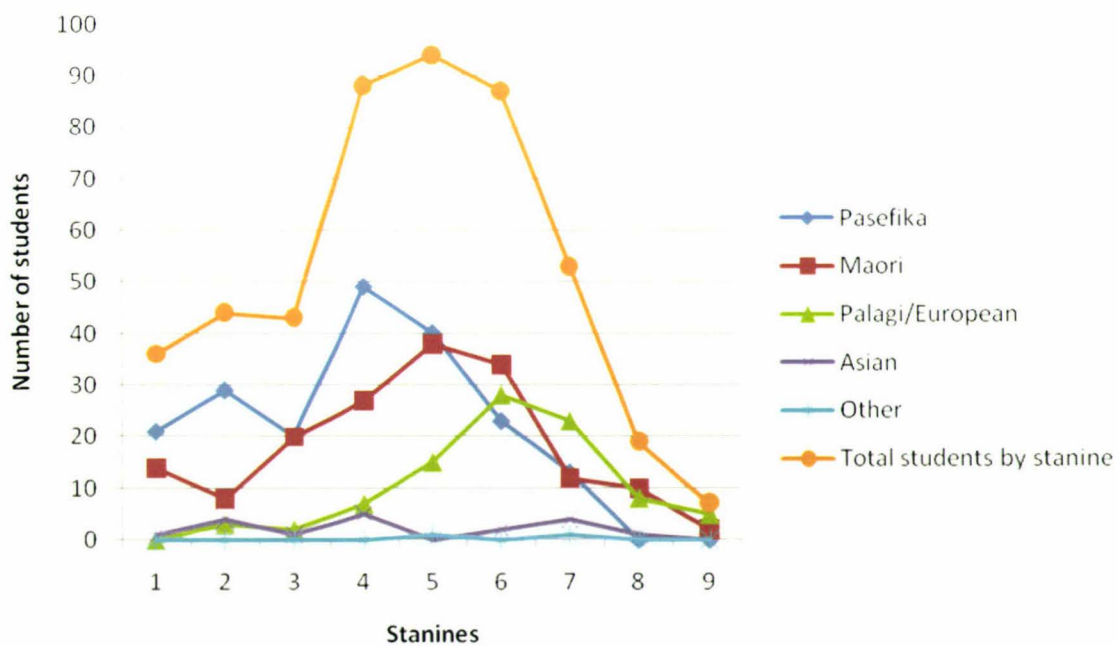
Graph 7: **Year 9 Stanine spreads by ethnicity**
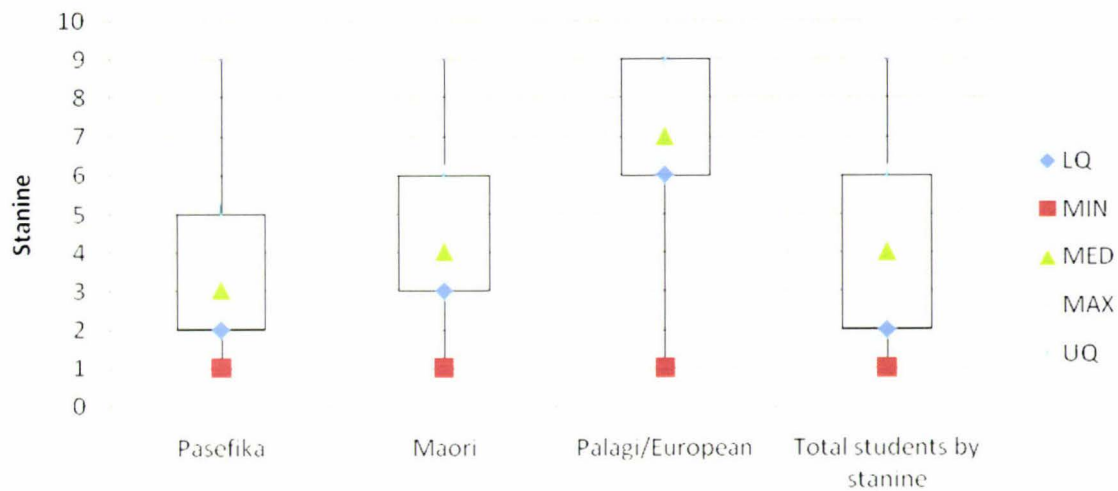
Graph 8: **Year 10 Stanine spreads by ethnicity**
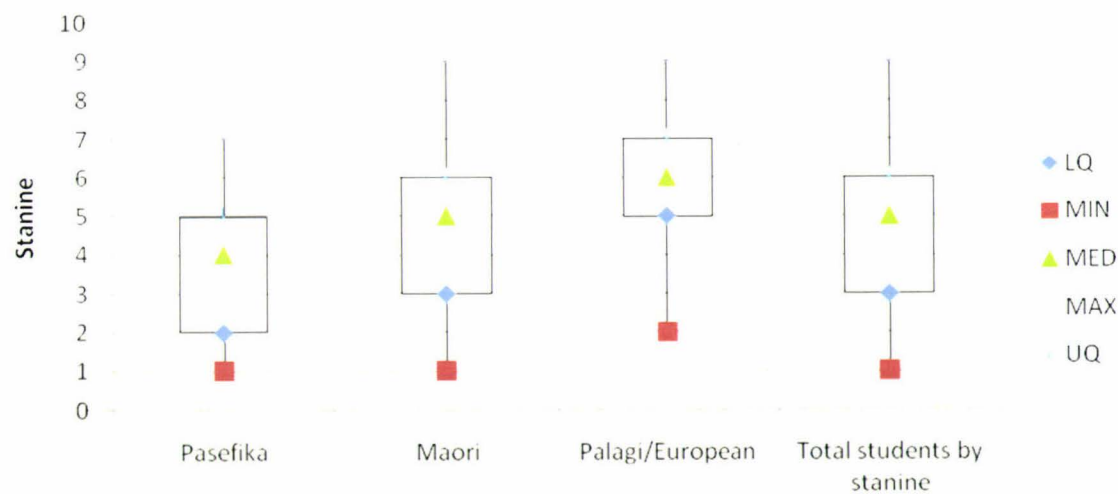
2.1. Year 9 findings

Fifty-eight percent of all 211 Year 9 Pasefika students scored 'below average' and only 36% scored 'average'. The majority of 'below average' students (72%) are from one college when testing was held in November. The median 3 and quartiles, stanines 2 and 5, are low; 61% of students scoring between the quartiles.

The achievements of Māori (n=178) are 34% 'below average', 54% 'average', and 12% 'above average' with 65% of students scoring between the quartiles (stanines 3 and 6). The achievements of Palagi (n=118) are greatly influenced by students at one college from non-participating contributing schools. Eight percent achieved 'below average', 39% 'average' (most scoring stanine 6), 53% achieved 'above average', and 80% achieved between the quartiles (stanines 6 and 9). Palagi data results negate transition and 'summer effect' on student achievement at one college as testing occurred in February 2008.

The Year 9 data for all students produced an asymmetrical shape with 46% scoring stanine 5 or better and 54% scoring stanine 4 or less. Over half of the students scoring stanine 1 were Pasefika students, and 45% Māori and 42% Pasefika students scored stanine 4. There were 202 (38%) students who scored 'below average', Pasefika students making up 60% and Māori 30%. Only 42% of all students scored 'average' of which 43% were Māori, 33% Pasefika, and 21% Palagi. Palagi students made up 60%, Māori 20%, and Pasefika 14% of the 103 (19%) students achieving 'above average'. The median overall is low at stanine 4. The inter-quartile range is large with 65% of all students scoring between the quartiles 2 and 6 as a result of the disparity between ethnic groups, Pasefika dominating 'below average' and Palagi dominating 'above average' scores.

2.2. Year 10 findings

Of all 195 Pasefika students 36% scored 'below average' and 57% scored 'average'. One quarter of all Pasefika students scored stanine 4 and just over one-fifth stanine 5. Only 39% of Pasefika students scored between stanine 5 (upper quartile) and 7, no student scoring stanine 8 or 9. The lower quartile (stanine 2) and median 4 are low.

The achievements of Māori (n=165) were 42% scored stanine 4 or less and 58% scored stanine 5 or better. The achievements of Palagi (n=91), of which three-quarters were from one college, were 13% scored stanine 4 or less and 87% scored stanine 5 or better.

The data for all students closely fits a normal distribution (55% scored stanine 5 or better and 45% scored stanine 4 or less), but 123 students, predominantly Pasefika (57%), scored 'below average'. The median is 5 and Pasefika (42%) represented most of the 269 students in the 'average' range, Māori 37% and Palagi 19%. A total of 79 students scored 'above average' of which 46% were Palagi, 30% Māori, and 16% Pasefika.

APPENDIX 9

Attitudinal competencies

(engagement, confidence, and academic ability in school)

In the questionnaire students rated three attitudinal competencies (engagement in school, confidence in school and academic ability in school) relating to students' approaches to learning at intermediate and college.   Student responses are presented in table 10 for intermediate school and table 11 for college. Findings of each competency follows.

Table 10: Engagement, Confidence, and Academic ability in school for Years 7 and 8

Years 7 & 8 MY LAST SCHOOL WAS A PLACE WHERE….	Always/ Almost always	Usually	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never	
Engagement in school					
The discipline rules were fair	6	2			
I liked the teachers	6	2			
I enjoyed learning	6	2			
I got tired of trying		2	2	4	
I got too much work to do		1	3	4	
I got too much homework			5	3	
I wanted to leave as soon as I could		1	2	5	
It was boring		1	2	5	
We kept doing the same things without learning anything new	1	1		6	
Confidence in school					
I felt I belonged	5	3			
I felt safe	6	2			
I got all the help I needed	5	2	1		
It was important to do my best	7	1			
My teachers taught me all the things I needed for college	7	1			
I liked my class	8				
I liked school	7	1			
I liked the way school did things	6	2			
Academic ability in school					
I was confident I could master the skills taught	7	1			
Most things were pretty easy to learn	5	3			
I didn't know how to do the work	1		4	3	
I understood the language used at Years 7 & 8	7	1			
We were taught to be organised and prepared for learning at school	7	1			
When we finished our work, we had to check to see it was correct	8				
When we had to write something, we had to think about whether we understood what we were doing	6	2			
Assessments (like tests) were used to help us work on the things we hadn't learned.	5	1		1	1 no answer
I needed more time to learn the skills taught	2	4	2		
When I didn't learn the skills taught, I got extra time and help until I learned it.	4	1	1	2	

Table 11: Engagement, Confidence, and Academic ability in school for Years 9 and 10

Years 9 & 10 MY COLLEGE IS A PLACE WHERE….	Always/ Almost always	Usually	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never	
Engagement in school					
The discipline rules are fair	5	3			
I like the teachers	5	3			
I enjoy learning	6	2			
I get tired of trying	1	1	3	3	
I get too much work to do		1	6	1	
I get too much homework			8		
I want to leave as soon as I can	1	1	2	4	
It is boring	1		4	3	
We keep doing the same things without learning anything new			3	5	
Confidence in school					
I feel I belong	5	3			
I feel safe	5	2	1		
I get all the help I need	5	1	2		
It is important to do my best	7	1			
My teachers teach me all the things I need for NCEA	5	3			
I like my class	5	2	1		
I like college	6	1	1		
I like the way college does things	3	3	2		
Academic ability in school					
I am confident I can master the skills taught	5	3			
Most things are pretty easy to learn	4	4			
I don't know how to do the work	1	1	5	1	
I understand the language used at Years 9 & 10	6	2			
We are taught to be organised and prepared for learning at college	6	2			
When we finish our work, we have to check to see it is correct	6	2			
When we have to write something, we have to think about whether we understand what we are doing	6	2			
Assessments (like tests) are used to help us work on the things we haven't learned.	4	3			1 no answer
I need more time to learn the skills taught	3	2	3		
When I don't learn the skills taught, I get extra time and help until I have learned it.	3	3	2		

1.   Engagement in school

Overall, students described positive engagement at their Years 7 and 8 school. The three aspects 'discipline rules were fair', 'liked teachers' and 'enjoyed learning' were all positive: six 'always'/'almost always' and two 'usually' for each aspect. No students described 'occasionally' or 'rarely'/'never' for these aspects.

No students described feeling 'always'/'almost always' a lack of engagement in school from five of six aspects. Four students 'usually' or 'occasionally' 'got tired of trying' and 'got too much work to do', while four 'rarely'/'never'. Five 'occasionally' 'got too much homework' and three 'rarely'/'never'. Three 'usually' or 'occasionally' 'wanted to leave as soon as they could' and indicated 'it was boring' at school, while five 'rarely'/'never' for these two

aspects. One student 'almost always' felt 'we kept doing the same things without learning anything new', one usually felt this way, and the majority (six) 'rarely'/'never' felt this occurred. The group was divided evenly about 'tired of trying', the 'too much work to do' and 'too much homework' but most are positive about learning and being at intermediate.

At their college students described positive engagement for 'discipline rules are fair' and liking teachers, five 'always'/'almost always' and three 'usually'. 'Enjoy learning' at college had the same result as intermediate. Again, no students described 'occasionally' or 'rarely'/'never' for these three aspects.

There were some changes in the patterns of views of college in relation to a lack of engagement in school with more students indicating there is too much work and homework and that college is boring, consistent with Wylie et al. (2006b:38, 40, 41) study. One student 'almost always' 'gets tired of trying', four 'usually' or 'occasionally', and three 'rarely'/'never'. Seven 'usually' or 'occasionally' 'get too much work to do' and one 'rarely'/'never'. All eight 'occasionally' 'get too much homework'. Half 'almost always', 'usually' or 'occasionally' 'want to leave as soon as they can' the other half 'rarely'/'never'. Five 'almost always' or 'occasionally' feel college is boring and three 'rarely'/'never'. Three students occasionally felt 'we keep doing the same things without learning anything new' and most felt this occurred 'rarely'/'never'.

The patterns of views of intermediate school and college in relation to the items that formed the factor 'engagement in school' were generally positive. There are relatively small changes in responses between the two types of schools with college slightly less positive.

2.   Confidence in school

This section begins with students' questionnaire responses and then interview responses on their confidence in school.

2.1. Questionnaire findings

Students were confident ('always'/'almost always' or 'usually') at their Years 7 and 8 school for seven of eight aspects: 'I felt I belonged', 'I felt safe', 'I liked the way school did things', 'it was important to do my best', 'my teachers taught me all the things I needed for college', 'I like school', 'I liked my class'. One student 'occasionally' got the help they thought they needed.

Confidence at college generally remained the same ('always'/'almost always' or 'usually') for six aspects. However, three 'always' liked their class, two 'almost always', two 'usually' and one 'occasionally', a large shift compared with intermediate where six students 'always' liked their class and two 'almost always'. The aspect 'I like the way college does things' also shifted with three 'always'/'almost always' compared with six for intermediate, and five 'usually' or 'occasionally' compared with two for intermediate.

Students appeared to be most confident in their intermediate school. Changes in student views about confidence in college had similar degrees of shift for the items in the 'engagement in school' factor – they were slightly less confident in their college.

2.2. Interview findings

Students were asked what schools did to make them feel safe, to make them feel they belonged, and to make it interesting to be at school.

2.2.1. Feeling safe at school

Feeling safe at intermediate and college was determined by:

- Rules, boundaries and schools being strict:

    "like they say, "oh you can't go out on the driveway, 'cos cars are coming", "you can't, go play on the field" and that, they'll tell you where you're not supposed to go";

    "when they had like, disco's or something, like you weren't allowed to, leave, until your parents came to pick you up, you couldn't walk home or anything... they like... just... crack down on bullying over there as well..."; and

    "and when they have like sports games at night they get like, some, people to come in watch out for the students... they get, someone to patrol, the gym... to keep, people from coming up..."
- Teachers talking about respect at intermediate;
- Teachers talking to you and helping you out:

    "the teachers, they made me, feel welcome...";

    "(at College) the way the teachers... they talk to you more... help you out...";
- Counsellors at college (though only one student had used a counsellor concerning an argument with a friend);
- Heaps of friends, "the people around me... 'cos they're... all like mostly Pacific Islanders and I'm like I could be comfortable with Pacific Islanders..."

One student felt unsafe at College compared with intermediate because of older college students, gangs, bad influences such as smoking, drugs, dope, and teachers not enforcing the rules:

> "...at College/ it's like the teachers don't care, like you can just run off... 'cos there's heaps of places where you can go and like, just walk off... like sneak off and the teachers won't like, snap you...";

> "...like some of us, have already known about smoking, it gets even worse when... they go to College 'cos then they start learning about like alcohol... and, like going out to parties... and like College doesn't feel safe 'cos the people around you they're like older people that can give you a hiding and that... but/ Intermediate... you's are, sort of the same age, and you sort of know each other".

All students recognised how easy it was at college to "just run off" or "sneak off" to have a smoke, drink alcohol, wag and even have a fight.

Bullying occurred at all schools usually by someone of the same age but most students in this study were not affected. The Years 7 to 13 College had an anti-bullying programme for Years 7 to 10 classes while at another college "the prefects were there if anyone try to bully you". One student believed the bullying was worse at Intermediate than College, while another student experienced the opposite at the same schools.

2.2.2. **Feeling a sense of belonging at school**

Students felt they belonged at intermediate and college mainly because of:

- Relationships with friends (usually Pasefika) because "you's all have something in common...", "...you felt... belonged to like, a group of people, like a group of artists... I didn't felt left out...", and "there's a lot of Tokes at school, the people I hang out with are all Toke";

- The "atmosphere... heaps of Pacific Island students"; and

- Relationships with some teachers because "some young teachers you can talk to... you can relate to them, they can relate to you... (Pacific Island teachers are) easier to understand them sometimes... Pacific teachers relate to you as well..."

Things that schools did to help students feel they belonged were:

- Teachers treating everyone the same "that no one's like special... they won't treat anyone differently..."; and

- Providing extra-curricular activities such as music and cultural groups, church service, and sports.

- School environment:

    "(I felt I belonged at Intermediate) 'cos those were like the fun years, like that's between, like, your childhood years and... you have to grow up when you go to [College] like not act like a kid... it's, much better like, you have more freedom, and that... at, Intermediate... like you'll be a bookworm, and like you can just go to the library and hang with your friends there, or/ you can go there and just draw, and like study whatever".

A student did not feel she belonged at the College because she felt different from students and friends as an artist, did not have the ability for P.E., and did not drink and smoke:

    "(at College) 'cos how different it is... I feel different towards my friends because, they're all alcoholics... they've all smoked weed and that, and I feel different from them, 'cos they've all done... stuff... 'cos some of them say that, it's how they were raised, like, I know, my, friend... she's like that because her mum left her when she was only little, and so she just had a dad, and all the sisters... and... my cousin, she's the one that I always feel like, comfortable around, 'cos me and her have grown up ever since, 'cos we went to the same church, and/ ...she's went like that 'cos... she has no one to like, look after her so she goes to her cousins... and they always go out drinking, they like took her out to her first party, they took her out to have her first joint and, drinking".

This student recognised family dysfunction influencing students to behave in undesirable ways that impacted on college life, such as friendships and attainment. There were some students who declined in attainment having the characteristics necessary to succeed at college but who succumbed to peer pressure or were adversely affected by family circumstances not of their doing. Nash and Harker (1998:77) describe an undeniable social cause for decline:

    There are patterns of behaviour associated with distinct youth sub-cultures, particularly those where the use of illegal drugs is more or less obligatory, that very frequently lead to a decline in academic performance, but this sort of trajectory is difficult to predict before it happens. When students insert themselves into a cultural form of this kind, and construct their sense of identity with reference to it, the resulting changes in their behaviour can come

as a surprise to their friends (or former friends), teachers, and parents alike. They certainly make a lot of people unhappy for them.

2.2.3. Feeling it was interesting to be at school

Fun classes of practicals, games and participating, groups of friends, cultural groups, different work at college, and more opportunities at college such as different sports, subjects, options, technology and music were the varied reasons that made intermediate and college interesting.

Boredom was associated with what happened at College such as not having anything to do during breaks, attending some option classes and P.E., classes where learning was not fun and practical, the work was hard and students did not understand what to do, having no friends in a class, and teachers that did not like students laughing. Wylie et al. (2006b:39) also found at age 14 more students were expressing boredom and restlessness because of the nature of the work, and the way it is presented at college.

Two students at one college felt music was "the only thing that we're well known for" and because the college was "terrible sports wise" there was a lack of school pride. At another college, although a student had a group of friends who drank alcohol but "accept me for who I am" she preferred to have friends that her mother "would accept into the house".

3.   Academic ability in school

The majority of students described positive academic ability at their Years 7 and 8 school. All students described 'always'/'almost always' or 'usually' for six aspects: 'I was confident I could master the skills taught', 'most things were pretty easy to learn', 'I understood the language used at Years 7 and 8', 'we were taught to be organised and prepared for learning at school', 'when we finished our work, we had to check to see it was correct', and 'when we had to write something, we had to think about whether we understood what we were doing'. Six students felt the aspect 'assessments (like tests) were used to help us work on the things we hadn't learned' 'always'/'almost always' or 'usually' occurred, one felt it 'rarely'/'never' occurred, and one did not respond to the question.

Only one student 'almost always' felt 'I didn't know how to do the work', the majority feeling capable about doing school work. However, all students felt they needed more time to learn the skills taught in Years 7 and 8. Two indicated they needed more time 'always'/'almost always', four said 'usually' and two 'occasionally'. When students did not learn the skills taught four indicated they 'always'/'almost always' got extra time and help until they learned it, one 'usually' got extra time and help, one 'occasionally' and two 'rarely'/'never'.

There were some changes in the patterns of views of college in relation to the factor 'academic ability in school'. Five, rather than seven, 'always'/'almost always', and three 'usually' rather than one, were 'confident they can master the skills taught'. Whereas three had said 'most things are pretty easy to learn' 'always' at intermediate only one responded with 'always' at college; four 'usually' at college compared with three at intermediate. At intermediate three 'rarely'/'never' felt 'I didn't know how to do the work' but at college one 'rarely'/'never' felt this happen, five 'occasionally' compared with four at intermediate, one 'usually' and one 'almost always' at college. 'When we finish our work, we have to check to

see it is correct' changed from eight 'always'/'almost always' at intermediate to six at college and two saying 'usually'.   Compared with intermediate fewer students (three) 'always'/'almost always' 'get extra time and help' when they don't learn the skills taught at college, and more (five) 'usually' or 'occasionally' 'get extra time and help' compared with two at intermediate.

Responses for college to the aspects 'I understand the language used at Years 9 and 10', 'we are taught to be organised and prepared for learning at college', 'when we have to write something, we have to think about whether we understand what we are doing' and 'assessments (like tests) are used to help us work on the things we haven't learned' changed very little compared with intermediate.   There was only a slight change in spread to the aspect 'I need more time to learn the skills taught' compared with intermediate – three (two for intermediate) 'always'/'almost always', two (four) 'usually', and three (two) 'occasionally'.

In general, students' self-belief about their academic ability in both schools was positive, with similar shifts in college as the other two factors – slightly less positive.

APPENDIX 10

Characteristics of a good teacher

Table 11 is representative of students' responses to rank in order nine statements they considered to be really important to make a good teacher. The table illustrates the number of times a statement appeared in the top five student choices (really important) and how many times in the bottom four choices (not at all important).

Table 12: Ranking of what makes a good teacher in order of importance				
freq*	Not at all important	What makes a good teacher?	Really important	freq*
0		Fairness and respect	00000000	8
1	0	Well organised and prepared for lessons	0000000	7
1	0	Knows the subject	0000000	7
2	00	Able to relate to the students	000000	6
3	000	Fun & creative lessons	00000	5
5	00000	Sense of humour	000	3
7	0000000	Uses examples of my culture to help me understand	0	1
6	000000	Knows my cultural background	00	2
8	00000000	A Pasefika teacher		0
*freq = frequency (number of responses for that characteristic).				

APPENDIX 11

Perceptions of the importance and influence of student's and school cultures on student achievement

1.   Students' findings

In their questionnaire students were asked 'how important it is that the school and teachers know their culture' (Table 12), 'how much the culture of the school (the way things are done) influences how well students do at school' (Table 13), and 'how much students' culture influences how well they do at school' (Table 14).   The questionnaire results from eight students were as follows:

Table 13: Importance of a school and teachers to know a student's cultural background			
YEARS 7 & 8		**YEARS 9 & 10**	
	Not important		Not important
2	A little important	2	A little important
5	Important	4	Important
1	Quite important	2	Quite important
	Definitely important		Definitely important

While students ranked as least important to be a good teacher the characteristic "knows my cultural background", six rated as 'important' or 'quite important' that intermediate, college and teachers know their culture, two rated 'a little important'.   Knowledge of students' cultures by schools and teachers is still considered important, no student indicating that it was 'not important' or 'definitely important'.

Table 14: How much the culture of the school (the way things are done) influences how well a student does at school			
YEARS 7 & 8		**YEARS 9 & 10**	
	No influence		No influence
2	A little influence		A little influence
2	Some influence	1	Some influence
2	Quite a lot of influence	6	Quite a lot of influence
2	A lot of influence	1	A lot of influence

Table 15: How much a student's culture influences how well they do at school			
YEARS 7 & 8		**YEARS 9 & 10**	
	No influence		No influence
1	A little influence	1	A little influence
3	Some influence	3	Some influence
	Quite a lot of influence	1	Quite a lot of influence
	A lot of influence	3	A lot of influence

Students' responses to the amount of influence the culture of intermediate (the way things are done) has on how well students do was evenly spread: there were two responses for each rating of 'a little', 'some', 'quite a lot', 'a lot'. Ratings changed in response to college with

seven rating 'a lot of influence' or 'quite a lot of influence' and one rating the culture of the school having 'some influence' on how well the student does at college.

Four students believed 'quite a lot' of their culture influenced how well they do at Years 7 and 8, and four rating 'some' or 'a little influence'. Rating 'some' or 'a little influence' at Years 9 and 10 was unchanged but only one believed 'quite a lot' of their culture influenced how well they do at college, and three believed 'a lot of influence'.

2.   Parents' findings

Parents were asked to indicate 'how important schools and teachers should know their child's cultural background' (Table 15), 'how much the culture of the school (the way things are done) and the child's culture influence how well children do at school' (Tables 16 & 17). The questionnaire results from parents of seven students were as follows:

Table 16: Importance of a school and teachers to know a student's cultural background			
YEARS 7 & 8		**YEARS 9 & 10**	
	Not important		Not important
	A little important		A little important
4	Important	3	Important
	Quite important		Quite important
3	Definitely important	4	Definitely important

Table 17: How much the culture of the school (the way things are done) influences how well a student does at school			
YEARS 7 & 8		**YEARS 9 & 10**	
	No influence		No influence
	A little influence		A little influence
1	Some influence	1	Some influence
3	Quite a lot of influence	4	Quite a lot of influence
3	A lot of influence	2	A lot of influence

Table 18: How much a student's culture influences how well they do at school			
YEARS 7 & 8		**YEARS 9 & 10**	
	No influence		No influence
	A little influence		A little influence
1	Some influence		Some influence
3	Quite a lot of influence	3	Quite a lot of influence
3	A lot of influence	4	A lot of influence

Parents' results were quite consistent for intermediates and colleges. Parents believed school and teacher knowledge about children's cultural background is 'important' or 'definitely important'. The majority believed the culture of the school had 'quite a lot' or 'a lot of influence' on how well children did at school. The majority again believed children's culture had 'quite a lot' or 'a lot of influence' on how well children did at school, with one parent responding with 'some influence' at intermediate.

3.   Teachers' findings

Teachers were asked to indicate 'how important students' cultural background was to their school' (Table 18), 'how important schools and teachers should know students' cultural background' (Table 19), 'how much the culture of the school (the way things are done) and the student's culture influence how well students do at school' (Tables 20 & 21). The questionnaire results from five teachers were as follows:

Table 19: Importance of students' cultural background to the school	
YEARS 7 & 8	**YEARS 9 & 10**
Not important	Not important
A little important	1 A little important
2 Important	Important
1 Quite important	Quite important
Definitely important	1 Definitely important

Table 20: Importance of a school and teachers to know a student's cultural background	
YEARS 7 & 8	**YEARS 9 & 10**
Not important	Not important
A little important	A little important
1 Important	Important
Quite important	Quite important
2 Definitely important	2 Definitely important

Table 21: How much the culture of the school (the way things are done) influences how well a student does at school	
YEARS 7 & 8	**YEARS 9 & 10**
No influence	No influence
A little influence	A little influence
Some influence	Some influence
3 Quite a lot of influence	1 Quite a lot of influence
A lot of influence	1 A lot of influence

| Table 22: How much a student's culture influences how well they do at school	
YEARS 7 & 8	**YEARS 9 & 10**
No influence	No influence
A little influence	A little influence
1 Some influence	Some influence
1 Quite a lot of influence	1 Quite a lot of influence
1 A lot of influence	1 A lot of influence

Three teachers believed students' cultural background was 'important' or 'quite important' to their intermediate schools. However, one believed a college considered students' cultural background was 'definitely important' while another believed 'a little important' and had written "not valued enough" at another college.

Four teachers believed school and teacher knowledge about children's cultural background is 'definitely important' while one believed it was 'important'. Four believed the culture of the school had 'quite a lot of influence' and one believed 'a lot of influence' on how well children did at school. Similarly, four believed students' culture influenced their achievement at school 'quite a lot' or 'a lot', and one indicated 'some influence'.

APPENDIX 12

School structures

What we have now in Porirua

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Contributing Primary Schools	Years 1 to 6 (ages 5 to 10)	1	2	3	4	5	6									
Full-primary Schools	Years 1 to 8 (ages 5 to 12)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8							
Intermediate Schools	Years 7 & 8 (ages 10 to 12)							7	8							
College	Years 7 to 15 (ages 10 to 18)							7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Colleges	Years 9 to 15 (ages 12 to 18)									9	10	11	12	13	14	15
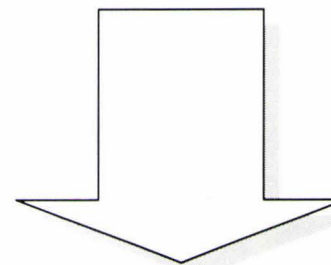
What if we had a Year 7 to 10 school????

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	2	3	4	5	6									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8							
						7	8							
						7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
								9	10	11	12	13	14	15

Contributing Primary Schools

Years 1 to 6 (ages 5 to 10)

Middle-school or Junior High School

Years 7 to 10 (ages 11 to 14)

Senior High School

Years 11 to 15 (ages 15 to 18)
Most students leave after Year 13

6 Junior High Schools
now in New Zealand
2 to be built in Manukau,
Auckland

APPENDIX 13

Curriculum Levels (1 to 8) and Years (1 to 13)

The following diagram describes the general relationship between curriculum Levels (1 to 8) and Years (1 to 13 or old J1 to F7) at school. This diagram is often presented to parents in students' school reports.
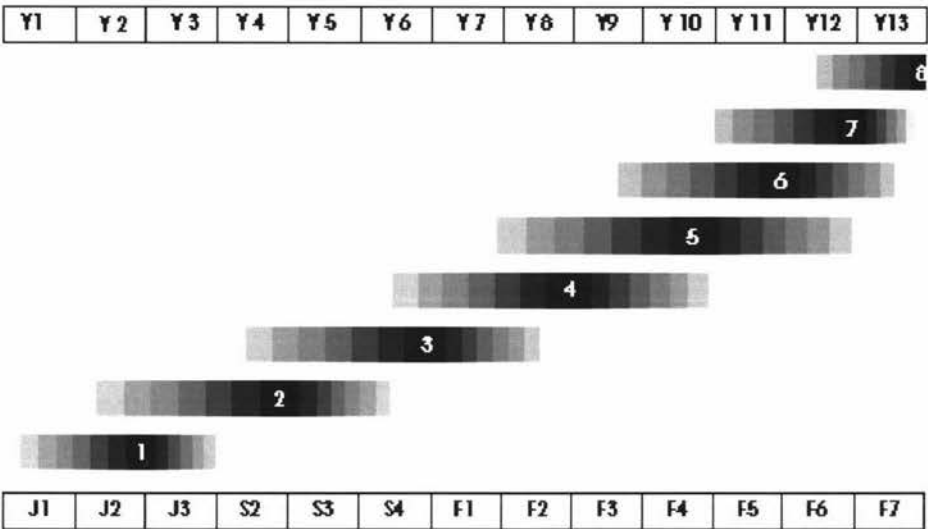
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