Teaching practices that support high achievement in the education of Pacific boys

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the most effective methods of supporting Pacific boys in their secondary education and investigated what teaching practices lead to success. The research specifically sought to identify what causes achievement in the classroom, as opposed to why Pacific boys might be failing in comparison to other groups.

A qualitative methodology was employed for this research, focusing on one New Zealand secondary school. The primary sources of data were a student questionnaire and focus group interview, and interviews with three highly successful teachers of Pacific boys.   This methodology was appropriate for this research, as while there is much research around the education experiences of Maori and Pacific students there is limited data available specifically around Pacific boys as a group.

The major findings from this study indicate that there are a number of pedagogical practices that successful teachers of Pacific boys use that have led to high achievement. Although these teaching practices are not exclusive to the teaching of Pacific boys, they do form an important part of educational strategy that has led to an improvement in learning outcomes of Pacific boys. The main themes established in these findings were focused on the following practices: creating a positive learning environment; establishing explicit learning intentions; thorough planning and feedback; setting high expectations; regular contact with home; and teaching with a positive attitude.

The findings imply that these practices, the establishment of good classroom relationships with students and recognition of cultural diversity, could lead to levels of achievement for Pacific boys that match that of any other ethnic group.

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Introduction

Chapter One provides an introduction to the rationale and aims behind this research project and why it will be of benefit to the teachers of Pacific boys, and ultimately how it will benefit Pacific boys' achievement. It should be noted from the start that the term 'Pasifika' is used in this research only when it has been drawn from another source that uses this particular term, otherwise the term 'Pacific' is used.

The Problem

The New Zealand's Ministry of Education Pasifika Education Plan (2008 – 2012) has the target to increase the Pasifika pass rates at National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 1 and 2 to 80 percent. Given the recent improvements at these levels in the past few years these are achievable targets. However, the Education Review Office (ERO) (2008) also identifies only 14 percent of schools as being effective for Pasifika students. Therefore the plans will require concentrated and regular review of programmes and strategies and this research project will add value to this process.

While there is a reasonable amount of literature around the separate issues of improving Pacific education and boy's education, there is a gap in linking these two enquiries. The aim of this research project is to provide proven and usable teaching practices that will directly improve the achievement of Pacific boys at secondary school.

Research context

The context of this review is important as the terms 'Pacific people' and 'Pacific education' cover a vast range of cultures, demography, communities and educational institutions. The particular focus in this thesis material centres on South Auckland where the largest number of Pacific peoples in New Zealand live.

It is important to define the term Pacific Peoples as there are many diverse cultures and communities that make up this group. According to the Pasifika Education Plan (2008), Pacific peoples made up 6.9 percent of the population of New Zealand. This term (Pacific peoples) covers New Zealand residents, both born here or in the islands, who originate from the six Pacific nations of Tonga, Samoa, Tokelau, Niue, Fiji and Cook Islands. A wider group includes the smaller communities of the Pacific, including the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, French Polynesia and Kiribati.

In terms of context there are further important considerations when considering this multi-ethnic group. Whilst literature and research is currently centered around the term 'Pacific peoples', ultimately when presenting outcomes and recommendations care must be given to tailor presentation and implementation to each sub group. The cultures and languages of each group are diverse and subsequently consideration should be given to best teaching practice that meets the diversity of each group.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education's Pasifika Education Plan (2008), uses the following order of priority so that students are reported in one ethic group only:

- New Zealand Maori
- Tokelauan
- Fijian
- Niuean
- Tongan
- Cook Island Maori

- Samoan

- Other Pacific Islands

- South East Asian

- Indian

- Chinese

- Other Asian

- Other

- Other European

- New Zealand European/Pakeha

Scope of study

For some of the groups, small numbers of population can limit the amount of analysis that can be carried out. For the purpose of this study, the term Pacific relates to a group of mainly Samoan and Tongan students at De La Salle College and subsequently this research focuses on these two groups. These demographics are provided later in this study.

Another important factor when defining context is the differences that arise between the New Zealand born 'Pacific peoples' and those born in the Islands. This raises questions around the world view and values of these groups that may be quite different and can have a serious impact on education. A useful summary of the ethnic diversity can be seen in the 'Ethnic Interface Model' (Samu, 1998). The model provides a useful background in further establishing the context when working within the framework of 'Pacific Peoples'.

Secondly, the term 'Pacific education' refers to all education relating to Pacific peoples and includes early childhood, primary education, secondary education, teacher education and post and tertiary education. Pasifika Students make up 7% of all students from early childhood to tertiary and 9% of students in compulsory schooling – this includes primary through to secondary (Pasifika Education Plan 2008).

This Research focus is on the secondary school sector, however, there is an undoubted need to look carefully at literature relating to all sectors to build a clear picture. Certainly literature

from early childhood and primary education sectors is crucial to understand what teaching pedagogy may lead to successful and unsuccessful learning and achievement for Pacific boys at secondary level.

The significance of this literature review and proposed research project is to provide further real workable practices for teachers of Pacific boys. This is vital because according to a report on boys' achievement (Driession, 2005), over 15 percent of Pasifika students are leaving school with little or no formal qualifications. While there has been improvement, the figure is still disproportionate when comparisons are made – it is nearly 35 percent more that the rate for New Zealand European (9.9 percent).

Another sub context of Pasifika achievement can be reflected in suspension rates. According to the Pasifika Education plan (2008) Pasifika rates of suspension (10.6 percent) are more than double that of New Zealand European (4.1 percent).This is evidence that engagement of Pasifika students is still not as developed as it should or could be.

Rationale

There is a significant gap in research around successful teaching and learning for Pacific boys. The Education Review Office as recently as 2008 has produced best practice processes and data that reflect the fact that boys, in general, are not achieving as well as girls. In fact Driessen (2005), cites boy's educational underachievement as a significant factor in the rates of unemployment for young men.

Bruce Ferguson, Gorinski, Wendt-Samu, with Mara, (2007), comment on the limited research available on Pasifika young men in general and Jones' (1991) and Tupuola's (1998) work supports the view that research in this area could lead to greater Pasifika male students' educational achievement. This data points towards a disparity currently existing between boys and girls and this is magnified again when Pakeha and Pacific boys are compared.

Also important is the work of Lashlie (2005) about how boys think and interact and what are some of the crucial elements to their success in life. Her interpretations of boy's growth to men are valid to both European and Pasifika students.

A further rationale is to provide information on the importance of the teacher's role in Pacific boys' education. Carpenter, (2001), articulates the power of the teacher and their integral role in delivering curriculum. Furthermore teachers who understand this role and can provide pedagogical practices that reflect the culture diversity in front of them are more likely to succeed in raising student's achievement.

Alton-Lee's (2003) best evidence synthesis outlines the qualities that you would find in the best teachers and this should be the cornerstone of developing teachers regardless of who they are teaching. Linked to this for the teachers of Pacific boys, is teacher development that enhances their understanding of how boys learn and supports them to identify, acknowledge and create a curriculum in their school that will work for these students. A guiding document is Sheets' (2005) work on diversity pedagogy and a strong adherence to the belief that students who are Pacific (and male) are more than capable of success.

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

Aims

The rationale provides the context and background to the aims of this research – to investigate the issues and problems which are behind the low success rates in the education of Pacific male students and therefore provide usable strategies for teachers that will lead to improved academic achievement.

Objectives

Hawk and Hill (1996) identified many issues faced by Pasifika students that impacted on their learning. At the crux of their findings was that great teachers needed to apply their skills in a way that matched the backgrounds and experiences of the students in front of them. A key word was the 'engagement' of these students by trying to understand their world view.

Learning styles are an important consideration in any teaching situation and Pasikale (1999) presented defined preferences of Pasifika learners in terms of their learning processes. Her key message is that Pasifika students in her study identified teachers with empathy or those that showed they 'cared' as more likely to connect with the students. She also noted that this empathy was a value placed above the ethnicity of the teacher.

Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi and Taleni (2006) compiled interesting data on Pasifika students and their learning styles, particularly in terms of literacy development. Some of their findings included comments from students about not being confident to read aloud, wanting to read and write about their own culture, the desire for positive feedback from their teachers and their preference for quiet classrooms because they were easier to learn in. Fusitu'a and Coxon (1998) looked at pedagogy in the context of interactions between tutors and students – their findings support the argument that specific learning plans catering for Pasifika students were more likely to be successful. The implications of these studies stress the importance of engagement not only being about teaching practices but also in the choice of curriculum that suited students. These messages underpin this research topic and draw out the best practice that subsequently leads to success for Pacific boys.

Research questions

Given the aims of this research it is important that the research questions lead to ways of addressing Pacific boys' academic achievement. This research project covers three major questions:

1: What teaching practices and strategies do Pacific boys best respond to?

2: What factors within the classroom hinder or enhance good teaching and learning practices?

3: How can schools best facilitate more effective teaching practices?

THESIS ORGANISATION

Chapter One – provides an introduction to the rationale and aims behind this research project and why it will hopefully be of benefit to the teachers of Pacific boys, and ultimately how it will benefit Pacific boys' achievement.

Chapter Two – reviews the literature around Pacific and boys education. It identifies what is known about this topic and what gaps may exist in the research thus far.

Chapter Three – outlines the methodology and research methods used in the research project. The reasons and rationale for the selected methodology and methods are discussed. The scoping questionnaire, focus groups and interview methods are outlined. The collection and analysis of data is explained. The crucial ethical considerations central to this research are documented and issues around reliability and validity are discussed.

Chapter Four – the findings from the data analysis are presented from the initial scoping questionnaire, focus groups and teacher interviews. How significant themes and ideas were identified is outlined.

Chapter Five – the findings from the collection and analysis are interpreted and discussed. The findings are developed within the parameters of the original research project aims and questions

Chapter Six – significant findings and recommendations to move forward are presented. Limitations and a conclusion to this research project are outlined.

CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter Two reviews the literature around Pacific and boys education. It identifies what is known about this topic and what gaps may exist in the research thus far. While there is a reasonable amount of literature around Pacific education and boys' education I believe there is a gap in linking these two enquiries. The aim of this chapter is to review and critique the literature around Pacific Education in New Zealand to ascertain:

- What research has been carried out on Pacific education issues in New Zealand to date that specifically relate to boys?
- What are the key findings from this research?
- Does the research point to specifics about what leads to successful learning outcomes for Pacific students and in particular males?
- Are there any major gaps in the research literature or limitations that do not provide adequate evidence to support perceived issues?
- From the literature what questions can I propose in order to understand the issues of Pacific boys' education for classroom teachers in New Zealand?

Overview

The literature review is focused around issues and problems identified with the drive to improve levels of achievement in Pacific education.

In summary there are three main themes I will explore:

- Teaching practices that engage and motivate Pacific boys
- The relevance of curriculum that reflects Pacific boys' interests and goals
- The importance of home and school partnerships

Broader questions and aims can be identified as:

- Are there usable tools that teachers can be equipped with to ensure they are meeting the learning styles of Pacific boys?
- What are the preferred key factors that guide Pacific boys to success in the classroom?
- Are there identifiable methods of motivation that will increase Pacific boys' opportunity to succeed at NCEA and beyond?

PACIFIC EDUCATION RESEARCH

Background

The literature around Pacific education mainly includes academic theses dissertations and academic journals. They tend to be produced by the same small group of Pacific and non-Pacific researchers. Many of their findings support the gaps in Pacific education that are outlined in chapter one. Recently there has been a shift in research literature on Pacific Education from studies provided by non-Pacific researchers to Pacific researchers. Also the number of studies available has increased since the mid '90s. This increase has been prompted by:

1. The issues raised by the ERO report on South Auckland schools in 1995, this was in fact termed an educational crisis
2. The initiatives that fell out of this report led to availability of further research on Pacific Education
3. An increase in general Pacific issues and Pacific Education issues

Recently most of the studies and research have been centered around the cultural aspects of Pacific learning and its place in a Western education system. Helu-Thaman (1996) describes the differences that exist between a Pacific outlook to education and how Pacific learners (either in the Pacific or here in New Zealand) have to work in the framework of a western style education. This is a more complex interface than was understood before the mid 1990's. Helu-Thaman points out that Samoan and Tongan cultural values are inextricably linked to behavior and performance so that the impact of these values on student learning within an educational setting cannot be underestimated. This can at times lead to real, often difficult problems and

issues for the Pacific student in a New Zealand classroom and ultimately problems in their learning and achievement.

Significantly, before these researchers began to study specific cultural outlooks towards education, in a multi-ethnic society, very little had been discussed about the relationship between Pacific students and their experiences in education. By beginning these conversations, Pacific and non-Pacific peoples, were taking the first steps towards acknowledging and understanding the differences that exist in learning styles for Pacific students. This literature has therefore enabled the development of strategies that could begin to acknowledge Pacific learners and assist them in the achievement of successful learning.

The historical Impact of education policy on pacific communities

Much of the literature around the impact of national educational policy regarding Pacific communities is centered upon the impact of the changes in the 1989 Education Act and the 1991 Education Amendment Act. According to Watson, Hughes, Lauder, Strahdee and Simiyu (1997) many of the changes that occurred throughout this period led to competition between schools, competition for students and for the best educational outcomes for these students. The debate about the rights and wrongs of these changes are part of a debate outside of this study, however the impact of the changes have a significant bearing on the objectives within this study.

One of the key changes was the introduction of de-zoning, which in essence meant students could effectively attend (or apply to attend) the school of their choice, regardless of where they lived or where the school was. For some schools this meant they were immediately oversubscribed and could set up 'enrolment schemes' meaning that they could use selective criteria for their selection of students.

Subsequently, schools that were considered to be traditionally successful were in a position to be highly selective about the students that they could enroll. This in turn led to a competitiveness not seen before in New Zealand education and a situation where schools could 'market' themselves should they choose. De Bruin (2000) describes the potential result of this

market situation of schools to be "the outflow of students from schools that were perceived to have a lower reputation" (p. 46).

The possible outcomes of this competiveness for some schools was the inability to compete with the marketing of other schools due to a lack of financial resources. This tended to be the case in economically disadvantaged areas and in communities that included mainly Maori and Pacific peoples. Peters (1996), a school principal from one of these such communities, provided a detailed account of the impact of the new government policy on his South Auckland Secondary school where 80% of students were Pacific. He described that the school quickly became a school in crisis as families who could get into schools elsewhere did so because they believed, rightly or wrongly, that these schools could offer their children more in terms of academic achievement. These students faced the selection criteria of the chosen schools but as they were often motivated they succeeded in gaining entrance. The spiraling impact of this in simple terms is that the best students were often sucked out of local schools in areas such as South Auckland, which resulted in achievement levels remaining low as the 'cream' that would have helped raised these figures had been taken away. De Bruin (2000) describes this as "human capital deficiencies of ethnic minorities" (p. 37). This human capital is defined as formal educational qualifications and this study has already pointed out the deficits that exist between Pacific and non-pacific achievement at secondary school level.

Watson et al (1997) were one of the first in New Zealand to have a close look at Pacific people and why they made particular choices for schools. This research, based on both quantitative and qualitative data, argued that Pacific students and their communities were disadvantaged by the new zoning policies which were directed at increasing parental choice, and that the "… schools which serve these students have been hardest hit by the competitive mechanisms introduced into educational provision" (Watson et al., 1997, p. 95). They also felt that these findings in relation to the overall setting of Pacific education and the suggested spiral of decline was, "a key factor in understanding the evolving dynamics of the secondary education market in Aotearoa/New Zealand" (Watson et al., 1997, p. 95).

Subsequently, due to the government policy described above, Pacific and Maori rolls declined around the middle of the 1990s in South Auckland, which is the contextual setting for this study. Harker (2006) claimed that the equality of educational opportunity that was to be a cornerstone of 'Tomorrows Schools' had not offered equity at all, he stated: "Our system now seems to be well down the track toward a dual system – one set of schools for the, mostly Pakeha, middle-class, and another set for the (mostly Maori and Pacific) poorer classes" (Harker, 2006, p. 54).   A statement that highlighted how issues in Pacific achievement in secondary schools was something that needed urgent attention.

Identity

There is little specific literature about Pacific identity issues that relate primarily to schools only. Many do take into account school, youth, growing up and 'youth' experiences, such as Anae (1995; 1998) who looked closely at identity issues for New Zealand Samoans, and Tiatia (1998) who researched Pacific youth and their relationship to their churches. One school based work of interest for this study was that of Tupuola's (1993) anaylsis of identity and its impact on school performance. These findings are very much in line with the data provided from student interviews in Chapter four of this research.

More recently there has been more research around the existence of different types of Pacific young people by Anae (1998) and Pasikale (1999). Pasikale (1999) was quite specific in her description of these different types of young Pacific people, which can be summarised as:

I)   Traditional
II)   New Zealand blend
III)   New Zealand made.

This 'rating', was based on the levels of identity that the youth in question had with their culture – their affinity to it and the value they would place on it. It was also clear in this research that the responses and behaviours of second or third generation New Zealand-born Pacific learners would be different from those of students brought up outside New Zealand.

The importance of Pasikale's (1999) findings in the educational setting is that educators can make radical assumptions about Pacific learners and their learning styles. Pasikale (1999) makes the potential for damage to Pacific achievement clear when she says:

> *The images, information and stereotypes about Pacific Island people are rooted in assumptions based on the images of 'recent island migrants' which has led to the displacement of the majority of Pacific learners, especially in the formal educational establishments. By this I mean the assumptions (mostly bad) educators make about New Zealand born Pacific Island learners, who either fail to meet expectations or worse still, float by without any expectations or demands on them.* (1999, p. 23)

Before access to literature of this nature, New Zealand teachers and educators could have been blissfully unaware of the diversity of the groups they were serving. This type of research assists educators in considering what best practice for Pacific students could look like and develop such practices to ensure that they can support the diverse and complex groups that exist in the classrooms.

With access to literature such as Pasikale's (1999), it then became paramount that teachers learnt to work towards ways of understanding and incorporating Pacific learners' identities. Lei (2006) suggests the ideal starting point for most teachers, particularly non-Pacific teachers, would be to reflect on their own identity and their own personal social and economic position within wider society. By doing so a non-pacific or Palagi teacher could be in a better position to appreciate and support the identity development of their Pacific learners.[Evidence provided in Chapter four from teacher interviews at De La Salle College supports this point.]

International assessments

Important guiding literature is found in The New Zealand Ministry of Education Monitoring report for Pacific Education (2007) which spells out some important messages for those delivering secondary education to Pacific students. In assessing the 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, it was seen that the gap was increasing between Pasifika 15 year-old students and their European/Päkehä and Asian counterparts in

the important core subjects of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. What is also of concern is that the statistics confirmed that many Pacific students were leaving secondary education with little or no formal attainment. Again, the gap between the proportion of Pacific students leaving school with little or no formal attainment is still higher than that of European/Päkehä and Asian students.

However, since this report, due to work being put into Pacific education in secondary schools over the past decade there has been some improvement in the statistics. It is forecast that the difference between Pasifika and non-Pasifika students leaving with little or no formal attainment should start to close by 2010.

NCEA Level 2 or above

Since 2003, all ethnic groups have seen an increase in the percentage of school leavers who achieve NCEA Level 2 or above. The gap between the proportion of Pasifika students leaving school with NCEA Level 2 or above and non-Pasifika students has decreased over the past year. The forecast position set by the Ministry of Education Pacific education Plan (2008) is that the target set will be met. It is predicted that, by 2010, 56.9 percent of Pasifika school leavers will have NCEA Level 2, (this is 5.9 percent above the target of 52% set in 2004). At the time this research was being completed, early available but yet to be confirmed data from 2010 looked very positive in terms of reaching this milestone.

Engaging Pacific Boys

A central issue to the improvement of Pasifika teaching and improving learning outcomes is that of engagement of Pacific boys' in the classroom. Interestingly only 2 percent of teachers are of Pasifika heritage, so how do the rest of the teachers at the 'chalk face' manage to understand and meet Pasifika students in their world?

Hawk and Hill (1996) identified many issues faced by Pasifika students that impacted on their learning. At the crux of their findings was that teachers needed to apply their skills in a way that matched the backgrounds and experiences of the students in front of them.

More recently Hawk and Hill (2000) updated their research focusing on teaching practices. This provided teachers of Pasifika students with clear recommendations of effective teaching, key features of good practices and how schools were putting these practices into place. Again, a key word was the 'engagement' of these students by trying to understand their world view. These ideas become central to setting up this research project in terms of data collection outlined in chapter three – quality data from Pacific boys will also only be forthcoming if the 'connection' or engagement is established.

Learning styles are an important consideration in any teaching situation and Pasikale (1999) presented very defined preferences of Pacific learners in terms of their learning processes. Her key message was that Pacific students in her study identified teachers with empathy or those that showed they 'cared' were more likely to connect with the students. She also noted that this empathy was a value placed above the ethnicity of the teacher.

This point is supported to an extent at my own school and the findings are highlighted in Chapter four. De La Salle College is a Decile 1 boys only school with a roll of 1,030 and over 90% Pasifika. A recent student engagement report on the link between student progress in reading ability and attendance concurs with Ross (2000) that well planned strategies with Pacific boys can succeed with the right approach and buy-in from staff. Some of these strategies went against suggested best practice research and included the grouping of 'at risk' students in one class, limitation on the numbers of teachers in front of the boys and keeping them in a homeroom type situation rather than breaking them into different option groups throughout the day. The study found that the boys were engaged, had progressed and were proud of their achievements.

Silipa (1998) produced a report called 'Cracking the Coconut Mentality'. This study looked at the inferiority complex that he found in observing a group of secondary school Samoan students. He found that with developed specific and targeted teaching strategies that these students were able to achieve academically. Again, this points to the benefits of pedagogy designed to suit students' individual learning needs.

A study by Pasikale (1999) concludes that Pacific learners have a range of preferences when it comes to teaching and learning processes. A key factor is that individual contexts have to be taken into account when dealing with the learner. Teachers interviewed in this research, regardless of ethnic background, believed that a range of teaching and learning processes needed to be used when teaching Pacific boys, as opposed to being trapped into preconceived ideas about how the students would best learn. These teachers believed that teaching practices needed to be tailored to the students and skill in differentiation was seen as a key ingredient. Pasikale (1999) concluded that teacher empathy towards individual students' needs, as opposed to understanding of their ethnicity as the key to success. [This would also be supported by the students involved in this research.]

Several other studies also support the notion of specific learning plans catering for Pasifika students. Fusitu'a and Coxon (1998) looked at pedagogy in the context of interactions in a homework centre for Tongans. They found that students saw definite learning advantages for themselves because of the fact the tutors at the centre were also Tongan and their bilingualism made it easier for students to interact and ultimately learn better. This study also found the Tongan parents saw benefit in that fact the Tongan tutors could provide values and expectations in terms of behavior that they felt maybe missing from the mainstream at school.

Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi and Taleni (2006) compiled data on Pasifika students and their learning styles, particularly in terms of literacy development. Some of their findings included comments from students about not being confident to read aloud, wanting to read and write about their own culture, the desire for positive feedback from their teachers and their preference for quiet classrooms, because they were easier to learn in. These findings are crucial for schools when considering how best to teach students and what sort of environment is going to connect best with their students.

There are also other issues central to the engagement of Pacific boys in the classroom. For many years the suspension and exclusion rates of this group have been high. According to Ministry of Education statistics, (2007), suspension rates for Pasifika students while lower than Māori suspension rates, were still higher than European/Pākehā and Asian suspension rates

respectively. Suspension rates for Pasifika had been steadily increasing since 2003, although in 2007 there was a substantial decrease of 17 percent from the previous year.

The forecast predicted by the Pasifika Education Monitoring Plan (2007) is for a suspension rate of 7.9 per 1,000 students up to 2010, close to the target of 7.5 per 1,000 students.   The positives of this forecast takes into account the recent significant improvements and the increasing proportion of Pacific students in schools involved in student engagement.

Certainly recent changes in the professional development for teachers of Pacific students has increased the level of engagement for this cohort of students. However, as mentioned in the introduction to this study, a recent ERO report, *The Achievement of Pacific Students.* Wellington: Education Review Office on Pasifika Student Achievement (2009) found that only 14 percent of schools are consistently effective for Pasifika students, although three-quarters of schools were found to be effective in some areas, but needed ongoing improvement in others.

Curriculum Design and ideology and its relevance to Pacific boys learning

A key issue of particular interest that is covered in the literature reviewed was curriculum design and subject choices within colleges. There is little in the way of specific Pacific curriculum in the research available in New Zealand currently, particularly at secondary school level. There has been a curriculum statement that requires secondary schools to include the Pacific, as a setting as part of a learning experience in Year 9 or 10 Social Studies, however this is insufficient to lead to any conclusions on Pacific education or furthermore as a way of identifying any particular trends for Pacific students. Perhaps what it does do as suggested by Samu (1998), is to develop a Pacific learning programme that is simplistic and idealistic. The real questions that need to be asked are about Pacific students', in the case of this research in particularly Pacific boys, engagement and their achievement in different areas of the curriculum. Is there a pattern and do they achieve better in some subjects than others? The patterns around engagement to their learning and the curriculum are found in Chapter four.

There are many theories and models that a modern curriculum may be based on. The short answer of what is curriculum, is summed up by Scott (2008) who refers to it as a system with

aims, content matter, methods and assessments, whilst Ross (2000) defines curriculum simply as what is to be learnt.

Ultimately Adams, Clark, Codd, O'Neill, Openshaw, and Waitere-Ang, (2000).note that the definition of curriculum should be the one that seems most relevant to the student body or the learners that you are catering for. This should be a relevant thought when designing curriculum for Pacific boys - does our curriculum cater for the learning needs of our students? More importantly within the curriculum there are layers and contexts with influences that can also create 'curriculum ideologies'. A curriculum ideology would best be described by Eisner (2001) as beliefs that schools have about what they teach and why. These ideologies can run very deep into the way curriculum can be presented from school to school. With this ideology there is an opportunity to ensure schools are providing for who they should be – the community. So if the community is Pasifika then the curriculum should reflect this. This may not be literally in terms of what is taught, but the delivery and strategies used to teach should meet the audience.

A simple example of this ideology may be reflected in how schools organise assessments. Many NCEA Unit Standards do not have a set date for completion of assessment tasks, or at least they may have to be completed throughout a school year, often as homework. So if it is a portfolio style assessment, teachers can revisit and reassess the tasks on an ongoing basis. This provides students with multiple opportunities to achieve. Of course this does often not sit well with some teachers. The idea of letting students have several opportunities to complete tasks is a quite foreign when compared to what was done just over five years ago, before NCEA. However, consider the idea of the portfolio NCEA assessment in view of a study by Fletcher et al. (2006) that reported for many Pasfika students doing homework was out of the question, when they were required to look after younger brothers and sisters or cousins. So this study shows, how a school chooses to organise its senior NCEA assessments can influence Pasifika students ongoing opportunity to achieve. Therefore schools must choose the most appropriate option for the students that they serve, which should then be supported by the teachers in that school. This is assessment that helps rather than hinders progress for Pasifika students. In

summary, the curriculum literature seemed to suggest formative or internal assessments best suited Pacific boys.

A further issue regarding curriculum choice in the context of Pasifika education, is the fact that teachers could be at times unaware they are teaching to the so called 'hidden curriculum'. The 'hidden curriculum' is best described by McCutcheon (1997) as curriculum that has two main characteristics. Firstly, that it is not intended and secondly it would seem to be part and parcel of every day teaching at many schools. Put simply, all curriculum is taught by and affected by the way teachers perceive it. This can have a huge impact on student learning.

The importance of this relating to the teaching of Pasifika boys should not be underestimated. It may be seen in the deliberate but subtle refusal to use strategies or concepts designed to engage the cohort, such as allowing them to verbalise an answer rather than write it down. The reason may be simply because the teacher historically is used to accepting written answers only and doesn't see a verbal version as valid, even if it is approved by the relevant authorities (McCutcheon, 1997).

The important question is why teachers teach to the hidden curriculum and what impact does it have on teaching and learning in the Pasifika context? Various reasons are to be found. For example, the failure to relate to the context of setting – the students backgrounds, families and communities. In one New Zealand study, Fletcher et al. (2006) stressed the importance of home-school relationships, the role of the church and high expectations from the school, as a key success factor for many Pasifika students. At De La Salle College we stress regularly the importance of what we call the student – teacher – parent/caregiver triangle and the importance of regular communication. However you cannot force teachers to buy into this and teach with this ethos in mind.

A further example of the hidden curriculum at work is schools that don't provide the necessary technology or professional development to meet expected requirements. Yelland (2007) goes as far as saying schools have a long way to go before educational opportunities are provided that are suited to the needs of a new world. This is going to be particularly true if you teach at a

highly populated Pasifika school, yet receive little induction to even the simplest of tools such as pronouncing names correctly. Finally, the hidden curriculum can also be seen in schools' refusal and/or reluctance to change and meet Pasifika students in their world because 'I've have always done it this way'.

Home/School Relationships

The AIMHI project (1996) noted, "Pacific parents, many of whom were born in the islands, have minimal understanding of the New Zealand education system. They do not understand the recent changes to the curriculum and qualifications structures, or the ways that the schools organise themselves"(p. 23). This quote clearly outlines the difficulties schools may face in establishing good home – school partnerships with Pacific families, as there is a direct impact for these families, due to their understanding of what is happening at school. Furthermore, the AIMHI Project (1996) points out that as the parents themselves are unsure about the education processes, they are also unsure about how to assist their children, or what is important to be asking the school and teachers about. For many Pacific parents and families, their experiences of schools will be based in many cases on their own schooling in the Islands, which they fear with some reason, would be outdated and not relative to what their children are experiencing. This will have undoubtedly been heightened at the turn of this century with the introduction of NCEA and following that the revised New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The AIMHI Project (1996) also examined the role of family and community in lives of Pacific students. Its findings presented the conflicting 'worlds' that many of these students lived in. They had involvement quite often in several significant 'worlds' – their families, school, church, peers and possibly even the involvement of part time work. These worlds could all be very influential, particularly their families and churches, but often those with the influence, such as their parents, had little experience, knowledge or understanding of the 'world' their children were living in (AIMHI, 1996).

A recurring topic in the literature reviewed was that of parent and school relationships. Building connections with Pasifika families and including them in school decision-making processes and

ultimately the education of their children has long been a goal of the Ministry of Education in New Zealand. Also, the depth and breadth of school communication with many Pacific Island communities can be poor or non – existent. Fletcher et al (2006) point out that in particular the communication about subject choice, NCEA, achievement levels and educational pathways is at times quite unclear for many of the Pacific families. There can be a reluctance for them to seek further advice on some of these issues and it can also be difficult to find agencies outside of the school gate that can assist in any way. Without being armed with this important information and advice many of the families do not feel adequately equipped to partake in the education of their children.

Harker (2006) suggests the intention of 'Tomorrows Schools' was to promote a positive vision that was designed to lead to greater involvement of parents in schools and also provide accountability from the schools in terms of what they were delivering to the community. Foliaki (1993) points out that for many Pasifika families that this did not pan out as hoped. For example, Tongan parents wanted to be involved in their children's schools but did not have the language skills to feel comfortable enough coming forward. This barrier is not confined to the Tongan community, particularly in decile one and two schools around South Auckland, for a long time the language barrier has denied valuable information being passed from parents to teachers that may have improved teaching delivery. Due to different home-school partnership initiatives from the Ministry of Education this situation is definitely improving and communities are providing the vital cog in improving Pacific student achievement (Pasifika Education Plan, MOE, 2008).

Henderson (1996) put together a very enlightening study based on a group of Tokelau students that clearly concluded that strong home-school interaction and contact resulted in students achieving higher levels of academic success. Parents were required to come into school on a regular basis, a tutor was provided, student progress was monitored closely and homes contacted early if there were any signs of inhibited progress. Furthermore, teachers worked on new strategies and approaches to support the students. The net result was that these Pacific students achieved above the national averages in external exams.

Another crucial aspect of Pacific life that is evident across all of the different Pacific communities in New Zealand, is the strong Pacific beliefs and morality of Christian influence that exists (Cahill, 2006; Tupuola, 1998). Religion, particularly due to the families of the Pacific learner, has the potential to affect what they deem to be appropriate content to learn at school and what behavior is acceptable at school. Cahill (2006) stated that 90 percent of Samoans claim affiliation to the Christian religion. Tupuola (1998) commented that some in the Pacific community will view certain material raised at school, particularly around topics such as sex education and health, as completely unacceptable. Indeed, the term itself was deemed to be problematic in Samoan contexts. The impact for the Pacific learner can be that at home they are not encouraged or possibly even discouraged in advancing their learning in some subject areas (Cahill, 2006; Tupuola, 1998).

The importance of the church in the lives of Pacific learners and the tensions they may face can go further than just disdain around sensitive topics such as sex education or health. There were very clear suggestions in research by Fairbairn-Dunlop (1981), White (1997), and Jones (1991) regarding studies of Pasifika learners that meant while time at school could be relaxed and enjoyable, Pacific parents often made sure all a young person's time outside of school was taken up with various family duties, such as church meetings, and that a Pacific student may not have the same freedom that palagi students had to socialise outside of school hours.

This influence could extend even further than simply time spent at church. Tupuola (1998) interviewed students whose parents made very forthright expressions about what sort of careers and jobs would be suitable for their offspring to follow. Often this pressure to enter certain professions, take up particular jobs or pick up tertiary study, such as University, was reflective of the pressure that parents placed on their children to make more of the opportunities that the parents perceived as having had made available to them (Tupuola, 1998).

Wider issues in boys' education

When considering literature around this topic I feel it important to scope wider than just writings based around education and Pacific boys. After all they are male teenagers and there are other hurdles facing this group throughout their teenage years that can also have an effect on learning outcomes and for teachers' delivery of curriculum. Hormonal changes are dramatically increasing during these adolescent years when secondary education is hoping they will focus on all important school work. As Carr-Greg and Shale (2002) put it, when going through such dramatic changes to body and mind, many boys are grappling with the simple but all consuming question of whether they are normal or not.

Lashlie (2005), as noted above having completed a significant study on males in New Zealand, also writes clear descriptions of teenage boys disappearing into another world and needing time at this age to think and process their ideas. These observations about teenage boys are also central to the development of educating young men, Pasifika or not.

Conclusion

Chapter Two provides a rich background into various aspects of research completed around the education of Pacific students. However as highlighted there is a gap in research around successful teaching and learning for Pacific boys. As result of this and as the data points out in this chapter, the achievement of Pacific boys is not at a level of many of their peers within the secondary school system. Chapter three of this research describes the research tools selected to gather data that is currently missing specifically around Pacific boys. Chapter four, five and six will provide analysis and recommendations around that data that will lead to a better understanding of what is required in order to support high achievement for Pacific boys.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

In this chapter the research paradigm, methodology and research method adopted for this research are outlined. A rationale for the chosen methodology and techniques employed to gather and analyze the data will also be examined. Furthermore, the ethical issues encountered will be addressed alongside the notions of rigour, reliability and validity.

Overview

Methodological approach refers to the choice of consultation, information gathering and analysis decided on for the research project. Kaplan (1973) also explains that the choice of methodology will determine how the research is undertaken and what resources, processes and resource tools are chosen.

 The two main types of methodological approaches or paradigms are generally either qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative methods tend to be used to provide detailed reasons to support a trend. Quantitative is used to establish a trend or issue. The quantitative approach had been considered the more dominate methodology until recently. However there has been a trend towards qualitative research methods with the role of the researcher becoming more central to the research (Bryman, 2008). This has also led to crossover in terms of how the methods are viewed and used. At times qualitative and quantitative approaches have been seen as two opposing sides to a research debate (Burke, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This debate has shifted recently from the idea of strictly adhering to one or the other methodology to looking at what would be the best fit for the topic, with researchers adapting methods from either camp if they appear to be useful.

However, Bryman (2008), does explain that there are still specific attributes within the qualitative and quantitative methods that will reflect a particular position of research overall. For instance the main concern of qualitative research is the quality and depth of data collected rather than vast amounts of quantity collected to support a topic. Therefore qualitative researchers' work is predominantly in the interpretive paradigm.

Based on the literature regarding methodology and Pasifika culture, the qualitative interpretive approach for this project is the best fit and the approach best suited to meeting the project objectives and research questions. Ultimately the aim of this research project is to collect data of a richly detailed kind, derived from conversations with students and teachers. Dunkin (1996) describes an interpretive synthesis as not designed to predict outcomes but more to provide a better understanding of the proposed research problem. A qualitative approach sees the role of the researcher as central and very visible in the research process. Therefore the formation of relationships between the participants and the researcher is central to the success of the project. It was important for the researcher to ensure open and engaging environments for the participants so quality dialogue could take place. An interpretative paradigm allows for the idea of understanding the world of the participants. This was to be a key characteristic of this research, or as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) explain, to "examine situations through the eyes of the participants" (p. 22).

Aubrey, David, Godfrey and Thompson (2000) refer to the idea of researchers conveying messages around how the world works through their choice of research methodology. The researcher's own value system and beliefs can be conveyed through the choice of research project, the way in which it is approached and the conclusions they draw from it. Within this is the idea from Hughes (2001) that a paradigm is the frame or way the research project is approached and viewed by the researcher. Hughes (2001) goes on to define that "what we learn about the world will depend on how we see it; and how we see it depends on our choice of paradigm" (p. 32).

In terms of Pacific-specific research there has been much debate about the idea of particular methodologies or rationales applicable to the Pacific research context. There is a growing body

of research about Pacific cultural paradigms around educational research. Of particular interest were Anae (1998) and Mara (1999) in which both were clear that to engage the concerns of Pacific peoples, epistemological ideas had to be carefully considered. Bryman (2008) agrees that epistemological questions around the nature of research are central before research methodology is considered. These ideas are outlined in chapter two when the word 'engagement' or making a connection are seen as crucial elements in successful teaching of Pacific boys. This is also a key process when seeking to gather data from this particular group – without that connection reliable data will be difficult to obtain.

It is therefore important to consider the impact of Pacific epistemologies on research methodologies. One of the crucial considerations when undertaking Pasifika research is the description of collective responsibilities and ownership principles that are common to Pacific people. Anae (1998) is very clear in stating the importance of understanding Pacific ideas about: values; individual and group behavior; gender; age relations; and notions of time. To effectively engage Pacific peoples it is clear that these epistemological realities must be at the core of the research to truly reflect and address the concerns that may be drawn out of the data gathered.

To this end there are some important epistemological practices suggested in the Pasifika Education Guidelines (2001) that can be used when considering an approach to Pasifika research. These include: sensitivity to Pacific contexts; embracing Pacific notions of collective ownership; understanding the notion of collective shame; and understanding how the authoritarian structures in Pasifika work. Using these epistemological issues as the foundations to build research on will assist in achieving an understanding of Pasifika cultures and hopefully achieve 'buy in' from the groups concerned.

In order to further understand Pasifika cultures a choice of qualitative methodology is most suitable because it is based around the collection and analysis of words rather than from the collection and analysis of data. This study is concerned with gathering views from students and teachers in a Pacific setting, and then making meaning from their experiences and opinions (Mason, 2000). In this way, the use of the case study method is applicable for this project because the interpretive or constructivist approach is more suitable to the Pacific context (Razik

and Swanson, 2001). Husen (1997) supports the case study methodology as a means that sometimes can provide a voice to those who views are sometimes not always heard, which in the context of this project refers to the students' voice.

Finally, qualitative methodology can be an empowering process for those involved. This research is designed to be looking into positive achievement levels that a group of teachers are obtaining and encouraging students to talk about the things that motivate them and enable them to succeed. In this context, the nature of interviews and focus groups can be a flexible and more encouraging way of bringing out the viewpoints from both teachers and students (Bryman, 2008).

Consequently, due to the literature regarding research methodology and Pasifika culture which I have outlined above, I followed a qualitative interpretive approach for this project together with the case study as my chosen methodology. This choice of approach is the most suitable to meet the study objectives and within the Pasifika context of the identified sample.

Bryman's (2008) description of a researcher in a case study immersing themselves into the social setting to listen and observe fit credibly with the epistemological concepts of Pasifika outlined above. As a researcher using a qualitative methodology and case study method this will enable me to listen and engage in conversations with Pacific boys and gather data from the group. An extension of this could be the additional idea of 'participant observation' – actually watching student lessons in action and noting successful engagement in the classroom (Husen, 1997).

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS

The chosen research site was De La Salle College, because it is the largest educator of Pacific boys in the world. Students and teachers were recruited by open invitation. I undertook three forms of data collection that ensured a triangulation of responses which Bryman (2008) recommends as a method of ensuring reliability of data by cross referencing the findings of each activity. Bryman (2008) describes triangulation as being "the use of more than one

method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that the findings may be cross-checked" (p. 700).

The three data collection methods used and invited sample were:

- A scoping questionnaire of 48 students
- 1 student focus group of8 participants
- 3 individual teacher interviews

Using three different methods did not only ensure triangulation but also provided me with effective tools to capture an overall sense of the experiences and opinions of the students and teachers involved.

Scoping questionnaire

A scoping questionnaire was designed for the students as the first step in the research project. The questionnaire is an ideal method to gather data from a large number of participants (Bryman, 2008). This is a useful way of gaining an understanding of the views and ideas students have about what they feel they best respond to in terms of classroom learning. The real value and purpose of the questionnaire is that the answers and themes observed could then be expanded on in the focus groups and teacher interviews.

The questionnaire was designed to ask students what they could identify as teaching practices that they learn best from. Support was sought from teaching staff to deliver an anonymous questionnaire to one class per year level (around 25 students from each year level, Years 9 – 13). A return of 48 students provided reliable data from a range of ages and academic abilities. All returns were unnamed to ensure confidentiality. The objective was to provide information that could be expanded upon in questions and with student focus groups.

Often thought of as a more quantitative process, a researcher might still use a questionnaire to collect data to support theory. In line with the epistemological outlook of this research, questionnaires added supporting data to show patterns or responses that can be collected a

little quicker than completely relying on interviews. While the technique is considered reasonably quick to collect data designing an effective set of questions can be challenging and thought needs to be given into how best to extract good quality information.

As the questionnaire used in this study was to be delivered to a range of students from Year 9 to Year 13 so careful consideration also had to be taken into ensuring the language and level of detail would not limit responses and therefore the effectiveness of the resulting data. Anderson (2001) and Hinds (2000) provide researchers with some very clear criteria about construction and delivery of a quality questionnaire. This includes: ensuring the type of information required is clear; ensuring a clear and consistent layout; and developing strategies for data collection and analysis. This advice was taken into account when constructing the questionnaire for this study.

There are limitations with this method and Bryman (2008) states one of the most obvious is the use of closed questions that can be put in front of respondents. Further to this Bell (2007) points out that while it seems an easy way to get a lot of data quickly it is still very difficult to put together quality questionnaires that will provide insightful sources of information. Consequently, as this questionnaire was to be the building block for this project, careful consideration had to be put into its design and delivery. Furthermore, the student body had to be considered also, as they were unlikely to have the inclination or the class time provided to complete a survey which would take more than ten minutes. So the questionnaire had to be specifically designed to gain maximum data from a short period of available time.

A combination of both open and closed questions were designed that would allow a level of usable data that would both provide some clear answers, but also an opportunity for students to respond with their own view points. Hinds (2000) describes the advantages and disadvantages of using closed or open-ended questions in questionnaires. He suggests that closed-ended questions are easier to code which reduces the time required to collate and interpret the data, also for the participants they are a much swifter way of completing the questionnaire, which in some instances may lead to greater levels of completing it. In contrast, with open-ended questions, which Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001) describe as the

hallmarks of qualitative data, participants need longer to complete them and there can be far more time spent collating and interpreting the data, although the upside of this is that there can be a richer form of data provided.

Taking into account the literature outlined above, for this project a specifically designed student based questionnaire resulted (see Appendix One). The questionnaire asked Pacific boys what they can identify as teaching practices that they feel they learn best from. This questionnaire in essence evolved around key issues that students from their experiences could describe of what works in the classroom and what impedes student learning. There were 16 questions in total, a mixture of open and closed questions, with 7 being of an open nature allowing students to offer their perspective and views in more detail.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups are considered by qualitative researchers to be an excellent way of gathering data for research purposes, it is a method that enables the researcher to get closer to the participants which will undoubtedly allow a deeper understanding of the issues at hand (McLachlan, 2005).While they tended to be used extensively in marketing research, focus groups have been recently used regularly in educational research in particular when dealing with primary and secondary students (Bryman, 2008).

In the focus group setting students may be far more willing to offer up opinions with the support of their peers. One of the advantages of the focus group is that it has the real potential for those involved to work off one another (Bryman, 2008). This fits with the descriptions of how Pacific boys would best offer data outlined in chapter two. The down-side of this is that those involved may not offer up their true personal experiences or ideas as they may go with the group outlook, particularly if there is a dominant spokesperson in the group (Thackeray & Neiger, 2004).

The focus group questions in this project (see Appendix two) were drawn from the responses to the student questionnaire which had been previously collated and coded. The focus group questions were seeking to expand and explore in more depth the views and ideas that had been drawn from the answers to the questionnaire. The format of the group meeting began with an explanation about the research project and how the focus group would run. The focus groups then went on to introductory questions which led into some key questions that were designed to be specific and hopefully provide some in depth scrutiny.

A focus group of eight was formed by inviting students to participate in the groups through the daily school notices. It was voluntary with an assurance that no names would be used in the findings. Students were required to take a letter home for parental consent to be signed (see Appendix Three) and meetings were held on site after school for no longer than two hours. No students from any of the classes I have taught were selected. Students were offered light refreshments whilst on site as the meetings were held after school.

A 'semi-structured' group interview technique was used as it was considered the best approach. The semi-structured interview uses a list of questions or topics but is flexible in how the interview proceeds, the questions provide a guide but are not a prescriptive format for the interview (Bryman, 2008). The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that participants tend to be more open about their view of the world (Bryman, 2008), which for the group I interviewed this may provide crucial insights.

I believe this choice of approach of the group interview had some real benefit, as it straddled the line between formal and informal interviewing (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Therefore, use of humor, sharing food, being attentive and interested in personal accounts in a more informal manner was an effective choice of method when gathering data from a group of teenage Pacific boys.

The researcher and Cultural sensitivity

The role of the researcher is crucial in ensuring that the topic under discussion is guided but at the same time all the participants are comfortable in the setting to fully engage (McLachlan, 2006). As mentioned earlier, the risk of a focus group can be that it simply reflects the view of the group rather than that of the individuals involved. It is vital that the researcher ensures that participants are all equally participating and this can be a delicate act of keeping things moving while hearing the voice of all (McLachlan, 2006). The real purpose of the researcher in the focus group is to get participants interacting with each other without the researcher taking a lead or central role.

Cultural sensitivity is a key aspect of running focus groups with Pasifika students. The interviewer should maintain a 'balanced rapport' while remaining direct and impersonal (Fontana & Frey, 2005). It has been suggested that the face-to-face interview with Pasifika peoples is extremely effective *because* it offers an opportunity to build familiarity and relationships with the interviewees (Anae, Anderson, Benseman & Coxon, 2002). With this in mind a 'semi-structured' approach using open ended questions of two focus interviews with students was considered to provide sound qualitative data.

Consideration was given to whether or not it may be prudent to enlist the services of an appropriate interviewer. In the context of considering the epistemological outlook of Pacific peoples the concepts of trust and rapport may be better initiated by using an interviewer known by the interviewees to ensure they feel secure in knowing that the process will be a transparent and worthwhile experience (Hill & Hawk, 1996). Selection of the interviewer is important and it must be someone with the relevant life experiences and skills to carry out the interviews. While the interviewer may be involved from the interview to the analysis of data stage, Hill and Hawk (1996) suggest it could be worthwhile merely using this person to facilitate the initial stages of the interview and ensure the roles and definitions are clearly defined. In the end I felt I had significant respect from the students to carry out the interviews myself.

Teacher Interviews

The interview was selected as a means to collect specific, in-depth information from selected teachers as to why they believed they were achieving such successful achievement in their classes with Pacific boys. The interview method is particularly useful as the researcher is able to go back to the participants to seek further details or expand on particular themes (Hinds, 2000).

Interviewing for research can be summed up as seeking to elicit information from respondents. The most common form of interview is the structured interview where interviewees are given the same set of questions. Questions should be very specific and should hopefully lead to responses that can be aggregated after analysis (Bryman, 2008).

However once again I chose the semi-structured method. The advantages in semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions are that the participants are allowed to be more open about their view of the world (Bryman, 2008), which suited this study as a mode of collecting rich qualitative data.

In the interviews for this project there were six questions in total (see Appendix Four) but they had the potential to be easily expanded upon depending on the participants' desire or expertise to develop in certain areas. The researcher sought to use the interview structure to generate knowledge and understanding from the participants due to their experiences with Pacific male students (Cohen, Manion & Morrision, 2004).The questions were designed to be open-ended as according to De Vaus (1990) this style of interview tends to ensure that the participants are more comfortable in supplying responses that are a more accurate expression of their thoughts, as opposed to a pre-empted or closed response.

The selection of teachers was based on purposeful sampling. In essence purposive sampling is the process of data collection in a way that allows the researcher to develop the theory as it emerges (Glaser, 1992). I saw this as a particularly useful process in terms of confirming or categorizing certain information that had come out of the student feedback and could then be discussed with teachers.

Purposeful sampling also meant that I could invite teachers who were respected as experienced, highly qualified and successful teachers of Pasifika boys to be interviewed. They were emailed inviting them to a one-on-one interview (single), on site, again for no more than two hours. Teachers were informed that they could withdraw their information up to three weeks after the interview took place. All teachers were given a pseudonym and interview data was only accessible by myself and my supervisors.

Theoretical Sampling

For the focus groups, Interviews and questionnaire sampling was based on groups of boys from Years 9 to 13 from De La Salle College and teachers from the same school. It was important that the best possible representation is important to the eventual analysis of the research.

To form the sample theoretical sampling was used, which is a form of purposive sampling advocated by Glaser (1992). In essence theoretical sampling is the process of data collection in a way that allows the researcher to develop the theory as it emerges. Purposive sampling is sampling with the purpose of enlisting quite specific and strategic participants for the research. It enables the researcher to use a variety of methods to gain participation (Strauss, 1996). For example the target group of this research project is Pacific Secondary school boys in South Auckland, so I was quite clear who my participants for the questionnaire and interviews needed to be and therefore theoretical purposive sampling was the most suitable. Furthermore, theoretical sampling is a relevant logical way to approach this data analysis as the facts are clearly laid out about Pacific boys under-achievement at school, so realistically my role as a researcher was to discover interrelationships and causes behind this and suggest alternative strategies to improve achievement for future students.

ANALYSIS

Coding

For the analysis of Interview transcripts, the scoping questionnaire and the focus group transcripts, a process of coding was required. Once the interviews and questionnaires had been

collected the process of collating the information into meaningful data began. The key with a qualitative research approach such as the one I undertook is managing the information gathered from the field. There is no definitive method of how qualitative fieldwork analysis should be done. Qualitative data can be considered 'attractive nuisance' – attractive in terms of the wealth of information that can be collected, nuisance because of then having to sift through and decide what is key and what is not (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006; Miles, 1979).

I analysed all the scoping questionnaires, focus groups and interview transcripts. In essence this consisted of sorting the data into various categories to make some meaning from it. This began by looking for emerging themes and grouping responses from individual questions. The 'coding' of these themes classified the data into information around certain topics, questions or answers and grouped linked responses together.

Coding is considered one of the most important processes in grounded theory. In essence this refers to sorting of the data into various categories to make some meaning from it. Ultimately, all data still needs to be analyzed in a robust fashion and in consultation with the advisory group (Bryman, 2008). Debates over the cultural or interviewing subtly needs to be thorough to ensure the final analysis is accurate and representative of the target group. An important aspect of this can be referred back to the earlier notes about the Pasifika context. There may be differing interpretations around certain concepts across the individual Pacific ethnicities (Samoan, Tongan etc), age groups and whether the person was New Zealand born or born in the Islands then migrated (Watson et al., 1997).

Early and regular consultation holds the key in deciding the best way to analyze collected data. Pre-analysis consultation with the right groups, particularly around the cultural aspects of this study was important. There are two main approaches to qualitative data analysis:

- Analytic Induction – seeks to explain things by pursuing data until there are no inconsistencies with a hypothetical explanation
- Grounded Theory – is concerned with making theory out of the data

Grounded theory is deemed the more widely used framework for qualitative analysis. Features of grounded theory are its primary concern with the development of theories from gathered data, and secondly the idea that data collection and analysis take place at the same time, effectively working off each other (Bryman, 2008).

In terms of this research project, to allowing coding and data analysis to take place a grounded theory approach was adopted as it was felt that it would generate definite ideas and answers, rather than simply theory. The importance of this is central within the primary role of Pacific research which should be to empower the Pacific communities in New Zealand (Taufe'ulungaki, 2000).

Finally, once final analysis of all the data was completed and feedback received the draft report was written up. As I was working within the Pasifika community the draft was presented to the original advisory group and other participants and relevant reference groups and feedback took place. Taufe'ulungaki (2000) points out that in the final stages of analysis, research about Pacific people should contribute positively to the development of Pacific people. Furthermore, it is also suggested that it may be very worthwhile to translate the final report in several Pacific languages (Tamasese, 1997).

ETHICAL ISSUES

A key document used in this research project was the 'Pasifika Education Research Guidelines – a report to the New Zealand Ministry of Education' (2001). This document was crucial to the researcher in terms of establishing key protocols and guidelines when undertaking educational research with Pacific participants. By adhering to these guidelines the researcher was able to ensure research practices undertaken were empathetic and empowering to the Pacific community.

In this study an understanding of Pacific values was important to ensure the research would fit the methodological approach acceptable to the community. Crocombe (1975) described some general features of the 'Pacific Way' as including:

- *Being prepared to be negotiable, being flexible*

- *Adaptation and compromise*

- *Oratory and verbal negotiation – the Pacific Way is spoken rather than written*

- *Kinship networks – literally thousands of people can claim kinship or affinity with any distinguished leader*

- *Universal Pacific notions of generosity with time, labour and property*

- *Pacific perceptions of 'time', leisure, dress, food and dancing*

- *The inseparable dynamics of church and culture*

(Crocombe, 1975, p. 23)

It was also felt that there were some common values that exist between Pacific peoples such as respect, communalism, collective responsibility, humility, love, service and spirituality. It was important to recognize these core values not necessarily as uniquely Pacific, but as principles intertwined with Pacific groups (Anae et al 2002).

Guidelines around research using humans as sources of information and data takes on real significance within Pasifika research when considering the respect for confidentiality and anonymity for participants. Anae et al. (2002) also point out that due to potential family shame Pacific people might be reluctant to come forward to participate in some research activities. This is due to the fact the Pacific community is small and can be well known to each other which places them in fear that if they impart information it could be traced back to them.

Another key principle is that subjects give informed consent. The bottom line is asking people for their permission first before you begin any research or ask any questions. If their answer is no then research cannot take place. In particular when dealing with younger people it is important to consider consent needing to be voluntary rather than coerced. Coercion leaves people with a choice but by agreeing it may ultimately come at a cost – the feeling that if I don't participate then I may be letting myself down or somehow suffer by not doing so (Wilkinson, 2001).

The nature and manner of consultation was the first crucial key in ensuring that this research project would be of value to Pacific education and would lead to the reduction of any mistrust and the building of positive relationships within the Pacific community. It is agreed there is a need for quality Pacific education research and my first step was to ensure stakeholders that this research project would provide usable and empowering results. I also needed to ensure that the study would be viewed as culturally sensitive and respectful to cultural property ownership. With this in mind one of the first ports of call was the Ministry of Education and in particular the Pasifika Education group. Secondly I sought advice and guidance from Pacific parents, teachers and advisors to set the project up in a way that they deemed as acceptable and meeting with their cultural protocols.

Ultimately this research project is based around the human element and at its core is young, male Pacific boys. Therefore the need for privacy and cultural sensitivity is paramount. The key was to provide a safe environment for all participants and the researcher alike. At the core of this research is the desire to protect and respect Pacific values and protocols. The objective in considering ethical issues was to set out a process the looked for a partnership with Pacific communities and other Pacific researchers (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Careful planning at the front end of the consultation process diminished the risk of making errors of judgment around ethical issues. An advisory team made up of personnel from members of the Pacific community and organizations such as the various Pasifika Teachers Associations, the Ministry of Education Pasifika Education group and Komiti Pasifika have provided an important and credible cornerstone for consultation.

Consultation centered around three major areas:

- Selecting the appropriate wording and framing for the research topic
- Considering the actual research questions
- Selecting the most suitable research method

Overall, by acknowledging the advice of the literature cited above, I ensured that all of the participants had their rights protected and were not harmed in any way.

Validity and reliability

There are also important issues around validity and reliability to ensure ethical principles are met. Validity generally needs to meet criteria from the research paradigm that is being modeled. Important concepts around validity such as controllability and predictability should be strived for (Morgan, 1999). Bryman (2008) sums up validity as "the integrity of the conclusions that are presented" (p. 343). An invalid piece of research can be rendered worthless and the impact of this, for instance in this Pacific context, could lead to further erosion of trust for future research projects. Cultural validity needs to be addressed at all stages of the research from the planning processes to the delivery of the final analysis (Morgan, 1999).

Reliability is ensuring that the research is consistent and would stand up to scrutiny. For example would the interview questions I delivered get the same response from someone else asking them – if not then they could be viewed as unreliable forms of data. Stability is a key word linked to reliability and consistency of measures – stability in terms of results that do not fluctuate when a measure is put forward to participants when put forward again a second time. If there are variations to results then the measure would be deemed unreliable and the research compromised (Bryman, 2008).

Qualitative research reliability can be regarded as a fit between what is being presented as research data and what actually happens in the real world of the setting that is being researched (Creswell, 2002). Triangulation, which is the use of gathering several different sources of data is important to ensure findings are cross-referenced and this provides a good check on reliability. Triangulation is a strategy that develops measures that result in far greater reliability in findings. Triangulation is used in qualitative research processes to ensure validity and reliability which will result in a greater confidence that data analysis is accurate (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 1966).

Particularly important when dealing with younger interview subjects are the issues of validity and reliability. In this research the concern was how to avoid: bias; leading questions; influencing participants; misperceptions and misunderstandings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison,

2007). Carefully considered questions that were extremely clear, together with training for interviewers was used in order to avoid these pitfalls. Likewise the use of leading questions was also a concern, however this was avoided by rephrasing any questions that appeared to put assumptions into participant's heads and by using phrases such as 'your opinion' as opposed to asking 'how satisfied' participants may be.

In line with the Pacific concept of respect, feedback and comments were sought at various stages throughout the research and before the final document was presented. Throughout the data gathering and analysis stages there was an ongoing display of transparency and proof that the research has no harmful goals or deceptive motives. This was achieved by going back to key stakeholders and relevant participants with up-to-date progress and milestone reports. In the Pacific context, Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave (1997) describe this as a collaborative approach designed to gain support during the research and an adaptation of the Samoan practice of *fa'afaetui*. This is the weaving of the research process and walking alongside an advisory group to ensure the cultural and intellectual specifics are drawn into the outcomes.

Conclusion

Within this project the use of focus group, interview and questionnaire data provides a form of triangulation that ensures reliable findings. In essence, as I analysed all three sets of data I was looking for match-ups and contrasts between the data provided by the students and the data provided by the teachers, therefore providing insight into the best teaching and learning strategies for Pacific boys. It was also very important to pay particular attention to detail around ethical issues if this research is to be seen as a positive contribution to developments in Pacific education.

CHAPTER FOUR : FINDINGS

Introduction

In Chapter Four the findings from the data analysis are presented from the initial scoping questionnaire, focus groups and teacher interviews. Significant themes and ideas are identified and developed and the research begins to consider some of the key findings in the successful teaching of Pacific boys.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Questionnaires

The scoping questionnaires were the first method of data collection undertaken and the responses formed the basis of questions to put to the focus group. Five sets of 30 questionnaires were distributed to five different home room groups – a set of questionnaires to each year level, from Year 9 through to year 13. 48 In total were returned which represents a response rate of 32%.Not all students answered all the questions.

Teachers who distributed the questionnaires had been invited by open invitation through the staff weekly notices and via an email to volunteer to assist with the research. The research project was outlined for their understanding of the project.

The respondents were all completely anonymous which the researcher believed led to an honest and transparent set of responses from the students involved. Students were also informed clearly about what the information was to be used for. They were also advised of the next step which was an open invitation to take part in the focus group sessions.

Once the completed questionnaires had been returned they were coded and collated into a simple excel spreadsheet which enabled me to identify any particular patterns and themes. This style of coding allowed the researcher to easily recognize where the issues were and what particular themes could be developed during the focus group meetings. Several useful themes

came out of the questionnaires and these questions were noted and become the initial foundations to be expanded on for the focus groups.

Responses

1. **What sort of activities do you do in class? Can you describe them? (e.g. writing, listening to the teacher, working with your friends in groups, working on your own, doing things like sport in PE or making things in tech, silent reading, using computers)**

Computers	5
Brainstorming	3
Making things in tech	2
Group work	9
PE and sports	7
Writing	8
Reading	4
Theory and Practical	1
Finishing assessments	1

Table 4.1 : Responses to question 1

Table 4.1 shows that the students felt most of the class time was engaged in group work and writing. The students also identified that they felt they spent a mixed amount of time engaged in various activities.

2. What sort of activities do you like best?

Computers	3
Brainstorming	6
Making things in tech	4
Group work	6
PE and sports	21
Writing	3
Reading	1
Theory and Practical	1
Finishing assessments	1
Design	3
Writing essays	3
Working on my own	2
Art	2
Analyzing exemplars	2

Table 4.2 : Responses to question 2

Table 4.2 displays a recurrent theme identified by the students in terms of what they enjoyed most were activities that lend themselves to being more 'hands on'. Physical Education and Sport were the most favoured in what students choose as the class activities they liked most. Next equal came brainstorming and group work. Brainstorming of course could be seen as a form of group work and is interactive by nature.

The main theme identified by the students in this data, which was also supported by the feedback from the focus group, was that the students enjoyed and engaged more actively when lessons were less structured and involved a more practical approach. Furthermore, the students also indicated that some lessons or activities were too structured and could be 'boring.' In this category were activities such as silent reading, completing assessments, working on their own and completing exemplars.

Finally, the findings also show a link between the activities that they enjoyed the most and the comments they made about enjoying the lessons with their teachers. Hands on, group activities are shown to provide opportunities to have fun with their teachers in the classroom and this seems to be appreciated and seen as helping students engage and get on with their learning. This data is summarized in Table 4.2 which highlights how many of the boys enjoyed PE and Sports, followed by work that involved groups or brainstorming.

3. Do you feel comfortable asking for help in class?

Yes 36   No 9

These findings show that students were generally comfortable asking questions to clarify the work being done in the classroom. However several of the students felt some concern in voicing an opinion or asking for clarification in class and this resulted in them feeling "put down" or just that they didn't like the idea of speaking out. The responses to the second part of this question validate this.

If no, why not?

Student answers included some negative responses:

"When I ask questions people make fun of me so I just don't ask"
"I get worried that the teacher might growl me"
"I don't like to talk out loud"
"I don't like to mainly because I am shy"

Of the majority of students who were positive about the idea of asking questions, many were very clear and concise in the reasons why they felt this comfort:

"Teachers are open – they don't condone us not to ask questions, they encourage us to"
"I get much more out of my lessons by asking questions"
"It (asking questions) helps me understand more of my lessons"
"Because they gave more experience"
"Because I know I will learn from asking questions"

"Because I understand my peers and feel comfortable and casual with them and the teacher"

"I always feel comfortable to ask questions"

Overall, the findings show that 80% percent of students are happy to ask questions in class and many of them find this a positive experience which engages them and improves the quality of their learning.

4. Does your teacher get round to everybody?

Yes 31   No 11

This question met with a mixed response although a higher percentage of students felt that the teachers made a reasonable job of getting around all students during a lesson. In the focus group findings which are documented later in this chapter, four students supported the perception that sometimes some students appeared to be left alone in class. The comments showed that that this was because of two reasons, firstly that the students appeared to be lazy or disinterested. Secondly, it could be that the student was left alone because they may appear to understand everything or be getting through their work without any problems. As a result in both these cases, the students said that their teachers sometimes would teach to other parts of the classroom, not include them in questions or would not stop at their desks when walking around checking on work. This issue became part of the questions developed in the focus group.

5. Do you feel your teachers encourage you to do well?

Yes 39   No 6

As seen above, the findings show that a high majority of students felt their teachers encouraged students. This was also reflected in question 13 where students were asked what they liked best about their teachers. An interesting point when looking at the combined feedback for questions 5 and 13 is that the comments identify that the teachers are seen as knowledgeable and also want to enjoy the lessons themselves. Eight students supplied comments to answer question five:

"They are friendly and motivating and encouraging. We can laugh with them"

"They do everything in their power to help us pass"

"They help me and keep me motivated to achieve and their classes are enjoyable"

"The teachers are passionate about their subjects and help me to learn"

"They teach well and help me to achieve what I am capable of"

"They push you to succeed"

Tied in with a sense of passion for their subjects and a high level of enjoyment, students saw teachers on a personal level, as people who were there for the benefit of student learning:

"They sacrifice a lot so that we can pass"

"They care about you, you get along with them"

"What I like best about my teacher is that she is always trying to get everyone to pass even though the chances are grim, she never gives up"

"Their constant encouragement to do well"

The findings show that a vast majority of students felt encouraged to do well and their comments present a positive response from the students regarding their teachers' level of support.

6. Do you feel comfortable about participating and contributing in class?

Yes 24   No 7

Over 75% of students felt positive when asked about their own participation and contribution in class. Those who responded 'yes' also added comments about feeling comfortable in the classroom environment with their peers. Six students added positive comments, they wrote:

"…to help me learn more on what I am capable of"

"Because everyone gets involved"

"Because just everyone contributes"

"Because I like contributing in class"

"Because working with all the boys gives us more confidence"

"Teachers encourage us to contribute"

One student added a negative comment. He wrote:

"People might laugh at me if the answer is wrong"

7. Does everyone participate most of the time?

Yes 27   No 12

The findings show that just over 70% of student participants had a negative response when they were asked about the motivation of others in their classes. Although feedback in comment form was not required for this question it became the basis of a question in the focus group.

8. Does your teacher ask you for feedback about whether you liked a lesson or what could be done differently?

Yes 20   No 18

Question 8 was a rare question because it met with such a diverse response. Clearly the findings show that the student participants were equally split in their opinion. These findings suggest that it would be interesting for teachers to get student feedback on their lessons to ensure that they are meeting the needs of individuals, or groups of students. For example, given the numbers of students in question 7 who do not participate, or those students in question 9 who are unsure what is expected of them, teachers may find valuable insights if lessons were reviewed with students. Given this, the results of Question 8 became another guiding question for the focus group.

9. Do you know what your teacher expects of you in this classroom?

Yes 28   No 10

The findings show that this was another question that received a mixed response, with over 60% of the participants believing that they understand what their teachers expect of them and 30% not knowing what is expected. Clearly there are non-engaged students who are unsure of the expectation of their teachers during lessons. Two students expanded on their feelings regarding this question in comments which stated:

"They way they teach, some teachers tell us something once and expect us to understand. I want teachers to go one step at time."

"Some students only focus on the bright students and leave the rest to fail"

The mixed response to question 9 provided another leading question in the focus group.

10. Do you think your teacher cares about your learning?

Yes 34   No 3

The high positive response to this question gives a clear indication that students felt that their teachers cared about their learning. Comments in response to Question 14 also supported this view with several students stating that one of the things that they liked about their teachers is the sense that they care and want them to succeed. This positive outlook can only assist in the building of relationships within the classroom and give students a genuine sense of belief that their teachers are working for them and their academic success.

Due to the overall positive response to this question I went on to use this with the focus group to drill down further regarding students' thoughts about this issue.

11. Do you know how you're doing in your subjects?

Yes 33   No 4

Another important factor in terms of encouragement for students was feedback. The findings show that over 90% of participants felt that they know how they are doing in their subjects. This questionnaire finding was also supported by three teachers interviewed who all made reference to the idea of constant feedback to students so they knew where they stood and where they were going. This theme is developed in the section containing the teacher interviews. Two students recognized this and commented positively about the levels of feedback that they received:

"They answer all your questions straight. They make you feel comfortable in class and give feedback on where you stand in a subject"

"They ask a lot of questions to see how you are going and give you lots of feedback"

Again, as with Question 10, the positive response to this question led to further examination with the focus group to gain better insight into why students see this as a key indicator in their success.

12. Do you attend this class regularly?

   Yes 35   No 5

There was a very positive response overall to this question given that truancy can be a problem at some high schools. Over 80% of students indicated that they attended class regularly. These findings are supported by De La Salle attendance data which averages at 97%. This is a good indicator of student satisfaction with their teachers and an overall positive approach to their learning. Students that responded to the questionnaire clearly wanted to be in the classes that they were sitting at the time of completing these questions.

However the findings of question 12 are juxtaposed with the findings to Question 13 where there was a clear split in whether or not students would choose to avoid some lessons. This question again became part of a more detailed examination with the focus group.

13. Would you avoid some classes?

   Yes 24   No 17

Along with Question 8, a question that was also met with a split response, the reasons for the responses to Question 13 were puzzling given the students generally positive reaction to most of the questions about their teachers and lessons. Clearly this would be a question that would require further development with the focus group.

Given the responses to question 2 it would appear initially that if students found a class difficult or boring by not including the activities they saw as 'hands on' or if they did not like the teacher, then they were likely to not attend. There were also references to this theme in response to Question 15 regarding what they wanted to change in their teachers.

14. What do you like about your best teachers?

Many students were positive about their learning outcomes in the classrooms of effective teachers and could articulate this. The findings show that good relationships between teachers and students have led to classroom situations where students feel respected but they also spoke at times of teachers that were tough which they also respected as they believed the teacher wanted what was best for the students. The students commented on the benefits of good relationships with their teachers, which were formed when teachers related to their students personally and used humour and more personal interactions to motivate and inspire them. The students acknowledged that generally they had good relationships with their teachers. Mostly, the students felt that having good relationships with their teachers would help them learn better and achieve more in terms of good results. Overall, 10 students responded to this question in the questionnaire. Six explained:

"They treat me fairly and are fun to learn from"

"They are easy to relate to"

"They know our backgrounds and are able to connect with us"

"Kindness"

"Talks and explains, how to do formulas etc."

"They talk to us and are able to relate to us"

Improved expectations from teachers has given students confidence in their ability to achieve and an awareness of their progress over time, it has also instilled in students a work ethic that will lead to future improvements. Due to these high expectations and good relationships the students seemed confident of why they were doing well at school. A further four students commented:

"They have high expectations"

"They push us to get past"

"They are clear, specific and kickback"

"They are driven and hard on our learning"

15. What would you like to change about some teachers?

17 students responded to this question with comments. Several responses were reported in other questions as students reflected on things that teachers could change under answers on participation and feedback. Four students felt teachers could change their 'attitude' but gave no specifics about what this would look like. Other responses were positive in terms that students wanted their teachers to be more in control of proceedings. Two students wrote:

> *"Be more confident and demanding"*
> *"Be more strict"*

Three students commented on the make-up or style of the lesson and the teaching:

> *"Have more fun in lessons"*
> *"Do you more outdoor activities"*
> *"Maybe not so boring"*

Further students commented more specifically and negatively, and although this was a relatively small number they were very succinct in their outlines and clear about how their teachers could do better:

> *"Some teachers don't know how to form a kind of relationship that is good like some do. Students will not listen if the teachers can't connect with them in the right way"*
> *"Take us seriously and be more in control of the class"*
> *"Stop them from being mean, like growling us even when we are talking about the subject"*

16. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

No students took the opportunity to add any further feedback.

Questionnaire conclusion

The findings show that the majority of students seem to be engaged and positive about the teaching and learning at De La Salle. They appear comfortable in their lessons and willing to seek help if required. They generally affirm that teachers who use a wide range of strategies to build relationships and enforce clear classroom management strategies are most respected by students. Students strongly affirmed: the importance of teachers positioning themselves as being in charge; the development of mutually respectful and caring relationships; and the importance of open and fun classroom interactions. Students were also clear how the provision of achievement criteria and feedback was very important to their participation and learning.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Questions

Based on responses to the questionnaires the following questions formed the basis of the interview structure for the focus group. There were several areas of interest or themes that had evolved from the data collated in the questionnaire. These were:

- student enjoyment, participation and engagement in certain activities (based on responses from questions 1 and 2)
- interactions within the classroom, particularly the practice of teachers responding to everyone in the class(based on responses from question 4)
- how do they feel about student participation in their classes(based on responses from question 7)
- responses to teacher request for feedback about lessons(based on responses from question 8)
- perceived teacher expectations of students during lessons(based on responses from question 9)
- would you avoid some classes(based on responses from question 13)

Other questions that needed further expansion from the scoping questionnaire were based on the findings around the positive elements of what students believed to be good teaching and learning.

- what they felt they liked best about their teachers

- what they would like to most change about some teachers

- what sort of feedback and encouragement do students receive and do they know if they are doing well in their subject

Focus group participants

The focus groups were organized after the data from the scoping questionnaire had been collated and analyzed – these findings provided the basis for the focus group initial line of questioning. The aim of the focus group was for the researcher to be in the position to identify what the students thought about their classroom experiences. The semi-structured style of interview enabled a set of guidelines to lead the conversations but also allowed scope for the conversations to flow into areas that become of interest as things went along.

The session was audio-taped then the data was transcribed into an electronic version. When the transcript was finished the researcher then grouped reoccurring themes and patterns into manageable blocks. Due to the openness of the students involved the common themes appeared relatively quickly and could be easily formed into groups.

Due to the fact that the focus group had been largely driven by the outcomes of the scoping questionnaire and the ideas within the research questions, the researcher avoided the trap of falling into what Krueger and Casey (2000) describe as 'the maze', that is, gathering too much data if the questions are too broad and not defined enough. While the focus group did throw up a reasonable amount of data, the overview of the project enabled the researcher to keep a good focus on the core topics.

Once the transcript had been completed the participants were all provided with a copy and they were invited to make changes or withdraw their input should they wish. None of the participants chose to do so.

Focus group responses: Student enjoyment, participation and engagement in certain activities

The focus group supported what the scoping questionnaire had very clearly pointed out, that is, that a majority of the students seemed to prefer activities that were active and 'lively'. These activities included brainstorms on the board with the whole class involved, any form of sport or PE, group work or simply being allowed to work alongside another student. One student's comments reflected the feelings of the whole group. He said:

> *'I think group work is really good, not just being stuck in a corner and do your own thing'.*

All the students in the focus group responded that they had recalled doing some group work however some teachers used it more than others and students felt it was boring when they didn't do it much. One student commented:

> *'I like it best when we work in groups, it's boring when the teacher just sets some work for you to do'.*

Three of the students did enjoy group work, but also enjoyed times when the teachers made them work on their own, in quiet, completing tasks such as silent reading or writing. One of these students explained:

> *'Group work is fun but its good to also have quiet times in class'*

Focus group responses: what do they feel about student participation in their classes

Students felt that most of their peers in their classes would participate but this could vary depending on who the teacher was. They were also adamant that some students wouldn't

participant because they didn't want to be seen as 'uncool'. Two students' comments highlight the groups' opinion:

> *'Some of the teachers aren't very strict and don't make the boys do all the work'*
>
> *'Sometimes you really want to get into it but you might not depending on who's in your class. This doesn't happen so much when you get older, most the boys want to do their work'*

Focus group responses: Responses to teacher request for feedback about lessons

This was an area that students responded that they really had never experienced a teacher asking about a specific lesson. However, several students did mention that their teachers did some regular review after they had finished a topic or at the end of the term. Two students explained:

> *'Some teachers never tell you how you are doing but others are awesome and keep pushing you along'*
>
> *'I really like it when the teachers tell you how many (NCEA) credits you have'*

Focus group responses: Perceived teacher expectations of students during lessons

Most of the students felt it was clear what was expected during lessons. They felt the school rules were used by most teachers to make this clear. One student expressed how they all felt:

> *'You know some teachers are stricter than others. Most of the boys like the teachers who are strict but also have a laugh with you'*

Focus group responses: Would you avoid some classes?

A number of students were quite clear that there were certain teachers that they would choose to miss lessons. One student articulated this feeling and the other participants agreed:

> *'Some teachers are boring and you don't learn anything, they don't even know if you aren't there'.*

Focus group responses: What they felt they liked best about their teachers

The students in the focus group were generally positive about their teachers and their experiences in the classrooms at De La Salle. They appreciated that most of the teachers treated them with respect and appeared to care about their education. Again, the more senior students felt that their teachers were very determined to ensure that they should pass their exams. Two participants commented:

> *'Miss is really cool at making sure you know what you have to do to make sure you pass'.*
> *'The teachers care about you here, they want you to pass so you end up not wanting to let them down'.*

Focus group responses: What they would like to most change about some teachers

There was some negativity about some of the teachers at De La Salle. Some of the students had definite suggestions about how the teachers could be better. One word that had been used several times in the scoping questionnaire was 'attitude' – and how the teacher should change their attitude. This idea was expanded on by one participant in the focus group:

> *'Some teachers have an attitude when they come to class, they don't chill out and try to understand us'.*

Focus group responses: What sort of feedback and encouragement do students receive and do they know if they are doing well in their subjects?

For the majority of students, particularly the senior boys in the focus group, feedback about what they were doing and what they should be learning was very important. The felt they learnt best in classes where teachers constantly reminded them of what was required to pass at NCEA level. One senior student's comments summarise the students' feelings:

> *Mr …is really good at making sure you know what is expected of you. He starts every lesson with telling you where we up to and what we are doing next. Before that I never really knew where I was up to or what I needed to do to get better'.*

Focus group conclusion

The responses collected from the focus group is in line with the literature review findings in chapter two. Students want teachers that provide environments that are high in expectation and teachers that are there to offer students the best chance of success. Students enjoyed well prepared lessons and in particular lessons that were clear in their intentions and well-paced. Clear provision of achievement criteria and feedback was very important to their participation and learning and this data supported the initial findings from the questionnaire.

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This section outlines the findings that have been drawn from the interviews with participant teachers invited to be interviewed. A description of the participants is provided as is a description of the questions and their responses.

The three participants in the interview process were successful teachers at De La Salle College. The decision to invite only three was based on purposeful sampling. These teachers were identified as amongst the best at the college and well respected by their peers as being so. Relative 'success' criteria and what is considered to be the best teachers is outlined under the heading 'approach'. As practicing teachers, the researcher wanted to establish from them what they believed they were doing was leading to their academic success with Pacific boys.

Approach

The interviews sought to gain an understanding of the experiences of teachers who were identified as having high levels of success at De La Salle College. This success criteria was defined as:

a) Higher than average pass rates at NCEA levels (Definition was 90% pass rates and higher, and an above average Merit and Excellence pass rates).

b) Good rapport and well-managed classrooms at Year 9 and 10 levels

c) Recognised by the school as being exemplary teachers – this meant they were effectively in key teaching and leadership roles. For this reason it is important to summarise the backgrounds of each teacher.

Teacher One: Male, 33, described himself as New Zealand Maori. Currently Head of Science. 12 years experience and at the end of 2009 was nominated for the Neita (National excellence in teaching award) best teacher awards. His teaching experience had been in De La Salle College for over ten years, he was also an old boy of the College. His qualifications were a Bachelor of Science and a Diploma of Teaching.

Teacher Two: Male, 36, 10 years experience, a UK teacher with 7 years experience in New Zealand, Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning. His experience had been in several inner London schools before coming to New Zealand and has been at De La Salle College for the past seven years. He has a PGCE in teaching and is currently studying for a Masters of Educational Leadership through Unitec.

Teacher Three: Female, 31, Fijian Indian, current coordinator of Literacy at the college. 10 years experience, firstly in Fiji then an all girls school in Auckland. She has been at De La Salle College for the past 3 years. She has a degree in English literacy and a Diploma of teaching.

In order to make arrangements for the interviews each teacher was invited to be part of the project. This was a purposeful sampling selection as described in chapter three – these particular teachers were selected because of their success with the Pacific boys at the school.

The purpose of the interviews was explained to the participants. The interviewees were given a copy of the questions before the actual interview. It was stressed by the researcher that the questions in the interview were intended only as a guide for the interviews, rather than as a rigid set of questions. Participants were encouraged to come with their own ideas for their interviews; again, it was stressed that they had been invited because of their expertise around this topic and the interview process was designed to get their perceptions on why their classroom teaching was resulting in success.

The interviews were held between 23 November and 12 December 2009. The interviews were conducted on the schools' premises and in the office of each person. Each interview was designed to be approximately hour in duration, however due to the enthusiasm of the participants they tended to go for at least 30 minutes longer, which was greatly appreciated by the researcher.

The interviews were tape-recorded, with the consent of the participants. Using the questions as a guide, teachers were asked to describe their experiences and reflect on their success in their classrooms. In particular they were asked to focus on their own performance, in terms of their classroom practice and the impact on the learning of Pacific students that they taught. It was hoped that these conversations would enable these teachers to reflect about their classroom experiences and identify clearly what it is that they were doing that resulted in high levels of student achievement.

The interview findings

The findings have been structured using the interview questions. Relevant responses to the questions have been labelled 1, 2 or 3 which relates to teachers 1, 2 and 3 as described above

Tell me about your experiences teaching Pacific boys? Your expectations, positive features and any difficulties or problems.

> 1: *"I have very high expectations of the boys and I communicate it to them. The best thing about Pacifica boys is that they are easy to take on a journey and totally open to resources and materials."*
>
> 2: *"Like teaching any other student in the world. Set high expectations and clear success criteria. Scaffold tasks and provide feedback. They need boundaries and consequences for their actions."*
>
> 3: *"One of the biggest problems is their lack of motivation. Most of these boys need clear goals and boundaries and they don't have the same at home."*

The comments above highlight that all three teachers felt that school-wide and in the classroom, to be successful all cultures need to be valued, with students encouraged to see the school as a special place to belong too. However, all three teachers were also adamant that students all had a culture of their own and while this needed to be recognised it was more important to ensure the student felt comfortable and accepted in the classroom and ultimately their job was to give the students the opportunity to succeed academically. Finally, all three teacher participants saw the Pacific students as no different from other students around the world, in that they responded to the same ideas about boundaries and routines.

What is the importance of relationships in your classroom? Comment on caring for the student and classroom management.

The key responses to this question are presented in these three comments provided by all the teacher participants:

1: *"Both are very important. If the boys realize you care about them as people and you care about their achievement they go the extra mile"*

2: *"Classroom management is most important. I used to yell a lot and try to force my management onto the boys but now I just use less aggressive classroom management skills more and make sure the boys know they have to finish work".*

3: *"Underlies all other work in the classroom. But there is a saying we use sometimes here that unless they (the students) know you care about them then they don't care about what you know".*

These comments provided in the teacher interviews reinforce the findings from the student questionnaire, that is, teachers who were aware of how their relationships and communications with students could impact on learning appeared to get better respect and ultimately results from their students. The teachers understood this relationship and the importance of how they interacted with students to ensure engagement, good attitudes towards work and classroom behaviour. They tended to believe in the traditional adage of 'firm but fair' seemed to be the best approach with Pacific boys.

What in particular have you found that leads to good learning? Comment on interactions and strategies.

All three teachers engaged students actively using a variety of strategies. They all look to raise the students' expectations and awareness of what they are capable. The clear message was one of high expectations, that they not only want their students to pass, but actually see excellence as the only realistic option in their classrooms.

Teachers generally felt that the more feedback and direction offered to students the better and this complimented the findings of the student questionnaire, which showed that the majority of students were confident that their teachers were heading them in the right direction. These three comments from each of the teacher participants summarise their feelings regarding good learning:

1: *"Clear success criteria – the boys need to know what they will need to achieve"*

2: *"My whole success in the classroom is dependent on strategies. I use a lot of ESOL and literacy strategies. The boys are supported with writing frames, vocab sheets, drafts etc. I also run a very rigid reading skills programme across all year groups. And I always make sure the students know what is required of them for achieved".*

3: *"Boost confidence at all times, expose students to other cultures, attitudes and experiences as it buys them in. Clear and concise information about where the course is heading. Too often teachers are not telling the students exactly what they will need to do to get an achieved, merit or excellent. I plaster this all over the walls"*

Group work was also cited as one of the best methods of classwork. This seemed to encourage the boys to get working and also allowed the teacher to move around the classroom asking students questions or providing them with feedback. Students appeared to enjoy sharing ideas and working with their peers. This type of interaction fits comfortably into the Pacific context of oral communication and sharing. It also enabled the teacher to get a better understanding of where individual students were at in terms of their ability level. The teachers were clear that the key to this method of class work was vigilant supervision and monitoring by the teacher,

otherwise group work could actually be detrimental to the progress of students. Unchecked they could simply give the impression of working but in fact be doing very little at all. These two comments highlight two of the teachers positive us of group work to aid learning:

> 3: "the boys love group work but you have to be really careful that you don't just set the work and then sit down at your desk like some teachers do. That's just a recipe for them to sit and talk and do nothing and only the very motivated will get on and do anything"
>
> 2: "The other thing with working in groups is that you have to find a way to check that they have not just completed the work, but that they have also understood it. Sometimes I do a quiz at the end and ask those I think don't understand, other times I check their work before they can leave the class".

How have you worked with the following groups to ensure success?

Students

There were some very clear and repeated messages about student success from all three of the participating teachers. The three teachers all set high academic expectations for their students. They frequently reinforced, both orally and in writing, their belief that excellence can be achieved. Furthermore, these teachers constantly make sure students are aware of what they will learn and where they are going and they work hard at making the students central to the learning activities. This ensures students are again very aware of expectations and these expectations are continually signposted along the way. The three teachers explained:

> 1: "I am very explicit, students get clear success criteria for each standard"
>
> 2: "There are no secrets about what we are learning and where we are heading".
>
> 3: "Assessments along the way and clear learning goals for all".

The teachers all suggested that keeping up with regular professional development programmes such as Assessment to Learn (AtoL), which is a teacher peer coach approach to professional development, was a key to their success.

Colleagues

Two of the teachers spoke about how they had greatly benefited from the support provided by their faculty and that team work with unit and lesson planning had been very valuable. They explained:

> 1: *"We do a lot of feedback and feedforward in our faculty"*
> 2: *"We make sure there are clear action plans in our faculty"*

Parents/Community

The three teachers agreed that respectful relationships between students, home and teacher are very important particularly in the Pacific context. The development of strong links between the schools and the community had been an essential component of the success of the school and the three teachers interviewed agreed with this. Further to this, all three teachers agreed that contact with home was a crucial success factor with their students.

The teachers indicated that there had been a real growth in the turnout of parents/caregivers at report evenings, which they felt was due to a home school initiative that had been set up, which invited the community into the school at the earliest possible point at the start of the school year. The emphasis of these meetings was that they were parent-run and facilitated, driven by the parents and for the parents and any concerns they might have. These meetings set up a far more open and transparent way of delivering messages to the parent group. Many parents had limited understanding of NCEA and University entrance and at times may have not been willing to ask questions. These types of meetings proved far more accessible to many parents.

Central to the success of the teachers interviewed was the fact that they also took responsibility for making contact with students' homes themselves. These teachers not only emphasized the importance of respectful relationships in classroom interactions but also the importance of taking this message of respect to the students' homes by being in touch whenever they could. One teacher's comment summarized this approach:

1: "I call home when I need parental support. I inform them of their kid's progress".

If you were to offer advice to other teachers what would you say?

Teacher 3 was very clear about what was one of the key ingredients needed to achieve with Pacific boys. This included quality resources that the students could identify with, and in particularly resources such as unit and lesson plans that the faculty had been writing over the past two years. For this teacher, creating these new resources was seen as productive as it enabled her to develop lessons that included relative strategies and differentiated learning tasks for members of the class. She explained

> *3: "About teaching boys? It's a huge challenge especially if you are an English teacher. You need material that's engaging. Something that reflects who they are but also resources that give them an idea about the world and others. By writing our own plans we have achieved this."*

Teacher 2also felt that planning and preparation was the key for any teacher to ensure the effective use of teaching and learning strategies and to facilitate student learning and understanding. He was enthusiastic about where the college had driven this the last few years. He explained:

> *2: "When I first got here there was nothing, no lesson plans or schemes of work. This just led to a lack of accountability and anyone could teach what they wanted. Now we have worked towards lessons plans and schemes for every faculty – all with aims and outcomes for every lesson you teach. Without this planning I think you just struggle alone making it up as you go".*

Several of the teachers did in fact comment very positively on the school drive to ensure all faculties had unit and lessons plans across the board for all subjects. It was felt that this had forced teachers to review their teaching and learning strategies, and whilst there was some reluctance at first, many teachers were seeing the benefits in lessons in terms of student engagement and achievement.

Teacher 3 also suggested that the use of Pacific literature, language and cultural differences could impact positively upon student learning. This particular teacher recognised the importance of understanding both the environment and the cultures of the parents. She explained:

> 3: *"Pacific literature is great as boys relate to it and enjoy it but they hugely appreciate other cultures"*

Can you make any suggestions about how the professional development support you are receiving could be improved?

It was clear from the interviews that the school's professional development programme had enabled the three teachers to develop and consider ways of increasing achievement in their classrooms. Several of the programmes the school had run had directly helped all three of these teachers in their classrooms in some way or another. What the interview findings showed was that all of the teachers had previously attended teacher education courses for secondary teaching in "mainstream" institutions, however whilst some of it had been undoubtedly useful and relevant, little of it was directly applicable to a school that is made up of 95% Pacific boys. These comments from two teachers sum up how all three teachers felt about professional development:

> 1 *"I think professional development should be tailored to teachers' needs. Look at appraisal goals and an eye out for relevant professional development. In the last couple of years this has happened here and it has really helped me develop in some of the areas I wanted to work on."*
>
> 3 *"No I think it is brilliant. One of the first things we did was build a picture of what an exemplary teacher at De La Salle looks like – this was the foundation for all of our professional development thereafter"*

Teacher interview conclusion

The teacher interviews supported the principles of best practice for all teachers described in chapter two of this research. The teachers used clear guidelines around their teaching for their students and one of the key components of their success was the high expectations they hold of their students and the fact that they believed their students had every chance of success. While it was important to be culturally sensitive the teachers all believed that best practice and attention to detail were key elements to successful teaching of Pacific boys.

The data collected from the students in the questionnaire and focus group interviews detailed earlier in this chapter also supports this – students want to know the teacher cares for them and they want teachers to push and hold high expectations for them. This in turn is supported by the literature in chapter two that highlights that Pacific students want teachers to make a connection to them and this is often seen through the provision of excellent lessons and commitment to ensuring academic success.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings from all three methods of data collection presented clear themes regarding strategies that support Pacific boys to achieve. The methods of data collection outlined in Chapter three also proved to be very successful and the correct use of process for this purpose – the student questionnaire, student focus groups and teacher interviews all provided a rich source of data which key conclusion can be drawn from. The next chapter will use the research questions as a framework to compare and contrast the findings from all three data collection methods, with the literature presented in chapter two.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This research project was always to be about what teachers are doing right in the classroom to achieve success with Pacific boys as opposed to merely highlighting the difficulties and under-achievements of Pacific boys in South Auckland. The evidence provided in chapter four of this research shows clearly some teachers are getting exemplary results working together with this group of students and the aim of this study was to identify, clarify and promote their strategies as examples of effective best practice when teaching Pacific boys. This project aimed to find out specifically what "works" for young Pacific boys in terms of relationships, curriculum, and pedagogy and then to provide examples of classroom practices that lead to high Pasifika learner achievement.

This chapter discusses the data presented in the previous chapter and analyses the key findings in light of the literature presented in chapter two. This chapter will be structured around the research questions identified early in this project:

- What teaching practices and strategies do Pacific boys' best respond to?
- What factors within the classroom hinder and enhance good teaching and learning practices?
- How can schools best facilitate more effective teaching practices?

What teaching practices and strategies do Pacific boys best respond to?

The findings of the student questionnaire and focus group showed that Pacific boys at De La Salle College clearly preferred group work as opposed to individual reading and writing; lessons that kept them involved and active as opposed to self directed tasks; and where possible hands on activities as opposed to simply completing written tasks such as assessments. The findings of these two data collection methods also showed that students enjoyed sharing, contributing and participating in the classroom.

The findings of the questionnaire and focus group was also corroborated by the findings of the teacher interviews which showed that successful teachers at De La Salle plan lessons that aimed to engage the students with active, group focused activities which were short and designed for the specific students in each lesson.

These findings from all three methods of data collection used in this study are supported in the literature review in chapter two of this research. The review supports that Pacific boys enjoy sharing knowledge and experiences within the classroom context and working together. This concept of 'togetherness' is bound in Pacific students' cultural identity and if teachers can incorporate it into lessons then students appear to be more comfortable and more willing to participate and contribute.

The findings of this study are also supported by Jones (1991) who highlighted, when working together with Pacific boys, the importance of pedagogy that includes teaching and learning processes that meet the needs of individual classes and students. This ethnographic study was centered upon a number of Pacific students over a period of time and highlighted the clear connections between teaching that advantages some and disadvantages others. The conclusion from Jones' (1991) is one shared by this study, that some processes used by some teachers actively disadvantage Pacific students, whilst other strategies can actively engage and support Pacific students.

Another theme that emerged from the findings of this study was the issue of mutual respect. The findings of the teacher interviews showed that successful teachers at De La Salle found that if the boys in their care believed that respect existed in the classroom they were more likely to engage and thus achieve. The teachers believed that this respect could be achieved by letting students voice opinions, showing them that they were willing to go the extra mile for them and ensuring that there was regular and robust feedback of their work. Again these opinions were confirmed by the findings of the student questionnaire and focus group, in which students confirmed that they tried harder in lessons in which they felt teachers were acknowledging their culture and the teacher was doing their best to get them through their schooling successfully.

The findings from all three methods of data collection used in this research study also indicated that male Pacific students' engagement and learning is likely to be enhanced when the teacher takes the opportunity to use Pacific literature, culture and experiences as part of their teaching processes. The teachers interviewed for this study said that this was something they would do if at all possible and they believed they obtained an excellent response from students when they did so. Students in the focus groups recognised and acknowledged teachers who did this and they felt this strategy provided a strong connection between their first language and English.

These findings are echoed in several of the most important research reports on teaching and learning of Pacific students carried out by Hawk and Hill (1996, 1999, 2000). Some of these studies focused on teaching practices and argued that the skill and qualities required by any good teacher are prerequisites for teaching Pacific students, however for delivery to Pacific students there is also the requirement of applying these skills is a way that acknowledges and respects the backgrounds of the Pacific students. In this research study, findings from both students and teachers would support these findings and often respect and acknowledgement could be delivered through meeting the boys in their view of the world. This could be practically achieved by using resources that celebrated the students' own cultures and also allowing them to work with each other, to enjoy each others' company and therefore see the value of community which is considered part of the 'Pacific Way'.

One of the positive reactions by teachers interviewed in this study was the influence of the NCEA system and in particular the benefit of internal assessment systems and unit standards to support learners in low-decile schools. Pre-NCEA, Hawk and Hill's (1996) research of achievement in eight low-decile secondary schools examined how the previous assessment approach of School Certificate and Bursary examinations had an all important emphasis on the external exams at the end of the year. They claimed, with some justification when results were analyzed, that Pacific learners were not achieving as high as they could due to this assessment model, as it did not enable their full range of skills to be evaluated. Teachers interviewed at De La Salle believed NCEA could deliver qualifications more effectively for Pacific learners because they could assess and re-assess material as they went along. This allowed for the capacity to go

back and retest and tailor the pace of the work to meet the needs of the students – when they were ready then assessment could be undertaken. Based on external NCEA examination results the three teachers felt that the boys at De La Salle were poor at sitting exams and often students who had achieved successfully in internal assessments found difficulties when it came to external exams.

The senior (Years 11, 12,13) secondary school students interviewed in the focus group also confirmed their preference for internal rather than external assessments. These findings in this study reinforced the findings of Hipkins & Vaughan (2005); and a study by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA, 2006). These studies showed that many senior students expressed a preference for internal assessments. The results of the focus group data show that the reasons the students at De La Salle preferred internal assessments is a little ambiguous, some said it was because they felt the internal options were easier and others preferred them as they did not enjoy the pressure of external exams. Whatever the reasoning, as one of the teachers commented, it was the responsibility of the college to choose the best possible pathway for the students and if results faired better with the internal assessment then the college should be providing this assessment approach as the bulk of its assessment format.

The student focus group findings also confirmed the teacher interview findings which discussed two positive strategies for supporting the high achievement of Pacific boys. Firstly, the use of word frames, defining difficult text and keeping clear success criteria around the classroom was seen as a key strategy by teachers and again it was recognised as positive by students. Secondly a crucial classroom strategy for success was the giving of explicit feedback to students. The senior students described the importance of feedback from assessments, but also the opportunity to retest in areas where they had not done well. Again the introduction of NCEA and internal assessments had greatly improved the level of feedback required by teachers. Particularly if teachers had embraced the possibility of portfolio approaches to internal standards, in which teachers could take far more opportunities to get students involved in the assessment process and outcomes through regular feedback, acquisition of skills in NCEA is an ongoing process and if used well can lead to excellent experiences for students in terms of

being truly involved in their learning – it is not simply a matter of preparing students for an end of year exam, they have opportunities to review and retest their learning on an ongoing basis in the new structure. From this study's point of view, both students and teachers responded positively to the possibilities that this allowed them.

Another major consideration in supporting the success of Pacific boys education that was raised in this study was that of curriculum design. The findings from the teacher interviews in this study showed that they felt many Pacific students, if taught in a pedagogically sound way, were more than capable of success in any subject. However the did believe it was entirely appropriate that many students would benefit from effective curriculum design that suited the skills and knowledge of the student body. They believed that providing opportunities to study in areas such as the performing arts, sports and health science were highly beneficial to the students at De La Salle. They only reasonable evidence they could provide to support this was the achievement levels at the college at NCEA level 1,2 and 3 had nearly doubled over a five year period and they saw a clear link between the development of more tailored professional development that had led to better classroom teaching and changes in curriculum pathway offered to students.

While Pacific curriculum research at secondary level is limited there is some subject-based research that explores the relationship between Western curricula and Pacific learners. Similar to the findings of this study, what this research has shown is that in order to allow Pacific students to achieve to the best of their ability, then curricula need to be planned that build on a cohorts' skills, strengths and interests (Koloto, 1995; Bakalevu, 1996; Lauaki, 1996).

A final theme that was evident in the findings collected using all three data collection methods was the importance of differentiated learning and individual learning plans. This was one of the key findings throughout the data created by both teachers and students – that if lessons were well planned and tailored to meet the requirements of all learners in the class then they were most likely to succeed. The three teachers interviewed at De La Salle felt that this had been one of the most important and successful adaptations to their own teaching and for teaching across the school. The idea is fundamentally about teaching to the individual rather than the 'middle'

of the class and avoiding a 'one size fits all' approach. In a Pacific boys' setting they suggested that this also included being aware of the second language learners or those with low reading ages. These practices are described in the literature as culturally responsive pedagogical practices which raise the level of student expectation towards achievement outcomes across a cohort as students can identify that their needs and requirements are being attended to, as opposed to being seen only as a group within the class (Alton-Lee, 2003).

What factors within the classroom hinder and enhance good teaching and learning practices?

The teachers involved in this study had very clear ideas about their role in the lives of their students. They were aware of the backgrounds of many of the boys, and the simple fact that in a decile one school there were going to be issues for some students that were going to impact greatly on their learning. They understood how student achievement could be influenced by various factors that they had no control over, or indeed that the school had any control over. Some of these issues might be poverty, health, broken families, and at times violence. In line with earlier descriptions in this study about Pacific values and culture and the concept of extended family, this often means that when one individual family faces some form of crisis, the effect of the crisis can be felt potentially over dozens of students in this community. The effect this can have on the individual student learner when they walk through the school can not be underestimated. The findings of the teacher interviews showed that teachers at De La Salle are all too aware of this and simply listening to the morning news about an event in South Auckland can be enough to send warning signals about how students' mindset might be for learning that day.

The teachers interviewed believe a certain amount of resilience is undoubtedly required to teach in South Auckland. They spoke of the importance having a good level of support in the areas of student health and welfare. More importantly they implied the key tool in dealing with such situations was an understanding that the students are often powerless to influence any of these things that may be happening in their families or around their community. They also had a firm belief that some of the students at De La Salle come to school in the first place because it was a place of safety and normality. The teachers therefore felt a duty to provide them with a

class environment that was secure and well-structured. This was difficult at times when a student was in a very disruptive state, but nevertheless they believed that generally the students responded well to this security.

The findings of the student questionnaire and focus group showed that students agreed that the school often provided them with a place of comfort and most of them were affirming about coming to school. Generally students appreciated teachers with humour and a relaxed style, but they were also adamant they wanted the teacher to be in control and to a certain extent even be strict when required. Good practice that motivated the participating students included the use of regular and honest feedback, students wanted their teacher to be 'straight up'. The students wanted to know where they stood and they also appreciated the teachers who signposted where the students were in terms of their achievement level and what they needed to do to improve. An example of this was often done by starting sections of work with the success criteria required for achieved, merit and excellence.

The student questionnaire and focus group also showed that the participating students wanted to be encouraged and pushed and responded well to the teachers who appeared to be going the 'extra mile' for them. This indeed seemed to make a big difference to many students – the fact that some teachers really wanted to them to succeed and were also seen as not willing to give up on students who appeared to be struggling.

Expectations and routines required for learning and behaviour also need to be clearly and regularly reiterated to the students. The three participating teachers commented that while this was sometimes time-consuming and tedious it was worthwhile it the long term as the students liked the clear boundaries that were set. These ideas regarding schools providing a place of safety in which students are 'pushed' to do their best in a positive learning environment is consistent with the work of Lashlie (2005)in which she makes regular reference to the fact that boys of all cultural backgrounds seem to enjoy and thrive in this type of environment.

The findings show that participating students also appreciated that teachers recognised their values, attitudes, qualities, and characteristics. The key factor for most students came back to teachers establishing good relationships with their class and caring about them as individuals. For most students the most important way a teacher could do this was by teaching them effectively and pushing them to do their best. The three teachers interviewed also agreed that it was important to incorporate and recognise the cultural diversity in their classrooms but felt it was also important that the school did not focus too much time and energy on this. An example made by one teacher was that when the school was involved in the annual Polyfest festival at the start of each school year, it was very difficult to get students to focus on school work as their energy went into the festival. The teacher noted though, that this was not necessarily simply a cultural context – some students would put the same energy into their sport and other activities before their school work. Participating students also had a mixed outlook on how much time the school should put into recognising cultural distinctiveness. Most were happy with the way things were at the present time and felt their education was the most important thing they wanted from their teachers. Several of the students mentioned that they saw it as the job of their parents and even their churches to instil Pasifika cultural values and languages at home, rather than these aspects being taught at school.

In terms of learning in the classroom and the recognition of the Pacific culture of the boys there is a range of literature (Biddulph & Osborne, 1984; Dalzell, 1986; Podmore & Sauvao, 2003) which suggests that there are different strategies that can be used in the classroom to develop more culturally responsive pedagogical ways of engaging students, while still covering the requirements of the curriculum. As previously discussed, many of these students may have the dilemma of living through different world views of society and so if ways of allowing them to move seamlessly within these worlds are available then teachers need to be able to capitalise on this (Biddulph & Osborne, 1984). The teachers interviewed presented a number of different ways in which they felt they were able to achieve this with good success and this allowed them to use the students' existing skills and knowledge while at the same time extending student learning and widening their view of the world. Some of the simple and successful practices used by the participating teachers, included the use of Pacific literature where possible, making use

of Pacific languages, particularly songs and also ensuring the correct pronunciation of students' names. This sent a positive message to students of the different Pacific languages in their schooling and acknowledged that their cultural capital and heritage are valued. It also provides a strong connection between their first language and English, the language of instruction.

The participating teachers also agreed that improving their understanding and empathy towards the cultures in their classrooms was an important part of the overall improvement of their pedagogical practice, something identified by McAllister & Irvine, (2000). However they also felt that improving more general sound pedagogy, creating differentiated lessons plans for example, were overall more important for teachers at De La Salle.

Sitting alongside the factors highlighted above, is the need to develop positive home–school relationships to support Pacific students' academic achievement. Research from Desforges, (2003) suggests that schools with the highest achieving students will also invariably have effective communication between parents and schools. These findings fit with other Pacific education research completed by Fletcher et al., (2005), Fletcher et al., (2006) and Parkhill et al., (2005) which identified that Pacific students who were achieving, were in schools that had strong home–school partnerships with Pacific parents while the Pacific students who were under-achieving often had parents who reported a lack of understanding of school-related activities, or worse, were difficult to get hold of. This view was reinforced by the teacher interviews at De La Salle which confirmed that often when teachers struggled to get through to a student it was because they had had little or no opportunity to make contact with someone from the home. The findings showed that the importance of parents attending events such as parent-teacher evenings are crucial in that they could be a starting point for discussions about how they themselves can assist their children through their secondary years. The teachers also reported though, that informal visits to the school to meet with parents were also very beneficial as it meant they didn't have to wait until certain dates during the year to bring any issues up.

Nevertheless a final important aspect of creating a positive home-school relationship was highlighted by teacher one, of the participating teachers, who explained that school (and

teachers) at times needed to understand the long hours often worked by Pacific parents or the difficulty for some to get to school. A certain level of empathy of flexibility was needed to ensure that these and other barriers were removed. De La Salle, through the strategic use of parent liaison and youth workers (fluent in Samoan or Tongan), had ensured that a successful system of contacting families had been undertaken.

How can schools best facilitate more effective teaching practices?

Teachers interviewed in this study were very clear in their view that quality, specific, differentiated professional development that was tailored to their needs was crucial in providing high achievement for Pacific boys. These teachers were very much committed to their own professional development and a desire to continuously look towards their own improvement. The teachers interviewed were adamant that robust and regular professional development was needed for all to ensure that they were keeping abreast of the best practice available. They were also quite clear that key skills in the classroom such as differentiated learning were probably being used by a limited number of teachers in their school. This is supported by the literature (Phillips, McNaughton and McDonald, 2001), which suggests differentiated learning was not used in many schools to any great success.

One of the key findings of this study from the teachers interviewed was the need and importance of an integrated and contextualised approach to the planning of professional development that meets the needs of the learners in the classroom. All three teachers had commented positively on recent professional development provided for staff that was aimed at maximising Pacific learners' classroom experiences as opposed to what they had been used to in the past which was a mixture of courses and programmes which had not been useful in their teaching context. They believed that the school had now adopted a far more focused and needs-based approach to professional development that sought to identify pedagogical practices that would be of direct use in their classrooms. In particular, all three mentioned the "Assessment to Learn" programme that they had been a part of as ongoing professional development over three years. They felt this enhanced teachers' understanding of differentiated learning, second language teaching and learning strategies.

Some of the strategies that the participating teachers felt professional development needed to focus on were: supporting teachers with managing longer periods of group work; using scaffolding and writing frames; incorporating Pacific literature into classwork; and providing clear success criteria for student achievement, all practices that are designed to make learning environments that are supportive, positive and responsive to student requirements.

The teachers interviewed were also very clear that in order to realise better outcomes for Pacific boys, particular attention in terms of professional development needs to be given to identifying "best practice" within the teaching and learning process that improves the suitability and relevance of the curriculum delivered.

Summary

All of these findings presented by the teacher participants in this study are also supported throughout the literature (Guskey, 2003; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, Lawrence & Gallagher, 2007) which suggests that when developing professional development approaches then schools must consider the school context and culture at the time of development. Guskey (2003) writes:

> *It seems clear, therefore, that differences in communities of school administrators, teachers and students uniquely affect professional development processes and can strongly influence that characteristics that contribute to professional development's effectiveness. Because of these powerful contextual influences, broad-brush policies and guide-lines for best practice may never be completely accurate (p. 16).*

This is a view that is supported by the participating teachers in this study, who were positive about their recent "Assessment to Learn" professional development which they felt had been designed with the staff, students and the school context in mind.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, the main findings of the research project are summarized, limitations of the study are explained, recommendations are presented and a final conclusion is made.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This project was undertaken with a view to identifying what were successful practices that enabled achievement for Pacific boys. Chapter one of this project outlined the gaps that existed in Pacific education and chapter two outlined in more depth the data that these conclusions were based on. It did not set out to identify why achievement of Pacific boys was still falling behind other ethnic groups. Teachers' selection for interview was based on a criteria that showed they had the skills, knowledge and ability to cause learning and achievement for Pacific boys.

Student questionnaires then followed to determine what the students saw as key components to their success in the classroom and what practices they could identify as improving their learning.

The data from the student questionnaire defined the questions for a student focus group. The student focus group employed a semi-structured format of interviewing that expanded on the questionnaire findings and looked to draw narrative representations of how they viewed the best way to learn.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS SUMMARY

The aim of this research project was to identify what teaching practices lead to achievement in the classroom for Pacific boys. High achievement for Pacific boys is presented in figure 6.1

below, which presents visually the findings of this research project in regard to what practices are best employed by teachers to build achievement for Pacific boys at secondary school level.

At the heart of the diagram is a two way arrow that represents the relationship between student and teacher. As the findings of this study, from all three methods of data collection, suggested that it was the nature and quality of the relationship between teacher and student which drives achievement for Pacific boys. To the left and right of this central arrow are two radial images, one to represent the student and one to represent the teacher. The student diagram includes the factors which may influence a Pacific boys' achievement which are; culture and beliefs; experiences; religion; friends and family; skills; and achievements. The teacher diagram includes the practices which the findings show best support Pacific boys to achieve academically. These are: positive learning environment and attitude; contextual professional development for teachers; specific learning intentions and feedback for students; high expectations; engaging with the students' world view and contact with home.

Overall the images presented in figure 6.1 (below) represent all of the interconnected factors that this study has shown to work together in order to support Pacific boys' achievement. Many of these factors employed by teachers are examples of "best practice" that would be found in good classrooms the world over. These findings are supported by the research in chapter two of this project which makes clear connections in the teaching of Pacific boys to "best practice" that should be found in all classrooms.

However this study and the literature (Arheson & Gall, 2003) has shown that it is the use of specific strategies such as the provision of explicit learning intentions and feedback coupled with positive student-teacher relationships, recognition of cultural backgrounds and an understanding of how the students view the world, that will achieve improved outcomes for Pacific boys. It the more complex process of the way that these factors interact that is unique to the findings of this study and to the achievement of Pacific boys as a specific group.

Figure 6.1: Factors that support achievement in the education of Pacific boys
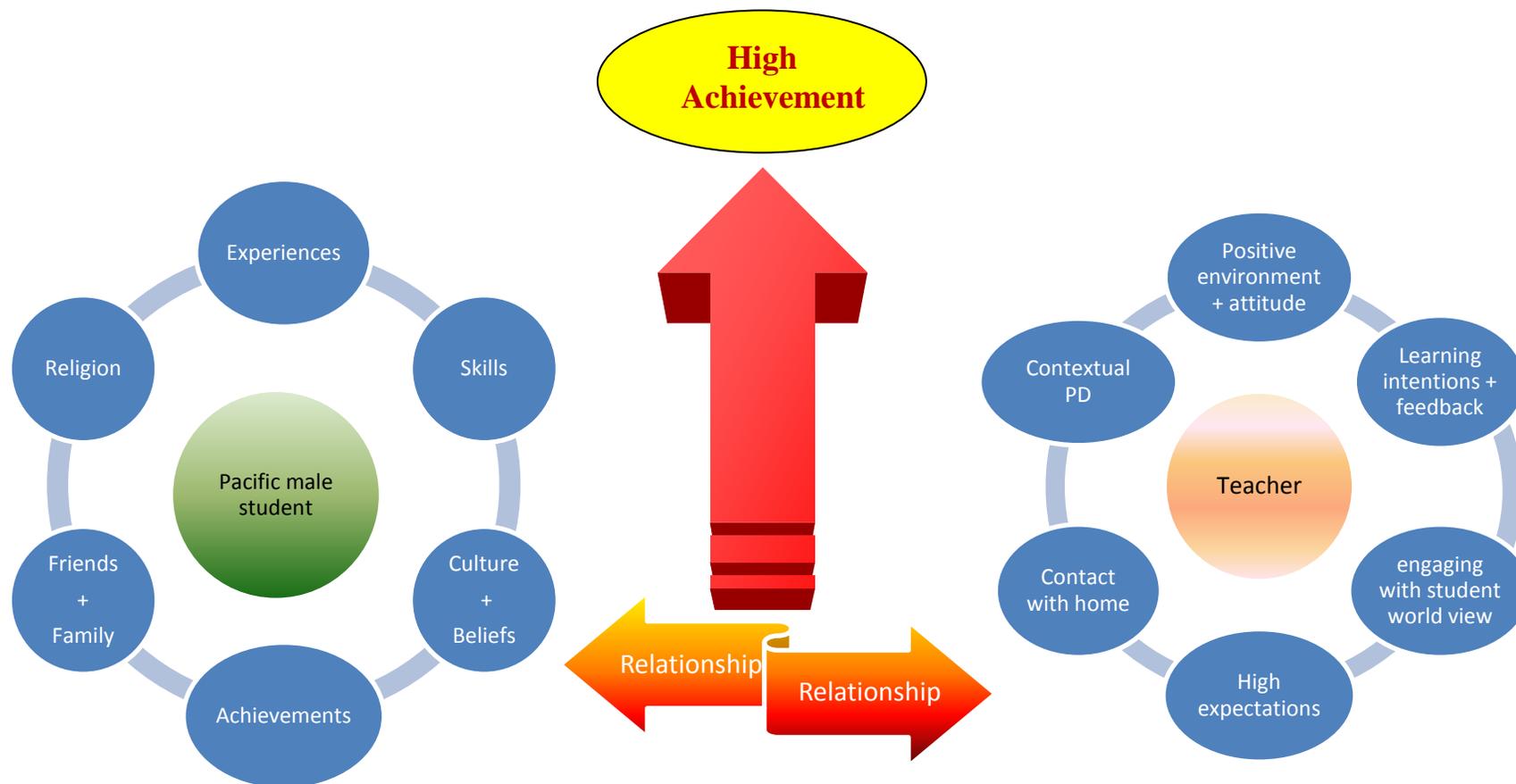
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FURTHER STUDY

In view of the above the following recommendations can be made.

Recommendation 1

Teachers who are teaching Pacific boys are made aware of the teaching practices and strategies to which Pacific boys' best respond. These include:

- Classroom environments that are interactive, inclusive and well-paced. This would include group work and activities that involve feedback and feed-forward for students

- Ensuring students are at all times aware of what criteria is required for their success and making sure they fully understand this criteria

- Productive home–school partnerships

Research shows (Alton-Lee, 2003; Du Four, 2004; Eckermann, 1994; Gorinski, 2005) that effective family–school partnerships are a crucial factor in improving student learning outcomes. If a school can get families into and engaged with the school community then there is a far greater possibility that academic success can be achieved.

Recommendation 2

Teachers who are teaching Pacific boys are made aware of the factors within the classroom that hinder and enhance good teaching and learning practice

- Lack of honest, open and regular feedback for students

In this research students were clear that they appreciated and felt motivated to succeed when the teachers gave very obvious and understandable directions about what was the success criteria required to achieve. This centred around the concept of developing personal relationships and connections that were open and warm. The teachers interviewed also all agreed that one of their key strategies was the giving of early and clearly defined success

criteria. They also talked about constantly revisiting this criteria during a section of work so it was constantly there for students to see.

- Regular and open communication with homes

Pasifika learners often live and learn between different worlds – which can include home, school and church. Some students can cope with this more successfully than others (Cahill, 2006).It is important for teachers to understand the pressure and confusion that these multi-worlds can create. State secondary schools in New Zealand operate on generally Western educational prescribed norms and at times this may cause difficulties for students for reasons that are out of their control such as parents not understanding the world of the school that their children are at.

- Teachers showing empathy but at the same time firmness for students

- In order to meet individual learning needs, teachers need to involve the learners in this process. Asking for regular feedback from students will provide this form of assurance that the curriculum is delivered in a way that the students are understanding the journey. Leaving it for the end of a topic or end of the term will be too late and some students may have been lost by then.

Recommendation 3

School management teams are informed of the ways that schools can best facilitate more effective teaching practices

- Professional development targeted at tailor-made requirements of teachers

Success with Pacific boys learning will come with the sharing of best practice that has been proven to actually work. The Best Evidence Synthesis work from Alton-Lee (2003) defines what quality teaching and learning would look like, and furthermore goes into explaining what works for diverse learner groups. Based on this literature and the findings of this study teachers of Pacific boys need to share which practices are getting the best results, and the notion of best

results should be based on the data of Year 9 and 10 reading/numeracy levels, and senior NCEA results.

Professional development in schools who teach Pacific boys should be based around modifications to teacher practices derived from teaching methodologies which have been proven to be effective with this student group. These schools should be engaged in processes of shared knowledge-building from those teachers who are successful in the field of Pacific boys education. They should draw on examples of "best practice" from teacher voices which can provide authentic narratives for other teachers dealing unsuccessfully or grappling with similar classroom situations.

Recommendation 4

As outlined under the heading 'limitations of the study' below, the sample group researched is small and from one school. It is recommended that the research is extended to gather further data to enable the continued understanding of Pacific boys education:

1. A research project that compares results and data between Pacific boys born in New Zealand and those born in the Islands
2. A New Zealand wide study is undertaken to account for the experiences of Pacific boys throughout the country

Recommendation 5

The findings of this research project are to be shared with the New Zealand Ministry of Education and the Pasifika Education Group. By using their community networks and involving key personal from these groups coverage for the findings of this research project can met a broader range of stakeholders. Their support and recognition of "best practice" for improving the achievement of Pacific boys will undoubtedly boost the chances of success for the group. The key findings from this project can be reported not only in areas with high population of Pacific students, but across New Zealand wherever Pacific boys are being taught.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The way that this research project has been able to meet the study aims and to answer the research questions suggest that the methods justified in chapter one were suitable for this study. Factors that limited this study were lack of time, money and the involvement of only one researcher. These factors meant I could only deal with a small sample size of one school, a small number of students and three teachers. With more resources and time, it is possible that a larger number of schools could have been invited to take part in the study and a greater number of staff and students, which may have given more enhanced opportunities for generalisation of the findings.

FINAL CONCLUSION

Teaching strategies work differently in different contexts for different groups of students. The strategies used by teachers throughout the world may all be similar, but effective pedagogy requires teachers to establish the "best practices" that will impact on the students in front of them. Changing and improving teaching practice is central if we are to do better for our Pacific students. This requires recognizing the rich diversity that exists within this population and recognizing that each student is individual and has the potential to succeed. All Pacific boys are inherently capable of achieving success. Success in their education is about harnessing their views of the world and providing education that works for them, their families and their communities.

As a teacher of Pacific students for over ten years I started this research project by thinking I was aware of the issues and was meeting the needs of my students effectively. I was always considered an excellent classroom manager, had good relationships with students and achieved reasonable levels of academic success in terms of results. Through completing this research and being exposed to new learning I have redefined the effectiveness of my teaching for Pacific students. This was due to the fact that the teachers that I interviewed had expectations that over 90% of their students would achieve pass grades and their results showed that this was possible. Through discussions with these highly successful teachers and the feedback from the

Pacific boys that I interviewed I have begun a new learning journey of my own about how best to support the learning of my students. I will endeavour to encourage teachers in similar settings to increase their pedagogical knowledge and skills to enable all Pacific boys to achieve their full potential. While students are at the heart of these findings much of my research found that the teacher continuing to be a learner is an equal part of raising the achievement of Pacific boys.

I am extremely passionate about the future of these students and leading change that will ensure the success of our young people. My hope is that I can make a difference, even in the smallest way, that creates classroom environments that reflect increased participation, excitement about learning and better understanding about what is required to ensure success.

As an educator in a Pacific teaching context I would ask others in a similar setting to reflect on a traditional Samoan saying:

E o'u le aso, ae' o oetaeao

Today my turn, tomorrow yours.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE : STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Student Questionnaire

Introduction

- I want to ask you about your experiences with teachers, in particular the sorts of things that happen in the classroom- the way your teacher teaches, how you think your teachers help your learning and what they could do better to help your learning.

- Responding to this questionaire is voluntary. You are not required to complete this questionaire if you do not wish to.

- Please return the completed questionaire to your homeroom teacher – they will leave a box on their desk. Please return it by December 8th.

- These questionnaires will be used for the purposes of formulating some questions that will be used in a group interview, however you are not required to put your name on this sheet, you will not be identified and nothing you write down will be used against you in any way.

1. What sort of activities do you do in class? Can you describe them? (e.g. writing, listening to the teacher, working with your friends in groups, working on your own, doing things like sport in PE or making things in tech, silent reading, using computers)

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What sort of activities do you like best?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Do you feel comfortable asking for help in class?   **Yes / No**

   If no, why not?

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Does your teacher get round to everybody? **Yes / No**

5. Do you feel your teachers encourage you to do well? **Yes / No**

6. Do you feel comfortable about participating and contributing in class?

Yes / No

If no, why not?

_____

_____

_____

7. Does everyone participate most of the time? **Yes / No**

8. Does your teacher ask you for feedback about whether you liked a lesson or what could be done differently? **Yes / No**

9. Do you know what your teacher expects of you in this classroom? **Yes / No**

10. Do you think your teacher cares about your learning? **Yes / No**

11. Do you know how you're doing in your subjects? **Yes / No**

12. Do you attend this class regularly? **Yes / No**

13. Would you avoid some classes? **Yes / No**

14. What do you like about your best teachers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. What would you like to change about some teachers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. Is there anything else you'd like to share?
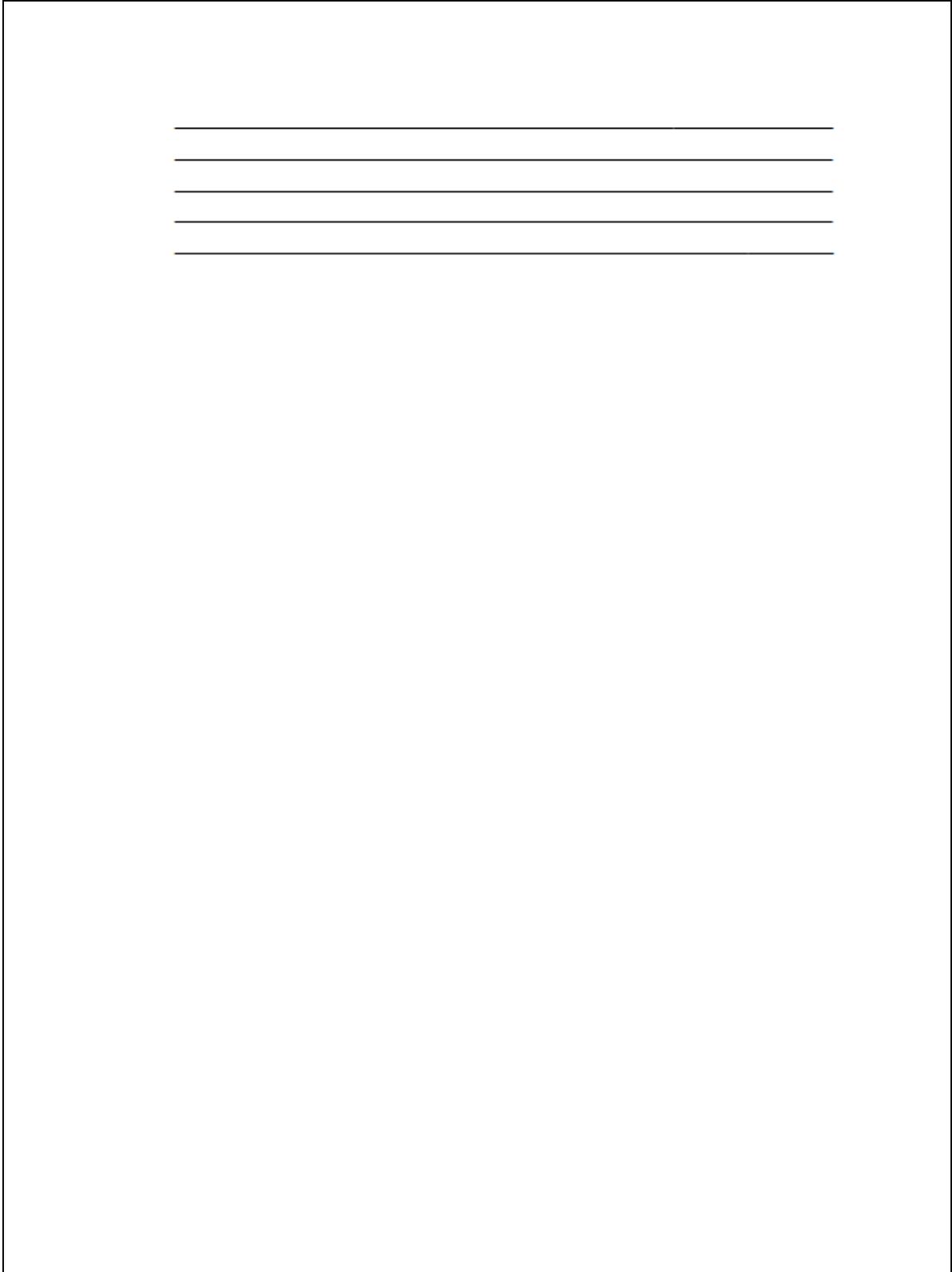
APPENDIX TWO : FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Student enjoyment, participation and engagement in certain activities

2. What do they feel about student participation in your classes?

3. Responses to teacher request for feedback about lessons

4. Perceived teacher expectations of students during lessons

5. Would you avoid some classes?

6. What they felt they liked best about their teachers

7. What they would like to most change about some teachers

8. What sort of feedback and encouragement do students receive and do they know if they are doing well in their subjects?

APPENDIX THREE : TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Teacher Interviews

These interviews will provide teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their involvement in teaching Pasifika boys at De La Salle College. It is hoped to gain data on theoretical classroom practice and the impact on the learning of Pasifika students in their classrooms.

The teachers invited to participate in these interviews have been identified by the researcher as successful implementers of the effective teaching.

1. Tell me about your experiences teaching Pasifika boys?

Expectations
Positive features
Difficulties or problems

2. What is the importance of relationships in your classroom?

Caring for the student
Classroom management

3. What particular have you found successful that leads to student learning?

Interactions
Strategies

4. How have you worked with the following groups to ensure success?

Students
Colleagues
Senior Management
Parents/Community

5. If you were to offer advice to other teachers what would you say?

6. Can you make any suggestions about how the professional development support you are receiving could be improved?

APPENDIX FOUR : INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORMS

![Unitec New Zealand logo — Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka]

INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Thesis: Investigation for effective teaching of Pacific boys at Secondary school.

My name is Brian Evans. I am currently enrolled in the Master of degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to investigate the issues and problems which are behind the low success rates in the education of Pasifika male students and therefore provide usable strategies for teachers that will lead to improved academic achievement.

I request your participation in the following ways (*tick where appropriate*):

☐   I will be collecting data using a questionnaire

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. I will be recording your contribution and will provide a transcript (or summary of findings if appropriate) for you to check before data analysis is undertaken. I do hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find this participation of interest. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology.

My supervisor is Melanie Miller and may be contacted by email or phone.
Phone: (09) 815 4321 ext 8176
Email: mmiller2@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2009-1017)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

CONSENT FORM - ADULTS

DATE

TO:

FROM: Brian Evans

RE: Master of Education

THESIS TITLE: Investigation for effective teaching of Pacific boys at Secondary school.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also understand that I will be provided with a transcript (or summary of findings if appropriate) for checking before data analysis is started and that I may withdraw myself or any information that has been provided for this project up to the stage when analysis of data has been completed.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2009-1017)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

CONSENT FORM – CHILD/MINOR

DATE

TO:

FROM: Brian Evans

RE: Master of Education

THESIS TITLE: Investigation for effective teaching of Pacific boys at Secondary school.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also understand that I will be provided with a transcript (or summary of findings if appropriate) for checking before data analysis is started and that I may withdraw myself or any information that has been provided for this project up to the stage when analysis of data has been completed.

I agree that the child/minor named below may take part in this project.

Name of child/minor: _____

Signed: _____ (child/minor)

Signed: _____ (caregiver)

Name: _____ (caregiver)

Date: _____

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2009-1017)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

LETTER PROVIDING ORGANISATION'S PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Date 2/10/2009

<u>Brian Evans</u>
49 Paice Ave
Sandringham

RE: Master of Education

THESIS TITLE: Investigation for effective teaching of Pacific boys at Secondary school.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project and I give permission for research to be conducted in my organisation. I understand that the name of my organisation will not be used in any public reports.

Signature

Name of signatory

Declaration

Name of candidate: Brian Evans

This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project entitled **Teaching practices that support high achievement in the education of Pacific boys** is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of Education.

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;

- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.

- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.
  Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2009-1017

Candidate Signature: ……….………………………………….Date: …………………

Student number: …………………………1329631