

神愛世人，
生子賜給
他的，不至

甚至將他的
他們叫一切
滅亡，反得永

生，信獨

KOLOA PASIFIKA

Edited by
Tafili Utumapu-McBride &
Linita Manu'atu

DENN
ALSO

HAT GOTT DIE WE-
GENEN FINGER

Koloa Pasifika

Edited by
Tafili Utumapu-McBride &
Linita Manu'atu

January 2019

ISBN

978-0-473-46740-1

Title

Koloa Pasifika

Author

T Utumapu-McBride, L Manu'atu

Publication Date

01/2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword – Dr Linitā Manu'atu	6
Chapter 1 – Tanya Forster	10
Chapter 2 – Karen Thomas	20
Chapter 3 – Christina Tuara	28
Chapter 4 – Natasha Maoate-Tafa	36
Chapter 5 – Kendra Lafu	46
Chapter 6 – Karleen Lafu	54
Chapter 7 – Crescenda Eri	64
Chapter 8 – Alice Enoka	74
Chapter 9 – Merini Leiataua	84
Chapter 10 – Astrid Williams	94
Chapter 11 – Vannear Lao	104
Chapter 12 – Kalolaine Tautakitaki	114
Poem 1 – Sissy Tainui	124
Poem 2 – Dhrishti Narayan	124
Poem 3 – Valerie Saio	124
Poem 4 – Siumoana Savieti	126
Poem 5 – Valentina Kingi	127

FOREWORD

The cutting edge Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching), BPED (ECT) degree began in 2013. Amongst the degree's 19 papers are the innovative strands entitled, *KoloaAotearoa: Indigenous and Migrant Education (IME) I* in Year 1, *FakakoloaAotearoa: Indigenous and Migrant Education II*, Year 2 and *Koloa'iaAotearoa: Indigenous and Migrant Education III*, Year 3. The central concept in the Year 1 paper is the Tongan concept of koloa, fakakoloa in Year 2 and koloa'ia in Year 3. The intention of the papers is to decolonise the hegemonic education received by Pacific peoples in their homelands and in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Initially, the lecturer of the IME Papers seeded the idea to compile a publication of Working Papers consisting of selected essays and presentations of third year papers for the benefit of the students. The advantages of the publication are that they have time to rethink and rework their ideas, learn more skills to write academically, to develop the ideas for publication and to create a forum of 'Talanoa Koloa' where they come together to critically talanoa, question and deepen their ideas and perspectives. The Working Papers form a 'stepping stone' for them to voice their perspectives. The students were enthused by the idea.

The papers, in this volume, are the students' assignments from Paper 297404, *Koloa'iaAotearoa: Indigenous and Migrant Education III* taught in 2015 and 2016. The manuscripts were prepared as presentations on their understanding of the conceptual framework of the degree, namely, *FatuLālānga* and *TalanoaLālānga* and their perspective of koloa'ia from their own cultural standpoint. The researched materials were written up, discussed, questioned and presented individually, for half an hour including questioning time. To be fair on the students, they were not coached to rewrite their presentations for publication and therefore I humbly ask the readers to 'hear' the written word, in these pages, as spoken words from the heart of each student while they express their experience of spiritual wisdoms and research knowledges.

A word about the concept of Koloa'ia. The inter-related concepts of koloa, fakakoloa and koloa'ia are taken from the Tongan language and culture. Koloa refers to tangible

and intangible wealth, riches and all that is significant and highly valued by a culture of beliefs, languages, customs, communal relationship, spirituality, harmonious living and peaceful co-existence (Latu, 2009). Koloa symbolises the mana of Pasifika peoples (Helu, 1990; Herda, 1999; Kaeppler, 1999; Latu, 2009). The concept of KoloaAotearoa contextualises the Te Tiriti o Waitangi, intercultural knowledges and political relationships between Pasifika peoples, Te Tangata Whenua o Aotearoa and the prevailing New Zealand European population of Aotearoa New Zealand. The term fakakoloa then provides a frame for inspiring and enriching our knowledges on guardianship, inter-cultural relationship, cultural diversity, recognising commonalities and differences in the specific context of Early Childhood Education. A more deep development of the concepts, koloa and fakakoloa is articulated through the term koloa'ia (abounding in wealth). A deeper development of the concepts, koloa and fakakoloa is articulated through the term koloa'ia. The concept of koloa'ia provides a frame for Pasifika peoples and their descendants through which to contribute meaningfully to the enrichment of Aotearoa, New Zealand (Latu, 2009). Significantly, KoloaAotearoa will underpin intercultural understandings and peaceful living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The chapters are organised to show our koloa of loto-toka'i (value of respect) first to Indigenous Māori o Aotearoa (Chapter 1). Then to the Pacific Realm countries (Cook Islands, and Niue); Chapters 2-6, followed with the paper by a Fijian student (Chapter 7); Samoa (Chapters 8-9); South Africa (Chapter 10); Cambodia (Chapter 11) and the final chapter is by a student from the Kingdom of Tonga. Also included at the end are original poems written by our students from the 2016 Year 3 cohort.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge the following people who kindly offered to peer review the chapters – Professor Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, Sione Tu'itahi, Dr Mere Kēpa, Dr Juliet Nanai, Dr Laumua Tunufa'i, Dr Akata Galuvao and Yvonne Culbreath. Thank you to Alice Enoka for providing the artwork for our cover.

Mālō 'aupito
Dr. Linitā Manu'atu



References

- Helu, I. F. (1990). Tupu'anga 'o e Kakai Tonga. In *Tala 'o Tonga. Ko e Tohi Tokoni Ma'ae Kau Faiako*. Vol 2 (pp. 1-3). Potungāue Ako, Nukualofa, Tonga.
- Herda, E. (1999). *Research conversations and narrative: A critical hermeneutic orientation in participatory research*. London, England: Praeger Publishers.
- Kaeppler, A. (1999). *From the Stone Age to the Space Age in 2000 years*. Nukualofa, Tonga: Tongan National Museum.
- Latu, M. (2009). *Talanoa: A contribution to the teaching and learning of Tongan primary school children in New Zealand*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.



CHAPTER 1

Abstract

Tēna koe e hoa. My Koloa'ia paper tells a story. A story of transformation, acceptance, openness, identity and how coming to understand the history of my genealogies, enabled me to enrich relationships not only professionally, but personally as well. I begin by explaining how the *koru* (bight/loop) is important to my Māori culture and I use this as a metaphor throughout this paper. Then, I explain the *Koloa* within *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and how the values within, enable us as Māori to enrich relationships with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. The conceptual framework for the Bachelor of Pacific Education (Early Childhood Teaching) degree is analysed, and I will explain how the beginning papers of the degree prompted me to undertake a *whakapapa* (genealogy) journey that changed me. Next, the story of how I entered the degree identifying as European comes into focus. Through this story, you will see how the degree opened my thinking to include other ways of knowing and use the values I learned on my *whakapapa* journey as a reference point throughout my three years at Auckland University of Technology' School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga (AUT). Finally, the reader will explore how I have been able to find ways of weaving together Māori and the Pasifika People's values and beliefs together to enrich learning experiences in Early Childhood Education. You will discover how my lecturers gifted me their diverse Pasifika knowledges and how they enriched my relationships both personally and professionally.

Symposium

To explain the richness and abundance of the Pasifika concepts that all of the papers for this degree have, from my perspective; I feel it is best described through the method of a story of my three-year journey at AUT. I will be referring to the *koru* design throughout this paper because it is something that I can identify with culturally and it has a dual meaning for Māori. The first is that of representing new life as the baby fern frond slowly unwinds over adolescence and grows into a mature frond. The *koru* opens into a brand new leaf on the silver fern plant where it ages and dies; therefore, Māori associate the *koru* design with new life (Sheehan, 2013).

My journey at AUT is similar to how the *koru* grows in that when I began the journey I had limited knowledge relating to the values that underpin each paper. As I learned of these, my knowledge was enriched, much like the journey of the *koru*, from baby to mature leaf. The second meaning is that the *koru* is a symbol of creation because of its fluid circular shape. The circular shape of the *koru* conveys the idea of perpetual movement, while the inner coil with rolled up inner leaflets suggests a return to the point of origin. In the larger scheme, this is a metaphor for the way in which life changes and stays the same (Sheehan, 2013).

The conceptual framework for the degree is presented through a set of papers, each with underpinning values and beliefs, some of which can be *FatuLālanga* (woven) together for a student to gain a deeper understanding of the papers. These values include language, culture, wisdom, leadership, love and many more. The papers in the first year allow the student to explore who she is and where she originates from giving the student a firm sense of cultural identity and belonging in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. This is best explained by Pere (1988) where she argues that cultural identity offers warmth, security, nourishment, sustenance and belonging. The knowledge of cultural values learned on this journey then has the ability to become a reference point for future papers. To explain, the values enable the student to further develop personal and professional philosophies. This is based on pedagogical knowledge, collected through studying the papers to enrich their teaching strategies in early childhood education. Furthermore, respect for relationships is taught through concepts such as *va*, which means respect for the space between relationships whether this be between people and, or environments. To highlight this, Tuagalu (2008) suggests that a common saying from a Samoan perspective is that of, "*ia teu le va*" cherish, nurture and care for the *va* (p.110). This saying signifies that not only should the student be mindful of the respect for the people in relationships, but for the space between as well.

In relation to teaching in early childhood education, the student begins the degree learning about his/her cultural values and beliefs and those of Pasifika peoples. Understanding similarities of the values between the cultures enriches relationships. For example, the Māori value of *Manaakitanga* requires that Māori are mindful of the notions of reciprocal acts of giving, hospitality and caring when engaging with others (Mead, 2004). The Samoan value of *fa'aaloalo* has similar notions, which are,

reciprocal respect involving honouring others (Ministry of Education, 1996a). These values should raise the student's awareness of how he or she acts when engaging with others.

Overall, the conceptual framework for the degree ensures that pedagogical knowledge acquired is added to and strengthened throughout the three years. This is to produce teachers, who understand how to weave cultural values and beliefs into their teaching practice. As well as into the curriculum, to provide enriching learning experiences for the young child in early childhood education. Sleeter (2009) highlights this concept by explaining that the teacher must encompass professional knowledge for a curriculum and practices to be inclusive whilst making attempt to understand the wider community, ensuring that the teaching and learning is meaningful. The framework for this degree produces teachers who are capable of practising the concept.

Koloa'ia means wealth and riches in abundance. In relation to the degree, *Koloa'ia* portrays the abundance of rich knowledge the student collects over the course of the three-year course. This value represents the *koloa* or *tāonga* (treasures of knowledge) collected from all of the papers by the student who then applies the knowledge to personal and professional experiences and relationships. To explain, I will define each paper and the concepts within and *FatuLālānga* these together so the reader may understand not only the *koloa'ia* within each paper but when added to other papers, the *koloa'ia* becomes enriched. Thaman (1995) highlights how knowledge is central to understanding relationships by explaining that language, together with an associated body of accumulated knowledge is vital for one to understand diverse cultural skills, values and beliefs. The papers within the degree enable the student to acquire diverse cultural knowledges and apply these to his/her life experiences to enrich his/her relationships with others.

Koloa'ia in the conceptual framework

For the student to have *koloa'ia* he/she should embrace the knowledge acquired through the papers. *Tupu'anga* embraces genealogical ties through the student investigating cultural values and practices such as *whakapapa* (genealogy). *Kainga* (a Maori village) highlights social, cultural, linguistic, economic and political issues relating to the relationships within *whanau*, *whakapapa*, leadership and the wider

community. *Fonua* or *whēnua* raises awareness of relationships and cultural values pertaining to land, cosmos, placenta, heritage and *aroha* (love). *Mou'iMafana* embraces wellbeing, spirituality and peaceful living through cultural values. *Koloa* acknowledges the treasures collected from understanding the relationships between Māori and others through an understanding of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*.

Ako and *Ilo* strengthens the student's understanding of how to teach and learn reciprocally according to pedagogical knowledge, philosophy and cultural values and beliefs. *Poto* is an understanding of how to weave these knowledges into the students' collected knowledge acquired through life experiences and add this to teaching practice. The knowledge acquired through the papers allows the student to find a spiritual sense of cultural identity and belonging in *Aotearoa* New Zealand, as well. Amituanai-Toloa (2011) suggests that language, culture, genealogical understandings and homeland relationships are vital cultural concepts that should be understood to ensure that one feels a strong sense of belonging and cultural identity. We see these concepts evident in the papers. The unfurling of the *koru* marks the student's knowledge growing and the mind, or soul embracing the knowledge that these papers offer. The student collects this *koloa'ia* through each of the first year papers.

The second year offers the student an opportunity to develop deeper understandings of the concepts/values. The knowledge is added to through exploring, in depth, the cultural values discussed earlier thus, taking the student from being *poto* (wise) to, in the third year, becoming *fakapotopoto* (a person who has acquired wisdom). This is acquired not only throughout the second year but also through a continuation of studying the following papers and the concept of *FatuLālanga*.

Faka ako mo e faka ilo'i

This paper is a continuation of *ako* and *ilo*. The values enable the student to critically apply the concept of *FatuLālanga* of Pasifika and Māori knowledges within the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) and other curriculum documents. This is achieved by identifying the gaps in these documents and finding ways to fill these gaps through the knowledge acquired throughout the three years of study. The concepts, *ako* and *ilo*, raise the student's awareness of teaching and learning to raise the consciousness of what to know and understand in early childhood teaching. This paper further develops the student's knowledge of Pasifika and Māori

Peoples' values and beliefs such as *tautua* (service), *alofa* (love), *fa'aaloalo* (respect) and supports raising the consciousness of how to *FatuLālanga* these into our teaching to support the young child's learning.

Tatala

Tatala enables the student to relate cultural values and beliefs such as *tautua*, *alofa* and *fa'aaloalo* to governance, management and leadership within early childhood education. This is done through culturally valued practices such as *talanoa* (critical discussion) within the class environment, an investigation of the Ministry of Education documents such as early childhood regulations, and research into cultural leadership values such as *fa'amatai* (Samoan chiefly Matai system). Once these are understood, the student then develops an understanding of how to embrace critical thinking surrounding these ideas to enrich curriculum and teaching within early childhood education. This paper also enables the student to explore cultural practices such as collectivity through *hui* (collaborative meetings) ensuring opinions of others are respected and acknowledged when decision making in relation to governance and management in early childhood education. From a Māori perspective, the leadership is underpinned with the value of *whanau* (family) consisting of inter-generational teaching. The elder teaches the young child how to be an influential leader inclusive of the values of *aroha* (love), *wairua* (spirit) and *manaaki* (compassion) (Katene, 2013).

Toutai

Toutai offers the student an opportunity to research an idea or topic that is close to his/her heart in relation to early childhood teaching. The three-year journey at this point of the degree enables the student to think critically and apply this thinking to his/her research. The strategies for research taught through this paper are inclusive of Pasifika and Māori values and beliefs. For example, the topic question relating to early childhood education asked by the student is something the student has become passionate about throughout the three years of study. Through studying methodologies and methods relating to researching a topic question, the cultural values and beliefs enable the student to undertake the research being guided by these values to ensure the best informative data is collected. To clarify, the methodology of a Kaupapa Māori approach to research is underpinned by the values of *whānau*, *aroha*,

manaaki, hui, and many more (Patterson, 1992). These values, if referred to when researching, allow the student to gather the best informative data.

Fakapotopoto

The paper *Fakapotopoto* ensures that we combine all that we have learned and take this into our practice in early childhood education. The knowledge gained enables the student to create learning experiences, in a centre, being mindful of the cultural values of love, service, collectivity and leadership. The paper offers critical thinking in relation to how to engage with parents, children and teachers within the centre with a focus on building and maintaining respectful relationships.

What has become evident in this discussion are the common values in each paper. Although each paper has a specific purpose in relation to early childhood education, it is obvious that common values of love, service, collectivity, leadership and respect should be understood before the student undertakes further study and, or a teaching position within the early childhood education sector. This is the *koloa'ia* that enables the student to become an effective teacher in early childhood education.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi)

The Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the founding document of New Zealand. The agreement is between Māori chiefs of hapū (sub-tribe, clan) and the British Crown that promises Māori undisturbed possession of land and Māori practices. The contract highlights an understanding of how Māori can reciprocally enrich relationships with migrants through the principles of protection, partnership and participation. Partnership embraces the notion that people act reasonably and acknowledge good faith reciprocally when engaging with others (Stokes, 1992). This principle also embraces the idea of maintaining established relationships ensuring trust and respect are evident (Wilson & Neville, 2009). Participation ensures the wellbeing of Māori is catered to holistically and ensures the welfare of their physical and mental health. Te Tiriti embraces the notion of open communication and respecting the opinions of others when making decisions in any context (Wilson & Neville, 2009). Protection guides people to be respectful of the cultural values, beliefs and practices of people of diverse cultures (Wilson & Neville, 2009). Each principle is embedded in values that ensure peaceful

relationships between the Crown, Māori and the people of diverse cultures residing in New Zealand.

The beginning papers of this degree planted the seed in me to begin the search to find out about my *whakapapa* (ancestral tribal relations). The values within these papers took me back to my childhood days where school holidays were spent with my grandparents on the *whenua* (ancestral land). These memories enlightened me to the fact that the Māori values were taught to me at a very young age although I did not notice at the time. I investigated my *whakapapa* through researching databases and the internet and found the stories of my ancestors. Although I did not know these people, I felt a very strong connection to them. After a long time of researching, it was time to visit elderly family members to see if they could fill in the gaps in my *whakapapa*. I visited being mindful of the value of *manaakitanga* and so began conversations by *korero* (talking) to the elders about what I had found out on my own through my research to date. I wanted them to know that I was not just fishing for information, rather I had done the groundwork and *whakapapa* was in my heart. This investigation resulted in being handed the book of my ancestors from my grandfather's sister. She said that she had been waiting for the child to come to her who could show her that *whakapapa* is in his/her heart and I am to pass it to the next person who displays such love for his/her ancestors. This was an emotional time. Once my grandparents passed away, I only went north for funerals; this investigation reconnected me to my *whenua* spiritually.

Once I had gathered all my data, it was time to visit the *urupa* (family cemetery). I had been here many times and never understood who anyone was other than my grandparents, uncles, and aunties. This visit was different. I finally knew who my ancestors were, and the stories of the lives they led and it was an emotional visit.

Learning this knowledge enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of my cultural values and beliefs that resurfaced when I reflected on my childhood experiences through the beginning papers for this degree. This is the *koloa'ia*; I gathered in the beginning and added to throughout my years of study. Through understanding not only my own cultural values and beliefs, but those of the Pasifika peoples as well. Understanding common values between the cultures has enabled me to make deeper connections with class peers and enriched my relationships with people of the Pasifika

cultures in my personal life and in the centre as well. I believe having engaged in this degree over the course of three years, that this is the *koloa'ia* I have collected, added to and practiced and this has enabled me to enrich my relationships with all people.

Understanding others' cultural values and beliefs highlights the *FatuLālanga* of the Treaty principles, particularly, that of protection. As *tangata whenua* (people of the land), Māori have a right to carry on traditional practices such as *whakapapa*, *te reo Māori* (language), *waiata* (song), *kanikani* (dance) and *karakia* (prayer) taught to us by our ancestors (H. Forsythe, personal communication, 2015). This can become a complex situation though. New Zealand is a multicultural country. The context of the Te Tiriti signifies that Māori have the right to organize themselves as Māori. How do we do this in a multicultural country? I believe the answer sits in our obligations as *Tangata whenua*. It is our obligation to pass cultural knowledge onto others whilst embracing the value of *manaakitanga*. This concept acknowledges peaceful relationships from a Māori perspective as defined through the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Understanding all of these concepts, allows the student to engage in relationships with others respectfully. As the *koru* unwraps into the baby fern then begins the cycle of the fern growing bigger and stronger. Just as we deepen our knowledge through engaging in life experiences, we become *fakapotopoto* when engaging with others. The important thing to note is that the *koloa'ia* we collect then should be passed onto others because just as the fern grows old and returns to the *whenua*, so too will we and future generations carry on the enrichment between relationships that we have embraced.



References

- Amituanai-Tolosa, M. (2010). To each a language: Addressing the challenges of language and cultural loss for Samoans. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 6(2), 79-85.
- Katene, S. (2013). Traditional Māori leadership. *The spirit of Māori leadership* (pp. 12-13). Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers.
- Mead, H. (2004). *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori values*. Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers.
- Ministry of Education. (1996a). *Ta'iala mo le gagana Sāmoa: The gagana Sāmoa guidelines*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (1996b). *Te whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Patterson, J. (1992). *Exploring Maori values: Spiritual values*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: The Dunmore Press.
- Pere, R. (1988). Te wheke: Whaia te maramatanga me te aroha. In S. Middleton (Ed.), *Women and education in Aotearoa* (pp. 6-19). Wellington, New Zealand: Nicholson Press.
- Sheehan, J. (2013). *Mountain Jade*. Retrieved October 10, 2015, from <http://www.mountainjade.co.nz/blog/the-koru-meaning-new-life-harmony/>
- Sleeter, C. (2009). Pedagogies of inclusion in teacher education: Global perspectives. In S. Mitakidou, E. Tressou, B. Swadenar & C. Grant (Eds.), *Beyond pedagogies of exclusion in diverse childhood contexts* (pp. 149-162). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Stokes, E. (1992). The Treaty of Waitangi and the Waitangi Tribunal: Maori claims in New Zealand. *Applied Geography*, 12(2), 176-191.
- Thaman, K. H. (1995). Concepts of learning, knowledge and wisdom in Tonga, and their relevance to modern education. *Prospects*, 25(4), 723-733.
- Tuagalu, L. (2008). The heuristics of the vā. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 4(1), 107-126.
- Wilson, D., & Neville, S. (2009). Culturally safe research with vulnerable populations. *Contemporary Nurse*, 33(1), 69-79.

CHAPTER 2

We were asked to showcase the koloa'ia of this degree, which was harder than any of us thought. Not because there was very little koloa'ia but because the whole degree wove together so perfectly all of the koloa of my culture. All Pasifika cultures and particularly Māori culture into the context of teaching and learning in Aotearoa. The Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) shortened life expectantly also added to the difficulty of this presentation. Overall, I wanted to ensure that my story was told; my lecturers felt my passion that they had tapped into and saw the potential of their degree go further than the end of a semester. "*Piki atu au ki te taumata o tōku maunga, ka kite au i te mana, i te ihi o te whenua nei nō ōku tīpuna*" (Grace & Grace, 2003, p. 6).

Kia Orana tatou katoa toa,
Ko Karen Moetu toku ingoa,
Ko Tera toku Mama, no Taupo mai aia, e ma'ine kuki airani, e te māori toku mama
Ko Tarawera te Maunga
Ko Tarawera te Awa
Ko Te Arawa te waka
Ko Ngati Rangitīhi te Iwi
Ko Albert toku Papa, No Kawerau mai aia, E papa'a toku papa

**Piki atu au ki te taumata o tōku maunga,
ka kite au i te mana, i te ihi o te whenua nei nō ōku tīpuna.**

I climb to the summit of my mountain to see the lands of my ancestors
(Grace & Grace, 2003, p. 6).

Return to the lands of your ancestors to reconnect with their roots and customs. (trad)

My *mihi* explains that my mum is Cook Island and Māori and that my dad is Pakeha. It has taken me awhile to work out how to introduce this and will no doubt change it more. My parents' *whakapapa* is important as to who I have become as an adult. Though my dad is Pakeha, he grew up in Kawerau as the only Pakeha family in this small Māori community and practically lived on the local marae. Our family laughs that

he is more Māori than my mum, so his values based on his lived experiences also influenced my values.

The *whakatauki* I chose represents a journey of sorts to discover and connect with ancestors and *'enua* of my grandmother's homeland and culture. Like most journeys, I seem to have come to the end with so much more than I ever imagined, so much goodness and *koloa* from so many opportunities, learning and experiences. I begin with reflecting back over the last three years as I consider the *koloa'ia* of this degree for me.

Our first year was full of new concepts, or so I thought, new to me but not for Pasifika people. Much of it was ancient knowledges used and had been known for centuries (Anae, 2010; Samu, Mara, & Siteine, 2008). You see I am a product of colonisation, where the need to be *Pakeha* outdid the need to retain my mother tongue. My mum can speak Cook Island however never did and did not really want to either. My Māori *whakapapa* was kept from our family, as a result of my grandmother wanting everyone to assume they were full European. So here, I was before I began this journey looking for a culture I was not sure I deserved, but deep inside knowing I needed it.

Setting out on this journey with a purpose to search for something, not sure what that something was at that stage, but seeing the advertisement for a Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) degree caught my attention. I had been involved in Playcentre for 18 years and although I loved most of it, I had realised that my way of thinking and working was not the common way. I had become increasingly frustrated as the organisation started a structural change and seemed to be more worried about the systems, the money, and the buildings. On my mind was a quote by Lex Grey who was an earlier Playcentre pioneer who talked about Playcentre being more than buildings, equipment and resources. So why were people only focusing on the material things and making everything so complicated?

Previous lessons of the Treaty of Waitangi spoke very clearly in that according to the treaty you were either Māori or non-Māori. Therefore, I spent time as Māori learning my heritage from others but still not quite feeling whole. I felt comfortable and that I was welcome in Māori environments but something again was missing. Over that first year, I discovered that it was because even though I have Māori *whakapapa* I

connected to my grandmother's Cook Island deeper in my heart. I also discovered that first year that she had gifted me so much more knowledge of our culture than I had realised. Although I did not have the language, I had the spirit and the passion and so many stories and wisdom from her homeland to pass to my *mokopuna*.

Changing the mind set and challenging the deficit view of Pasifika within our own communities and families was harder than expected (Baba, Māhina, Williams & Nabobo-Baba, 2014). At last, I started to really hear what was being said, in the media, around people I spent time with. I found it easier to feel the anger inside but still kept silent, as it happened so often. What could I do? Growing up in a mixed heritage family I was used to ignorant remarks with many assuming my mum was my caregiver, in other instances people talking down about Māori and Pacific Island assuming I was neither. I tended to steer myself away from those people or make sure they knew my mum was Cook Island and Aotearoa Māori to shush them quickly.

Year 2 was essentially when the decolonisation really set in; the realisation of what has been lost and forgotten, the hurt and sadness. It was time to reassess what we had, what we treasured and have a good look with brighter lens. So many times with help from our lecturers, we really saw how beneficial our values are to more than just people from the Pacific. I was at a national meeting and I cannot recall what I said but a colleague came to me grinning and said, "ahh it's about time Karen that you underwent the decolonisation process." It came as a surprise as I had not realised that my talk, my thinking and my views were changing and it was being noticed by others. This degree was starting to ground me and validate what I had been feeling in my heart for many years but could never articulate to others.

Third year I would say is the year of the activist. Previously I got upset or angry over what people said but I tended to willingly change my view so everyone was happy. I began to get angry and indignant at people who talked in a negative or offensive way about any indigenous culture. I can no longer let it go over my head to file away battering at my soul. Anger and frustration causes a quick switch of TV channels and radio news as I mumble and growl to my husband who smiles in acceptance of this new position of mine. In fact, his talk has changed too, a factor perhaps of sharing my new insights and learning at home. Never before have I been as affected by learning and information as I have with this degree.

So this year has been about changing the talk, challenging the majority and speaking the *talanoa* (Vaiotei, 2006) of Pasifika pride and identity. In the process, I have begun re-educating others about Pasifika history, and so called assumptions made by others. I present a collective worldview and all the positives of this to the forefront of my practice. I have no worries any more if this is not the majority, as the majority has a lot to learn from Māori and Pacific peoples. Winitana (2015) suggested that creating more opportunities for Māori and Pasifika to *talanoa* and explore possibilities together would be powerful. Can you imagine the benefits for all collective cultures in Aotearoa?

This all came about through a carefully constructed conceptual framework uniting *fatu* (heart), *lālānga* (weaving) and *talanoa* (talk) woven purposely together with core aspects of Pacific Island knowledge at its heart. These ideas and concepts form a *lālānga* creating a way of being which more than just early childhood teachers. This degree has created the way for teachers to continuously weave their love and respect of families, cultures with the values of themselves and the people they surround themselves with. That is teachers that connect spiritually and show their genuine selves in their service to children and their families of Aotearoa and potentially beyond. Teachers that put others first and consider the impacts for the collective good instilling the concepts of *tauhi va* and *manaaki*.

FatuLālānga and *Fatutalanoa* represent practices that ensure the heart, and mind are in-sync and work together in harmony with families and communities. *Lālānga* through this degree bonds to vital values and beliefs and put the students' culture at the core of the degree. This enables and validates one's heart and soul, mind and body into one complete package. To have *aroha* centrally positioned around all we do is extraordinarily liberating. In my previous practice, I had always tried to hold back my *aroha* for children, as I wondered whether I was letting the mother in me come through. Rather than what the world told me, I was a professional teacher. Now I know better, children love me because I love them too, I hold them when they are sad, celebrate when they are happy and simply be there when they are indifferent.

The *koloa* in the papers presented throughout this degree connected and overlapped in many intricate ways. So on my way up the mountain I did not just pick up new concepts, I deepened my experience and understanding as I travelled; applying them to real life and theory, studying alongside papers and research from Pacific

academics. Many of these readings sent me off on tangents of discovery, however always brought me back to the same grounding principles. Everything we do and relate to are connected by past, the present or now and will become future which spiritually binds us to our '*enua*, our *kopu tangata* and our *atua*. These ideas in themselves puts a more profound responsibility to be more genuine, respectful and purposeful through the ways we learn to know, to do, to be, and as we live together (Alidou, Glanz, & Nikie'ma, 2012).

Faka ako and *faka 'ilo* firmly embedded the importance of language as the keystone of culture which was reinforced by '*etau ngaahi lea* (our languages). For one who has yet to reclaim her *whakapapa* languages it was heartening to know it was not too late. The thought I could converse to my *mokopuna* in Kuki Airani and Māori overwhelms me and reinforces my determination. To do this right I need to position myself around speakers of our languages and immerse in the culture and practices. I learnt more than I imagined from a practicum at a total immersion Tongan centre and could feel the difference in what I could understand as the weeks went by. Unfortunately, as the research suggests you must stay immersed in these languages' rich environments for a longer than a few weeks to maintain this understanding and language use (Amituanai-Toloa, 2010; Taufe'ulungaki, 2005; Tuafuti, 2010).

As I climbed the *maunga*, I stopped often to appreciate *Papatuanuku* and *Ranginui* at their best as everything we did connected us to our '*enua* in some way. *Tatala* taught me the simplicity of unravelling what I found to search out the *koloa*, thus adding to my *kete*. There is a lot of information within Early Childhood Education and in education in general. From experiences, it can become too easy to let it all wrap you and others up into knots. *Tatala* is a concept that refocuses on people collaborating with others to find the best of the best, ensuring time to take to understand the layers and complexities involved. I relate it to the de-cluttering of practices, a clearing of the mind of unnecessary information, which are ideas that Tui Atua (2005) has talked about often in his writing, which in my mind is common sense as why would people do something twice or create a complicated system if there was no need.

Toutai connected with my love of exploring new ideas and finding and reclaiming what really works for indigenous people. The knowledge that too often research is done to people, by others without ever being of benefit to anyone but the researcher or their



funder was my previous understanding of research. However, indigenous research methodologies that connected with lived experiences such as *Tivaevae*, *Kakala* and *Talanoa* evoke images that can be related to ensure the gathering of data and information is authentic, meaningful and shows true Pacific identity, pride and respect to all involved. As I think about developing a new *Tivaevae*, or begin to weave an '*ei katu* (head piece) I can smell the fragrances from the flowers that inspire creativity, feel the *ma'ana* (warmth) from the people, see the potential and hear the joy of *talanoa* as we work.

Three years on and nearly at the end of this degree and I know it is the people, love, respect and service that makes a Playcentre, or a preschool, home or anywhere where *whānau* with young children come together. Reinstating the people at the core of all that is done, being mindful and respectful of the various relationships and connections between people, '*enua* and *atua* are cherished.

Finally, I am near the top of my *maunga* and I feel the closest to my ancestors that I have ever been. Despite the bumps and rocky times along the way, it has all been worth every moment. I look out and I can see where I have come, the joy and *aroha* I have experienced along the way. The *va* created between ourselves as students and Pasifika women, is so strong it will forever humble me. The *aroha*, *manaaki* and wisdom given and shared by our lecturers with us are second to none.

The only missing link was developing strength in Kuki Airani or even Māori languages however, that is my own to do. Despite this somehow I have developed a repertoire of Pacific languages that now naturally appear within my talk and my writing. It does make me proud that I can now understand some spoken Tongan, Samoan, Cook Island and Māori and have learnt more than I imagined about each of these cultures. Yes, I would have loved to have been able to translate all those concepts in Cook Island for this symposium however, that is my next mountain to climb.

Meitaki maata

References

- Alidou, H., Glanz, C., & Nikie'ma, N. (2012). Quality multilingual and multicultural education for lifelong learning. *International Review of Education*, 57, 529-539.
- Amituanai-Toloo, M. (2010). Get a twenty-inch frying pan: Enhancing success for Pasifika bilingual education. *Mai Review*.
- Anae, M. (2010). Teu le va: Toward a native anthropology. *Pacific Studies*, 33(2), 222-240.
- Baba, T. L., Māhina, O., Williams, N., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (Eds.). (2014). *Researching Pacific and indigenous peoples: Issues and perspectives*. Auckland, New Zealand: Centre for Pacific Studies – The University of Auckland.
- Efi, T. A. T. T. T (2005). Clutter in indigenous knowledge, research and history: A Samoan perspective. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 61.
- Grace, P., & Grace, W. (2003). *Earth, sea, sky, images & Maori proverbs from the natural world of Aotearoa New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers and Craig Potton Publishing.
- Samu, T. W., Mara, D., & Siteine, A. (2008). Education for Pacific peoples for the 21st century. *Nga Kaupapa Here: Connections and contradictions in education*, 145-157.
- Taufe'ulungaki, A. (2005). Language and culture in the Pacific region: Issues, practices and alternatives. *Directions: Journal of Educational Studies*, 27(1).

Tuafuti, P. (2010). Additive bilingual education: Unlocking the culture of silence. *Mai Review*.

Vaiioleti, T. M. (2006). Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on Pacific research. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12, 21-34.

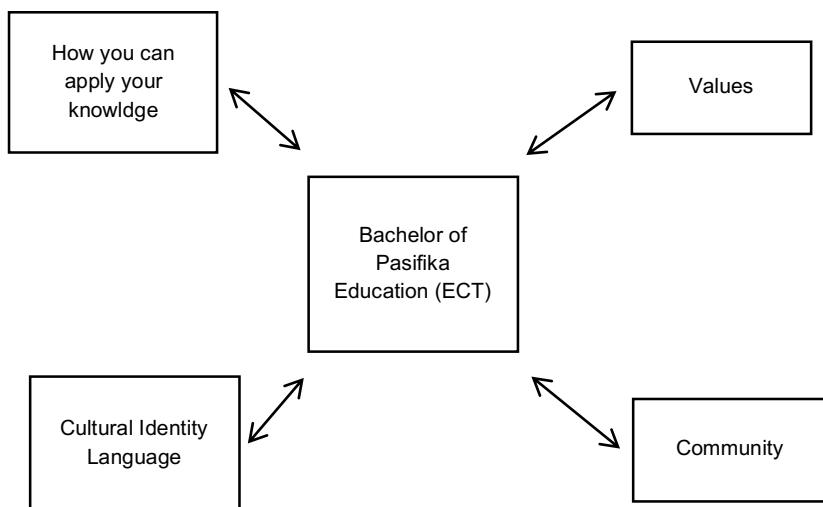
Winitana, M. (2012). Remembering the deeds of Maui: What messages are in the tuakana-teina pedagogy for tertiary educators? *MAI Journal*, 1(1).



CHAPTER 3

Fofola e Koloa – A Symposium of Koloa'iaAotearoa

“E kai i to ko'u poke e uri to aro ki manavaara” – remember where you originate from and the purpose of your perseverance. This is a proverb that has motivated me throughout my years of study and how far I have come. Each year of study has had different reasons of what my purpose was and why I was undertaking this degree. With the enrichment and abundance of knowledge and that, I have gained; I will be sharing this through the metaphor of net fishing.



I have seen the degree from different perspectives but I have decided to use the metaphor of net fishing where the gathering of knowledge began from out inwards towards the net, which symbolises the degree. Net fishing is not only that of my culture but of the Pasifika and of other cultures of the world. To acquire knowledge as in the netting exercise the more 'people' to circle the fish the more fish is gathered (Solomona, & Vuki, 2012). Through net fishing, we are able to gather different species of fish, which helps with the sustenance of the village or the community. In this sense,

the fish is the knowledge you gained from the degree. Throughout the three years as you gather knowledge, you are positioning each person at strategic positions around the net to help gather more fish. The strategic positions symbolises the papers within the degree. These positions allow you to strengthen your understanding of knowledges on the degree. With each year, you increase your ability to catch more fish by increasing the number of people around your net. This representing you acquiring more knowledge and understanding.

The conceptual framework of this degree is based around the concepts of *TalanoaLālānga* and *FatuLālānga*. *TalanoaLālānga* can be referred to people that weave their knowledges, skills, experiences and histories into the practices languages and culture. But it can also show the diversities within Pasifika people's culture and language, their practices and beliefs. *FatuLālānga* is the practical part of *TalanoaLālānga*, this being able to construct and utilize the concepts that are taught throughout the papers allowing for us as diverse people to teach our communities with the abundance of knowledges from our own perspective, indigenous Māori and the western perspectives.

As part of this degree the different papers that underpin it have provided enrichment that allows for holistic knowledge that comes from the *vaerua* (spirituality), *pukuatu* (heart) of the people, their languages and cultures, values and beliefs and their *'enua* (land) (Tu'itahi, 2010). Through these different knowledges (papers), values and beliefs, we as emerging teachers are able to see a deeper understanding of what is needed or important when becoming an educator of our Pasifika knowledges. Being able to bring together the different knowledges, understanding of western, and our tangata whenua will help us as migrants of this country to relay our knowledges to those that matter – our *tamariki*.

With this degree I have come a long way and have built up knowledges that I believe has allowed me to grow into the educator I am today. According to Amituanai-Tolosa (2010), "language and culture are two of the most important aspects of one's identity" (p.81) and having a strong foundation of culture and language I believe has provided me with a sense of direction where I am able to feel comfortable for my place here in Aotearoa. Because I am sure of my sense of direction this has given me a purpose to why I am wanting to achieve this degree. For me then, to understand the perceptions

of the degree was through my lifetime experiences that I encountered throughout my life. Being migrants to this country has classed me as being different. But we must not see this as a negative. The differences that we have are full of knowledges and these are the values and beliefs of languages, cultural perspectives, being of collective, relationships and importantly engaging within our communities. Being here in Aotearoa with our diverse knowledges and understandings should allow us to be taught knowledges according to us. Through these knowledges, we are able to gain an understanding of my standing point here in Aotearoa.

Faka ako mo e faka ilo'i

Fakaako mo e faka ilo'i has continued from the papers *Ako mo e ilo* and *Ako'i mo e ilo'i*. When put into two concepts *fakaako* is seen as the application of education and *fakailo* is to raise the awareness of people of what to know and understand (Helu-Thaman, 1988). This is evident through the curriculum Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) and the other curriculum documents. This paper allows us to recognise the gaps through knowledge that we have learnt within the three years and these concepts helps us as emerging teachers to develop knowledge of tangata whenua and the western knowledges. According to Telford and Toumu'a (2013), these are values of *vaerua* (spirituality), *aroa* (love), *akakoromaki* (respect) and *tautua* (service). This then providing that we understand their values and beliefs and being conscious of how we can *lalanga* the knowledges we have acquired and be able to teach and support the learning of our *tamariki*.

Tatala

Tatala (critical dialogue) enables us to look further than just governance and management. It allows us to dig deep into the knowledges that encompass our values and beliefs culturally. Thinking back to when our island leaders would gather for their yearly meetings with the community. They empowered the community to contribute to the structure and running of the island. With them allowing the community to participate and give suggestions within the meetings attracted a mutual respect from the community (Anae et al., 2002). Through this, everyone collaborated and helped with the development of the island.

Being a leader is important but also having the proper leadership skills is vital. Knowing oneself, and knowing your spirit allows you to know your values and beliefs. Walker (2008) acknowledges that the “wairua is intelligence, it has a language of its own” (p. 7) and integrating the spirit into your practice will allow for collaboration and interchange. In Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996), recognition of spirituality should have a holistic approach especially within our Pasifika peoples and our tangata whēnua. Through this holistic approach, as well the values of *aroa* (love) and *akakoromaki* (respect) and by improving our human and spiritual development, this allows us to maintain the child’s culture (Toso, 2011). As leaders, we must observe ourselves in order to deliver effective knowledge for the *tamariki*.

Toutai

The concept *toutai* allows for the opportunity to select a topic that is of meaning or is close to the heart of the student. This is then related to the context of early childhood. The journey of three years that the emerging teacher has accounted enables them to critique and apply their thinking to their research topic. The approaches of this paper include Pasifika and Māori values and beliefs. Through the methodologies and methods of the research Pasifika and Māori values, beliefs and approaches are taught to build up information relevant to the research question. The research topic would be a topic of interest to the student within their three years of study. With research comes the cultural values and beliefs and this enables the student to collect qualitative information. To clarify the methodology of *tivaevae* is underpinned by values of *taokotai* (collaboration), *akangateitei* (respect), *uriuri kite* (reciprocity), *tu inangaro* (relationships) and *akari kite* (shared vision) (Te Ava, 2011). These are the values when referred to, allows the student to gather data.

Fakapotopoto

This degree has lead me to *poto’i* and *fakapotopoto*. My *poto* has been enriched though my peers and the knowledge I have learnt in connection to research as an emerging teacher. According to Hau’ofa (1993), enquiry allows learners, teachers and researchers to harvest knowledge, skills, values and beliefs of Pasifika. Being able to hear and share knowledge in class provided me with the understanding of the concepts values and beliefs that are instilled within this paper. The *talanoa* allowed me

to *raranga* (weave) my *poto* (to know oneself) with my peers; this enabled me to take this into my field of practice. Being able to combine all the knowledges that I have learnt over the three years has enriched me with the abundance of knowledge to take back to our communities. These knowledges providing learning experiences and being mindful of the cultural values of spirituality, love, service, respect and leadership. Having this knowledge has given me the opportunity to raise the awareness (*faka i'ilo*) for our *tamariki*. In addition, helps to focus on building and maintaining respectful relationships within the sector and be able to provide this within the centres.

Within each paper, it was evident that the values, beliefs of spirituality, love, respect, service, a holistic view and leadership are important to understand before I am able to further my education and teaching profession. These values that I have found are the *koloa'ia* of the papers that have and will mould me to become an effective educator.

Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi is the document of New Zealand. The treaty is an agreement between the British Crown and tangata whenua. This document highlights the understanding of how we as migrants are able to enrich our relationships through the principals of protection, partnership and participation. The treaty is our guiding principles here in Aotearoa. Because in relation to tangata whenua we have the same values and beliefs, but having the respect for them allows for us as Pasifika to work alongside them. Partnership holds the view that people are to act reasonably and acknowledge equality when engaging with others and maintain relationships (Stokes, 1992). Participation ensures that the wellbeing of the tangata whenua is catered for holistically. Protection guides people to be respectful of the cultural values and beliefs and practices of the diverse cultures. This allows us as Pasifika people to continue to show the respect not only to our tangata whenua but also to our Pasifika communities.

In relation to the Treaty of Waitangi, we have been able to adapt through the connections of the indigenous people of Aotearoa via spirituality. Through the different beliefs of tangata whenua, spirituality is fundamental to them. From a Samoan perspective, according to McDonald (2004), "spirituality is grounded in our cultures, our spiritual beliefs our creation stories, our past histories influenced by missionaries, contemporary beliefs and practices and our migration into Aotearoa New Zealand"

(p.1). All our values and beliefs draw the strength from the perspective of spirituality and this provides the understanding that here in Aotearoa the church can be our place of belonging. According to Taria Kingstone (2003) the church was where he found his *turanga vaevae* (standing point) and this is where he found spirituality. So similar to that of the indigenous people of Aotearoa, where they had a *marae* to go to where there is the abundance of knowledge, we as Pasifika people find support within our churches and church communities this being our *turanga vaevae* here in Aotearoa.

In conclusion, this degree has expanded my understanding from my previous concept of returning home to pay back my dues to my community. The knowledge that I have acquired is not only valuable to home but is valuable to my community throughout the world. By the end of my netting, I would be able to gather knowledge that will provide me with the knowledge where I am able to venture out and use this knowledge to help the community. Relating this to my metaphor, I would have gathered enough fish to share out to the community. The concepts of *Fakapotopoto*, *Fakaako mo e faka'ilo*, *Toutai*, *Tatala* and *Koloa'ia* are all central to the curriculum framework of this degree. For me as a Pasifika student, these are at the core of my own understanding and I would not have known these concepts without taking this degree. I can say now that these concepts have become embedded into my heart to the extent that I can now say I am able to share *lalanga* (weave) them into my practices and allow them to guide me to better the learning of our future tamariki. This then acknowledges the purpose I am here which is to serve my community and better the learning of our future generation of our Pasifika tamariki.

References

- Amituanai-Tolosa, M. (2010). To each a language: Addressing the challenges of language and cultural loss for Samoans. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 6(2), 79–85.
- Anae, M., Anderson, H., Benseman, J., & Coxon, E. (2002). *Pacific peoples and tertiary education: Issues of participation*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland Uniservices.
- Hau'ofa, E. (2000). *The ocean in us. Voyaging through the contemporary Pacific*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kingstone, T. (2003). Kia orana! Talofa lava! Kam Na Mauri! In P. Fairbairn-Dunlop & G. Makisi (Eds.), *Making our place: Growing up Pā in New Zealand* (pp. 47-64). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- McCaffery, J., & McFall-McCaffery, J. T. (2010). O tatou o aga'i i fea?/ 'Oku tau o ki fea?/ Where are we heading? Pacific languages in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 6(2), 86-121.
- McDonald, A. T. (2004). *Spirituality and important quality in Pasifika early childhood education: A Samoan perspective* (pp. 1-9). Pasifika International Conference, Samoa.
- Ministry of Education. (2004). *Governing and managing your early childhood service*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.
- Solomona, D. M., & Vuki, V. C. (2012). *Traditional fishing methods, rauia and gender roles in Arorangi village, Rarotonga, Cook Islands*.
- Stokes, E. (1992). The Treaty of Waitangi and the Waitangi Tribunal: Maori claims in New Zealand. *Applied Geography*, 12(2), 176-191.

- Te Ava, A. (2011). *Mou Piritia Te Korero A O Ui Tupuna, Taueuea: Culturally responsive pedagogy for Cook Islands secondary schools PE*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Telford, M., & Toumu'a, R. (2013). *PISA 2009 reading workbook: Acting on the evidence: What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for our school leaders, teachers, parents, families and communities of Pasifika students?* Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.
- Thaman, K. H. (1988). *Ako and faiako: Educational concepts, cultural values, and teacher role perceptions in Tonga*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of the South Pacific, Fiji.
- Toso, M. (2011). Spirituality as a philosophy of practice with implications for very young children: A Samoan perspective. *New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education*, 13(1), 34-38.
- Tu'itahi, S. (2010). Kafataha: Strategies to preserve Pacific languages. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 6(2), 134-142.
- Walker, R. (2008). The philosophy of Te Whatu Pokeka: Kaupap Maori assessment and learning exemplars. *New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education*, 10(2), 5- 10. Retrieved from <http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz/webdav/site/education/shared/about/research/docs/first%20years/fyv10issue2walker.pdf>

CHAPTER 4

The concept of *Koloa'ia* is about the abundance of *ako* (education) *poto, ilo* (knowledge), *ahurea* (culture) and *reo* (language). Within this presentation, I will be presenting my *Koloa'ia* that I was able to develop within this Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) degree, but first, I will start with introducing myself.

My name is Natasha Teremoana Saufuliane Maoate-Tafa and I am of Pacific Island descent. I was born to a Cook Island mum, Akaiti Maoate and a Samoan dad, Fueina Tafa. My *tupu'anga tara* (story) weaves in the many cultural backgrounds of my *peu tupuna* that I carry with me at this present time, Cook Island, Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Tahitian, European and Hawaiian. This is not an exaggeration. My *Fonua* of Rarotonga encompasses the culture and language that has nurtured me into becoming a strong Cook Islander who is proud to be a part of the multi-cultural nation that we call Pasifika. My *Kainga* (home) within New Zealand has strengthened my understanding of my place in Aotearoa and how I have been searching for a place to call home, and finding a sense of belonging, when in actual fact I have been living on it this whole time. As Troy Kingi sings,

Where we come from we were made to be strong
Our legacy will carry on
And if a piece of home
Resonates in your soul
Your journey will take you
Where you belong.

Aotearoa, he iwi kaha tatou
He mana tuku iho mai ano
Whenua haumako
Wairua ora
Whaia te ara
Ki te mutunga
(A-Z Lyrics, n.d, para.3).



I stand today as a student of this Pasifika based degree and the knowledge of my understanding of the three years that I have dedicated my heart and soul into to provide you with this presentation. My *Toku haerenga* (my journey), throughout the last three years of my life has been devoted to re-interpreting the knowledge, values, beliefs, cultures and languages of our Pasifika people into Koloa'ia that has helped me develop into the emerging teacher that I am today. As I take you through my journey, I will be including the concepts that have been infused into this degree that have made me understand my place as a New Zealand born Pacific Island woman within education. Rather than using a concept or an idea from my own cultural heritage, such as the *Tivaevae*, I thought to use the concept of a pathway from one destination into another.

Being born and raised in New Zealand, I was fortunate enough to grow up with the abundance of a multi-cultural family, Chinese, Niuean, Tongan, Samoan, and European. You name it; I have relations to those cultures. But the one culture that I thought was closest to my Fonua was the Māori culture and language. This is where I found the concept of *Toku Haerenga i te waharoa ki te Marae*. This concept is a symbol of my journey through the three years of learning, and in my journey to becoming a professional teacher, I used the notion of *FatuLālānga* and *TalanoaLālānga* to put my prior knowledge and knowledge within the degree to understand not only who I was as a person but also, the teacher that I aspired to be.

The Waharoa Marae is the starting point to my journey in becoming a teacher. But little did I know that it was also the starting point to understanding my place within New Zealand. Ara ki te Marae consists of the journey between the start and the end in becoming *ilo* and *ako*, with the right application of *poto*. The Marae is the destination to where I wanted to be, however as I enter the Marae, I am opening up the new possibilities of what could happen after my journey through this degree and welcome me to a new outlook into the future. The process within this concept can also relate to the process of a Powhiri within the Maori culture. I liked the idea of starting as *Manuhiri* (guests) and how it relates to how I feel as a person of Pasifika descent, that has struggled to find her own identity within a multi-cultural environment, such as New Zealand, into becoming tangata whenua (people of the Marae) and now understanding my place in New Zealand and how I can further explore who I am as a person.



For me to use concepts such as *Tivaevae* and *'ie toga*, which are significant to the Cook Island and Samoan culture, would be to express unauthentic knowledge and would not come from the heart. I am not a person to speak from the heart because I get overwhelmed and emotional. However, today I feel confident enough to express *toku haerenga* – my journey through the lens of my New Zealand born mainstream education and my Tupu'anga that has created the essence of my cultural background.

To begin with, let me explain how I came to the doors of AUT University. After finding a job in a bi-lingual early childhood centre, I had to upgrade my qualification because it was not recognized by the Education Council of New Zealand. So my goal starting this degree was to gain a recognized qualification and then complete my teaching registration. With that in mind, I had my heart set on filling the pathway ahead of me with meaningful and educational information that could open my mind to the possibilities of early childhood education.

The Māori proverb *Naku te rourou, nau te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi* simply translates to “with your basket and my basket, the people will live” (Woodward, 2016). This Māori proverb depicts the basket of concepts that were introduced to us in the first stage of developing our knowledge within this degree. Poto and Ako mo e ilo created the foundation to my understanding of professional teaching practices and how teachers, significantly who were from the Pacific Island nations, could develop their principles of culture, language, values and beliefs into effective teaching practices and strategies to foster the holistic well-being of our Pasifika children.

The interwoven treasures within KoloaAotearoa and Fonua strengthened my knowledge, values and beliefs of Pasifika Education, within Aotearoa which spoke to me in a way that really attracted me to wanting to know more and wanting to develop my sense of identity and *akarito* (to treasure or nurture something). In this instance, the *akarito* of my education became important to knowing my sense of identity and belonging within an environment where I was pulled in too many directions to understand the idea of my own culture and language.

Becoming a teacher with this knowledge made me understand the importance of acknowledgement and respect. When children start in the centre, they can feel either excited or anxious about their first day of school. For me, I cried on the first day of

primary and high school. Yes, I am a big baby. The notion of *FatuLālanga* taught me, that I must be able to acknowledge who the child is and understand his/her back-story before progressing into his/her learning and development. Kung (2011) expresses the call of teaching is a provider for teachers to create opportunities by using their “*gifts and talents to serve others*” (p.10). Tagoilelagi-Leota, Kesi, Tagoilelagi, Penn, and Autagavaia (2011) also supports this by explaining that the spirituality within *Matālālāga*, the skills that are used to prepare authentic ‘ie toga and metaphorically teachers, “*proposes the spirituality as a living element to inspire teaching as a profession*” (p. 8). The gift of being able to apply my cultural knowledge within my teaching practices helped me better understand the way in which our Pasifika children grow, whether they are abundant in their culture and language or not. Being abundant in the *ilo*’ (knowledge) that I started with on this journey and transforming it into appropriate knowledge that was beneficial for my Koloa, helped me create more ideas about what I wanted to apply into my professional teaching philosophy.

The pathway in between the start of this journey and the end started to become more singular when my mum moved over to Atafu, Tokelau and left me in New Zealand by myself to study. Yes, it was great to have my own space, but I still missed the company and knowledge that my mum provided me within our *ngu’tuare* (home), which brings me to Year Two of this degree. One of my biggest inspirations in life and the main motivation to pursuing education came from my mum.

The reason why I became a teacher came from the hard work, leadership and humbleness that my mum instilled into me. To be where I am today would not have been possible if it was not for my mum. She has given me the strength to move forward and see that there are endless possibilities out there in the world; you just have to go and grab them. In this same year, we lost my namesake and mum’s mother, Teremoana. Losing my nana made me appreciate the trip I took to Rarotonga after she passed and how my spiritual well-being in Rarotonga held me. The trip also highlighted how important it was to me becoming a teacher and acknowledging the spirituality of a teacher in knowing who he/she are. According to Toso (2011) spirituality is the collective of mind, body and intellect in working together to generate a sense of ‘wholeness’.

The foundation from the first year was supported even more during the second year with the concepts of *poto* and *ako mo e ilo* becoming *poto'i* and *ako'i mo e ilo'i*. To me the significance of the 'i' added more value to being *poto*, wise and prudent, and *ako mo e ilo*. The lessons within this year taught me how important it was to learn and apply the value of cultural knowledge within the New Zealand education system. Palmer (1997) states that having the courage to teach is to keep one's heart open when the heart is asked to hold onto more than it is able to. This explains how important it is to open the heart of our young children and teach them to retain the knowledge that we share through our love and passion of early childhood education.

The Ministry of Education (1996) founded the early childhood education curriculum of Te Whāriki on the aspiration that children grow up to be confident and competent learners. This aspiration has helped me develop an understanding about the Ministry of Education's goal for young children's learning and development within New Zealand. My philosophy for teaching is to let children use exploration and foster them into confident human beings that are able to comprehend the world as they experience it, yes my philosophy has changed. But like my experience, my knowledge has continued to flow and enhance as I have come into new situations.

According to Kingstone (2003), each person sews their own Tivaevae of their life and metaphorically signifies the importance of experiences and relationships that we encounter to weave our own Tivaevae. Within our Pasifika centres, we develop and implement learning opportunities for our tamariki to explore and comprehend their own concepts within each learning experience. By providing our tamariki with a safe and encouraging environment, I am able to practice my teaching philosophy competently and know that I have been able to weave the notions of *ako'i mo e ilo'i* and *poto'i* into the centre environment, foster their knowledge of *tupu'anga* and support them in understanding their place within New Zealand.

Now, coming to my favourite year by far, 2016. Year three, *Tau e toru*, *Tausaga tolu*. This was by far the best year of my journey, without trouble. For 2016, I was introduced to the concepts of 'Etau Ngaahi Lea, Fakapoto^{poto}, Fakaako Mo E Faka'ilo, Tatala, Toutai and Koloa'iaAotearoa, which are the main papers of this presentation. These six papers gave me life and challenged me to the brink. Although this year has been the best year academically, on a personal level it has been one of



the most depressing. Earlier this year unfortunately I injured my back and all my confidence and competency to be what I wanted to be all spiralled into a black hole and made me feel like I could not be a teacher anymore.

The first semester of this year put me in a place where I never thought I would get to, even with the passing of my dad; I never got into a position where I could not fight my way out. Going from being independent to being so scared of being home alone, I entered a stage of defeat. This stage made me question my last year in becoming the teacher I wanted to be. The turning point that made me realise why I was here was when I travelled to Samoa with my grandparents and met my mum. That is when I became comfortable within my own skin and acknowledge that my last year could turn into a positive and be worth all the hard work that I have put in so far.

Tatala and Fakapotopoto remind me of my dad and how much he influenced me throughout the 17 years of life that I was gifted. He was the epitome of a leader, just like my mum. Because of his big stature, there was the initial look of “ohhhh he's scary looking or damn he can knock me out” but my dad was the gentlest giant that God gifted me. He was able to provide for others before himself and he was always dedicated to his job of being a team leader. He defied odds when he set his goal of becoming a ramp manager for Menzies Aviation. His leadership, dedication and drive to becoming an effective leader who defied the odds that were put against him, made me want to become a teacher that was passionate about her tamariki and not the perception that Pasifika people were often thought about, such as being lazy, living off the dole and being obese.

'Etau Ngaahi Lea and Toutai pushed my mind to thinking about strategies in implementing cultural knowledge, values, beliefs and languages because of the barriers that Pasifika people are dealing within all aspects of cultural identity. Tu'itahi (2010) provided two examples for the existence of culture and language within education: producing a universal language for all to understand, which promotes the collective methods within our Pasifika people and communities that will project and increase awareness of our language. Inclusion of Pasifika concepts within education would not only attract our Pasifika people but also, promote the Pasifika culture and language on a world scale.

This year has made me realise that this degree was not only about upgrading my qualification, but it was about the start of my journey into finding who I was on a spiritual level. Acknowledging that Aotearoa has been my Hau Kainga this whole time I have been searching for my sense of belonging. My cultural background does not define me. But provides me with connections to the world and how I can see it through the lens that I have developed over the lifetime that I have experienced. I am a firm believer of things happening for a reason, so coming into this degree, establishing the relationships I have with my class, lecturers and concepts of each paper, have all happened for a reason.

This brings me to the presentation and the paper I learnt about the most over the past three years, Koloa'iaAotearoa. When we started, KoloaAotearoa made no sense to me. Why were we learning about indigenous people and migration in our first year? Where were the learning opportunities for our tamariki? Why were we making connections to the Māori culture and the Treaty of Waitangi?

Going from KoloaAotearoa to Koloa'iaAotearoa I learnt about the importance of acknowledging tangata whenua and their rights as the indigenous people of this culture, language and land before understanding myself. This is where I found the three principles of the Treaty of Waitangi became very important to acknowledge and practice within my teaching practices. The three principles of participation, protection and partnerships provided not only a perspective of understanding the meaning of the Treaty of Waitangi, but the principles that our Pasifika people have been trying to instill within us. Also to help protect our culture and languages from extinction, establishing partnerships between our Pasifika people and the tangata whenua of Aotearoa, being our home away from home, and participating in today's society to make our Pasifika cultures and languages be heard.

This is where I established the meaning of this degree to me. My mum said to me *in order for you to be a teacher, you must be able to understand who you are first* (A. Maoate, personal communication, October 5, 2016). This is where the inspiration of Toku haerenga i te Waharoa ki te Marae came about and helped me understand that this journey I started, had started with a goal. Which was to gain a recognised qualification, but now, the pathway to the Marae has diminished the goal of getting a

qualification and transformed into becoming a teacher abundant with love for our tamariki and for our Pasifika cultural knowledge, values, beliefs and languages.

These concepts made me think about the change I wanted to make as a teacher and how I could possibly make those changes through my journey to becoming a teacher within New Zealand and beyond.

To conclude I would like to express that my experience in this degree has been an eye opening experience that I believe I was destined to pursue. I have not only learnt about myself, but my people, our Pasifika people. Plus the knowledge that is still out there, yet to be discovered, the strategies that need to be put in place to effect a stronger change and what kind of teacher I was destined to be to make sure our tamariki are accepted and loved for their differences that make them unique.



References

- A-Z Lyrics. (n.d). *Aotearoa*. Retrieved from <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/stanwalker/aotearoa.html>
- Kingstone, T. (2003). *Kia Orana! Talofa lava! Kam Na Mauri!* In P. Fairbairn- Dunlop & G. Makisi (Eds.), *Making our place: Growing up Pī in New Zealand* (pp. 47-64). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Kung, N. (2011). *The nature and experience of a teacher's calling: A case study of New Zealand Early Childhood Teachers/Teacher Education*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Palmer, P. (1997). The heart of a teacher: Identity and integrity in teaching. *Change Magazine*, 29(6), 14-21. Retrieved from <http://www.mccli.dist.maricopa.edu/events/afc99/articles/heartof.html>
- Tagoilelagi-Leota, F., Kesi, F., & Penn, S. (2011, July 3). *Matālālāga a le faiaoga Aoga Amata*. In L. Manu'atu, M. Kepa, & T. Utumapu-McBride (Eds.), *Critiquing Paisifika Education Conference @ the University*, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Toso, M. (2011). Spirituality as a philosophy of practice with implications for very young children: A Samoan perspective. *New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education*, 13(1), 34-38.
- Tu'itahi, S. (2010). Kafataha: Strategies to preserve Pacific languages. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Scholarship*, 6(2), 134-141.
- Woodward Maori. (2016). Proverbs. Retrieved from <http://www.maori.cl/Proverbs.html>



CHAPTER 5

Abstract

This presentation is dedicated to my late mum Maclean Lafu-Pouesi who passed away on 10 April 2015. What I have created is my Niue interpretation of the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching's) conceptual framework. As a Niue person, I believe this presentation allowed me to share, extend and continue to provide vital ways for our Niue peoples' language and culture to be centre of our lives here in New Zealand and aboard.

The way that I have created these concepts was through designing the *Fonu* (Niue turtle) together with my sister who was also a part of this cohort degree. The Fonu connects our migration story to New Zealand, which is also, where my source of knowledge comes from in this presentation.

This presentation encompasses love, Aotearoa, Niue, tangata whenua, The Treaty of Waitangi, and our children of today, tomorrow and the future passion, goals and life time achievements within their language and culture. The collectively is what will keep our culture and language alive. This presentation is only the beginning for our Niue voices to be cemented in our Body, Minds and Spirits - Fakaaue Lahi.

Monu Monu Monu

E Niue Fekai

E Niue Nukututaha

Ke hake ke tu ki luga

Ke hifo ke pu i lalo fonua

Ko mamatua tau fanau

Niue tu mai

Niue tu mai

Fakalofa lahi atu ke motulu oti

Koe higoa haaku ko Kendra Lafu

Niue Island on this day is more to me than just my mother's, mother and father's birth place, it is not just a place in the Pacific that I emptily connect to because everyone

else has somewhere to call home, or a Pacific Island lost in translation, migration or colonisation (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). No at this point in time and each day forward in my education travels, Niue Island is now more than any money, gold or material item I may be offered or can buy. This is my life, my identity, my culture, heritage, past, present and future, please take heed while I let you in on why this will now be my life when I graduate and begin learning and guiding young Niue children in early childhood education. This is the point right that we do not just sit idle anymore but we make sure we take what we have learnt and change even just a little bit of who we are and others alike.

What is the Pasifika Early Childhood Education degree conceptual framework?

I believe the creators of this degree hoped we would come to this point in time knowing exactly what this conceptual framework was to me as a Niue person, ready to share, extend and continue within the Niue peoples both here and aboard. What I would like to make known today is that each paper that I have sat, studied, written about and learnt, and become aware of must go hand in hand with each other; you cannot have Toutai without Fakapotopoto, Fakapotopoto without Tataala and so forth. This conceptual framework is based on the Tongan way of knowing but through this three-year degree together with Karleen, we have been able to see this framework from a Niue perspective, with Niue concepts and understanding, although with more growth to be continued and explored after we graduate.

The essence of this conceptual framework is about weaving - Lalānga

FatuLālānga –this concept has been the foundation for each paper we have taken. The concept from a Niue perspective is Atefua Lalaga (Sperlich, 1997). Weaving from the heart, drawn from the spirit (God, our spirit, others spirit) learning about collective living, forming relationships through talanoa and awareness of the va (Anae, 2010). Most importantly becoming one body with our cultural values and beliefs through action. Specific weaving for specific countries is how we shall take upon this concept. So today I will be basing this presentation on Niue culture and language.

Niue Island – I use to say I bleed Niue, I would die for Niue, I believed my actions (not speaking the language, not fully knowing the culture, pretending to be interested in

Niue activities and events) was enough. To be honest I believed only knowing was enough I was Foafoaaga he lotomatala (New Zealand Government, 2012). I had to extend Fefela - my knowledge through my ako (learning), and arrive to Kite maama, being enlightened to see, learn, know, understand for the goal of Niue culture and language maintenance these are concepts that Karleen and myself have come up with, that are from the Tongan Framework.

This piece of writing was from first year; my simple knowledge of Niue, and my migration story, my fonua, my Niue Fekai had never crossed my spirit, tongue or mind. I then became aware that I needed to connect to a symbol and the Fonu was the connection relating to Toutai – in Niue we have a taufanga ika also known as a tufuga an expert in a chosen talent, in this case fishermen. Our fishermen fish alone in their vaka but are in the ocean as a group, this is significant because throughout this degree I have been fighting with my understanding, values and beliefs of how individualistic Niue people are. Even through this example of my Year Two writing from Poto'i, confining our Niue values and beliefs to try and fit what I thought needed to be fitted when in actuality we needed to go back and Tūtalaga (Tatala) our culture and language within the Fonua and Magafaoa, not being fully enlightened iloina till Year Three. However, this shows growth and evidence of becoming aware of the Koloa with our Niue families, communities, centres, and Niue Island. This is due to the lack of what is out there nowadays, as Niue people are too busy trying to find solutions (Muller, 2015). When from this degree a major turning point in understanding who I was and what this conceptual framework means to me was looking within the Atefua (heart) of my family home, relatives' homes and finding the Koloa within each room that could bring about our Mahani Fakamotu and Vagahau Niue.

These four concepts are at the heartbeat of how we as Niue people understand the conceptual framework. The lalaga (weaving) of these four are essentially the identity of a Niue person, the lacking is within grasping the whole heartedly meaning of Fonua, Magafaoa, Mahani Fakamotu and Vagahau Niue in our lives, living here in New Zealand. The collectively, the transformation of our heart, body, mind and soul begins within, I believe trying to save a culture or language is not the answer but finding the strength, knowledge, ideas, and koloa within oneself firstly is the way in which we as Niue peoples will bring about this conceptual framework.



What we can understand through this design of our Fonu is that the head is responsible for being Kite Maama, Fefela and even Tufuga. Understanding the environment of New Zealand is Tūfuga, and the relationships that will revive our Niue people's culture and language will be by forming a strong bond with the Indigenous people of New Zealand, tangata whenua. There mana (strength) to hold fast to their identity for the generations to come and whom are here in the present, a goal we as Niue must have for our children.

According to the Treaty's bicultural principles (Orange, 1987) we need to understand that we fit in under Tau iwi. Although we often confuse our status with being lumped together with funding allocations – which is a breach of the treaty, it all comes down to our relationship with tangata whenua. As the founding document, we have an obligation to navigate the space of biculturalism by rightfully recognising Māori/tangata whenua special status, much like we would expect for visitors to do when we are back in Niue.

We need to understand that as proud as we are as Niue people we still have Niue to return to. Māori don't – This is it – And if we fail to embrace this fact we will always be at each other's throats. And for us working with 'Tau iwi' or the state their treatment of the indigenous people should be a point of reference (Kēpa, 2008) Māori development will mean development for Pasifika/Niue – Nothing we have to date has come about through the states recognition of difference – It is all off the back of what Māori have fought for. If we fail to realise that if they are willing to treat the indigenous people of this country so poorly what makes us think we will receive anything different if not worse?

In this section I will talk directly from my heart, I have decided not to write down this but to speak fresh from each of these concepts in order to grasp my true understanding and knowledge of how I see this interweaved and together as the curriculum framework from a Niue perspective (Chapman & Eretama, 2008). Language – according to the Ministry of Education (2000, 2007) students will benefit from learning another language, and this is inclusive of students learning a Pacific language as a second language.



Culture - as migrants from the Pacific Islands have settled in New Zealand, one aspect for Fakapotopoto I will carry on is my emerging philosophy, which is articulated by Puloka (2013) as our culture being our birthing womb out of which we are born into communities. Communities that must cater to Niue children with more than just knowing their village name, their last name, their culture and one song but more and this conceptual framework of the Fonu is the catalyst that Karleen and I can take forth.

My story

This is about a resource I made in Year One connected to my travels in the conceptual framework of the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) degree.

At this stage I would like to rein act my first time entering into my interview with Dr Linitā Manu'atu and the promises I made before her. The next scene is of me in my first class of KoloaAotearoa, going home and telling my family of this knowledgeable woman that will influence my way throughout this degree. To connect all this enlightenment and depth of my understandings I have used a resource of a story that I made with no Atefua (heart) in Year One but more or so just to pass. This story represents now for me a turning point in the way this degree has helped me grow into a person that knows but also extends and hopefully passes on. There is a long way for me to go as an individual and this is only the start, this is only the catalyst to the greater things ahead for the Niue community and me. This story is about the creation story of Niue Island the significance of this story is that we as Niue people would rather our children watch the new modern movies that do not connect them to their fonua, or identity or even heritage. We as Niue must come together and invent groups to maintain our language and culture but action our words by going back to how our grandparents and tupuna paved the way for us to be here today.

The connection to the Fonu is that it will always return regardless of how far or how close the fonu's fonua is, its life, its breeding place, and it will return there just as Niue people must return to their roots. We do not have much time to accomplish these goals but we do have the time we have today. This degree has been the best experience in my life. Allowing the awakening in my soul to reach deep within has had its troubles and sometimes tears of both heartache and joy, but the overwhelming compliment to this degree that I would like to thank is those who have paved the way

and have allowed our class of 2013 to be a part of this cohort. I have been changed, and now feel that I do bleed for Niue and our children in the future. The only difference now my bleeding for Niue will be accomplished through my actions that I show beyond this degree. Fakaaue Lahi.



References

- Anae, M. (2010). Research for better Pacific schooling in New Zealand: Teu le va – A Samoan perspective. *Mai Review*, (1), 1-24.
- Chapman, T. M., & Eretama, M. (2008). *Taaoga Niue: Opening ceremony arrival of the Premier of Niue and the Prime Minister of New Zealand 2004*. Alofi, Niue Island.
- Kēpa, T. M. A. (2008). Languages and cultures: Learning and teaching betwixt worlds. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Scholarship*, 4(1), 57-66.
- Ministry of Education. (2000). *Guidelines for Niuean language programmes*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *Vagahau Niue in the New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Muller, M. (2015). Niuean trust turns to youth to keep threatened culture alive. *New Zealand Pacific Headlines: Pacific scoop*. Retrieved September 28, 2015, from <http://pacific.scoop.co.nz/2015/05/25350/>.
- New Zealand Government. (2012). *Koe Fakatupuolamoui he tau Magagaoa Niue. A Niuean Conceptual Framework for addressing family violence*. Ministry of Social Development. Retrieved September 08, 2015, from www.ppdvp.org.nz/wp-content/media/2014/04/pacific-framework-niuean-fa-lr.pdf.
- Orange, C. (1987). *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Wellington, New Zealand: Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press.
- Puloka, T. M. (2013). A double-hulled Kalia Katea Māhanga: 'Ofa, in research and education. In M. Kēpa, L. Manu'atu & T. Utumapu-McBride (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Critiquing Pasifika Education Conference @ University* (pp.76-92). Auckland, New Zealand: AUT University.

Sperlich, W. (1997). *Tohi Vagahau Niue: Niue dictionary*. Honolulu, HI: Government of Niue and University of Hawai'i Press.

Statistics New Zealand. (2015). *New Zealand 2013 Census Ethnic group profiles: Niuean group living*. Wellington, Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved September 21, 2015, from www.stats.govt.nz/census/2013-census.aspx.

Tāoga Niue. (2008). Tāoga Niue. In M. T. Chapman & M. Enetama (Eds.), *Tāoga Niue*. Alofi, Niue: Department of Niue Cultural Heritage, in association with the New Zealand Agency for International Development.



CHAPTER 6

Abstract

This presentation was in recognition of my late Mother who passed away in April 2015. My whole purpose of sharing my journey and knowledge was to demonstrate the knowledges I have been able to encompass over the last three years. My sister and I designed a Niue Curriculum using the Degree's Pasifika Curriculum in shape of a Turtle, the reason why is because our Great Greatgrandpa brought my Family to New Zealand from Niue through his wrestling of the Turtle, which represents our Migration story. Through my time in the degree, I learnt of my ancestors in Niue, Tuapa and their fight to keep peace amongst all Niue people. This is where I have incorporated my Villages' values and beliefs but also the fight Niue people have today when trying to keep our language and culture alive. This presentation I hope can benefit Niue people who are also walking the path of survival here in New Zealand, Niue and aboard. Fakaau Lahi.

Introduction

Fale pipi E

He mafola

Ko fe a koe

Ne haiai e Patuiki

Falepipi E

He mafola

Ko fe a koe

Tau fuata tau afine

Pipi mau e mafola

Moe tau tupuna

He tau matua

Monu monu monu tu Tagaloa kitu kitu ea

Fakaalofa lahi atu kia mautolu oti,

Ko hai he lologo haaku?



What is this song you sit there and ask? Am I just singing this song for the sake of showing you that I have learnt something new from what I have learnt in Year One and Two? How does this embody my spirit and what connection does this song have to the degree's conceptual framework? This is the calling that draws my heart, spirit and body which encompasses this degree. How you may ask? This is a fight to do with my village of Tuapa and Mafiti, and a sacred *tāoga* called the *sika*. Unfortunately, my family no longer has this piece of *tāoga* but in ancient times, the *sika* believed to bring fortune to the whole island, families and Niue Island, but was stolen out of jealousy and from there has believed to have brought bad fortune for our Niue Island and its people (The Coconet TV, n.d.). This connection to the song has now constructed the way I look, act, and put into action the conceptual framework of this degree.

Migration Story

As migrants and indigenous peoples, we continue to fight a battle in a land that is home to a vast diversity of people. This song reminds me of the struggle that our people have fought through migration and are still fighting to find our position in this land, that we consider our home away from home (Walsh, & Trilin, 1973). To understand where I am now and the way I look at this conceptual framework, Kendra (my sister) and I decided from the beginning as much as this is an individual journey, we as Niue descendants must work together for the benefit of our Niue children and peoples.

This *Fonu* (turtle) is our interpretation of the conceptual framework, which we have designed together. However, I will discuss it differently as we both believe our experiences and perspectives are seen through different lenses. I will now explain how I came to be at one with the conceptual framework and the papers, concepts, values and beliefs and the way in which I interweave these into my practice.

Turtles Head Navigation

The head represents the Navigation and migration of the seas and lands - As migrants of this land our elders, Mamatuas and grandparents' aspirations were to establish better lifestyles and most importantly gain greater job opportunities here in Aotearoa New Zealand (Macpherson, 2004). The conceptual framework enhances this because



we will be successful in these aspects of our lives when we are grounded in our language and culture; this personally is about being Fakapotopoto or in Niue Kite Maama. *Poto* can be seen as being clever, and understanding what to do and being able to do it well. I achieved this through first seeking what I found I was clever or skilful at. Achieving this in Year One extended onto *Poto'i* this concept has allowed me to apply my skills according to the context. An example of this is being equipped with relevant tools to enhance and support the development of Pasifika children's learning through this I have developed my expertise and skills. Now in Year Three I am continuing to be enriched with wisdom, which displays the concept of *Fakapotopoto* through recognition of understanding that I have knowledge and skills but also listening to others and adding richness to my wisdom. All three concepts grow my knowledge and skills as an emerging teacher, and influence my understanding of bringing together relationships. Through our navigation of the waters we have landed here in Aotearoa, our turtle's head navigated the sea and for our Niue peoples Aotearoa is now what we call home. The head represents generations – this *Fonu* can be applied to an individual Niue person, or a family, village or community. The head of the fonu is not important it is more the action and navigation that the *fonu* applies to their travels so being Kite Maama is about knowing, learning, growing from learning and *Fefela* is about the application and how we learn from these experiences to benefit our communities and families.

Body/Shell – The Conceptual Framework

Atefua Lalanga, (Sperlich, 1997) *FatuLālanga* in the conceptual framework for me is the main source of considering the Mind, Body, and Soul. This connects each part of the body in the turtle in the same way in which Niue people must see ourselves if our language and culture are to survive. I believe this is the core of this degree from my own experience. Culture and language is a huge talking point for many cultures and in some ways the same for Niue people but what this conceptual framework has brought about is the place of one's heart, and the way in which they respect and care for their mind, body and soul but also our Niue children.

Essentially our interpretation of the body for myself connects and weaves together the six papers of the degree. My *fonua*, grounds me as a migrant it reminds me that although my family have adopted Aotearoa as their new home, this land is not ours,



our spirit and essence of our identity, belonging, culture and language are connected to our *fonua* (land), our homelands (Kēpa, 2004). Our *fonua* is essentially, where we come from our place of birth, place of origin and burial. The human life cycle is a fine example of the way in which we as people connect to our land, just as we come from the land our bodies return to our *fonua* once we have passed on. *Fonua* can be seen as both land and people, just like mother and child, *fanau*, *Kaina* and *Magafaoa*, the collective is at the heart of all forms of relationships which can be seen through the concept of *Tutalaga*.

Magafaoa – Tatala – Tutalaga connects to *Mahani Fakamotu* (Culture) and *Vagahau Niue* (Language) through peeling back western knowledge in order to unmask our Niue knowledge. *Tatala* is about unpacking the many layers that dilute and minimise our culture and language here in Aotearoa, it highlights the significance and connection this has to the *Magafaoa*, and maintenance of *Mahani Fakamotu* and *Vagahau Niue*.

Arms/Legs – New Zealand and the Treaty of Waitangi

Koloa of what we as Niue offer to New Zealand and what New Zealand offer to us

The arms and legs support the body of the *Fonu*, ensuring that as it travels through the water, and it is navigated in the right direction. The arms and legs of the *fonu* also reflect the *tāoga* in which we as Niue migrants offer to Aotearoa. As migrants our key focus is to reclaim and maintain our culture and language in a land that is essentially not ours. Establishing strong relationships first with tangata whenua waters which is grounded on our principles, and core values and beliefs is paramount as it creates new relationships and ways to come to an understanding of working collectively as one. This is where the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles interweave with this conceptual framework. The Treaty of Waitangi from my understanding now is about the relationship we create, maintain and respect with the Indigenous of this land, and once again for the survival of our Niue culture and language. This also creates opportunities to share *taoga*, which can be beneficial to the survival of *Mahani Fakamotu* and *vagahau Niue* in Aotearoa. The sharing of knowledge symbolises the passing and sharing of knowledge through the *fonu* (Kēpa, 2008).

This takes special consideration from Niue People and represents a Toutai (expert, head fisher) the fishermen and the oneness. The Toutai must have with his surroundings, environment and cosmos (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2013) this is significant as it reflects and highlights the way in which toutai weaves and connects to each paper Tūtalaga (*Tatala*), Tāoga (*Koloa*), Elogia (*Koloa'ia*), Fefela (*Ako'i mo e ilo'i*), Tufuga (*Toutai*), and Kite Maama (*Fakapotopoto*). Toutai can be used to derive the abundance of knowledge, fishing and collecting the best catch from each paper to reflect the richness of tāoga in which we have brought to Aotearoa.

How this relates to Early Childhood Education

Culture and language – What this degree has highlighted is the need for our Niue people to understand the richness in our culture and language (Ministry of Education, 2007). We adjust our culture with the understanding of the benefit for our families, however if we are able to incorporate our language and culture into our homes first and foremost then the continuation of our culture and language may become more natural (Amituanai-Toloo, 2010). This is where each of the concepts can be weaved into Niue people's lives.

The design of the *Fonu* as a whole is a reflection of *koloa'ia* each part is just as important as the other, and is essential to the survival of the *Fonu* and conceptual framework. It highlights the three years and has allowed me to identify my place within this framework. Before I came to study the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (ECT) I let my lack of language and cultural awareness, determine my identity and position in Aotearoa. My *Agaaga* (Spirit) and *Atefua* (heart) had no sense of belonging to my *fonua*, people and family. I saw English as my priority and success in regards to education. As I have continued throughout this degree, the conceptual framework has changed my thinking and the way in which I view *Mahani Fakamotu* (Culture) and *Vagahau Niue* (Language). I have collected *koloa*, and have become *Kite Maama* (*Fakapotopoto*) clever and wise in knowing how to apply my knowledge. This has equipped me with understanding my connection to my *fonua*, and has allowed me to understand the importance of maintaining *vagahau Niue* and culture in Aotearoa (Kingi, 2003).

At the heart of my work

When I look at this *Fonu* I can immediately connect to the weaving of Niue people's culture and language, families and generations and even the place we find ourselves now here in New Zealand. I still have a lot of growing to do in this framework, and because Niue is not my first language, beginning with this will be the start of a plan I would like to put in place until I have achieved my goals of sharing this special tāoga with as many Niue children as I can. The spirit of my work is always going to be ongoing; this degree has opened up without shame our connection to God and the ways in which we base our centres on for our children's benefits and lifetime goals and adventures. The weaving of this conceptual framework has been the most interesting but also hardest learning I have experienced in my life. In the beginning, I sang a song of sorrow for a treasure that only people from Tuapa connect to however this for me is the underpinning of why our culture and language may be rapidly dying. A turtle has this ability to return each time to the same place it gave birth. Which for me symbolises the answer for our Niue people and myself, we must return to our ancestors' ways, ways of conversing, ways of learning and knowing, ways of navigating certain situations and ways of finding the abundance within what we have here and now and not tomorrow or in the future. I believe this *Fonu* can become the answer for our Niue people; my challenge is making sure this happens in the future to come.

Closing Song

O oi oi e

Mahaku tau tupuna

Fakahalehele

Ne mokomoko au

Ti pihea he manamanatu

Kia lautolu

Koe talia mai

Fakamoui he tau kupu

Mai he atua

Atua Niue mo fekai

Atua Niue mo Nukututaha

This is a song I would like to leave with my ancestors, to let them know that I thank them for the knowledge and tāoga they have gifted to me. This song is in remembrance of Niue Island and the love we as Niue people once had but is now being forgotten. But I would like to put this challenge forward as I begin my journey into Early Childhood Education everywhere I go this *Fonu* will go to even if it is to make aware the beauty of Niue Island and people. Fakaau Lahi.

References

- Amituanai-Tolosa, M. (2010). To each a language: Addressing the challenges of language and cultural loss for Samoans. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 6(2), 79-85.
- Kēpa, M. (2004). Fonua: Lands, languages, teaching and learning. *Education*.
- Kēpa, M. (2008). Languages and cultures: Learning and teaching betwixt worlds. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Scholarship*, 4(1), 57-66.
- Kingi, P. (2003). Mai he fonua (from the placenta): Socialisation of me/we. In P. Fairbairn- Dunlop & G. Makisi (Eds.), *Making our place: Growing up PI in New Zealand* (pp.197-204). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Macpherson, C. (2004). From Pacific Islanders to Pacific people and beyond. In P. Spoonley, C. Macpherson & D. Pearson (Eds.), *Tangata tangata: The changing ethnic contours of New Zealand* (pp-135-155). Victoria, Australia: Dunmore Press.
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *Vagahau Niue in the New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Sperlich, W. (1997). Tohi Vagahau Niue: Niue dictionary. *Government of Niue and University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu*.
- Tagoilelagi-Leota, S. F. F. (2013). Tautai: A research design. In S. F. Tagoilelagi-Leota & T. Utumapu-McBride (Eds.), *O pelega o fanau: Treasuring children* (pp. 236-241). Auckland, New Zealand: AUT University.

The Coconet TV. (n.d.). *The Poly Songbook*. Retrieved September 28, 2015,
from <http://www.thecoconet.tv/poly-songbook/uhumotu-ne-hai-ai-e-patuiki/>

Walsh, A. C., & Trilin, A. D. (1973). Niuean migration: Niuean, socio-economic background, characteristics of migrants and settlement in Auckland. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 47-85. Retrieved September 20, 2015,
from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/stable/10.2307/20704901>.



CHAPTER 7

Abstract

This paper enlightens my growth in becoming a Pasifika teacher. It highlights the values of our languages and cultures in which we as migrants can enrich our early childhood education systems in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It strengthens my stance in my cultural values and beliefs and inspires me to seek more deeply and understand knowledges of our new land and tangata whenua and share ideas of our fellow Pasifika peoples. Koloa'ia opens up and extends cultural wealth so that all is enriched and will benefit. It also draws on the knowledge of our lived experiences that can be vital to being a competent teacher and learner.

Fofola e Koloa - A Symposium of Koloa'ia Aotearoa

Tena kotou

Ko Kiribati/ Tamoa te whenua

Ko Tabewa te motu

Ko Mote, Eri te whanau

Ko te moana nui a kiwa moana

Ko Crescenda tōku ingoa

Tēnā koutou Tēnā koutou Tēnā koutou katoa.

Kam na mauri, Talofa lava and Bula Vinaka!

Today, I stand before you to talanoa the Tongan concept of koloa'ia (wealth and richness in abundance) of Aotearoa New Zealand, gathered throughout the three years of study.

The *mihi* presented, introduces myself as an I-Kiribati and Samoan heritage, my name that signifies my kainga that connects me with my vanua. With respect to tangata whenua and their cultural values, my mihi also acknowledges how grateful I am to be a citizen of this country and how we (Pasifika, Pakeha, Māori) can stand together to enrich the education systems with our knowledges and approaches. Although I am I-



Kiribati/Samoan by ethnicity, I will take my stance from a Fijian perspective because I was born and raised in Fiji and are familiar with culture and use of their language.

I was raised in a small I-Kiribati village in Naboro, 21 kilometres away from Suva (capital of Fiji). My father's utu (family) came from Kiribati Island from the atolls of Arorae, Noouti and of Banaba (also known as Ocean Island). My mother's kainga is from Samoa, in Savaii. They both migrated for different purposes. My grandfather with the rest of the Banaban people was more or less shafted off to Rabi Island (Fiji) so that the island can be free to mine phosphate for Australia and New Zealand (Shennan & Tekenimatang, 2005). Memories of my grandfather's stories of his journey and struggles to accommodate and acclimatize to their new environment brought so many tears and laughter as well. Although English was the main language spoken at home, I-Kiribati culture was dominant because we were living amongst our people who always spoke the language, practice their *batare* (dance) and sang songs that reflects their homeland and way of life.

Christianity through the Catholic faith was and still is centred to my family living today. The Tongan concept of Tupu'anga (histories and genealogies) have brought a wider view of Pasifika and Māori migration stories as a means to explore histories of Pasifika early childhood education. As a teacher, it is important to know and compare diverse services and organisations through their philosophy, history and so forth. Like Tantos-Rangi (2015) says, 'there is no knowledge like inside knowledge' (p. 78). I find this to be a valuable aspect in this professional field because when it comes to exploring and incorporating learning and cultural understandings I need to be familiar about heritage stories of a place and the way in which people of diverse culture conduct their livelihood.

Cultural mana (protocols) and being familiar with these heritage and ancestry knowledge would mean knowing how to relate with people accordingly and ensuring no harm is done to the *va* (social space) (Tuagalu, 2008) from a Samoan perspective or *vaa* (Helu-Thaman, 2003) from a Tongan perspective, also known as *wa* in Māori. I believe it is stories like these that signifies our existence, our identity of who we are as an individual. Our beliefs make up the truth of a culture, which may differ from other cultures' beliefs. The Ministry of Education (1996) stresses the importance of "all children should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and acquire an

understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The curriculum reflects this partnership in both text and structure" (p.9). As a migrant, I believe it is my responsibility to know Tikanga Māori, history of places and people and their language, which is portrayed in their songs and dances, artefacts, symbols, myths and legendary stories.

Decades ago, Manukau, was also known as Woodside. It changed in 1908 to *Wiri* (The name is believed to come from the first name of *Wirihana Takaanini*, a son of the 19th century Ngati Tamaoho chief, Ihaka Takaanini). There are several versions to how and when the name derived from. Some say it came from the crew of the Tainui canoe as they rowed into the harbour when they heard the cries of birds that they thought sounded like human beings crying. Only to find out that it was 'only birds' (*he manu kau noa iho*), hence the name 'Manu-kau' came about. However, Leslie and Kellie (1949) the Tainui iwi suggest the name is because of the rough breakers at the harbour entrance and thus the name 'Te Maanuka o Hotu-nui', maanuka or 'maanukanuka', meaning anxiety or anxious mind (p. 57) (as cited by Māori elders today who still stand firm on the name *Manuka/Maanuka* meaning an implanted post. It is in the Tainui tradition to lay claim of the waters by laying a post as such).

Changes such as land development, names of places, work industry and lifestyles of people continue to evolve, grow, reconstruct, and develop. So too have education! The educational arena today has grown and will continue to search for broader perspectives, that will move the complex learning of our children. Diversity in ethnicities means diverse culture, religion, language, and way of life.

The concept of Kōloa Aotearoa (Year One paper) is knowing *tangata whenua* (Indigenous Māori) in relationship with the Treaty of Waitangi (a founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand). The three articles of the treaty are often discussed in relation to the three principles of partnership, protection and participation. One of the most significant challenges is making these principles become a reality that can be visualized in the everyday practice. It also contextualises *Tiriti o Waitangi* (Māori version) to deepen an understanding of Māori whenua, tangata, relationships, beliefs and way of life with the land, sea and sky (Orange, 1992).

Fakakolua in this series of papers, deepens our thinking to understand and bring out the rich cultural values that we can add to enrich learning and teaching. Living in abundance of kolua implies the wealth of peoples' knowledges from different cultural background, languages, values and beliefs.

Ken Robinson's (2013) theory also points out three principles that is crucial for human beings to flourish and discuss possibilities for a cultural education that will nurture the young generation today. There are three principles. The first principle; Human beings are naturally different and diverse. Children who are born by the same parent, raised with same family values, live in the same house within the community and yet very different from each other. They have a different name that they respond to, their learning and developing stages differs, and so does their behaviour.

The second principle is curiosity. Lighting up the spark in children's curiosity will not only empower them to learn but develop a sense of independence. They become natural learners. 'Curiosity is the engine of achievement' and for them to be great achievers reflects on the way teachers teach. 'Teachers are the life blood of the success for schools' Teaching is a creative profession to mentor, stimulate, provoke, and engage. Learning is the whole point of education. The role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning, to support and become a diagnostic teacher instead of a being a dominant in the process of teaching. Thirdly is awaken the powers of creativity, and informative.

The above ideas mention suggests a need for education sectors, government sectors and the community to bring forth their ideas to enrich our education. By using the Treaty as a metaphor to make a stance for Pasifika peoples to make a contribution to enrich the treaty with our values. In order for education to meet the needs of diverse learners, I believe it is time we start to explore and discuss amongst ourselves as students, teachers and work colleagues to address issues that can contribute valuable perspectives.

Principles of Tatala - From a Fijian perspective is Dikeva

From a Tongan perspective *Tatala* (critical dialogue) is an approach that brings out the concept of Pasifika values that is an important component of becoming a Pasifika



leader. Governance and management is about leadership. It is about one who is leading a team and in early childhood education, teamwork is one of the key values that teachers/ educators, have to embrace. It can be challenging to step up into this role, which demands reciprocity, responsive teaching, and support of work colleagues and professional.

I take on a Fijian stance of *dikeva* looks as a whole aspect of leadership ways in which they do things and how useful it is. As a teacher I look into what knowledges is needed to build and support the way we teach in response to children's needs. Are we able to build their confidence and capabilities? The few points I have gathered is:

- Relationships within pedagogical leadership that can maintain a balance support
- Importance of role modelling the 'work', as in ethics, professional practice
- Coaching and being a mentor that implements good communication skills.

Pasifika values

The revelation of the experiences and personal knowledges that we have the life experiences of the way we live until today that we impart to the children. For example, what we learn here in the University, does not prepare us when we go out on practicum. We learn as we experience and develop it ourselves. The knowledge and skills that we observed and face out there whether good or bad, it means we learn from our mistakes to make progress. Nabobo–Baba (2006) states I- *tauvei* (people of the land) as a Fijian concept of knowledges and skills that defines the responsibility of the *vanua* (land), resources and all that exist within it. Within the centre, it is our responsibility to ensure the environment is well maintained and is safe for the children to freely explore and learn. All adults that are working in the care for children will ensure it brings out the value of respect, ethics, attitudes/dispositions and *talanoa* that is shared and guided by customary protocols and actions.

Sautu (good life/well-being) is a strong value in the Fijian culture because it starts within a family. A person who is brought up well will always have the interest of the *vanua* at heart. This determines a person to know how to relate with people of different status, *yalomatua* (wise) and *vutuniyau* (wealthy) in a way that leads with a good and beautiful heart and soul, and is mindful and protective over people. One who is



yalomatua reflects when one is *lotu* (spiritual), does his/her duties and fulfils his/her obligations to the family.

Principles of fakaako & faka'ilo

(Teaching and learning to raise the consciousness of what we know and understand)

The Year One paper *Ako* (teaching and learning) and *'ilo* signifies the process of knowing and to the knowledge itself (Helu-Thaman, 1988, 1995). *Ako mo e ilo* expresses the close relationship between content knowledge and pedagogies. The concept of *ako* is extended and advanced to *ako'i* (capability and capacity to initiate, teach, and to educate groups or individual learners). *Ako'i* transform our way of thinking *fakaako* (relating to and having relevance to education), the curriculum *Te whāriki* (mat) used as a metaphor to weave knowledges into the strands and principle that is designed for all to stand (Drewery & Bird, 2004). It begins from the side and ends up in the middle or the other side. However, *Kuta* (Fijian round mat) conceptualise a weaving that begins from the centre. This signifies the spirit is central to every human being, plants and animals and everything that we do. This is the first wisdom, the first acknowledgement of the abundance of the *koloa*. The source of abundance is the spirit. There is spirituality in everything that is seen in the land, sea and the cosmos. What does this mean for a teacher? It would mean our heart is centre to the work that we do. The circular motion or pattern of the *kuta* would represent my role as a teacher, sharing ideas as a leader and relationship with parents and whanau and a continuity. The round mat strands are double layered so that it maintains its strength and can also be used on both sides. Strength within a centre is teamwork, to be ethical and respectful of each other's differences and ensure that our work is visible to the parents. The raw material used from the leaves of the pandanus plant (*voivoi*) reflects a genuine teacher who have the true spirit to teach from within the heart.

Pasifika knowledge and values from a Fijian perspective (Nabobo-Baba, 2006)

Knowledge – *kila ka* (to know something), *vuku* (knowledgeable), *yalomatua* (wisdom)
– Fiji indigenous knowledge is important such as values, skills, and acceptable behaviour.

Language – We come with our language already deeply embedded in us. Do we stop there? What happens to our New Zealand born Pasifika children? We need to maintain our language by speaking it and using it in our activities, songs and dances. Children can easily pick up their own mother tongue and so can they quickly replay it with English. If they hear, see and act the language they will be encouraged to participate and thus may encourage adults as well. Likewise, for adults, it is never too late to learn another language and let it grow over time.

Culture/ *vakavanua* – Fiji culture as Nabobo-Baba (2006) defines, *i tovo vakavanua e dai* (culture today), *i tovo makawa* (ancient culture), *i tovo e liu* (culture in the past) and *i tovo ena gauna ni veisau* (culture change), which brings about *na i tovo vovou* (newly introduce cultures) (p.72). Together with language the children with thrive and be encouraged to be confident. The words that are spoken have meaning, such as using myths and legendary stories to create an understanding of cultural knowledges.

Spirit – Fiji culture emphasis *lotu* (spiritual/ worship) which is important knowledge and central to their way of life. *Lotu* also includes Christianity – notion of worship in God in which every beginning and end of the day is acknowledged in prayer.

Relationship (*veiwekani*) – this identifies Fijians are communal people. From an early age children are always taught to share food. Sharing with relatives maintain and enhance good relationships. Qereqeretabua (as cited in Nabobo Baba, 2006) once said “veiwekani is important because we are people that live together, we do not promote individual living. We live and thrive in collective efforts.... We encourage and value communal work” (p. 90).

Principles of Research using the approach of Toutai

Toutai research uses the metaphor of a fisherman, one who fishes in deep waters to catch the best fish for his family or for his community. From an I-Kiribati perspective fish is one of the major sources of sustenance because of their coral atolls surrounded by the great Pacific Ocean. Fishermen (*te tia akawa*) are naturally gifted with these skills and knowledge needed to be a wise fisherman. Drawing on the knowledge

(*anatatai*) of *Te tia akawa* as a researcher (*tia ukeuke*) is one to *ukeuke* (research) for the best quality *ika* (fish). A *toutai* researcher is one who believes in him/herself that he/she will make a difference that will benefit the community as a whole.

I draw on the knowledge of Māori researcher and academic, Smith (2004) for researchers to heed to the call to "...disrupt hegemonic research forms and their power relations and to alleviate and reinvent new methodologies and perspectives" (p.2). With the recent growing demand of government placing more emphasis on Māori and Pasifika as top on the priority learners list, this calls for Pasifika teachers/educators to take a firm stance to believe in themselves to bring back cultural values of what and how they learn within their 'domain'. The knowledge that was passed on from generation to generation learnt within the domain of their home, the community, the church, the people and their way of life. With the growing population of our diverse Pasifika migrants and Pasifika New Zealand born, there is a call to lighten up the education pathways with cultural values and beliefs. Our young people are vulnerable. They need to be recognised for who they are and what they bring with them. Language is our foundation that we can build on this conceptual framework.

As Manu'atu (2015) describes '*Etau Ngaahi Lea* (our many languages) as the grounding roots to understanding specific Pasifika languages and cultural ideologies. As a teacher in practise, a Pasifika migrant, I am determined to build on my own language and adopt *te reo Māori* after this degree. Maintaining language would mean building bridges across many dimensions of life, connecting people together to work together for a better outcome.

I conclude with a *whakatauki* (Maori proverb) (as cited in Rapatahana & Bunce, 2012, p.7).

Ko taku reo, taku ohooho, ko taku reo taku mapihi mauria

My language, my awakening, my language is the window to my soul.

Let us be proud of our mother tongue for it brings in-depth meaning that best describes who we are, the past, the present and the future. Success for our future education systems is to attain the spirit of the language into our teaching practice. Let us not sit back and watch our languages disappear before our eyes but stand proud and become proactive users.

References

- Bird, L., & Drewery, W. (2004). *Human development in Aotearoa: A journey through life*. Australia: McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Gordon-Burns, D., Gunn, A.C. Purdue, K., & Surtees, N. (Eds.). (2012). *Te Aoturoa Tataki: Inclusive Early Childhood Education: Perspectives on inclusion, social justice and equity from Aotearoa New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.
- Helu-Thaman, K. (2003, June 15-18). *Vaa - A Pacific foundation for peace and inter-cultural understanding*. Keynote Address at the UNESCO Conference on Intercultural Education, Jyväskylä, Finland.
- Manu'atu, L. (2015). *Etau Ngaahi Lea: Our Languages* [PowerPoint slides]. 297405. Retrieved from Auckland University of Technology AUTonline website: <https://autonline.aut.ac.nz/>
- Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whāriki. He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Nabobo-Baba, U. (2006). *Knowing and learning: An indigenous Fijian approach*. Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific.
- Orange, C. (1992). *The story of a Treaty*. Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.
- Rapatahana, V., & Bunce, P. (Eds.). (2012). *English language as hydra: Its impacts on non-English language cultures*. Bristol, United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

- Ringer, B. (n.d.). *A history of Manukau City Centre*. Retrieved from <http://www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/EN/heritage/localhistory/countiesmanukau/communities/Pages/historyofmaunkaucitycentre.aspx#references>
- Robinson, K. (2013, April). *How to escape education's Death Valley*. [TED Talk]. TED.com Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_how_to_escape_education_s_death_valley
- Smith, L. (2004). Building research capability in the Pacific, for the Pacific and by Pacific peoples. In T. Baba, O. Mahina, N. Williams, & U. Nabobo-Baba (Eds.), *Researching the Pacific and indigenous peoples: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 4–16). Auckland, New Zealand: Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Auckland.
- Tantos-Rangi, Z. (2015). Insider's tips hidden treasures of the Danube. *Luxury Holiday & Corporate Travel*, (26), 78–79.
- Tuagalu, I. (2008). Heuristic of the va. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 4(1), 107-126.

CHAPTER 8

The concept of the *fatu*

Abstract

My presentation depicts the concept of the *fatu* (heart). Through the concept of the *fatu* (heart) it gave me the opportunity to *talanoa* (converse) openly, and was based on my reflections of my *fatu* (heart) from 2013 when I started the degree to when I finished my last year in 2015. The physical and spiritual growth that my *fatu* (heart) went through to learn and gain the knowledges of the *gagana* Samoa (Samoan language), *aganu'u* (culture), values and beliefs were based on my understanding of the conceptual framework of *TalanoaLālanga* and *FatuLālanga* from a Samoan woman's perspective. In doing so I was able to incorporate my love of visual arts and being an artist as a metaphor for my own idea of what I call *lalaga* (weaving). In a sense that I can *lalaga* (weave) in the form of painting to create a masterpiece, in comparison to that of a *matuau'u* (expert weaver) who weaves an '*ietoga* (fine mat) in the Samoan culture. Due to importance of the concept of my *fatu* (heart) in my view, my presentation discussed the stages of the *lalaga* (weaving) from within the *fatu* (heart). The second was my *fatu* (heart) from the beginning, followed by my *fatu* (heart) through the journey and lastly my *fatu* (heart) right now. Each stage represented the different experiences of my *fatu* (heart) whether good or bad and the people that really mattered in defining the utmost importance of getting my *fatu* (heart) to its happy place.

Introduction

In this writing, I will discuss my knowledge and understanding of the conceptual framework of *TalanoaLālanga* and *FatuLālanga*, through my chosen concept of the *Fatu* (heart). Through my writing the concept of the *fatu* (heart) is established and develops in different forms or phases, which will firstly introduce the different type of *lalaga* (weaving) that I have chosen to represent who I am, my pedagogical knowledge, *gagana* Samoa (Samoan language), *aganu'u* (culture) values and beliefs. The *lalaga* (weaving), from within the *fatu* (heart). Secondly, I will talk about my *fatu* (heart) in the beginning phase, when I did not recognise the importance of language,

cultural practices, values, beliefs and spirituality. The third phase is about the concept in which my *fatu* (heart) has finally awakened through my journey, where the ideas of Fakapotopoto, Fakaako mo e faka'ilo, Toutai, Tataala and Koloa'iaAotearoa arise. Lastly I will talk about the phase where my *fatu* (heart) is right now, near the finish line and where to from here.

The *lalaga* (weaving), from within the *fatu* (heart)

In a traditional interpretation of a *lalaga* (weaving) from a Samoan perspective and cultural practice, the *lalaga* (weaving) would be a Samoan '*ietoga* (fine mat). In thinking about the '*ietoga* (fine mat), it is of great value and importance to the Samoan people and culture (Tagoilelagi-Leota, Kesi & Galu, 2010). Therefore, in relation to the conceptual framework of *TalanoaLālānga* and *FatuLālānga* I have developed an idea of a *lalaga* (weaving) that will coincide with my concept of the *fatu* (heart). In looking at the idea of *lalaga* (weaving) I thought about how the '*ietoga* (fine mat) is significant to Samoa. I then decided to use the idea of *lalaga* (weaving) in relation to my identity, who I am through my love of art and vision of an artist, which is significant to me. This for me is essential to the concept of the *fatu* (heart). I am not a weaver, I cannot weave a Samoan '*ietoga* (fine mat), nor do I own one.

However, when using the idea of *lalaga* (weaving) as a metaphor for an artist. Metaphorically, as an artist I am weaving in a different form, which is through my drawings and paintings. The same ideas of weaving are still applied in my perspective, just different in context and different resources and tools used to weave with. As an artist, we do not rush straight to a canvas and start painting. Thus, it is important that we seek inspiration from the *fatu* (heart) to begin to collect ideas for our artworks. Which for me it is to "*lalaga le talanoa*," when an artist has found inspiration or is driven by the emotions of the *fatu* (heart), this is when the weaving of ideas starts to take shape in the mind of the artist (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2010, p. 39). Hence, this is the beginning of the *lalaga* (weaving) from within the heart and mind of an artist. Predominantly, the *fatu* (heart) is the centre of all things, including the way in which an artist begins his/her masterpiece. Therefore, in relation to how an artist weaves ideas to create a masterpiece on a canvas, I believe when viewing the way an '*ietoga* (fine mat) is created it is in comparison to that of which a *matuau'u* (expert weaver) starts to weave an '*ietoga*.



The metaphor of an artist is portrayed in my view as someone who weaves together his/her own ideas, as well as other people's ideas to create different knowledges to incorporate that knowledge through visual arts and painting. Hence, to establish the symbolic message of *gagana* (language), *aganu'u* (culture), spirituality, values, beliefs, history, *fanua* (land) and *fa'asamoa* (Samoan way of life) through images and symbols in visual art works. As explained by Tui'tahi (2010), the essence of people's knowledges and intelligence is pulled from the hearts of people and humanity and what they consider important to them. This metaphor can support children's learning and development in Pasifika centres with the idea that they also can *lalaga* (weave) their language and cultural practice through art. According to Eckhoff (2007), who states, "the visual arts can be an important and rich domain of learning for young children" (p. 7). Which I believe is true, there is a sense that children can display and incorporate themselves in their artwork and create a symbol of identity through their work.

What is significant in art works and imagery is that they hold "many messages" in them (Tangaere, 1997, p. 47). For instance, Tangaere (1997), talks about the human development in the Māori culture, which represents *te ira tangata* (the life principles of people). She talks about the importance of it being the "essence of Māori knowledge" (Tangaere, 1997, p. 47). This is connected to the *Poutama* (lattice weaving design), a visual design of Māori human development. Thus, it is interwoven in the Māori culture and *tangata whenua* (Māori people). Hence, for Māori people this symbolizes the stairway to the twelfth 'realms' in which Tane-nui-a-Rangi ascended to obtain the "three baskets of knowledge" (Tangaere, 1997, p. 47). Through the visual art of imagery people including children are able to interpret their everyday life, their struggles, challenges, emotions, history, language, culture, values, beliefs and spirituality through art. Art itself becomes a visual image of people and their life stories.

My *fatu*, from the beginning

Before attending this degree, I truly had no clue how paramount and valuable my *gagana* Samoa (Samoan language) and *aganu'u fa'asamoa* (Samoan culture) was in the sense of having an identity and feeling a sense of belonging being a Samoan living



in New Zealand. In comparison to that of the cartoon character of 'Alice in Wonderland', where in her first context she did not feel like she belonged. In a sense I was a 'lost soul,' someone who in the outside always-represented Samoa, always made sure that people knew that I was 100% Samoan born. However, in the inside, within the *fatu* (heart) what was missing in me was the *agaga fa'asamoa* meaning someone who has a Samoan heart (McDonald, 2004). Having the *agaga Samoa* meant that you understood and had knowledge of the three core values that underpins the *fa'asamoa* (Samoan way of life). The three core values of *alofa* (love), *fa'aaloalo* (respect) and *tautua* (respect) are a fundamental way in which Samoan people teach and learn the *aganu'u fa'asamoa* (Samoan culture) and the *gagana Samoa* (Samoan language), which evidently creates and acknowledges the importance of relationships (Ministry of Education, 2009).

It was apparent, when attending this degree on my first year in 2013. I started to find out more on my identity as a Samoan individual and the significance of where I came from. According to Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001), it is essential for people and most importantly for our children to understand the significance of "...knowing ourselves and where we come from..." (p. 201). My first year I learnt about the concepts of Mo'uiMafana, Fonua, Poto, KoloaAotearoa, Ako mo e 'ilo and Tupu'anga. With regards to the idea of *lalaga* (weaving), I have chosen to use a metaphor to portray an artist, in the form of weaving ideas of cultural knowledges into an artwork. These concepts allowed me to begin the 'weaving of ideas' in a visual form of way.

The concept of Poto through the metaphor of an artist is to start being wise in knowing and understanding the use of colour, and what colours create a certain colour when mixed. Also, knowing the different techniques of holding a paintbrush, to create different paintbrush strokes. The concept of Mo'uiMafana is being able to have a connection with my mind and body whilst being inspired by the "...reciprocal relationship between humanity and its environment" (Tu'itahi, 2005, p. 4) back in Samoa and here in New Zealand.

Which clarifies the notion of "on-going relationships between the entire physical and social environment and humanity, and between man (and women) and his fellow beings" (Mahina, 1992, 2005; Taufe'ulungaki, 2004, as cited in Tu'itahi, 2005, para. 8). This represents the concept of Fonua. From the *fanua* (land) we acknowledge the



concept of *Koloa Aotearoa* and the concept of *Tupu'anga*, these two go hand in hand to build on the inspiration of emotion, to be able to portray the feeling of happiness, anger, disappointment, regret and confusion in a painting. This reflects the history of The Treaty of Waitangi, where the indigenous Māori people lost most of their *koloa* of land, language and culture due to the relationships they had entrusted with the British. In which, the *Kaupapa whakahaere* (Principles) were put in place to deal to issues of the Treaty of Waitangi. With regards to the concept of *Ako mo e 'ilo* builds on the relationships of pedagogies and knowledges, with connection to the principles of *Whakahoa* (Partnership), *Whai wahitanga* (Participation) and *Kaitiakitanga* (Protection) (Forsyth, 2013). The curriculum is created to cater for different children and their cultural backgrounds and languages.

My *fatu*, through the journey

In this phase, my *fatu* (heart) has begun being enriched by the knowledges from the Year One concepts. Essentially my *fatu* (heart) is starting to awake and with that my mind; body and soul have started to follow in pursuit. In addition to Year Two, the concepts taught were *Poto'i*, *Ako'i mo e 'ilo*, *Fakakoloa Aotearoa*, *Kainga*, *Fonua II*. These concepts developed and enhance a deeper understanding of the concepts taught in Year One. The concept of *Kainga* or in the Samoan language *aiga* (family) brought to my attention the crucial role of family members in a child's life and wellbeing. More importantly, the understanding that Pasifika people including Samoan people work well and have greater strengths when working as a collective (Thaman, 1996).

Now at the stage of my journey, I have reached my Year Three of this degree. Over the years, I have developed, gained and extended my thinking of pedagogical knowledge as well as the knowledge of who I am and my place here in this world, through learning about the *gagana Samoa* (Samoan language) and *aganu'u fa'asamoa* (Samoan culture). This year the concepts have evolved more into the stages of bringing out the critical thinking of our teaching ethics, teaching philosophies and development as future educators. In regards to the metaphor of the artist, there is an understanding that through the weaving that is of the knowledges in the mind of the artist, what supports that weaving of knowledges is spirituality. As explained by

McDonald (2004), it is important to understand that spirituality coexists and intertwines together with the values of the Samoan people and culture.

Therefore, in the vision of an artist we must use the concept of the *fatu* (heart) to develop the idea that we must “observe with the heart” to understand and be enriched by the knowleges that we *lalaga* (weave) (Kesi, 2015, p. 3). Concerning the concepts that have been taught this year, that of ‘Etau Ngaahi Lea, Fakapotopoto, Toutai, Fakaako mo e faka ‘ilo, Tataala and Koloa’iaAotearoa. These five concepts have a similar connection with each other. They all have the essence of the value of *alofa* (love) in them. *Alofa* (love) stems from the *fatu* (heart). I see *alofa* (love) as the centre of all things; it is the centre of these concepts and those from Year One and Two. As explained by Tui Atua (2009), the “*faasamoa* is founded on *alofa*” (p. 52).

In connection to the metaphor of the artist, the concept of Tataala allows the weaving of the knowledges and ideas in the mind of the artist to be unpacked. By unpacking the *lalaga* (weaving) of knowledges and ideas, the artist begins to layout the different tools and resources used to create the artwork. Each tool is given a duty to fulfill in the hands and needs of the artist, for example a paintbrush. Each paintbrush is different in size, to apply different texture, shape and strokes either thin or thick. In comparison to that of the different roles of educators and the management team have and need to fulfill in a centre.

From there, Tataala opens up the pathway to Fakapotopoto, this concept in the metaphor of the artist, creates the idea of ethical practice. Generally, the artist started from being *poto* in establishing the knowledge of colours and the techniques of holding a paintbrush. From there, moved to being *poto’i* in the idea that the artist has become an expert in knowing how to paint, to use different elements to texturize the painting. Which leads to Fakapotopoto, where the artist is now capable of creating masterpieces. In comparison the practice of educators, we begin with the basic tools to teach, and then we gradually improve and develop our skills and then have the knowledge and skills to teach with confidence.

Another aspect is the concept of Fakaako mo e faka ‘ilo, which to me is the broad knowledge in which the artist uses the ideas of language, cultural practices and interprets those ideas into symbols or messages on a painting. In the same way, the



“curriculum is designed for the learning and development of children...” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11). Hence, the curriculum integrates and acknowledges the worth of children’s cultural backgrounds and language, and creates the relationship of when there is knowledge it is soon practiced through the learning experiences provided by educators.

In connection to the concept of Toutai, the artist has already weaved together the knowledges and ideas to create a vision for the artwork. From there the artist will research different materials, resources, layouts, textures and designs. This is also known as a period in which we have for trial and error. As an artist, there is an importance for them to research, to have a rationale on the importance of the message that they want to interpret through their artwork. The artist will enrich the language, culture, values and beliefs through research. Through the rationale, the artist will have gained an understanding of the meaning and message behind the selected symbols, the use of colour and more.

In doing so the research will help the artist determine different methods of applying the research to the artwork, of what is needed and what is not. In all, the findings of the research will benefit the artist to produce quality in the artwork. The key of discussion is in the result of the artwork, having applied the research, has the final product been successful in delivering a message, change, and feeling. In comparison to an early childhood centre, as explained by Grey and Clark (2010), as educators to our learners, we too are researchers in our roles. Respectfully, educators reflect on their practice, not only to better themselves but also to improve and create learning experiences for children.

All these concepts contribute and uphold the essence of the *fatu* (heart). My understanding of the conceptual framework of *FatuLālanga* which is to weave from the *fatu* (heart) and what is been woven is that of knowledges, experiences, skills, life stories, language, culture, values, beliefs, history and spirituality, which is *TalanoaLālanga*. Which is the weaving together of ideas. This I believe is the abundance of the concept of Koloa’ia, becoming koloa’ia and experiencing koloa’ia through the *fatu* (heart) and living it through the idea of the artist.

My *fatu*, right now

This phase is where my *fatu* (heart) is right now in this point and time of my life. With this last year coming to an end, I reflect on how the concept of the *fatu* (heart) has grown and developed through the knowledges that I have been taught and learnt over the years. I have come to understand that a "*faasamoa* that cannot speak to the heart and soul is a *faasamoa* that will die" (Tui Atua, 2009, p. 60). Indeed, this is significant to the journey in which my *fatu* (heart) has taken to discover and learn the knowledges and the value of my *gagana* Samoa (Samoan language) and *aganu'u fa'asamoa* (Samoan culture) to give me a sense of identity and belonging. My *fatu* (heart) is happy, it has been awoken by the knowledges that I have learnt and is still learning. As mentioned by Levy (1995, as cited in Thaman, 1996), "learning is a continuous process, aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills and values..." (p. 10). Most importantly, my *fatu* (heart) has grown not only through knowledge but also in the relationships of my *aiga* (family), also the people that I have come to know, love and also call my *aiga* (family). I believe the collective or the *aiga* (family) is the *fatu* (heart) and centre of an individual.

Conclusion

I will end by referencing a verse from the Christian hymn of 'Amazing Grace' to portray the journey of my *fatu* (heart) and where I am today. Having gained the knowledge that, I have learnt I feel that this quote connects to my journey. 'I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now I see...'

References

- Eckhoff, A. (2007). The importance of art viewing experiences in early childhood visual arts: The exploration of a master art teacher's strategies for meaningful early arts experiences. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 35(5), 463-472.
- Forsyth, H. (2013, April 05). *Introduction to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi*. Lecture presented for the KoloaAotearoa class (295404), AUT University, Manukau Campus, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Grey, A., & Clark, B. (2010). Chapter 1: Introduction. In B. Clark, & A. Grey (Eds.), *Perspectives on early childhood education: Ata kitea te pae – scanning the horizon* (pp. 1-9). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson.
- Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, G. (2001). Pasefika languages and Pasefika identities: Contemporary and future challenges. In C. Macpherson, P. Spoonley, & M. Anae (Eds.), *Tangata o te Moana nui: The evolving identities of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (pp. 196-211). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Kesi, F. (2015, March 10). Relationships & fakapotopoto, Mo'ui fakapotopoto: collective living by Pasifika. Lecture presented for the Fakapotopoto: Professional Inquiry & Practice class (297401), AUT University, Manukau Campus, Auckland, New Zealand.
- McDonald, A. T. (2004). *Spirituality and important quality of Pasifika early childhood education: A Samoan perspective* (pp. 1-9). Paper prepared for the Pasifika International Conference, Samoa.
- Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whāriki. He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2009). *Ta'iala mo le gagana Sāmoa. The gagana Sāmoa guidelines*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

- Tagoilelagi-Leota, F. S. (2010). Fa'alelegapepe: A living assessment for Aoga Amata. In B.
- Clark & A. Grey (Eds.), *Ata kitea te pae – Scanning the horizon* (pp. 37-45). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson.
- Tagoilelagi-Leota, S.F., Kesi, F., & Galu, M. (2010, January 7-11). *Ietoga and human lifespan*. Paper presented at 8th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Education (HICE), Hilton Waikiki Prince Kuhio Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Tangaere, A. R. (1997). Maori human development learning theory. In P. Te Whaiti, A. McCarthy, & M. Durie (Eds.), *Mai i rangiatea: Maori wellbeing and development* (pp. 46-59). Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press.
- Thaman, K. (1996, February 15-16). *Reclaiming an education: Culture, teaching and learning*. Keynote address, New Zealand National Symposium on "Pacific Islands Learning," Auckland, New Zealand.
- Tui Atua, T. T. T. (2009). *Faasamoa speaks to my heart and my soul*. In T. Suaalii-Sauni, I.
- Tuagalua, T. N. Kirifi-Alai & N. Fuamatu (Eds.), *Su'esu'e manogi: In search of fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi and the Samoan indigenous reference*. Apia, Samoa: National University of Samoa.
- Tu'itahi, S. (2005). *Langa fonua: In search of success*. Auckland, New Zealand: Massey University.
- Tu'itahi, S. (2010). Kafatana: Strategies to preserve Pacific languages. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Scholarships*, 6(2), 134-141.

CHAPTER 9

Abstract

The aim of my presentation is to discuss my collection of *koloa* throughout the three years of learning new knowledge in this Bachelor of Pasifika Education (ECT) degree. The Tongan mat (*fala fuopotopoto*) is used as a metaphor to explain or highlight the ideas the degree was framed with and what we as Pasifika educators might/should learn and take on to enrich our practise to bring about quality learning for our Pasifika children in New Zealand. The presentation was an exhibition of the *koloa* that I was able to gain and understand together with the *koloa* that I was able to collect from my lived experiences. For example, the centre of the *fala fuopotopoto* in which the weaving starts from signifies the teacher that weaves/works from the heart. As the weaving continues to expand in a circular fashion (which represents inclusiveness), our cultural values and beliefs come in (such as love, respect & service) to strengthen the weaving (the works of the teacher). This presentation also highlights the significance of the *mata* (eyes/vision) in our weaving from a Samoan perspective in Matāālāga (Tagoilelagi-Leota, Kesi, Tagoilelagi, Penn & Autagavaia, 2013). Thus, highlight the significance for teachers to utilise authentic *mata* (eyes) and vision in this profession to bring about success to benefit the collective. Fa'afetai.

Introduction

My topic exhibits the abundance and richness of the *koloa* in the knowledge, culture, languages, values and beliefs from the Pasifika people's spirits and ways of living. In addition, how we can apply them in ECE *Aotearoa* New Zealand. It will discuss the conceptual framework of the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (ECT) that relates to the Tongan concepts of "*TalanoaLālanga*," a concept with ideas that emanates from the weaving of the Tongan "*fala fuopotopoto*" (round mat). Furthermore, is bringing together the different but significant strands of ideas, values, beliefs, knowledge and knowing I have collected from the different topics woven into the "*fala fuopotopoto*" and applied in ECE to benefit our children and people in *Aotearoa* New Zealand.

The conceptual framework for the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (ECE)

Key Words: *fala fuopotopoto* (round mat), *TalanoaLālānga* (weaving the talk), *FatuLālānga* (weaving of the hearts/spirits)

The process of weaving the *fala fuopotopoto* (round mat) is utilized as a metaphor and as a representative of bringing together the *koloa* from our homelands, which are our languages, beliefs, knowledge and values. The *fala fuopotopoto* is a round mat that is woven starting from the inside/centre/middle, in a round fashion continuing to move and expand outwards producing a much bigger round mat (*fala fuopotopoto*) (Manu'atu, 2013). According to Tu'itahi (2014), the concept of *fuopotopoto* is defined in the *Tongan* language as “the shape of *poto*” which represents the inclusiveness in wisdom as well as equality and fairness. Within the process of weaving the *fala fuopotopoto* stems the concept of *TalanoaLālānga*, which refers to the *talanoa* (talk) that is happening while weaving. The ideas, beliefs, values, stories, knowledge and spirits of the weavers are woven together or exchanged in this *talanoa* that comes from their hearts (*FatuLālānga*). Similar to the conception of *lalaga* (weaving) in *matālālāga* (weavers), it “looks at the communal aspects of working together” (Tagoilelagi-Leota et al., 2013, p. 155). *Mata* (eyes) *lalaga* (weave) emphasise the importance of our eyes or having a vision before and when we weave. Furthermore, they assert the significance of *mata* (eyes), throughout the entire process of weaving starting from planting the flags, cutting and gathering, cooking and the involvement of the whole community, as well the spirit of the land and ancestors.

The *fala fuopotopoto* used in this programme as a metaphor in the early childhood education context, to represent a structure or framework that can holistically bring about our Pasifika knowledge, values, beliefs, and languages. Its centre, in a circular fashion, represents the hearts and spirits of the people and land from which the knowledge and wisdom drew symbolizes a pedagogical approach that is inclusive. Therefore, can open opportunities for Pasifika *koloa*, the *koloa* of the indigenous people of this land (*tangata whenua*) as well as the western ideas to be equally acknowledged and implemented in ECE through our Pasifika concepts and ways of knowing (L. Manu'atu, personal communication, 2015). Similarly, Luafutu-Simpson (2011) argues that we ought to use our authentic cultural lenses to gather appropriate multiple approaches to enrich our teaching practices and children's' learning.

Strands of knowledge from the papers

The strands of the *fala fuopotopoto* refer to the wealth of knowledge that each paper brings. As the weaving develops, the knowledge grows in-depth and wider and become connected and related to each other. The four papers specifically discussed here are:

Faka'ako and Faka'ilo: The word *ako* defines as education, learning or school, which Thaman (1988, p. 252) describes a Tongan philosophy as “*ako* (education) is rooted in an ideology that gives weighting to social and moral, rather than to intellectual considerations; it is group-oriented and motivated by an ethic of caring and social usefulness”. *'Ilo* is knowledge and understanding that we gained from *'ako* (learning and education). Faka'ako and faka'ilo then are described as getting educated with the knowledge or gaining understanding from learning, relating to education or the knowledge that enhances us to teach and to learn “to raise our consciousness of what to know and understand.” This subject highlights the theories and philosophies behind the pedagogical knowledge as well the curriculum and ideas underpinning our Pasifika as well as Western and Māori practices. It includes the significant knowledge and wisdom of our arts/crafts, our singing, our dancing and all other cultural practices from Samoa, Tonga, Māori, Cook Islands, Fiji and Kiribati (I. Palea'i-Foroti, personal communication, 2015).

Fakapotopoto is defined as being skillful, wise or full of wisdom as well as knowledgeable. Thaman (1995, p.10, as cited in Tu'itahi, 2010) describes *poto* in the perspective of the *Tongan* education as the “positive application of *'ilo* (knowledge and understanding)” in our practices. Therefore, a person that is fakapotopoto, is “sensible with resources, proficient in distribution, practical, smart, thinking ahead and consistent” when applying knowledge and understanding (*'ilo*) that they have collected through/from their learning (*ako*) in their practice (Guttenbeil-Po'uhila, et al., 2004, p.115, as cited in Tu'itahi, 2010). Someone that is wise and full of wisdom, self-control and equipped with the *koloa* of knowledge that comes from her heart.

Tatala is taught as an approach that brings about unfolding, opening and allowing critical dialogue about cultural values, beliefs, and practices to enrich pedagogical practices in governance and management in ECE. *Tatala* highlights an inclusive approach to leadership, governance, and management to bring about quality in the services that we provide for our children. The *Tatala* approach highlights the significance of being open-minded (but mindfully) to multiple perspectives such as Māori, and perspectives from the western population as well as views from parents and children's families to encourage participation to bring about empowerment (I. Palea'i-Foroti, personal communication, 2015).

Toutai refers to different types of fishing that is caught collectively to benefit the collective. A means of survival for most of the Pasifika Islanders as well as other populations around the world, providing sustenance, provisions to nourish and nurture the well-being of the people. From a Samoan perspective, the practice of *toutai* has a strong spiritual connection with God/gods and cosmology as knowledge, strength, directions, wisdom and blessings given from them. Also, the blessings (*tapuaiga*) of the family, village and the community that wait for the *fishermen* to return (S. Tagoilelagi-Leota, personal communication, 2015). *Toutai* is used in the context of this degree to bring about the new knowledge as well as applying our different existing pieces of knowledge to enrich and benefit the collective (Tu'itahi, 2010). It emphasizes decolonizing our ways of researching and inquiring our knowledge, by re-thinking, reclaiming and using our methodology and methods of research (such as *talanoa*) that are culturally appropriate to us, and that can bring out the significance in our cultural values, beliefs, languages, and practices.

Koloa'iaAotearoa

Koloa'ia denotes the richness and wealth of knowledge derived from all the papers taught throughout this whole degree. *Koloa'iaAotearoa* emphasizes the enrichment of Aotearoa New Zealand with the wealth of knowledge that we bring with us from our homelands through the abundance of goodness in the spirits of the people. Again, the *fala fuopotopoto* symbolizes the different kinds of strands and different kinds of weaving that comes inclusively from the hearts and spirits of the people (Manu'atu, 2013). We came to New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi (TOW), signifies an

agreement between two parties (Māori and the Crown) to live peacefully, and harmoniously, respecting and acknowledging each other with the principles of participation, protection and partnership (Orange, 2011). Thus protects our rights as Pasifika Islanders (under the Crown) to maintain our cultural values and beliefs, encouraging our participation in this country as well as working alongside other minority groups. Moreover, the TOW symbolizes and influences the relationships politically as well as the relationships between the people from different cultures, such as Māori, Pasifika, and mainstream in the context of ECE. This influences the structures and processes of Pasifika centres (L. Manu'atu, personal communication, 2015; I. Palea'i-Foroti, personal communication, 2015).

This degree acknowledges the diversity of people, and culture all around this country. It recognizes that there are issues that we constantly face as migrants in this country, such that, we continue to be colonized and marginalized hence the decline in our languages. However, this degree is a stepping-stone for Pasifika people, to re-claim and decolonize their ways of thinking about us. As Ha'uofa (1993) argues that our Pasifika people's way of thinking have been shaped and influenced by the notion, that the Western perspective is the more appropriate way to lead us to a success in life for decades. Unfortunately, this belief is highly advocated by the people in our children's lives in the context of education, leaving our cultures, languages, values and beliefs behind. Therefore, this programme advocates the maintaining and sustaining of our languages and culture in ECE, through using appropriate cultural approaches to enrich our children. They may be empowered and feel confident to participate as Samoans, Tongans, Fijians (and all the other islands) in this country and wherever they maybe in life (Luafutu-Simpson, 2011).

Our *koloa* refers to our language, cultural values, and beliefs as well as the spirits of the people. It refers to how we live amongst each other in our families and our relationship with each other as well as the land. It refers to the things that are significant to us as Samoans, Tongans, Māori, Niue, Tokelau, Kiribati and Cook Islanders. Children are part of this *koloa*. This degree emphasizes the significance of enriching relationships amongst ourselves in this country specifically in the context of ECE, acknowledging and identifying our connections and our common grounds as well as our dissimilarities. As Samu (2006) argues, that teachers must first, acknowledge diversity amongst the learners as well as their background embracing similarities and



differences to bring about quality learning and respond effectively. Therefore, the different *koloa* or wealth of knowledge collected from the different papers, our intrapersonal knowledge and new knowledges helps us as educators to enhance and enrich ourselves as educators to enrich this relationship with our children, parents, families, and other cultures.

The *fala fuopotopoto* is used as an example to frame how educators ought to weave the knowledge, through *TalanoaLālanga* and *FatuLālanga*, while applying them in our work in ECE to benefit our children. This programme teaches us to be open-minded and acknowledge the other perspectives, such as Māori and mainstream, and form a weaving that highlights the significance of the relationships that we ought to respect amongst ourselves and to promote inclusive approaches. However, taught and communicated through our Pasifika knowledge, languages, pedagogies, and ideas that are culturally appropriate to 'us'. *Koloa'iaAotearoa* occurs when we are in abundance of goodness in our spirits, to accept that we are not the only perspective. Therefore, we have to respect and weave in new knowledge to enrich our living in this country but maintain who we are but putting as a focal point (L. Manu'atu, personal communication, 2015).

Conclusion

Personally, I have come to learn a lot about myself and more about my cultural values and beliefs, and the significance of understanding my place as a migrant in this country and most importantly, my role as an educator. I have come to understand the conceptual framework degree and the different flavours of knowledge and strands of knowing that I have collected to enrich my basket. All the papers that I have taken signify an important strand of knowledge that can strengthen the *fala fuopotopoto* that I will continue to weave after this degree. I now value my *tupu'anga* and understand how important it is for a Samoan child to have access to this experience. That every child has the right to know about their *fonua/tupu'anga* so they become empowered in the knowledge that they have a sense of place while their holistic well-being, learning and development is promoted (Ministry of Education, 1996).

The knowledge from each paper compliments the other and is woven together with the intrapersonal knowledge and experiences of the educator to enrich his/her practice to

bring about quality learning. Coming from Samoa with the knowledge from my upbringing, and getting this new knowledge can enrich my practice to benefit the children. *Faka'ako* and *faka'ilo* are to learn the knowledge that is significant to us as Pasifika, as well as Māori and mainstream, which includes, *Te Whāriki*, understanding, respecting the relationship, similarities, and differences from the different perspectives. *Fakapotopoto*, in being skillful in applying this knowledge in the context of ECE, skillful in using this knowledge to collect and research ways to improve our practices and ways to relate to each other. *Tatala* as an approach to leadership as well as governing and management. It signifies the inclusion of everyone in collaboration to empower them to participate as who they are. Valuing other perspectives and allowing everyone to be part of the work. Which relates well with our '*teu le va*' approach from a Samoan perspective, referring to maintaining harmonious relationships with each other through our values of love, service, and respect (Toso, 2011). *TalanoaLālānga* can bring together the knowledge from our Pasifika land and peoples, as well the mainstream and the indigenous people of *Aotearoa* to form a programme delivered to Pasifika educators. Therefore, we as Pasifika educators can be empowered to empower and influence our children in the ECE centre.



References

- Ha'uofa, E. (1993). *A new Oceania: Rediscovering our sea of islands*. Suva, Fiji: USP.
- Luafutu-Simpson, P. (2011, December). *Exploring the teaching of effective approaches for assessing young Samoan children's learning in early childhood centres: Developing an authentic Samoan lens*. Ako Aotearoa.
- Manu'atu, L. (2013). *Malo e 'ofa! Renewing the spirits of Tongan migrants through a new educational programme @ the university*. Critiquing Pasifika Education @ the University, 4th Biennial Conference Proceedings. Manukau Conference Centre, AUT University. ISBN 978-1-927184-13-4
- Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whariki: He whariki matauranga mo nga mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Orange, C. (2011). *The Treaty of Waitangi* (2nd ed.). Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.
- Samu, T. (2006). The 'Pasifika umbrella' and quality teaching: Understanding and responding to the diverse realities within. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12, 35-49.
- Tagoilelagi-Leota, S. F., Kesi, F., Tagoilelagi, I. F., Penn, S., & Autagavaia, M. (2013). Matālālāga a le fai'aoga A'oga Amata: Authentic teacher in Aoga. In S. F. Tagoilelagi-Leota & T. Utumapu-McBride (Eds.), *O pelega o fanau: Treasuring children* (pp. 154-166). Auckland, New Zealand: AUT University.

Thaman, K. H. (1988). *Ako and faiako: Educational concepts, cultural values and teachers' role perception in Tonga* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

Toso, V. M. (2011). Reconceptualising spirituality as a philosophy of practice for Pasifika early childhood education in New Zealand: A Samoan perspective. *Pacific-Asian Education Journal*, 23(2), 129-138.

Tu'itahi, S. (2010). Kafataha: Strategies to preserve Pacific languages. *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 6(2), 134-142.



CHAPTER 10

Abstract

My Koloa'ia Symposium was about my journey within this degree, a Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching). I based my Koloa on the King protea flower as it held significance to myself as a South African. I integrated the different concepts of Koloa'ia, Fakaako and Faka'ilo, Tatala, Fakapotopoto and Toutai as the petals of the flower. Each one opening up as did my understanding of what I had been taught. The degree is based on Pasifika knowledge, values and beliefs. Within this context, I had to learn and delve into my own culture in order to contribute to the course and enrich my own knowledge and experience. This is a fundamental part of my educational journey, which I will take with me, regardless of where life takes me. The conceptual framework of this degree has not only cultivated an environment of growth for myself but my family and furthermore the children I teach. It has really reshaped my way of thinking from not knowing much, to having an abundance of knowledge towards the end and continue to grow. It opens my understanding of Pasifika people and what their values and culture means to them. This is extremely beneficial to the children. I am proud to have completed the degree. I will continue the Koloa'ia in my teaching.

Conceptual framework

The Bachelor of Pasifika Education encourages the values and beliefs of Pasifika. Students learn Māori and Pasifika languages, and knowledge that includes all cultures. During the three years of the degree, I have been shaped through learning new information and strategies, and have received ongoing support throughout my journey as a student teacher. This degree has reshaped my way of perceiving things through learning new concepts and knowing how to break down simple activities which makes it easier for children to learn.

The conceptual framework of the degree is a series of papers based on Pasifika concepts, underpinned by Pasifika values, knowledge, beliefs, languages and cultures. *Central to the framework is TalanoaLālānga*. Talanoa means thinking and acting in verbal conversations with other people and one's self. Talanoa perceive a

Tongan feel of acting and thinking as a bonded relationship. When Talanoa becomes experience it is known as *mālie* when it is ongoing growth regarding knowledge, nuances and passion of the culture. It opens up the soul, heart and mind of the participants that lets them realise a deeper understanding beyond what is physically there (Manu'atu, 2004). *Lalanga* means to weave and *FatuLālanga* means to weave from the heart. This enables us to critique the difference in our approaches, and consider language and cultural practices and to develop a holistic well rounded practitioner.

The degree presents in a series of strands, each with papers that explore some of the core values of being a teacher. The conceptual framework is the foundation where learning on the degree begins, the origin and the beginning of the concepts on which this education is built. Throughout the three years, it has been an ongoing learning journey from concept to concept.

To start, I would explain the journey that I have been on so far through my Bachelor of Pasifika Education degree. The collective three years has made all the pieces of the puzzle begin to fit into each other and a holistic picture emerged. Working from one concept to another and working from the known to the unknown has resulted in an abundance of knowledge that we have worked through until now.

The conceptual framework *TalanoaLālanga* relates to and is drawn upon a Tongan approach of knowing. It weaves through what we already know and adds onto knowledges with the different concepts. The collective framework using the idea of weaving was an appropriate one as it is familiar to Pasifika and Māori people. Also appropriate is the use of the concept of Talanoa. Talanoa is a strong “way of constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing [Tongan] knowledge” (Manu'atu, 2000, p.56). Through Talanoa all Pasifika people learn about tangata whenua through the different ways of the people and the stories they tell. Pasifika nations learn through reconnecting, relating and recalling with different groups and each other using Talanoa as a research methodology (Latu, 2010). For Māori the notion of talking face-to-face is similar to Talanoa and so the use of Talanoa in the context of Aotearoa is appropriate.

My Journey

Before coming into this degree, there were a lot of things I did not know about other cultural beliefs, as well as having limited knowledge of my own culture. Relating this to my teaching journey, I did not understand how things were done in the other cultures. When I talked to the children, they did not understand what I was saying. I found when I spoke to children they did not listen to me nor did they understand what I was instructing them to do. I realized that the children had a problem with understanding what I was trying to tell or instruct them due to my accent. They could not interpret what they heard and went on playing and ignored me. I felt lost and I was not confident.

Learning about the different concepts of *Koloa'ia Aotearoa*, *Fakaako* & *Faka'ilo*, *Tatala*, *Fakapotopoto* and *Toutai* on the degree has been extremely valuable. It has shaped my thinking and opened up my understanding on learning about different cultures and languages. With the guidance and support of my teachers and staff members while on practicum, I learnt a lot of new strategies and how to handle conflicting situations while at the centre. I found that involving the parents and community plays a big part in the lives of these young children. I noticed that the children were more responsive and there was an improvement in their attitude to their work when the family and community are involved. I now feel my confidence has grown in the ability to teach at bilingual centres as each experience brings different challenges and new knowledge. I now feel more prepared and know how to approach staff members and parents. I understand Pasifika values and I know how important culture and language is in the role as an emerging teacher.

Fakapotopoto

Looking at the strands of the conceptual framework, let us begin with *Fakapotopoto*. *Fakapoto* is wisdom, it is the people, and it is you, all of the poto and us. The wisdom comes out of that. Fakapoto is to be wise. Distinct to this paper is the development of philosophic approaches to teaching. It is how to collect and apply the wisdom that we gain. *Fakapotopoto* means wisdom and knowledge, it is about needing to be wise, extra wise, and it is about authenticity. This is examined in practices such as relying on our own cultural resources, having the real thing in our centres, not fake resources. This is seen by bringing in our grandparents to help as they have their own unique and



genuine knowledge. *Fakapoto* means to be considerate, perspective, vigilant and knowledgeable. It is also a framework for leadership, to be *Fakapoto* is to show wisdom, be considerate and careful. This results in Tongan education core, learning in heart and mind that focusses its capacity to promote *poto* in together (Tu'itahi, 2014).

Fakaako & Fakaka'ilo

Another strand is Fakaako and Fakaka'ilo, starts with Ako is knowing, understanding and is described by Helu-Thaman as a Tongan concept that incorporates *Ako*, *ilo* and *poto*. In her thinking, she used the Bible influence, of using proverbs. In Māori, there are also three stages of knowing, *mohi*, to know, *marama*, to understand and *matatau*, to be knowledgeable. The *Ako* concept denotes learning and teaching and 'ilo refers to the method of knowledge and knowing itself (Helu-Thaman, 1988, 1995). *Ako* is seen as advanced and is then extended to *Ako'i*, which is the capacity and capability to teach, to educate and to instruct a group of people or person when they are learning. The concept of Fakaako is having relevance to changing situations, education or sites of the context in learning and maintaining education. The concept Fakaka'ilo is to uplift the consciousness of learning and teaching of a group of people or oneself of what to understand and know (Helu-Thaman, 1988).

The distinct concept of this strand was that for me I saw how the timing of indigenous knowledges and ideas of collectiveness keeps coming back. *Ako* is learning, applying knowing to know. It embraces collectively living with the language and adding to what we already know. Everyone is different and we all come from different backgrounds. Yet through *Ako*, no one needs to choose, we are able to affirm what makes sense of our place in Aotearoa. We are able to contextualise the people we are educating with the migrants. There are a lot of issues that arise around indigenous knowledges and how they should be included in education, adding in values and beliefs, passing it down from this generation to the next. Therefore, many people do not know how to teach Pasifika and Māori children as they have not been taught their values and beliefs.

Tatala

The concept of Tatala is about changing your lenses, and it incorporates all the structures that need to be better understood through structural change and ideological change. Tatala makes all of us rethink the situation we are in together with the concepts and ideas, moving from within the richness of the language. Tatala is to open up my spirit for freshness, new ideas, and now my approaches are different through me living the *Tatala* concept. Through Tatala we open up what we already know and that is the *Koloa'ia* of what we want to understand. The distinct concept of Tatala is recognising that there are different values and beliefs. It is about talking in ways to bring out the honesty in people. Tatala is how we govern other people in their schools when they come with different agendas. Through Tatala we unpacked education considering such things as what happens if you have parents who are speakers of the language of the child and you bring them in to enrich the schools. We examined ideas such as adding to learning through the rhythm of the music and we talked about connecting to our culture, political, economical. Tatala is how we run our schools. What we know from home, about bringing it to school and then recreating it because of our values and beliefs. The Tatala concept focuses on bringing the idea that gives good governance, management and administration. Tatala actually means to unfold, unravel, and unpack. Tatala metaphorically speaking means to "make clear to the mind" (Churchward, 1959).

Toutai

Toutai is to go fishing, deep-sea fishing, and this strand is around the concept of research. It is not just about doing research but it is about bringing it into early childhood education to improve my practice. Toutai is about questioning, looking to find answers, fishing for the biggest and best. It calls us to consider things like the place of values and beliefs that go into mat time, the respect, and asking why is it a sacred time when the respect comes through. *Tautai* from a Samoan perception (and spelling) illustrate traditional fishing, which shows the researcher how to research and to make sure quality data is accomplished. *Tautai* combines two words. Tau means fight or combat and Tai means the tide. For Herdrich and Armstrong (2008), tautai is referred to as a fishing expert that the fisherman relies on his leadership skills. Tui Atua (2009a) argues that tautai is seen as the head fisherman between a group (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2013).

In relation to Treaty of Waitangi

The strands of the conceptual framework relate well with the guiding principles of the Treaty of Waitangi through bringing in talk of protection. It shows us the significance of actioning values and beliefs. The treaty allows us as immigrants a right to be here. The strands of the framework all talk of cultural significance and honouring people of the land so Maori values have to be taken into account. The notion of partnership makes a place where Māori and Pakehā can accept each other as treaty partners and the conceptual framework honours that as it involves all cultures and their involvement and contribution is appreciated. The treaty acknowledges Māori to have rights as tangata whenua. This is important because New Zealand is the home of Māori culture, which embraces a multicultural community that values its bicultural foundation (Te Kete Ipurangi, 2012).

Koloa'ia

Finally we come to the strand of Koloa'ia, to me it is about looking at concepts from our homeland and naming our work. The concept *koloa'ia* refers to abounding in wealth. It gives a frame for ancestral and Pasifika people in which to contribute value to the enrichment of New Zealand (Latu, 2010). To describe what is the Koloa'ia for me, is the abundance of knowledge. I chose the concept the King protea because it is significant to me. It is the South African national flower. I use it as a metaphor to represent my life. To me it symbolise the protea in a mythological connection to transform and change, it is not unexpected that the communication of the flowers, protea represents courage and diversity (Meaning & Symbolism of Protea, n.d.).

King protea

The protea seed being planted needs a good environment (allowing it to be watered and to have enough sunlight to assist it to grow). It originates in South Africa and grows in clusters like a family. The soil is vital as the seed is nourished and starts to grow. The strong weaving of the different concepts of the strands of the conceptual framework can be related to the King protea seed in the soil. The soil has to be really well prepared, it has to be good soil, weed free, and it cannot be too heavy or the seeds will rot. The King protea has the potential to carry on and each petal has a role to play in shaping who I am today. The petals are the different concepts that have

opened my mind to this new way of thinking about things and seeing them later bud and become a beautiful flower. The protea attracts sugarbirds and sunbirds for its sweet nectar and beautiful colours. This relates to me learning about the different knowledges taught throughout the framework (Wildscreen Arkive, n.d.).

Taking the “centre” as an important part of the plant, it is that part of us that starts with our heart. This in relation to myself, the original thinking was that there are many sources to what was in my heart. First, we had the weaving stories and Talanoa, which connects people in their weaving. Then FatuLālānga which began the weaving, looking inside, knowing the issues, seeing the deficits, knowing what is in you and what you bring to weave (L. Manu’atu, personal communication, 2015).

I see Koloa as a concept to encourage me to think critically, to question my spirits, and be willing to accept difference, to change, to question my heart and celebrate the richness within. Just as the rich soil is a good home for the King protea seed, the strands of the conceptual framework provided the ground for us to grow in our knowledge. The learning that was gained and experiences in the papers of the degree is like the development of the King protea as it is nurtured to grow to a point where it is strong enough to support a single large flower. The flower of the King protea is like the Koloa’ia of the degree. For me, this is the true abundance of the learning.

References

- Churchward, C. M. (1959). *Tongan dictionary*. Nukualofa, Tonga: Government Printing Press.
- Helu-Thaman, K. (1998, n.d.). *Learning to be: A perspective from the Pacific islands*. Paper presented at Education for the 21st Century in the Asia-Pacific Region, UNESCO Conference, Fiji.
- Helu-Thaman, K. (1995, May 24-26). *Different eyes: indigenous educational ideas and their relevance to modern education: The case of Tonga*. Keynote address paper at the DICE International Conference, Institute of Education, London.
- Latu, M. (2010). *Talanoa: A contribution to Primary schooling of Tongan children in Aotearoa New Zealand*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Manu'atu, L. (2000) *Tuli ke Ma'u Hono Ngaahi Malie: Pedagogical possibilities for Tongan students in New Zealand Secondary schooling*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Manu'atu, L. (2004). TalanoaMālie innovative reform through social dialogue in New Zealand. *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 27(4), 39-41. Meaning & Symbolism of Protea. (n.d.). *Teleflora*. Retrieved from <http://www.teleflora.com/meaning-of-flowers/protea>
- Tagoilelagi-Leota, S. F. F. (2013). Tautai – A research design. In S. F. Tagoilelagi-Leota & T. UtumapuMcBride (Eds.), *O pelega o fanau: Treasuring children* (pp.236-241). Auckland, New Zealand: AUT University.
- Te Kete Ipurangi. (2012). *Issue 16: NZC Updates, the New Zealand Curriculum Treaty of Waitangi Principle*. Retrieved from <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/NZC-Updates/Issue-16-January-2012>

Tu'itahi, S. (2014). *Exploring intelligence and wisdom from a Tongan perspective for enhancing Pacific Leadership in health, education and other sectors* (pp 3-7). Retrieved May 02, 2014, from <http://www.hauora.co.nz/assets/files/Occasional%20Papers/Matapoto%20pea%20Lotopoto%20%20%20awaiting%20clarifications%20from%20Si%20one.pdf>

Wildscreen Arkive. (n.d.). *King Protea/Protea cynaroides*. Retrieved from <http://www.arkive.org/king-protea/protea-cynaroides/>



CHAPTER 11

Ko Cambodian te whenua Ko Battambang te papa kainga

Ko Mekong te awa

Ko Lao te whanau

Ko Vanner toku ingoa

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Kia ora, Chomreabsour, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Malo e lelei, Talofa lava, Bula vinaka,

Chao ban, Namaste, and Greetings to you all. Welcome.

Today, I will be sharing with you my journey from before I started this degree to where I am now. What inspired me to do this degree was my *krom kruosaeear* (family). I grew up with a very close *krom kruosaeear* and they have been my support system from the gecko. I believe if it were not for my *krom kruosaeear*, especially my *mteay* (mother), I would not be where I am today. I chose to do this degree mainly for my *mteay*, she has always wanted her children to graduate from university and I wanted to give that to her. The reason why I chose this particular degree was because since I was young I have always loved children, being around them, babysitting them for my older sisters, cousins, aunties and uncles, I always put my hand up, my twin and I. We always used to say this is our day-care and we are their teachers. Growing up I felt always connected to this sector and this is why I chose this path because I *sralanh* (love) children, I *sralanh* seeing their growth and development it brings so much joy to me that I cannot explain. Coming to this degree with my sisters only motivated me more to accomplish and finish this degree, as for my family means everything to me. Having my *krom kruosaeear* alongside me, I would not be able to get through this without their support.

Through my presentation, I am going to TalanoaLālanga my journey in life. I will be speaking from the *fatu* (heart) which I *lalanga* (weaving) in my *sralanh* (love), cultural values and experiences to talanoa about my journey throughout these three years. This is where my journey begins; I have written a story to capture a different way to explain my journey, for you to have a better understanding from my perspective.



The magical journey of Vannear the caterpillar

Once upon a time long ago in a land that was very special, beautiful and magical even, the land of Aotearoa. There lived a tiny weeney caterpillar named Vannear. Vannear looked like every other caterpillar in the land. She had 2 eyes, 1 mouth, 16 legs, a long body and 2 antennae on top of her head. Vannear blended in nicely with the rest of the caterpillars and had many friends. Although Vannear the caterpillar blended in nicely with the rest of the caterpillars, she felt like her life was plain and not complete, she had a feeling that something was missing in her life.

Vannear lived in a beautiful big green milkweed plant. She was really content with her simple life where she would spend most of her days doing what she loved best, eating and munching away on the green leaves that grew on the plant she called home. One day Vannear wanted to do something different for a change and started to explore the garden. As she was hiking and climbing up the leaves of the old oak tree, from the corner of her eye she had a glimpse of something bright and colourful gracefully flying over her. Vannear's eyes gazed upon the exquisite creature as it landed on the leaf next to hers. There before her was the most beautiful insect she had ever seen, with matching beautiful stretched out colourful wings, that were as bright as a summers day. Vannear suddenly felt shy and taken back from the beauty of this creature as she slowly flapped her wings. "Well hello there, little missy... my name is Bella. What is your name?" "Mmm m me? Umm my name is Vannear" answered the caterpillar shyly. "I'm sorry if I startled you landing here giving you are scare," Bella replied. "Oh um no problem" replied Vannear who is so bewitched by her beauty and grace. "What are you?" Vannear suddenly blurted out, who then felt a bit rude and embarrassed to ask such a personal question. Bella suddenly had a puzzled look on her face; she extended one leg toward Vannear and said, "What do you mean? Vannear? Do you not know what I am? I am a butterfly of course!" and then giggled. "A butterfly?" replied Vannear?

Bella then looked all curious and said "has no one told you about the journey that awaits you? Well my dear, if I was to tell you that, I was once where you were, a tiny weeny innocent little caterpillar just like you." And smiled, Vannear started to think, and feel sad that she is just an ordinary caterpillar and wants to look beautiful and fly gracefully through the air like Bella. Bella noticed the sad gloomy look on Vannear's



face and asked her “why do you look so sad?” “I want to look and be like you, a butterfly,” answered Vannear.

“Right now you may feel like a plain caterpillar and not having that feeling of fulfilment in life. But trust me my dear, you just need to be the best caterpillar you know how to be, but more importantly to trust that in time you will become everything you were created to be. You have great plans for life, even ones you did not know about.

Vannear smiled and took in Bella’s advice, she felt a lot better and more confident about herself. Bella then slowly flapped her beautiful wings and said, “I have to go now Vannear, I will see you shortly, take care my friend,” and she flew away gracefully, BYYYYYE BELLA I yelled out as she flew around the corner.

Unable to let go of the image of the beautiful butterfly Bella, Vannear took in her advice and started to carry on doing what she loved doing best, which was eating and munching away. As the days went by Vannear got bigger and bigger, where she could no longer eat. She wanted to have a little rest from all the eating she had done all day that she decided to hang off the leaf to take a nap. Then something very special and magical happened, Vannear started to spin a silk mat around herself. As she was spinning, Bella’s voiced popped in her head “In time you will become everything you were created to be... you have great plans for life”. Vannear started to get excited, as she knew she was in the process of developing into a butterfly.

Inside her chrysalis her long body started to change, she was no longer green, her antennae each day started to grow longer and longer. As she was rolled up inside the chrysalis with, her 6 legs tucked against her stomach, wait... 6 legs? Vannear now has 6 legs,” where did the rest of my legs go” thought Vannear. Vannear then started to get scared and worried, that she is transforming, that herself, her inner personality would change too; she was worried she will no longer be the same old Vannear. Then she heard Bella’s voice “In time you will become everything you were created to be... you have great plans for life”. Vannear smiled with the support and advice that was given from her friend she knew to trust that in time everything would be okay. Vannear was now comfortably wrapped in her chrysalis developing herself into a butterfly. When Vannear knew she was ready to spread her wings she slowly emerges out. Vannear began to flutter her crumpled up wings back and forth, she turned and looked

behind her to find that she had now owned a pair of lovely delicate colourful wings. But despite what she had developed into, she was the same old Vannear. Vannear finally felt what she was destined to be, and no longer felt the emptiness inside her and flew away gracefully into the air where she could share her journey of developing into a butterfly.

I wrote this story, as I feel like it relates to my life and my journey. It is a way to share my story with children. The children will learn about self-acceptance and belonging but it is also a way and a chance to learn not only the beauty of God's creation but the importance of being who he made them to be and the *tamlei* (value) of friendship and support along the way.

Relating back to my life before I started this degree, I am the caterpillar in this story, a few years back my *mteay* (mother), my twin sister Vannet and I moved away to Nelson for five years away from the rest of my siblings and *krom kruosaear* (family). Once we left during those 5 years, I did not feel complete. I felt alone although I had my twin sister and *mteay*, I felt lost like that a part of me was striped because I was taken away from my *krom kruosaear*, and that was a hard moment in my life as my *krom kruosaear* meant everything to me. I have a *krom kruosaear*, yet my *krom kruosaear* did not feel whole because of this. But when we moved back and reunited with my *krom kruosaear* I was overjoyed and happy, and started to feel like we were whole again, having that sense of belonging and finding a part of my identity back again is a great feeling. My *krom kruosaear* is my rock, our Cambodian language and cultural values, the respect, *sralanh* (love), and support weaved in together to build on that solid foundation in life, to be happy. Without *krom kruosaear*, we would not be whole, but instead lost and confused on who you are as a person. It shapes you to be the person you are "Family in many ways shapes peoples' lives, it shapes who they are, how they act, and their values, and especially on their identity. Your identity is the only thing you have to show the world who you really are" (Rivera, 2009). Like I said earlier my *krom kruosaear* is my rock, and the *sralanh* and support I have gotten from my *krom kruosaear* throughout my life has helped me to be where I am today.

I am the caterpillar in this story and I am eating and growing collecting knowledge about my *krom kruosaear*, language, my culture and myself. I would say yes I know who I am my language and culture, because I was raised and grew up knowing my



culture and language. Oh well so I thought. But when I started this degree, I was so far from having the wealth and knowledge of my culture, that it made me feel ashamed. Being in this degree made me realised that and I now feel I know more about my culture and myself.

Being in this degree, I have learnt so much about myself, about my language, about my culture, about the community I live in, and for me I would say I have grown. Each step I take the new knowledge I collect, the experience and practices I do in my life. During this stage in my life journey is me the caterpillar being in the chrysalis developing into the butterfly. It is my process of finding my identity, where I am collecting and developing my knowledge, about myself, but also the knowledge to be a great teacher I can be.

I would say coming into this degree I have had limited knowledge and understanding of my cultural background, about teaching, and what it takes to be a professional teacher. What I did know though was that I enjoyed being around children, as for throughout my whole life I have been surrounded by children, and my *krom kruosaeear*. The thought that I could make a difference and the effect I could have on a child's learning and development, the passion I have for children was enough to get me started to pursue a career in teaching. I would say entering this degree I started from the bottom, with no knowledge but the knowledge of myself. But being here something amazing happened to me, I did not know I could further know myself, open up myself to a better feeling of belonging. As each year went by, the more knowledge I collected, and gained, not just the knowledge of the curriculum, and the knowledge of teaching, but the knowledge about myself, about, my *krom kruosaeear*, and about my culture, and along the way the relationships I have gained.

The concepts I have learnt, at first, I did not really understand them, but then I thought of it from a different perspective, my own perspective. Now I have finally realised that everything that we have learnt, *Tatala*, *Toutai*, *Fakapotopoto*, *Faka ako mo e faka ilo*, and *Koloa'ia Aotearoa* comes hand in hand and it all weaves in together in our everyday lives. The way we are, the values, the *sralanh* (love), we are practicing it. However, we do not even know that we are.

From my own understanding of *Tatala*, the Cambodian term used is *Kechchapipheaksaea saamkhan* (critical dialogue) it is about being open minded, having the multiple views, about weaving in the different perspectives, to understand and accept the differences our own cultural values that underpin the relationship that are built upon. For me it is about people, through the connection, dialogue and the conversations we share with one another building and maintaining the relationships, to be able to work collaboratively together, where we are sharing the power of leadership. This is where *Toutai* also comes in, *Toutai* is leadership, someone that is *Fakapotopoto*, I believe to be a great leader you need to be a great researcher too. From my understanding you need to know the values, your own cultural values to be able to make connections with people, the relationships that are built upon that through conversation that are shared, the wealth and richness from the stories and information that have been shared. It is not just about investigating but the relevance of finding out the true meaning behind it all, which can relate and touch one's *behdang* (heart). It helps you grow and to have the knowledge. It is a part of who you are, and your everyday practice. "The essence of spirituality is the search for meaning and clarification of our true self, to discover awareness of our being" (Tagoilelagi-Leota, Kesi, Tagoilelagi, Penn & Autagavaia, 2013, p.157). I have learnt this concept in my practice as my role as a teacher, where I am constantly learning, from the mistakes I learn in life, questioning myself to research about the child, about what I could do differently in improving my practice to thrive to be the best I can be. We do this all the time, it is a part of us in our everyday practice and routine and we are not even aware that we are.

These two concepts work well together, from my perspective how the caterpillar is developing into the butterfly its true form, I am developing my knowledge as the years go by into understanding and identifying myself as a Cambodian and becoming a professional teacher. The development from Year 1 of my *poto*, where in my first year I just had limited knowledge of cultural background and myself. Through the transition process on to Year 2 to *poto'i* where I have gained and collected knowledge, and started to identify myself more in my cultural background and now on my final year *Fakapotopoto* which is *brachnha del ban ttuol* (acquired wisdom) in Cambodian concept. I am now filled with knowledge from when I first started, where I am feeling strong in my language and culture having a better understanding of myself, where I am able to put it into my every day practice as it is a part of me.

From the knowledges I have gained this relates into with *faka ako mo e faka 'ilo* my cultural understanding of this concept is *Kar bangrien ning rien daembi doeng ning youl* which means teaching and learning to understand. The cultural knowledges I have gained from my *mteay* (mother) and *krom kruosaeear* (family), and from being in this degree, learning about it has shaped the person I am today. I will use these cultural knowledge and values and weave in my knowledge from my *fatu* (heart) into with my learning because it is a part of me, who I am as a person and my personality.

From my understanding of *Fakapotopoto* and *faka ako mo e faka'ilo*, you need to have that passion from within the *fatu* (heart), the passion for the children and teaching and *lalanga* (weave) your practices in with the knowledge you have of yourself, the cultural values to underpin your teaching into your practice. From my perspective, we need to be skilful in our knowledge through the process of learning and the development in our life journey, experiences, and practice.

From my own understanding of *koloa'ia*, it builds and starts from *KoloaAotearoa* on to *FakakoloaAotearoa*, and now at present *Koloa'iaAotearoa*. I believe it is about the knowledge you have experienced and gained throughout your life journey, from the *fonua* (land) at birth until you leave this earth. Just like my journey in life going through this degree. As each year passed, I collected and understood more of my cultural background, my values and beliefs. Where I am enriching my knowledge and the wealth of knowledge I have collected from all the papers, throughout my 3 years. It weaves into our everyday living practices, our values, the way of living and shapes who you are as a person. Where I am recognising myself as a Cambodian educator living in Aotearoa. A beautiful land that has accepted me and my *krom kruosaeear*, and many other ethnicity, making this a multicultural society. Because of this, we as migrants need to respect Te Tiriti o Waitangi, as it is a document between two parties, the indigenous people of this land and other migrants like myself to build a peaceful living here. The 3 principles of partnership, participation, and protection in the treaty are to ensure peace for the *tangata whenua* of this land. Looking at this from my journey in life, the partnership is between everyone that is living here in New Zealand, the Māori people and the migrants, and the reciprocal relationships and respect between each culture to ensure all cultures are valued for the contribution they bring working together. As we, all have equal rights and responsibilities in maintaining our cultural knowledge and identity while living in Aotearoa (NZII, n.d.). The principle



participation is to ensure we all have a right to participate and get educated. For me it gives me the opportunity to enter this degree where I have become open minded, exploring, experiencing and appreciating the multicultural society. I am where I am learning about language, culture, and heritage, where it has given me my true identity and sense of belonging living here in Aotearoa. The principle protection, from being in this degree, I am learning the Māori language and culture in my papers, I am acknowledging it in my studies as it is part of the agreement in the treaty. This is showing I am respecting the treaty by protecting the Māori language and culture, that we are embracing it in our education, so students can understand New Zealand's unique bicultural heritage.

To conclude, looking back from when I first started to where I am now, I can say I feel really happy, and proud of myself to have made it this far, making my *krom kruosaeear* proud, through the struggle and challenges in life. I would have not made it this far without the support and love of my *krom kruosaeear* and friends. Having to discover myself more being here, brings joy and richness to my *behdaung* (heart) as I have found my true self, my true identity, and along the way making new friends. Just like the story of the caterpillar developing in the chrysalis into a butterfly, I am developing my knowledge and finding my identity in life. I am just like the butterfly ready to emerge out of the chrysalis and ready to spread my wings and fly to start my new journey in life. I have a saying that pushes me and reminds me that I can do anything if I put my heart and soul to it. *Tae khnhom ach thveuavei ban teangoasa tamory preah krisd del ban pongrung khnhom* (I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me).

References

NZII. (n.d.). *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Retrieved October 5, 2016, from <http://www.nzlii.org/nz/other/nzlc/report/R53/R53-1.html>

Rivera, M. (2009). *Does family shape one's identity?* Retrieved October 27, 2015, from <http://riveramiriam.blogspot.co.nz/2009/09/does-family-shape-ones-identity.html>

Tagoilelagi-Leota, S. F., Kesi, F., Tagoilelagi, I. F., Penn, S., & Autagavaia, M. (2013). Matalalaga a le faia'oga A'oga Amata – Authentic teacher in A'oga Amata. In S. F. Tagoilelagi-Leota & T. Utumapu-McBride (Eds.), *O pelega o fanau: Treasuring children* (pp.154-166). Auckland, New Zealand: AUT University.



CHAPTER 12

Abstract

The presentation for this symposium is centred around the metaphor of *fala fuopotopoto* (round mat) and how as a Tongan, a migrant and a teacher, I can weave the *koloa* of being a Tongan and a migrant living in Aotearoa, to enrich the lives of the *fanau* (children) I teach. This presentation is not necessarily only about my teaching practise but a *talanoa* of the wider and self-awareness that the Bachelor of Pasifika Education – ECE teaching has given me. This degree has allowed me to identify and acknowledge the existing *koloa* of living in Aotearoa, as a Tongan migrant. It places me in an advantageous place to grow my teaching practise and develop a deeper personal *koloa* of the values and beliefs that over time have shaped my lived experiences in Aotearoa. This presentation and programme have humbled me by providing not only opportunities for deeper thought and discussions but it also highlights the constant need for a person to strive and grow in their knowledge.

My name is Kalolaine Tautakitaki. I hail from the island of Tonga from *Hufangalupe* and *Vaonukonuka*, *fa'u kāinga fo'ou ki he To'anga 'o e Ofa*. Today I will be using the *fala fuopotopoto* (round mat) as a metaphor for my *talanoa*. I am aware that it is also used as the metaphor for this degree. The *fala fuopotopoto* is *fatu* (to begin, start, prepare) from the centre and *lālānga* (weave, weaving) outwards. I have chosen this weaving to symbolise the *koloa*, *fakakoloa*, and *koloa'ia* that has been my life and experiences for the past 21 years.

In Tonga, the process and product of weaving are dually referred to as *lālānga*. The process includes both men and women whether planting, harvesting or the preparation of the pandanus leaves and weaving. Once the *lālānga* is completed, it is referred interchangeably as *koloa*. I acknowledge that both the skill of the process and the product is *koloa*.

Lālānga in Tonga has been a skill that has been passed down for generations as a means of livelihood and survival, and a symbol of cultural values and continuity (Pau'uvale, 2012). It is a beautiful example of the partnership and collective strengths of a *kāinga* (family, kin) to create meaningful and beautiful *koloa* for the collective



good. As a Tongan migrant, my *kāinga* and I do not weave in Aotearoa so *lālānga* has become a *talanoa* of *koloa* including ideas, *loto* (spirit) and values.

Just as the flax is planted and harvested from the *fonua*, a child, specifically myself, I have been deeply planted and nourished with the *koloa* of my *fonua*. My *tupu'anga* (origin) and *kāinga* have embedded a deep sense of pride and passion in me for my *fonua* that is inclusive of culture, language, people and their relationship with the land and seas (Tu'itahi, 2009). Identifying myself as a Tongan woman is a layer of the foundation of my identity. This layer heavily influences the decisions and pathways that I have pursued and has given me a deeper sense of meaning, self-worth and purpose in my life. *Fonua* provides me with a perspective and a *tūrangawaewae* (standing place) to express my ideas, thoughts, values and beliefs (Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, 2012). I am always striving to honour and earn the right to that *tūrangawaewae* daily.

When young I had no formal early childhood education (ECE) experience however, my *tupu'anga* was filled with relationships and therefore experiences that enriched my life. As a young girl observing the way relationships were nurtured between my immediate family, *kāinga*, church *kāinga*, neighbours, schoolteachers and peers, was and still is one of the greatest learning opportunities that I have been blessed with. Through these interactions I was able to see, personally practise and understand values that underpin *anga fakaTonga* such as '*ofa* (love), *faka'apa'apa* (acknowledging and returning respect), *fetokoni'aki* (reciprocity), *tauhi vaha'a* (caring and maintaining relationships), *mamahi'i me'a* (loyalty within self) and *anga fakatokilalo* (humility, being open to learn) (Tongan Working Group, 2012). I believe that these values helped mould my *loto* young and weave my person as someone who is able to navigate and self-manage myself within the situations that I have come across.

Looking back now to primary, intermediate and secondary school I do not know when my education transitioned to becoming more about my mental aptitude in maths, English and science and near non-existent in terms of my spiritual and emotional development. Trying to critically think about what was deemed education and worth knowing, when I was in school, is difficult because of how disjointed my education was. After wonderful early learning at home with my *kāinga* I entered primary in Tonga then moved to New Zealand in the third grade, and moved back to Tonga then came back to New Zealand for intermediate.

The expectations of *ako mo e 'ilo* (learning and knowledge) in Tonga is much different than New Zealand. Until I came to this degree, I had not noticed the lack of spirituality in my formal education. I was receiving it from home but had not appreciated it, or sometimes I felt discouraged, at school. Although at home spirituality was important, in hindsight it would have been much more fulfilling if what I learnt at home and school were congruent and were both deemed equally important for my development as a person. Although lacking in some areas, I attribute my high school years as a part of my life and weaving that I had to experience activities and knowledge that broadened my interests that gave me an awakening and realisation of the wider world, interests, events, possibilities and pain, both nationally and globally.

The past three years in this degree has been filled with moments of self-revelation, confidence highs, lows, confusion, wonderment and tears of joy and frustration in equal parts. This degree, the lecturers and fellow students have taught me to look at what my *fatu* was. What my spirit and core within me was made of when I started here. Knowing this then lead to how did I get here? I have gone from believing that I am who I am by chance and genetics to acknowledging the force that is my *fonua* and *kāinga*. I was faced with the challenge of what it means for me to be Tongan, a woman, a daughter, a friend and a migrant. Thoughts that I believed were my own were challenged and while I was offended, I loved the experience. It taught me a lot about myself as a student and as a part of a community of forward thinking Māori and Pasifika men and women who wanted to decolonise thoughts that would hinder the progress of Tongan, Māori and other Pacific knowledges and language.

I was confronted with what is *koloa*? Have I spent my life collecting what is good and enriching or have I collected things that would deter me from being the best possible person I can be? So I looked at myself and labelled what is *koloa*, and what is dead weight that needs to go. This helped me identify and affirm what I have been nurturing within my mind and spirit: *'ilo*, the *poto*, the *vā*, *loto* and *'ofa*.

Knowing what is *koloa* and be able to *fakakoloa* an environment requires more of a person than theoretical knowledge. I have found it requires knowledge of multiple understandings and views and an open-minded person. It requires an understanding of what is important and *koloa* to people, the tensions that sometimes hinder *fakakoloa* in ECE and life in general. The *tatala* (opening of mind and heart) of tensions has



allowed me to come to my own understanding of situations that I once believed were black and white. Now I see various shades of grey due to circumstances, economics, politics, religion and a multitude of factors. I have learnt through *tatala* that there is no easy way to fix situations and move on, but by open and critical *talanoa* one can begin to understand the complex layers that have created a situation (Paleai-Foroti, 2015). Tensions are caused by people and the different spirits, agendas and priorities they have. Situations and relationships may be complex but I am a firm believer that without God, or whatever religion or faith you choose to believe in, I cannot *tatala*, because to understand one another it takes humanity that can be exhausting on understanding, patience and generosity of spirit. In essence, my *lālānga* and *fatu* has to be tight or with pressure, it will come undone and for that is through God.

As this degree progressed, the knowledge and questions got deeper. Now that you know what *koloa* is, where to find it, what it looks like and now you know you have it, what are you doing with it? Who is benefiting? Is it making a difference? Our *ako mo e 'ilo* and *poto* – being clever, skilful; to understand what to do and be able to do it (Churchward, 1959), was now required to engage in *FatuLālānga* – practise and develop from being clever to being an expert and develop from learning and knowing to having the capacity and capability to teach.

This year has extended *ako'i mo e 'ilo'i* to *fakaako mo e faka'ilo*. This was about me recognising and deciding what is relevant to teach and raise consciousness. This is a lifetime work. I know it will not stop here; learning never stops. Similarly, to the *poto'i* I have tried to practise, being skilful eventually must develop into a natural ease, wisdom and sagacious practice. In my *fala fuopotopoto*, *fakapotopoto* is the strand that weaves through *ako*, *'ilo* and *poto* in practice by natural instinct and discernment. From what I have counted as personal achievements, striving to attain *fakapotopoto* has allowed me to fulfil my role as a teacher according to the code of ethics and Graduating Teacher Standards organically and without prompting by a marking criteria or checklist. The *lālānga* in *fala fuopotopoto* will not end after this degree; it will be an ongoing process. This process will involve me becoming a teacher who is wise, proactive and takes initiative rather than knowledgeable but waiting for instruction.

It surprises me what I have learnt in the past three years. This degree has enriched my life and practise from notes, motivation, *talanoa*, ideas, resource making and *tauhi*

fanau – nurture of children. The knowledges and wisdoms that have been shared with me these three years have allowed me to *tauhi fanau valevale* – nurture infants and toddlers with more confidence and sensitivity. As a teacher who is trying to promote *mo'uimafana* I have learnt it is not only about physical development, I look at an infant now and do not panic and view it as helpless. I look at an infant and recognize this child as the *koloa* that he/she are, the '*ofa, lotu* (*prayer*), and joy that this child represents for his/her *kāinga*. Although physically not yet independent, I know that this baby can feel the emotional security and trust with adults who care for him/her (Ministry of Education, 1996). As a teacher, I am positive that this baby can tell the presence of '*ofa* through my body language, my hands, my expressions and voice.

My interactions with older children and children with special needs have also benefitted me. The biggest change I have seen in myself is the way I view children. Tongans believe that *fanau ko e koloa fungani mei he 'Otua* – Children are treasures from God (Koloto, 2004). Thereby making the adults in their lives the *tauhi* of this treasure. Three years ago, I was happy as long as the child was occupied and not distressed. Now I will challenge children with activities and questions, talk to them more, introduce vocabulary and I am not willing to let a teachable moment go by. It has gotten to a point where if I know I have let an opportunity pass by I get slightly sad, not because I lost a chance to show what I know to my Associate Teacher or the child but because I lost a moment to engage the child on a different topic. The *fala fuopotopoto* is symbolic of a holistic framework that represents inclusive education and the opportunity and open place for other ideas of *tauhi fanau* not only Early Childhood Education or Tongan but also Western, Montessori and Māori in partnership to create a holistic, encompassing and *fakakoloa* learning for children as well as myself as a teacher and person.

With so much that I have learnt and have not yet shared, it is somewhat amusing that I know very well that I still have a lot to learn, I have a lot to experience and much to know. Symbolically *toutai* refers to deep-sea *moana* fishing but I have come to understand it this year that you do not cast a line and hope to get lucky. One must know the waters, the time, the place, and what I want to catch. Whether I embark on postgraduate study or teach in the future, I know that opportunities to learn are everywhere. The wealth of knowledge in tertiary institutes, ECE centres, teachers and families is in abundance. This degree has prepared me for learning in whatever form it



may come in, whether in a sermon or a lecture, the knowledge I attain is no use to anyone if it cannot enrich someone else and myself. Whatever we as a class may do in the future, you cannot *fakakoloa* anyone or anything if you yourself are not *koloa'ia*.

These past three years I have been *fakakoloa* by the people, the talks and the wisdoms that surrounded me. Moreover, ever since the first year I have been walking around in a state of *koloa'ia*. I am in abundance of wealth here by being amongst everyone. So to end, I leave you with a poem I wrote that shows how much I value the contribution that each person I have had the honour to work with, talk to and meet during this degree. The Forum of Indigenous Thinkers, Artists, Poets, Scholars and Educators with the Conference Coordinating Committee (Tautakitaki, 2015) published this poem. This was a way to contribute back to the field of ECE in Aotearoa and my Tongan and Pasifika community.

To be so blessed

Young one

Look ahead

Those before you have paved a way

To be so blessed

Each step you take

Well met, supported, embraced

Poto Fakapotopoto,

'etau lea, mo e tupu'anga

Better for it, you are enriched

Whakamana 'a e loto 'o e Kāinga

To be so blessed

But do not stop here

Young one

Tatala ho loto

Look around

Into the hearts of those who walk with you

To be so blessed

You are not alone

Together build your wildest dreams
Because your *moana* is deep,
Toutai is plentiful,
Your *fonua* is rich
They allow you
Gives your loto strength
To be so blessed
But do not stop here,
Young one
Look behind you
You are a hope for the future
To be so blessed
You are the pride of the past
Your trodden path has extended the road
Others will walk these grounds
Well met by the imprints of your footsteps
Ako mo e 'Ilo will not stop here
They will go beyond
To be so blessed
That I could be a part of the journey.



References

- Churchward, C. M. (1959). *Tongan Dictionary: Tongan-English and English-Tongan*. Tonga: Tonga Fast Print.
- Koloto, A. (2004). A Tongan perspective on development. In W. Drewery & L. Bird (Eds.), *Human development in Aotearoa: A journey through life* (2nd ed., pp. 61-65). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whariki: He whariki matauranga mo nga mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Paleai-Foroti, I. (2015, March 11). *Introduction to the concept of Tatala (critical dialogue) with reference to our own Pasifika knowledge's, values, beliefs and cultural practises*. Lecture presented to the Ako mo e 'ilo class (297403), Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Pau'uvala, D. L. (2012). *Laulōtaha; Tongan perspectives of 'quality' in early childhood education*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Tautakitaki, K. T. (2015). To be so blessed. In L. Manu'atu, M. I. Taione & N. L. T. Helu-Mabbs (Eds.), *Booklet of nursery rhymes & poems* (pp.118-119). Auckland, New Zealand: Forum of Indigenous Thinkers, Artists, Poets, Scholars and Educators

Te Ahukaramū, C. R. (2012, September 22). *Papatūānuku – the land - Tūrangawaewae – A place to stand*. Retrieved October 5, 2015, from <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/papatuanuku-the-land/page-5>

Tongan Working Group. (2012). *Fofola e fala kae talanoa e kāinga: A Tongan conceptual framework for the prevention of and intervention in family violence in New Zealand*. Ministry of Social Development.

Tu'itahi, S. (2009). *Langa fonua: In search of success. How a Tongan kainga strived to be socially and economically successful in New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Office of the Directorate Pasifika@Massey.



Poem 1 – Sissy Tainui

Beginnings

My whanau, my life

My children

Small rays of light

My tupuna not forgotten

Beginnings and endings

Like the fine silk of cotton

Navigators, explorers we are

Our loved one's close

No distance to far

Haere mai tamariki ma

Let's walk this path together, this homeland

Always deep in our heart

Teaching me to be humble

Teaching me to be brave

A sense of belonging from the start

As I awaken everyday

The sounds of birds singing

Family guiding me all the way

My journey of learning

Awakens me everyday

Poem 2 – by Dhrishti Narayan

Our language is our identity,

Our culture brings us prosperity,

Our values form our personality,

And our beliefs build our unity.

Poem 3 by Valerie Saio

In case you have not realised it is somehow uncool to say what you believe in

In a land of diverse cultures it is somehow hard to be who you are

It is somehow uncool to speak a language other than English.

People are somehow afraid to speak words of another language
Why must I say?
Why are we putting ourselves through that agony?
Language are the words that are spoken
Spoken for other to understand
Language is a gift of tongues
A blessing that is being given to you and I
Language is the culture as you and I believe
Language is how you and I connect
I only speak two languages
Samoan and English
But mainly English I would say
When I speak English to my elderly
I feel uncomfortable
Knowing I can hurt them by speaking Palagi
I would get an expression on their face
"o le fia palagi"
But not in so many words
I think Palagi
I speak Palagi
I think Samoan
I speak plastic Samoan
I once believe nothing good comes from one's language
Yeah neeh,
Why should I?
It is not so important?
LIES LIES LIES is what I have being telling myself.
My passion began with music and dance.
Fob music one would say
The ability to tell a story through beautiful beats, heartfelt words, and instruments that
hits you in your soul
The ability to dance to feel the music in your heart
The ability to tell a story through your action
The ability to sing on top of your lungs even though you cannot sing
The ability to learn alongside one another.

Dance to feel the music in your heart it is then you speak to others.
Dance to know
Dance to learn
More about your language and culture.
Dance to become one with one's culture
Dance with grace in respect to the culture
Respect the culture as well as the language
The spark in your brown eyes
Your glow
Your movement
Your beautiful voice
Reflecting of your love for your language and culture.
Respect, build the character and defines who we are.

Poem 4 – by Siumoana Savieti

“KNOWING MY IDENTITY”

*I consider myself
not only a true Tongan
but a true Polynesian
the knowledge, the wisdom, and understanding
I know is from God
the love, respect, service,
and maintaining a good relationship
I have for both cultures
connecting and grounding me to both
Tonga and Samoa
to know who I am
is my truest identity
I stand by and will continue
To share what both cultures
have taught me to **l o v e...**
that is what I value, throughout this journey
as a mother, wife, sister, aunty, and daughter
and living in abundance of Aotearoa
thank you Tangata Whenua.*

“ILO'I PE 'E KITA 'A KITA”

'Oku 'amo atu 'eku laukau'aki 'eku hoko ko e fefine Tonga
pea mo 'eku hoko ko e fefine Polinisia.
he ko e Ako, 'ilo mo e Poto, mo hoto fakakoloa,
ko e me'a kotoa pe ia mei he 'Otua.
koe 'ofa, faka'apa'apa, tauhi vaa mo e feveitokai'aki
'oku fatulalanga ai 'eku mo'ui,
'o tala mahino ai hoku founa,
koau ko e Tonga mo e Ha'amoia.
ko 'ete 'ilo kita mo hoto founa mo hoto 'uhinga
'oku ne pukepuke 'a fufula 'ete lea mo hoto 'ulungaanga tukufonua.
ko ia pe 'ete tukufua mo 'ete pole ki he kaha'u na,
ke vahevahe atu mo tufotufa
'a ia kotoa kuo fakalekesi'aki au ke u 'Ofa....
ko ia si'ete mata'ikoloa he vaa'ihala,
'ete hoko koe fa'ee, uaifi, moe tokoua,
'isa koe tama moe mehikitanga
ko hoto kahoa tauleva 'i Aotearoa
Hoto tu'a'ofa atu, Fakafeta'i e ma'u Koloa!!!

Poem 5 – by Valentina Kingi

When I was 9, I moved to this place
This place that foreign and had new face
It was weird and noisy but also wonderful
It was cold and grey but oh so colourful
It had a lot of cars and a million twinkling lights
It had a lot of people, most of them white
Lured by promises of work and better opportunity
“Speaking English” was the secret to success, the key
Or so I was told anyway
By those who *may* have led me astray

(You see) culture is married to language
Like a club sandwich
Take away a layer
Then it has no flavour
Like crackers and cheese
Honey and bees
Chips and Dip
Hop and skip
Cookies and milk
Satin and silk
You get my point
Their a universal joint
Language must be cherished
Don't let it perish
Chucked away on the wayside
Like some undignified, germicide, unidentified, pesticide.
Throwing away your language is cultural suicide
Don't be tempted by bright lights and city nights
The urban flight into the limelight
Language is a property right, a human right...its copyright!

The way you speak is unique
It's like a valuable antique
It's priceless and holds it weight in gold
Don't use it as propaganda
Our culture and language are stories untold
It's a freedom of expression
Don't let it be a transgression
They tell me mine is slowly dying
And that for me is terrifying
How did I get so caught up
In this rat-race just to have a close-up
Of material things that really don't matter
I mean, my bank account is no fatter.
I need to hold on to this language I was blessed with

To be proud and to come forthwith

To announce and to share

To declare everywhere

That MY language is the key success and that of my happiness

Because God gave us language as an identity

To mark the difference between you and me.



神愛世人，甚
生子賜給他
他的不至滅

至將他的獨
們叫一切信
亡反得永生

Koloa Pasifika

is a tribute to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) degree, the graduates of the programme and the staff (2013-2017). It is only through teaching and learning about Pasifika concepts, knowledges and cultural perspectives, that teachers will be able to have some insights into the world of their Pasifika students.

AUT

ISBN 978-0-473-46741-8



9 780473 467401