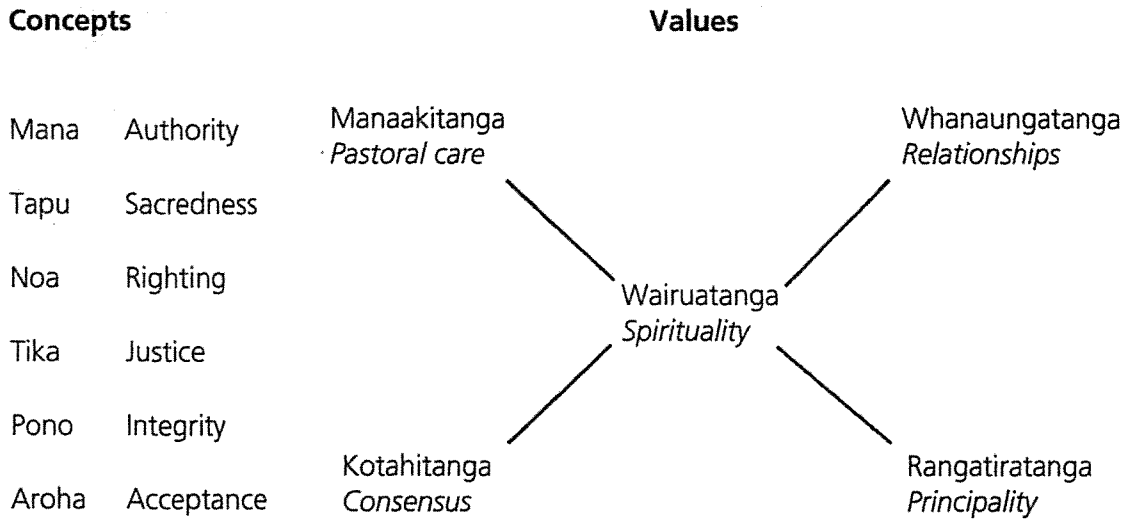
FIGURE 2.4 *Māori concepts and values*



Source: adapted from Ritchie, J. (1992). *Becoming bicultural.* Wellington: Huia Publishers.

Thinking about human development conjures up notions of adventure and intrigue, so vast and intricate is its scope. Many scholars refer to the biopsychosocial forces that interact on the wonder of humanity. People are continually engaged in the art of making meaning and creating our world through the unique process of human learning. In doing so we draw upon the realms of our own as well as other cultures. Collectively, these factors provide the things we notice about what makes people the way they are, as well as some interesting variations that make us individuals (Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996). These privileged investigations are predicated on the universal philosophy of respect. Traditionally, Māori have expressed in multiple ways that mythology, history, and kinship with nature are key aspects of their cultural survival. These are some of the touchstones of Māori psychology and they warrant respect in studies of human development in Aotearoa, just as respect is advanced to conventional approaches within the discipline. Huge dividends emanate from respectfulness of other ways and other means. The first of these is tika or justice, the plea for cultures to 'listen' to each other and hear each other's voices. The second is pono, which refers to affirming the integrity of traditional, as well as contemporary, knowledge. Finally there is aroha, that concept which has depth and scope in abundance, but with a central core referred to as acceptance.

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora te iwi.

With your food basket, and mine, there will be ample for all.

75100

Reading 5.2

Mā tōku rourou - the concept of Ako: Co-construction of knowledge from a kaupapa Māori perspective

Tamati, A. (2005). 'Ma tau rourou, Ma taku rourou' The Concept of AKO: co-construction of knowledge from a Kaupapa Maori perspective. *Early Education*, *37*, 23–31.

"Mā tōu rourou, Mā tōku rourou"
The Concept of AKO: co-construction of knowledge from a Kaupapa Māori perspective

Aroaro Tamati

Peer Reviewed Article

The concept of AKO in Māori education ideology means both to teach and to learn. AKO was articulated in literature in 1984, after anthropologist Joan Metge carried out a three-year research project on Māori preferred processes of teaching and learning. Metge found that Western educational theory and the English language make "clear-cut" distinctions between both teaching and learning and the teacher and learner roles. The Māori language uses one word, ako, to mean both to learn and to teach. Metge concluded that the notion of AKO stresses 'the unified co-operation of learner and teacher in a single enterprise' (p.2).

AKO is aptly depicted by the whakatauki (traditional Māori proverb), "*Mā ā tōu rourou, Mā tōku rourou ka ora ai te iwi*" – through your basket (contribution) and my basket (contribution) we can feed our people. From an educational perspective this saying denotes the dynamic role of contribution in the construction of new thinking and learning. It signifies that every person has something of value to bring to a learning opportunity, no matter how large or small. It also represents partners coming in on equal terms. Every contribution influences and contributes to the construction of new knowledge and understanding.

In Māori society, the notion of contribution is underpinned by the fundamental importance of others in learning, of relationships and of sharing and contributing as members of a group, not in isolation of others (Wharehuia Hemara, 2000). Traditional Māori ideology emphasises wholeness and connectedness where knowledge is viewed as a group possession, to be used for the benefit of the group (Metge, 1984). Māori preferred social and learning processes sit within the context of whanaungatanga, where people are intimately connected to everyone else through whakapapa (genealogy), whānau, hapū and iwi - their family and tribal links (Hemara, 2000).

Arapera Tangaere (1996) argues that whanaungatanga and AKO integrally link with the concept of tuakana/teina - the notion of an older sibling taking responsibility for a younger sibling's learning or development. According to Russell Bishop and Ted Glynn (1999), it is the dynamic, flexible nature of whanaungatanga that allows for the role shifting that is fundamental to further learning taking place. With the empowerment that the inter-changeability of roles suggests, AKO can be seen to remove the issue of inequitable power relationships from the teaching and learning equation and instead focus on the nature and complexity of interactions and relationships, in the construction of new knowledge.

The bringing of the "rourou" acts as an appropriate metaphor for co-construction. AKO can be seen as the process of each person, metaphorically, intermingling the contents of their rourou (existing understandings and abilities) with others' as they interact and negotiate in shared and collaborative activity. When they gather up their rourou, elements from the other person's rourou are merged with their own. These shared understandings are then lengthened and strengthened whenu (strands) of their rourou that are involved in a perpetual process of weaving.

AKO has some parallels with Western educational paradigms such as the concept of schema - specific patterns of thought, speech, interaction, representation, and behaviour (Nutbrown, 1999). Cathy Nutbrown argues that patterning and consistency are features of young children's development and stresses the importance of progression in thought and of making meaningful continuities. AKO also appears to have interesting connections with the concept of co-construction of knowledge. However, while literature suggests links between the concepts of co-construction and AKO there is little evidence-based data. Some questions arise:

- How is AKO exemplified in children's learning?
- What are the parallels between AKO and the notion of co-construction?
- What are the implications for teaching and learning?

In order to explore these questions, I conducted an evidence-based study at an immersion Māori early childhood centre. The centre, which has a roll of approximately 25 children, ranging in age from nine months to four years, aims to provide quality early childhood education, from a Kaupapa Māori perspective. Its core medium of communication is Te Reo Māori. Five one-hour observations of small groups of children were carried out over a period of approximately two weeks. Observations were undertaken mainly in the tuakana room, although some of the play flowed to the outdoor play area. Two historical observations were also included because of their relevance to the topic. Narrative written records were made of participants' actions, interactions and language. The observations were analysed and interpreted under four main themes: the idea of shared learning, the role of whanaungatanga, the inter-connectedness of learning and the importance of equitable power relationships.

The Idea of Shared Learning

"Mā tōu rourou, Mā tōku rourou"
(With your basket and my basket, we create a new basket, of knowledge)

An integral part of the concept of AKO is the idea of shared learning, not just in the sense of sharing ideas, dialogue, or prior learning, but also in the shared outcomes and understandings of the group, as an entity. Here the shared understandings can often have more importance to individuals than their own goals. In a sense, the shared group goal becomes the individual's own goal, even if temporarily. This links to the concept of intersubjectivity (Artin Goncu, 1998) where those involved in the play engage in shared meaning. Margarita Azmitia (1988, as cited in Marion Dowling, 2000, p. 28) highlights the value of "shared thinking", by being

involved with others in learning: including increasing the time children work on a task; fostering persistence, enjoyment, increased strategising and problem solving strategies; and the benefits of less experienced children learning through observing more skilled partners.

Tauira (example) 1:

> *Rua (a 4-year-old boy) has a 'flag' that he made yesterday. He is waving it around. Tahi (a 4-year-old girl) watches what he is doing and wants the flag. Rua refuses to hand it over and Tahi is upset. I gently suggest, "Tērā pea me hanga tētehi mā Tahi," (Maybe you could both make another flag for Tahi). Rua and Tahi agree and they both set about making Tahi a flag. They get a stick, some paper and some Sellotape. Despite their efforts the paper will not stick to the rough branch. They call out to me, " Whaea, kāore i te māu!" (Whaea, it won't stay on!). "Me pēwhea te whakamau? He aha tētehi atu mahi hei whakamau?" (What do you think might make it stick? What other things could you use, to make it hold?), I ask. All of a sudden Rua runs over to the resource shelves and gets a stapler. They both try to staple the paper to the branch. To no avail. They both turn to each other. "Kāore i te mahi!," (It won't work), Rua exclaims. "What's a good idea?", Tahi asks in English. They both scoot back to the resource shelves. Rua finds some long, rectangular stickers. Rua holds them up, "Pēwhea ēnei?" (What about these?). "Ae" (yes), replies Tahi. They set about attaching the stickers, Rua taking the lead role, with Tahi in assistance, handing him a sticker at a time. After several minutes and a considerable number of stickers, the paper fastens to the branch. Rua hands the flag over to Tahi. She stares at the flag, with a look of sheer joy on her face.*

This interaction is a delightful example of AKO, intersubjectivity and shared learning. The pair is presented with a problem – one flag and two children. With gentle prompting, they immediately understand what they need to do. What is interesting is the way Rua, possibly because he created the first flag, took on a "teacher" or tuakana role, while Tahi (who is one of the dominant girls at the centre) was happy to take on a teina role, in achieving the common goal. The task involved some pretty intense problem solving. They made choices (Rua always making the final decisions) about the use of materials and strategies, and discovered cause and effect. There is evidence of aroha, awhi, tautoko, (empathy, caring and support), tino rangatiratanga (self determination and self regulation), whakawhanaungatanga and mahi tahi (making connections, cooperation and reinforcing reciprocal relationships), and also the creation of new working theories and understandings. They worked at an extremely high level of involvement indicating higher-level thinking. And the overarching ethos was evident: "*Mā tōu rourou, Mā tōku rourou*" (Their combined contributions helped them achieve their goal). But more than this, Rua put Tahi's goal ahead of his own needs. Tahi's goal became the pair's goal.

The Role Of Whanaungatanga

"Whakatupungia te pā harakeke, kia tupu whakaritorito"
(Nurture the essence of whānau, that it may flourish)

A central component of AKO is the concept of whanaungatanga – the fundamental importance of relationships, and the roles and responsibilities within those relationships Within the concept of whanaungatanga, AKO highlights the nature and the importance of roles. Children take on roles in which they are comfortable and which are also socially acceptable to the group. Children learn that with certain roles come responsibilities. Central roles in learning are those of "tuakana and teina" (that of older sibling being responsible for a younger sibling).

Tauira 2:

> *Two 2-year-old girls are in the under-two area. Toru is talking on the phone. She turns to Wha and says, "Kua haere a Mama ki tana mahi!" (Your Mum's gone to work, and continues talking on the phone. "Ae, kua haere ia ki te mahi. Ae, kua haere. Ka kite." (Yeah, she's gone to work, yeah...she's gone. See you.), she continues. Several minutes later, both go to the whānau play area. "Haere ki te moe" (Go to sleep), Toru orders. Wha climbs under the bed and Toru lays a blanket over the side. "E moe," (Go to sleep), she repeats. Toru then climbs on top of the bed and goes to sleep herself. Seconds later, Toru calls out, "Oho!" (Wake up!). She climbs under the bed and joins Wha. Then Toru announces, "Wā oho. Haere mai kuri, e oho. Wā oho. Haere mai kuri, haere" (Come on dog. Wake up. Time to get up. Come on dog, let's go). The pair climbs out, Wha crawling on all fours. They proceed to "walk" around the room then make their way back to the bed. "Haere, haere ki tō whare," (Come on, get in your kennel) Toru orders.*

Here the two girls engage in what Doris Fromberg (2002, p.36) describes as "shared predicability and collaborative novelty". They also take on tuakana and teina roles, as part of their social pretend play. Toru's dialogue and actions reveal her understandings of mother/child and owner/dog roles – that of nurturing. But the use of an authoritative tone shows she also understands different responsibilities or types of authority that might come with those roles. Wha reveals her knowledge of how a dog should act, by panting, walking on all fours and picking items up with her mouth. She also acts in a subservient role to her mother/owner. To perform in this 'screenplay' (Fromberg, 2002), each takes on roles that are comfortable to them. The key aspects of whanaungatanga, evidenced in this example, are the importance of relationships, of the need to be part of a group, of learning occurring through group interactions and of such learning reinforcing cultural values and customs. Social pretend play lends itself to this type of learning.

The Role Of Inter-Connectedness In Learning

"Ēhara taku toa i te toa takitahi, ēngari he toa takitini"
(My knowledge does not comprise of my solitary endeavours but of those of others, past and present)

The concept of AKO incorporates the notion of inter-connectedness in all learning. According to this ideology, no learning or thought can exist in isolation. All thought and learning is connected – over time, experiences, thought, relationships and cultural contexts, and environments.

Tauira 3:

> *Tekau-mā-toru, a 4-year-old girl, is in the play kitchen making a drink. Iwa, a 2-year-old boy, and Tekau-mā-rua, a 2-year-old boy, bring their cups to her and she fills them. Whitu, a 2-year-old girl, comes along. Whitu hands her a cup then drinks from it. She has another one, then another. In all, the children repeat this process 9 times. Iwa grasps one of the play stove's elements. He turns it as if it is a steering wheel and starts 'driving'. Whitu 'drives' with another element. Iwa yells at her, "Kao, sit, sit," (pointing to the food table). She goes and sits at the table, while Iwa continues 'driving'. Tekau-mā-toru and Tekau-mā-rua walk off. Tekau-mā-rua returns, with a set of keys. He makes a car sound and turns the keys, as if he is starting an engine. Iwa continues 'driving'. Tekau-mā-rua picks up an eggbeater and starts turning it, making a car noise has he turns it. Tekau-mā-toru returns - picking up the keys, turning them on top of the element and making a car sound. She hands the keys to Iwa. He in turn, rotates the keys on the element. Each starts turning an element, with Iwa making car sounds.*

This group's script starts out with making drinks, with four-year-old, Tekau-mā-toru in control. However, 2-year-old Iwa confidently changes the script. The driving actions are repeated over and over again, revealing a possible circular schema - about turning engines and rotating wheels. Examples of these are the use of props – a set of keys and an egg beater – which are turned and rotated, with accompanying engine sounds. The consistent connections are those of experience, materials, culture and thought. It is interesting to note that at "wā huihui" (mat time), Tekau-mā-rua still had his keys with him. A teacher who had not been involved with the 'driving' play tried to elicit the keys from him, much to his resentment! This scenario, of encountering the actions or behaviour of a child and not having prior knowledge of such behaviour, is probably played out numerous times in early childhood settings. Certainly, it is unrealistic to expect teachers to be aware of every interaction and every play, all of the time. But what do you do when you are faced with such a predicament? Suggestion: Stop. Take a breath. Wait. Remember, every action or behaviour you observe has a history and a context. Listen to the child. Trust the child. You are now in the teina (learner) role!

The Role Of Equitable Power Relationships

"Ko koe ki tēnā kīwai, ko au ki tēnei kīwai, o te kete..."
(You carry your handle and I'll carry my handle, of the kete)

AKO embodies the notion of equitable power relationships in teaching and learning This is about the interchangeability of roles, the importance of choice, equitable power relations and shared understandings. To simultaneously embrace the concept of teaching and learning means acknowledging the equality of both the teacher and learner roles. Viewing children as having mana, or status, recognises they have the ability to make their own decisions and to drive their own learning.

Tauira 4:

> *Two four-year-old boys are throwing large soft wool balls into a small wicker basket. Rima takes on a tuakana role, determining who goes first. "Taku wā," (My turn), he announces. Wha, a 2-yr-old girl, joins him and tries to throw out of turn. This is disruptive to the flow of play. "Taku wā!" (My turn!), he yells, and puts the basket on a chair. "He pōrangi!" (That's silly!), he says to her. He picks up the basket and carries it around the room, finally putting it under a large painting table. Wha follows him. "Haere atu," (Go away), Rima calls out to her. I enter into the issue and explain to Rima that Wha will listen and follow the "rules" (his rules), if he explains to her what he requires of her. Rima quietly ponders what he needs to do. Observing this exchange, Wha appears to relax. She shuffles over to where I am, and sits down, waiting. It is Rima's turn. "Taku wā?" (My turn), Wha asks. "Kao, taku wā" (No, its my turn), Rima replies. Rima has his turn. When he is finished, he lets Wha have a go at throwing the balls. They continue turn taking. All this time, the other boy (Tekau-mā-tahi) has been watching the pair. He calls out, "What about me?" in English. " Kao, taku wā," (my turn), Rima announces. Tekau-mā-tahi goes and plays with a truck.*

This interaction shows how power roles and relationships are co-constructed. It is Rima who takes on the tuakana role. But his "power" is challenged when Wha arrives, so the group dynamics must be revised. My involvement acted as a scaffold - the type envisaged by Laura Berk and Adam Winsler (Jordan, 2004, pp.32-33) which involves interesting and culturally meaningful collaborative problem-solving, the fostering of intersubjectivity and warm and sensitive reciprocal relationships.

My role was not to determine or change the power dynamics, but to provide information. Wha stopped being disruptive, possibly because I had advocated for her interests and her inclusion in the play. This brief adult support was enough to facilitate intersubjectivity between Rima and Wha about involvement and inclusion - evidenced by Wha asking Rima if it is her turn yet. If there were no shared understanding, Wha would have continued throwing out of turn. Interestingly, Tekau-mā-tahi chose not to assert his right to continue playing with

the balls. Could it be that his lower level of Māori language fluency than that of the other two lessened his ability to foster or sustain intersubjectivity between the trio that, in turn, may have lessened his ability to effectively assert himself?

Implications for Teaching and Learning

This study provides some intriguing understandings about how AKO can be realised as an emancipatory tool, in fostering young children's thinking and learning.

The Idea of Shared Learning

All children have their own "rourou" of knowledge, prior experiences, relationships and existing understandings, that contribute to their own and other's learning. Teachers need to find ways that children can actively and positively contribute their own "rourou" to construct, with others, new experiences, understandings and relationships. Teachers need to notice and recognise children's learning journeys and respond appropriately and effectively (Cowie, 2000). This might include providing resources for play, removing impediments, actively participating in social pretend play and revisiting ideas and experiences.

The Role of Whanaungatanga

Children need to experience different roles and responsibilities in order to learn how to effectively interact with others, how to include others, how to negotiate, or how to take other's points of view. If not, children will not be seen as valuable play partners. Howard Gardner (1983) argues that a child's knowledge is meaningless until it is expressed in a social setting. Tuakana and Teina roles are important in such learning. Children also need to investigate roles and responsibilities outside the early childhood setting, such as those on a marae. Teachers need to consider the nature and level of their own involvement in social pretend play. Active adult participation in pretend play can: give validity to the play and children's self concept; extend both the nature and level of the play, as well as adult's and children's existing understandings of the topic of play; enable adults and children to explore relationships; and further develop or co-construct their knowledge about themselves and as members of a social group.

The Inter-Connectedness of Learning

As with the notion of schema (Nutbrown, 1999), AKO is fostered in an environment where there is a consistency of routine, adult behaviour, resources and materials. In such an environment, children are able to share each other's rourou (existing experiences and understandings) to weave, with others, a new 'shared' rourou. According to Tangaere in the Māori world one's personality does not develop in isolation. Individuals, relationships and learning are intimately connected to everyone else. Children show that, given consistency of materials, positive environment, interactions with others and, time and space, they actively control their own learning, exploring relationships and trying out other roles and new ideas. To maintain the inter-connectedness of learning, teachers need to notice, recognise, and respond to the threads of children's thinking (Nutbrown, 1996). They need to be continually aware that there is a history, context and logic in children's action and thought, particularly when teachers may have no prior knowledge of such action and thought. As already mentioned, it is unrealistic to expect teachers to be aware all children's interactions and

behaviour. But being aware that there is always a history and context to such behaviour, and actively seeking children's perspectives (Gallaway, 1999) can help guide the way teachers respond, thereby fostering dynamic learning.

The Role of Equitable Power Relationships

Experimenting with power roles is an integral part of social learning. AKO is about the interchangeability of roles. With dominant power roles comes learning about how actions impact on others and taking responsibility for the consequences of those actions. Teachers can extend children's thinking and learning about power relationships by fostering concepts of leadership and followship (Sergiovanni, 1992). Children need to see the people whom they perceive as having the most power, take on less powerful roles (Bishop and Glynn, 1999). Relationships are a key aspect of AKO. Relationships between adults and children, where boundaries are fairly and consistently stated and implemented, provide models and strategies for children to be able to create and experiment with building their own positive, reciprocal relationships with others. Jordan (2004, p.33) argues that in order to co-construct meaning and understanding, teachers need to acknowledge children's own expertise as being as valid as that of teachers. It must also be remembered that it is the child's learning journey, not what the teacher sees it to be. Children need to be able to make their own decisions and choices and have control over their lives and learning.

Conclusion

It is important to note that all four components of AKO outlined are interconnected. The idea of bringing and reciprocally sharing one's rourou in a learning opportunity provides the platform for children to 'weave' together their new and existing understandings. It serves as a vital process in extending children's thinking and learning. Ultimately the success, or otherwise, of utilising the concept of AKO within early childhood settings, lies with adults – teachers, management and whānau. AKO positions children as equal partners in the teaching and learning process. Whether children get the opportunity to exercise that right is directly determined by adults. It is adults who determine a centre's kaupapa (philosophy) and how that kaupapa is implemented. As powerful players, children are quite capable of determining their goals and driving their own learning. The question is, how much power are we adults prepared to relinquish in order for real, meaningful and holistic learning to take place? The ball is most definitely in our court!

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Reading 5.6

The 'Pasifika umbrella' and quality teaching: Understanding and responding to the diverse realities within

Samu, T. W. (2006). The 'Pasifika umbrella' and quality teaching: Understanding and responding to the diverse realities within. *Waikato Journal of Education, 12*, 35–49.

THE 'PASIFIKA UMBRELLA' AND QUALITY TEACHING: UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO THE DIVERSE REALITIES WITHIN

TANYA WENDT SAMU
School of Pasifika Education
The University of Auckland

ABSTRACT *The New Zealand Ministry of Education recognises that the most important challenge facing teachers today is the ability to manage simultaneously the complexity of learning needs of diverse students (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. v). It also holds the view that for quality teaching to occur, teachers must be responsive to diversities between groups of learners as well as within groups of learners. This paper aims to enhance educators' understandings about the intra-group diversities of Pasifika and to signal the implications for teaching and learning.*

KEYWORDS

Pasifika students, Pasifika diversities, Quality teaching

INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Ministry of Education, through its Best Evidence Synthesis Programme (BES), has recognised that in the context of New Zealand schools the most important challenge facing teachers is the ability to manage simultaneously the complexity of learning needs of diverse students (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. v). Diversity in schooling in this case is characterised by differences in socio-economic background, gender, special needs, disability, giftedness, home language and ethnicity. The Ministry is of the view that for quality teaching to occur, teachers must be responsive to such diversities (Alton-Lee, 2003).

The BES Programme recognises that diversities are found within ethnic groups as well. It has directed those who are contracted to develop syntheses of evidence-based research to be mindful of the following:

> Teaching needs to be responsive to the diversity and the diverse realities within groups, for example, diversity within Pākehā, Māori, Pasifika (the Pasifika umbrella) and Asian students who are arguably the most diverse *ethnic* group categories by cultural and linguistic heritage. (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 21, emphasis added)

This paper aims to explore the forms of diversity under the Pasifika umbrella, and to identify and discuss related issues that are of critical importance for the teaching and learning of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools. The author contends that quality teaching for Pasifika learners requires the development of

teachers' and educators' in-depth, contextualised knowledge and understanding of their Pasifika learners. I argue that this is a pre-requisite for the overall process of developing the most effective, site-specific and tailor-made pedagogical response plan possible.

This paper begins with a brief explanation of the term Pasifika education and a description of Pasifika people as a multi-ethnic grouping in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This is followed by a discussion of the term 'quality teaching' in relation to the term 'responsiveness to diversity'. The paper will then address its overall aims.

PACIFIC EDUCATION / PASIFIKA EDUCATION

In the context of New Zealand, Pacific education simply refers to the education and development of people of Pacific cultural heritage and descent resident in New Zealand. Over the past two to three decades, the formal names or labels that institutions and government organisations such as the Ministry of Education have applied to this multi-ethnic minority group have ranged from Pacific Islanders, Pacific Islands and Pacific Nations to the more recent term of Pasifika. Pasifika is the term used by education institutions because *Pacific* translates into *Pasifika* in several of the Pacific languages spoken in this nation (Ministry of Education, 2005). However, the use of the term *Pasifika* or, more precisely, *Tagata Pasifika* is more about the power to name rather than simple translations, in my view: "The fact that as a term, it 'originated' from us, is of no small consequence because being able to define ourselves is an issue of control" (Samu, 1998, p. 209).

I support this view by drawing on Māori researcher and theorist Smith's (1998) arguments regarding the way that using others' constructions is disempowering and takes away a marginalised group's ability to set the terms for self-definition and identification (Samu, 1998).

PASIFIKA AS A MULTI-ETHNIC GROUP WITHIN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

As a multi-ethnic group, Pasifika are made up of more than six cultural groups, with heritages rooted in the islands nations of the South Pacific. According to the 2001 census, half of Pasifika peoples were Samoan, an increase of 34% since the 1991 Census. The next largest groups were Cook Island Māori (22.7%), Tongan (17.6%), Niue (8.7%), Fijian (3%) and Tokelauan (2.7%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). There are other Pasifika communities within New Zealand that are smaller in terms of size but also strive to maintain cultural heritage and identity; for example Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and French Polynesia.

Two-thirds of the total Pasifika population of New Zealand live in the Auckland region, which contributes to Auckland's claim to be the largest Polynesian city in the world. Wellington has the second largest population of Pasifika people resident in New Zealand with approximately 15% of that population. Other Pasifika people resident in this country have established smaller, but no less vibrant and cohesive communities in other cities and towns in New Zealand.

It is important to note that of the six main (in terms of population numbers) Pasifika groups, three have more members living in Aotearoa New Zealand than the home nation; namely the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. The New Zealand-based communities of Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau peoples resident in New Zealand are vital off-shore communities, fast becoming critical locations of language transmission and culture for their respective Pacific nation homelands.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Pasifika made up the second largest minority of the New Zealand population, at more than 5%. However, in 2001, while the total percentage of New Zealand's population who identified with either one or more Pacific heritages increased to 6.5%, those who identified as Asian made up 6.6% of the total population. This has shifted Pasifika, albeit narrowly, to being the third largest minority group in this country (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). In terms of total numbers, just over 230,000 people identified as Pasifika in 2001. Pasifika total numbers have been increasing over the past four to five decades (the time frame for Pasifika peoples' location within New Zealand society). Much of the increase in population since the mid-1980s is due to natural increase and not immigration. More than half of this population (58%) are New Zealand-born and raised.

Pasifika, as a multi-ethnic group, has a higher birth rate than the national population and also has a higher average number of children per family. Consequently, the Pasifika population is a very young one. This is a feature that is expected to continue for some time. This has enormous implications for the education system and its various sectors. In 2021, the Pasifika population is projected to increase to 414,000 (an increase of 58%) and will make up 9.2% of the New Zealand population. Pacific children will make up about 17% of all New Zealand children then, compared with 11% in 2001. It has been projected that by 2040, the majority of students in New Zealand primary schools will be Māori and Pasifika, and that such a change will "... occur within the working life of teachers who are currently being trained or inducted into teaching" (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 5).

Given that 60% of Pasifika peoples live in the Auckland region, the impact on early childhood centres and schools in this region will be immense.

QUALITY TEACHING AND RESPONSIVENESS TO DIVERSITY: INSEPARABLE NOTIONS

When the Ministry of Education of New Zealand considers quality teaching, it can be argued that the parameters for its discourse are set by comparisons of New Zealand with other OECD countries using data from international studies such as Pacific Islands Students' Association (PISA). New Zealand student performance on such tests is both very positive and very negative. In other words, there is a very significant range of outcomes. We have students who achieve very highly on such international tests, but we also have students who do not and are well behind those who do. According to Alton-Lee (2005), of these, "Māori and Pasifika students featured quite prominently amongst the students that performed poorly" (p. 8). Alton-Lee describes the education system of New Zealand as being one of "... high disparities in achievement by comparison with most OECD countries" (2005, p. 8). To be even more precise, New Zealand has the second highest ranking in terms of

disparity of the OECD nations. Quality teaching in New Zealand appears to be limited in terms of its effectiveness.

Further analyses by the Ministry of Education, particularly through its Best Evidence Synthesis programme of research and development shows that the cause of the disparity is *not* in the decile ranking of the school. Rather, "... there is marked variability within schools in teaching effectiveness ..." (Alton-Lee, 2004, p. 4). The difference in educational outcomes is the result of differences in the effectiveness of teaching within schools in New Zealand. This does not necessarily mean the difference between a poor teacher and a good teacher. Generally speaking, teaching may be good or of a high quality (judged as such because of student outcomes) but it may not necessarily be effective for all the different learners that are experiencing that teaching, because students who are different are not achieving the same favourable outcomes that other students are.

This means that we have an education system that serves many students well. So much so that we can confidently say our education system is a high quality one. However, our education system does not serve all New Zealand students well, particularly students of specific cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As a consequence of international evidence-based comparisons, we must acknowledge that our education system is a low equity one. Therefore, quality teaching in New Zealand has to be effective for all who participate. This requires diversity and difference to be at the very centre of the meaning of the notion 'quality teaching'.

So, what is the real problem? Alton-Lee (2005) argues that the overall weakness of our education system in New Zealand is the inability to be responsive to the diversity of its learners:

> The high disparities, the relatively high variance within schools in the New Zealand PISA results, and our rapidly growing demographic profiles for those learners traditionally underserved by New Zealand schooling, indicate a need for community and system development *to be more responsive to diverse learners*. (p. 8, emphasis added)

The Ministry of Education's Best Evidence Synthesis programme has developed what is described as a responsiveness to diversity framework. Sinnema and Aitken (2005) have explained what this means in the following way. They state that a responsiveness to diversity framework:

> ... places an emphasis on approaches that are efficacious in enhancing educational outcomes for all students. It challenges deficit thinking that locates responsibility for lack of achievement in the students or their families and also challenges thinking that assumes more able students will be able to cope without consideration of their special needs and abilities ....
>
> One of the central concerns of a 'responsiveness to diversity' framework is to highlight pedagogical approaches that work for diverse learners *simultaneously*. In New Zealand schools, the typical learning context is one in which a group of 25-30 students are taught together. It is important then, when considering the magnitude of

> influence to consider the impact on all learners, not just the students to whom the pedagogy is targeted ... (p. 13, emphasis added)

Other educators have developed theoretical frameworks for the effective teaching of diverse learners, frameworks wherein difference is the norm rather than a specialised add-on to what is being provided for 'normal' learners. An integral part of such frameworks are sets of principles. Gay (2000) describes *culturally responsive teaching*, whilst Hernandez Sheets (2005) talks about *diversity pedagogy*. Regardless of the names or labels, these are frameworks that do more than acknowledge and describe diversity. Each "... conveys a need to respect similarities and differences among human beings and *to go beyond sensitivity to active and effective responsiveness*" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 8, emphasis added).

Responsiveness to diversity, in terms of the classroom, is about tailoring teaching to learner diversities in order to raise academic achievement. According to Alton-Lee (2004):

> What students bring to the classroom is in turn influenced by their gender, families and wider affiliations and heritages and the extent to which these become resources in their school [centre] learning. There are substantial research literatures that show these aspects of learner identity and background to be integral to educational achievement or failure, particularly when there are cultural mismatches between the home and school [centre]. (p. 4)

In terms of Pasifika learners, a series of questions can be asked, beginning with: What do Pasifika students bring to the classroom? Then: How is what they bring influenced by the specific features of their particular forms of diversity, their families and their heritages? Last but not least: To what extent do the learning experiences and environments that teachers plan match (as opposed to mismatch) the specific Pasifika cultural ways of being of their Pasifika learners? The starting point involves teachers finding out more about what their Pasifika learners bring to their classroom, finding out more about what is underneath that Pasifika umbrella.

UNDERNEATH THE PASIFIKA UMBRELLA

This paper argues first that teaching that is responsive to student diversity requires teachers to have deep, contextualised understandings of learner diversities (Alton-Lee, 2003). Second, it argues that developing such an understanding of the diverse realities of Pasifika requires a closer examination of identity and the assistance of a theoretical framework to identify and explore the factors that have the most relevance and influence in shaping the realities of specific Pasifika learners, in relation to the processes of teaching and learning for which their teachers are responsible.

1. Deep, Contextualised Pasifika Identities

The use of the term Pasifika recognises the reality of more than half a dozen distinct ethnic and linguistic groups, each with their own unique social structures, histories,

values, perspectives and attitudes. As Mara, Foliaki and Coxon (1994) have pointed out:

> It is important to keep in mind that 'Pacific Islander' is a blanket term used in metropolitan countries like New Zealand to identify people from a number of different Pacific Island countries (and their New Zealand-born descendants). Its use conceals and undermines the historical, social, political and cultural uniqueness of each Pacific Islands society. (p. 181)

However, a collectivising term such as Pasifika can be understood and used as a discourse that recognises, values and respects the various unique Pacific nations as well as drawing groups together. This is done in much the same way that the term *the Pacific Way* has been used in the Pacific Region for over thirty years. Crocombe (1976) argued that this term "... satisfies both psychological and political needs, in that it helps to fulfil a growing demand for respected Pacific-wide identifying symbols and for Pacific unity" (p. 1). Much like the use of the term Pasifika, the term 'the Pacific Way' is not intended to imply homogeneity. The diverse Pacific nations and peoples that fall under its banner are not all the same. Crocombe (1996) argued that the term was developed and has been used within the region in those instances and occasions when "... the common interests of all the islands peoples can be served by collaboration ..." (p. 1). Reflecting on the value of collectivising terms for Pacific peoples, Samu (2006) has stated:

> Sometimes the main advantage of a unifying concept is the countering effect it has against oppositional forces such as neo-colonialism – or for migrant community groups such Pasifika in New Zealand, countering oppositional forces such as assimilation and social/economic/cultural marginalisation. (p. 10)

There is another dimension of identity that is of critical importance. This involves the forging of unique identities of Pasifika or Pacific Island itself. Over the past ten years, New Zealand-born and New Zealand-raised Pasifika young people have developed unique forms of expression and identification. They demonstrate a creative, assertive self determination and are growing in numbers. They strive to be bicultural or multiethnic on their own terms.

In any discussion of Pasifika diversities, this particular platform must not escape notice. It exists, it is vibrant, and it is becoming more and more distinct. It appears to blend aspects of traditional culture with the urban and the contemporary. It does not exist in any of the Pacific nations, rather, emerging within the migrant communities of Pasifika in New Zealand, Hawaii, the west coast of the USA and Australia. It, as an identity platform, is attractive because it is safe; a person can be Pasifika in ways that he or she wants to be. The conscious and deliberate construction of such a personalised Pasifika identity means it is okay not to be fluent in the mother (or father) tongue. It is okay not to be an expert in traditional art form; and, it is okay not to be knowledgeable of culturally based protocols.

A Pasifika identity-montage affirms multiple-heritage. It excuses partial cultural literacy and provides a degree of social credibility. It is inclusive (albeit

selectively) of the historical and contemporary socio-political issues of Pasifika. Such identities may not be articulated clearly by young Pasifika learners in schools. However, if they are listening to hip-hop music and wearing clothes from the Dawn Raid label and watching the annual *Style Pasifika* fashion show, and animated comedy series *BroTown* on television, then they are being exposed to, and participating in, the process of new ethnic identity formation taking place amongst many New Zealand-born Pasifika peoples.

With respect to identity, research conducted by Anae (1998) and Pasikale (1996, 1999) clearly identifies the existence of different groups or types of Pacific young people. Pasikale (1996) called these identity profiles, and described them as: Traditional; New Zealand blend; and New Zealand made.

In other words, these profiles are based on the extent to which the individual Pacific youth can relate to the cultural traditions and practices (including language) of their parents and/or grandparents. Pasikale (1999) describes the interests and issues of New Zealand-born Pacific people as being of critical importance because of the high proportion of Pasifika in Aotearoa who are New Zealand-born. The implications for schooling then, as she describes it, are:

> ... the images, information and stereotypes about Pacific Island people are rooted in assumptions based on the images of 'recent island migrants' ... [and consequently] ... the displacement of the majority Pacific learners, especially in the formal educational establishments. By this I mean the assumptions (mostly bad) educators make about New Zealand born Pacific Island learners, who either fail to meet expectations or worse still, float by without any expectations or demands on them because of some misguided liberal attitude (otherwise known as the 'soft option'). Either way, human potential is not recognised or developed. (Pasikale, 1999, p. 5)

Pasikale (1999) continues her argument about the importance of identity to successful learning by saying:

> It is evident that how one perceives oneself provides the context for how one will proceed with learning. The literature suggests that for Pacific Island people, the sense of being (or identity) is influenced strongly by the environment. This has important significance for New Zealand born Pacific Islands people who are being socialised in a predominantly westernised environment. (p. 5)

Pasikale (1999) further argues:

> ... suffice to say that 'identity' is a critical issue for many Pacific Islands learners, and understanding the issues can mean the difference to our positive cultural continuity and the alienation of a generation more comfortable with other forms of sub-culture. It can also mean the difference to continued academic failure and educational success based on the realities of future Pacific Islands generations. I have come to appreciate that 'identity' is not a static

> product but a process of constant navigation, based on a core of convictions that provide a foundation for self-acceptance. (p. 6)

It is important to note that the conclusions that Pasikale draws on (above) are based on a qualitative research project called *Seen But Not Heard* involving 80 Pasifika learners on what were then known as Training Opportunities Programmes (TOPs). The majority of the learners were youth who had not been successful in secondary school and had left before achieving any formal qualifications. As young people they seemed to be particularly vulnerable to issues around identity, and were positioned to reflect quite deeply on what did, and did not work, for them in schools.

More recent documentation of Pacific youth 'voices' articulating their own constructions of personal identity include work by Pacific art historian, Lisa Taouma, journalist and producer of Television New Zealand's *Tagata Pasifika*. In the promotion flier for a recently presented seminar[1] for the University of Auckland's Pacific post-graduate seminar series (August, 2006), was the following statement:

> Pasifika youth in Aotearoa are increasingly visible in asserting a new brown identity where the catch cry is 'loud, brown and proud' – heard on the radio, seen on the tv. The impact that this Pasifika youth population is making particularly in popular culture is looked at in a 20 minute video piece on the perception and projection of Pacific identity in Aotearoa.

The aforementioned video piece is a compilation Lisa Taouma has made from stories aired on *Tagata Pasifika*. A number of Pasifika people, from their teens through to their thirties, confidently state the names they have given to the identities that they have constructed for themselves: for example, I am a Kiwi Samoan, I am a Pacific New Zealander, Urban Samoan, and so on.

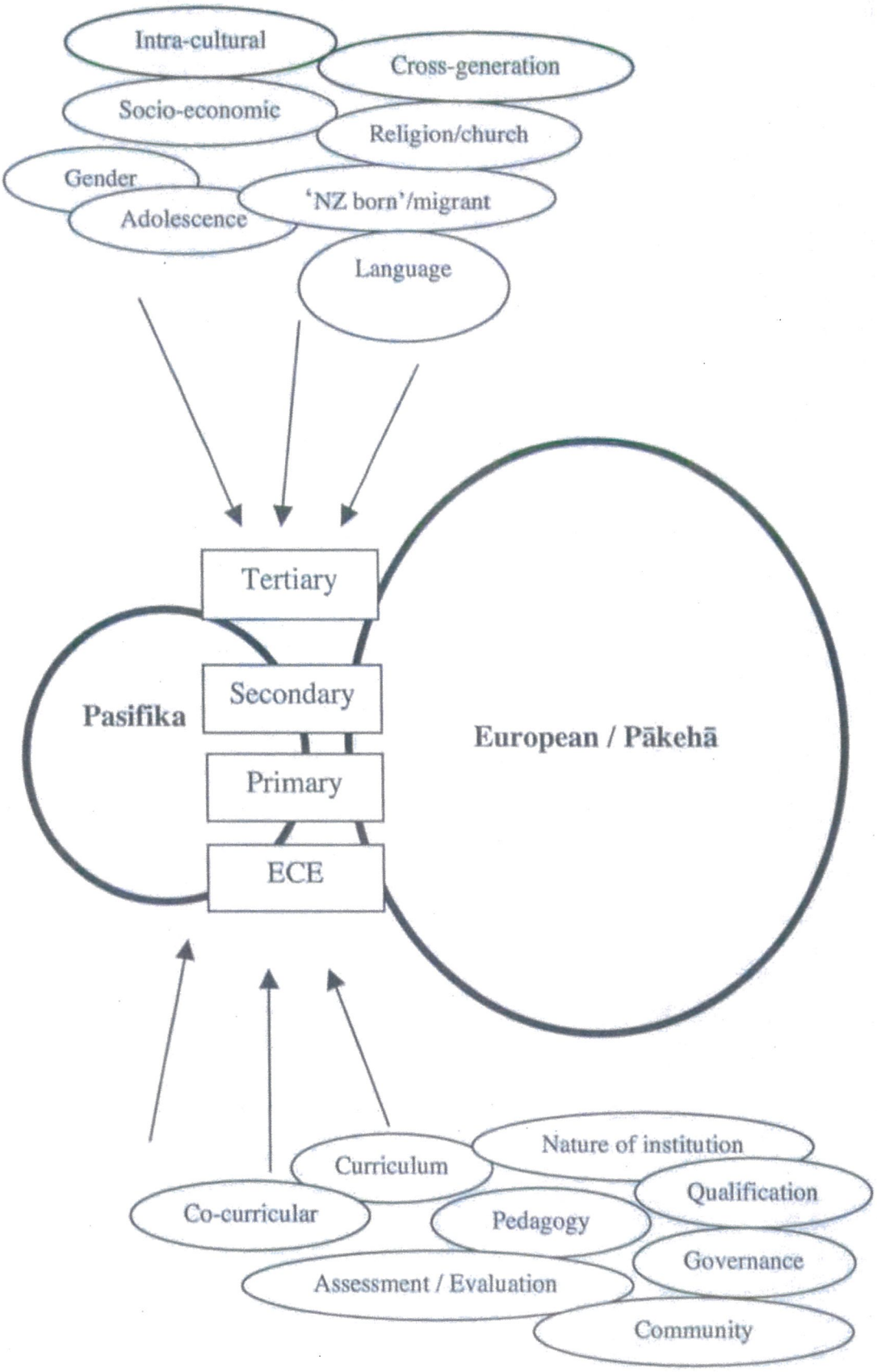
However, while identity is complex and quite fluid, there are additional factors to examine closely and to consider in terms of learner realities. Where should a teacher begin?

2. A Framework for Exploring and Understanding Pasifika: The Ethnic Interface Model

The Ethnic Interface Model enables a structured exploration of the possible diversities that are to be found amongst Pasifika as learners within the New Zealand education system (Coxon, Anae, Mara, Samu & Finau, 2001; Samu, 1998).

In Figure 1, the two circles represent the different 'worlds', or sets of cultural capital, meeting within the context of the four sectors of formal schooling: Early-childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary. The size of each circle is representative of the broader power relations between the two worlds. These relations are reproduced in schooling in various ways and to varying degrees. This is a relationship that must be recognised if educators are genuinely driven by the desire for equity.

Figure 1. The Ethnic Interface Model



The pyramid at the 'interface' of the two worlds not only represents levels of formal schooling but it is also a reminder that specific structures and processes of each level of schooling and the individual characteristics of the provider are also variables that must be taken into account in any evaluation of the academic progress of Pasifika students in these contexts.

The cultural capital of individual Pasifika students will be shaped by a number of factors that the school/learning institution has no influence over. Students' responses to different aspects of schooling will reflect, for example, their world views. Their individual world views are influenced by their gender, cross-generational relationships, socio-economic status, whether they were born and raised in this country or are recent migrants, and even their specific religious background and level of personal activity or engagement with it. These factors will have varying degrees of significance for individual students at the interface.

Individual schools and institutions determine the organisational structures and processes within their contexts such as: the pedagogical practices teachers decide to use; the nature of the co-curricular activities they encourage and support; assessment and evaluation processes; and the school-based curricula. Many schools and early childhood centres actively seek and promote meaningful partnerships with their parents/caregivers. However, it can be argued that these more professional structures and processes are part of the core business of schools and the fundamental terms of engagement are set by the school and its teachers and/or leadership. Parents and students have very limited influence in these areas.

There is a final point of clarification regarding this framework. If viewed via a deficit perspective, one could be searching for the cause of the problem of Pasifika learner underachievement or failure in the learner's specific Pacific cultural background, social and economic circumstances, the specific church related activities the child and his/her family are involved with, the level of English competency, and so on. Key assumptions underlying this framework are that the teachers and educators that use it:

- … recognise the critical connection between culture and schooling … (Hernandez Sheets, 2005, p. 3);
- Have a strong sense of social responsibility, and commitment to developing their self-awareness as cultural, social and political beings (Samu, 2004); and
- Are aware of the dynamics of power and privilege. Delpit describes this as understanding … that power plays a critical role in our society and in our educational system. The world views of those with privileged positions are taken as the only reality, while the world views of those less powerful are dismissed as inconsequential (Delpit, 1995, p. xv).

The Ethnic Interface Model can be used by educators to examine educational issues and concerns for specific groups of students, at specific sites. Even more important, it can be used to 'unpack' the variables that have the most influence for particular students. The following vignette[2] attempts to demonstrate this.

> A health education session for Year 11 students (i.e., students in their third year of secondary schooling) is about to begin at a co-

> educational, central city high school. The topic is sexuality. After students are seated in the hall, and the sessions begin, a small group of Pasifika boys quickly leave the hall before any of the teachers can stop them. When one of the teachers catches up with the group outside, and demands to know what is going on, one of the boys says rather desperately, "Sir, we can't be in there, our cousins are in there too".

What was involved in this situation? The boys (gender) were Tongan, from very traditional Tongan (culture) families. Brothers and sisters have a special relationship within a traditional Tongan world view – one with strict rules of respect regarding the ways they are to speak to each other, behave around each other, and even standards of dress when in each others' presence. Being in the same room during a discussion about puberty and sexuality (adolescence) is not appropriate. And, with Tongan families, the brother-sister relationship can extend to cousins. The children of your parents' brothers and sisters are your brothers and sisters.

The boys' perspective of the problem (avoiding a cultural taboo) was not the same from the teachers' perspective (students who appeared to be wilfully avoiding a required learning experience and challenging teacher authority). If the teachers had disregarded what the boys said (because they lacked an appreciation that a different cultural way of being was at the heart of the situation), and had ordered them back into the hall, a far more confrontational situation would have ensued. If teachers at this school had been more aware of the cultural expectations that these particular boys adhered to, the special session or class could have been organised in a different way, and the required learning experience would not have been disrupted.

TEACHING THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO PASIFIKA DIVERSITIES

Quality teaching for Pasifika learners cannot be based on the assumption that there exists a specific pedagogical approach or set of strategies that best suits them. Critical questions that I would raise in order to challenge such assumptions are:

- How can there be a Pacific pedagogy in the context of New Zealand schools when Pasifika people are so diverse?
- How can there be a Pacific pedagogy in the context of the New Zealand education system when there are such different ways of being Pasifika and when some more recent forms of Pasifika identity do not require competency or fluency in a specific Pacific language[3] or culture?
- How can there be a Pacific pedagogy in the context of the New Zealand school system when individual schools are unique micro-contexts of their own with their own cultures?
- How can there be a Pacific pedagogy in New Zealand schools when, in many instances, Pasifika students do not dominate the class or school composition in terms of numbers?

I do not believe that the development of a Pacific pedagogy as such, or a straightforward evidence-based prescription for quality teaching of Pasifika learners in this country, is possible. However, I am of the view that what can be developed for teachers of Pacific students in New Zealand classrooms is a framework of principles to guide their efforts to develop specific and relevant teaching and learning environments for their specific Pacific students.

One of the main contentions of this paper is that the first principle is the development of teachers' understandings. According to Coxon et al. (2001):

> Educators must take a more pro-active role in becoming aware and informed of Pasifika diversities, and acknowledge the cultural bias inherent within the structures of New Zealand's education system. Having done so, such educators would creatively consider their own practices in terms of how to bridge the quite complex cultural and social gaps, or mismatches that exist. (p. 5)

Teachers and their Pasifika students interact at the interface of two culturally embedded, yet quite different, worlds; the formal education system (specifically, of the classroom and the school) and the world of the individual learner. The most immediate determinant of student success or failure in school depends on the interactions of teachers and learners at that interface between two culturally embedded worlds – worlds that reflect the unequal, imbalanced power relations of wider society.

According to American educator Cummins (2003), the most immediate determinant of student success or failure in school depends on the interactions of educators and students, or teachers and learners. Cummins (2003) suggests that these interactions can be examined in two ways: "... firstly by focusing on the teaching and learning relationship from a narrow perspective (ie examining the strategies and techniques that teachers are using), or alternatively focusing on what he calls 'identity negotiation'" (p. 51).

Identity negotiation is about the messages that are communicated to students about what they are capable of becoming in the teacher's eyes. The central idea of this perspective is that "... the ways that identities are negotiated between educators and students is at least as fundamental in determining student achievement as any of the myriad techniques for teaching" (Cummins, 2003, p. 51).

In considering Pasifika learners in New Zealand schools, I accept Cummins' (2003) argument for the need to "... reconstruct our curricula and teaching methods in light of a richer image of the child" and relate that to the New Zealand context. Teachers need in-depth understandings of the specific diversities of their specific Pasifika learners in order to construct contexts where "culture, language, intellect and imagination are a part of the discourse of their 'image of the [Pasifika] child'" (p. 51, adapted). Amongst Pasifika learners are unique, contextualised Pasifika ways of knowing and relating to the world. What is needed is tailor-made, contextualised teaching.

In New Zealand, there is a growing research-informed knowledge base about what is required for the quality teaching of diverse learners. The Ministry of Education's Best Evidence Synthesis (BES), *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students*

in Schooling (2003), persuasively argues that effective teaching is contextualised, and that this must also include the socio-cultural context of learners. Effective teaching involves the creation of learning communities that are based on caring, inclusive and cohesive relationships. The onus would appear to be on teachers actively developing richer images of their Pasifika students, and creating learning communities that are meaningful to Pasifika students.

I acknowledge that this paper has not provided much in the way of specific research evidence to connect teachers' efforts to know and understand their specific Pacific students, and their pedagogical responses, let alone how such connections resulted in positive changes to Pasifika academic achievement (i.e., quality, effective teaching). Māori educational research provides invaluable support for this through landmark studies and subsequent professional development programmes such as Te Kotahitanga Project (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003). One must be cautious, however, and avoid assuming that this research will be relevant and apply to Pasifika learners in New Zealand. However, intensive work is being conducted in 2006 and beyond within Ministry of Education research projects that are focusing on Pasifika learners, their perspectives or voices (such as *The Experiences of Pasifika Students in the Classroom* project contracted to New Zealand Council for Educational Research) and exploring what constitutes effective teaching in specific curriculum areas for Māori and Pasifika learners (*Quality Teaching and Learning Development Project*). As we continue to theorise and reflect on teaching that is responsive to Pasifika learners we can be assured that the evidence-based research that is needed to inform this process will be available to enrich, stimulate and challenge our efforts as teachers and educators to support Pasifika learners more effectively.

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[1] Entitled 'From Dusky to Dawn: Dusky Maidens to Dawn Raids'.

[2] Hernandez Sheets (2005, p. xxii) describes the purpose of constructing and including vignettes in her book for pre-service teachers, *Diversity Pedagogy: Examining the Role of Culture in the Teaching-Learning Process* as being to "... demonstrate theoretical positions ... to invite dialogue and focus on specific [pedagogical] elements based on current literature on how teachers and students learn". The rationale for inclusion and use of vignette in this paper is the same.

[3] Please note that I am not downplaying the importance and value of Pacific heritage languages. The reality, however, is that some Pasifika learners have quite strong culturally based identities which provide them with a sense of place and belonging in their social worlds (of school, family and peer community) – these important anchoring ways of being, at that particular point in their lives, do not involve fluency in heritage language.

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Reading 5.3

The role of arapū in reversing language shift in kōhanga reo

Skerrett-White, M. (2004). The role of arapū in reversing language shift in kōhanga reo. *Early Childhood Folio, 8,* 34–39.

The role of arapū in reversing language shift in kōhanga reo

Mere Skerrett-White

The arapū (A, E, H, I, K, M, N, NG, O, P, R, T, U, W, WH—*a, e, ha, i, kei, eme, ene, nga, o, pi, ara, ti, u, wa, wha*) was developed to support and promote the emergent literacy skills of bilingual children in kōhanga reo. The developers also hypothesised that the use of the arapū would provide a means of exploiting and advancing the metalinguistic awareness of the children in kōhanga reo. The arapū came about as a result of frustration with the lack of such a tool for use in early childhood Māori-medium education.

The centrality of the role of te reo Māori in Māori cultural advancement and identity is a given and is inseparable from the exercise of (tino) rangatiratanga (an awareness of self as a basis for setting targets and developing self-reliance; the capacity to choose rapidly and effectively between options; and creativity, being the capacity to generate new solutions to new problems). As change agents, powerful children can and will make powerful decisions and change as they assert their Māori worldviews, rather than clinging to the determinant worldviews of others. That change, for their psychological, sociocultural, and economic wellbeing, not only benefits te iwi Māori, but also the nation. Kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori have promulgated a revolution of sorts against the prevailing hegemony. The maintenance of a changed view is in furtherance of the wider aims of tino rangatiratanga—taking control of our own lives. In kōhanga reo, this is afforded by the encouragement of children to think, to speak, and to do for themselves, in order to take responsibility for and be critical about the decisions they make.

According to Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (1999), children can potentially thwart, challenge, or question the dominant ways in which the concept of *child* may have been constructed in the past (for example, as a tabula rasa for others' imprints) by entering into the activity of shaping their own subjectivity—by thinking about their own thinking and speaking and acting on that. Tino rangatiratanga, in this sense, is an ability to control the way the world enters into our minds, bodies, and daily lives—that is, to make sense and meaning of the world at the individual level and at the cultural level, mediated from a given position that is Māori. This is self-identification at the personal level and self-determination culturally. It is an ability to think critically and respond collectively in order to mediate external influences and the rate of change which impacts upon our lives and resources.

Our biological (*whakapapa*) and cultural heritage prepares us to use language and other cultural tools in order to learn from each other in our cultural communities and to pass on, invent, and re-invent knowledge. Consequently, language is our cultural identifier—symbolic of who we are. All living languages must be used through the generations and across generations—passed on to children in their daily interactions among whānau, in homes, and in communities (which change). This article describes the development of literacy tools to promote literacy in te reo Māori and further the aims of Māori language regeneration.

The development of literacy in te reo Māori

Bruner (1996) describes culture as being biology's last great evolutionary trick by freeing *Homo sapiens* to construct a symbolic world (through language). The construction of symbolic worlds (cultures) through the use of language(s) can be further elaborated to include the many and varied graphic representations of language-in-culture in the form of "print" and other culturally representative symbols—such as kōwhaiwhai (painted scroll symbols), tukutuku (ornamental panels signifying different natural phenomena), whakairo (carved representations of histories)—and in the presentation arena, whaikōrero (oration) and haka (performance). These symbols all form part of the resplendent "whāriki" (weaving) that shapes the mind and, of course, provides a foundation for the complex critical literacy functions. These "critical" functions are concerned with shaping human lives (Freire, 1972) and, as a consequence, have an underlying political agenda of societal transformation. Print literacy, being representative of oral language and thought, is an important mode of meaning-making in today's societies. It must follow, therefore, that the development of literacy in te reo Māori in kōhanga reo is equally important.

Saunders (1988) suggests that it is important for bilingual children to be made aware that their heritage language has its own literature and writing conventions, because print literacy development extends and enriches language

use. Reading and storytelling with children are important activities. They develop vocabulary and give the children models for increasing syntactical complexity (Elley, 1987; Howe & Johnson, 1992; Strickland & Morrow, 1989). Reversing language shift efforts in the regeneration of te reo Māori promote balanced literacy in te reo Māori and a deepening understanding of two different syntactical structures. Saunders further states that illiteracy "in one of a bilingual's languages represents a considerable loss to the individual and to the community as a whole" (p. 198). Illiteracy, or an imbalance in print literacy between an acquiring bilingual's languages in a kōhanga reo, would then have a wider impact on efforts to reverse language shift.

Fishman (1996) suggests that print literacy creates communities over time and space. Print literacy is intergenerational, in that print allows people who are no longer alive to talk to people who have yet to be born. So too do the Māori forms of oral literacy represented in our whaikōrero (orations), mōteatea (laments), ngeri (rhythmic chants), pepehā (charms or witticisms), hakirara (poetic lilts), whakatauki (proverbs), and whakapapa (histories). Māori are doubly blessed in having access to additive bilingualism.

A tool to promote literacy in te reo Māori

Young people progress through different states of literacy before becoming fully-fledged members of what F. Smith (1991) terms the "literacy club". These states include different ways of interacting with books: handling them, examining them, turning pages, making sense of pictures, and reading them in ways that make sense to the child. There is no difference when young children are developing literacy skills (Cummins, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Macrine, 2002; White, 2003). Therefore, included within the curriculum of the kōhanga reo is a programme of support that leads to a greater understanding of books and the relationship between individual letters, words, and sounds. This support has meant the development of a tool—an alphabet naming system called *te arapū Māori*—which had not been developed in such a way for use in kōhanga reo.

Background

Approximately 200 years ago, Māori welcomed the alphabetic representation of te reo Māori, as shown by the speed with which print literacy accelerated among Māori communities (Simon, 1994). New Zealand's first book, *A Korao no New Zealand*, compiled by Kendall, was printed in 1815 and intended for Māori readers. Recorded on the first page of that book is an alphabet, followed on subsequent pages by alphabetically ordered word-lists (Kendall, 1815). Kendall naturally made use of the writing conventions with which he was familiar, and in doing so he set a precedent—although his alphabet is significantly different from te arapū.

The concept behind te arapū is not new. Letters have been given names in many languages, including the English alphabet (*ay, bee, aitch, em, en, double-you*), the Spanish alphabet, the Samoan *tusi pī*, and of course the "alpha and the omega" that is the Greek alphabet.

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Te arapū Māori

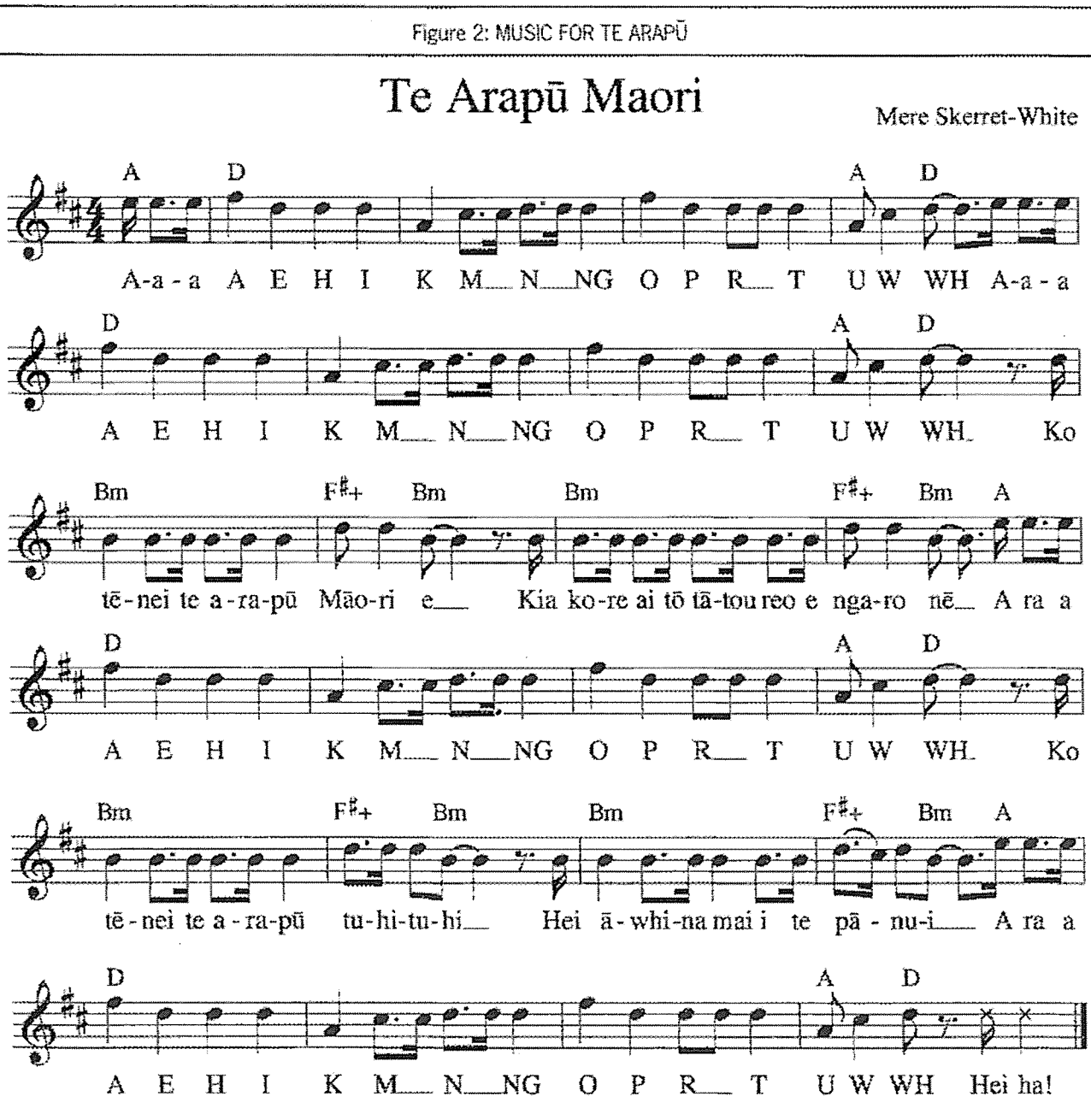
Te arapū (see Figures 1 and 2) was developed in order to support and promote the emergent literacy skills of bilingual children in kōhanga reo. In addition, the developers hypothesised that the use of te arapū would provide a means of exploiting and advancing the metalinguistic awareness of the children in Te Amokura Kōhanga Reo. It came about as a result of our frustration with the lack of such a tool for use in Māori-medium education.

Te arapū was developed by Maraea Hunia, Kate Cherrington, and myself. After many discussions over a number of years, Maraea Hunia developed a list of named

Figure 1: PRONUNCIATION GUIDE FOR TE ARAPŪ

A	E	H	I	K	M	N	NG
A	*E*	*Ha*	*I*	*Kei*	*Eme*	*Ene*	*Nga*
O	P	R	T	U	W	WH	
O	*Pi*	*Ara*	*Ti*	*U*	*Wa*	*Wha*	

Figure 2: MUSIC FOR TE ARAPŪ



"...These are Pākehā symbols representing our language. Ehara i te mea no te ao Māori..." The development of the arapū to promote literacy is not an issue of Māori or Pākehā.

Māori letters. Further discussions in May 2000 led to the refinement of the list and the production of the final arapū. Te arapū was then given rhyme, rhythm, and song (which form an integral part of the resource), making it suitable for use as a learning and teaching tool. The lyrics are by Kate Cherrington and myself, with an addition by Maraea Hunia.

Young children enjoy rhythm and rhyme and they very quickly learn them (Campbell, 1996). After just two days, te arapū was being sung while the children were in the sandpit, on the swings—in, out, and around about the kōhanga reo. It rapidly became a favourite with everyone—even recognisable in the sounds (humming along) made by our babies.

Rationale for te arapū

The Sesame Street alphabet song, developed in the 1960s (Smith & Elley, 1997; Palmer & Fisch, 2001), was designed to help young children learn the alphabet, with a target audience of children who were learners of standard English as a second language as well as other children from all walks of life. Just as the development of the alphabet song and its use in the *Sesame Street* programme was controversial in the 1960s (as programmers began to realise preschool children were very able to pick up educational concepts previously thought to be best taught to school-aged children), so te arapū and kōhanga reo children's exposure to text have been controversial in some sectors (made so by both policy makers and practitioners). However, because it had already been piloted and found easy to teach and learn, we decided to continue with its use in Te Amokura Kōhanga Reo.

The English alphabet is a highly visible part of early childhood education in Aotearoa. Alphabet books, friezes on walls, alphabet charts and posters, and ditties, rhymes, and the Sesame Street song are all parts of an early literacy programme. Research suggests that these are important aids to help children learn phonemic contrasts using pictures and words (Jenkins & Bowen, 1994). Online research (for example, looking at www.amazon.com) clearly shows the wealth of resources dedicated to this significant literacy tool.

I am unaware of any controversy surrounding the exposure of young learners and speakers of English to the alphabet or the promotion of alphabet and letter awareness, particularly the use of the Sesame Street song, friezes, or rhyme. Even the phonics-versus-whole-language debate is more a pedagogical and political debate about the "best" method for the teaching of *reading* and *writing*.

The position of this research is that the development of a Māori alphabet naming system (te arapū) for young children attending kōhanga reo should be viewed as is the English alphabet system: as a relevant and useful tool to support literacy—and ultimately Māori/English biliteracy. In any event, it is now too late (by approximately 200 years) to debate whether we should or should not take this literacy tool on board.

Te arapū is useful as a tool in the sense that it is easy to learn and to retain or recall; it promotes letter/sound recognition; it assists children when learning to spell (*pūkupu*) or decode words; and it accelerates learning to read and write. The following points were considered in choosing the sounds for the letters:

- The names for K, P, and T (sounded as *kei*, *pi*, and *ti*) are used for ease of transference between the English and Māori alphabets. They (*kei*, *pi*, and *ti*) are all consistent with Māori phonology. They are also Māori words, as is T (*tea* or *tee*) in English.
- The vowels remain consistent with the sounds they represent so there is a one-to-one letter/sound relationship.
- *Eme* and *ene* are borrowed from the Spanish alphabet and are similar to the English M (*em*) and N (*en*), again for ease of transference.
- All of the remaining consonants have an "a" added—with the exception of R (*ara*), which is nested between two vowels for flow and rhythmic effect.

In discussion at a Taura Whiri kura reo Māori (Māori language school) one teacher commented about te arapū, "Isn't that a Pākehā thing to do?" I replied, "Well, yes, if that is what you want to call it. These are Pākehā symbols representing our language. Ehara i te mea nō te ao Māori..." The development of the arapū to promote literacy is not an issue of Māori or Pākehā.

Our writing system was adapted from the English writing system (as the English writing system developed from the Phoenician, Greek, and Roman systems) in the early 1800s by the missionaries. Subsequent Māori-language press releases, covering all topical issues, helped to standardise Māori orthography (Benton & Benton, 2001).

We are not about to reinvent the wheel, and we do want our children to learn to read—as quickly and effectively as possible. As Mason M. Durie (2001) stated at the Hui Taumata, "If years at school do not lead to some readiness to confront the world, and to participate actively in it, then opportunities for Māori advancement will have been sacrificed" (p. 4; see also Durie, 2003).

We hope that te arapū and its song becomes as widely used among children learning to speak, read, and write in te reo Māori as has the Sesame Street alphabet song (sung to the tune of *Twinkle, twinkle, little star* for English. The universality of the Sesame Street song was demonstrated when a kaumātua was asked "How did you learn the alphabet when you went to school?"—he replied by singing the song, which had not even been invented when he went to school!

Research

The dominant approach to studying children's sociolinguistic development is through conducting production, vocabulary, and comprehension tests (Hickey, 1997). Such an approach was considered to be inappropriate for this study because, while such testing may provide information about what children do in a test situation in (usually) one linguistic code (Saunders, 1988), it does not give information about what children can do or understand in the real world. Testing creates an artificial domain (Carr, 2001), whereas the aim of the current case study was to document the relationship between language shift (from Māori to English among Māori-speaking communities) and its reversal—through its regeneration as a first language, as a native language, and as a vernacular in the specific cultural context or language domain of kōhanga reo. In writing about research on reversing language shift, Fishman (1991) argues that "It is exactly such variation, both from person to person and from situation to situation for the same person that must ultimately be sketched out..." if the language shift picture is to be clarified (p. 45).

The cornerstone of successful language regeneration in kōhanga reo is the support offered to children to enable them to make links between situations in their bilingual, bilateral, bicognitive, and bicultural development. We are concerned with the advancement of a generation of Māori who are secure in their identity as Māori, who speak te reo Māori, who think in Māori, and who are also able to transition easily between *te ao Māori* (Māori worldviews) and *te ao whānui* (Pākehā worldviews).

This work was set in a particular kōhanga reo with a philosophy of commitment to reversing language shift (Fishman, 1991, 1996, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b) in order to not only contain further linguistic and cultural decline and loss, but to also contribute towards overcoming some of the pervasive sociocultural dislocation of modernity and to further Māori advancement. It provides an insight into the Māori bilingual and bicultural development of a small group of children (and adults) with implications for Māori pedagogy (teaching, learning, and meaning-making), assessment, curriculum, and professional development.

Many categories of language shift were raised through reinstituting te reo Māori as a vernacular (or everyday community language) with data sketching out some domains of language use and not just responding to adult-directed talk. Domains were being increased topically and situationally, through the use (or re-vernacularisation) of te reo Māori as a community language. Its functioning as a vernacular is synonymous with Māoritanga and Māori identities being alive and thriving.

He taonga tuku iho, te reo Māori, te reo rangatira.

One of the main points of the study is that commitment, collective endeavour, critical pedagogy, and a "care" ethic—centred on and connected to children's lives—can and do make a difference. Such commitment is transformative (Smith, 1999).

The sociocultural imperative for reversing language shift of te reo Māori is the creation of a community of Māori language users, eloquently encapsulated in the whakatauākī, *kia mate rā anō a Tama-nui-te-rā*, or the discerning words of our kaumātua, Professor Te Wharehuia Milroy, who said:

> E te iwi, e te whānau, let us be forever like the kahikatea grove, steadfast and committed. Should we lose our language, then, like the kahikatea standing alone, our time would be at hand and extinction inevitable, impacting not only on Māoridom but the whole of humankind. Therefore, to each and every one of us, if we are united in thought and committed to the cause of Māori language regeneration, then we must think in this manner: that until our ancestor Tama-nui-te-rā ceases to shine, then, and only then, must we accept that our language will finally expire.
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> cited in White, 2003, p. 305

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Mere Skerrett-White is of Ngati Maniapoto, Ngati Pukeko, Ngati Pikiao, and Ngai Tahu descent. She is currently Head of Department—Te Kohungahunga at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiarangi. Mere has been involved with kōhanga reo for nearly 18 years and was a founding member of several kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori.

Email: mere.skerrett-white@wananga.ac.nz