COMMUNITY LITERACY CENTRE IN SAMOA –

WHY IS IT SO SUCCESSFUL?

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Judy-Anne Alexander-Pouono

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this work to the memory of my late father, Kendrick Montrose

Fitzevans Alexander and to my mother, Sybil Durham-Alexander, who provided

unwavering support to their children during their academic pursuits.

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Judy-Anne Alexander-Pouono

ABSTRACT

Concerns and issues facing achievement in literacy are not new, particularly in developing countries. The challenge in Samoa is that many children speak the Samoan language in their everyday communication with families, friends, villages and the wider society. However, in Year Four, they are introduced to English as a subject and this continues until they are ready for secondary school, when, all formal examinations in schools and universities with the exception of Samoan, are conducted in English.

The small island nation is preparing to be a greater part of the world stage, as its people get ready to expand their horizons through migration, regional and international exchanges of employment, and further interest in the tourism market to improve its economy and foreign exchange earnings. As a result, the need for improved literacy and competency in English is becoming more apparent.

This means that children will need as much assistance in improving their literacy levels as is possible, to support their learning at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels and as they choose careers. One way of doing this can be the establishment of community literacy centres that operate outside of school hours. This research reports on one of these centres. The Centre was selected based on its years of operation, the manner of its organisation, the service that it offered, and the successful results that it appeared to be having with its clientele. The principal purpose of the study was to identify the role of the centre, observe its operation closely and recommend whether or not the model could be copied to another setting under similar circumstances and at the same time achieve comparable results.

Qualitative data was gathered from semi-structured interviews with the facilitator, both face-to-face and telephone (to clarify any points), observations of the programme at the centre, individual interviews with the students and finally a focus group interview with parents. The findings show that with a committed and informed facilitator or leader, an organised programme, regular reading hours, capable teachers or assistants, a 'print saturated environment'(Duffy, 2003, MOE, 2003, MOE 2006, Pressley, 2002,) with a variety of books designed to attract children, and a safe, non-threatening environment, school age children could improve their literacy levels and engagement in reading. The conclusion indicates that centres similar to this one can be set up in other villages in Samoa to assist children with improving their literacy skills in English and hopefully their future outcomes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Personal Narrative

> "Literacy confers a wide set of benefits on individuals, families, communities and nations.…" (Education for All, Global Monitoring Report 2006, 2005, p. 16).

This section gives a personal narrative into my background, my position in this research project and the reasons which led me to undertake this particular study.

I was born in Trinidad and Tobago to parents with Indian, Chinese and Venezuelan backgrounds. However, I classify myself as a cosmopolitan Trinidadian. While the country has a vernacular of its own, education was always conducted in formal English.

Before I came to live in Samoa, I had agreed to maintain English as the first language for our children. My Samoan husband had made the request and when I asked why, the answer was because of his great difficulty with English at school, since it was the language of instruction in education. I had assumed that our household would have been a bi-lingual one. However, when I arrived in Samoa, I had a clearer picture of the situation, and as a result, English was always spoken to our children, even in the company of the extended members of the family. After my children had mastered their 'first' language and began learning Samoan at school and interacting more with the wider community, their father began to speak to them in Samoan. While I continue to speak to my children in English, I now understand the reason for their father's decision.

The rationale was that students were taught in English, examinations were conducted in English, trade and business were transacted in English, tertiary learning placed great emphasis on English, text books were all written in English, research resources were in English and the most important was that when it was time to begin university education, our children would have achieved the required competency and fluency levels in English. While several educators have recommended that children in the country master Samoan first, and then go on to English, the reverse was the case with my children. Since literacy is the basis for all learning, the inability to live life without basic skills may limit an individual's choices in later life. With globalisation, there is also a need for 'literacy in multiple languages' (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, 2005, p. 3).

When I first arrived in Samoa, I found that very few children's books were available for sale in Samoan. I wanted to introduce my children to reading in Samoan, even though we were unable to understand the vocabulary. I felt that the printed word would have accelerated the rate of learning a new language. The library in town did not offer a variety of reading material in Samoan either. Visiting homes especially in the rural areas offered me a choice of two books - the bible and a hymn book. The children in the extended families became my translators as they were learning English at school, but reading material for pleasure was practically non-existent. Books were also expensive. In addition, transportation to and from town, for those without their own vehicles was a problem. If an individual needed to buy the family's weekly staples and transport them home on the village bus, a weekly trip to the town's library to get a basketful of books was definitely not on the list of priorities.

When I began teaching at a mission school the year after I arrived here, I had a clearer picture of the problems. Today, there are many more books available and second hand bookshops offer excellent choices and prices to suit all budgets. Encouraging children to read as a regular past time is still a challenge. I will elaborate further on these issues in the subsequent chapters.

As an English teacher who has taught in Trinidad and Tobago and in Samoa, I have always been interested in literacy issues. After working with many people who were unable to read and write effectively made me realise that their choices in life were limited. Moving to live in Samoa twenty one years ago and bringing up three children, I am more aware of the challenges facing young children as they learn to read and write especially with English as a second language.

The idea of using literacy centres to boost reading comprehension came from listening to people in Trinidad and Tobago whose lives had been changed significantly after recognising that their inability to read (and write) was affecting their career choices, employment opportunities, and general upward mobility in life. In an informal interview with a literacy tutor who assisted at one of these centres, (in my home country), she explained that the venues had been set up in areas, for example, in villages where the students were tutored in small groups to ensure success. There were also many adults who used the facilities to improve their skills and if they were embarrassed to attend the centre in their residential areas, they were allowed to go to the neighbouring one where no one really knew them. The centres had become very popular and there was growing support

for them from various private citizens, who supported the venues as their "community contribution" (Kesraj, 2003, pers. comm.)). In other words, it was the particular citizen's way of giving back to his or her fellow human.

The problems facing people with reading difficulties are not limited to just one country or a region, as it is a worldwide problem (Jha and Kelleher, 2006). After lecturing at the National University of Samoa for the last twenty years in English and sociology, I feel I am more aware of the issues involved with the literacy of both children and adults. From my experience both here in Samoa and in Trinidad, I have noticed that males and females were having difficulties achieving in our schools and some recent studies have identified that literacy was a major cause of this (Jha and Kelleher, 2006, Skelton and Francis, 2003). A central aim of this study is to identify effective literacy practices in community programmes that may improve reading outcomes for children in Samoa.

Insider-Outsider Perspective

I am both an outsider and an insider in this study. I am an outsider because my upbringing, education, values and experiences are slightly different to those practised in Samoa. I do not speak Samoan very well, but I can understand better than I can speak. I am an insider because for the past twenty one years, I have been part of this society, by working and contributing to the academic lives of children and adults. In addition, I also contribute to the expected financial gift giving as well.

As early as 1994, I was one of a group of mothers who was asked to spend one morning a week reading to and with a group of Year Two children to assist with boosting their reading levels. This was at a private primary school, and today the school continues to educate and prepare its students for the outside world. This is one of the contexts in which I can be classified as an insider.

Pereira (2006) has written extensively on the term 'insider/outsider.' She describes the term as being 'ambiguous or not black and white.' Pereira (2006) believes that because a person belongs to a particular group, it does not necessarily mean that he or she is an insider or outsider. This is because in the modern world, people migrate to and from countries and they are exposed to a variety of ideas, images and ways of doing things. Pereira (2006) concludes that in reality, the term insider-outsider becomes 'blurred and often irrelevant' (Pereira 2006, pp. 4-7).

With regard to doing research in culturally appropriate ways, Pereira (2006) cited the works of Utumapu (1992), Anae (1998), Tanielu (2002), Filipo (2004), and Silipa (2004), who included similar Samoan concepts in their respective works. The concepts consisted of values such as *faaaloalo* (respect), *tautua* (service, eg. to the extended family), *feagaiga* (relations of mutual obligations and or responsibilities), *fealofani* (mutual respect between people), *loto maualalo* (humility), and *alofa* (love).
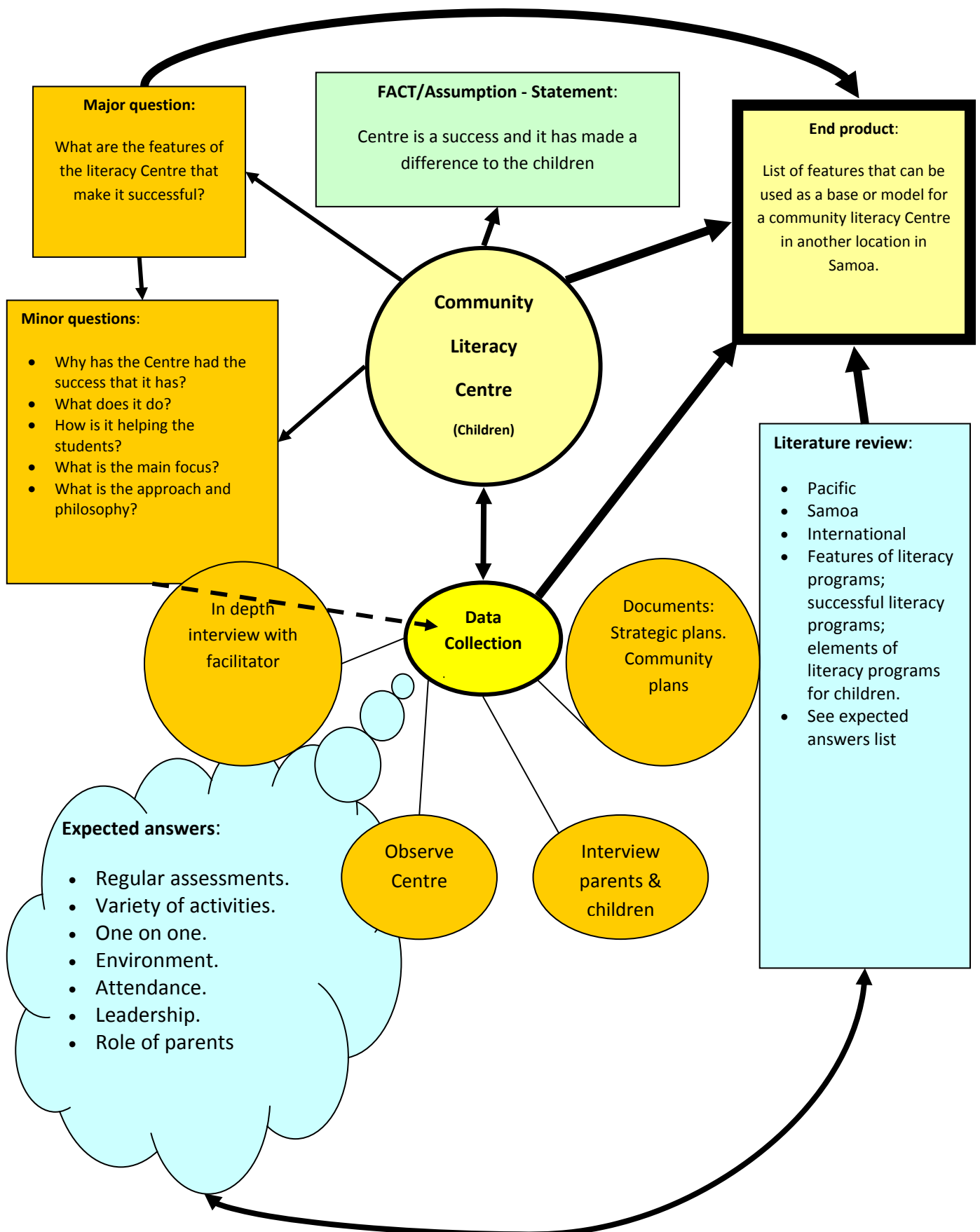
Even though I am a long term resident of Samoa, there are times when what is classified as being culturally correct, for example, a belief or a practice can sometimes conflict with the personal convictions of another individual who was brought up in a different environment. There are many cultural practices which I question, but when I am in a social setting, I behave in accordance with the environment's norms, values and traditions. Similar to Pereira (2006), I identified the concepts of *faaaloalo* (respect), and *feagaiga* (relations of mutual obligations and responsibilities) as being of particular relevance to my study.

Prior to beginning my study, I considered the concept of *faaaloalo* (respect) to ensure that I was aware of the code of behaviour required. For example, I discussed the entire project with the facilitator, who then discussed it with the Administrator of the Theological College. After permission was given, and I was allowed access to the compound to begin my research, I made sure that I followed the strict protocols as advised. These included the need to respect the curfew times, to dress carefully, to listen more than talk, to observe and not offer unwarranted advice according to my values, and to sit in the appropriate seat. An example of this was experienced during the interview with the focus group of parents. As the parents were sitting on the floor, I decided to sit on the floor also. However, I was later invited to sit at a desk as I was writing down the answers. I graciously accepted as this made writing easier. I also ensured that I confirmed the participants' answers by repeating them, recording them in writing and then reading the written responses to ensure their accuracy.

As reciprocity is a valued feature of Samoan society, I was happy to continue the practice. In some instances, money was given as a token of appreciation for a particular favour. However, in this case, in order to thank the parents and children for allowing me to be part of their learning environment, I chose instead to provide savouries, dessert and beverages to share with the participants.

The refreshments allowed the session(s) to end on a pleasant note. In writing up my study, I have also tried to write in a style that will appeal to a diverse audience.

Aims of the Study

Major question:

What are the features of the literacy Centre that make it successful?

FACT/Assumption - Statement:

Centre is a success and it has made a difference to the children

End product:

List of features that can be used as a base or model for a community literacy Centre in another location in Samoa.

Community Literacy Centre

(Children)

Minor questions:

- Why has the Centre had the success that it has?
- What does it do?
- How is it helping the students?
- What is the main focus?
- What is the approach and philosophy?

In depth interview with facilitator

Data Collection

Documents: Strategic plans. Community plans

Literature review:

- Pacific
- Samoa
- International
- Features of literacy programs; successful literacy programs; elements of literacy programs for children.
- See expected answers list

Expected answers:

- Regular assessments.
- Variety of activities.
- One on one.
- Environment.
- Attendance.
- Leadership.
- Role of parents

Observe Centre

Interview parents & children

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The diagram displayed above shows the approach which the author will be using as a guide to support her study. It is hypothesized that there are certain characteristics of the Literacy Centre that account for the measures of success in the improved reading comprehension levels of those students who attend the centre.

The mind map presents the process that the researcher considered necessary to gain appropriate findings from the study. The main fact, assumption and statement (Centred in the box at the top of the diagram) provided by the Facilitator was that the centre was successful as is demonstrated by the enhanced reading comprehension levels of the children who attended. The setting was the 'Community Literacy Centre' and is therefore positioned in the middle of the diagram. The centre is located on the compound of the oldest Theological College in Samoa. Data would need to be sourced from a range of participants using different data gathering procedures as is illustrated in the circles at the bottom of the diagram. A review of relevant literature would assist the researcher to theorise on specific features of literacy programmes that may be common to other community initiatives in similar contexts. Such a review would need to incorporate information from the Pacific Region, including New Zealand, Australia, Samoa and other neighbouring countries, as well as international sources.

Finally, the end product stage located in the square in the left hand corner of the diagram, addresses the key question as to whether or not the features of the Community Literacy Centre could be used as the model for similar centres in other locations in Samoa and therefore provides the rationale, purpose and main question for this investigation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Important Learnings

Literacy has been described as "the foundation for further learning" (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, 2005, UNESCO, p.2). Any discussion that involves education is almost certain to mention literacy and numeracy. However, there are still many individuals in Samoa who, for one reason or another have not been fortunate enough to become literate in what is regarded as school-centred literacies, that is, reading and writing.

During my childhood, I was often told of the limitations which several people suffered from as a result of their inability to read and write. I have even listened to the life histories of several individuals who learnt to read when they were about nine years of age. Whilst these people were able to lead rich and fulfilling lives, in today's world it is essential to be able to read, write and comprehend from an early age. This ability may allow an individual to make informed choices later on.

Perhaps, the story which is embedded in my mind is the one entitled "My Father's Hands." It is the story of a father who passes away with his heart medication in his hand, and it was only after the father's death that his son realised that his father was illiterate, and that he could not read "child proof cap" on the label of the bottle. Had the patriarch of the family shared his inability to read with his children, the father's life may have taken a different path.

Since many activities in Samoan society are organised on a communal basis, children may find reading far more enjoyable if conducted in the company of their peers, their church community or members of their nuclear or extended families.

The issues concerning literacy and its accompanying difficulties are not confined to any one society. In fact, literacy problems are global, and countries which recognize the dilemma usually introduce the appropriate strategies to assist those affected in their respective communities. Since Samoa is a member of the international family of nations, it strives to follow universal trends. For instance, the second goal of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is as follows:

Achieve Universal Primary Education: For children in the country, the aim of this goal is to "ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" (Samoa National Human Development Report 2006, Soo, Vaa, Lafotanoa, Boon (Eds), p. 177).

This goal is a challenge for the country. For example, in 2003, the number of registered children in primary schools was 84 per cent for males and 85 per cent for females. Therefore approximately 15% of children did not receive primary education for that year (Samoa National Human Development Report, Soo et al., (Eds), 2006, p. 21).

In an attempt to improve the situation, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) has now introduced a policy of compulsory education at primary school, where free stationery and teachers are provided to all government and public schools. It is expected that parents will pay and raise funds as decided by school committees for maintenance and other operating costs of school buildings, as well as other school related ventures, such as field trips and sports days (MESC 2007). However, recent findings from the 2006 census indicate that "the results from the Samoa Primary English Literacy and Language SPELL Test 2 show the 'at risk' percentage for English has increased from 46 % in 2000 to 53 % in 2006" (MESC, 2007, p. 93). The SPELL tests reports also show declining levels of English literacy for Samoan students (MESC, 2007).

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) hopes that by 2015, one hundred per cent of the children between the ages of 5–14 would be able to read and write as a result of completing their education up to Year Eight (Samoa National Human Report, Soo et al. (Eds.) 2006). In order to achieve this feat, MESC and its supporting agencies would have to ensure that there is total attendance of the above-named groups. This would also include closer collaboration with communities and village committees. However, "…, civil society is of the general view that it would take a more holistic approach…in particular family development…to achieve the set targets for this MDG" (Samoa National Human Development Report, 2006, Soo et al. (Eds.) p. 179). This is where a literacy centre can make an invaluable contribution to reinforce learning at school and provide extra reading resources.

Alton-Lees' Best Evidence Syntheses (BES) (2003) show that in New Zealand where programmes have been introduced to assist parents in encouraging reading at home, literacy levels have significantly improved. Learning becomes effective when successful

links are created between school and the cultural context in which students are socialised (Alton-Lee, 2003). The literacy centre is located where the children reside and it therefore recognises the social context in which the children live.

Over the years there have been several programmes in Samoa initiated to assist students with literacy, namely, homework centres, after school tutoring centres, mothers reading to children at village and private schools, and private tutoring for individual students, but no research exists as to their effectiveness (Perelini, 2010, pers. comm).

The population of the country appears to be moving away from traditional forms of livelihoods, such as agriculture, and moving into paid employment (Samoa National Human Development Report, Soo et al. Eds.) 2006). Since the 1970s, there have been increases in employment in the financial and business sectors, in social and personal services, as well as in manufacturing industries (Samoa National Human Development Report, Soo et al. (Eds.) 2006). This has led to the need for improved literacy skills of the population, which continues to be a challenge for the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and other sectors of the community. In a wider context, higher levels of literacy skills are now expected in today's world to meet the challenges associated with the complexities of change. This could be explained by the significant technological advances taking place in societies around the world, and why the ability to decode, interpret, and critique text in all its forms is a necessity if one is to function successfully, as this literacy competence would be expected in almost every discipline in the world.

Moreover, several studies highlight the lack of fundamental literacy skills which include the ability to read and comprehend. For instance, it has been said that "771 million people aged 15 and above live without basic literacy skills" (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, 2005, UNESCO, p. 1). The report also points out "in absolute numbers, those without literacy skills are mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia, East Asia and the Pacific" (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, 2005, UNESCO, p. 2).

National assessments in Samoa

In Samoa, there are four types of formal National assessments in the education system, which range from Year 4 to the final year of secondary school:

- The Samoa Primary Educational Literacy Level (SPELL) tests at Years 4 and 6,

- The National Examinations at the end of Year 8 (Year 8 National Examinations),

- The Samoa School Certificate at the end of Year 12, and

- The Pacific Secondary School Certificate Examination (PSSC) – the Year 13 regional examination, which is administered by the Fiji-based South Pacific Board of Educational Assessment.

The SPELL assessments reflect the competencies needed for success in literacy, such as comprehension and interpretation in two levels during primary school. Unfortunately the results of these national assessments have declined as the Samoa National Human Development Report (2006) states:

> In the last five years, examination results in the SPELL tests as well as the Year 8 and Year 12 exams have declined. The quality of teaching, inadequate teaching resources and minimal support for teachers are inter-related and maybe causal factors (Samoa National Human Development Report, 2006, Soo et al. (Eds). p. 83).

Recent SPELL tests also indicate that at Samoan primary schools, many children are not meeting the expected levels of reading proficiency.

Background - SPELL Tests

The predecessor to the SPELL tests and upon which it is based, is the Pacific Islands Literacy Level (PILL) Test, which was administered in 1992 by the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation to nine countries in the region, including Samoa. Under the PILL test, three areas were examined, namely, English, the vernacular of the particular island and numeracy. For English, questions were open ended as the purpose was 'to ascertain the levels of literacy of the particular student' (Afamasaga, 2008, pers comm). The answers provided were marked to correspond to levels in the following ranges: 0-2; 3-4; 5-6. Associated with these levels were 'descriptors for the marking criteria, which guided the markers' (Afamasaga, 2008, pers. comm). Children at levels 1, 2, 3 were considered 'at risk', while those at levels 4, 5, 6 were considered to be acceptable (Afamasaga, 2008, pers.comm).

The English SPELL 1 Test given in Year 4 included questions, for example, based on a picture. The students were required to read and answer questions based on the given stimulus material (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2008). For the SPELL 2 Test administered in Year 6, there were knowledge based questions, as well as questions

which required interpretation and application skills (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2008).

All Government schools must participate in the SPELL 1 and 2 Tests, but they are optional for private schools. However, the private schools use the results to assist in assessing students, and to determine what intervention or remedial measures are necessary (Devoe, 2008, pers comm).

For the SPELL 1 Test, the results for English Language for the years 2000 to 2006 for boys and girls, who were considered to be 'at risk', that is achieving marks at levels 1, 2 and 3, are presented below as a percentage of the total population in Year 4. "The results for the SPELL 1 cover all schools, Government and non-Government." (MESC, 2007, p. 93).

Table 1. SPELL Test 1 results: 2000-2006 (All schools)

English only

Years	Test Results – Boys	Test Results – Girls	Total
2000	(29%)	(17%)	(23%)
2001	(18%)	(11%)	(15%)
2002	(55%)	(41%)	(48%)
2003	(61%)	(41%)	(51%)
2004	(19%)	(8%)	(13%)
2005	(19%)	(7%)	(13%)
2006	(25%)	(12%)	(19%)

(Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, Education Statistical Digest, 2007, p. 93).

In SPELL test 1, over the period 2000 – 2006, the percentage for 'at risk' children increased from 23% in 2000 to 51% in 2003 and then it decreased to 13% in 2005, rising slightly to 19% in 2006.

When compared, the table shows that the percentage of' 'at risk' boys tend to be much higher than girls in any one year. For boys, the years 2002 – 2003 were the highest in

terms of 'at risk.' In 2004, the percentage decreased to 19% and rose again in 2006 to 25%. The same trend is evident with girls' results.

Table 2. SPELL Test 2 results: 2000-2006 (Government Schools)

(English only)

Years	Test Results – Boys	Test Results – Girls	Total
2000	(51%)	(35%)	(46%)
2001	(60%)	(36%)	(48%)
2002	(63%)	(38%)	(50%)
2003	(68%)	(42%)	(55%)
2004	(69%)	(44%)	(56%)
2005	(69%)	(45%)	(57%)
2006	(60%)	(45%)	(53%)

(Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, Education Statistical Digest, 2007, p. 94).

In SPELL 2, the percentage of 'at risk' children in English increased from 46% in 2000 to 53% in 2006. The SPELL 2 test results pinpoint the schools and students who are 'at risk.' The data from this table also recognizes the fact that the information applies to Government schools only. The difference in trends maybe that in the SPELL 2 table, Non-Government schools are not included, as the latter schools tend to have better resourced libraries. In general, SPELL Test 2 results are worse than SPELL Test 1.

The overall high 'at risk' percentages may be due to the inadequacies of the bilingual policy in Samoan education (MESC, 2007). A prime objective of the Samoan education system should be [is] bilingualism, the development of bilingual individuals, fully literate in Samoan and English" (Education Policies 1995 – 2005, cited in MESC, 2007, p. 94). It is believed that students should learn their first language (Samoan) and then acquire the skills of another language (English) from Year 4, as from Year 7, all teaching is done in English. This is to prepare students for the National Examinations at Year 8 and for Secondary School (Years 9 – 13) where students are taught mainly in English. However, "there is need for continuing discussion and research on the required competence threshold that students must achieve in English" (MESC, 2007, pp. 93-94).

In order to deal with the issues of literacy in schools, MESC established a Literacy Taskforce in 2004 to assist teachers in improving the literacy and numeracy levels of students. The main aim was to identify students who required extra assistance and advise and supervise teachers regarding the appropriate intervention methods (MESC, 2007).

Additional measures proposed were the encouragement of reading at all levels with an improved library system, the introduction of standards at a regional level for literacy and numeracy, village or district literacy programmes, education programmes for students who finished school before completion of studies, homework centres, *a'oga faifeau* (pastors' schools) and other communal teaching organizations (MESC, 2007). One major objective "is to promote a reading culture among people of all ages" (MESC, 2007, p. 97).

The evidence given regarding the SPELL 2 test is also supported by the Jha and Kelleher (2006,) study where the researchers analysed these examination results and found that a significantly higher proportion of boys were 'at risk' at the end of Year 4 as well as at the end of Year 6 when compared to girls. The study considered three subjects, namely, English, Samoan and numeracy. However, the figures given for SPELL Tests 1 and 2 are for English only.

Afamasaga (2006, cited in Soo et al. (Eds.) 2006), suggests that while teachers and effective teaching are central to the quality of any education system and student outcomes, there has been a gross shortage of teachers in some schools in Samoa. Afamasaga (2006) also believes that this could be a key variable in explaining the low levels of literacy achievement of the children involved in the particular tests.

In summary, the nationally administered SPELL tests in Samoa are showing that many students are 'at risk'(MESC, 2007) in our schools and it is the assumption of this study that a community literacy centre can assist in improving children's literacy and general achievement.

Furthermore, recently released information by the Department of Statistics, Government of Samoa (2010, p. 15) shows that the decrease in the number of children attending the early years of primary schooling is cause for alarm. The observation appears to be directly related to the number of children engaged in economic activities in the town areas.

It is an issue that needs to be addressed immediately by MESC and other appropriate authorities because Samoa needs sound and well-educated people to lead, guide, and,

sustain all socio-economic developments made today for future generations (Department of Statistics, Government of Samoa, 2010).

Literature Review

> We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children. Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer 'Tomorrow.' His name is 'Today.'

(Gabriela Mistral)

In almost every society in the world, education is an integral part of an individual's life. It begins in the cradle and ends in the tomb; even though there are some experts who believe that learning begins "in vitro," in other words, in the womb, before birth. The basic education is usually thought to be the three Rs – reading, writing and arithmetic ('reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic'). With regard to education, the first exposure to teaching and learning is done by parents giving oral instructions to their children. This is usually done informally and in everyday life, and these include the norms, traditions and values of the child's natural environment. There are a number of ways by which parents teach their children. For example, many parents and caregivers may introduce the alphabet to a young child using a colourful display of letters with matching objects, or they may teach the youngster the rudiments of numeracy by playing counting games using his or her fingers and toes. A third example could be a young child following an adult's instructions on how to write his/her name in the sand at the beach using a stick or a spade. However, as the child grows, he/she is exposed to a more formal type of education which takes place at a recognised institution, namely, a school. Today, he or she may be introduced to a computer from an early age. It can be said that computer literacy is now fast becoming an essential requirement for almost any form of employment as well.

This study is specifically about literacy in English, since it is the language of instruction and examinations in education. According to Esera, (2001, p. 18), "the motivation to learn English is high among Pacific Island Communities, as parents see it as essential to their children academically succeeding." Esera (2001) explains that the communities also recognize the association between improved economic benefits and academic achievements. Heem (2010, pers comm.). refers to English as "the language of empowerment." The same sentiments apply to Samoa, especially for those who wish to migrate to predominantly English speaking countries, for eligibility to serve in regional

and international positions, for those wishing to become private consultants, for employment in Government and the private sector(s), the legal arena, as well as for the many aspiring politicians, who are hoping, among other things, to improve the education sector for children. Esera (2001) comments on the many issues involved in imparting language acquisition skills to children and adults alike, and when problems arise, what measures can be taken to either eliminate the difficulty or improve it. This research investigates the problem of literacy with particular reference to Samoa.

Reading Pedagogy

In a number of countries the emphasis in learning to read has shifted from the acquisition of skills and knowledge to one that encompasses social discourse and practices. Vygotsky (1978) has emphasised that language acquisition depended on social interaction and has therefore stressed the importance of explicit teaching by peers and adults. A central focus of reading instruction, particularly in the early years of schooling, is the acquisition of effective reading strategies.

For example in New Zealand schools, the prevailing philosophy that supports reading programs aligns with a social constructivist view of learning in which meaningful communication involves a holistic and integrated approach (MOE, 2006). Reading and writing are viewed as reciprocal or mutually enhancing processes in which the construction of meaning is an integral factor (Baker, 2001). Approaches commonly used in teaching, such as shared and guided reading, acknowledge that the co-construction of knowledge is not restricted to multiple individual contributions (Baker, 2001). The use of authentic and rich texts is believed to facilitate such learning. Critical literacy approaches, where children are encouraged to question the author and debate concepts within the text using their knowledge of how the world works, are fostered in effective literacy practices. As a result, the teachers become the facilitators rather than the authoritative sources of knowledge (Baker, 2001).

In contrast to New Zealand literacy programs, literacy education in most Pacific Islands' schools tends to emphasise skill acquisition and therefore has a more functional and

restricted view of literacy (Tuafuti, 2000). In the early years, the greater emphasis is on teaching sounds and letters and word-level strategies, and so errors in both reading and writing receive close attention (Baker, 2001). Comprehension receives a more superficial focus while higher-level thinking and understanding are considered to be less of a focus in

reading instruction. This approach may partly explain the reason for the findings by Lai, McNaughton, MacDonald, Hall, MacDonald, McKee, Nicholls, Reeves, Swann, Valgrave, Weir and Warren (2003) that Pasifika learners in New Zealand schools often have effective word-solving strategies but little understanding of what they are reading.

With regard to reading, there are four types of effective reading practices according to Luke and Freebody, (1999). Firstly, there are code-breaking practices where the information given in the text allows the reader to interpret the information whether it is a book, a film or any other form of writing. Secondly, Luke and Freebody (1999) identify text-participant practices, which refer to the reader interpreting a piece of writing depending on the reader's own knowledge of the subject. Thirdly, there are text-user practices, where one uses a text depending on the information the person is seeking. The last practice is referred to as text-analyst practices where texts are written according to the writer's point of view, beliefs and personal feelings (Luke and Freebody, 1999). This means that a reader can accept, dispute or challenge the views. Some of the strategies recommended are monitoring a person's reading, predicting text information, using knowledge of English words and meanings, personal and cultural experiences to assist the text's understanding, and being aware of the influence of the social and cultural texts as applied to home and community. Finally, the comparison and purpose of text must be considered before the reader can agree or disapprove with information contained in the piece of writing (Winch, Johnson, March, Ljungdahl, and Holliday, 2006). Reading instruction in Samoa tends to focus more on code-breaking practices (Tuafuti, 2000) and therefore follows a somewhat limited view of what literacy entails, particularly as it relates to the twenty first century.

With regard to the teaching of Samoan, the language was first taught by *faifeaus* (pastors) in pastors' schools. It began with the "*Pi Tautau*" (the alphabet), where children were taught how to read the alphabet with songs in two stages – *Pi Tautau* and then *Vasega* (other levels) for Years 1 -6, which reinforced the Samoan language (Afamasaga, 2009, pers comm).

When the children began formal schooling, teachers used flash cards with those who were able to read or they taught the alphabet if it was not known, especially to those who did not attend pastors' schools. Afamasaga (2009, pers comm) emphasised that reading and writing went hand in hand with forming and tracing letters. She added that during the 1960s and 1970s a reading programme was developed by Dr. F. Ma'ia'I who was the

Director of Education at the time. This was the basis of reading for Years 1 to 3. That practice was later continued by two assistants in the Department of Education (now MESC).. There were also WAKA books from the University of the South Pacific and readers for Years 1 and 2 which were translated into Samoan (Afamasaga, 2009, pers comm).

Today, there are New Zealand books which have been translated into Samoan. A private school was gifted with several series of books by Margaret Mahy all translated into Samoan. This allows the students to read in English and Samoan (Hunt, 2009, pers.comm). Private schools in Samoa are at an advantage because they receive regular supplies of reading material through donations from parents, donor groups, service organisations or past students. Burgess (1993), in her study on "language nests" is of the opinion that by boosting the number of books available in English and Samoan, literacy levels would be increased as the written material would act as stimulus material for both language and leisure activities (cited in Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu and Finau, 2002, p. 24).

In the first part of a study completed at the National University of Samoa by Vaai, Heem, Arp and Koria (2009) on literacy issues, the key findings given for not reading were: too many household chores, lack of English reading materials, financial constraints, inability to understand vocabulary and so boredom set in. One significant reason was that if time was available the student preferred to play sports so that he or she could have a chance at a sporting career. One possible explanation for this is the fact that a member of a family who has a successful and lucrative sporting career will also be able to make significant financial contributions to his or her family's upkeep. Students have also expressed the view that there were not many English speakers to assist them in their families (Vaai et al., 2009). The second part of this study is still in progress. Given the above reasons, this study hopes to reaffirm the belief that a community literacy centre could supplement reading achievement gained from schooling or elsewhere.

In Samoa, there are several other factors which can affect a person's reading involvement especially for pleasure or for general knowledge. Firstly, there is excessive television viewing. There are several channels, some of which show foreign soap operas, and these appear to attract a large number of the population. Many of these programmes have English sub-titles, so if the viewer cannot understand the language, he/she can see 'the action.' There is also one channel (Star TV) totally devoted to religious programming,

whose broadcast is in English and Samoan. Television was only introduced in Samoa in the 1990s, and at the present time, there are several stations, including Sky Pacific (paid television from Fiji), where twenty-four hour coverage is available. As a result, many families, especially in the rural areas prefer to look at television instead of reading. Mrs Alexa* (not her real name) commented that on an early morning visit to one of her villages, where she is senior *matai*, (chief), the villagers were all looking at television instead of working on the plantations. In a historical evaluation of reading habits in the United Kingdom (Marsh, 2003, cited in Skelton and Francis, 2003, p. 63) concluded that with the advent of television, children were reading fewer books.

The number of video shops in the country may also have had an impact on the reading habits of the population as the shops are now more accessible to its clients. Video shops are now available at numerous locations throughout the country. The variety of videos, for example, music, action, thrillers to name a few means that there is less time to read. In 1990, I asked a video shop operator why there were so few family type movies as I was concerned with the level of violence in the films that were available for children. His answer was that "because the films are in English, with no Samoan sub-titles, they are difficult for the families to understand, so they look at the 'action'." Many students express the same sentiments today. In some of the literature classes at the National University of Samoa (where I am a lecturer), many students prefer to look at the movie version of a book or a play instead of reading the required piece of writing. For examination purposes, the questions are usually based on the book or play, so if the film version is different and the student does not read what is required in the particular course, problems arise with the expected interpretation during the assessments.

Secondly, another reason for not selecting reading as a preferred leisure activity in Pacific Island contexts is given by Mangubhai, (1995, p. 17)

> reading for pleasure – particularly, solitary reading – is not a practice that is encouraged in the societies because it is regarded as socially isolating. This is because in Pacific societies, activities are communal based and many homes do not allow private spaces. Living conditions … with cultural practices have not encouraged the development of the practice of wider reading.

This view is also supported by Teasdale, Tokai, Puamau (2004, p. 42) that "a culture of literacy has not yet developed in most settings in Oceania" and "written material is not a

primary source of information gathering." However, present formal education, both here and elsewhere, requires students to have sophisticated reading skills, including the ability to critique text. This means that the focus on learning to read is of critical importance from an early age.

The lack of importance attributed to reading is reflected with the percentage of boys and girls who were considered to be 'at risk' when literacy levels were measured using Spell Tests 1 and 2. The statistical analysis showed the result for the risk level to be relatively high (MESC, 2007). One attributing factor could be the lack of effective reading instruction and reading on a regular basis in schools.

Some of my students in a course at the National University of Samoa entitled "Children's and Young Adults' Literature," who are teachers in rural or village schools, have confirmed that reading resources were inadequate in their schools and that their only choice was to write on either brown sheets of paper or on newsprint for the students to read. To compound this problem, some of the classes have relatively large numbers of students. During the teaching of this course, I usually read to the students to demonstrate how reading could be encouraged as well as how parents and children could improve learning. This is just to add another perspective to reading with children.

Taupi (2010, pers comm) states that during the 1970s, schools used to receive copies of school journals from New Zealand which provided necessary reading material for students here. For example, Taupi (2010, pers comm) said that she learnt all about Sir Edmund Hilary and his conquest of Mount Everest from these journals. In addition, she said that there were mobile libraries which also showed films whenever they visited the villages in the different parts of the islands. This was especially beneficial to the smaller villages. In Taupi's village for instance, the residents were introduced to the All Blacks rugby team, and other awareness programmes. She emphasised that when the films were shown, it was a treat for the entire village, not just for students alone, as parents and their children were able to discuss the film(s), or documentaries or whatever else was shown. On longer visits, for example, if the unit was there for the weekend, the residents had extra treats (Taupi, 2010, pers. comm). Perelini (2009, pers. comm) another educator here confirmed this fact. She said that when the journals were no longer available, there were very few books available in many schools. Perelini (2009, pers. comm.) added that literacy may have been affected by the unavailability of these New Zealand journals. This is further

aggravated by the lack of teachers and teachers who lack expertise in the area of reading (Afamasaga, 2006, in Soo et al. (Eds). 2006)

Taupi (2010) further highlights the importance given to the oral dissemination of skills in Samoan. For example, a *"lauga"* (oratory speech) is learnt by listening, not by reading. "The intricacies of the oratorical skills are perfected by listening to other chiefs" (Taupi, 2010). This is an ongoing process. Taupi (2010) added that those who learn by books are those who do not live in Samoa or in villages. *"Matai"* (chiefs) who come to the island for church conferences, for instance, are the ones who go to the bookshops to buy the relevant books on *'lauga'* (traditional oratory) on how to give a speech." Listening to the discussions of the chiefs (*matai*) was also considered to be very crucial. A specific illustration is a politician's maiden speech in (the Samoan) Parliament. "The speech is totally oral, it cannot be read. Cue cards may be used, but during the speech, nothing can be read, as it is traditional to talk" (Taupi, 2010, pers. comm). Another example of oral recording is where a family's genealogy is memorised, it is not usually written. However, that is slowly changing, as families are now recording their family trees "on paper" (Pouono, K., 2010, pers comm.). "One major reason for this 'amendment' is to record a particular family's tree, showing all the branches of the extended family. It is designed especially for those who live overseas and who may not be aware of the family ties and titles. It is also to maintain accurate details for future generations." (Pouono, K., 2010.).

A third reason for the lack of regular reading is the fact that many children do not see their elders reading newspapers, books, magazines or any other form of material on a regular basis.   A part of the problem is that if there is a lack on financial resources, the limited funds are not spent on reading material. Many students do not even read newspapers on a daily basis. One local newspaper, for example, *The Samoa Observer*, which is regularly published in English, is now being translated into Samoan several times a week. The intention is to try and encourage a larger percentage of the population to read. It is also hoped that young children will be persuaded to begin reading earlier, now that cheap second hand books are available. In addition, the many programmes drawing attention to the crisis of literacy problems may also push parents and or community groups to continue the drive to enhance literacy levels. One bookshop has been using the media to advertise their books and to have special story reading sessions.

However, the first step in addressing the problem is convincing parents that their children need to read a variety of books from an early age, if they (the children) are to achieve

quality of life later on. "In fact books should be introduced to children from birth ..." (Butler, 1995 cited in Winch et al, 2006, p. 204). Heem (2010) stated that in a study recently completed in one of her courses, the particular student concluded that a significant amount of language acquisition depended on the oral dissemination of information, rather than on the written word. It must be remembered that a rich form of oratory is heard during cultural ceremonies in Samoa, while formal education is delivered in English (Heem, 2010, pers comm). Occasionally, there is conflict between the two official forms of communication. I have also worked for nine years in the tourism industry, and during that time, it was very difficult to get employees to write reports, as they almost always preferred to present the necessary information orally.

Community/home-based reading programmes

One possible influence to reinforce school reading is the church's involvement in this area. Luteru, Ryan and Teasdale (2004) emphasise the church's role in promoting literacy with hymn books, bibles and religious tracts. "The involvement of various churches in any adult literacy program is, therefore, highly desirable" (p. 20). The same would apply to children. Hughes and Sodhi (2008) confirm that public primary-school systems grew out of the church schools offering teaching in the vernacular and in English. The same authors also point out that children learn languages better in their younger days. (Hughes and Sodhi, 2008). Since the church is a major part of an individual's life from a very young age in Samoa, it could play a major role in implementing literacy programs. Afamasaga (2009, pers comm.) stressed that pastors' schools *(a'oga faifeau)* were basically the "first literacy centres in Samoa," so the institutions were familiar with the role.

Some of the solutions recommended for encouraging reading outside of school in a number of contexts include the home - for the development of language skills, the use of storytelling and reading to children, oral exchanges while learning about books, writing activities and others (Pang, Muaka, Bernbardt and Kamil, 2003). The use of *"fagogo"* (oral myths and legends, usually told before bedtime) can be used here. It has been said that the children were told frightening stories if they were delinquent, so they tried to be on their best behaviour, to avoid a 'scary story' just before sleep time. "The use of oral story telling used to be a regular and anticipated event in the daily routine of a traditional household. Now it appears that television, bingo and other past times are replacing this practice" (Pouono, K., 2010, pers comm).

The Home –School Partnership Programme suggests the inclusion of parents and families in its plan by encouraging enriching language through talking, extending experiences, improving and sustaining effective domestic routines and practices, as well as reading to and with children. This would ensure that English and other languages would be included with the programme in order to strengthen the number of players (Learning Media, 2003, p. 13). In Samoa, this could be introduced using the school, home and community as most people live in close proximity to each other. In addition, the church could also be involved as it plays a pivotal role in almost every community or village.

In Australia, McVeigh (2006) records her experiences at an Intensive English Centre and recommends the inclusion of phonics and grammar. A significant aspect is the consideration of "ways in which these reading and writing tools are presented to students who have little or no English" (p. 10). This is relevant to the Samoan setting as there are many children for whom English is very much a second language. For many of these children, the only time the English language is used is when they are at school. The author also suggests the use of fun activities, for example, word games while teaching. Furthermore, other strategies which have been used are the inclusion of "visual culture" as reported by Naylor (2006, p. 70), with one-to-one support, tutor comments on student's individual needs, computer assistance, journal recording and individual reading programmes. Roberts and Krsinich, (2002) have also suggested the use of similar activities.

Other researchers have recommended comparable programmes as well. Among them are Biddulph (1983) who focuses on parent-teacher, parent-parent, parent-child and teacher-librarian partnerships to improve reading. In another longitudinal study, Baker, Gersten and Keating (2000) look at ways by which adults can make a positive contribution to the lives of young children by reading to them as well as teaching them to read. In addition, emphasis is a placed on "one to one interaction" (Baker et al, 2000, p. 494). In Samoa, libraries are being introduced to encourage children (MESC, 2007). It is hoped that all these measures would assist in boosting literacy skills.

A similar view to Baker et al.'s study (2000) is further enhanced by Fletcher, Parkhill, & Fa'afoi, (2005) in their study on Pasifika students where among other things, their conclusion shows that "Pasifika children feel more secure and confident in their literacy learning in school settings that acknowledge their culture and seek alignment between school and home" (Fletcher et al, 2005, p.21). Professor Konai Helu-Thaman is also a

strong advocate of this view, which could apply in the Samoan setting. "... I also believe that the ways in which we have been socialised largely influence our behaviour and way of thinking as our world view" (1998, p. 20 cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 6). In the same manner, Hindin and Paratore (2007) confirm that children who had the support of home intervention made fewer errors in reading. As shown in a much earlier report by Anderson, Fielding and Wilson, (1988, cited in Morrow, Sharkey and Firestone, 1993, p. 4) the amount of time children spent reading out-of-school "correlated positively with reading achievement."

Another study by Morrow, Rand and Young (1997) comments on a special programme conducted for first, second and third graders at a venue in the United States of America called Literacy Centre Time (LCT). This was carried out three to five times a week, and included a number of activities from which the children were allowed to choose. One feature of this programme was that the students consulted their peers for assistance instead of always relying on the teacher.

From the evidence above, it would seem pertinent to investigate the effectiveness of a local literacy centre, whose aim is to assist with improving reading achievement, as well as any associated educational outcomes for students. It is hoped that this study would provide a constructive contribution to debates on community literacy programmes and how they could help our children achieve success.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

"To understand is hard. Once one understands, action is easy"

(Sun Yat Sen, 1866 – 1925, cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000, p. iii)

Introduction

This chapter traces the path taken by the researcher regarding the selected methodology and design of the study. The first section describes the study's qualitative design, while the second outlines the constructivist paradigm favoured by this researcher. The next step highlights the data collection of the case study technique, and theoretical justification. The section which follows includes the ethical, psychological and cultural issues relating to the case study method. Finally issues pertaining to validity and reliability are discussed. The conclusion identifies the progression and modus operandi used in the collection and analysis of the data. For ethical reasons the children were each given a nom de plume, while the parents also got a nom de plume. The centre is referred to as the literacy centre or centre and its coordinator is the Facilitator or facilitator.

Methodology

This research project explores the question, "Community literacy programme in Samoa: why is it so successful?", and as to whether or not the features of the literacy centre could be copied and followed in another location in Samoa. In order to get the required information for the data collection, several people were involved. They were the Facilitator of the centre, ten parents and ten children.

As individuals differ in their views, the same applies to researchers. This means that researchers attempt to explain similar phenomena using different lenses or world views. According to Mutch (2005, p. 60), this occurs because the theorists involved form their individual theories from "different perspectives or world views or a mixture of these." Anderson (1992, cited in Mutch, 2005, p. 60) classified two groups of people, namely, objectivists and subjectivists.

Mutch (2005, p. 60) labels objectivists as those who look at the world as being 'tangible or real,' using objective descriptions, with knowledge that can be obtained. In addition, "there are universal laws that explain social behaviour and the role of research is to uncover these explanations" (Mutch, 2005, p. 60). On the other hand, subjectivists are of

the belief that the world is built by people who base their feelings on their experiences or through their social interactions with others. The main reason for this type of world view is to ascertain how an individual or a number of individuals or groups see 'their world' and attempt to offer their explanations to suit (Mutch, 2005).

Davidson and Tolich (2003, p. 124) summarise their thoughts by advocating that quantitative research involves 'detachment and impartiality' towards the object of investigation termed 'objectivity', while the 'subjectivity' in qualitative research places the emphasis on the respective researcher's values regarding his or her 'personal involvement and partiality.' My research involves a number of participants, including young children for whom English is a second language. This means that the answers given will provide a more comprehensive or in depth knowledge regarding the subject. As it would be difficult to quantify the findings, I prefer to look at my work through the lenses of a subjectivist.

As a researcher I favour a constructivist paradigm as outlined by Mutch (2005), Denzin and Lincoln, (1994, p. 13). "The constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), ... and where findings are usually presented in terms of the criteria of grounded theory." Given my background and beliefs, I feel that in collecting and analysing the data, I shall be able to explain my findings in a subjective manner, as there would be a number of reasons why the explanations for the success of the literacy centre may be unique or different to other locations in and around Samoa. As Mutch (2005) points out the world is created by people with a wide range of experiences, and this type of research seeks to establish how these individuals or crowds determine their world view. In order to accomplish this feat, they seek to interpret the world in their own way with appropriate support.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 13) point out that the criteria for this type of paradigm include credibility, trustworthiness, transferability and confirmability. The two experts also highlight the fact that case studies are expressed and interpreted, while considering how the researcher uses qualitative research to view the world, act in it and allow his or her beliefs to shape his or her outlook (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Some of the attributes of constructivism are that reality is flexible, knowledge and truth are created, meaning can be shaped in a social, cultural or historical fashion, our experiences facilitate inventions, there is the ability to adapt models to more suitable situations, and there exists the capacity for the recognition of different forms of

communication (Mutch, 2005). This means that interpreting this particular world view will depend on who the researcher is and what criteria he or she is using.

Since the data will be collected in the natural setting of the centre, the findings will be presented based on grounded theory whereby understanding will be interpreted according to the values of the researcher and the subject of his or her attention (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Data collection

In selecting an appropriate method of data collection, a researcher has two choices – either a qualitative method or a quantitative one. The choice of method is 'shaped by the goal we have in mind,' as quantitative research provides breadth, while the qualitative type provides depth (Davidson and Tolich, 2003, pp. 121-122).

I selected the case study to collect data from interviews with the participants, namely, facilitator, parents and children at the centre. There were three parts to this: introductory questions, identification of recurrent themes which focused on the study's concerns and a set of prompts to encourage participants to divulge further information (Davidson and Tolich, 1999, p. 148). Mutch (2005, p. 21) adds to the discussion with her description as "a few examples that exemplify particular cases, the strategies are semi-structured interviews and participant observation." In this case there were ten examples of parents and children respectively.

In attempting to find the perfect questions, Davidson and Tolich (2003) recommend that questions should be structured so as to facilitate more listening and less talking on the part of the researcher. I endeavoured to use appropriate questions to get the required information while keeping in mind any biases which a researcher may have (Mutch 2005, Davidson and Tolich, 2003). Every effort was made to choose questions where the researcher did the listening and participant(s) provided the relevant information.

The design for the research necessary for this study meant that several questions were considered. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 75) suggest questions such as the specific purposes, general research purposes, research questions, the focus of the research, the type of methodology, data required, the main methodology, validity, reliability, and the instruments of data collection to name a few. Morrison (1993 cited in Cohen et al, 2000, p. 77) believes that a clear plan of action will have appeared by the time the researcher arrives at the design and methodology phase.

The project used the case study design where the focus was on one setting.   In this case, it was the literacy centre.   Mutch (2005) and Yin (1989) define case studies as being an examination of a single event or setting. On the other hand, Cresswell (1998, p. 61) refers to a case study as "an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case …over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context."   Furthermore, there were multiple sources of information which took into account a programme, an event, an activity, or individuals (Cresswell, 1998). These views were also supported by Denzin and Lincoln (1998), Bogdan and Bilken, (1998), Davidson and Tolich, (1999), and Neuman, (2000). The studies sometimes used features such as informants interviewed in their natural setting, use of descriptive language, data analysed inductively, and attention given with the aim of finding meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this case study, the paramount informant was the facilitator of the literacy centre who was able to offer greater insight into the role and functioning in the area of interest.

As a result of using a qualitative approach, this study allowed the collection of data using a lived in experience, interest in the field and numerous realities as well as "semi-structured interviews and participant observation" as recommended by Mutch (2005, p.21). Moreover, this study was designed to provide a constructive contribution to debates on community literacy programmes and how they were able to help the children achieve success.

Data Analysis

The literacy centre is a unique approach in Samoa for providing additional support for students in English literacy. In order to address the major question that has been stated, it was critical to observe and understand the operations and approach that the literacy centre was taking to reading and literacy in all its areas. According to Yin (1989, p. 84), it is possible to obtain vital information for case studies from six sources; namely, documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artefacts.

Several authors, cited in Cresswell (1998, p. 63) are of the opinion that, "the type of analysis of these data can be a 'holistic analysis of the entire case or an embedded analysis of a specific aspect of the case." Stake (1995) highlights 'a detailed description, analysis of themes and assertions,' while Merriam (1988) emphasises the 'context of the case.' For this case study, the researcher used documents (students' records of books); interviews

(facilitator, parents and children); and direct observations of the programme (facilitator at work with her *faletua* helpers and children).

The data collected on achievement levels will provide more evidence on the impact of the centre. During the analysis process, the researcher will identify any emerging themes and patterns which appeared and will report on them.

Interview questions

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the main aim of this study is to investigate a particular 'Community literacy programme in Samoa: why is it so successful?' In order to find the answers, a major question, as well as minor questions, was asked.

1. The major question of this study was "What were the features of the literacy centre that made it successful?" The Coordinator of the literacy centre provided the answers to this question. The data collected gave the following information:

    1a.   Background information of the centre

    1b.   Details of its clients

    1c.   In-depth understanding of the centre and its philosophy

    1d.   Centre's operation in motion

2. The minor questions used as part of the data collection are listed below:

    2a.   Why did the centre have the success that it has?

    2b.   What did it do?

    2c.   How was it helping students?

    2d.   What was the main focus?

    2e.   What was the approach and philosophy?

To answer the sub-questions identified above, a combination of methods was used to gather information from the centre's facilitator and parents. The table below outlines the link between the data gathering procedure that was used to obtain the data it hoped to obtain in the process, while the third column lists who or what provided the relevant information. This was done in several stages.

Table 3. Project strategies

Sub-question		Data	Informant
1.	Why has the centre had the success that it has?	• In depth interview	Centre facilitator
2.	What does it do?	• Observation	Centre at work
3.	How is it helping the students?	• Semi structured interviews • Student records	Centre facilitator Parents
4.	What is the main focus of the centre?	• In depth interview • Observation	Centre facilitator Centre at work
5.	What is its approach and philosophy of the centre?		

With regard to sub-questions 1, 3, 4, and 5, which required the use of face to face interviews, Bogdan & Biklan (1998) remind researchers that the use of face to face interviews allow key informants to talk about their personal experiences. This is ideally conducted in their natural environment and in their own space which is familiar to them. Davidson and Tolich (2003) and Neuman (2000) confirm that "qualitative methods are effective when the researcher is investigating the perspectives and understanding of people, and their interactions, within an authentic setting" (cited in Belcher, 2006, p. 24).

One of the qualitative methods used collected data from the selected children's reading records and a summary of the corresponding results are presented in tabular form in the Findings Chapter. The data collected here showed the nom de plume of each student, their individual ages, the year of entry when each student entered the centre, the initial reading level assigned by the facilitator on entry, the current reading level the particular student has reached and the number of levels each student has read. (This is based on the levels of difficulty as colour coded and discussed in a later section). Students enter the centre at different ages and from various classes at his or her regular school. In the same way each child brings his or her own set of values and experiences from their previous settings. However, it was not the aim of this study to assess any external criteria, other than what was present in the study setting.

Since observation will be used in sub questions 2, 4, and 5 to firstly answer the question 'what does the centre do?' and secondly to allow for comments made by the facilitator and other informants, it must be remembered that one disadvantage of the interview method is that people can say one thing and do something entirely different. In addition, interviews can also make assumptions about aspects that could be incorrect. However, this can be alleviated somewhat by using observation methods in addition to interviews (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

Finally, semi-structured interviews (see attached Appendix 1a and 1b) will be used with the following personnel:

1. The coordinator of the literacy centre to secure the necessary details:

    (i)   Background information

    (ii)   Details of the programme as well as its clients

    (iii)   To gain an in-depth understanding of the centre and its philosophy

2. The selected parents, in order to obtain information regarding:

    (i)   Their views on their idea(s) of success, particularly their idea(s) of success in school

    (ii)   Their thoughts on the centre

    (iii)   Reasons why they liked the centre

    (iv)   The main focus of the centre and why

    (v)   The benefits of the centre to the children

    (vi)   The difference the centre made to their child's/children's reading

    (vii)   Their assistance with children's reading

    (viii) Any other views or comments about the centre

3. The selected children for their comments on:

    (i)   The length of time each has been attending the centre

    (ii)   The reason(s) why he or she liked the centre

(iii)   The exact assistance he or she received from the centre

At the beginning of this study, there were forty children who attended the centre. It was decided to interview and examine the records of ten children. Ten parents were selected and invited to participate in the semi-structured interviews. Letters were sent to both parents of the chosen children. It was hoped that there would have been equal representation of fathers and mothers.

Ethical, Psychological and Cultural Issues

Social researchers have a responsibility to both their profession and to their subjects as ethical issues deal with harm, consent, misrepresentation, privacy, and confidentiality of data (Punch, 1998). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) stress similar concerns, namely, informed consent and protection of the participant. These matters were dealt with carefully as strict attention was placed on gaining informed consent from the participants taking part in this study, including gaining consent from the parents of the children. Letters to the effect were sent to the parents requesting their children's involvement as well the input of the custodians (parents). Information letters as well as selection criteria will be discussed later. Ethical approval was also sought from the National University of Samoa's University Research Ethical Committee (UREC), and once obtained, ethical approval from the University of Canterbury's College of Education (letters are displayed in Appendices 2).

All participants and the relevant authorities were assured of the anonymity of individuals and schools attended and security of data collected during the study. Entry into the field included obtaining official permission from the administration and management of the College where the centre is located. Data resulting from the interviews were coded by symbols to avoid possible identification of any individual at the centre.

All papers and tapes connected to the study have been kept secure and access is strictly confined to the researcher and her supervisors. In addition, all participants were reminded that they were able to withdraw at any time and they were advised of the complaints procedures to the National University of Samoa and to the University of Canterbury.

In Samoa, it is of paramount importance to observe the strict societal protocols that are present in everyday life, and on every occasion. Consideration was given at all times to the behaviour expected when entering the centre's compound, times of entering and

leaving, dress, and common courtesies required. Residing in the country for the last twenty one years has allowed me to be aware of the aspect of "*Faa Samoa*" – the Samoan way and I was able to pay very careful attention to ensure that participants were comfortable whenever an interview session was held. It was also important to remember that I was entering the compound as an 'outsider' and so that demanded that I had to be extra cautious and pay careful attention to respect, listening first and talking after, generosity, and knowing when to offer advice (Smith, 1999). I was always on guard as I was entering a domain where traditional knowledge was going to be shared and I have learnt that even though I have been residing here for a number of years, there is no guarantee that 'I understand.' I do respect their cultural practices and I have learnt to listen more attentively and to adapt accordingly. This is a very small society and so every effort was taken to protect the identities of the participants.

However, the following guidelines were in place for any participant who may have felt uncomfortable:

- At the beginning of the study, all parties were advised regarding procedures, interviews and observations

- Participants were free to stop a session or withdraw from the study if he or she felt uncomfortable at any time. This was also applicable to the parents.

- Confidentiality was stressed. Nom de plumes were given to parents, and also to the children.

- The coordinator of the literacy centre was the researcher's guide throughout this study, while in the presence of the community. She had promised to advise should any sign of uneasiness be displayed by one or more of the participants. She was able to do so because of her close association with the community.

- The interviews and observation sessions were conducted at the study centre which was a familiar setting to all the participants.

The researcher took into consideration the Samoan way of reciprocity. This is usually seen during cultural occasions in the *Fa'a Samoa* where gifts are exchanged – food, monetary donations or something more tangible as decided by the visitor concerned. While I did not promise any gifts during my visits leading up to the interviews, I did take

savouries, dessert and beverages to thank the participants for their generosity of time and knowledge. These were graciously accepted. The general population of the centre will be thanked later in similar fashion.

> "The ethical concern of being seen to pay informants is counted within the cultural expectation of receiving a gift (*mealofa* or *Koha* – Maori equivalent), representing showing respect to the participant and generosity as discussed by Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton, (2001)" cited in Faoagali, 2004, p. 34).

Smith (1999) reminds us that the final results of a study should be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways and in a language that can be understood. With this in mind, the findings will be returned to assist children and will be given in a positive manner.

Reliability and Validity

> "Qualitative research does not seek to generalize to the whole population but to provide a precise (or valid) description of what people said or did in a particular research location. Its validity is strengthened by triangulation" (Denzin, 1978 cited in Davidson and Tolich, 2003, p. 34).

Methods used here were observation, interviews and document analysis.

The reliability of qualitative data will depend on the consistent use of instruments and data analysis. In addition, all the data gathering procedures were based on the triangulation approach which uses the strategies given previously in Table 3. They are observation, interviews and document analyses.

With regard to validity, according to Mutch (2005, p. 114) "validity means that your study actually measures what it sets out to measure." In order to accomplish this, any term mentioned will be clearly defined, as well as any variable, attribute or unit of measurement used. Other experts in the field, Davidson and Tolich (2003, p. 31) confirm that "validity refers to the extent to which a question or variable accurately reflects the concept the researcher is actually looking for."

Since reliability is related to consistency, in this study, representative reliability will be used as a group of individuals are involved. The instrument will offer more consistency in the results with the selected participants (Davidson and Tolich, 2003, p. 32).

The achieving of either reliability or validity "does not automatically guarantee the other;" as "measures can be reliable but not valid" Davidson and Tolich, 2003, p. 33). Every effort will be made to ensure that the strategies used will ensure both reliability and validity in this study.

"Successful research, like politics, is about the art of the possible. It is about managing the resources you have, within the given time and resource constraints" (Davidson and Tolich, 2003, p. 20). While "research should always be tailor-made," sometimes it can also be "messy," as things do not always turn out the way the researcher intended (Davidson and Tolich, 2003, pp. 20 – 21).

Modifications to this study have occurred as it progressed. It was the intention of the researcher to study the effect of the literacy centre on boys' learning. However, time constraints would not have allowed the effective collection of data as it would have required a number of interviews with several agencies, as well as a variety of document analyses. Given the time frame for the completion of the thesis, the topic had to be more specific.

This study involved a number of people – namely, the Facilitator, ten children and ten parents. The interviews with the facilitator took place at her school office in town and at the community literacy centre. It was not really possible to interview her in the actual setting as there was too much activity occurring all at the same time. To be specific, there were children walking to and from reading to the facilitator, reading to and or with his or her respective tutor(s), exchanging books, reading to their friends, reading to younger and or older children; reading by themselves or listening to their friends read. A 'normal' night usually had over thirty people at the study setting. It was on a rare occasion that they were not all present.

As the data collection involved observation, interviews and document analyses as are usually required when using case studies (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, Mutch, 2005, Davidson and Tolich, 2003), it was also necessary to spend a fair amount of time in the "field" – the centre at work, to observe its operation fully. In total, I spent approximately twelve sessions at the centre.

Every researcher has a special set of responsibilities when dealing with his or her chosen subjects. Similarly social scientists have a responsibility to both their profession and to their subjects. Two issues arose: namely, informed consent and the protection of the

participant as specified by Bogdan and Biklen (1998). As required by the principles which govern almost every type of code of ethics, I paid careful attention to each issue. Mutch (2005) and Davidson and Tolich (2003) mention the issues such as confidentiality and anonymity of all participants involved, total honesty by researcher, and being meticulous when analysing and reporting on the data collected.

In an informal conversation with the facilitator about two years ago, while discussing my various courses, I mentioned my area of interest and asked whether or not it might have been possible to study the centre. The answer was positive. After further expressions of interest in pursuing the study, I was invited to visit the centre and introduced to the helpers and to the children. They were told that I was a friend of the facilitator, that I taught at the National University of Samoa, that I was a student pursuing a higher degree and that I was thinking of studying the centre. I was not a total stranger to some of the children, as some of their parents were my former students at the National University, and so they had seen me before. However, I was not aware of that fact, and they were all very receptive with the idea. It was then time to formalise the process.

The first stage was obtaining formal permission from the Principal of the College (Administration) and then consent from the Facilitator (Management of the centre). After that, parents were asked for their consent for themselves and their children. Strict attention was placed on gaining informed consent from the participants taking part in this study. Ethical approval was also sought from the National University of Samoa's University Research Ethical Committee (UREC). This was followed by ethical approval being given by the University of Canterbury's College of Education. The letters included information about the study, my role, procedures to be followed, as well as ethical issues. Before my formal work began, I spoke with the group, introduced myself, gave a short biography, answered queries, and shared a few light hearted observations. Then, the formalities began.

All participants and the relevant authorities were assured of the anonymity of individuals and schools and the security of data collected during the study. Data resulting from the interviews were coded by symbols (noms de plume) to avoid identification of any individual of the centre. All papers and tapes connected to the study have been kept secure and access is strictly confined to the researcher and her supervisors. In addition, all participants were advised that they were free to withdraw at any time. They were also

informed as to the complaints procedures at the National University of Samoa and the University of Canterbury.

Consideration was given at all times to the strict societal procedures that are observed in Samoa. The researcher is also well aware of the aspect "*Faa Samoa*" – the Samoan way, and paid careful attention to ensure that participants were comfortable. Every effort was made to minimise psychological and cultural risks during this study. There were no signs of any discomfort. The participants were advised that should there have been any visible signs, there were guidelines to follow. This was after reemphasising the guidelines regarding procedures, interviews and observations, stopping or withdrawing from the study, and confidentiality. The coordinator of the literacy centre was there to guide while I was in the presence of the "community" as they were familiar with her owing to her close association with them. All interviews and observations were conducted in their setting, the one most familiar to them – the literacy centre.

I was well aware that I was entering the centre as an outsider. However, that did not last long as working with the Facilitator allowed for closer ties with the entire community of reading children. Besides, I have a number of former students who are now in training at the main theological college, so that was an additional bonus, and I am now teaching their children at the National University of Samoa, so there was no resistance to sharing their views. They also knew that my presence was not a threat in any way, if any, it was to help.

Credibility

Participants were selected from a general list of students at the centre. I chose every fourth child, so as there were forty children I was able to get ten for my sample. They had seen me around and some had even asked the Facilitator to read to me at times during their general programme, so we were all at ease with one another. We sat on the floor or at the desks or they sat on a chair, while I sat at the children's desk. This was all for comfort. I also wanted to ensure that there was no uneasiness. All sessions were held during their normal reading times. These sessions were held during the college's academic term 1 and then completed term 2.

The interviews with the parents were semi-structured and the questions allowed them to lend their voices to traditional knowledge, expertise, experiences, expectations and future plans. I only prompted when I needed clarification of a point. These interviews had to take place at an appointed place at an appointed time. However, with the facilitator, our meeting times were flexible and they suited each other's schedule.

Dependability

The visits took place over a period of about ten weeks. At times, classes were cancelled at the last minute owing to inclement weather or power failures. That meant that I had to have a 'make up' session. Talking to students took place in the presence of helpers who were also parents, and finding a quiet place. That was not always possible, as the area is small and a hub of activity during reading nights. During interview sessions, before I recorded any child's answers, I repeated the information to verify that I was writing the exact responses. This ensured that my records were accurate. The semi-structured interview with the parents took place in one session lasting about two hours. In instances, where it may not have been possible to verify information in person, telephone conversations would have been used.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

"An integral part of the library is expanding horizons." (Facilitator, 2010)

This chapter reports on the findings of the researcher and what evidence was found to support the answers to the questions as given in the introduction to this study. The reader should then be able to ascertain two facets. The first one will be to determine why the centre is successful and secondly, whether it is possible to replicate the model to another location in Samoa or even to another similar context. This should be feasible, since the graduates (that is, the parents of the children at the centre) of the main College are often invited to work in countries where Samoan families migrate to and or reside. The *faifeau* and *faletua* (minister of religion or pastor and his wife) are usually trained for a variety of religious and secular duties, with literacy being included as one of their responsibilities.

This chapter will be divided into four sections. Firstly, the context from the setting will be described. Secondly, the views of the centre facilitator will be summarised, while the third section reports on the opinions of the parents. The last section reviews the feelings of the students involved in the study.

Part 1: The Context

The literacy centre is situated on the compound of the island's oldest theological teaching institution. The College was founded in the 1840s by two ministers from a British religious organisation. The main aim of the establishment is to train ministers of religion and their wives for a variety of religious activities in villages in Samoa and in other countries as well.

The centre began ten years ago with a grant from the New Zealand High Commission to purchase books for the literacy centre. Over the years, the centre has expanded to cater for the needs of the children who reside there during the academic year while their parents attend the main College.

This section describes the environment as observed by the researcher. Before the centre opens for the reading sessions on Wednesday and Saturday nights, the children line up outside the building with their minders and wait for the facilitator. Usually they just chat with their friends and as soon as the centre opens, they enter, and almost immediately

chores begin. The older children lay the mats *(fala)* for sitting out on the floor. There are about eight such mats which are laid out for the children. While this is being done, another set of children bring out the baskets of books. These storage containers all have their respective colours prominently displayed at the front of the readers, and they are laid out on the tables for the children to choose from. Some other youngsters, usually the taller boys bring out the larger books which are usually read at the end of the sessions. During the day, the building is used by the college's kindergarten. The literacy centre's books are kept in a locked cupboard away from the books used by the kindergarten as the two 'schools' are separate entities. However, as part of her duties, the facilitator oversees the functioning of the kindergarten. Being the spouse of the Administrator means she has a given set of responsibilities, but with the freedom to introduce other activities as she sees fit. The setting up of the literacy centre was one of her additional interests. The children and their minders then take their places on the mats. There is a greeting to welcome the children and the helpers for the particular session, after which the folders are given out to the respective helpers and work begins.

As each child belongs to a particular mixed ability group, (there are six), he or she shows his or her book to the 'tutor' for the evening who then confirms its return with a tick on the recording sheets. The child then reads the book, returns it to the respective basket and gets a new book which is also recorded. One on one reading is facilitated with a tutor so each child is assured of undivided attention. While this is taking place, the other children in the group choose to either read alone, read to others, or an older child may elect to read either to an individual child or to a group. Depending on time available, it is possible for a child to read two books to his or her tutor or one to a tutor and one to a peer. This means that at every session, a child reads at least one book. As there are usually two sessions a week, each of the forty or so children read at least two books each for the weekly sessions. Each child may opt to read alone or someone may read to him or her, for example, a parent, or he or she may read with a sibling or with his or her friends. These are in addition to the Sunday library session, where books are only borrowed, but no reading sessions are held.

The Sunday library is held after church services on a Sunday. Children over the age of six as well as the older children who live on the compound are welcome to borrow two books each for a week. The books for this library are permanently housed in a separate room at the back of the kindergarten building. This room is not used for anything else. The

facilitator's assistants for these sessions are usually two older children, one male and one female, who record the names of the books and the borrowers in two notebooks. The books are returned the following week. This library began with books belonging to the facilitator's children. Later on, other books were purchased with funds from the original grant from the New Zealand High Commission, from the College's library fund or from the facilitator's 'pocket.' The facilitator points out that every Sunday approximately eighty books are 'sent out' into the community for others to read.

The environment at the literacy centre is safe and child friendly. My observations indicated that at no time were any negative comments heard by the researcher at the centre. The remarks were always positive. Even if the children were noisy or unsettled, the facilitator expressed her disapproval in a firm, gentle and positive manner. The physical setting can be described as warm and welcoming, with a full audience, regular and punctual sessions, with the facilitator always in attendance. The programme was well-organised and always followed the same format, children circulated to their respective groups and reading tutors for the individual reading of one or two books. This depended on time available for changing their books. Meanwhile, the facilitator was assessing her particular group.

The Wednesday and Saturday sessions ended with a story being read by the facilitator, or the children read with the facilitator or they sang a song, for example, 'Old McDonald' or 'There was a farmer who had a dog and Bingo was his name….' The facilitator also announced and congratulated any child or children who had progressed to another level during her respective group assessment. A round of applause was always given for the successful youngster(s). The children were then dismissed into the care of their minders who escorted them back to their homes at different locations on the compound.

Part 2: The Facilitator

Leadership

The facilitator is a committed leader and has guided the programme consistently for a number of reasons. Firstly, she is well qualified, and has over thirty years of experience. She has taught at mission and private primary schools in both rural and urban settings which cater for a wide cross section of students. The facilitator has also been a lecturer at the Faculty of Education at the National University of Samoa, where many teachers are trained. As a result, she appears well-suited to lead the programme and provide basic

training for the *faletua* helpers, who are the parents as well. Moreover, she is well aware of the educational problems facing the nation's children. The training is simplistic as the *faletua* helpers are not all teacher-educators, and may not have been exposed to the formal elements of assisting children with their reading, or do not have the theoretical understandings of the reading process, particularly at the acquisition stage (Facilitator, 2010).

A child is eligible to enter the centre from age six. On the first day, he or she is assessed by the facilitator, who then determines at what reading level, meaning the colour of graded reader he or she begins with. I asked three questions, (see Appendix 1b) regarding how the initial assessment was done, what standardised reading tests were used and whether running records were used. For the first part, the facilitator's (2010) response was:

> "I use my graded readers, I just get an idea of fluency and understanding based on my professional judgment and experience. It is a 'feeling.'"

She reiterated that her extensive knowledge and expertise as a teacher/educator allowed her the freedom to make such a decision. While this 'testing' method may apply in this environment, in another, it would require a more formal and systematic type of testing. For example, Clay (2001) recommends the use of running records to assist with monitoring and documenting children's reading and understanding of reading material. A Running Record, expertly used by a trained teacher and carefully interpreted, provides a valid view of change over time in children's reading. This allows the teacher to observe a child carefully and to establish where the child has difficulty and what the teacher can do to assist (Clay, 2001).

The response by the facilitator (2010) to the second question was "standardised tests are expensive, I prefer to spend the money on buying books," while for the third part, the facilitator said that no formal reading records were kept. The only records kept were the colour on the book which gave an indication of the level of the individual student and the name of the book.

It is felt that the interactions which take place during reading have a positive impact on the young children and improve their attitudes to literacy. At the centre, the facilitator sits with the child with whom she is reading. She assesses one child at a time, in other words, there is one on one appraisal. The facilitator and child sit on the top of a desk usually with the child seated in close proximity either on the right or left of the facilitator. This adds to

the feeling of warmth and security as described above. Each child in the centre has a follow up assessment with the facilitator during every sixth reading session. Then she decides whether or not the individual child moves up to the next colour or remains at the same level for a while longer. The child moves to a higher level when he or she improves in his or her reading and comprehension.

Reading Pedagogy

The facilitator takes a holistic approach to reading as compared to the skills approach. At all times, the facilitator stressed that the programme was designed to improve or supplement the reading that was done at the children's respective schools, in other words, the engagement in "reading mileage." This is done by exposing the children to a variety of books, stories, genres, authors, illustrators which deal with a number of themes. For example, the issue of environmental problems (Winch et al. 2006) has been the concern of 'poets and artists' for a very long time and there are a number of books dealing with the issue, (p. 480). Another example of a topic with which the children will be familiar is the one dealing with natural disasters, after having recently experienced the devastating effects of the earthquake and tsunami in Samoa. The programme is always intended to increase the child's achievement in reading across curriculum areas at school.

Reading to children from an early age in any language, whether it is a person's mother tongue or a second language can make a difference to a child. "Initial education in the mother tongue is widely recognised to be positive for a child's cognitive development. Learning how to read in a maternal language facilitates access to literacy in other languages. Language diversity need not be a barrier to literacy acquisition" (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, 2005, p. 30). The facilitator places emphasis on the fact that reading aloud to children will expand their vocabulary, assist them to appreciate the value of books, help them to understand new ideas and concepts and be aware of the world around them. In addition to materials, the position of the parent or caregiver is very crucial. To support this view, the facilitator usually sends an information sheet to the parents suggesting that they read to or with their children for at least twenty minutes a day (see Appendix 3).

Pause, Prompt, Praise

In Samoa, many children are not read to from an early age. Instead, they have a rich form of oral literature, a form of storytelling called '*fagogo*' (myths and legends) usually told by the matriarchs of the family (Pouono, K., 2009, Taupi, 2010, pers. comm). The facilitator is of the opinion that the best method relevant to the teaching of the children is the method called the "Pause, Prompt, Praise method," which has been developed by Glynn and Wheldall, 1989. In New Zealand, it has also been translated into Maori as "*Tatari, Tautoko, Tauawhi.* The facilitator stated, "I consulted my cultural advisors to translate the words into Samoan, which they gave as "*Faatali, Fesoasoani, Faaviivii*" (2010, pers. comm.). The main instructors are the parents who are trained to assist their children in their home environment. When asked why she favoured this method, she replied, "The results of this particular programme show that after home tutoring by parents and using the appropriate techniques, the children show significant progress in reading" (facilitator, 2010, pers. comm.).

Training of helpers

Several studies and statistics regarding literacy have shown that the literacy rates in the Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level (SPELL) tests given at Year 4 and Year 6 are below expected levels (MESC, 2007). To assist with the programme, the *faletua* (wives of the pastors in training) helpers, with an average age of approximately 30 years are given basic training in how to use the techniques of the 'Pause, Prompt and Praise' technique. This is because many of the children are behind in their reading ages and their schools may not have the teachers or the resources to offer additional support. For example, one private school in Samoa (of which I was a Board Member) has extra reading assistance at both their primary and secondary schools for students who require help. On average, the respective student is given one - on - one tutoring three times a week. It is compulsory for all the first year *faletua* to attend the training which is planned and taught by the facilitator. Emphasis is placed on the church's mission in teaching and educating the members of its flock. The centre can be classified as an extension of the College with a focus on the children between six and twelve years of age. The new *faletua* all attend the training sessions as the facilitator is of the opinion that they could apply these methods while working as future ministers' wives. The training is conducted in an environment which is safe, encouraging and non-threatening. The newly recruited *faletua* are also introduced to the benefits of the reading programme. According to the facilitator, "many

of them who had never been involved in providing reading assistance, were somewhat 'nervous' about tutoring. However, they were keen to learn the "Pause, Prompt, Praise" approach as they were able to notice the improvement in their own children's reading" (2010, pers. comm.).

Partnerships

The facilitator believes that families have a very crucial role to play in engaging their children in literacy activities on a regular basis. She adds that there has been research to show that children who have seen books from an early age, have been members of families where books, magazines and newspapers are commonly read, where letters and lists are frequently written and where generally children observe how people use reading and writing on a daily basis, as well as bible reading (*lotu* – attendance at church or worship at home), reading labels in shops and supermarkets and writing cheques when making payments. are the ones who would be more successful at school. In addition, "children who are surrounded by books generally learn to like books" (facilitator, 2010, pers. comm.).

There are many mothers, fathers and other caregivers who take children to school in Samoa and who then spend the school hours waiting around the compounds to take them back home. Since the country needs to raise literacy levels in English and Samoan, the facilitator (2010, pers. comm.) believes the mothers could be used to supplement and help with the teaching of English in the classrooms.

> "Children could read to tutors at any time during the day, thus ensuring that books were used more effectively. There would be little financial cost to the schools and a great deal of satisfaction as there develops collective ownership of the project. Tutors are likely to feel that they are making a major contribution to the academic progress of the children of their village(s)."

Part 3: Parents

Ten parents participated in the focus group session, which was organised around semi-structured questions. I had hoped to get a sample of mothers and fathers to attend the interview session, so I addressed the letters of invitation to both parents. However, only mothers attended the meeting. This was because the interview was scheduled during a week when fathers were the designated 'caregivers', as the mothers were allowed 'time

off' to study for their examinations. This schedule is part of the curriculum for the College, which is given at the beginning of the year, so it cannot be changed. I ensured that my request for an interview fitted into the parents' schedule. I also gave the prospective participants an idea of the general topics I was going to cover in our group session. I did this in anticipation of any possible language difficulties. On the day of the interview, ten mothers attended. I ensured that everyone was seated comfortably. I gave a brief overview of what my work was about and then the interview began.

All mothers were given a nom de plume to protect their identities. When I mentioned to the group that I had expected some fathers to attend, Mrs Orchid (not her real name), said that she spoke on behalf of herself and her husband. It was then that I was told that the mothers had been given study time to prepare for their examinations. The other mothers nodded in agreement. I distributed written copies of the questions to the parents for them to follow as the interview was conducted in English. I also extended the invitation to the mothers to speak in Samoan, if anyone wished to do so and I would have had it translated into English. No one accepted the offer as they all spoke English and expressed themselves clearly. In addition, they were accustomed to seeing me with the facilitator and working with the children, and so they were therefore not self-conscious about their level of spoken English. Some of the mothers were my former students at the National University of Samoa, so I was not a total stranger to the community. Mrs Rose asked if her husband was able to write his answers. I agreed and his comments have been very valuable. They are included in this summary.

The first question (see Appendix 4) was designed to gain an overall impression regarding the effectiveness of the centre and what it was that the parents considered to be a measure of success. Typical of this response was Mrs Ixora's reply that "success was surviving the first year at the college." Mrs Orchid added that "even greater success was reaching the fourth year of the programme." Another participant stated that as an example of general success "was trying to achieve something that you are trying to achieve, that is, achieving your goals, for example, becoming a pastor." With regard to success in school for the children, the consensus of opinion was that success constituted children getting good marks at school, passing all exams, placing high up in class (first, second, third etc. which determines special prizes and dux of levels or classes), running a programme, for example, a homework centre to improve reading and English - the language of education and examinations. Mrs Frangipani's definition of success was "child learning, not rote

learning, understanding and applying concepts." The parents felt that these aspects of success would eventually lead to jobs in teaching, banking or other professional fields. Mr Rose was of the opinion that success in school included "making friends, feeling a sense of belonging, compatibility to the school, enjoying one's learning, developing, and the success of others."

Questions 2, 3 and 4 focussed on aspects of the centre that the parents were positive about.

Their comments highlighted several issues dealing with the improvement in reading. Firstly, the children were exposed to a variety of reading material or 'mileage' as described by the facilitator. At the centre, they were able to read an assortment of books, which were constantly changing and growing in numbers. These books helped to expand vocabulary, as well as to stimulate discussions with a range of children. Mrs Ixora responded, "in addition to learning how to read, the children help their peers, establish buddy reading, read in a firm way and help their friends. The books also help improve Christian values such as helping and sharing, as advocated by the College." The mothers emphasised that the children were fortunate as there were many villages which did not have access to books for reading. The sentiment was that the children at the centre were fortunate to be familiar with a wide range of authors and illustrators.

A second common observation amongst parents was that the two hours of compulsory reading at the centre ensured that the child was reading, so if for some reason, the parent did not have time to read at home, the child was reading at least two books for the week. The selection of books available improved comprehension. Mrs Hibiscus pointed out that it was good for mothers to read as they also learned how to read themselves. She also added that parents enjoyed illustrations, so "it was good for pictures too." The mother emphasised that improved comprehension had an impact on all facets of education, encompassing oral communication, on school work, friends, university and employment. As the facilitator stressed, "children who read do better in school". This can also apply to achievement at institutions of higher learning. "Academic success at tertiary level is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that includes language proficiency, learning and study strategies, and certain personal characteristics" (Stoynoff, 1997, 56 cited in Vaai et al, 2009, p. 22).

Furthermore, the mothers reported noticeable features of their children's constant and or improved reading. In addition to the accelerated reading skills, they noted progress in homework, comprehension, enhancement in expressions and longer answers. Confidence

levels rose among the children which also stimulated reading, especially when there was competition among students. The mothers reported that their children showed eagerness to work and as they developed good reading skills with the acquisition of new words, better reading habits evolved. For many children, the centre provided the opportunity for children to switch from Samoan to English. For instance, Mrs Rose commented that when her child first started at the centre, he was only able to speak Samoan, but by the time the family returned to New Zealand, he was able to adjust to reading and on his return to the centre (in Samoa), he was able to keep up with his peers. Mrs Hibiscus added that with the children's improved spelling and pronunciation, they increasingly ventured to teach their parents: "My daughter is always trying to correct the way I pronounce English words." (Mrs Hibiscus). Mrs Tiare commented that her daughter had never liked reading, but after going to the centre, she now liked to read and was improving. "My daughter learnt to read not only in English, but also in Samoan."

In addition, Mr Rose, who contributed his observations in writing, submitted these comments: "There are improvements with interpersonal skills, learning language, respect and sharing. Children develop their cognitive skills and comprehension, since reading is the foundation of education." A further comment from Mr Rose was that: "with the confirmed focus to upskill its tutors, students' and teachers' wives, it [the centre] can only improve its performance." In addition, he emphasised that some of the benefits from the centre to his children included: "being exposed to different literature, world views, perspectives and cultures. Their imagination, vocabulary, self-awareness and knowledge have been greatly improved by this centre."

When asked how parents could help children with their reading, the parents responded by saying that they could assist by listening, showing interest, avoiding negative comments, asking questions, never lying to children, and praising the children always. Mrs Teuila remarked that when she praised her son, he was "okay;" but that when his father praised him "he was on top of the world." It was stressed by Mrs Frangipani that parents should never yell at children. To elaborate further, Mrs Ixora advised the focus group that the children knew all the other children on the compound, they had admirable social skills leading to better networking as they all wanted to belong to the reading group. In addition they knew all the new faces and neighbours. All these traits led to social bonding and healthy competition. Mrs Teuila added to the debate by stating that, "reading is beneficial to Samoan kids. Some kids do better when they see other kids trying. It stirs the feeling

of wanting to read." Mr Rose stressed the importance of encouraging a "set amount of reading, per night/ week/ month/year." He also suggested "playing games, offering rewards and breaks for reaching reading goals," and most significantly, he encouraged parents to: "By example, read as well. Read aloud in both Samoan and English."

Additional comments included, "it would be nice to treat Samoan reading the same too. I believe people think better in their vernacular language and then translate it into English. The centre is such a good guidance for the kids. I wish this kind of centre can be found in villages, because it is good motivation for children." Mr Rose felt that the centre would benefit from "increased information technology [IT] through computer reading apparatus and tools." He expressed the view that performance could be increased with exposure to "outside advice and training." Additional comments by Mr Rose were that reading and writing began with "free and critical thinking," and if carefully addressed would eventually lead to successful reading. He encouraged parents to begin talking to their babies during their infancy, tell stories, share music with them, and as they grew up, to find ways to stimulate their imagination. He concluded by saying: "Our children need to learn that literacy is a right from God and necessary for successful living. As ministers, we need to be at the forefront of such thinking for the future of the church, the world and for the glory of God's kingdom and more."

Finally the parents paid tribute to the facilitator for her tremendous contribution to the centre. The mothers emphasised her passion for reading and her enduring interest in expanding the selection of reading material as well as her legacy to the centre, the children and the institution in general. They (the mothers) added that they paid more attention to their children, because they were now more aware of the importance of reading and had seen several success stories as well.

The interview with the parents was videotaped. I had a camera technician who recorded the session. The parents sat in a semi-circle on mats on the floor, and I also sat on the floor. However, the parents recommended that I should sit at the desk as I was writing their responses. I was happy to comply as it made writing easier. As the parents each had a copy of the questions, it was easy for them to follow. I asked the questions while the parents supplied the relevant information. As each question was answered, I recorded the responses in writing, but, before I wrote the answers, I repeated what was said to the parents, to allow them to make any necessary corrections1. After each query was answered, I read the written responses to verify their authenticity. It was necessary to

record in writing what was said to ensure absolute accuracy. Transcripts were later prepared and the tape is stored securely in my office. The session lasted for about two hours. At the end I thanked the parents, and as a sign of reciprocity, I took savouries, dessert and beverages to share with them. It was a pleasant and culturally appropriate way to end the evening's events.

Part 4: Children

Background

Each child has been given a nom de plume to protect their identities. The children were interviewed separately and were asked three questions. They were asked the number of years they had attended the centre, what they liked about the centre and how the centre had helped them (see Appendix 5). The responses were relatively brief and specific, while there was some overlap between questions 2 and 3 owing to their similarity. The ten children in the group ranged in ages from seven to eleven and had been attending the centre for between one to two years.

The interviews with the focus group of children were not taped. Three questions were asked, when the particular child entered the centre, what he or she liked most about the centre and how did the centre help him or her (the child). The interviews were conducted during six sessions. The problem with not being able to tape the interviews with the children occurred because of a number of reasons. First of all, owing to the pre-arranged programme of the entire organisation, such as holidays, parents' programmes as well as time constraints, I had to conduct my interviews during the weekly reading sessions. Secondly, during the individual interviewing process, it was difficult to find a quiet place to facilitate the interviews with the children and the researcher alone. As a result, each individual interview with the children was conducted in the presence of a *faletua* helper. This was the best option as the *faletua* helper was able to translate the particular question for the child being interviewed if he or she could not understand. Before I recorded the answer, I repeated the information to verify that I was writing the exact responses. This ensured that my records were accurate. The records are safely stored in my office.

Responses

The children liked the centre for a number of reasons. The answers provided included: because of friends, learning to read and speak English, exposure to new vocabulary, improved comprehension, better oral skills in English, as well the ability to talk to anyone

(in English) with confidence. They concluded that with the levels of books from 'easy to hard,' the constant addition of new books on a regular basis, the variety and availability of reading material and the kind and helpful '*faletua*' (wives of ministers of religion), their reading showed improvement. The children believed that this had a positive impact on their schoolwork in general.

With regard to assistance given to the children at the centre, the answers appear to be similar in many of the responses. For example, Amber replied: "I like the centre because of friends, reading chapter books and it helps with reading and understanding in English," while Chris responded with: "a basic education, new words, vocabulary, grammar and comprehension." On the other hand, Peti acknowledged the opportunity "to get smart, and improve my reading so I can get better and better." Carly liked the idea that new words were learnt so "I can talk formally to people." Ally also liked to read to help "improve my English and help me to talk to my friends at school." Other noteworthy comments were given by Pene who said that the centre "makes me read a lot. I'm the top reader in my class," and Jade whose answer was, "I want to be well-educated, so I can help others and when I become a father, I can help my children to read."

The data presented in Table 4 traces the reading journey of the ten children selected for the focus group. The six columns recorded the following information – firstly, the nom de plume of each of the children was assigned. Secondly, their respective ages were taken on the day the data was collected, that is, the evening on which each was interviewed. The third column specified the date, in each case, the month when the child entered the centre, as the facilitator (2010) indicated that she preferred children to begin after having a year of reading in a formal school setting. This was because the programme was intended to supplement the particular child's school reading, not to teach the child to read. Next on the table was the colour that the child initially started on which went from white (first readers to ruby, the highest level at the centre). The current level of the reader, that is, when the data was collected was then noted, while the final column recorded the number of reading levels that each child has achieved. This gave an indication of the reading levels of each individual child and the length of time the child took to move from one level of reading to the next. For example, Carly (8) started in March 2008, moving up five levels to 2010 when the data was collected. Pat (8) began at the centre at the same time, but only achieved three levels. On the other hand, Toni (9) moved up nine levels between February 2009 and the data collection period, while Chris (11) started at the highest

colour, ruby, in February 2009 and was allowed to read any book which suited his interest. It can be concluded that in association with other factors, it is possible for children to accelerate and improve their reading levels while attending the centre.

Table 4: Reading achievements of focus group of children

Name	Age	Date started	Initial level	Current level	No of levels read
Carly*	8	Mar 2008	White	Green	5
Pat*	8	Mar 2008	White	Yellow	3
Toni*	9	Feb 2009	Blue	Ruby	9
Ally*	8	Feb 2010	Red	Yellow	2
Peti*	11	Feb 2010	Turquoise	Emerald	5
Jan*	8	Feb 2010	Blue	Gold	6
Chris*	11	Feb 2009	Ruby	Any color	All
Amber*	8	Feb 2010	Ruby	Ruby	1
Jade*	11	Feb 2010	Silver	Ruby	3
Pene*	7	Apr 2009	Orange	Silver	5
*	Not	their	real	names	

Summary

This chapter summarises the key findings of the three participants, namely the facilitator, the parents and the children at the literacy centre. The facilitator showed three main attributes, they were - leadership, a holistic type of reading pedagogy, and partnerships with parents. The parents expressed a number of reasons why the centre was successful as well as evidence for their support. They also expressed their appreciation to the facilitator for her contribution and lasting legacy. The third group, the children, answered questions to demonstrate why they liked the centre and how it was helping them to succeed in their respective schools as well as in their everyday lives. All parties appeared to work well together.

Limitations of the study

There were several limitations to this study. First of all, I am a novice researcher. This is my first attempt at a research project of this magnitude. In addition, I was unable to locate another study similar to mine to use as reference. Next, I was hampered by the erratic nature of internet access in Samoa, as well as restricted library resources. It would have been ideal also if I were able to visit the university library and my supervisor more often during the collection of data prior to the writing up process. Thirdly, the sample was small, as the study was conducted at one setting – the centre. As a result, I am unable to generalise the findings as a qualitative method of investigation was used. While the researcher obtained valid information to support her work, if the experiment is repeated, the findings may be similar, but not necessarily be the same.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

"In reading, setting an expectation by immersing students in real literacy often inspires them to rise to that expectation and to develop their own visions for literacy." (Duffy, 2003, p. 5).

This chapter analyses the implications of the findings and is divided into five sections. The first section discusses the environment, followed by the second which deals with pedagogical beliefs. The third segment focuses on students of the centre, with the fourth exploring partnerships, while the final section considers the implications for the Samoan educational context, what is being done in schools with regard to reading, what can be done to improve the situation and what questions remain.

The basic question which remains to be answered is "what is the literacy centre doing to boost the reading levels of the children in the programme that is not being done in the schools which they attend or maybe in other schools in general?" To address this, the researcher considers current literacy practices in Samoan schools and how these differ from the operations of the literacy centre. There are several differences which will be discussed separately below.

Environment

The literacy centre is a part of an overall learning environment which is oriented to success in various forms. This appears to be because parents of the children choose to attend the theological college to become *faifeau* and *faletua* (minister of religion or pastor and wife of the minister) in order to serve their fellow human. Being students at the college (namely, father and mother) is regarded as a sign of prestige, pride and special blessing to a family, not only the nuclear family, but also the entire extended family, the person's parent church, the village and the district. When the candidates graduate three or four years later, it is cause for even greater celebration. However, since many children live with their parents while they (the parents) are in training, attention also extends to the respective offspring, thus making the children's achievement important as well. This is where the literacy centre is involved as it can be classified as a library- on- site for the children, but with additional support mechanisms. It is necessary to understand that the library is the foundation of a literate setting.

With regard to the environment, Duffy (2003, pp. 5 – 8) suggests six characteristics of a literate setting. The first is filling the environment with about thirty top quality books per student, which should include a variety of genres and levels of difficulty. Internet access should also be available. The second is the organisation of the classroom to facilitate approximately sixty minutes of daily reading, including short intervals and allowances for uninterrupted reading. The next suggestion is that the books should include both oral and written sources involving global information and beliefs. In addition, writing should be an essential aspect of classroom behaviour, such as keeping dairies, or writing stories, letters or expository essays. Of equal importance is allowing the students to have several chances to read under the tutelage of the educator. This facilitates sharing, teaching, and learning on any number of topics. The final proposition is engaging in conversations where children are given the opportunities to talk, in other words they should have 'a voice.' "Their role in classroom talk should be more collaborative than submissive, more active than passive, more conversational than submissive" (Duffy, 2003, p.8).

The centre, with its wide array of printed literature, variety of teaching styles, guided leadership and learning techniques, appears to attract and hold the attention of the students. This is occurring because first of all, there is a facilitator who takes charge of the centre and is dedicated to improving the lives of children. This is done with the constant addition of new and up to date books, revised editions by the latest authors, and frequently mended texts, especially relevant to a multitude of reading styles and tastes. It also appears that learning is made possible in several ways, for instance, individual reading, group sessions or with a medley of songs. The children enjoy being exposed to a vast selection of reading material ranging from one word books with illustrations in a range of colours, fine textured stationery, and on a mixture of page sizes to books almost the size of mini novels presented in similar form. In addition, there appeared to be a large number of authors from a host of backgrounds dealing with several themes, but applicable to their ages. All the books were relevant and seemed to appeal to a diverse audience. In addition to the facilitator and the assigned *faletua* helpers at this child-friendly location, the older, more competent children also demonstrate their communal spirit by offering their assistance in reading to, or with, or listening to the reading of the younger members of the centre. This appears to increase the reading abilities and stimulate the confidence of the children as learning is facilitated in a very positive atmosphere, thus ensuring that the children's interest is maintained. The centre at work is shown in Appendix 6.

Several researchers and or authors, for example, Duffy (2003), MOE (2003), MOE (2006), Pressley (2002), Winch et al. (2006), have written extensively on the effectiveness of a print saturated environment, such as the one found at the literacy centre. Children need to be aware of concepts such as sounds, word recognition, messages contained in a piece of writing, how to read for example, directional strategies, what information is given in the title, the cover and the illustrations. They also need to differentiate between the differences in letters and sounds, for instance, "c" and "g" and other symbols and signs that indicate the meanings of pictures and their sequence. Owing to the wealth of experiences that the print media, such as books, newspapers, notices and letters allows a child, he or she is able to expand his or her vocabulary as well as to enhance his or her comprehension level. The child is able to "decode … individual words, construct meaning effectively and think critically as readers" (MOE, 2003, p. 37).

Graves, Juel and Graves (2007) state:

> "the cognitive constructivist view of reading emphasizes that reading is a process in which the reader actively searches for meaning in what she reads. This search for meaning depends very heavily on the reader having an existing store of knowledge, or schemata, that she draws on in that search for meaning" (p.2).

This infers that previous knowledge may influence a child's interpretation of a text. The New Zealand Ministry of Education Literacy handbooks (MOE, 2003, 2006) advocate that using texts familiar to students' experiences is paramount. They appreciate texts which appeal to their interests and are culturally relevant.

The Pedagogical Orientation

The literacy centre appears to be guided by a constructivist view of learning, where the learning is supported by the scaffolding of more expert others, in this case, the facilitator, the *faletua* helpers, and the older children. Similar to Clay (2001, p. 228) when she describes the Reading Recovery programme, the rereading of familiar books occurs on the Wednesday evening, and then again during the Saturday session. Such texts still present 'some processing challenges,' while facilitating 'meaning, structure, print guide self correction and decision- making.' Even though teaching occurs, there is a degree of support. The support is such that the reader would be able to resolve the difficult aspects of the book. In the constructivist paradigm, students create their own meaning.

In Samoa, schools tend to be teacher dominated, and all learning is highly structured. 'A One-size fits 'approach to the learning of reading reflects a more skills-based approach to teaching and learning Texts for all subjects in schools, both Government and mission are designed by and lessons prepared by the Curriculum Unit of the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture (2006). These formal textbooks determine what students learn and what approaches are to be taken with the lessons. Schools do not deviate because all examinations are set on prescribed topics, and administered by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture. While the National Curriculum Policy Framework draws attention to the need for children to communicate efficiently, resolve difficulties by using imaginative resolutions and assessing choices for example, acquiring acceptable societal and cultural expertise, organising oneself and expanding individual employment and study habits, it appears that this is not happening. This is because these attributes depend on the approach taken by teachers in their respective areas as clarified by MESC (2007). "Pedagogies are meant to be active, interactive and creative. … MESC's current SPP (Strategic Policies and Plan) highlights the issue that the current education system privileges the learning of facts and a teacher dominated pedagogy." (MESC, 2007, p. 67).

In one private school which I visited, the classroom teacher worked with the weaker students during the reading session, while those who were able to read on their own were divided into groups according to their reading ability. The students were allowed to choose books from their class library and read alone while the teacher concentrated on the four weakest children in the class. This school also has its own learning support teacher where a 'child in need' gets individual attention about three times per week. This is included in the school's curriculum and begins from the lower levels. The school's sister school at the secondary level has a learning support teacher as well. Taylor, Peterson, Pearson and Rodriguez (2002) emphasise that successful instruction includes having clear goals, asking questions to ascertain comprehension of content or skills included in teaching, and giving feedback to pupils regarding their progress in class. Pressley (2001) reported that outstanding teachers taught skills by actively engaging students in authentic reading and writing, as well as self-regulation in the students' use of reading. Taylor et al (2002) point out that what teachers teach is just as important as how they teach when deciding what to change.

At the centre, it appears that the underpinning philosophy is that the extra two hours of supervised reading contribute to the 'reading mileage' of the children. The reading is

primarily concerned with supplementing what is done during the children's daily sessions in their regular schools. It is clear that the literacy centre's focus on text reading, such as word level knowledge is building on skills learnt in the formal school settings to foster fluency.

In order to determine a child's reading level, the facilitator uses her expertise and "feeling" as she terms it, to decide what the specific level is of the child 'being tested.' This is determined after the child's reading of the assigned text to determine fluency and understanding. This means that there is reliance on informal diagnostic assessment using text reading. While this may be reliable in the centre's setting, in other educational contexts, this may be classified as being unreliable, because standardised tests or more summative ones have not been utilised during the testing process. The only tests available in the Samoan setting which could be used are the Spell tests 1 and 2 administered during years 4 and 6 to determine the element of risk in the reading levels of students in Government schools (MESC, 2007). While these tests give general information regarding the schools involved, and may appear to provide information to assist individual children who may need specialised training, the students do not always receive the remedial attention required for improvement. "Intervention strategies … provided to teachers … are not fully carried out by some teachers" (MESC, 2007, p. 95).

The preferred method of instruction used in the centre is "pause, prompt and praise", a set of reading tutoring strategies, developed by a group of Auckland researchers, Glynn and Wheldall in the 1970s. This programme encourages working partnerships between parents and the school community. The method has three stages as follows: if the word is not attempted, does not make sense or if the word is read, makes sense, but is incorrect, there is a 'pause' to allow for the reader to correct himself or herself. If the tutor offers assistance with correction(s), it is termed 'prompt', while 'praise' is given if the reader repeats or continues reading and is aware of the meanings or sounds of words (Glynn and Wheldall, 1989). This method appears to work well because the facilitator is able to train the *faletua* helpers in the basics of the strategy in a short period of time. These helpers are then able to follow its principles in reading with the children. It appears to be succeeding and helping the students to develop metacognitive strategies in that, "in the case of reading, the most important here-and-now metacognition is awareness of whether a text is being understood …" (Pressley, 2002, p. 291). This strategy appears to be assisting both *faletua* helpers and children at the present time.

The students have a positive attitude towards the centre because they are exposed to a variety of texts, suitable to all reading ages and interests, in other words, there was something for everyone. For instance, some of the males commented on the variety of adventure books available at the centre. It appeared that the children were happy to read and this had a direct impact on their school work.

Partnerships

MOE (2003, p. 15) and MOE (2006, p. 13) describe partnerships as "collaborative that contribute to and support children's learning". In addition, each learner is influenced by a group of key personnel who all contribute to the learner's progress. Included are teachers, parents, caregivers, peers and specialist(s) instructors. As all teachers have a specific role, it is necessary that they complement each other, and be aware of the exact role that each plays. A good partnership should be organised, lively and functional and works well when each partner shares information on the topic, the learner, the literacy requirement as well as the pupil's background which should involve the literacy methods as practiced in his or her home environment.

The partnerships which could apply to this setting in this study are those with institutional support, such as librarians either at public libraries or at the child's school library or at the library at the literacy centre. Each experience would be similar yet different. Since libraries are designed to carry literary material for general and specific information, as well as for leisure, each library may be restricted with the amount of information and quality of text, as well as the clients that it caters for. For example, a child may choose to read a school based text at his or her school library because that is what is available. On the other hand, a public library may offer a more extensive selection, because it caters for a wider readership. While the libraries may offer information, they may not cater for the individual tastes for every type of reader. At the same time, a library in a village may provide additional benefits to the village. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 (2005, p. 29) states, "the library is an ideal place to offer family literacy programmes, as it provides materials for all age groups and reading levels. … libraries and community learning centres can offer space for classes as well as reading materials."

Another partnership which affects success in school is that of the home-school relationship. For example, Paratore (2002, p. 49) confirmed that early readers had parents who spent quality time with their children, read to them, answered their questions,

acknowledged requests for assistance, and who showed them that reading provided a wealth of information as well as relaxation and commitment. Moreover, Paratore (2002, p. 50) established that the mothers strengthened the bonds of parenting and home life which had a positive effect on her child's reading ability. Similar findings by Luis Moll and his colleagues (1992) and William Teale (1986) are also cited in Paratore's article (2002, pp. 51-53).

The literacy centre in this study appears to be having a positive effect on the children's learning as from the findings, the parents have recognised what is expected of them. As they are now more aware of their responsibilities towards their children's success, this recognition has assisted them in becoming more active players. Teachers also need to know the backgrounds of their students, and their previous experiences in order to help them guide their students. Paratore, (2002) cites the New London Group (1996) who suggest that a particular view of language may influence the type of pedagogy associated with it. Furthermore, the group recommends that it might be necessary to investigate the lifestyle and experiences of parents and children to observe how they react together. This is necessary to ascertain how teachers may 'exchange rather than prescribe' what works best with regard to families and literacy (p. 58). This may work well at the literacy centre, because the parents are relatively well educated. However, for non-English speaking parents, extra information on preliminary education will be needed to ensure that the parents understand what is required. The challenge remains that partnerships with parents are paramount to foster links between home and school.

MOE (2006, p. 185) summarises this by stating: "Students' achievement is enhanced when parents and teachers work together and celebrate progress together, combining their knowledge and expertise to encourage and extend the students' literacy learning," while Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell and Safford (2009, p.319) add that as teachers looked at their own reading and that of the children's reading choices after school, their ideas of reading expanded. The changes helped the teachers to reshape their pedagogy. "In these communities, reading for pleasure was recognised as a valuable activity in its own right and younger and older readers began to forge new relationships through sharing their reading lives" (Cremin et al, 2009, p. 319).

Two other partnerships acknowledged by MESC (2007) are the pastors' schools (*a'oga faifeau)* and community learning centres. The pastors' schools 'supplement regular education' by teaching basic literacy, numeracy and biblical studies. The church or

village centre also assists students with internal assessments and other school assignments. On the other hand, MESC is involved in the coordination of community learning centres in various villages in the country. While there are five objectives, the one associated with this study is 'to promote a reading culture among people of all ages' (2007, p. 97). This partnership could be of benefit to those residing in rural villages and it could facilitate easy exchanges of information, especially in the outer areas in Samoa. During an interview with Mrs Tala* (not her real name) a *faletua* who began a literacy centre five years ago based on the model studied in this study, she stated that both she and her husband were also involved in a number of other related activities. These included taking the children to the movies, out for a meal, to the museum or to see the circus when it was in town.

Barriers

This section critiques the several tensions or barriers which I have identified as possibly affecting a child's desire to read and enjoy additional aspects of text, either for pleasure or for expanding their literary experiences. As a teacher/educator, I believe that learning should be fun and that there should be some element of flexibility. In addition, I subscribe to the view that the world cannot be explained in terms of black and white, that there are many shades of grey. Besides, I expect children to be encouraged to be well-read, and adults as well so that they may be able to offer an objective and informed opinion on an expansive range of subjects. However, I also recognise that the ideal is not always the reality.

To begin with, the education system in Samoa is very examination oriented. The examinations mentioned previously in the introduction which involve literacy are Spell 1 administered at Year 4, Spell 2 administered at Year 6, Year 8, Year 12 – Samoa School Certificate and Year 13 – Pacific Senior School Certificate examinations. For example, in many schools, students at the Year 8 level sit an examination which decides which senior secondary school they later attend at senior secondary level, from Years 9 – 13. As everyone is tested in English, Samoan, mathematics, basic science and social science, "it is acknowledged that the testing of psycho-social skills is limited in Year 8 due to the nature of the 'pen and paper' examination" (MESC, 2007, p. 67). As a result, all teaching is done with the focus being on what is most likely to appear in the examination. "MESC is working on trying to include more psycho-social skills in testing" (MESC, 2007, p. 67).

One private school with which I was familiar changed its syllabus in Year 8 to allow for a wider based curriculum. This was at the request of the teachers who felt that they were restricted in their teaching for that particular year. Another reason for that particular change was that the children at the primary school were moving up to their sister secondary school, so it was felt that the examination would not have determined any particular choice of school, thus allowing teachers and students to expand their teaching and learning to include other topics as well.

The Pacific region is also hoping to assess life skills levels at Years 4 and 8 in the following aspects - 'communication and interpersonal skills, decision-making and critical thinking skills, coping and self-management skills, practical/livelihood skills and contextual/issues based skills' (MESC, 2007, p. 67). This implies that exposure to a wide selection of printed material would impact on the skills previously mentioned. The same examination orientation applies to the upper levels - Samoa School Certificate and Pacific Senior School Certificate Examinations, which also have an internal assessment component added. Students' success is based on passing examinations with 'high scores,' so all students taking the examinations must adapt to the same rigid course of study for the prescribed length of time, as the syllabus is fixed. This could imply that owing to the controlled syllabus, reading is not necessarily promoted as a leisure activity at schools, as the only reading that is needed is for narrative and information. Such reading could be obtained from the prescribed textbooks, which could be explained by the utilitarian approach to reading.

Another reason acknowledged as having an adverse effect on reading is the length of a school day. Children begin their school days very early in the mornings, especially if they have to walk to the neighbouring villages to attend school, take the bus to town or travel with their parents on their (the parents') way to work. It is not uncommon for children to be dropped off to school before parents go to their own jobs, so depending on the parents' starting times at their places of employment, a child may be at school at 7:00 am for an 8:00 am start. The official school hours are usually between 8:00 am to 2:00 pm daily and so teachers may not be allowed the flexibility to extend the allocated time for reading, especially individual reading. This is because it is imperative that specific tasks be achieved in the specified amount of time. For young children whose attention span may be limited or restricted, it may seem appropriate to engage them in additional reading after the official school hours at another venue, for example, the literacy centre. Afamasaga

(2009), MESC (2007) confirm that pastors' schools (*a'oga faifeau*) also assist with improving literacy skills, as well as other private organisations, such as the global education specialist, Kip McGrath which caters for individual teaching in literacy and numeracy in Samoa. Study centres and family members also assist children (MESC, 2007).

One aspect of cultural modelling, where the world view appears to be in conflict with the home environment is identified and exemplified by a study done by Vaai, Heem, Arp and Koria (2009) on the reasons why students do not read. This study was done with students at the National University of Samoa. The findings show that the students do not read because they find it boring – that is, they do not have the language skills necessary to enjoy reading. Because they do not understand and have low comprehension, they avoid reading. Another reason is that the less educated parents appear to have the belief that reading is a waste of time, meaning 'it does not put food on the table and money in the pocket.' As a result, it is not worth doing. The emphasis is on getting chores done and working, rather than 'loafing' by reading. Some students prefer to play sports, which is perceived as a valued past time as it is one area with great potential for income generation for the extended family. A lesser reason was that parents emphasise reading the bible or textbooks, but not novels, magazines etc. for pleasure. In other words, this could mean that the parents see literacy as a fringe subject. As mentioned in the literature review, Mangubhai (1995) reminds us that reading is not encouraged as it could be seen as being 'socially isolating'. Since children are always involved in the activities of the family, church and village, it may seem plausible that if a literacy centre is attached to a church it would be successful owing to the communal interests of its members.

In Samoa, "poverty is seen more in terms of hardship, lack of access to essential services or poor education" (MESC, 2007, p. 27). Financial constraints appear to have had an impact on literacy as there are children who do not attend school on a regular basis, even with a compulsory education policy at the primary level of education where free stationery and teachers are provided for government and public schools by MESC (2007). However, the real costs appear to be the payments and fund -raising activities required by school committees for maintenance of teaching facilities, operational costs for additional activities for example sports' days, culture days, field trips or any other similar activity (MESC, 2007). The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, (2005) reports that one of the key barriers to universal primary education is the charging of different types of fees, for

example, registration costs, uniforms, transportation and other learning resources. "Making school more affordable, by removing these costs and by providing free or cheap transport and school meals, acts as a powerful incentive for parents to send their children … to school" (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, 2005, p. 7).

Recent findings released by the Department of Statistics (Government of Samoa, 2010, p. 15) have reported a decrease in the proportion of children in early primary years as a cause for concern. This could mean that there is non-compliance with the compulsory education policy. "This finding coincides with the increasing number of young children selling all sorts of merchandise in the streets of Apia during school hours" (Department of Statistics, Government of Samoa, 2010, p. 15). MESC (2007) has also commented that some household budgets have been adversely affected by cultural and church commitments and this could have an adverse effect of children's school attendance.

Other areas which show cause for concern are the results for the Spell Tests 1 and 2. Spell Test 2 show for example that there were more students considered "at risk" in this test, but that effective measures had not been used. Explanations given for the difficulties are that "there are no strong links between the SPELL and the present primary curriculum," some teachers try to get the tests in advance to coach their students in preparation for the examination, while some principals withhold the results from the respective teachers. As a result, the necessary corrective evaluations were not implemented (MESC, 2007, p. 94), which led to the formation of a Literacy Task Force in 2004.

 The main aim of the Literacy Task Force in 2004 was to assist by supporting teachers in improving the literacy levels of students. This is done by observing "at risk" students and advising teachers on the many ways by which literacy can be improved. This does not always happen (MESC, 2007.) MESC is also aware that more qualified teachers are required and that a reading culture cannot be promoted if students do not have more access to books. Schools will now be getting their own libraries and during the last three years, additional funds were spent on obtaining books written and produced by local authors 'to promote and support the teaching of literacy' (2007, p. 95). This should increase the number of books available for individual reading by the student population, and reinforce the work of the Literacy Task Force as well. Some of my students in HEN 104, a course on Children's and Young Adults' Literature, stated that when books were not available, their teachers demonstrated their creativity by writing on brown sheets of paper, which allowed shared reading while the children were seated on mats on the floor.

With regard to reading in Samoa, Afamasaga (2010, pers comm.) confirms that in primary schools, whilst a whole language approach is encouraged, the reality is that there remain barriers to the implementation of the philosophy. For example, it is dependent on highly trained teachers, smaller classes, an abundance of relevant resources and teaching texts, and in particular, teacher knowledge. While all primary teacher trainees at the pre- service level are trained to teach reading in both Samoan and English, there is no training for specialist reading teachers at the present time. However, the teachers are also trained to take reading records with the children, a practice which varies in schools. Afamasaga (2010, pers comm.) added that the keeping of running records was mandatory at one time, but without good monitoring and evaluation in schools, the practice lapsed, as there were schools which kept good reading records, while some did not. However, effective from 2011, a new set of minimum service standards will be introduced which will require all schools to keep reading records.   This will allow children who are identified as experiencing reading difficulties to have extra tuition either with a reading specialist or with 'reading mums' which usually take place after school (Afamasaga, 2010, pers. comm.).

 One area of concern for this researcher is bilingualism with regard to education. One school of thought suggests that bilingualism may be the cause "why the overall language learning in Samoa is of low quality" (MESC, 2007, p. 94). The present policy of MESC (2007) is that for the first three years of school, children would be taught in Samoan, and then introduced to English as a subject in Year 4. As it appears that both Samoan and English language skills are not developing as they should,   MESC recommends that discussion and research continue in order to decide what English competency levels students must acquire for effective learning (2007, p. 94). Since children learn Samoan in their everyday lives at home, church, and cultural activities, owing to the growing importance of English in education, business, trade and tourism, the language should be introduced by suitably qualified teachers who could role model the language. This should be done in Year 1. An English literacy centre could also assist in enhancing the required language skills in a village. This could have a positive result by continuing to reinforce the literacy skills needed later at tertiary level. Tourism is one area which will benefit from improvement in literacy levels as oral and written skills will be improved. This is because more emphasis is now being placed on expanding the tourism market in the country's bid to boost its economy.

Information technology has been introduced to many schools which could further enhance learning in all fields. This is another area which requires a high level of English. Chan Mow (2009) confirms that "the best computer programmers have very good English skills" (pers. comm.). While it is an excellent teaching tool with the current emphasis on visual forms of media and the fact that children are able to gain a wider view of the world with the click of a button, the costs are very high. The cost of equipment (computer hardware, software and the constant demand to update information), plus electricity costs and the power failures at times are factors which may have to be considered at the present time. However, while the children may have access to computer learning at school, there are not very many who will have the same luxury in their homes. On the other hand, from a community point of view, information technology could be an excellent tool for the exchange and transfer of vital information, especially in rustic or isolated communities.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

"Children learn to read by reading"

This study suggests that there is a dichotomy between the approaches in the literacy centre and those used more widely in school contexts. While styles may differ, the end result is that both institutions are trying to achieve the same results, that is, improving the reading levels, comprehension and overall achievement of children. For the children of Samoa, education is the key to their success, as well as the tool to break the cycle of poverty.

In general, it appears that there is much to be done if children here are to acquire the expected levels of reading required for academic success. This is mainly because the children usually communicate in their mother tongue, which is Samoan in their everyday life, while the language of education and testing is conducted in English. This means that in order to be very successful, children are expected to achieve relatively high levels of reading and comprehension.

The environment in the centre focussed on overall success, teaching styles, immersion in a print saturated environment and role modelling in the language of English. It appeared that the centre was achieving because the children were improving in their reading and doing better in their regular school work, as they were living in an environment where what was being taught was what was being practiced.

As far as the pedagogical orientation is concerned, it appears that the centre operates under constructivist principles, while the schools are more behaviourist in design. A student at the centre is allowed to construct his or her own meaning, while in schools this is not always the case. The difference can be explained using the rationale that the centre has one aim in mind, which is improving reading and general comprehension levels, while schools have to achieve much more in a limited period of time. As a result, owing to the design and time constraints in schools, schools tend to be more teacher dominated.

New initiatives to foster partnerships include schools and librarians, parents and schools, pastors' schools and community centres, which all have the same end result in view. However, the partnership which required additional understanding was that of parents and schools as each needed to be aware of the other's function. Parents and educators also need to collaborate at all times and continue the consultative process so that learning is a joint effort between the two parties. The teacher needs to be fully aware of what skills the

child brings into the classroom and what skills to concentrate on. It can be said though that libraries in villages can be beneficial to both parents and children, and communities at large, if operated carefully.

With regard to the barriers, this was the most challenging as many unanswered questions remain. The present system of formal assessment is very exam-oriented, the syllabus is fixed and does not appear to allow room to change, while ideally it should be changed. Barriers such as financial constraints on families, the rigid examination system, the effects of household chores on time for leisurely reading, the apparent lack of qualified teachers, and cultural difficulties appear to have an adverse effect on families. These are in addition to the restrictions that a lack of reading materials imposes on children. The implication is that reading is not a leisure activity, but a requirement of what schools need for information. Since gift- giving from overseas relatives is a common practice, relatives could be encouraged to give books instead of chocolates. The books may have a better effect.

After considering the factors above, it can be said that the replication of literacy centres to villages based on the model given in this study, could continue in the attempt to assist children with improving their literacy levels in English. This should assist in improving the quality of life for children, parents, communities and the country at large. As can be seen, the twenty first century is laden with challenges and for a country like Samoa, there are additional challenges, literacy just being one of them.

Recommendations for future study

This study could be used as the first stage in a bid to determine the effectiveness of literacy centres. In fact, it would be valuable to continue to conduct research into such organisations taking into account other variables, such as the results of individual SPELL tests, the contribution of parents to children from a particular school, a comparison of achievement levels or the impact of information technology and visual media on the reading curriculum of schools. The list is infinite. With current trends in technology as well as the emphasis that is now being put on reading 'the printed word,' it is possible that the country could achieve the goal of having a population that is one hundred per cent literate. However, if the problem of literacy underachievement remains unattended to, it will have a long term impact on the aspirations and outcomes of the students and continue to affect the development of the nation as a whole.

Finally Lynne Enari, a well-respected educator in Samoa commented, "I am happy that someone is studying the centre. Some of my past students who are now *faifeau,* have been pleased with their children's performance while they were attending the centre. Furthermore, some of my nephews who have been past and present students at the College have made similar remarks. Many of the parents stated that their children showed remarkable progress after attending the centre. In addition to getting good results while at school in Samoa, the children continued to do very well after they went away to continue their education either at other secondary schools or at universities. All children who attended the centre have done very well," she concluded (2010, pers. comm.).

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APPENDIX 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(a)   In-depth interview with Facilitator

1. What prompted you to start the Literacy Centre?
2. What was your vision?
3. Tell me how the Centre is organised?
4. Explain what your definition of 'literacy' is?
5. Tell me about the how you have progressed over the years?
6. Has your vision or focus changed over the years? Why? How?

(b)   Questions regarding the Reading programme

1. How is the initial assessment done at the Centre?
2. What standardized tests are used for assessments?
3. Are running records kept?

APPENDIX 2: LETTERS

2A   Letter to Literacy Centre management

2B   Letter to Literacy Centre facilitator

2C   Letter to Parent

2D   Letter to Children

2E   Consent Form for Adults

2F   Consent Form for Children

2A   Letter to Literacy Centre Management

PO Box 3825

Apia

Samoa

Date

To Whom It May Concern (Name will be given)

Address

Dear Sir/Madam

Research Project title: Community literacy programme in Samoa: why is it so successful?

I am a student at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, studying for my Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTchLn) and I am requesting your kind permission to conduct a research study at your Literacy Centre.

The study aims to look at the impact that this Centre is having on students achievement. I will carrying out in-depth interview with the Centre facilitator as well as interviews with parents.

My supervisors are Ms Faye Parkhill, at the University of Canterbury and Ms Susan Faoagali in Samoa. Their email addresses are below. Please feel free to contact them at any time regarding this research.

Strict attention will placed on gaining informed consent from parents involvement in the study. I can assure you that all information will be kept confidential and that all tapes and papers will be kept secure and access will be strictly confined to the researcher and supervisors. There is no apparent risk to any participant taking part in this study. However

a participant may withdraw at any time and the information that s/he has provided will not be used.

It is anticipated that the data collected will contribute to understanding the literacy issues facing children and educators in Samoa.

Please contact me if you have any further enquires or questions. My contact numbers are listed below. I look forward to a favourable reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Judy-Anne Alexander-Pouono

Phone: 685 23760 (home)/ 777-8255 (mobile)/ j.pouono@nus.edu.ws

Ms Faye Parkhill (First Supervisor) -faye.parkhill@canterbury.ac.nz

Ms Susan Faoagali (Second Supervisor)- fsusan@lesamoa.net

2B   Letter to Literacy Centre Facilitator

PO Box 3825

Apia

Samoa

Date

Address

Dear Madam,

Research Project title: What effect does a community based literacy programme have on boys' achievement in reading in Samoa?

I am a student at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, studying for my Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTchLn) and I am requesting your kind permission to conduct a research study at your Literacy Centre.

The study aims to look at the impact that this Centre is having on students achievement. My supervisors are Ms Faye Parkhill, at the University of Canterbury and Ms Susan Faoagali in Samoa. Their email addresses are below. Please feel free to contact them at any time regarding this research.

I will be carrying out an in-depth interview with you as the facilitator to obtain detailed information regarding the history and focus of the Centre. I will also like to carry out interviews with some parents and carry out observations of the Centre at work.

Strict attention will placed on gaining informed consent from parents in the study. I can assure you that all information will be kept confidential and that all tapes and papers will be kept secure and access will be strictly confined to the researcher and supervisors. There is no apparent risk to any participant taking part in this study. However you may withdraw at any time and the information that you have provided will not be used.

It is anticipated that the data collected will contribute to understanding the literacy issues facing boys and educators in Samoa.

Please contact me if you have any further enquires or questions. My contact numbers are listed below. Attached is the consent form that I will be asking you to sign at your earliest convenience and I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely

Judy-Anne Alexander-Pouono

Phone: 685 23760 (home)/ 777-8255 (mobile)/ j.pouono@nus.edu.ws

Ms Faye Parkhill (First Supervisor) -faye.parkhill@canterbury.ac.nz

Ms Susan Faoagali (Second Supervisor)- fsusan@lesamoa.net

2C   Letter to Parent

PO Box 3825

Apia

Samoa

Date

To Whom It May Concern (Name will be given)

Dear Sir,

Research Project title: Community literacy programme in Samoa: why is it so successful?

I am a student at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, studying for my Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTchLn). I have been given permission by the Centre administrator to conduct this study at the Literacy Centre that your son attends.

The study aims to look at the impact that this Centre is having on students' achievement. I will be carrying out in-depth interview with the Centre facilitator as well as interviews with some parents.

My supervisors are Ms Faye Parkhill, at the University of Canterbury and Ms Susan Faoagali in Samoa. Their email addresses are below. Please feel free to contact them at any time regarding this research.

I am requesting your kind permission to conduct an interview with you. I can assure you that all information will be kept confidential and that all tapes and papers will be kept secure and access will be strictly confined to the researcher and supervisors. There is no apparent risk to you, however you may withdraw at any time and the information that you have provided will not be used.

It is anticipated that the information from you will contribute to understanding the literacy issues facing boys and educators in Samoa and assist in improving other similar programmes.

Please contact me if you have any further enquires or questions. My contact numbers are listed below. Attached is the consent form that I will be asking you to sign at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Judy-Anne Alexander-Pouono

Phone: 685 23760 (home)/ 777-8255 (mobile)/ j.pouono@nus.edu.ws

Ms Faye Parkhill (First Supervisor) -faye.parkhill@canterbury.ac.nz

Ms Susan Faoagali (Second Supervisor)- fsusan@lesamoa.net

2D   Letter to student

PO Box 3825
Apia
Samoa
Date

Dear

<u>Research Project title</u>: Community literacy programme in Samoa: why is it so successful?

I am studying at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, for my Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTchLn) and I would like to have your permission to have an interview with you. Our conversation will be private and there is no apparent risk to you. You are able to withdraw at any time and the information that you provide will remain secret.

All data will be stored in a secure location (in my office at NUS) and destroyed after five years. Your name will not be used in any publication.

We are hoping that the data collected will help us to understand reading problems facing children and teachers in Samoa.

Thank you for your willingness to help us. I look forward to working with you.

Please contact me if you have any further questions. My contact numbers are listed below.

Yours sincerely

Judy-Anne Alexander-Pouono

Phone: 685 23760 (home)/ 777-8255 (mobile)/ j.pouono@nus.edu.ws

2E   Consent Form for Adults

To participate in the research project titled: Community literacy programme in Samoa: why is it so successful?

I have read the relevant information and agree that

- My interviews and discussions will be audio taped and I have full access to the tapes and transcripts,
- My participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice,
- All information will be treated as confidential,
- I can speak with the University of Canterbury College of Education ethical officer or the named supervisors if I have concerns,
- No names will be used in any publications or presentations arising from the study with out my permission and that all information collected will be stored in a secure location,
- I can call the people doing the study if I have any concerns or questions.

Participant/ Informant _____

Signed:_____   Date:_____

2F: STUDENT CONSENT FORM

To participate in the research project titled: Community literacy programme in Samoa: why is it so successful?

I have had the project explained to me and I understand what Mrs Alexander-Pouono wants to do

I know that my parents have said that Mrs Alexander-Pouono to talk with me

Mrs Alexander-Pouono wants to talk to me about how sometimes children have problems with reading and about what helps children learn to read

Mrs Alexander-Pouono will record what we say on a tape recorder and then she will type it out when she listens to the tape recorder.

The only people who know what we talked about will be me and Mrs Alexander-Pouono. Mrs Alexander-Pouono also has teachers. She will talk with her teachers about what she is learning from me about reading. No one else will know.

When Mrs Alexander-Pouono tells people about what she has learned, she will not use our real names.

If I want, I can choose the name Mrs Alexander-Pouono uses for me when she writes about what she has learned.

If I feel unsure about the questions I am being asked I can tell Mrs Alexander-Pouono that I would like to stop

My name   _____

Signed _____   Date:_____

APPENDIX 3

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS

"listen to me read..."

children learn to read by reading, and reading often.

* It's easy - just listen to your child reading every day.

* You can make a real difference by doing this.

* Research shows that listening to your child read every day, can improve reading skills dramatically.

* 10-15 minutes each day is enough.

Help your child to become a better reader.

* Give support and praise. Do not dwell on an unknown word - give it and move on.

* Your positive and practical support is an essential ingredient for success.

APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONS WITH PARENTS

1. What do you think success is? Tell me some stories about success. What is your idea of success at school?

2. Tell me what do you think of this centre?

3. What are some of the things you like about it?

4. What do you think is the main focus of the Centre? Why?

5. How has/ have your child/children benefited from the Centre?

6. Did the literacy Centre make a difference to your children's reading?

7. How can parents help their children with their reading?

8, Is there anything else you would like to say about the Centre?

9. Any other comments?

APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN

1   .How long have you been attending the Centre?

2.   What do you like most about the Centre?

3.   How has the Centre helped you?

APPENDIX 6: PICTURES FROM CENTRE

Photograph 1: Facilitator – Reading to Children

Photograph 2: Children and *Faletua* Helpers at the Centre

Photograph 3: Children at the Centre

Photograph 4: *Faletua* Helpers at the Centre