Weaving language with identity; the story of Samoan Secondary students.

Letoga: A Precious Thing

Maree Goldring

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of

the degree of master of Teaching and Learning

Christchurch College of Education

August 2006

ABSTRACT

If you belong to the dominant culture of your society, it is relatively easy to build an identity and conform. You understand how things run, what is expected of you, and how to meet those expectations. You have freedom to decide whether or not you will fit in.

But have you ever considered what it must be like to belong to a minority culture?   I certainly didn't, even though the primary school I work in is multicultural. Sixteen years ago, when I arrived, I assumed that it was up to the Samoan students at our school to assimilate into the Anglo-Saxon education system I had grown up with, despite the fact that many of them had been born in Samoa.

But something happened over the years. An almost instinctive awareness grew amongst the Samoan parent community about the importance of the maintenance of their children's first language and culture. As a result of much hard work, my school has a Samoan bilingual class, where students learn, and learn in, two languages.

The goal of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of the bilingual class from the point of view of students who had left the class at least two years previously, and now attended secondary school. They shared insights into the life of the class, and what they believed were the long term effects for them. Most of what they shared about the class was very positive and affirming, and they attributed feelings of confidence and self esteem to the warmth and cultural nurturing of the class. The ability to speak fluently, and learn in, their first language promoted a sense of identity and self worth.

They felt proud of their Samoan identify and equated their abilities in Samoan as crucial to that.

This report, then, is about the journey from assimilation of a minority culture into the majority one, to the realization of the rights its members have to maintain their own identity, and the benefits that result.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of this study

This study was borne out of a desire to add to the quantitative data that exists about the efficacy of bilingual education, focusing on my own experience with Samoan bilingual education in my school.   I believed that bilingual education just might be one of the most significant answers to addressing the long "tail" in our internationally compared achievement data in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results (OECD, 2001), in which Pasifika students were disproportionately placed. The lack of funding and staffing assistance for bilingual classes other than Maori was a concern.
I also believed that the voices of the secondary students who were in that class as primary students would have significant stories to add to the data; would these stories support my belief in the effectiveness of the class?

Overview of study

The study began as a question about experiences, and ended as a story about our human right to maintain our beliefs in who we are and what makes us that way – our identity.

The students who were in the Samoan bilingual class at Crossroads School at Year 5 and 6 were asked about their memories of that time from their current perspective of Year 9 and 10 students, in order to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the class as they recalled it.   They were also asked for their opinions as to how it could be improved, and their advice as to what would be needed to establish any new classes. Through the course of the study it became

obvious that knowing how to speak and learn in Samoan was central to their feelings of identity, confidence and self-esteem.

The students regarded their ability to speak fluently in both Samoan and English as a wonderful thing, were grateful to their teacher for her encouragement and love, and their parents for helping to make it possible by their support of the class.

The Metaphors

A gift of a letoga (fine mat) from Samoan hosts after a stay in a Samoan village several years ago provided a key to the foundation metaphor of the study. The letoga is regarded as a precious thing, an item of great value. The long involved process of making it over a period of time, and its value, could be equated to the growth of a child, and all the thought and care that goes into its development. The strands of the mat provided the basis for the study, and the format for the findings is based on the warp and weft threads that constitute any weaving. Further to the letoga metaphor, the concept of fa'afaletui, (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001) a community gathering of differing ideas in order to construct new knowledge, provided a linking concept, when equated to the construction of a fale (house), for the making of the letoga/child. The taualuga (roof) shelters the letoga/child, while poutolu (three poles) conduct the experiences of the aiga (family), naa (community) and aoga (school) to the letoga/child. (refer Fig. 1, page 22)

The Thesis

The thesis follows a conventional pattern of introduction, context, literature review, methodology, data collection, findings, and summary. However, using

2

the letoga metaphor, each chapter is regarded as a new stage in the making of the whole mat. This strand concept is further developed into warp and weft strands in the presentation of the findings.

Chapter 2: Context

The warp and weft of my journey during this study has amazed me. Initially I thought I would find evidence of the success of my school's Samoan Bilingual class in terms of achievement. To a small degree I have, but I have found major threads that I did not expect. I was allowed to enter the emotional, affective world of the students, and this is the important story I must tell for them. Through this research, I have taken on the role of their storyteller. It is a story of memories of laughter, warmth, and love; of security and belonging. In some cases it is also a sad story of loss and longing, which I did not anticipate.

I found myself embarking on a journey of new discoveries, not all of which were comfortable. Old beliefs were challenged, sometimes buried, and new ways of thinking both about myself as I struggled to find focus, and about the school I was to return to manage, emerged. In the past when faced with such a challenge, I have struggled with focus, and with academic reading and thinking. Neither is my natural 'thing.' However, usually clarity has risen almost by itself, often from a sudden thought, surprising me with the logical flow that comes from it. This insight came to me in the form of metaphors, which will be developed in the telling of this story.

My Journey

For the last 14 years I have worked at Crossroads School (a pseudonym), a small, multicultural, decile one suburban school in a large urban centre. Initially, I was appointed assistant principal, in charge of the junior school, and the new entrant teacher. I later learnt that I was the only applicant for the position – even then teachers veered away from schools in low socioeconomic areas which had a reputation for being 'too hard' to work in. Prior to this

position I had taught in schools in small urban centres with large groups of Maori children, but my first experiences of Pasifika students had been briefly in a relieving position just prior to arriving at Crossroads.

I was amazed at the number of Pasifika students in the school, and soon developed a feeling of great affection for them. As new entrants they ranged from the sociable, well adapted, capable child to the non-communicative, aggressive, challenged individual - much as the range in any group. As a rule, I found them affectionate, lovable children, with sunny personalities. However, the disproportionate number of children struggling to integrate into the Palagi (European) education system was evident. Progress was slow and they did not have the experiences, concepts and language necessary to cope with the Palagi texts, which were all we had in those days. I could not speak Samoan, but the school employed a part time Samoan teacher aide whose main role was to try to build up the children's grasp of English. Later we ran English oral language programmes for the same reason. Our emphasis was on improvement of English, translating as necessary. However, the teacher aide did to some degree try to develop both languages side by side.

As the years passed, I took on the role of deputy principal, and in 2000 I became acting principal due to the unexpected departure of the principal. The Samoan bilingual class had just begun in earnest that year, having had a trial run for a term a year earlier, when a small amount of extra funding had been given to the school. Much of my administration and emotional effort went into Pasifika affairs for that first year. I found it very exhilarating, and sometimes exhausting, to work with Pasifika people from within and outside the school community. The steely determination of the parents and teacher to make the bilingual class a success was very plain for all to see. The happiness of the

students was evident, and the class atmosphere was electric. Cultural performances became stronger, senior school speeches in Samoan and English became a highlight of the year, and the cultural harmony of the school improved. The school already had a Maori bilingual class that had been in place for several years, and suddenly we were a 'boutique school,' an example of multicultural unity. Strong bonds had developed between the children and teachers of the two bilingual classes, particularly as they learnt each others dances and rituals in the culture group, which we combined for the first two years. We established a new motto for the school, 'Learning together in harmony,' with a new logo, capturing floral aspects of our three main cultures. Near the end of 2001 I was appointed principal. By that time the Samoan bilingual class was well established.

I was granted a study award through NZEI for 2005, on the understanding that I would undertake Pasifika bilingual education research. This was the start of my journey.

Summer reading on wet Coromandel days – in my tree house surrounded by nikau and kanuka, rain slanting down the windows, cosy inside. May, Hill and Tiakiwai (2004) open before me, and the bricks of my walls of limited understanding of bilingual theory are about to be tumbled. I have nurtured the idea that children, on entry to school, must be strengthened in English literacy before they can be expected to enter a bilingual situation and cope. Then, and only then, can they enter a bilingual class and achieve. At Crossroads School that is at Year 3. True, we make efforts to provide them with first language support through teacher aides, and have worked with parents to encourage their partnership and home support. That is the best we can do with the limited staffing and financial resources in a small Decile 1, multicultural school.

Now May, et al., (2004) have gathered evidence to prove me wrong, and made me rethink what should/could/maybe will happen in my school when I return. Best practice indicates that to achieve bilingualism children need to enter into a bilingual situation, where their first language (of their ethnic group) is used for the majority of the time, and is the main language for writing and reading. English is gradually introduced, and by the time 5 - 8 years have elapsed, the child achieves at or beyond their chronological level in both languages, having gained considerable advantages cognitively over their monolingual peers. What are the implications for my school? How can we afford to employ a Samoan teacher just for the small group of Samoan new entrants? What will the expectations be from the Maori community for their new entrants, particularly those entering from the on-site Kohanga Reo, who currently also enter their bilingual class at Year 3? What about the growing Tongan group entering the school from the pre-school on site? My new understandings were to become pivotal to my research and help shape and refine my research questions.

Examination of the literature around bilingual education soon revealed two significant outcomes of bilingual education. The first is *identity.* My readings, observations, and common sense indicated that language is closely allied to identity. Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001) discusses the growing awareness in Pasifika communities of the importance of their languages and identities, "The maintenance of Pacific languages is critical in New Zealand for the retention of Pacific cultural identities" (p. 200). The goal is to retain the value of their first language and prevent any diminishing of their cultural heritage in the younger generations. Bilingual education is seen as a means to this end. The question is, does the younger generation place value on their first language too?

The second outcome is *achievement*. A strongly touted justification for bilingual education is its researched effectiveness in enabling bilingual students to achieve as well as, if not better than, their monolingual peers, in both languages. I decided that the question of academic achievement as the basis for my research was not an option. The class did **not** meet two of the most vital factors of best practice:

- the students did not enter at Year 1,
- they did not stay for 5 or more years in the class.

At the time of my proposal, I looked broadly at the first outcome, the question of identity, although this was only one aspect of the affective zone I was considering. As my research continued, it became apparent that identity, and its relationship to learning, and learning in, one's first language, was the primary focus of my data, and my thinking. This discussion is continued in Chapter 3.

Initial research questions

Initially the focus question for my proposal was:

What do Samoan secondary students have to say about their past experience in a primary bilingual class, and its impact on their education, identity, and attitudes?

Considering:

- aspects of that time that worked well for them
- what did not work well for them
- how this time affected: their education – achievement, choices, goals

                                        their attitudes – to home, relationships, leisure

                                        their cultural identity – being Samoan in a

                                            Palagi society

- advice they would give to schools to enhance existing units, or ensure new units were successful.

Final research question

After the collation of data and research reading, the focus question then centred more on issues of identity:

What was the significance of learning, and learning in, their first language at primary school to the identity of Samoan secondary students?

In the chapters that follow I tell stories – mine, those of some ex-students from the Samoan bilingual class, and some of their current teachers - that explore the impact and ongoing effect of 2 or 3 years of bilingual education on these students.

Chapter 3: Discovering the Strands

I had spent the day writing about my methodology. All the way through I had been using metaphors of threads, cloth, weaving, as I explained my approach.   I came across a reference to the traditional Samoan concept of Fa'afaletui, (Anae, et al., 2001) where the knowledge process is described as weaving, as different points of view on a matter are brought together – a meeting of the minds to make new knowledge. Suddenly the way forward had clarity. My experiences in Samoa two years ago gave me a vision of where I could link together these fine young people and a symbol of high status in Samoan tradition – letoga, or the fine mat. When I left the village where I lived for a week, I was given a fine mat which now is on display in my office at school. I saw the women of the village making the mats, and was staggered at the amount of work and time that goes into one mat. The web site for the Californian Oceanside Museum of Art (2002) is rich with information about letoga, and the more I read the more certain I became that I had found the cultural metaphor I had been looking for. The following quotes from the website can be related directly to my study:

"The social importance of fine mats lies in their living histories"

- The stories the students tell are the living histories

"These histories must be followed individually to fully appreciate their significance"

- The students have their own stories of their time in the bilingual class and stories of now.

"Pertinent information includes who made the mat"

- My research includes the people who "made" the story – students, other children, families, teachers

"And on what occasions was it exchanged"

- The students tell of significant events where intangibles of value were exchanged – such as the teacher providing students with encouragement

during speeches that led to confidence, and in return she received affection from students.

"This history, a tangible part of the mat, increases its perceived value, as the significance of each factor is carefully negotiated on every occasion. Therefore fine mats contain a time dimension unlike most artistic products."

- This equates to the growth of the child, the experiences that are contributing to this growth, and the expectations parents and wider communities put on them according to their current stage of growth

"They also play a prominent role in the present as retained by families as symbols of status and wealth, while holding great promise for future prosperity".

- The children of a family are like a fine mat in their potential to make the family proud.

I also recalled the number of people involved in the making of a fine mat, the collective nature of its production (a large open fale space where several are made at once), and imagined how the women passed the time as they worked, telling stories about each other, and gossiping about their communities. This is reflective of the time it takes to grow a child, the community behind that growth, and the stories told about and around that child as he/she grows. When I contacted my supervisor/cultural advisor to check the cultural integrity of my thinking, understandings and facts, he confirmed the appropriateness of the metaphor for my study.

This thinking also led me to decide that an appropriate way to present the data and my analysis would be as a woven letoga. Weaving involves warp threads and weft threads. The Warp thread is that which normally runs vertically down a fabric. However, a fine mat begins from one corner and is woven diagonally.

Thus the warp threads in a fine mat are those running down from the beginning corner. **For the purposes of my study, the first warp strand to which all the others are connected, represents the child and his/her own stories.**

The Weft is the thread that is woven across, around and between each warp thread. **For the purposes of my study, these represent the analysis, research, theories, and teachers' stories that impacted upon, or explained the combined students' stories.**

Each story from the students' voices, or those told on their behalf, (the warp thread) is followed by analysis, relevant research and theory, and sometimes others' stories (the weft thread).

First steps

Before any precious item can be created, preparation is important. In the manner in which the leaves of the plant are carefully prepared for the legaga (weaving) of the letoga (fine mat), so too must the preparation for the weaving of this document take place. It is important that it is grounded in theory which provides the background to the findings of the research.   The focus of this section is to briefly discuss the development of language, its importance to culture and identity, the pressures brought to bear on this identity, the rights of a person to retain their culture in a society where they are in the minority, and the New Zealand context. I will then briefly outline the history of bilingualism, some indicators of best practice, its advantages, and its state in New Zealand.

Without language you are nothing

"Without language you are nothing." These words were spoken by a secondary Pasifika student on national television. (Tagata Pasifika, TV One, 10th March,

2005).   Impulsive words said during a brief television interview, but they are very powerful. They became pivotal to this research, although initially I did not realise fully how much this would be so.   Is communication the only way "we learn who we are"? (Adler & Rodman, 2003, p. 8).   If we had no communication, would we have any idea of who we are; our identity? We do not learn language in isolation – we learn it by learning how to do things, "We do not first 'learn' language and then later 'use' it" (Gibbons, 2002, p. 25). As Wittgenstein remarks (cited in Barker & Galasinski, 2001), "Language did not emerge from reasoning…Children do not learn that there are books, that there are arm chairs etc. etc., but they learn to fetch books, sit in arm chairs etc." (p. 53). Barker and Galasinski continue to contend that "language… is an array of marks and noises used to coordinate human action and to adapt to the environment" (2001, p. 53).   Piaget identified several stages in the development of language and thought in children, and laid the foundations for understanding the structured way in which we develop language. Each stage becomes increasingly complex and is built on the earlier experiences.

We construct our perceptions of ourselves through our interactions with others; their responses to our actions give us cues upon which we build these perceptions, which in turn influence our future interactions. This is particularly so in the classroom; the child structures or scaffolds learning on what has gone before. "Language itself provides us with a way of structuring our experience of ourselves and the world, and that the concepts we use … are made possible…" by language (Burr, 1995, p.33). Despite its complexity, most of us tend to take our ability to communicate for granted, without considering it as central to our very existence. "The very nature of ourselves as people, our thoughts, feelings and experiences, are all the result of language" (Burr, 1995. p.

33). We come to develop a sense of ourselves, our communities and each other through language (Ryan, 1999).

There are several ways of viewing the relationship between language and the person/identity.   A traditional view is that a person and their language are separate entities; language consists of labels a person draws out of a 'box' as they are needed to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and concepts to others. We try to communicate our internal state through language, but in this view language and the experiences of people are two "essentially independent things" (Burr, 1995, p. 33). However, post modern views disagree with this idea. Post modern theorists maintain that identities are "constructed through language" (Burr, 1995, p. 33); without language identity does not exist.

Social constructionism postulates that language enables us to express the concepts within us, and these are brought into being and shaped in our interactions with others. These concepts are not absolutes, and can vary from culture to culture, and situation to situation, thus creating multiple identities in any one person. We learn how to behave congruently with each of these identities. Our behaviour in the family is different to how we act, sometimes subtly, at school, in the workplace, sports club, with our friends, and so on. Integral to our development are the verbal interactions we have with others in social situations. What we do with those experiences is what makes us who we are, how we construct ourselves in relation to others.

We are shaped by interactions within the culture we belong to (Adler & Rodman, 2003). "We develop the kind of spoken language which expresses the things our culture believes in, its ideas, even just the objects with which it is familiar" (Dimbleby & Burton, 1998). For example, the Ifaluk culture in the

Micronesian Islands has a word for anger (song) used in a very specific situation; when someone has offended them or broken a cultural protocol. They have other words for other kinds of angry feelings, depending on the situation. In the English language the statement 'I feel angry' can relate to many situations (Lutz, 1990).

Language, learning, and identity are socially constructed and closely interlinked. Theorists and researchers make some powerful statements about the relationship between language, culture and identity, summed up by the following: "The language and the culture of an ethnic group are intertwined as are heart and mind in a flourishing body" (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 115). The conclusion can be drawn that the relationship between language and identity is at the heart of our very being. This realisation can be seen as a post-modern phenomenon, as heritage languages, such as Maori and Gaelic, undergo resurgence for cultures that seek to redefine their identities in modern society.

But what happens if all the learning you do about yourself, all you believed to be true about yourself, is suddenly challenged, and appears to be unacceptable in the eyes of new communities you enter? This is the experience all of the parents of the students in this study as they immigrated to New Zealand from Samoa, and most of the students and their siblings also had to contend with on entering school in New Zealand.

Who am I – really?

"Who am I?" is a question most people instinctively seek an answer for. For many it is relatively straightforward. Often it is supplemented by historical family data; letters, photos, articles, family trees. Some lucky people may have access to professionally produced books which are full of information about

their family. I am one of those. I never knew my grandfather, but the sense of identity which overwhelmed me when I read his writings about native birds published in 1934, and his musical ability, brought me to tears as I recognized my own abilities and interests. My children, who were adopted at birth, needed to find out about the 'secrets' of their conception and birth families, to fill voids in their feelings of identity. For both, abilities and interests turned out to be genetic. Their links with their birth families are established and positive, but contact is infrequent – their need for genetic identity has been met as their questions are answered. Their cultural identity is congruent with their upbringing.

A congruent sense of identity is not so difficult to feel if you live in a society which fits your family identity, where most people look, speak and act like you. You know how to speak and behave at home, school, and in the wider community. You are congruent with the dominant society. However, for minority groups it is not so straightforward. The dominant society can be suffocating and deprecating of minorities, yet the desire to fit in can be overwhelming. Put yourself in the shoes of a 5 year old Samoan child in New Zealand. The need to belong is intense. You have a very clear idea of who you are in the aiga (family) structure, and have conventions and values that ground you. If you enter school and find that everything important to you, (your language, experiences, family routines, and church) are discounted, ignored or deprecated, it is likely that confusion and a loss of identity may follow. There is a risk of feeling devalued. Family links may be strong, but the school and community may not be congruent with this? Some children adapt to the new education system they enter. Others become withdrawn or disruptive, and so slip through the cracks to become failing statistics. Cummins (2000) quotes a Californian child, whose identity differs from an education system which

harshly forces the dominant way of life on him: "This place hurts my spirit" (p.1). He translates Wagner as he discusses the concept of "illiteracy of oppression"

> illiteracy of oppression is a direct consequence of the process of integration/assimilation at work in the public school and in the entire society; it results in the slow destruction of identity and of the means of resistance in the minority community; thus, it is brought about by the oppressive action of the majority society (1991, p. 44-45, cited in Cummins, 2000, p.41)

Life is further complicated as each of us takes on the persona of several, often many, different identities. Spoonley (2001) discusses the emerging multiple identities of many Pacific people in New Zealand as they become involved in a blend of Pacific and New Zealand cultural norms: "… the 1980's and 1990's have seen the emergence of cultural identities which reflect multiple influences, and which depart in significant ways from their migrant, colonial and island origins and traditions" (p. 90). This has led to conflicts and dilemmas for all generations, and many parents feel that the younger generation is in danger of drifting completely away from their culture. "This is sad and creates a rift which unless quickly healed can see PI [Pacific Island] elders and their children drifting further and further away from each other" (Mailei, 2003, p. 229).

A New Zealand Identity

In New Zealand the Maori community has successfully instigated many immersion and bilingual programmes to re-establish their heritage (Maori) language after generations where Maori was submerged in the English speaking education system. This has been an important step in valuing and maintaining their cultural identity. Many Pasifika groups also realise that their youth are

17

losing their first language in the face of the dominant English society. However, according to Silipa, this does not concern all Samoan parents, as many still value English over Samoan, and do not even support Samoan as a subject being introduced at secondary school level (Silipa, 2004). Tuafuti (2005, p.9) discusses how many Samoan parents "believe that the best education for their children is through assimilation into English". Fortunately the Samoan parents at Crossroads School placed value on their first language and linked it to maintaining the cultural identity of their children. Silipa also clearly identifies first language as a means to help "to build self-esteem, confidence and a sense of identity among Samoan students by making them aware of their cultural heritage" (2004, p. 56). Faamatuainu Donald Tala Mailei, a New Zealand born Samoan, discusses how learning Samoan became central to his identity, and that to him, "language is the key to culture" (2003, p. 229). Another New Zealand born Samoan recounted to me how he had felt totally diminished when he went to Samoa and was not able to converse in Samoan with the children he taught. His identity was threatened. "The relationship between language and culture is like oxygen to human survival. Without one, the other will not survive" (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 2001, p. 197).

The goal from the Samoan community's view is therefore to place value on their first language and restore their cultural heritage in the younger generations before it is too late. While the family and community have a role to play in this process, bilingual education is seen as a pivotal means to this end. "Giving and sharing of the Samoan language and culture will continue to keep the culture alive and strong…[and] unified" (Mailei, 2003, p. 229).

The Samoan Secondary Student

Adolescence coupled with a change in educational context can present any student with complex and stressful emotions and situations.   Social life can dominate any other aspect as young people jostle and wriggle into a new more adult identity. Academic studies can take a back seat if students do not see education as useful and interesting, and are unclear about why they are in school.   The Samoan secondary student has the added dimension of cultural conflict to deal with, particularly as they may challenge their traditional role in, and the expectations of, their family in the light of what they see as the new societal norms. Silipa (2004) describes the conflicts and stresses a Samoan student faces as "wavering" as they move from one situation to another. Students" perceptions of themselves and their relationship to their teachers are essential elements for their success. Nakhid (2003) conducted research comparing Pasifika students" perceptions of their schooling with their non-Pasifika teachers" perceptions of them.   Through "mediated dialogue" she revealed the gulf between the two groups. The teachers were unaware that their perceptions of the students" behaviour and learning conflicted with the students" perceptions of themselves, and were aghast at how this mismatch must impact on the students" behaviour and learning in the classroom.   Nakhid (2003) asserts that if students do not feel that their identity as a Pasifika person is recognized and valued, they are likely to experience a "familiar sense of failure" (p. 223). She found that for some students, identity meant their church, for others it was their family, and for others it was being recognized as a Pasifika person. They did not consider their socio-economic status as influential in their educational situation, although teachers considered this of great significance.

The Samoan Cultural Context

It is my intention here to now take the concept of fa'afaletui (Anae et al., 2001) into the realms of a metaphor to link together the contexts of identity development for a Samoan child, creating a visual structure on which to base this research. A more literal translation of fa'afaletui means "capacity building and knowledge sharing between/amongst people in (a) community of practice like house building" (S.R. Silipa, personal communication, October 17, 2005). Let us consider a fale (house), constructed of the taualuga (roof), supported by pou (poles) sheltering a place where families gather, eat, talk, dance and sing. The taualuga represents the accumulated knowledge, customs, experiences and expectations of home, school and community. Let us take three evenly spaced supporting pou (poutolu), and name them aiga (family), aoga (school) and naa (community or village) respectively. They are the triangulate conduits by which the combined knowledge, customs, expectations and experience from the taualuga is passed to the child sheltered below, through **language**. Without language, this transmission could not occur.

The triangle is an important concept for the following reasons:

• The equilateral triangle made by their placement represents a strong construction shape, the A frame.

• A navigator triangulates (uses a compass to finds three converging points of reference) to confirm a location before moving on (Goldring & Mullins, 1995, p. 84).

The child is "made" into the precious thing (the letoga, fine mat, a metaphor which will be expanded on later in this document) largely by experiencing life under the sheltering roof, shaped through **language** in the social settings they are exposed to. The foundations of identity are constructed as they interact in

20

these social situations. This is social constructionism, within the cultural context of the students.

If all poutolu are strong and equal, the child's core cultural identity is clearly constructed, and is strong and firmly located.   But if the construction is faulty and one or more pou (pole) weaken or fail, the child is at risk as part of their core identity may fail to develop in positive ways. This is the situation children from minority language groups can find themselves in as they venture into new educational and social worlds. A graphic of the metaphor follows. (Fig. 1)

TAUALUGA/ROOF
(Accumulated knowledge, customs, expectations and experience of Aiga/family
Naa/community/village)
Aoga/ school

Poutolu – three of the poles of support for the roof, which shelter the making of the precious thing, letoga, below.
(The conduits of all the above to the child, through language)

Aiga / Family

Naa Community/village

Aoga / School

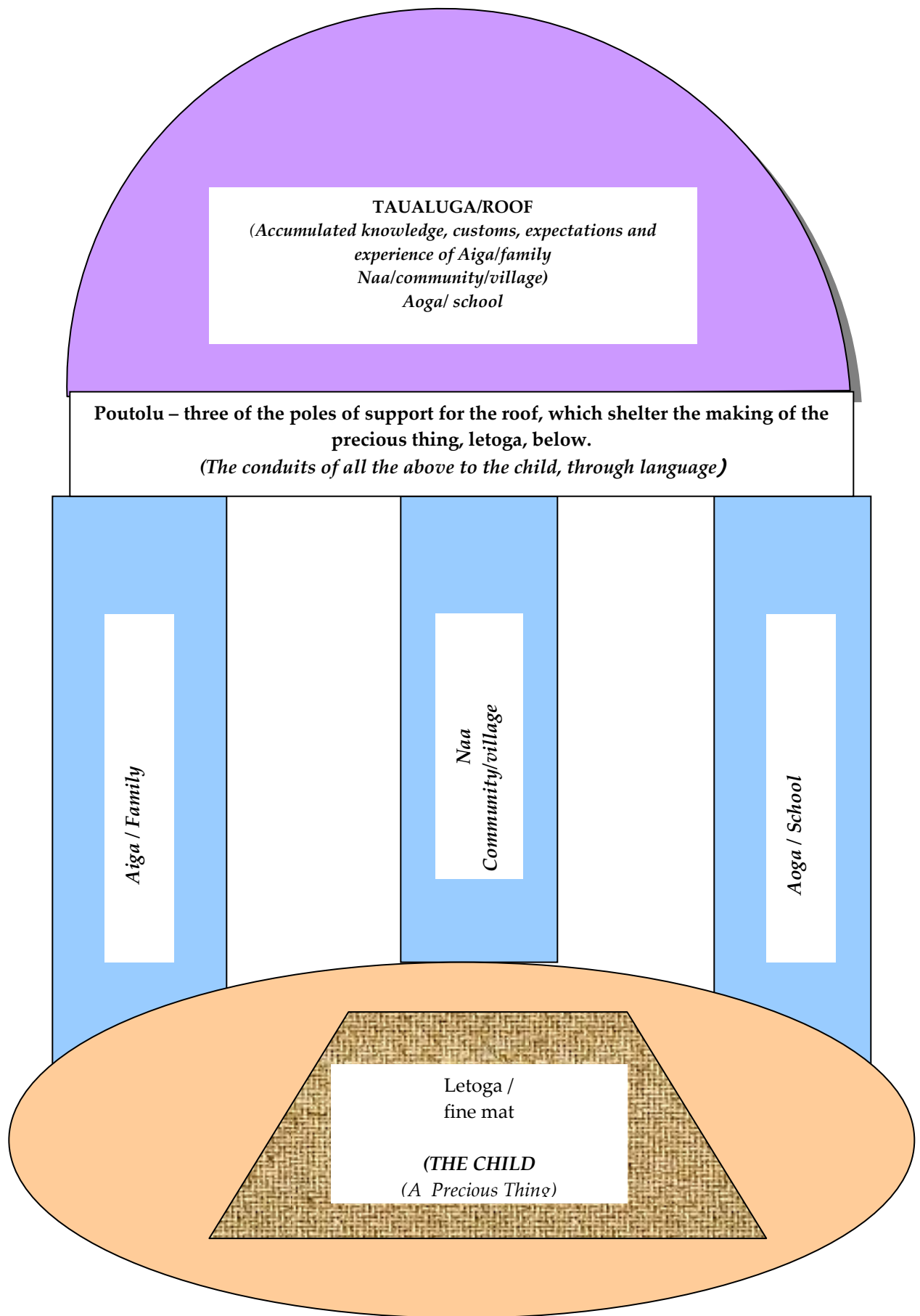Letoga / fine mat

(THE CHILD
(A Precious Thing)

Fig. 1

Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

Who is a bilingual?

Definitions of a bilingual person are many and varied; it is "an extremely complex phenomenon" (May, et al., 2004, p. 10). Early definitions range on a continuum from Haugen (1953, cited in May, et al., 2004, p. 10), who defined a bilingual person as anyone who can make "meaningful utterances (however limited) in the other language," to Bloomfield (1935, cited in May, et al., p.10), who maintained a bilingual person is one who has "native-like control of two languages." These early definitions focused almost solely on the ability to speak two languages, and did not encompass the full range of literacy skills, ignoring the variations of biliteracy possible with the four modes of communication (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

While bilingualism is not common in New Zealand's population, across the world it is common place for people to be bi or multi-lingual. This can be for expediency if their country borders on other language speaking countries, or prestige - it can open up career options. These people are **elective bilinguals**. Many bilinguals are created when they have to adopt the language of a new country as they emigrate from their homeland. They are **circumstantial bilinguals** (May, et al., 2004). As the evidence collected in this study aims to demonstrate, circumstantial bilinguals face the possibility of losing their cultural identity if they drift away from their first language as it becomes too uncomfortable to cling to it.

A Short History of Bilingualism

Bilingualism has long been a contested issue. Early research drew conclusions that being bilingual was a disadvantage to a student. For example, Saer's study (1924, cited in May et al., 2004, p. 19) concluded that "bilingualism had a negative effect on children's intelligence" and that "bilinguals were mentally confused and at a disadvantage in thinking compared with monolinguals" (cited in Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 62). Much early research in bilingualism has been largely invalidated by modern research standards, (Baker 2001, cited in May et al., 2004, p. 20) due to "deficiencies in testing, experimental design, statistical analysis and sampling." It focused on intelligence as the measure of success, regardless of factors such as socioeconomic status and educational opportunities, and was conducted in the student's second language.   In what is commonly regarded as breakthrough bilingual research, Peal and Lambert (1962) surveyed French-Canadian children in 1962, carefully matching French-English bilingual and French monolingual children for socio-economic class, educational background, and age. The study revealed that bilinguals scored better than monolinguals in both verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests, particularly in tests requiring lateral thinking. These results were attributed to the mental flexibility the bilingual child required to switch from language to language (defined as 'code-switching'). This resulted in "superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities" (Peal & Lambert, 1962, cited in May et al., 2004, p. 24).   Other research has since confirmed that bilingual children out perform their monolingual peers in these areas, and usually reach or outperform age norms in curricula in both languages after 5 or more years in a bilingual class.

Issues of language and power

Despite the evidence of such research, bilingual education remains very contentious in many parts of the world and counter research is often used as a tool to exert political power. In the United States great emphasis is placed on "one-nationhood", and the idea of people speaking languages other than English is seen as a threat to this ideal (Baker & Jones, 1998; Oller & Eilers, 2002). "Diversity has been constructed as 'the enemy within,' far more potent than any external enemy in its threat to the fabric of nationhood" (Cummins, 2004, p. 3). American society is threatened by diversity in a culture that believes in one nationhood for all. Anti-bilingual education campaigner Schlesinger (cited in Cummins, 2000) makes sweeping judgments on the subject of bilingualism, which apparently still influence many educational policymakers in the States. He insists that

> bilingualism shuts doors. It nourishes self-ghettoization, and ghettoization nourishes racial antagonism. …using some language other than English dooms people to second-class citizenship in American society. …monolingual education opens doors to the larger world. …institutionalized bilingualism remains another source of the fragmentation of America, another threat to the dream of "one people" (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 108).

Circumstantial bilinguals are typically at the mercy of the majority society which holds the power base, and decides whether or not they can be allowed to maintain, enhance, and learn in, their minority language. Usually this decision is based on the political climate of the nation. A recent political speech in New Zealand, (Brash, 2004) in which race based funding was a key platform, demonstrates how such issues are at the mercy of the current political climate.

Questions of rights and identity, issues are central to this study, are largely ignored.

First Language as a Human Right

At this point it is worthwhile considering the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which New Zealand is a signatory. As outlined in *Human Rights in New Zealand Today: New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights,* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2 (1), states that:

> Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (1993, p. 1).

The right of New Zealand's minority groups to have access to education in their first language is reinforced by some of the "key rights" outlined:

- "The right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic or national origins
- The right to enjoy one's culture and use one's own language."

In 1965, the United Nations adopted a specific Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Racial discrimination, as defined in Article 1 for the Convention, is

> Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (p. 2-3).

The CERD requires signatories "to encourage integrationist or multiracial organizations and movements and other means of eliminating barriers between

races, as well as to discourage anything which tends to strengthen racial division" (1965, p. 3). This would appear to discourage educating children in their first language, as on the surface this would be encouraging racial division. However, the Convention goes on to make an exemption from the definition of racial discrimination "… special measures designed to deal with disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups, on the condition that such programmes must be based on an identified need and be discontinued once the objective for which they were introduced has been achieved" (1965, p. 3). There is no doubt that bilingual education is one of the "special measures" at our disposal to assist those disadvantaged in New Zealand society by simply having a language other than English as their first language.

For further reinforcement, Article 2 requires signatories to take "special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (1965, p.3). Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), gives the following direction for children's education: "1. The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own" (1989, p. 4). Article 30 states that amongst other basic rights, the child in a minority group "shall not be denied the right …to use his or her own language" (1989, p. 4).

The New Zealand Context

In New Zealand, bilingual education is now fostered and supported, particularly Maori bilingual education. This has occurred despite doubts that it

would ever happen; that it was too late. Benton (1972) suggested that "the use of Maori as a medium of instruction in a few schools a purely local palliative – the smoothing of the pillow for a dying language" (p. 10). However, he did take into account the determination from within the Maori community to restore the Maori language as part of the reclamation of their cultural identity. This began, in the 1970"s, with the Kohanga Reo (Language Nest) movement, where pre-school children attend a centre, in an early childhood programme conducted completely in te reo Maori – an immersion programme.

Since then, many primary and some secondary immersion and bilingual programmes have been established to continue the work of the Kohanga Reo. This has been an important step in valuing and maintaining Maori cultural identity.

Pasifika groups now realise that their youth are losing their first language in the face of the dominant English society. Maintaining cultural identity through language is vitally important to the older generations. The goal for many Pasifika communities is therefore to place value on their first language and restore their cultural heritage in the younger generations. Bilingual education is seen as a means to this end. This was the factor which motivated the parents and staff of Crossroads School when we set up the class. As my research will show it was also clearly recognised and appreciated by the students. Their pride in their Samoan identity was strong. May, et al., (2004) state that their report aims to provide "an overview of the international and national research literature on bilingualism and bilingual/immersion education" (p. 1).   While the primary focus of their study is to "situate Maori-medium education in relation to" (p. 1), the above research, the generic theory of good practice is also relevant to Pasifika bilingual/immersion education in New Zealand. One of the

concerns raised is the lack of a nationally coordinated policy on bilingual/immersion education, and any plan at all for Pasifika bilingual education (p. 2). A recommendation for policy development is "The promotion of bilingual/immersion programmes for other language groups (particularly Pasifika)" (p. 3). This research project adds weight to the value of bilingual education programmes for Pasifika students, particularly in terms of the positive effects on their sense of cultural identity and their identity as successful learners.

Revisiting Bilingual History at Crossroads School

At Crossroads School the growing number of Samoan students, and parental desire, made fertile ground for the introduction of a bilingual class. In 2000 the first Samoan bilingual class in the South Island was established in our school. The numbers of junior students did not support a class, but the Year 4 to 6 student numbers did. We had to be ever mindful of the implications for staffing and funding the rest of the school, and ensuring our teacher, a beginning teacher, was not overburdened by too many levels in the class. We were ignorant of much of the literature of best practice, and unaware of any local support for the development of the unit – we felt like pioneers in the deep south. Sending our teacher to an Auckland school with a large Samoan bilingual unit was our best option for gaining ideas and guidance. Overall we felt very much alone.

Bilingual Education

As stated in Chapter Two, two recognized aims of bilingual education, (Ferguson, Houghton & Wells, 1977, cited in Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 465) are of significance to this study:

1. The vital role it plays in maintaining and enhancing the child's **identity**, "To preserve ethnic and religious identity."

2. Its effectiveness in raising **academic achievement** in the bilingual child for their future prospects, "To provide language skills which are marketable, aiding employment and status."

Identity is central to this study, and is further discussed in Chapter 6. **Achievement** is possibly the most commonly touted justification for bilingual education. This refers to the effectiveness of bilingual education in enabling bilingual students to achieve academically as well, if not better, than their monolingual peers, in both languages. As academic achievement is not the focus of this study, further theoretical discussion of bilingual education is not developed. A good summary is available to the reader in the Report to the Ministry of Education by May et al., 2004. It is worthwhile to list here the elements of a successful programme, to further support the decision to focus on issues of identity for this research. The following are considered to be the elements of best practise for a bilingual class:

1. Instruction is in two languages, and/or has the target minority language as the medium of instruction for the curriculum.

2. It is additive - the second language is learnt "at no expense of the first" (May et al., 2004, p. 8).

3. It is designed to maintain, and if necessary enrich the target language.

4. Teachers are fluent in both languages

5. The target language is the medium of instruction for at least 4 years before the majority language is given equal status

6. The is at least 50% immersion in the target language

7. The target language is introduced early in the primary school rather than later.

8. It ensures the child's target language is strong before instructing in the majority language

(May et al., 2004, p. 100)

As discussed earlier, the research participants in this study were not in a best practice situation, having only 2 or 3 years in the class, and entering at Year 4, thus not meeting elements 5, or 7. Some of the children were not strong in their first language when they entered the class (element 8).

Chapter 4: Selecting the strands

Research Design

When formulating the focus of the study, I fleetingly considered, amongst other ideas, that I could collect academic data from the students' current schools to give an idea as to their progress, perhaps comparing it to other Samoan students who had not spent time in a bilingual class. This would have meant a quantitative approach to this study. However, this idea was quickly discarded, as I realised that any data I collected would not be valid when considered alongside other research into the effectiveness of bilingual education: the students had been in the bilingual class for less than five years, and had not entered it at Year 1, two of the main factors of best practise for bilingual education (May, et al., 2004; Baker & Jones, 1998). The most time any of the ex-students, now at secondary school, had spent in the class was 2 years, as they had entered it at Year 4 or 5, so I decided that a qualitative approach was more appropriate. I was keen to follow up ex-students to see what effect those years may have had on them, and to listen to their reflections of that time to inform me about how we could enhance what was happening in the school. As I contemplated the idea of listening to the students' voices, it became obvious that a qualitative design was the direction to take. "Qualitative research is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 101). I also knew that I would have difficulty keeping my distance from the participants, (Creswell, 1994) as I already knew them, and had considerable knowledge of the time I would be talking about with them. I had no pre-conceived theories about what they would say, or why they would say it. My analysis would be inductive: "an approach … in which one begins with concrete empirical details then works toward abstract ideas or general principles" (Neuman, 2000, p. 511). These

thoughts confirmed a qualitative design for the study, and led to the decision about the approach I would use.

Theoretical Approach

Initial thinking indicated that a *phenomenological* or a *grounded theory* approach would be most appropriate. The purpose of the first, "to understand an experience from the participants" point of view" and the second "to derive a theory from data collected in a natural setting" offered possibilities (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 157). However, the latter seemed less appropriate as the setting in which the data is being gathered is not the main setting of the study (i.e. the bilingual classroom). I was also looking more for an understanding of the students" experience in the class as they recalled it 2 or 3 years down the track. Thus my leanings were towards a phenomenological study for my research design. Leedy and Ormond (2001, p. 157) further describe the method of data analysis in a phenomenological design as:

- "a search for *meaning units* that reflect various aspects of the experience;
- integration of the meaning units into a *typical* experience."

Narrative Inquiry

I realised quite early in the study that I wanted to tell the story of the bilingual education experiences of Samoan students at Crossroads School. I wanted to listen to their voices which I believed would add to the ideas I had read about best practice in bilingual education. Mishler (1984, cited in Gubrium & Holstein, 2003), has the view that

> experiences come to us in the form of narratives. When we communicate our experiences to each other, we do so by storying them. It would be difficult to imagine how an experience of any kind could be conveyed

except in narrative format, in terms that structure events into distinct plots, themes, and forms of characterization (p. 36).

Using a consistent basic structure in all my interviews led to the students telling stories that followed a similar thread. There was a considerable amount of refreshing dialogue, vignettes of conversations and events as retold by the students, and a collection of phrases and terminology that grabbed my attention. I could tell by the thought they put into their answers (the umms, the pauses, the eyes to the ceiling, the attempts at answers that were begun, then restarted) that sometimes they struggled to "make meaning of their lived experiences" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 297). It seemed that telling their stories was something they had rarely, if ever, done before, although I made the assumption that they had listened to storytelling by their family and elders. Thus I had a strong 'storying' narrative thread running through the data, with a definite chronological weave, and the early emergence of commonalities in the students' experiences and thoughts. "When we analyse a phenomenon, we are trying to determine what the themes are, the experiential structures that make up that experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 79). I saw possibilities in the analysis strategies suggested by Rossman and Rallis (2003), "of meaning condensation, meaning categorisation, narrative structuring, and meaning interpretation" (p. 296). As my thinking and data collection continued, I was drawn continually to the narrative structuring, which "follows the natural organisation of the interview to reveal a story". The decision to use large chunks of the students' dialogue, warts and all, is supported by Lehmann (2001) when she states the following:

The research participants' own words will not only illustrate my interpretations of the narrative, but can speak directly to the reader. Just as it was told to me, it can be told again to others with a minimum of

disturbance. There is power in the narrative and it lies in the choice of words, the hesitations, the difficulty in expressing oneself. … As narrative they demand respect and can stand with their own strength for us all to interpret. (p. 88)

This description resonated strongly for me, as I was very aware of how some of the students had struggled to communicate their thoughts, to express themselves in words. It was through the power of their words that their strong emotions came. To dilute this with my own interpretations would have not conveyed this dimension. It also meant that my position as researcher was less compromised if I told it as they said it. I discuss my position as insider/outsider researcher shortly.

Data Analysis

As I collected the data commonalities or themes became apparent. There were very strong memories and feelings from the time in the class that the students all focussed on. Their feedback largely sorted itself into natural groupings linked to the questions, enabling analysis to draw out themes such as the confidence they believed the speeches and ability to speak Samoan had contributed to. Other themes were synthesised (Creswell, 1994) from the data, such as the overwhelming sense of fun and love they imparted to me when they talked about that time, describing the important affective aspect of their experience.

It is my aim to pull these methodological theories and concepts together under the broad structure of phenomenology and narrative inquiry, incorporating a weave of related literature with the research findings. As described earlier, the traditional Samoan practice of fa'afaletui, which "draws together a range of perspectives capable of informing the issues at hand" (Anae, et al., 2001, p. 42),

offers a weaving metaphor on which to base the study – the students as letoga or traditional fine mats. The study is based on this metaphor as much as possible, with the data (the students" voices and teachers" feedback) and its analysis interwoven with the relevant theory and research in terms of warp and weft threads. This is a living approach, more in tune with the culture into which I intruded with my study. Its base is the oral responses of people in a culture which has a strong oral tradition of storytelling. This approach later revealed a dilemma as I found that several of the warp threads resulted in similar weft content. I dealt with this by referring one to the other within the weft.

The Insider/Outsider Dilemma

I realised that I was both insider and outsider to this research. I was an insider to the extent that I was the first teacher of most of the participants, and principal of the school during most of their time in the bilingual class, so I had inside knowledge of the context. As members of the school community, I knew the participants well in the time they attended Crossroads School. However, "By virtue of being a researcher, one is rarely a complete insider anywhere," (Razari, 1992, cited in Bridges, 2001, p. 161), and I was obviously an outsider in terms of ethnicity, culture, position of power, and age.

Some researchers believe that effective research can only be carried out by an insider, a member of the group who has shared the experience/s under study (Bridges, 2001).   In a sense I was one of the few insiders that could carry out this research as the students did not have the experience and skills to do so themselves. On the other hand, my own involvement in the story was part of the cloth to be woven. I was the person who would take what was offered and ultimately act on it, if I wanted to be professionally credible. I thought initially my prior knowledge of the participants in my study would present me with

many problems and this was true at the beginning. During the first fono (meeting) one participant dominated the proceedings with clownish behaviour and comments often to the detriment of the contributions of the others, and I found myself stepping into the role of teacher/principal, asking him to behave more appropriately.   I felt very uncomfortable as if I was polluting the data. I also felt that the students had not yet accepted me as a researcher; I was still their first teacher and principal of the past. Later when I talked with them individually I sometimes switched from a researcher asking questions to someone who shared a memory with them, usually a time of laughter. This often occurred when they talked about their feelings at speech time. At first I was concerned that once again I may have been polluting the data, but I came to realise that this was an important human aspect to the process – the recognition of our past relationship, and my recognition of them as young adults whom I respected and valued.   It was part of the storytelling that at times we co-constructed the data. We were "social actors" (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998, p. 257) who through our perceptions of that time were constructing meaning in the way only we knew it.

Later as I began to delve into the data, and start to weave the first few threads, I realised my own story was trying to insinuate itself into the weave to complete a three dimensional, coherent, chronological narrative.   I struggled with this, much as did Lippi , (2001) when doing postgraduate research about mentoring. He came to the understanding that it was not just curiosity that drew him to his area of study, but his "rich lode of data" (2001, p. 72) in the field. Like Lippi, I had many questions, such as, "How do I outline my experiences? Where will this data live in my dissertation? How do I write about them? What if they become too personal? Where do I draw the line"? (2001, p. 73). I decided to include my story at the beginning of the 'weaving' chapter to set the scene,

much as the weaver would think and talk about the letoga before the weaving began.

I was acutely aware that I was a lone Palagi researcher intruding into a Pasifika world, and could inadvertently cross lines that would cause offence, and put up barriers to the process. I hoped that my background in the school with the families would assist in establishing my credibility, but I could not rely on that alone. I referred frequently to the advice offered by the Pacific Education Research Guidelines (Anae et al., 2001), and consulted my Samoan supervisor. I needed to ensure that my research would make a meaningful contribution to Pacific societies. My research results should "improve the lives of Pacific people, transform the practices of those in power and influencing policy," and "ensure that educational and social policies are informed by sound research outcomes" (Anae et al., 2001, p. 8). I also checked with a Samoan colleague that the processes used were appropriate. As a result of this accumulation of knowledge, I ensured that all communications with parents were written in Samoan, and that a Samoan colleague went with me to personally deliver the information and permission letters to homes. Food and gifts were important elements of fono. Parents were invited to the initial fono, but none came. The students seemed very reluctant to have their parents present, and may have persuaded them not to attend. At the fono organised late in the year for reporting back to the parents, only one student's parents arrived. Despite my written invitations, once again, it was my belief that the students actively dissuaded their parents from attending.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research does not have the same hard facts as quantitative data with which to check reliability and validity. Increasingly in qualitative research the

concept of trustworthiness is used "to mean the ways we work to meet the criteria of validity, credibility, and believability of our research – as assessed by the academy, our communities, and our participants" (Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001, p. 324). Trustworthiness can be achieved through the concept of reciprocity, which implies give and take. There is a partnership between the researched and researcher where the researched have the opportunity to check the data collected for accuracy, and have a part in the theorising from the data. This has been identified as an important element in research design when Pasifika communities are involved.

I endeavoured to ensure reciprocity in the following ways:

- While students and teachers were being interviewed, I frequently reflected their answers back to them to ensure that I had understood accurately what they had said.

- My participants (students and teachers) were given a transcript of our interviews with invitations to contact me if they were not accurate. I did not hear from anyone.

- In November, as the data analysis became more concrete, another fono was held to which all students, their parents and their ex-bilingual class teacher were invited. I did not invite the contributing teachers, as this would have destroyed their anonymity and embarrassed the students. The intention was to share the emerging themes and theories with those present and their feedback sought as to the accuracy of my assumptions. I was particularly hoping parents would be there, as I wanted to check the data I had gathered about the initial setting up of the class through their eyes. However, only half of the students attended and one set of parents. I found that sharing the data with the students was challenging, as they were embarrassed by hearing what they may have said, and what I thought about it. No-one challenged my thoughts, perhaps because they

were not attuned to such abstract thinking, and if they were, did not want to show it in front of their peers. Possibly they still saw me as a past teacher and principal, and were according me the respect that Samoan culture gives such people. To question me would have been a mark of disrespect. Several of the students whose feedback had been the most interesting were not there.   The parents arrived after I had finished talking with the students, and I spent time talking with them. They confirmed that it was their desire for the children to retain their first language that motivated the formation of the class.

Ethics

The students, parents and teachers were assured of confidentiality in the consent forms they signed. Pseudonyms were used for students and the schools. The students were young and vulnerable, and peer approval was a real issue. They were assured at the fono and before the interviews that what they said was confidential. Although at the school which 6 students attended they were given the opportunity of being interviewed with others, I ended up interviewing 2 pairs and one alone. One refused to be interviewed after the fono, preferring lunchtime rugby. I was collecting data from students still young enough to be classified as children, but I had to ensure I treated them with respect as "people who have individual voices" (Cullingford, 2002, p. 29). The students were very emphatic that they did not want their parents involved; they expressed several times that they did not want them at any fono, and they were very happy that no interviews were planned at home. I suspect that they actively discouraged their parents from attending the final fono. Data was held in a secure place in my home throughout the study. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants.

Chapter 5: Gathering the chosen strands

Participants

Participant Selection

To select the student participants, a list of the ten possible ex-students of the bilingual class was drawn up. All were part of the class when it began, at either Year 4 or 5 levels. They had had 2 or 3 years in the Samoan bilingual class before leaving Crossroads School, and were now in Year 9 and 10, having spent at least two and a half years out of the class at intermediate and secondary school. All of the students and their families were contacted, and all agreed to be part of the study. Six students (3 girls, 3 boys) attended the local secondary school, having been to the same intermediate school. Another 4 (1 girl, 3 boys) attended secondary schools throughout the city; one co-educational, one single sex, and two church schools.

The principals of these schools agreed to meet with me and discuss the research, and ultimately allowed their staff to take part, if they were willing. It was difficult to include all the teachers of the students in the study, so Maths and English teachers and form teachers were approached by the principal of each school. At one school the principal also approached a teacher who he knew had had a close association with the student in the previous year. All but one school had staff who agreed to be part of the study. Fourteen indicated they would be willing to be interviewed, but of these only six were finally interviewed in person. The other eight responded through a questionnaire.

Participant Description

Three of the girls attended one high school, two in Year 10, and one in Year 9. The other, a year 9, attended another high school nearby. The four girls needed encouragement to contribute in the fono, being content to listen to the boys, and

41

laugh at their ideas and antics. However, in the individual or pair interviews, they were mostly articulate and thoughtful, providing some of the most insightful data. Three of the boys, all Year 9, attended the same high school as the three girls, but the others, two Year 10, one Year 9, attended three different schools. One attended a boys' school, the other two attended Church schools. Three of the six boys dominated the fono with clownish behaviour, joking, and teasing. They were quieter and less articulate than the girls during the individual or pair interviews.

The teachers who participated ranged from the deputy principal of a large single sex school to a beginning teacher at a co-ed school. Most were experienced and had spent some time in the school. Most had known the student/s since they had entered their respective secondary school. All were articulate and appeared to enjoy talking about the student. It was difficult for the beginning teacher to make comparisons with other Samoan students, as she had not taught any other than the participant.

Data collection methods

Decisions over tools or methods to use for data gathering were relatively simple. I interviewed the students in at least two settings, (school and off-site) in whole group fonos (meetings) and smaller groups or individually. This was culturally acceptable according to *Pasifika Research Guidelines* (Anae et al., 2001). Tape recording interviews was essential, and the acceptance of this process (possibly culturally unacceptable) was checked via the consent form. Carrying out interviews with teachers provided another perspective on the students, their behaviours, and progress, thus strengthening the data. Other research has shown that there is often a huge gap between the perceptions of teachers and their Samoan students (Nakhid, 2003), and while my goal was not to focus on

this potential gulf, I was interested to see if there was some correlation between the students" and teachers" views. Also included in my plans for data collection were visits to the classrooms to observe the students in that setting. However, this became impractical and after the interview data was collected I did not feel that this was necessary.

Process

Fono One

My goals for the first gathering were to enable the students to re-establish relationships with each other and with me, to start them thinking about their time in the class, and set the scene for the times I would speak to them individually or in small groups. I had food, photos of the class and my time in Samoa, and a CD player. The students soon worked through any awkwardness they felt about being with each other again. When I directed them into two groups so I could record their reminiscences, the results contributed more to building their relationships than data I could use. There was a lot of hilarity and unintelligible conversations, with a few dominant common memories coming through. (I used these dominant memories later in my interviews as springboards for some of our conversations). Conversations and themes became clearer once the students came together into one group again, and I could focus them. Their memories were mostly positive, and centred on non-academic events, but hilarity dominated much of the discussion. After the first fono I felt exhausted from the concentration of listening to them, but strangely energised to see these young people, most of whom I had taught as five year olds, maturing into lovely lively people. I decided to have one more group fono at this initial stage, as the students had so obviously enjoyed themselves, were keen to meet again, and there were still two more to join in.

Fono Two

At the second fono a week later I focused on checking that I had covered all their ideas accurately in my data, and asking for any more thoughts. Nothing of significance was offered, but they enjoyed listening to their ideas of the week before, again with much hilarity. I also used the time to arrange school visits with them. At the school most of them attended, it was arranged to meet with the boys and girls separately. As the other four were the only students from the class at their school, individual meetings were inevitable. We then shared food and the students chatted and laughed and teased each other.

Interviewing

Interviews were the obvious option for data gathering, and as the study progressed, I knew it had been the right decision to make. I met with the students at school either before school or at lunch time. All of these meetings were recorded, after checking with the students that they were comfortable with this. Two girls and two boys were interviewed in pairs, the others individually. Principals and staff were without exception very supportive. At one school the principal even vacated his warm office for our interview. Some distractions such as outside noise and cold rooms had to be dealt with, but generally the students were focussed and seemed to enjoy this chance to reminisce.

I needed to establish a new relationship with the students, different from our past one of student/principal. This was difficult during the large group fono, due to the dynamics of the group, but was easier in most cases in the individual or pair interviews. Treating the students with respect and as adults was the key, and soon any barriers were broken down. I was keen to view them as valued people, whose time I appreciated. I saw each of them as a "productive source of knowledge", and became aware as I listened and reacted to their words, that the

interview was "constantly developing" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 74). Expressed emotions (either through words, emphasis or body language) became the catalyst for tangents in the conversations. The relationship we developed allowed for these emotions, whereas giving the students a cold questionnaire to fill in would never have indicated their feelings other than a list of ticks by words such as 'happy' or 'sad'. The light (and sometimes tears) in their eyes, and the laughter in their voices were powerful forms of data, which only an interview could reveal.

As I was relying on the students" memories two or three years after the events, I knew that their recollections would not necessarily be accurate; "human memory is notoriously inaccurate" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 159). I also expected that they may have difficulty processing their replies to questions such as "Why did you feel that way?" given the time lapse, their immaturity, and inexperience in being challenged with such questions. Indeed it was very likely that they had never been in an interview situation before. There was a possibility that they might say what they thought I would like them to say, particularly as they may still have seen me in a position of authority. Also the recollection of the experience may have heightened their emotional response, resulting in exaggeration.

 As the interviews were semi-structured, I formulated questions to provide a basic structure in line with my initial research questions. I expected rather different and more extensive responses to some of the questions than I received, and more than I anticipated for some. For example, the students" vivid memories of the speeches caught me by surprise, as I had not thought them significant. I expected a much wider range of memories of their time in the class, but their common memories of the speeches and culture group dominated. I

expected the students who attended schools scattered away from the others to be less positive about their current situation than the others, but this was not the case. In fact in general they were more positive about their school life.

During the interviews, as discussed above, I often became involved in the memories as we co-constructed the stories. The term for this type of interviewing is "reflexive dyadic interviewing" (Ellis & Berger, 2003, p. 162). I can do no better than quoting their extensive description of this method here:

> Reflexive dyadic interviews follow the typical protocol of the interviewer asking questions and the interviewee answering them, but the interviewer typically shares personal experience with the topic at hand … the researcher's disclosures are more than tactics to encourage the respondent to open up: rather, the researcher often feels a reciprocal desire to disclose, given the intimacy of the details being shared by the interviewee. The interview is conducted more as a conversation between two equals than as a distinctly hierarchical, question-and-answer exchange, and the interviewer tries to tune in to the interactively produced meanings and emotional dynamics within the interview itself (Gubrium & Holstein 1997). When telling the story of the research, the interviewers might reflect deeply on the personal experience that brought them to the topic, what they learned about and from themselves and their emotional responses in the course of the interview, and/or how they used knowledge of the self or the topic at hand to understand what the interviewee was saying. Thus the final product includes the cognitive and emotional reflections of the researcher, which add context and layers to the story being told about participants… (p. 162).

I did not become involved in this way with all the students. Some of their responses were more cut and dried and unemotional than others. Those who reacted with emotion (usually one of delight) brought out my own emotional responses, and made interviews with these students an exhilarating experience. Telling their stories was something they had rarely, if ever, done before. I gained the impression that they had often listened to their parents and elders stories and reminiscences, but had not been storytellers themselves. However, this impression was based on logic, not on any evidence.

Data collection from the teachers was simplified by limiting it to Maths and English teachers, although form teachers were also approached by principals if they thought it appropriate. The interviews were conducted in a variety of environments, usually at lunchtime or during a free period. I was aware that I was cutting into their precious non-contact time, and tried to be business-like, although friendly and appreciative with them.   The structure of the questionnaire I used formed a solid base. However collection of data from the teachers ranged from sketchy to in depth, depending on the length of time, and in what capacity each teacher knew the student. One interview stood out for reasons that go beyond the scope of my study. Three teachers gathered to discuss one student. This was the first opportunity they had had to do this and they found that sharing ideas with each other, using the interview situation as a vehicle, moved them on in their understanding of the student, and opened opportunities for a future combined approach to the student. They were optimistic that a recent positive change in the student's attitude could be built on. We all speculated that it may have been the student's knowledge that involvement in my project meant I was going to talk with the teachers could have been the catalyst for recent changes in attitude.

At one school no staff member was prepared to discuss the student. At another only the maths teacher contributed, although she had only known the student for two terms, and had not had any other Samoan students to compare with. Both English and Maths teachers contributed at another, and at the school which had the largest number of students, the meeting arranged was cancelled due to a tangi many staff members attended. I left a questionnaire at the school for a teacher to distribute to the teachers involved, and collected this written material on my return from a month overseas.

Chapter 6: Weaving the strands and making the letoga over time

A memory of my own, almost 9 years ago

The principal brought the little Samoan boy into my new entrant classroom with his mother just as mat time began one morning. She was introduced to me, and spoke in broken English as we greeted each other. Her child clung to her hand, and looked at the floor. When I hunkered down to his level to say Talofa, hello, he would not raise his eyes. His mother took him to the mat and remained at his side in a child's chair as he cuddled up to her legs. I asked another Samoan boy to go and sit by him. He continued to look anywhere but at the other children and me – mostly at the floor or his mum's skirt. His face was drawn, like a closed door. The other children were absorbed in the daily routine of greetings, day chart and newsboard, and ignored him initially. After a while another little Samoan boy shuffled towards him on his bottom, and sat close. The new boy's mother quietly left just before mat time finished. He continued to sit there with a wooden look on his face. As the children moved to their first group activities of the language programme, I spent time with him, talking quietly, frustrated by my monolingual disadvantage. He still would not look in my direction. The other two little boys came up at my request, and translated for me as I asked if he would like to join in a cut and paste activity with a group. The new boy remained mute, and stood and watched the other children. His little fist flashed out as another child accidentally banged against him as she moved around the table. Later it was discovered by the Samoan teacher aide that the new boy had limited Samoan as well as almost no English, and the health nurse later found he had hearing difficulties. Over the ensuing weeks, the boy resorted to frequent punches and kicks as he strived to communicate within the class. He seemed to know how to push the buttons of the other children to get them riled up, and responded to their reactions with a sly grin and violence. Perhaps any attention was better than none. I made every effort I could to use positive reinforcers, but his limited grasp of any language made communication difficult. His hearing difficulties

took some time to address, despite support from the school and health nurse. He later became one of the students in the bilingual class, and one of those interviewed for this study.

While I would not like to think it was the case in my classroom and school, the minority child commonly enters school into an English only environment where his/her identity, ethnicity and culture are totally ignored and discounted. Additionally,

> At age five, or whenever they enter school, and after they have come a long way in mastering their first language, they have suddenly to begin to learn a new language – English. Not only must they learn this new language, but they must learn *in* it as well. And they must immediately begin to use it to develop new and sometimes quite abstract concepts as well as literacy skills." (Gibbons, 1993, p. 3)

Is it any wonder that this situation can lead to frustration and major behavioural and learning difficulties for the child?

In the case of the immigrant community, the dominant language is often adopted by the younger generation as a means of identifying with their social peers, as well as to learn at school. Often it is to the detriment of their first language, the language of their family culture. This is particularly so if the parents believe that learning the new language is more important for their child's future success than their first language. This belief is reinforced by the parents" motivation for migrating in the first place; usually to live in a country which offers better opportunities for the education and future of their children. "My parents had come to New Zealand in the early 1950s under the rhetoric of 'wanting a better life' or 'a better education for their children'"(Anae, 2003, p. 89). One of the participants in Alison Jones' study said,"My parents came here

for us kids even before we were born. They came here to get us a good school, to get us more chances than we'd get back home" (Jones, 1991, p.31). Jones continues to discuss their parents' migration; how they were brought in to the country to become labourers at the lower end of the labour market. They brought with them a determination that their children were going to find better employment than they had (p. 55). She quotes a discussion with a parent by Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop (1981), "We say to them 'Do you want to spend the rest of your life in a factory like us? Then go to school'"(Jones, 1991, p. 56).

But the parents at Crossroads School moved beyond this attitude and they became motivated to begin the weaving of the threads; to begin the process of turning their children into letoga, a precious thing. Along with their family and community, the school became one of the tripod of pou, added to the weaving process.

The first step

Warp

Conversation (a memory, at a Board of Trustee meeting some time in 1999)

Parent Representative (Samoan):   **It is important that we provide our tamaiti in the school with the chance to keep their Samoan language and culture. The Samoan parents of the school have asked me to take this message to the board. We want a bilingual class to be set up in the school. We will provide whatever support is needed, but we are determined that it will happen.**

Weft

After discussion, the Board agreed that the current Samoan New Zealand trained teacher on staff be employed as a Samoan bilingual class teacher. With the bulk of Samoan children being in the Year 4 to 6 levels (23), the class would include those children. The Board would fund a full time Samoan teacher aide out of operations grant. May et al. (2004) recommend that "should further

51

bilingual programmes be developed for Pasifika students as we … recommend, a similar approach of concentrating on quality rather than quantity, and comparable funding criteria (as for Maori-medium education), should also be adopted" (2004, p. 130). This would certainly make the prospect of establishing bilingual classes more feasible for smaller schools such as ours. At the time of writing this study, no such funding exists for Pasifika groups.

A Beginning

Recreated Conversations in Samoan Homes: (the children's memories, near the end of 1999)

 Warp

Hi, Mum, Here's a letter from school. About a new class for me.

"Oh, this is so exciting. The bilingual class is going ahead."

Why do I need to go into a bilingual class?

"Because we have got a special language, and it will help you to learn it better."

"We want you to learn it to prove that you are Samoan because you can speak it. Especially at church."

"You need to learn more about your culture, and get better at your language. Do you remember when you were five and we went to Samoa? You couldn't understand anything your family was talking about. You said it felt weird."

Students" reflections on their entry to the bilingual class: (Why did you go into the class?)

- ✓ **It will be easier to work because we will all be speaking in one language. If we speak in other languages in normal classes they would**

be looking at us funny – they might think we were talking about them, but were not.

✓ **Our parents did not want us to lose our original language because it's independence. You have something that's yours, and that's your language.**

✓ **My parents wanted me to be in the bilingual class to prove that I can speak Samoan.**

✓ **When I was young I started to lose my first language because I kept talking in English all the time, so I think that's why my parents put me in there, because it's first language and everybody should know their first language.**

✓ **I needed to learn more about my culture and my mum put me in there so I could get better at my language.**

Weft

The students are clear about why they entered the class: the importance of being fluent in their first (original) language and its integral part in their identity, although they may not yet be able to verbalise it as such. The use of a concept such as "independence" raises the question of the converse – if they did not know their first language would they feel dependent? Do they "perceive, sometimes implicitly, that home languages … can help them not only rescue a measure of social worth, but also assist them to master an English-based curriculum" (Ryan, 1999, p. 163)? This is significant, in that from the very first day at school in the ideal bilingual situation, students are taught the curriculum in their first language, with the gradual introduction of the majority or second language over 5 or more years. Learning **in** their first language is an important part of the development of the cognitive growth of a bilingual person, and facilitates their academic ability in their second language**.** This is due to the advantages of being able to think bilingually. For example, the Samoan and

English speaking child has two words for everything (fono or meeting, siva or dance, lotu or prayer). Baker and Jones suggest that this means the "link between concepts is usually looser… and will extend the range of meanings, associations and images". Such a child has "the possibility of more awareness of language and more fluency, flexibility and elaboration in thinking than a monolingual" (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 8).

In the absence of information in the school at that time about the academic effectiveness of bilingual education for students, the parents focused on the bilingual class as a means to ensure their children would retain their Samoan identity. The multicultural nature of New Zealand's society is gradually becoming accepted, and thankfully often celebrated, but many first or second generation immigrant parents, like those at Crossroads School, are realising that their children are in danger of losing their first language, or at the least discounting it as of little value. They realise that this potentially threatens the foundations of their cultural identity, "Samoan parents are deeply worried about their children losing the Samoan language….concerned that their children will become strangers in their own faa Samoa world" (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p. 21).

Programmes such as the Home School Partnership run in schools with multicultural communities, and funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, have heightened awareness of the rights of minority groups to retain their first language and identity. These parents feel empowered to insist on the rights of their children to be taught in Samoan.

The political and social situation in New Zealand has recently allowed Pasifika parents to realize that the retention of their first language is not only a right, but essential to maintain their identity. Power has shifted to some extent, both

politically and financially into the hands of Pasifika people through The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the employment of Pasifika people in the Ministry of Education responsible for Pasifika education.

> In New Zealand Samoans are holding fast to their language, to their belief in God, to their practices, and to their customs and traditions ….despite the difficulties of economic pressures, of immigration problems and of some lack of awareness of the dominant culture in New Zealand of Samoan cultural practices and traditions (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p. 9).

The Samoan Bilingual Class - The affective zone
(Presented with pairs of words, the students selected those they felt best represented their time in the Samoan bilingual class. Typical pairs were worried/confident, safe/unsafe, happy/unhappy.)
Warp

The students were very clear about their feelings in the class. They did not have to ponder the question at all. The dominant adjectives chosen from the pairs I suggested to them were **happy, secure, calm, warm, excited, proud, and challenged.** Every student stated they felt **loved and respected** by the teacher, and other class members.

Other feelings described were:

- **Worried at first but then now I'm** *confident*
- **Nervous – sometimes when it came to the afternoons with the Samoan bit – stand up in front of the class and do things to say to everyone – pretty nervous at that time, (**and speeches and performing?) **yeah performing and speech are one of the hardest things because every time we get up there we cry – but not the performing.**

Three students admitted to being **challenged when doing Samoan language.**

Weft

Any teacher would be proud to find these adjectives used to describe their classroom. It is a basic human need to belong; to feel loved and secure. Without this social condition no-one can learn to their potential. If children live in fear of looking foolish, of criticism, of making mistakes, they withdraw and do not take risks. "Students who feel threatened in the classroom, whether physically or emotionally, are operating in a survival mode, and while learning can take place in that mode, it is with much difficulty" (Tileston, 2005, p. 7). When a teacher creates a classroom culture where children are comfortable, and can relate to each other naturally, then learning is more likely to take place. The understanding of the students" cultural environment that a teacher from the same culture brings is vitally important, both for compatibility of values and credibility amongst parents. This was confirmed by a student's feedback when asked to give factors for success for such a class (see the later discussion in Advice Warp).

The Teacher

(What did the teacher do to help you in the class?)

Warp

- ✓ **Pushed us to learn more about Samoa and Samoan history.**
- ✓ **Challenged by pushing us – speaking in front of people**
- ✓ **Didn't care (about joking) as long as we did our work**
- ✓ **Was trying to make us do like real hard work and get us up there**
- ✓ **Encourage us**
- ✓ **She was a real cool teacher – she made us feel safe in that class – encouraging us to do stuff and says it's okay you can do it. Just like think of all the things that make you happy and stuff and not those**

that let you down. We loved the teacher. (Why?) Nice, funny. She was like a mother.   Yeah like a mother

- ✓ **Oh Mrs D was a good teacher really – she was real cool and she was really helpful, encouraging, and she really loved us. She'd egg us on like if we don't know how to say our speech she'll just make us, like keep on doing it and try it all the time. If we don't know things she'd just make us – encouraged.**
- ✓ **Big effect (**having a Samoan teacher**) – a really big effect because a teacher like Mrs D she's Samoan and she's got a background like us. So really we can understand her and she can understand us – yeah – its really easy – like cruisy – …**

Most students also chose the adjective "challenged" to describe their time in the class.

Weft

I have equated encouragement and challenge with high expectations for the purpose of this section. Students did not articulate high expectations, but this was the intent of the teacher's encouragement; "**She'd egg us on", "pushed us", "trying to make us do like real hard work"**. She demonstrated that she believed in them and what they could achieve with encouragement, and challenged them. High expectations of students have long been recognised as a vital factor in high achievement. Ovando, Combs and Collier (2006) discuss a situation that arose in an Alaskan school in Anchorage, where a teacher's high expectations of newly arrived twin Japanese boys were quickly fulfilled, just as her low expectations of her Alaskan native students "contributed, unfortunately, to negative academic consequences…   This example illustrates the power of a teacher's expectations in either promoting or limiting academic success for language minority students" (p. 30). Similarly, mainstream teachers have traditionally held low expectations of Pasifika students, and the students

often fulfil these expectations by achieving poorly. This is illustrated by the following extracts are from the *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis* (Alton-Lee, 2003).

> Even when teachers are focussed on student learning, inappropriate teacher expectations can undermine students, or constitute a barrier to effective practice. Teacher expectations have been found to vary by student ethnicity, dis/ability, gender and other student characteristics unrelated to a student's actual capability. (p. 16)

and

> Phillips, McNaughton and MacDonald's (2001) landmark work, linked to the achievement of literacy in the Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara project, demonstrates that quality teaching can ensure high standards for Pasifika and Mäori and students from low SES families in a decile 1 school. The findings of that study show that teacher expectations are critical, both for the level of achievement possible and the pace at which learning should proceed. (as cited in Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 18-19)

For students of a minority culture with a teacher of the majority culture, the gap in expectations attitudes and behaviours may be significant. Barriers exist which the teacher may be unable, through lack of awareness, to break down. Nakhid (2003) discusses the issues surrounding the impact the "perceptions and assumptions about Pasifika students held by the dominant culture", and the "teacher-student relationship as critical to improving educational achievement" (p. 209). There are many instances in her research where the teachers" perceptions of the students were widely different from how the students saw themselves. For example, the teachers felt the students lacked self-esteem, and related this to poor academic achievement. The students "believed that what the teachers considered to be low self-esteem was actually the reactions by the

students to the way they saw themselves being treated by the teachers" (p. 217). One student answered the question "Do you think Pacific Island students have low self-esteem?" with "We just joke around. Like when they say you can do it we like go, yeah whatever. But we know we can do but we're just joking around. So they must think we have low self-esteem" (p. 217). Other researchers have tried to explain why minority students do not achieve highly, pointing to factors such as socio-economic status, poor levels of English, and lack of parental support. However, evidence now points to a major factor being poor expectations of teachers based on erroneous perceptions of what these students can achieve. This continues at the tertiary level, as Fa'afoi and Fletcher (2002) found in their research. One adult student stated: "Some tutors think because you're a Pacific Islander – they assume you don't have the skills…They don't expect you to succeed, so you think you shouldn't do well as you're a Pacific Islander" (p. 27).

Nakhid (2003) points out that there are many successful professional and sporting Pasifika people, and suggests that the explanation for their success lies in the "expectations of success …, and the presence of complimentary cultural values" (p. 208). At Crossroads School the children were nurtured by a Samoan teacher who held high expectations, in a culturally appropriate environment.

Events during the class: *(What do you remember most from the time?)*
Speeches
Warp
Every year that the students were in the bilingual class, a Samoan Speech competition was held, and the teacher and parents coached the children. Heats were held, and then finals to which staff, other students and parents were

invited. Visiting judges were invited. Cups were awarded at the end of year prize giving to age group winners.

Memories of the speeches emerged as the most vivid of all the students" recollections.

- ✓ **The first time I did speeches I was nervous. But when I got up there I actually did it (and) I felt more confident, plus the actions. In the beginning I didn't do any actions because I wasn't confident but when I saw everyone smiling it just made me feel confident. It's just that warm smile that everybody gives you makes you feel confident. They were so loving.**

- ✓ **My big impact was speeches. Ever since my first speech I just wanted to do more and more, and "cause I gained more confidence I felt I could do anything "cause you know at times I don't feel right to stand in front of people and say stuff, … but then most of the time I'm really confident and say things because you know everyone. And even new faces, like you eventually get to know them, so – that was my biggest… (fade).**

- ✓ **One thing that I remember about the Samoan bilingual class that I can't ever forget about it is the speeches, Samoan speeches. That was, that was a pretty……. Pretty……. <u>funny </u>experience. (**Slow and deliberate, emphasis on funny**)**

- ✓ **It was you know – just can't – have no words to explain it.   Whenever a speech came up into my head it gave me goose bumps, and gave me an <u>exciting </u>feeling (**smiling and eyes very bright**). It was negative <u>and</u> positive. The negative side was um imagining my self standing up there and just getting stage fright and start crying. Oh, no. This time – Oh I got used to going up and I actually did my whole speech – not like the first time which wasn't too good. But yeah, starting to get the hang**

of the speeches. I got this mike and stuck it in the stereo and then I spoke in it for my speech (lots of laughter**) and mum and dad were sitting down listening to it. You'd just see what would suit the speech and you'd learn ways of bringing up really good ideas to go with it. I really don't know that question, but I think they all – some of them were pretty much really scared and some of them were really competitive and ready to do it, yeah. This is goose bumps, this is competitive**, (making continuum on desk with index fingers) **I'll be like somewhere in between**. (indicated midpoint)

- ✓ **Which is like: that, what, who, that sort of thing. She made me use those in my speeches and in my speeches if I wrote it out she could understand what I was saying and then she'd put it in a formal way so that everyone could understand and if there were words I couldn't understand she would explain to me the meaning of them so that I'm not just talking like from what other people write down for me but I can understand why I am talking about it, so she was a big impact on my life then. She still is.**

Weft

The lack of confidence Pasifika students face in a monolingual class, when English is not their first language, is documented in research (Jones, 1991; Silipa, 2004; Nakhid, 2003). Taleni (1998), for example, identified the real fear newly migrated Samoan students feel about using English at school and in the community. This fear affects the way they communicate in the other "modes of learning such as listening, viewing, writing and reading" (Taleni, 1998, p. 21). In most cases the students had only used English in Samoa in English language lessons, never in social situations.   This is compounded by the perceptions of teachers, and their mismatch with the reality the students are experiencing. This will be further considered as part of another thread.

61

Confidence or self belief in one's ability is a vital ingredient to the risk taking which leads to growth essential to every learner, and the taking on of new challenges (McLean, 2003). If this is fostered early in life, it creates strong threads which support the rest of the weave of development. The most powerful attitudes of self belief surround the notion that no matter the level of ability, the student knows that they can achieve their realistic personal goals. "A more robust confidence is nurtured in classrooms that convey that ability can grow, that students will progress if they apply themselves, and use the right approaches" (McLean, 2003, p.50). In this study, the supporting structure of questioning and guidance the teacher put in place allowed self confidence to grow. She used the context of speech making to encourage the students to achieve to the level of their ability, and the resulting confidence, as can be read later in this study, remains with many of the students today.

The students' feelings about speech time indicate a journey or continuum – as one student suggested. They each made a journey from one of fear to one of confidence and achievement. Teacher and parents combined to weave a weft thread of support and encouragement around them. The home and school pou (poles) were strengthened in this partnership.

Culture Group (Another strong memory of that time)
Warp
The school had a strong culture group which included Maori, Samoan, and Tongan students. The start of the class, the extra time they had together, and the recognition that the oral tradition of song and dance in Samoan culture was vital to the language and identity of the children, led to the emergence of a strong

Samoan group with the whole class involved. It became in hot demand around the city for Pasifika cultural events.

- ✓ **Not nervous: practising and got used to it.**

- ✓ **Yeah! Performing and speech are one of the hardest things because every time we get up there we cry – but not the performing**

- ✓ **Performing.   Oh you'd better do it properly, or you're not having the rest of your lunch**

- ✓ **When you were performing you'd never do this again, especially when our Samoan - like your parents are over protective and you wouldn't be going to perform. They won't trust us to do it by ourselves, and it was real cool. I'd never left my mum and dad at that age when I was in the bilingual class – without them saying stand up properly.**

- ✓ **Yeah.   The cultural festival.   We don't really dance at all but my parents did – like they said what everyone wanted to do I will do it for my school.   What I wanted to do for the teacher so –.**

- ✓ **Oh, the cultural festival** (a loud and instant response did not give me time to finish when student was asked about a highlight of the class).

- ✓ **Oh yeah. That was one of my favourite parts of the year where all the Maori and all the Samoan and Tongan got together and started learning things for the cultural festival. It really – you felt really - um really proud to do it when you go up in culture festival – you just get into it. Yeah – it's a great experience.**

- ✓ **We learned a lot from the Maori and Maori learnt a lot from Samoan, and Samoan learned a lot from Tongan. Oh it was like a circle thing – we all learnt from each other and it made us feel really close**

- ✓ **Still stay close mates; you don't just stay with this little group.   You make friends with a whole – a whole – yeah.**

The culture groups were often seen gathered in impromptu performance practises in the playground; Samoan, Maori and Tongan children together. The boys enthralled the school with their renditions of each culture's warrior dance – the Maori Haka, the Samoan siva-tau, and the Tongan kailao.

Weft

The Maori and Pacific Islands Performing Arts Festival began in 1976 , "when a group of teachers at Hillary College, Otara, decided that the fostering of Polynesian song and dance performances among young people would help to preserve, or in some cases, establish, identity among their students" (Lay, 1996: p. 44). The success of this Festival continues. How our students viewed performing in the culture group presented an insight into how they perceived themselves as Samoan, and the pride it engendered in them. It reinforced their identity to themselves, other students in the school, and their city as their performances brought thunderous applause at local primary school cultural festivals or other public performances. They placed value on the ability they had to learn aspects of the Maori and Tongan culture as part of that group, and the flow-on effect it had on their relationships outside the cultural group. All implied that this continued in their relationships at Secondary School, where they often hung out in multicultural groups. Their current teachers" comments support this. There is reference to this in the section below titled **The Present**.

There was also the suggestion that the teacher's role in loco parentis when taking the children to performances was very important. If she had not been Samoan, some children may not have been allowed by protective parents to perform in town, or at events outside school. The protective instincts in many Pasifika parents are strong as they come to terms with the conflicts between the cultural norms of New Zealand society and the expectations of their culture. Lay (1996) discusses these tensions as parents see the delights of the cities of

New Zealand ensnare their children. It is at this point that the pou of community threatens to weaken as the children begin to make choices outside the expectations of their family. When children were in that environment with another Samoan parent who understood their concerns, parents felt assured of their child's safety.

After the class *(How did you feel about your first language when you left the class?)*

Warp

- ✓ **I can speak properly and stuff, and I know how to speak my language more clearly and stuff and I understand**

- ✓ **Same (both languages) happy reading and writing when left – still using it – mum makes me read Samoan books – the Bible. When we are away from home we use a mixture.**

- ✓ **I felt good – like it felt good to write in your own language because then as you go along you start to know more, you know. Because then as you go along you start to know more, and you know when you write back then, because I've still got my books and all that. It seems kind of fresh what I was writing but I knew what I was writing and I could understand what I was writing back then. So when you look back into it, it's funny – you laugh it off. Yeah so it's all good now.**

- ✓ **Its feels funny,…um – I actually was proud of myself back then.**

- ✓ **Oh, Oh (enthusiastically) I can't tell really which one I am best at because I can speak fluently in both of them now. I'm really good at both of them.**

- ✓ **My family came out and visited me and were surprised to find out that I was really fluent in my Samoan.**

Weft

A stream of positive statements come from this warp collection: - **I … speak properly, more clearly, I understand, happy reading and writing, use a mixture, it felt good, its all good now, proud of myself, I can speak fluently in both, really good at both, I was really fluent.**   Some of these comments are in the past tense, some in the present.   The students rightfully felt proud of their achievement in learning their first language. As a result of their time in the class, they have now taken possession of their language to the point where they feel pride in themselves, for their own sakes, not just their parents. They link their identity with their ability to speak Samoan fluently. Their parents were the catalyst for the class and as a result of their initiative; they have given their children the priceless gift of their first language, and strength in their Samoan identity.

The statement of one student about not being able to tell which he was best at now, and another about the mixture they use away from home, is significant. It means that they are capable of code-switching; a skill which research has shown contributes to the flexibility of thought which is a trait of bilinguals (Baker & Jones, 1998; Cummins, 2000; May et al., 2004). The students' words were confirmation the pou (pole) of education has been strong enough to carry them into the secondary school environment, and contribute to a strong weave in the letoga of their lives. However, the fragility of the pou became evident through other comments they made.

The Present:

(What effects did that time have on what you can do now?)

Warp

- ✓ **Reading in Samoan**

- ✓ **Speak in front of people – feel confident.**
- ✓ **Not shy**
- ✓ **Art – use Pacific things**
- ✓ **Confidence when we do speeches.**
- ✓ **I liked doing art in the bilingual class so I do art here – patterns**
- ✓ **More positive about school**
- ✓ **Just everyone saying to try to stay at school and get a good job.**
- ✓ **Maths – Mrs. D gave us challenges and it was real cool and it kind of helped me here at this school. I don't struggle much** (reading and writing) **I don't think I'm better than the others – we are all the same.**
- ✓ **Don't write as much but I read – hardly any Samoan books around. I use it when we do assignments. Thinking back I can think of, like everyone does like the same assignment but I'm just like thinking outside the square and then I'm thinking Pacific, and then do something Pacific** (laugh)**; everything I do is basically Pacific – that's quite cool.**
- ✓ **Given independence**
- ✓ **Confidence to be different? Yes confidence to stand up and get it** (speech) **over and done with – like any small or big audience like you can.**
- ✓ **The maths we did in primary helped me – cause the things Mrs. D taught us like she told us that she's got year 6 and put us into year 7 to see what we could do, and I've told my teachers to try and skip things we can do in year 11 NCA, and that's really helped me in maths and that's the subject the bilingual class has ….** (Helped with?**) yes, but not so much English and reading and that……..**

- ✓ **I'm really confident and say things because you know everyone. And even new faces, like you eventually get to know them, so – that was my biggest………**

- ✓ **Oh, benefits. (Enthusiastic reaction)**

- ✓ **Oh my class, last year we had these things where you had to come up and go talk about something. They just like - you don't write it down but don't change the subject and you talk about it – you think of everything you know about that subject and talk about it, and no one in our class would go up and I said "oh yeah I'll go up". And I went up and I done it and everyone was surprised. They were pretty shocked. It was good, yeah. (**Laugh**) You were – or I was - oh (**pause**) (**Confident?**) Oh yeah that's the one – (**laughed). I wasn't……… I didn't have those goose bumps.**

- ✓ **Um - creative writing – yes I like doing creative writing now, and I'm really into my reading and my maths is getting better.**

Weft

Most of the students see confidence as a big factor in the benefits of their time in the class. Commonly they attributed this specifically to speech time, but it was more likely an accumulation of all the positive experiences they had in an environment which was encouraging, and culturally congruent. Four mention literacy or numeracy as strengthened from their time in the class. Confidence and pride in their identity also came though strongly. One student felt confident enough to think "outside the square", and this allowed her to find a Pasifika slant to her assignments. Two continued to use Pasifika themes in art. This ability to link their Pasifika culture with the Palagi curriculum can lead to effective learning. McNeight (1998) instigated a study with her 6th form classical studies class where they compared links between ancient Rome and traditional Samoan culture. Achievement was more than twice what it had been in

previous units. Her students demonstrated a belief in themselves. Pasikale (1996) and her team of researchers noted that it was a "lack of confidence, not a lack of ability, that hindered students' learning" (p. 54). The importance of confidence and self belief should not be underestimated in successful learning.

(What is it like to be Samoan in this school?)

Warp

- ✓ **Nothing that makes (me) feel Samoan (in the school)**
- ✓ **Nothing to identify with as Samoan**
- ✓ **I so <u>hate</u> this school. I'm not even allowed to speak Samoan in my own class. They think you say something about them. Sometimes you may say something about them but…. I have no one to talk to – oh it sucks aye. It really sucks. Like I'm the only Pacific Islander there – there's half Tongans and Cook islanders and Palagis – it's not the same. Throughout my whole years I've been stuck with them and last year and this year.**
- ✓ **If they had a bilingual class here like they have a whanau class. Yes they need a bilingual class. Because you can understand better and you can put up your hand and say I don't understand it. I just don't feel secure. The teachers hard to get at. The way my teacher treats me she treats me like c…… My form teacher. She treats Islanders in my class like c…….. I don't think she likes us. She doesn't let us speak our language but when she hears other people speaking like gibberish she doesn't care. It's like its okay. It sucks.**
- ✓ **Can't read and write at school now. That's dumb**
- ✓ **Speak Samoan in class (**to one other Samoan boy**). No books in library. Like reading English – it's better.**
- ✓ **Hardly any Samoan books around.**

- ✓ **Normally hang out with Islanders, lots of Palagi, comfortable with everyone.**
- ✓ **Oh it's pretty pretty pretty all right. Teachers are pretty cool as well.**

All students indicated that they would like very much to have books to read in Samoan apart from the Bible, appropriate to their age.

Weft

Some of the feedback that forms the above collection caused me considerable concern. It appeared that the bilingual class, while a greatly beneficial time for the students, had set expectations of their future education that were not necessarily fulfilled. They left Crossroads School at Year 6 on the crest of a wave, and since then some have battled to retain their Samoan identity and maintain motivation within the school context. Pasikale's research (1996) found that eighteen of the eighty participants in her study expressed hatred for their time at secondary school, and another nine had bad memories of their teachers.

All the participants in my research believed that there had been no bilingual or Samoan language support at their intermediate school. Many felt that their identity as a Samoan had been diminished or discounted in the secondary environment they were now in. When considering the metaphor for my project, I could see how the school pou (pole) could become fragile and in danger of failure, undoing all the good work of the weavers, as some students struggled with identity issues. One stated that there was "nothing that makes me feel Samoan" and yearned for the safety ("I don't feel secure") and cultural identity she had experienced in her primary years. The six students who were at the same school expressed the most negative feelings about their environment in terms of Samoan identity. The students who had gone to secondary schools without any of the other participants did not express such negative feelings. This puzzled me. Perhaps they had been in the situation long enough to accept

that it was normal to be one of few rather than one of many, and that they were confident and comfortable in their cultural identity, grounded by their bilingual experience and home environments. The reasons are not clear and the data from this study do not shed light on the possibilities. What is clear, however, is the need for cultural acknowledgement expressed by the students. All students imparted a strong sense of pride in being Samoan. The data from the teachers confirms this sense of pride (see their feedback below).

Current Teachers" feedback

Students" Attitudes to learning.

- **Very motivated, positive, always wanting to learn, and doesn't mind being corrected. Appears to have clear goals in mind for his future and is focussed on them. Keen to ask questions and take part in everything. Very confident. Can see him reaching his goals – wants to succeed.**

- **Happy to try things – always on task – motivated enough to keep trying**

- **Determination to try**

- **Tends to hang back and not put himself forward in class – unmotivated, despite obvious ability. Would rather be one with the others than stand out, even though he knows the answers – sit quietly and be invisible. Not wanting to be the "nerdy" one. Is aware of ability – may think that to achieve academically isn't cool. Does he believe he can't do it? Could be an overall lack of confidence.**

- **…not asking for help if she gets stuck.**

Cultural Identity:

- **Is comfortable as both a Samoan and a New Zealander - is proud of who he is, and shares his language and culture with other students**

- **freely and without embarrassment or reluctance. Can say "As a Samoan…", and express his opinion, or "In my culture, this is how we do things"**

- **Proud to be a Samoan and still do well in the English language. Interacts with all cultures – fits in fine with whole group.**

- **Understanding of his culture and eagerness to learn far surpasses current Year 11s. Not afraid to ask questions, and not embarrassed if he gets it wrong.**

- **Being able to mingle with other cultural groups more than other Samoan students. Keeps on track – strong person.**

- **In drama almost brings himself down – uses Brotown accent. Not seen any link to cultural identity – putting it down – sending it up? Doesn't want to draw attention to himself as a Pacific Islander. Has not joined Pasifika music group. One of the least likely to identify himself as Samoan.**

While some teachers felt their students' attitudes were positive, and they were motivated, other feedback focussed on those which painted a picture of a quiet, unmotivated student. Nakhid (2003) encountered similar comments from teachers in her research. Tuafuti (2005) discusses the "culture of silence", and how traditionally Pasifika "children are to be seen and not heard", and are encouraged when they go to school to "honour thy teacher". She discusses the traditional value placed in Pasifika cultures on silence; "silence speaks meaning". For Pasifika children in the classroom setting, questioning an authority can mean "disrespect and impoliteness" (Tuafuti, 2005, p. 4). The gap between teachers' perceptions and the students' cultural needs can be immense. Alton-Lee (2003) emphasises the importance of teachers' understanding of other cultures, and the need of inclusiveness of the curriculum, with innovations such

as that of McNeight (2003), where she allowed the students to compare the familiar (Samoan culture) with the unfamiliar (Ancient Roman Culture).

Despite their comments, most students continued to be strong in their cultural identity, although one seemed to choose to go out of his way to not identify himself as Samoan. This could be the result of peer pressure, and the fact that he was one of only a few Samoan students at the school. The staff, after discussion, were determined to look further into his situation, as his potential was high.

The Role of Parents *(How did your parents support you while you were in the class?)*

Warp

While parents were not the focus of this study, the students were asked how their parents had supported them while they were in the Samoan bilingual class. Some students could not think of any way their parents had supported them. The comments below show the range of ideas.

- ✓ **Help – my dad sometimes (**with) **reading**
- ✓ **Made sure I went to school (laugh)**
- ✓ **Helped with homework**
- ✓ **Expected (**me**) to get everything right**
- ✓ **Encouraged me – helped me with homework. My parents encouraged me to all the bilingual things.**
- ✓ **Help with speeches**
- ✓ **They helped me with my homework and they said that if you do your Samoan homework then it will help you a lot.**
- ✓ **Anything I wanted to do in the bilingual class my parents would support me in anything, everything – oh – things that my parents were**

happy with they still stood behind me and you know still stood beside me too, you know, what I wanted to do, and our culture, our religion, our beliefs means that we don't really dance in our belief, and I wanted to do it because it's a good cause and to show everybody our school, what our school was like …….. We don't really dance at all but my parents did – like they said what everyone wanted to do I will do it for my school for what I wanted to do for the teacher so ………

✓ **When you were performing you'd never do this again, especially when our Samoan like your parents are over protective and you wouldn't be going to perform they wont trust us to do it by ourselves, and it was real cool – I'd never left my mum and dad at that age when I was in the bilingual class – without them saying stand up properly.**

How do your parents feel about your ability to speak in Samoan now?

✓ **My dad doesn't really mind that we speak English now because we are starting to gain more language, you know – we are starting to get a language now so that's really good actually. Plus we get parts to do in like programmes at church and it's in Samoan so he can see that we are doing well, so he doesn't really mind if we speak English. He feels proud when he sees us up there. We may have little mistakes but you know that was like the first time up there because we weren't confident then but now we gain more confidence to speak in front of people now.**

Weft

It was obvious that parental support was recognised and appreciated by the children, although the responses were varied. The comments demonstrated a deep commitment from the parents to the class, even to the extent of compromising their religious beliefs when their child was allowed to perform in the culture group. Best practise research shows that parental support is vital for

the success of bilingual education, and that "Quality teaching effects are maximised when supported by effective home-school partnership practices focused on student learning. School-home partnerships that have shown the most positive impacts on student outcomes have student learning as their focus" (Alton-Lee, 2003. p. vii). Samoan parents have had to overcome the traditional belief that the school alone is responsible for the education of their children. Many initiatives such as the Home School Partnership Programme mentioned earlier have been set up to link parents and school. Crossroads School was among the first in the South Island to be part of this programme. As a result many parents no longer feel threatened by the school; they visit regularly, and learn how to support their children at home, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Such programmes are not one off events – schools must keep up the momentum they create to catch new families and support existing ones.

The final quote above made by a student about the pride her father has in her now, is delightful. It rewards him for the commitment his family made when his child entered the class, and is a very significant part of the value of the letoga.

Advice – Student Perspective (*What advice could you give to Crossroads School bilingual class, and any other school trying to set one up?*)
Warp
Teacher:
- ✓ **Helpful, caring, loving**
- ✓ **Ideal teacher? Nice, funny – if she wanted to be respected (or he) like treat everyone the same – you won't have one student that stands up in our eyes – fairly**
- ✓ **Teachers should be Samoan so that the kids can relate to them.**

- ✓ **Oh yeah the teacher's got to be motivated as well. Really most of the things the bilingual class was doing revolved around motivation**

Language:
- ✓ **Trying to get it (**language) **in**
- ✓ **Half and half (**Samoan and Palagi**)**

Classroom climate:
- ✓ **Don't be naughty**
- ✓ **Don't pick on each other**
- ✓ **Don't give up**
- ✓ **Have fun in the class like all the activities we did – early morning aerobics and stuff.**
- ✓ **Celebrate all the events**

One student expressed himself with a maturity and thoughtfulness that stood out.

I think it needs support from the parents, and you'd need like a whole – you'd need more than enough people to start the bilingual class, and a teacher with a good background of the specific culture that their bilingual class will be in, and that the students are wanting it, not just there's a bilingual class lets go in – like they want to be, they want to have a bilingual class.

Yeah – the students – it's no use them just going in but not really into it. They got to be really into it.

Yeah – without those things it won't be a success

He summed up the experience:

Being in a successful bilingual class is a really good experience and it will help in your future life.

Weft

None of the students could make any suggestions for improvements for the class at Crossroads School, and just indicated that it should continue as it has been. However the wide range of suggestions for a new class demonstrated the range of maturity in the students. They summed up their positive memories of the class, and outlined the central issues as being:

- A teacher who they can relate to culturally, and is motivated.
- Parental support
- Motivation of the students to want to be there ("**They got to be really into it"**).
- Fun
- Equity and fairness.

Astute students know what conditions are essential for learning. The emotional state of a classroom is of high importance to them. If the barriers of fear, insecurity, and incongruence (to the culture of the classroom) are removed, the conditions for effective learning are in place. Kyriacou (1997) develops this idea that all learning occurs in a social context, and is affected by various "affective variables" (p. 35). These affective variables are the emotional and social factors which influence a student's learning. He maintains that one of the strongest influencing factors is motivation, and the students' feedback concurred that this was of major significance to them in the bilingual classroom.

Chapter 7: Summary - A precious thing is made

Much of the material I read before I began on this study indicated that in qualitative research initial questions frequently change over the course of research. This has been true of this study. Through my review of "previous research" I developed "sharper and more insightful questions about the topic" (Yin, 1994, p. 9), and this had supported my investigations and analysis of the data.

Initially I thought that the research would reveal the specific things that made the class a success, and ways it had helped the students. As the study progressed and I read more, and listened to the students in my study, the theme of identity, language and human rights emerged as central. Previously I had not put much thought into the effects that learning their first language has on the identity of a person, perhaps taking that as a given. I did not consider the moral and ethical responsibility of a majority culture to ensure that one of the most basic of human rights, possession of one's first language, is available to a minority culture. As my research question evolved, I became aware that it was not just learning their first language that was important to the students; learning the curriculum **in** their first language was also of great significance, and had cemented their feelings of self belief and identity.

As a member of a majority culture, with the educational needs of a minority culture in my hands, how could I ever deny the students bilingual education? The delight of the students in my study as they described their time in the bilingual class was inspiring. There is no doubt in my mind that the gifts of confidence and pride in being Samoan were an outcome of the class, and are

standing several of the students in good stead in their present situation, and making their pou strong for their futures. I believe that, as a result, they have a much better chance of success in a Palagi world. If their time in the bilingual class had been longer, who knows where they would all be now?

Unfortunately the continuation of the bilingual class is not entirely in my or the school board's hands. Issues of funding and staffing each year place the classes, both Maori and Samoan, in jeopardy, as the school roll struggles to meet the required levels for the necessary number of teachers. White flight and false perception are very real issues in our community.   Funding is difficult to secure despite the strong evidence of the effectiveness of bilingual education in bringing about high achievement amongst minority groups.   It is hoped that the government will acknowledge this, and provide targeted funding for these groups, before the gulf widens between Pasifika groups and others in our communities.

The Class and Crossroads School:

I can confidently say that the short time these students had in the Samoan bilingual class at a young age has had an effect on their sense of identity. In some cases this has been profound, and I hope in the future this will make them more assertive as to their rights, and the rights of their children, to continue to use their first language.

The following are the significant outcomes.

- Students confirmed other research (Alton-Lee, 2003; McLean, 2003; Ovando et al., 2006) which identified indicators of an effective classroom. These included such factors as the emotional safety created by their relationship with their teacher through warmth, laughter, and

encouragement, and high expectations of success, all in an atmosphere where students are able to identify with their culture.

- The students' emphasis on speeches, and the confidence they attribute to them, has made me realise that they are a very important part of the school year, and deserve pomp and celebration to lift their profile. I would recommend that all bilingual classes adopt this activity. It would be interesting to see what the mainstream students think of the speech competitions. The speeches are an example of students being pushed to achieve. Their success led to confidence, and the teachers' high expectations were an important part of this. This also confirms research which highlights the impact of teacher expectations on student outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2003).
- The role of parents in encouragement and support is vital, and very much appreciated by the students. The students understand the links between their language and identity, and that it was their parents' decisions that formed the class in the first place. The investment in the future for both their families and the wider Samoan community is recognised by the students.

Implications for schools

The students also raised issues that need to be effectively addressed:

- There is room for better understanding amongst teachers, of the importance of the first language as a medium for learning, and its significance to identity and feelings of self worth. Bilingual students should be allowed to talk with each other in their first language in the classroom. Structured opportunities for this leads to better learning in the transfer to English. Krashen and Terrell, (1983) cited in Baker and Jones (1998, p. 676) discuss the "natural approach" of second language

acquisition, where teachers allow a relaxed and low anxiety atmosphere. This approach should enable the students to feel free to use their first language as a means to achieve the meaning necessary they need to succeed in the second.

- Teachers who have Pasifika students in their classes would benefit from professional learning about mediated dialogue, such as that undertaken by Nakhid (2003). They need the opportunity to express how they perceive Pasifika students and their classroom behaviour. They also need to hear what Pasifika students say about their own learning styles, and their explanations for how they act in the classroom. Being able to do it in their own safe groups with a mediator will encourage honesty. The mutual understandings that this engenders will enable a more culturally appropriate environment for the students, better teaching strategies for the teachers, and mutual respect and understanding to be developed.

- Students from Pasifika cultures benefit from opportunities that encourage them to celebrate their culture, and not be embarrassed about it. Most schools are taking positive steps to enable this to happen, but like many other ideas, it needs constant revision and rejuvenation. Asking students what they want is a good start, but if they state that nothing needs to be done, steps could still be taken to ensure they have a first language speaker accessible to support them if needed. Creative ways to celebrate their presence, particularly if they are a very small group in the school, should be found. The arts curriculum can offer many opportunities, drawing on the talents of the students. Office foyers provide gallery space for visual arts.

Of significance to all teachers, primary and secondary, no matter what cultures they teach (and in New Zealand almost every classroom has more than one culture) is the evidence that

what teachers know about the lives of children outside of school affects

their pedagogical practises. Inquiry needs to become a common

pedagogical practice. In the light of the diversity that is inherent in all

classrooms, having the means to construct knowledge about differences

among learners may be more important and less problematic than having

information on learners in pre-packaged forms. (Mercado, 2001. p. 690,

cited in Alton-Lee , 2003)

Such evidence places strong moral and ethical obligations upon schools to

support teachers to gather this knowledge. Professional development to enable

this to happen needs to be included in a school's induction process for new staff.

My Undertakings

My return to the school is imminent. I take with me a clearer understanding of

the need for bilingual education, and the ideal situation for second language

learners. I am more determined than ever to ensure that the Year 1 and 2

children, both Maori and Samoan, are given as much first language support as

possible, and hope my Board of Trustees will agree to make this a focus of

funding. Our dream of a bilingual class at new entrant level is still not possible,

but we must do the best we can in the circumstances. I will encourage the staff

to undertake professional development in second language learning, and the

bilingual class teacher to teach some Samoan language to us in practical,

manageable chunks. Staff will be shown the research data on best practice to

enable them to be better informed about, and sympathetic to, bilingual

education.

Conclusion

My personal journey through this study has been highlighted by my

conversations with the students and the discovery within their stories of the

strong sense of identity they link to their ability to speak and learn in their first language; being bilingual. They have grown into young people whose potential in many cases is already evident. They are the precious things, structured and nurtured through the vision of their parents and the school, and at least two of the poutolu (three poles) of their sheltering fale (house) are strong. It is to be hoped that within the community the confidence they feel will strengthen the third pou (pole) of their fale.

Together we must continue to help to nurture the letoga,(fine mat) even after it is completed. Its history and currency continues throughout its life, and depends largely on what happens now. As educators and responsible citizens of New Zealand, we cannot allow the unravelling of the letoga. We must have systems in place that strengthen the structure of the sheltering fale. These young people will one day be the ones who embark upon creating new letoga, and the strength they gain now will make the creation of the future letoga even more rewarding and successful.

References

Adler, R., and Rodman, G. (2003). *Understanding human communication* (Eighth Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best evidence synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Anae, M. (2003). O a'u/i - My identity journey. In P. Fairbairn-Dunlop & G. Makisi (Eds.). *Making our place: Growing up PI in New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore.

Anae, M., Coxon, E., Mara, D., Wendt-Samu, T., & Finau, C. (2001). *Pasifika education research guidelines. Final report*. Wellington. Ministry of Education.

Baker, C., & Jones, S. P. (1998). *Encyclopedia of bilingualism and bilingual education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Barker, C., & Galasinski, D. (2001). *Cultural studies and discourse analysis. A dialogue on language and identity*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Benton, R. (1972). *Should bilingual education be fostered in New Zealand?* Wellington: NZCER

Billington, R., Hockey, J., & Strawbridge, S. (1998). *Exploring self and society.* Houndsmills: MacMillan Press Ltd.

Brash, D. (2004). Nationhood Speech. Presented to the Orewa Rotary Club.

Bridges, D. (2001). The ethics of outsider research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 35* (No. 3).

Burr, V. (1995). *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge

California Oceanside Museum of Art (2002). (n.d.) *Worn with pride: Samoan artistic heritage*. Retrieved May 28, 2005, from http://oma-online.org/worn_with_pride

New Zealand Human Rights Commission, (2004). (n.d.) *Human rights in New Zealand today: New Zealand action plan for human rights*. Retrieved May 8, 2005 from hppt://www.hrc.co.nz/report

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Cullingford, C. (2002). *The best years of their lives?* London: Kogan Page Limited.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy; Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Dimbleby, R., & Burton, G. (1998). *More than words; An introduction to communication* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Ellis, C., & Berger, L. (2003). Their story/my story/our story. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Postmodern interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Fa'afoi, A., & Fletcher, J. (2002). Na hakahita ki tagata pahefika i te akoga haka haiakoga: Identifying barriers for Pacific Islands student teachers. *Many Voices*. 19. Wellington. Learning Media.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (1998). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

Gibbons, P. (1993). *Learning to learn in a second language.* Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning.* Portsmouth: Heinemann

Goldring, R., & Mullins, W. (1995). *Bushcraft. Outdoor skills for the New Zealand bush*. Wellington: New Zealand Mountain Safety Council.

Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. (2003). From the individual interview to the interview society. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Postmodern interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Harrison, J., MacGibbon, L., & Morton, M. (2001). Regimes of trustworthiness in qualitative research: The rigors of reciprocity. In *Qualitative Inquiry, Volume 7, Number 3, 2001.* SAGE Publications.

Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (2003). *Postmodern interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, G. (2001). Pasefika languages and Pasefika identities: Contemporary and future Challenges. In C. Macpherson, P. Spoonley & M. Anae (Eds.), *Tangata O Te Moana Nui; The Evolving Identities of Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore.

Jones, A. (1991). *At school I've got a chance*. Palmerston North: Dunmore

Kyriacou, C. (1997). *Effective teaching in schools: Theory and practice*. (Second Edition). United Kingdom. Stanley Thomes (Publishers) Ltd.

Lay, G.,(1996). *Pacific New Zealand*. Auckland: David Ling Publishing Limited.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2001). *Practical research. Planning and design.* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Lehmann, J. (2001). Beyond the storytelling/inside the telling. In C. Boucher & R. Holian (Eds.), *Emerging forms of representing qualitative data*. Melbourne: RMIT University Press.

Lippi, J. (2001). Up close and personal: The researcher at the centre of the research. In C. Boucher & R. Holian (Eds.), *Emerging forms of representing qualitative data*. Melbourne: RMIT University Press.

Lutz, Catherine. (1990). Morality, domination and understandings of "Justifiable anger" among the Ifaluk. In G.R. Semin, and K.J. Gergen (Eds.), *Everyday understanding: Social and scientific implications.* London: SAGE Publications.

Mailei, F. D. T. (2003). E lele a le toloa a e maau lava i le vai. In P. Fairbairn-Dunlop & G. S. Makisi (Eds.), *Making our place; Growing up PI in New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

May, S., Hill, R., & Tiakiwai, S. (2004). *Bilingual/immersion education: Indicators of good practice*. *Report to the ministry of education*. Hamilton. University of Waikato.

McLean, A. (2003). *The motivated school*. London: SAGE Publications.

McNeight, C. (1998). *Wow. These sorts of things are similar to our culture. Becoming culturally inclusive in the senior secondary school curriculum.* Unpublished graduate research study. Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Nakhid, C. (2003). Comparing Pasifika students' perceptions of their schooling with the perceptions of non-Pasifika teachers using the "Mediated dialogue" as a research methodology. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 38* (No. 2).

Neuman, W. L. (2000). *Social research methods; Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Ngan-Woo, F. E. (1985). *The world of Samoans*. Auckland: Office of the Race Relations Conciliator.

Okesene, O. (Producer). (2005, March 10) Tagata Pasifika. TVNZ.

OECD. 2001, Knowledge and skills for life: First results from the OECD *Programme for international student assessment (PISA)* 2000.

Oller, D., & Eilers, R (2002). *Language and literacy in bilingual children*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual matters.

Ovando, C.J., Combs, M.C., & Collier, V.P. (2006). *Bilingual and ESL classrooms*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Pasikale, A. (1996). *Seen, but not heard*. Wellington: Education and Support Agency.

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2003). *Learning in the field. An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Ryan, J. (1999). *Race and ethnicity in multi-ethnic schools*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Silipa, S. R. (2004). *"Fanaafi o fa'amalama": A light within the light*. Unpublished doctorial dissertation, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Silipa, S.R. (2005). Personal communication.

Spoonley, P. (2001). Transnational Pacific communities: Transforming the politics of place and identity. In C. Macpherson, P. Spoonley & M. Anae (Eds.), *Tangata O Te Moana Nui*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Spoonley, P. (1993). *Racism and ethnicity; Critical issues in New Zealand society*. Auckland: Oxford.

Taleni, T. (1998). Newly migrated Samoan students in New Zealand schools. *Many Voices*, 12. Wellington: Learning Media.

Tileston, D. W. (2005). *10 Best Teaching Practices* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Tuafuti, P. (2005). *Pasifika bilingual education: Unlocking the culture of silence.* In Major, J. & Howard, J (2005). Keynote addresses presented at the 9th Community Languages and English for Speakers of Other Languages Conference. Christchurch: CLESOL 2004.

Van-Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Williams, R. (1983). *Keywords*. London: Fontana.

Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and method* (Second Ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Letter to parents requesting permission for their child to take part in the study –
Samoan and English

Me, 2005

Susuga Mr. & Mrs ( )

Talofa lava malo le soifua

I le ava ma le faaaloalo e tatau ai ua ou tusi faatalosaga atu ai, e fia maua se avanoa e talatalanoa ai ma ( ) e uiga i le taimi sa auai ai i le aoaoina/faaogaina o gagana e lua i totonu o le aoga, ( ) School.

O le tausaga nei o lo″o ou feagai ai ma ni "mataupu suesue" mo se faailoga fa″aunivesite (Master of Teaching & Learning Degree), ma o le autu o nei talatalanoaga/fetufaa″iga ma e sa a″oa″oina i le vasega lea sa faaoga ai gagana e lua o le fia faalauteleina lea o se iloa ma se malamalamaaga. Talitonu o se fetaufaa″iga ma le fanau e aofia ai le vaitaimi″ sa a″oa″oina ai, pe faapefea ona

lu"itau ma fa"atino ai lo latou "a"oa"oina", o latou "uiga-tu ma aga", faapea latou "fa"asinomaga/tulaga fa"ailo". O le manatu maualuga o le a mafai ona maua mai i nei fetufaa"iga ni "manatu fa"avae/autu" e atina"e ai ni auala e fa"alauteleina ai le lumana"i o le fa"aogaina o gagana e lua i totonu o (   ) School ma faapena foi ona fesoasoani atu ai i nisi o aoga o lo"o fia maua se silafia ma manana"o e fia atina"e ni a latou lava vasega e "fa"aaogaina ai gagana e lua"

O le taimi muamua e mo"omia ai la matou feiloa"iga ma le fanau atoa, o le a faapea fo"i ona valaaulia atu ai uma matua ina ia auai mai. O lenei feiloa"iga o le a soso"o lea ma se matou feso"otaiga e aofia ai se "vaega to"atele", ona faasolosolo atu ai lea i "vaega toaititi" po"o le ta"ito"atasi fo"i pea ma le fa"alua pe a maea lelei. Ua iai le talitonuga o nei auala o le a mafai ona fa"amalosia ai se talatalanoaga taitoatasi ma"i "latou" oe matamumuli, fa"apea foi ona fa"amalosia talatalanoaga ma i latou e fiafia e fetufaa"i o latou manatu ma isi.
O le tele o fonotaga o le a usia/faia lea i o latou lava faleaoga i le taimi o aoga e tusa ia ma se faatagana mai i le aoga sei vagana fonotaga muamua e lua o le a faia uma lea i le fale (   ), fa"afesaga"i tonu ma le aoga. O le fa"atulagana o taimi ma aso mo le fa"amoemoe o lea fuafua lelei/faia pea latalata i le taimi, ou te iloa e leai se manatu o nei fonotaga o le a tutupu pe faia i luma mai o Me, ae ou te mautinoa o nei fonotaga o lea faamaea uma i le faaiuga o Iuni.

So"o se tala latou te talanoa mai ai o lea ou taofia uma lea e aunoa ma se faailoa faalauaiteleina. O latou igoa uma o le a le faaogaina lea i so"o se lipoti o lea ou tusiina. O fonotaga uma foi o le a pueina i laau pue leo, aua o lea ou le faalagolago i lou mafaufau. O le a tufaina e tofu le tamaititi ma lana lava kopi o tala, faaupuga ma mea sa tutupu i talatalanoaga/fonotaga, e mafai ai ona latou

siakiina le fa"atuatuaina o au fa"amaumauga. O lea ou teuina faamaumauga uma i totonu o se "faila" i lo"u fale ma e na"o au lava e mafai ona faitauina.

Tatala atu le faitalia i le paia o matua, afai e sau se taimi ole a le talafeagai ai le mataupu ma fuafuaaga ma ua fia "aveesea" mai ai lou alo i le auai atu i le "mataupu su"esu"e" o le a le afaina lea, ou te talia fiafia soo se mea pea fai e logoina au e uiga i le fa"ama"amulu mai o lou alo. Afai o lea leai se fa"afitauli, faamoemoe o lea auai atu lou alo i fonotaga e pei ona fuafuaina/faatulagaina. Ua iai foi le fa"amoemoe ou te fia talatalanoa ma o latou faiaoga e tusa ai ma se taofi/silasila/tofa e uiga i olaga fa"alea"oa"oga o le fanau

Ua maea ona soalaupule ma ua maua ai se maliliega e tasi a le komiti fa"afoe a le Aoga Fa"afaiaoga Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee ina ia pasia le fa"ataunuuina o lenei fa"amoemoe. So"o se faafitauli e fa"aono tulai mai po"o se gaulemalie foi e uiga i se vaega o le "mataupu suesue" e mafai ona faafesootai mai au, po"o le faafesootai foi le tuatusi e pei ona taua i lalo.

The Chair,
Ethics Clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
P o Box 31-065
Christchurch
Phone 345 8390

Fa"amolemole tauaao atu i lou alo itulau o lo"o iai le ta"iala ma se fa"atagana e faitau ma sainia pea maea lena ona maua o se maliliega.

Sau se taimi/aso tatou toe fetaui ai aua le aoina mai o nei pepa

Fa"agaeetia lou nei tagata i lo outou lagolago mai i le mataupu suesue". So"o se faamatalaga e tuuina mai e lou alo e matuai taua tele. Fa"amoemoe o le "mataupu suesue" o le a fa"aaupegaina ai le toatele o nisi o tama fanau a Samoa i totonu o Rowley Community aemaise ai latou o loo a"oa"oga pea, e le gata i lena a"o nisi o aoga/vasega o loo latou faaogaina fa"atasi le gagana Samoa faapea le faaperetania i totonu o Niu Sila.

Mo nisi/soo se faamatalaga e te fia malamalama ai e uiga i lau mataupu, telefoni mai au 338 0535, pe meli mai foi goldring@paradise.net.nz. Fa"amoemoe o le a utugia mai se faatalauula atu a le auauna

Fa"afetai tele

Maree Goldring

May 2005

Dear Mr. and Mrs. ( )

I am writing to you to request your permission to talk with ( ) about her time in the bilingual class at ( ) School.

I am doing some research this year for my Masters of Teaching and Learning Degree, and I am intending to talk with ex-students of the bilingual class so that I can be better informed. They will be able to talk about that time, and how it has affected them in their education, attitudes and identity. Their ideas will allow me to make the bilingual opportunities at ( ) School more effective in the future, and may help other schools that want to set up bilingual classes.

The first time I meet with them will be with the whole group together, and you will be invited. I will then meet with them again in a large group, and later in smaller groups or alone at least twice after that. This is to encourage those that are shier and would prefer to talk alone, and to support those who feel more confident with others. Some of the meetings may be at their school during school time (arranged with their school), but the first two meetings will be after school meetings at (   ), opposite the school. The time and date will be decided closer to the time, but it is unlikely that these meetings will happen before May, but they should be finished by the end of June.

Everything they tell me will be treated confidentially. Their names will not be used in any study material I write. The meetings will be tape recorded, so that I do not have to rely on my memory. I will be giving each student a copy of what was said at the meetings so that they can check my accuracy. I will keep all information in a locked file in my home, and I am the only person who will have access to it. It will be destroyed after the research is completed. I will arrange a meeting with everyone concerned to share the results of my research when it is finished. You may withdraw your child from the study at any time, but it would be appreciated if you informed me of that withdrawal. Otherwise, your child will be expected to make a commitment to attend arranged meetings. I am also hoping to talk to some of her/his teachers about her/his school life as they see it.

The Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.   If you are not happy with the way this research is being done, you can let me know, or contact

The Chair,

Ethics Clearance Committee

Christchurch College of Education

P.O. Box 31-065

Christchurch

Phone 345 8390.

Please give your child the separate information and permission forms (attached) once you have given your permission, for them to read and sign.

I will arrange a time to visit you again to pick up the forms.

I appreciate your cooperation in this study. What your child has to say will be very important. It will be of benefit for other Samoan children in the (   ) community still attending the school, and for other Samoan bilingual classes in the country. If you would like to talk with me more about this before you make up your mind, please ring me on 338 0535, or email me goldring@paradise.net.nz , and I will come and visit you again at a time and place to suit you.

Yours sincerely,

Maree Goldring.

Appendix ii

Permission form for parents

fa"atagana a matua e auai o latou alo i le mataupu o lo"o fia suesueina:
"fa"aaogaina o gagana e lua i le aoga"

Mr & Mrs (   )

Ua ou malie/le malie e auai lou atalii/afafine pe a le faailoaina mai lona igoa i le "mataupu suesue" "o le faaogaina o gagana e lua i le aoga" pei ona fa"afoeina e le susuga a le tamaitai pule aoga o Maree

Ua maea ona ou faitau ma ua ou malamalama lelei foi i le auga ma le famoemoe o lenei suesuega.

Aiaiga mo le fa"atagana:

- Ua ou malamalama so"o se tala e fai e lou atalii/afafine o le a pueina i le laau pue leo, pe afai o le a mafai ona ia vaai ma fa"amaonia o faamaumauga uma o le fonotaga e sao lelei

- Ua ou malamalama so"o se tala e fai e lou atalii/afafine o le a le fa"ailoaina faalauaitele, ma o le a le faatagaina foi ona tusia pe taua lona igoa i le lipoti

- Ua ou malamalama so"o se taimi lava e mafai ona fa"amavae mai ai lou atalii/afafine i le auai atu i le mataupu o loo suesueina, pe afai e maea ona logo le tamaitai faiaoga o Maree.

- Ua ou malamalama o faiaoga uma a lou atalii/afafine o lea fa"apea foi ona fesiligia ma suesueina.

Sainia_____ Lenei Aso_____

PARENT PERMISSION FORM FOR STUDENT TO TAKE PART IN BILINGUAL STUDY

I give/do not give permission for (   ) to take part in the bilingual class study with Maree Goldring.

I have read and understood the information received.

If I agree:

- I understand that what my child says will be tape recorded, but s/he will be able to view a written copy of the meetings to check it for accuracy.

- I understand that what my child says is confidential, and s/he will not be identified in the study.

- I understand that I may withdraw my child from the study at any time, but I will make sure that Maree Goldring is informed of this.

- I understand that her/his teachers may be interviewed.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Students" information letter (Samoan and English)

Me, 2005

Talofa lava, (   ),

Pe a nei ma le lua tausaga talu ona e tuua le vasega e a"oa"oina/fa"aogaina ai gagana e lua i le aoga: (   ) School, ma e iai lou fa"amoemoe, pe a tusa ai ma sou maliega, ta te talatalanoa e uiga i lea vaitaimi, ae pe faapefea ona suia ai lou olaga e oo mai ile taimi nei.

Ua maea ona tatala mai se fa"atagana mai ou matua e faia ai se ta talatalanoaga ma oe, ma e iai le faamoemoe o le a e taliaina ma le fiafia.

Po"o lea se mea o le a mafai ona e talatalanoa mai ai, o le a avea lea ma fesoasoani e faaleleia atili ai le alualu i luma o le "vasega e a"oa"oina/fa"aogaina ai gagana e lua" i (   ) School, ae le gata i lea o lea mafai ai foi ona maua le malamalama ou te tuuina atu ai ni fautuaga mo aoga o loo iai ni a latou polokalame faapenei, faapena foi aoga o lo"o tau amata ni latou lava polokalame.

99

O lo"o ou fa"afeso"otaia ma valaaulia taitoatasi latou uma sa a"oa"oina i le vasega e pei ona taua i luga ina ia auai faatasi i le "mataupu suesue". O le fonotaga muamua e aofia ai tagata uma, ma ole a faia lea i le fale ( ) i se aoauli i le masina o Me pea tuua le aoga. O nisi o fonotaga e aofia ai ni vaega toaititi poo le taitoatasi foi ma o lea faia lea i lou faleaoga i le taimi o aoga pe a tusa ai ma se fa"atagana mai i lau aoga. Afai o lea e taliaina le talosaga e iai le faamoemoe o lea e auai atu i fonotaga uma e pei ona fuafuaina, ina ia mafai ai ona ou faamaumuaina le aano o tala o lea mafai ona e talatalanoa mai ai.

E tatala atu le faitalia ia te oe, o lea mafai ai ona e faamavae mai i le auai atu i soo se taimi, ae ou te fautua atu ia e logo mai au pe afai o le tulaga lena. O fonotaga uma e pei ona fuafuaina o le a faamaea uma lea ia Iuni. O lea ou fa"aogaina laau pue leo i fonotaga uma, ina ia ou faamaonia ai le sao o au faamaumauga, ma ou le faalagolago ai i lou mafaufau. O lea ou avatuina ia te oe le kopi o nei faamaumauga e siaki ina ia e iloa ma fiafia i le sao lelei. Poo le lava ni faamatalaga o lea e taumaia o lea le faailoaina lea faalauai tele. O le a le faaaogaina foi lou igoa i le lipoti-o lea ia te oe le faitalia i le pikiina o se igoa e faaoga. O faamaumauga uma lava o lea teuina lea ise faila i lo"u fale, ma e nao au lava e mafai ona faitauina. E manaomia foi se talatalanoaga ma ou faiaoga.

O lenei "mataupu suesue" ua maea ona pasia e le komiti faafoe Aoga Fa"afaiaoga: Ethics Committee of the Christchurch College of Education. So"o se mea e te le fiafia iai, fa"amolemole logo mai au, pe fa"afeso"otai foi le taitai fono ole komiti faafoe e pei ona taua i luga i le tuatusi o lo"o I totonu o le taiala a matua.

Fa"amoemoe o lea e taliaina lau faatalosaga vaivai a le auauna. Afai o lea e taliaina le talosaga, e manaomia lou sainia o le taiala lea ma o lea ou aoina pea ou alu atu e vaai oe i lou fale.

Faafetai

Maree Goldring

May 2005

Dear ( )

It is at least two years since you left the bilingual class at ( ) School, and I am hoping you will be willing to talk with me about that time, and how it has effected you since.

Your parents have given their permission for you to talk with me, and I am hoping that you will agree.

What you can tell me will help me to make the bilingual class at ( ) School even better, and enable me to give some advice to other schools that have bilingual classes, or want to start one.

I am contacting all the ex-students of the class, inviting everyone to be part of the study. The first meeting will be with everyone together, at ( ) one afternoon in May after school. Other meetings will be in smaller groups or individuals, and may be at your school during school time, if your school gives me permission of course. If you agree, I will expect that you will attend all meetings we arrange so I can gather the very best information you can give me.

However, you can withdraw at any time, but I ask that you let me know if that is the case. The meetings should be finished by the end of June.

I will be using a tape recorder at all our meetings, so that I can make sure I am accurate, and not rely on my memory. I will give you a paper copy of that record for you to check to make sure you are happy with it for accuracy. What you tell me will be confidential. Your real name will not be used in my study – you may like to choose one for me to use instead. All the data will be kept in a file in my home, and I am the only person who will have access to it. I may also be talking with some of your teachers.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Christchurch College of Education. If you are unhappy about anything that happens, please let me know, or you can contact the Chairperson of the Ethical Clearance Committee. That address is in your parents" information letter.

I look forward to hearing that you would like to help me this way. If you agree, please sign the form and I will pick it up when I visit your home again.

Yours sincerely,

Maree Goldring

Students" permission form

FA"ATAGANA/MALIEGA SAINIA E TAMA/TEINE AOGA O LOO AUAI I LE "MATAUPU SU"ESU"E"

(   )

Ua ou malie/le malie ou te auai ile "mataupu suesue"-a"oa"oina/fa"aogaina o gagana e lua o loo faafoe/faafegai ma le Susuga Maree i le tausaga nei. Ua malilie mai foi ou matua ina ia ou auai atu i le "mataupu suesue". Maea ona ou faitau ma malamalama i le autu o lenei tusi.

Aiaiga mo se faatagana/maliega:

- Ua ou malamalama o le a matou talatalanoa ma isi tamaiti faapea Maree I le fonotaga muamua, soso"o ai lea ma se fonotaga I ni vaega toaititi poo se talatalanoaga nao au.

- Ua ou malamalama o le tele o nei fonotaga o lea faia ile taimi pea uma aoga faapea foi le taimi o loo faia agoa, e tusa ai ma se faatagana mai ile aoga.

- Ua ou malamalama soo se tala out e faia o lea a pu"eina ile laau pueleo, lolomi, ma faafoi mai ia te au e siaki pe sao.

- Ua ou malamalama lelei so"o se tala o lea ou faia o lea natia lea, ma o lea le fa"ailoaina foi lou igoa i totonu o le lipoti.

- Ua ou malamalama o lou auai atu e fai i lou loto faitalia, ma e mafai ona ou faamaamulu mai i le auai i le mataupu suesue" ma o tala uma sa ou faia o lea faapea ona aveesea mai fa"amaumauga. Ae ua ou malie e logo Maree pe fai o le tulaga lea o lea oo iai.

Igoa_____Sainia_____Aso_____

PERMISSION FORM SIGNED BY STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN BILINGUAL CLASS STUDY

( )

I agree/do not agree to taking part in the bilingual study that Maree Goldring is doing this year. My parents have also given permission for me to take part in this study.

I have read and understood the information in the letter.

If I agree:

- I understand that I will be meeting with the other students and Maree first, then either in smaller groups or by myself.

- I understand that some of these meetings will be out of school time, and some in school time, or breaks, as long as my school agrees.

- I understand that what I say will be tape-recorded, typed out, and given back to me to check for accuracy.

- I understand that some of my teachers may be interviewed about me.

- I understand that what I say will be confidential, and I will not be identified in any way in the study.

- I understand that taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and my information taken off the data. But I agree to inform Maree Goldring immediately if that is my decision.

Name: _____ Signed:_____ Date: _____

<u>Appendix v</u>

<u>Letter to principals</u>

May 2005

The Principal,

( )

Christchurch

Dear ( )

I am the Principal of (   )   primary school. This year I am on study leave, preparing a study for my Masters of Teaching and Learning degree.

There are some students at your school who attended ( )   School"s Samoan bilingual class until their intermediate years.   They are (   )

All students and their parents have given me written permission to take part in the study, visit them at school, and talk with their teachers. I can show you that permission if you require.

My study is focusing on the long term effectiveness of the class, and gathering information to increase its effectiveness for present and future Samoan children at our school. The voices of the past students are central to this study. Research has concentrated on comparisons of achievements of monolingual students with bilingual students in best practice situations, but has not sought the students" opinions; nor has it investigated long term benefits of this education.

The methodology I will be using is based on focus group discussions, followed by smaller group or individual meetings, using qualitative research methods. The first two meetings will not be held on school premises or during school hours as they are gatherings of the whole group, including students from several secondary schools. However, follow-up meetings may be on school premises and during school time, carefully arranged with yourself and staff to create minimum disruption, or at breaks, should you give permission for this research. Interviews will be tape recorded and participants will be given a copy of the transcribed account. I may also need to observe the students in a classroom setting.

I may also require interviews with some of the student"s teachers, (preferably Maths and English) and am including information and permission forms with this letter for you to
forward on to them should you agree for your students to take part in this study at school. I also have included a stamped addressed envelope for them to return their permission forms to me, along with one for your own reply.

You may withdraw your permission for this research at your school at any time.

The Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.

If you have any complaints about the manner in which it is being conducted, you may contact myself, or

> The Chairperson,
>
> Ethical Clearance Committee
>
> Christchurch College of Education
>
> P.O. Box 31-065
>
> Christchurch
>
> Phone 345 8390

Thank you for your cooperation. Please feel free to contact me if you require further information before making a decision. I would be happy to come and discuss this project with you.   My phone number is 338 0535, email goldring@paradise.net.nz

Yours sincerely,

Maree Goldring.

Permission form from secondary school principals

( ) SCHOOL

I give /do not give permission for (   ) to be interviewed at school during school hours, at times to be arranged to suit the student"s timetable, or at breaks. I have read and understood the information pertaining to this study.

If I agree:

- I understand that they may be interviewed alone or in a small group.
- I understand that they will only take part once permission from their parents has been received by Maree Goldring, and the students have also given permission.
- I understand that the interviews will be tape recorded, and the students given transcripts of the meetings to affirm.

- I understand that the school or students will not be identified in the study.
- I understand that some of the students" teachers may also be interviewed, once they have given their own permission to take part.
- I understand that Maree Goldring may observe the students in their classrooms, subject to permission from the teacher
- I understand that I can withdraw the school from this study at any time, but will notify Maree Goldring immediately if this happens.

Name: _____   School: _____

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Appendix vii

Information letter to teachers

May 2005

Dear Staff of (   ) School,

I am the Principal of (   ) primary school. This year I am on study leave, preparing a study for my Masters of Teaching and Learning degree.

There are several students at your school, who attended (   ) School"s Samoan bilingual class until their intermediate years. **(   )**

My study is focusing on the long term effectiveness of the class, and gathering information to increase its effectiveness for present and future Samoan children at our school. The voices of the past students are central to this study. Research has concentrated on comparisons of achievements of monolingual students with bilingual students in best practice situations, but has not sought the students" opinions; nor has it investigated long term benefits of this education.

The methodology I will be using is based on focus group discussions, followed by smaller group or individual meetings, using qualitative research methods. The first meeting will not be held on school premises or during school hours as it is a gathering of the whole group, including students from several secondary schools. However, follow-up meetings may be on school premises and during school time, carefully arranged with yourself to create minimum disruption, or at break times. Your principal has given permission for this to happen. Interviews will be tape recorded and participants will be given a hard copy of the transcribed account.

To supplement what the students have to say about themselves and how they view the effectiveness of their time in the bilingual class, I would like the opportunity to talk with you also. Your principal has identified you as a teacher who works with some of these students. You may provide insights to them that they may not perceive for themselves, and see commonalities with them. Everything you tell me will be confidential, and data kept in a secure file in my home, to which only I have access. Neither yourself, students or school will be identified in the study. All the above students and their parents have given written permission for them to take part in the study.

You may withdraw your permission at any time, along with the data you have given me. The Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.

If you have a complaint about the way the research is being conducted, you may approach me, or the

The Chairperson

Ethical Clearance Committee

Christchurch College of Education

P O Box 31-065,

Christchurch

Phone 345 8390

Please sign the included permission form, and return to me in the envelope provided as soon as possible. If there is more than one teacher who is interested in being included, please return the forms together.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Maree Goldring

Appendix viii

Permission form from teachers

(   ) SCHOOL

I agree/do not agree to take part in the study of ex Samoan bilingual students at our school (   ). I have read and understood the information pertaining to the study.

If I agree:

I understand that what I say is confidential and neither my students nor I will be identified in any way in the study.

I understand that interviews will be conducted at a time and place to suit myself.

I understand that the students may be observed in the classroom.

I understand that what I say will be tape recorded, and I will be given a transcript to check for accuracy.

I understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time, but will undertake to inform Maree Goldring immediately if that is my decision.

Name: _____Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix ix

Fono and interview focus questions.

Fono

I"d love you to tell me about your time in the bilingual class. What do you remember?"

Tease out further questions from this main one, possibly trying by the end to sort out some strengths and weaknesses of the class.

I will probably leave any probing about anything that refers to them personally (Question 3) now until the smaller group/pairs/individual meetings, but flag them for the next meeting. Ensure they choose a name pseudonym for themselves.

Individual or small group interview - Reminders for me

<u>Baseline data/guiding questions :</u>

Do you know why you entered the bilingual class?

What did you think about that?

How old were you when you entered the class?

How long did you spend in the bilingual class?

How long ago did you leave it?

Which language did you feel most comfortable using when you entered the class – Samoan or English? Speaking? Reading? Writing?

Which did you feel most comfortable using when you left? Speaking? Reading? Writing?

Which language did you use mainly at home during this time? Why?

Has this changed at all since you left the bilingual class? Why?

Which of these words best describe how you remember feeling overall in the class? Think about the whole experience, not incidents.

happy	unhappy
secure	worried
calm	nervous
warm	bullied
excited	ashamed
challenged	insecure
proud	stupid
clever	dumb
loved	disliked
respected	inferior

Any others that you can think of?

Which of the above words come to mind when you think about it now after several years?

Tell me about the things you enjoyed about the class, the things that made it work for you.

- What did the teacher do that helped this?
- Other staff?
- Other children in your class?
- Other children in other classes?
- Your parents?

Tell me about the things that you felt were not so useful that happened.

- What did the teacher do that was not useful?
- Other staff?
- Other children in your class?
- Other children in other classes?
- Your parents?

What influence, if any, has that time in the bilingual class had on your current educational situation:

- Your achievement
- Your course choices
- Your attitude to learning?
- Your goals
- Your behaviour
- Your choice of friends.

If you had the choice at the Secondary level, would you choose to be in a bilingual class again? Why/not?

If you were advising a primary school on how to set up a new Samoan bilingual class, what would you tell them they must do to make it a success?

What things would you tell them that they must avoid doing?

Would this advice be different for a secondary class? How?

<u>**Appendix x**</u>

<u>**Questions for teachers**</u>

Could you make some comments about _____ under the following headings please?

Attitude to learning

Literacy and numeracy ability

Relationships with staff and other students

Strengths and weaknesses

Behaviour

Cultural identity

Any comparisons to other Samoan students you have taught/are teaching.