

**Faleolupe: Samoan parents and Aoga Amata teachers'
perceptions of literacy:
A case study in Auckland New Zealand**

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Oto'otoga: Abstract

Literacy is the foundation of all other learning in the child's life and must be well equipped in the early stages of life so that the future learning achieves better results. However, literacy challenge is a worldwide concern, including the *Samoan* children born in New Zealand. I focus on *Aoga Amata*, as their purpose is to nurture the language and culture of the *Samoan* child. The aim of this research is firstly, to examine parents and teachers' perceptions of literacy, and secondly to examine how educators enhance this in *Aoga Amata*, to improve the literacy of the children.

For this qualitative research, I utilised '*Talanoaga*' as a data collecting method which is a *Samoan* method used when they do research on *Samoan* people. The significance of '*Talanoaga*' in our culture underpins four main components such as *talanoaga mafana* (warmth), *talanoaga malie*, (social), *talanoaga alofa* (love), and *faakerisiano* (Christianity) which is a culturally rich method of gathering the data, and, each *talanoaga* with participants are integral to those components otherwise *talanoaga* will be nothing and meaningless.

The findings suggest literacy learning and language must be initiated first by parents at home in the mother tongue best known by the child. The focus question is, what literacy means to *Samoan* people. The outcome revealed that Literacy has signified the ability to read, write, speak, action taken, identify, communicate, and make meaning in the environment including cognitive, spiritual and physical components. However, the process of teaching literacy in the *Samoan* way was integral in a relationship, and that culture, language and spirituality are overarching to the learning and literacy of the *Samoan* child. The visual resources and actions taken divulged the significance for the *Samoan* child to learn better, as having visual resources has an impact on the learning progress.

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Dedication

O lenei su'esu'ega ou te aualofa ai i nai ou matua peleina O Aiiloilo Vaifale Sua ma si ou tina o Laufa Vaifale Aiiloilo Sua.



E ui ina ua fai i lagi le tuligâ si'a ae faafetai i la oulua galuega fitâ faamatua o le aoaoina o matou le fanau, sa fa'afaiilele ma aoao ina ia ola ma matatau i le Atua. Faafetai o lenei lava e solisolimulivae i ala lelei ma ala o le manuia na lua faatonu mai. Faafetai nai ou matua peleina. O lenei galuega o lea manatua ai pea oulua.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: *Tuluiga Aisico-Maka*

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Chapter 1: *Lupe o le Taea* – Introduction

I used the term Lupe o le taea to present my research introduction. Lupe means pigeon, and to catch the pigeon of the early morning is considered as a special accomplishment. In this study, it refers to teaching the child in his/her native literacy and language early in life and achieving well is a significant success that has an impact on future learning and achievement.

1.1 Introduction

The OECD Report (2013) indicates that the literacy levels of migrant communities are a challenge globally. School testing data suggests the literacy levels of Pacific children in New Zealand are similarly challenging. For example, in 2017 the Primary school reading recovery data shows a decline for Pacific boys of 24%, and for girls of 16%, in the past 5 years (Education Counts, 2018), and required more work to improve it. Given the increasing importance of education to social and economic participation (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2015a) these data have serious implications for Pacific people's quality of life and wellbeing today.

As a practitioner educator in *Aoga Amata*, I always appreciated the connections, bonding and nurturing of the infants, toddlers and young children in the *Samoan* language and cultural values. I believe when children's first language is nurtured well this contributes to their future learning success in general and also increases their capacity to learn other languages later in life. Throughout my career, my heart has ached when I see data highlighting declines in Pacific levels of literacy. This is a problem we cannot ignore. Furthermore, the primary school data showing low literacy levels for Pacific children (Education Counts, 2018; Esera, 2012), was puzzling to me – what was happening? For example, did Pacific parents not fully understand the importance of literacy, or that literacy in the home language was the foundation for future learning whether this was in English or *Samoan*? Were these statistics occurring because the Ministry of Education (MOE, 1996a, 2017) did not highlight literacy? Or perhaps due to the fact that Pacific and *Samoan* parents communities assumed their children would just pick up the language and culture – and so they were not systematic in teaching literacy?

A second group of questions related back to how was literacy being defined in the National tests and, how was this being measured? This led me to question whether there are differences between the *Samoa* and English definitions of literacy?

A brief review of the literature highlighted different definitions of literacy. Some of these focused on what is called content skills (e.g. the ability to read, write, and speak and

others) focused more on literacy as a process – of finding and dealing with knowledge around us. For example, the OECD (2013), defines literacy as the ability to listen well, write, read and speak and this is affirmed in a UNESCO (2003) report which describes “the three R’s as reading writing, and arithmetic’s and providing skills of decoding and encoding in the written language” (p.8). The Ministry of Education’s Kei Tua o Te Pae (1995, 1996b, 2004a) lists oral, visual, and written as critical for literacy learning development adding that a literate person should be able to communicate well and understand written information. Other researchers such as *Samoan* researcher Tanielu (2004) further draws attention to basic mathematics skills, while in the Tongan study by Brinkman and Thanh Vu (2016), literacy was defined as the acquisition of verbal skills, reading and writing and numeric concepts. Clearly, literacy is a multifaceted concept, defined in different ways according to the culture and values of the people who are doing the defining (UNESCO, 2003). That said I strongly agree with the UNESCO note (2003) that literacy is the key to all other learning in life. This line of thinking immediately led my thoughts back to the role of *Aoga Amata* and Early Childhood Education generally in teaching for literacy and for facilitating literacy skill building for children who might have literacy issues. For example, What strategies do Pacific parents use (or need) to support children’s literacy at home? And in turn, how are (or can) ECE educators build on and uplift the standard of the *Aoga Amata* children’s literacy achievements?

I strongly believe that teaching literacy is not just about reading and writing and speaking. For example, literacy is fostered and ignited when trusting relationships are built, when environments are stimulating and there are strong connections and an alignment between home and school cultural values and practice. Children will learn more, gain confidence and understanding in an environment, where they feel welcomed and accepted. Unfortunately, I am also concerned that in these rapidly changing times, global goals and methods have ignored these, and in doing so devalued Pacific cultural methods of learning.

1.2 Research Gap

A brief review of the literature indicated little mention of research on cultural literacy while the term is mentioned in the Te Whariki. In addition, there was less attention to what cultural literacy meant or how this could be achieved. However, the UNESCO (2006) report proposed a shift in global definitions of literacy from context specific terms and from an assumption that English speaking should be the focus of the learning process.

Drawn on the ongoing debate by “experts in philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, economics, sociology, this report defined literacy as an autonomous set of skills; as applied practiced and situated; as a learning process and literacy as text” (p. 148). It also emphasized the importance of maintaining and developing children’s oral skills in the mother tongue and that this can also help address the extinction of heritage languages today especially when technology and written text are favoured in education (UNESCO, 2006). This view is very important to this study of literacy generally because these UNESCO comments aligned very strongly with the *Aoga Amata* vision that their flagship is cultural literacy.

According to ERO (2013):

O la matou Aoga Amata e faataua le gagana Samoa ma aganuu aemaise le aoaoina o alo ma fanau i le olaga Kerisiano [fa’akerisiano] (p. 9).

In our *Aoga Amata* practice, we enrich the usage of the *Samoan* language, culture, values and our Christian beliefs in our daily programme and practice.

The *Aoga Amata* programme is promoted as total immersion in cultural literacy skills that enrich and stimulate the learning skills of the *Samoan* child for the first five years of life (Ete, 2013). Its focus is on both cultural security but also modern knowledge to cope confidently with the future life changes. The absence of research on cultural literacy in ECE settings today highlights the important need for this exploratory study. More specifically the importance of documenting the literacy skills a *Samoan* child brings into *Aoga Amata* and how *Aoga Amata* educators enhance or build on these literacies to promote and consolidate learning. A research assumption is that literacy gains are made when *Aoga Amata* educators and parents work together to promote teaching strategies which build on the knowledge and experience *Samoan* children bring to the *Aoga Amata*. My view is that literacy practice requires partnership between parents and teachers “like a bird needing two wings to fly” (Pacific Parents, in ERO, 2008b, as cited in Statistics New Zealand, 2008, p. 1). This research will disclose the most effective teaching strategies to support literacy development for the child before transitioning to Primary school.

At the heart of this study is an exploration of a *Samoan* concept of literacy and how this is understood and reinforced in learning - teaching interactions.

1.3 A Samoan Concept of Literacy

To this end, I will review the historical cultural values and background of literacy of the people of *Samoa* before the arrival of the missionaries and the contemporary view today. *Faalogo, tautala ma le vaai* oral, aural, and seeing are *Samoa* original literacy from the past (Mara, Foliaki, & Coxon, 1994; MOE, 1996c; Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tui Atua, 2004). As is well documented, in the *Samoa* pre-contact period before the introduction of written scripts, literacy was largely an oral language skill, one of - listening, understanding and the ability to make meaning through reading the signs, and symbols of the natural environment, such as the sun, moon, sky, sea, trees, and birds (Tui Atua, 2007). *Samoans* learnt to understand the meaning of things, signs, and symbols of the environment and used these to understand and predict events (Aiono, 2005; Lefale, 2010) as a guide in their daily chores for example by looking into the skies to ascertain the best planting or fishing time (Tui Atua, 2007). In the Bible, God has made birds and animals and each one of them plays a significant part in the environment and people, *Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano I Samoa - EFKS* (1909), “*ua usu mai e manu viiga e lelei*” (p. 292). For example, the bird (*manutagi*) signalled that rain is close by; when the branded rail or *Gallirallus philippensis* (*ve'a*), sang out or cried during the day or at night time that was usually a sign of someone dying in the village; or when the flowers (*fua*) of the *mosooi* appears it is an indication that certain seafood like sea eggs (*tuitui*) are ready to eat (*momoga*) (Genesis 1 vs 1-10; EFKS, 1909).

In sum, literacy for *Samoans* featured the interpretation of signs and meanings from the environment. Tui Atua, (2006) has proposed that literacy is the ability to converse, understand and make meaning of the environment that elicit emotional, social and cognitive thinking. Furthermore, that the "linguistic tools of the *Samoa* [such as] allusion, allegory, and metaphor [are the tools that] enable us to make meaning of our own surroundings and the environment to live in harmony, interconnected] and maintain the sacredness of the others" (p. 7). These meanings and symbols are central to the *faasamoa* social systems culture (*aganuu*) and language and embody the values and beliefs underpinning *Faasamoa* motivational systems (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 2001, as cited in Cahill, 2006). The *Samoa* term *aganuu* literally means the relationship in the ways people react and interact in daily chores in the village and this encompasses the language and the *faasamoa* beliefs, values, and customs (Apulu, 2010). Mulitalo-Lauta (2000), explains *Samoa* culture as “the total makes up of the *Samoa* person” (p. 15, as

cited in Tamasese, Parson, Sullivan & Waldegrave, 2010, p. 28) the “totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, art, belief, institutions and all other products of human work and thought” (Tuisuga–le-taua, 2009, p. 122).

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the *Samoan* literacy skills children bring to the *Aoga Amata* and how does/can the educator build on these to empower the literacy skills of a *Samoan* child?
2. How do teachers define “literacy” and how do they teach for this?
3. How do parents define “literacy” and how do they teach for this in the home?

For this study of literacy, the defining term is based on the data as mentioned above. From the *Samoan* perspective; it is the ability to converse, understand and make meaning of the environment that elicit emotional, social and cognitive thinking as well as the linguistic tools of the *Samoan*, such as allusion, allegory, and metaphor enable us to make meaning and connection to the environment. My concern is that *Samoan* children are not being equipped with the basic literacy skills at a young age, and by this, I mean the cultural protocol and methodologies utilized by the people of *Samoa* are not being integrated into literacy learning in ECE in New Zealand.

For this exploratory study the qualitative approach of *Talanoaga* will be used because I would like to listen to the views, to people’s stories (Kesi, 2014; Kolone-Collins, 2010; Wilson, 2017). *Talanoaga* encourages participants to share their views openly in a trusted environment. *Talanoaga* is a *Samoan* cultural approach in which *talanoaga mafana* (warmth, understanding, thoughtful) is achieved. *Talanoaga* will be carried out with teachers and parents whose children attend *Aoga Amata*. *Aoga Amata* is a total immersion *Samoan* Early Childhood Education, that focuses on nurturing cultural language and literacy skills *tu ma aga faaaloalo* of the *Samoan* children.

South Auckland is the study site and often referred to as the "Polynesian capital of the world" (Bedford, 1994; Wilson, 2017). Education Counts (2018) estimates that 74% of *Samoan* children learning the *Samoan* language in the Auckland area. A total of 5583 out of 6881 and the majority of the families live in South Auckland areas, such as Otara, Mangere, Otahuhu, Papatoetoe, Papakura and Manurewa (NZ Statistics, 2014).

This research study is based on a study I have been involved in which aligns with our current reflective practice and internal evaluation analysis at *Aoga Amata*. Parents were asked; '*Aisea ua e filifili ai e aumai lou alo i le Aoga Amata?*' Why have you chosen to bring your child to *Aoga Amata*? The majority of the responses were that the parents wanted their children to learn, speak and understand the *Samoan* language, culture, values and most importantly to learn *tu ma aga faaaloalo* (respect).

1.5. My standpoint

As a teacher for over 30 years in *Samoan* and in New Zealand. I have always been concerned that *Samoan* children must have a solid grounding in basic cultural literacy skills which will set the foundation for them to succeed in future learning. My concern is that *Samoan* children are not being equipped with the basic literacy skills at a young age, and by this, I mean the cultural protocol and methodologies utilized by the people of *Samoan* are not being integrated into literacy learning in ECE in New Zealand.

As well reported, literacy is the foundation of all learning (Alexander-Pouono, 2010), whether in *Samoan* or the English language (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017) in line with the UNESCO study (2006). I see literacy as a thinking, cognitive and making meaning process – which can be applied and is evidenced across many fields of study.

1.5.1 Cultural Literacy and Identity

Cultural literacy is central to identity, and security which to my knowledge is an endurance. Cultural identity, and education, in literacy learning are integral in values, identity, beliefs, knowledge and skills the child brings to *Aoga Amata* and school (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2015). Nurturing the identity of the *Samoan* child (Tapusoa, Podmore, Tuafuti, Taouma & Crichton, 2005) through fostering a warm and trusting relationship, feelings of togetherness and belonging to the child's feeling where "I can be me" (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2014, p. 888). This is inclusive of all other cultural values such as *alofa* (love), *faaaloalo* (respect), *tautua* (serve) (Podmore & Samu-Wendt, 2006), *galulue faatasi* (working together), language and identity are overarching in the spiritual practice of the *Samoan* people.

1.5.2 Study rationale and significance

The research intention underpinning in this study accommodates educators, parents and the children both at home and in *Aoga Amata* with teaching strategies that develop

knowledge and understanding of how to cultivate learning. This study can contribute to the vast population and communities especially the *Samoan* children who are growing up in this country, how to enrich literacy learning both at home and in *Aoga Amata*. Preschool children will benefit from this research study, in terms of emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual skills through motivation and effective relationships that contribute to literacy achievement.

Educators have incorporated effective strategies to excel language and literacy achievement of the children in *Aoga Amata* in preparation for the transition to Primary school. Home literacy practice will be encouraged and continuously cultivate strategies and methods that inspire literacy attainment. Most importantly educators and parents need to engage in an effective relationship through collaboration and sharing in children's development that strengthens the desire to invigorate literacy programmes both at home and in the *Aoga Amata*.

This research will contribute to discovering/uncovering teaching strategies that are effective to support young children in *Aoga Amata* and Primary schools. Pacific especially *Samoan* children are pretentious, and this research will gain a significant amount of teaching methods that support the Pacific and the *Samoan* children in New Zealand who are at risk. The findings will also support the continuation and maintaining of our heritage and cultural methods of teaching literacy at home because it provides a sense of belonging, an identity of the *Samoan* child when home strategies amalgamate into learning. Finally, the findings demonstrate teaching strategies that are effective to utilize not only at home, *Aoga Amata* but also at Primary school to support Pacific and other ethnicities because it is a global problem and this research may support all in need.

1.5.3 New Zealand

Research studies have been undertaken in New Zealand for Pacific literacy in Primary and Secondary Schools (Falconer, 2017; Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afu'i, Taleni & O' Regan, 2009; Nunes, 2007; Tunmer, Chapman, Greaney, Prochnow, & Arrow, 2013). Research studies were undertaken previously on *Aoga Amata* and ECE transition to Primary Schools (Sauvao, Podmore, Mapa & Tereora, 2000; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017). These researchers outlined parents and teachers play a significant role in literacy gain in young children in early years before transitioning to Primary School. This is because gaining basic literacy skills builds a solid foundation for future learning.

The NZ Statistics, (2014) in Table 1, shows the participation of *Samoan* children and other Pacific children in immersion services in New Zealand. The latest NZ Census was done in 2018, but data was embargoed at the time of this study until it is officially released.

Table 1: Participation in Pacific medium education (immersion or bilingual services)

Language of teaching	Level of Pacific medium education			Total enrolments	Total ECE services
	Under 12 percent (81–100 percent)	(12–80 percent)			
Cook Islands					
Māori	1,271	427	25	1,723	45
Fijian	1,067	34	-	1,101	23
Niuean	687	123	59	869	20
Samoan	11,217	1,386	1,166	13,769	304
Tokelauan	441	145	22	608	15
Tongan	2,806	161	557	3,524	74
Other Pacific	224	-	-	224	7
Total Pacific	17,713	2,276	1,829	21,818	488

1.5.4 Global

The report from OECD (2013), highlights literacy challenges is not only in the United Kingdom it is worldwide, which contested the seriousness of the level of literacy that many are illiterate. The report states there are two main critical factors literacy achievement is imperative, that is a link to social economics stability and the need to maintain individual security and wellbeing. This is the reason why literacy gain is critical to every individual being. A global study from a diverse background emphasised that educators, teachers, and parents must include all cultural backgrounds in the learning of literacy adding new patterns based on multicultural and communities involved (Au, 2006). Yet there has been no research on the literacy a child brings from home and how educators in *Aoga Amata* build on that, to enhance literacy in young children.

1.6 Study risks

Being a *faletua* (church minister's wife) may have an impact on the people's contribution in this research. Participants may feel uncomfortable, when unable to say the formal *fa'atuaao faasamoa* (welcome) when approaching the minister's wife in the *Samoan* way. For this, the participant may feel insignificant, disheartened, as a result. What is essential was to find a way to manage conflicts of interest so that participants may take part in ethical research (William-Jones, Potvin, Mathieu, & Smith, 2013).

The main risk is my role as a *faletua* and my previous exposure and experience in working with children and their families. Being a *faletua* and work in the *Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa* (EFKS) church also exposes me as being bias. I bring predetermined assumptions and beliefs as a result of my work in the church and community roles.

As an Early Childhood educator for nearly a decade, I have tested my own ideas and focused on teaching strategies to improve literacy practice and learning, especially in the *Aoga Amata* for the last five years. In doing so this may have affected the outcome of this research study based on my experience and knowledge gained in practice and may have taken lightly the contribution generated from the participants.

1.7 Organisation of thesis

In this thesis I designated the name "*Faleolupe*" to be the titled of my research. The so-called name mirrored the history of the *lupe a Malietoa*; which escaped from the carer (*Muliaga Soifuaga*) in the village of *Lano Savaii*. The bird was found by Tiaua and Aiiloilo members of my family in the village of *Asaga*. Aiiloilo then built a house at Pu'apu'a, my home place especially to care, nurture and feed the pigeon, and Tiaua built a fence to protect the bird from dangerous species and humans. Latter on, Muliaga Soifuaga searched for the pigeon and only found when he heard the pigeon's sound *ōlo* (*tagi*) in a place where it was cared, loved and well looked after. He was so relieved as the pigeon was properly cared, and overseen well, which symbolizes a Samoan saying "*Ua tuulima le lupe a Malietoa*". The name *Faleolupe* was adopted from then on as the *Lotofale o le pule a Sealiimalietoa* (name title of the *aiga potopoto*) in the village of Pu'apu'a and our family (*aiga*). The supposed named characterizes; as to evolve language and literacy, culture and values, identity and the history; as well as caring, loving, feeding and nurturing the child's wellbeing to become healthy in body, mind and the spirit which correspond with the focus of my research study.

This thesis is arranged in six chapters containing this introduction which has set the overall background to this study. Chapter One: Section One - The introduction. "*Lupe o le taeao*". Section Two - the research gap; Section Three - *Samoan* concept of literacy. Section Four – Research Questions. Section Five my standpoint; culture literacy and identity; study rationale and significance; New Zealand, Global; Section Six study risks. Section Seven - organisation of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review- reviews the literature '*Ua fetuutuunai muniao*' which has four sections, which are: Section One – what is literacy; Section two literacy practice in the Pacific, Section three, post contact and precontact *Samoan* and the fourth section, literacy in New Zealand.

Chapter Three: Research design and methods '*Ua faailo lupe i le foaga*'. This chapter is divided into three sections of the research approach; the research methods and some reflections.

Chapter four: Research Findings '*Ua saa faaoti le utu a le faimea*'. This chapter presents findings from my *talanoaga* with parents and teachers. It is organised in two parts following the research questions.

Chapter five: Discussion '*O le lupe na faia mai le fuifui*'. In this chapter, I will discuss my findings in two parts. Part one the results of the parents and the findings from the teachers drawing on similarities and differences in the use of literacies. Part Two I will refer to the literature, the national and international definition of literacy.

To conclude with Chapter six '*Ua sili mea le seuga*' summary chapter: this includes the What literacy means for the *Samoan* people; The four domains of literacy; The absence of literacy definition in Te Whariki; The absence of the *Samoan* child identity in the ECE Curriculum; The conceptualisation of *talanoaga*; The significance of time; The significance of asking questions; Visual resources; Recommendations; Limitations of the study; Final Remarks.

Chapter 2: *Ua fetuutuuna'i muniao* - Literature review

This quote means to readjust the net, so they have a good catch for the day.

2.1 Introduction

The Literature Review is presented in four sections. The first section is, what literacy means and how it is outlined and defined worldwide as in the OECD, the Ministry of Education and the Curriculum of Early Childhood Education. The second section is Literacy in the Pacific. The third section is Precontact *Samoa* before the missionaries arrived, literacy acquisition of oral, speaking, respect and kindness and how literacy is obtained through it. Then, Post contact *Samoa*, and the literacy practices that entail the focus of this study. The fourth section is Literacy in New Zealand.

Most of the literature on literacy refers to the English language. However, I have found a few writings that support my study. Dickie (2010) constructed knowledge of literacy from reading a passage from the Bible and memory verses (*tauloto*), and a survey focused on some *Samoa*n children. Dickie, (2003) argues that literacy is a culture-free skill, as no rules are accompanying it and there reading, and writing was emphasised in the school. In Dickie's (2011) study literacy is a cultural practice or out of school practice requiring teachers to make connections between home and school practice as Thaman (2002) called it "a way of life of a people" (p. 22) in this study of *Samoa*n people.

2.2 Literacy

Literacy is a complex topic, which is defined in many different ways according to the cultural values and knowledge of the people involved and what they believed in (Campbell, 1990; Hamer, 2005; Keefe & Copeland, 2012; Perry, 2012). In general, literacy is distinctive as the ability to read and write (Oxford University Press, 2018; Parlakian, 2003). The Oxford University Press (2018) further explains that literacy is the ability to read and write one's own name in the first language and persist rationally. The views of other studies that enlightened literacy included: listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, visual, and critical literacies (Clay, 1982; Falconer, 2017; Keefe & Copeland, 2011; Martello, 2007; McLachlan, Carval, de Lautor, & Kumar, 2006; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Others view there is no one way of defining literacy because it is a different perspective to different cultures (Campbell, 1990; Keefe & Copeland, 2012; OECD, 2013) as literacy changes when the community changes. Keefe and Copeland,

(2012) further stressed that the definition of literacy used by education providers, policymakers and all those involved in education must include everyone and those with special needs and more so that education is available for everyone.

2.2.1 Global

UNESCO (2006), further argues that literacy skills of oral language are very important as well as the intellectual ability of knowing how to read and write. UNESCO also outlines the most important literacy skills of reading and writing as reasoning skills; whereas (MOE, 2009b) the inclusion of cognitive skills such as asking questions leads to literacy gain. UNESCO's (2006) report incorporates literacy with everyday interactions; such as a rich environment that articulates richness in cultural values and literacy focus results in literacy that develops extensively. Although UNESCO (2006) suggests that to be literate is vital having a wide-ranging educational route but referring to Dewey, and Piaget, the constructivist educators must focus on children's learning, especially when the child is engaged and to make meaning through learning experiences. UNESCO further reiterates that to change the term literacy will always have a controversial opinion as all nations have different views on critical literacy. UNESCO (2006), also reaffirms literacy as a phenomenon topic that includes cultural values and identity of people from their cultural perspectives.

The OECD (2013), report highlighted that literacy challenge is a worldwide topic which contested the seriousness of the level of literacy that many are illiterate around the globe. The report states there are two main critical factors. The first one is literacy achievement is linked to social economics stability which leads to maintaining individual security and wellbeing, and secondly is the reason why literacy gain is critical to every individual.

2.2.2 Ministry of Education

According to the MOE (2010-2015), the New Zealand Curriculum provides the framework for what students need to be literate. It is specifying that children must accomplish abilities such as "read, write, listen, think creatively, use and understand mathematics effectively" (p. 14). These are fundamental basic skills that provide essential roots to achieve all other subjects and a pathway to an important qualification. The MOE (1995) classify aspects of oral language through seeing, "listening and responding to other ideas; visual when preparing, developing and interpreting ideas; written when preparing briefs; interpreting and presenting proposal and evaluations" (p.20).

However, the MOE's (2012) publications defined "literacy is the ability to understand, respond to, and use those forms of language required by society and valued by individuals and communities" (p. 1). Also the MOE, (2009a, 2009b), provides an outline to support educators in teaching literacy in an early childhood setting. The defining terms of literacy as an integral of oral, visual and written practices. The importance of visual practices when a child reads, he/she acquires awareness, which is vital in reading and literacy practice. The MOE (2009a, 2009b) firmly emphasize children acquiring oral sound awareness and understanding builds the foundation of future success in reading and writing. However, the MOE (2009a, 2009b) have a sound and logical explanation of how literacy gains and should merge the version of literacy attainment into the curriculum of Early Childhood Education (MOE, 2017). Furthermore, adding more effective teaching strategies including cultural values, customs and identity of the child, to invigorate his/her interest in literacy development and support with literacy deficiency.

The Education Review Office (2013) recommends meaningful literacy practice when teachers deliver a wide range of three R's exercises that allow the learners to detect, pay attention and play with words and sounds, and use their reading ability for an aim and ask questions. The ERO (2011) support the philosophical view that early literacy is a social practice that develops through social interactions but not through formal education as the thought was that formal education was not very useful. However, Hervey (2013), believes what is happening in the classroom is essential. The events, environment, teacher-child interaction, and the wide range of potential information support literacy learning and most importantly, what the teacher generates to improve children's education and results (Allington, 2002; Hattie, 2009, as cited in Hervey, 2013). Hervey (2013) states that literacy teaching can only be defined as successful when it affects children's education positively.

2.2.3 Te Whariki Early Childhood Curriculum

In the *Samoan* translation (MOE, 1966c) of an early childhood curriculum, it emphasised that literacy is oral, listening, reading and writing. It is essential for acquiring oral and speaking language first before introducing reading and writing (Cronogue, 1985; MOE, 1996b, 2010; Parlakian, 2003). These verbal skills occur through collaboration and various learning strategies educators implement every day (Parlakian, 2003). These include reading, singing action songs, rhymes, counting, performing and dancing, painting and drawing, storytelling and many more.

The New Zealand Curriculum for Early Childhood (MOE, 1996a, 2017) does not explicitly regulate how to define literacy in the document and have not much support for educators (McLachlan, Arrow, & Watson, 2013a). ERO (2000) recommended to the MOE that written guidelines for literacy teaching in early childhood must be developed. Hence, it is open to educators to explore teaching methods to teach literacy and integrate into programmes (McLachlan et al., 2013a). The adverse side effects are that educators may provide learning according to their views, initiating methods based on their beliefs and not considering the child's total interest (ERO, 2013; Macartney, 2011; Ward, 2016), and what is appropriate learning for different age groups for literacy drive. The educators require a logical approach to ensure literacy learning and development in conjunction with the child's interest and age group level, to make learning more effective and fundamental.

In Te Whāriki (MOE, 2017), the closest to literacy is the Communication strand four (McLachlan, et al., 2013a) which is defined as "children develop non-verbal and verbal communication skills and they experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures, they discover different ways to be creative and expressive" (p. 42). This is the fundamental explanation of the strand, where the child's learning should shape with cultural expectations in the Centre. The concern is if the educator does not understand the child's cultural background and identity, what he/she brings into the centre, then the educator would not be able to connect to cultural literacy in the child's learning especially when some centres have different values such as mainstream (Ward, 2016). Furthermore, the Communication strand does not discuss the "multiliteracies, bilingualism, and biliteracy" (Mc Lachlan et al., 2013a, p.15). The Communication strand refers to pathways we contemplate and connect with one another, build an effective environment where children make a logical approach, have a purpose to converse, and the responsibility for children in the first years to build competency in speaking. Hedges (2003) expresses that some teachers at Early Childhood Education are unsure whether literacy focus is part of their roles. Researchers signify educators must not doubt themselves in teaching literacy in all levels as literacy is seen in all context of learning (ERO, 2013; Perry, 2012; Siilata, 2014). ERO (2013) further classify that important practice provides opportunities to enhance literacy and numeracy, enabling the child to use and play with language, and ask important questions.

The strand continues as the linguistic and signs of children as individuals, and others promoted and protected (MOE, 2017). However, the most significant cultural values of

the *Samoan* child, the spiritual has yet to be embedded in the curriculum (Ward, 2016), which is the central component in the *Samoan* child's learning of all ages and without it the teaching is ineffective.

The Strands and goals as Strand One, "Well-being as Mana Atua"; has four goals. The well-being and happiness of the child is safeguarded and fostered (p. 25), "Strand Two, Belonging Mana Whenua", young children and their parents' emotions nurtured and secured which also has four goals (p. 31). Strand Three, "Contribution Mana Tangata"; chances for education to equalise, and each young child's involvement is respected and acknowledged (p. 36), also has four goals. Strand Four, Communication Mana Reo as mentioned above, and Strand five, Exploration Mana Aotūroa, the young children gain through a vigorous search of their surroundings and has four goals.

The difference between the old and the new documents such as Strands and principles of the early report remain the same in the new version except goals and learning outcomes are now down to four each. Colleagues and teachers thought it is manageable and easy to understand the guidelines provided in the new document. It also generates a glossary list for Maori and Pacific words used in the document (MOE, 2017).

The four principles remain the same such as:

1. Empowerment of Whakamana as the curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow.
2. Holistic development or Kotahitanga as it reflects the comprehensive way children learn and grow.
3. Family and Community or whanau Tangata; the wider world of family and community is an integral part of early childhood curriculum.
4. Relationship or Nga Hononga; Children learn through a responsive and reciprocal relationship with people, places, and things (MOE, 2017, pp. 18-21).

The curriculum is a bilingual document as Maori names are used in each goal, strands, and principles in which all ethnicities should be inclusive (Te One, 2013; Ward, 2016). The document is prolific in information that is pertinent to all children's learning in this country. The challenge though is for educators to transcribe, translate each strand and principle to align with their teaching structure and culture (Galuvao, 2016; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Ward, 2016). It is, therefore, developing critical reflections, and meaningful application of each strand to coincide with the ability and capability of the child to make meaning more appropriate according to his/her perception.

On the other hand, preschool children have different levels of development and growth as others attend *Aoga Amata* when six months old or even weeks old. In addition, some may come to the *Aoga Amata* well equipped with basic skills of literacy already embedded in

them from home (Toso, 2013), and the objective is to empower and improve these skills in the *Aoga Amata*. The MOE (2009) emphasised that children, bring in their cultural experiences, language/s, identity and customs with them. Therefore, we must embrace the qualities a child brings from home, in learning. So far, we talk more about it, rather than taking actions implementing a plan. There is a common saying actions speak louder than words.

2.2.4 Literacy and Pacific people

The word Pacific or Pasifika is a name that characterised Pacific Islands in New Zealand as they are not equal (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau 2001; Thaman, 2002) and must acknowledge a unique national status from each country. These include *Samoa*, Tonga, Fiji, Tokelau, Niue, Cook Islands even though these islands (Kesi, 2014; Leaupepe & Sauni, 2014; MOE, 2012; Siilata, 2014) have different perspectives, cultures, languages, leadership, spirituality, reciprocal relationships, respect, families and values.

Education is critical to Pacific people and the main reason for their migration to New Zealand (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1984; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Ward, 2016). Pacific parents and families want their children to be a success in school (Siilata, 2014; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Wilson, 2017); and maintain their cultural identity (Siilata, 2014), and dream children have access to high-quality education that can be provided in this country (Mara, 2005). The success in school will also provide avenues for a better job and live a better life (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Wilson, 2017). It also suggested that a pathway to future success in education is the parents' involvement in teaching basic literacy home strategies, which are familiar to the child (MOE, 2003). According to Hanushek and Woessmann (2009), it is a guaranteed factor for success in children's literacy and schooling achievement.

Pacific culture, language, and knowledge are a logical part of the child's learning, and education. Fletcher et al., (2009) recommended these need to be blended in as part of the children's schooling. This view was supported by Alton-Lee (2003); Fletcher, et al., (2010); Taleni, Parkhill, Fa'afoi and Fletcher (2007), that cultural values are identified as a contributing factor to the Pacific learners' success in education (Falconer, 2017).

Pacific researchers urge to merge teaching literacy strategies at the centres and schools to be interwoven with language, culture, identity and values of the Pacific children (Dickie, 2008, 2010; Falconer, 2017; Fletcher, et al., 2006; Fletcher, et al., 2008; Siilata, 2014; Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tuafuti, 2000). The child's learning is meaningful, when

knowledge is inter-related and connection is made to the home culture, language and identity (Dickie, 2008; Fletcher et al., 2009; Siilata, 2014; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Tagoilelagi, McNaughton, McDonald & Farry, 2005). The vast majority of studies affirm that children learn better and are effective when their indigenous language is amalgamated in their learning (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2015a; Fletcher et al., 2009; Siilata, 2014; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Tanielu, 2004) as language is the root of learning (Siilata, 2014). The child feels connected to the environment, and everything he/she engages is profound, and being aware that his/her needs and wants are met (Spiller, 2013). The child constructs knowledge when participating in authentic play activities relating to family and cultural stories and experiences that are eloquent (Cullen, 2002). Children who are already literate from their heritage language will be able to transfer it into learning other languages (Siilata, 2014).

There are factors involved that contribute to limiting success in literacy attainment for Pacific children. Elley (2000), expressed some critical issues affecting Pacific children in the classroom, such as safety in the environment from intense and overcrowdedness, cultural identity, and self-awareness (Fletcher et al., 2006). Researchers from the Pacific consider literacy reading and writing as an area of concern for minority ethnic groups (Fletcher et al., 2008). Effective strategies for reading and writing are required to uplift the standards of Pacific children in the multi-cultural societies and the entire world (Dickie, 2008; Fletcher et al., 2008).

Spiller (2013), argued that building positive relationships (Spiller, 2013) is the most critical strategy if Pacific children's learning needs is to improve. The educator must understand what is required to support education by engaging in a warm and caring relationship to derive a positive outcome in learning for Pacific children (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2015b; Spiller, 2013). Siilata (2014), expresses understanding the child's background is requiring educators to engage in a reciprocal relationship with the child and become sincerely involved in the child's learning when educators experience the child's everyday life. The children easily sense the environment is safe (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2015a) or a poor relationship between teacher-child results in poor performance in the classroom (Spiller, 2013).

Dickie (2010), addresses Pacific children are not always achieving literacy well and looking at out of school literacy practice for the *Samoans* compared to school literacy. Siilata (2014) argued that effective teachers employ prior knowledge to consolidate with

new expertise in teaching and always reflect for improvement. Teachers understand students initiate interest in learning that each takes individual and numerous paths in acquiring literacy and development (Hervey, 2013). Besides, educators guide children in the classroom interactions like encouraging, asking questions and providing feedback (Siilata, 2014), extend further and risk-taking (Hervey, 2013; Siilata, 2014).

Other researchers argue that Pacific children learn a lot more and have better achievement if taught by Pacific educators (Mauigoa, 2014; Robinson & Timperley, 2004; Spiller, 2013) although the Ministry of Education does not support this view. Others (Pasikale, 1996; Spiller, 2013; Utumapu-McBride, Esera, Toia, Tone-Schuster, & So'oaemalelagi, 2008); demonstrate awareness that Pacific Island students respond positively to teachers who respect their values and care for them, as a sense of belonging is the key to their success.

2.3 Pre-contact Literacy *Fa'a-Samoa*

Samoa has two literacy pathways, firstly with pre-contact literacy *Fa'a-Samoa* that is mainly oral, aural, seeing things, understanding of symbols and signs, and making meaning through daily interactions, and connection with the natural environment. Secondly is Post-contact literacy *Fa'a-Palagi*, the influence of the missionaries, who first came to *Samoa* in 1830, the London Missionaries Society (LMS) which will be discussed in detail in the following paragraph.

Literacy of the *Samoan* people in 1800 is the ability to converse, understand and make meaning of the environment that produces emotional, social and cognitive thinking (Tui Atua, 2006). The literacy skills were oral, aural, and seeing things or *tautala, fa'alogoma le vaai*. There were no written documents (Dickie, 2010) as Tui Atua (2004) describes as an "oral culture" for several reasons (p.1). However, the richness of the *Samoan* language phrases, clauses or idioms and proverbs derived from nature, the sea, and the sky, as well as other traditional rituals that represent family, village, and the nation (Kolone-Collins, 2010; Tui Atua, 2003, 2004, 2006).

2.3.1 Language

The existence of the *Samoan* language in New Zealand depends on today's generation. Current research reaffirmed the continuation of the heritage language depends entirely on the usage of the *Samoan* language at homes (Utumapu, 1998; Wilson, 2017). The identity of a person is often explained by the cultural and language entails (Tamasese, Peteru,

Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005). Tamasese et al., (2005) further reiterates the identity holds crucial sense of perceptions of native language and culture of an individual.

The identity of the *Samoan* child synthesises with cultural values and language (Tui Atua, 2008), as he/she carries the genealogy of his/her whole family, the reason why the child is not alone. He/she is a part of the community and learning language, and cultural values from the early stages of life is critical as Tui Atua, (2003) states:

I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies. I am not an individual, because I share a “tofi” (an inheritance) with my family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my sense of belonging (p. 51).

Language acquisition occurs during child/adult interactions and relationships (Vygotsky, as cited in Falconer, 2017). According to Duranti and Ochs (1986), the child is expected to speak the *Samoan* language clearly as early as ‘three and half to four-year-old’ and expected to speak verbally long messages to folks on other occasions (p. 221). Parlakian (2003) affirms early literacy development begins at the first “three years of life as children learn to talk, read and write” (p.1) through social interactions with others and with literacy resources including books and the environment.

Helping our young children at home reiterate normality strategies and methods we utilised in the eighteenth centuries and onwards and continuously implementing contemporary literacy learning at home and in *Aoga Amata*. Tui Atua (2005a) discussed the conventional systems for teaching the native language like *Samoans* gradually switched by new knowledge for understanding, and we should view cautiously what we require before we discharge it. Solofa-Viliamu (2018) reaffirms “*E fafaga tama a Samoa i upu o le gagana Samoa, ae fafaga fanau a le Ekalesia i upu a le Atua – Keriso*” the *Samoan* children are fed with words of the *Samoan* language, but the children of the church are fed with the word of God-Jesus Christ (p. 7).

Aiono Fanaafi signifies the *Samoan* language and culture yield the source of wisdom, uniqueness, pride, and reflect on the *Samoan* language. As states:

O la ta gagana o le fale o oloa taua; o le punavai magalo; o le lagi tuasefulu o lo o i ai le fa’atufugaga ma le atoa li’o o le tofamanino’ (p. 8).

Our language is a house of treasured goods; the source of pure water; the ten-heaven of creation with pure wisdom (as cited in Kolone-Collins, 2010, p. 22).

2.3.2 Oral language is important

Oral culture and language are part of the indigenous history tools (Tui Atua, 2005a, 2005b). Nunes emphasised that histories and knowledge of *Samoa* people have been passed down by words of mouth (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009) from generation to generation and the oral practice in the village by *matai* chiefs is highly valued so is the implementing of *matai* skills. Oral language in *Samoa* is vibrant as communication, social gatherings (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009) as well as the *matai* role in the family, is routinely engaged in oral collaboration (Nune, 2007). The effects on the oral tradition of *Samoa* symbolise much of the nature of *Samoa* traditions and customs (Nunes, 2007). Milner also supported the wisdom and knowledge of the past generations be kept, and preserved, to enrich traditional values for future generations (as cited in Aiono, 2005).

Orators' speeches and proverbs generated from the sea, forest, sun and the moon, the weather, were often connected with daily events and lifestyle of everyday life and spirit (Tui Atua, 2005a). Dickie (2010) cited oral language is valued when both memorisation and performance is integral as part of literacy. For example, *Samoa* proverbs such as speeches engender from nature "*Ua Mata Lupe le seuga" o lona uiga ua mamalu ma matagofie le aso*; which means it is a very formal setting and a beautiful day (T. Iona, personal communication, 15 September 2017). Siilata (2014), stressed, oral language and literacy are connected and linked.

The orator plays a significant role in the families including the use of the language such as in the village council, family affairs and many more (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2005). Others thought orators are intelligent in oral language (Meleisea, 1987; Solofa-Viliamu, 2018; Vili & Autagavaia, 2013), because they keep every information in their heads. They learned off by heart or memorize in sequence each important part of the entire speech or *lauga* (Meleisea, 1987). Vili and Autagavaia, (2013) further recapped "*ua le malie mata e vaai i se failauga e tulai mai o se matai o se failauga e poto ma atamai*" (p. 66), eyes cannot be satisfied to visualise an orator speaking eloquently. *Samoa* people "relied entirely on oral literacy and practical method to educate generations of children for over 3000 years ago" (Tanielu, 2004, p. 94).

2.3.3 Family role and culture-Gagana Faaaloalo-Respectful language

The role of *Samoa* families is phenomenon in terms of being the core of the *fa'asamoa* and its role in the *Samoa* society and culture. *Samoa* families lay down the foundation of the *fa'asamoa*, implementing *tu ma aganuu faaaloalo* that guide children's interactions

in daily life (Ochs, 1988; Tagoilelagi, 1995). Ochs (1988) reiterates “this knowledge is the core of social competence in a *Samoa* community. While understanding of social structures is a lifelong process, the beginnings of this understanding emerge early in the lives of *Samoa*n children” (p. 71).

In the framework of the *faasamoa*, *fā'aaloalo* (means respectful), and *tu ma aga faaaloalo, amio lelei* (Wilson, 2017), *ma tausaaafia*, decent behaviour and good manners. *Gagana faaaloalo* (respectful language) is used through every interaction but mostly used to show respect to adults. At home, respectful language is used when communication takes place amongst elders such as grandparents, uncle and aunties, visitors, or even parents (Kolone-Collins 2010). The nurturing of the *Samoa*n children includes teaching how to show respect to their elders (Kolone-Collins, 2010). For example; when *Samoa*n child(ren) call or invite their parents or adults to a meal (*mea'ai*) in the home, the respectful approach should be *Tamā, Tinā susu mai or maliu mai or better still, talaaao mai, e fai le mea tatau ai, or fai lau mea tausami/taumafa* (Duranti & Ochs, 1986), hence children need to watch and listen. It is vital for a *Samoa*n child to understand the basic *tu ma aga faaaloalo Samoa*n way (Esera, 2015; Kolone-Collins 2010; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Wilson, 2017). The performance of these behaviours reflects children who are well taught. These entail how-to walk-in in front of people, how to talk (Esera, 2012; Wilson, 2017), and some believe that blessings from the parents and elders matters (Simanu-Klutz, 2001). Children learn from the actions and doing such as listening to their elders, seeing, imitating and performing. *Samoa*n children learn better and feel right when they understand the activities they do and consider their usefulness (Simanu-Klutz 2001). Maugatai (2018) resonates, use it, and live it for the betterment of others. The author further reiterates *o le agaga (poo le gagana) e atamai ai e tautala, ae sili ai ona atamai e ola ai*; the language must be used wisely or with intelligence but most importantly to live by. Simanu-Klutz (2001) recaps that doing, and actions are critical, as knowledge embedded through cultural performance is entertaining and full of life. Children do not fully understand until they see, touch, feel, implement and discuss (Maugatai, 2018; Simanu-Klutz, 2001). The role of parents at home is fundamental for success in literacy and schooling achievement (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2009; Utumapu, 1998). Literacy learning at home is a valuable contribution (Gronski & Fraser, 2006) to the child's knowledge when parents facilitate children at home utilising various teaching strategies including cultural resources that enhance and support their learning

Wilson (2017) emphasises the parents' impression on children hearing the words and language they speak, one day the children speak the *Samoan* language without much effort to prioritise the use of language at home, hence language does not automatically occur. It is significant that parents insist speaking the mother tongue at home; as consistency is essential for language development (Fillmore, 1991; Utumapu, 1998). Utumapu (1998) emphasised that most parents who prioritised their children's learning and education, this enabled their children to become successful.

2.3.4 How traditional *Samoan* cultural ceremonies are performed

2.3.4.1 Storytelling – *Fagogo*

Fagogo serves, oral traditions, and legends of *Samoa* (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009). These fairy tale stories narrated at night by grandparents to soothe young children to sleep (Alexander-Pouono, 2010), especially with the chanting or *tagi le fagogo* (Kolone-Collins, 2010; Tui Atua, 2008). Spending quality time with young children in *fagogo* sessions is significant. This is the time for “nurturing, sharing stories, values, rituals, beliefs, practices and language” (Tui Atua, 2008, p. 73). It also generates valuable and precious time together, in a meaningful relationship and there is nothing that can change *fagogo* (Tui Atua, 2008).

The child's learning occurs through listening, speaking, thinking critically and collaboratively, asking questions and singing along together with the storyteller. *Fagogo* is a core element in nurturing young children's lives (Tui Atua, 2008) socially, emotionally and spiritually. It helps sustain *Samoan* cultural rituals and history of *fagogo* (Tui Atua, 2008). *Fagogo* serves a purpose of thinking and understanding and yield language attainment (Kolone-Collins, 2010). *Fagogo* has its own historical stories to tell and retell from the past generation in a sense of retelling to their children in future generations (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009). It serves and reveals the true meaning of the story but to entertain and develop language effectively (Kolone-Collins, 2010; Tui Atua, 2008). Unfortunately, *fagogo* gradually becomes a tradition of the past as technology in today's generation has taken over the essence of *fagogo* since children are watching electronic devices at all the time.

2.3.4.2 *Matai's house and Ava Ceremony*

Through oral tradition children learn from everyday interactions at home, at the *matai's* meeting house, or the women's meeting house and all other important functions held in the village such as *saofa'i*, (ceremony to bestow a matai title) wedding, opening of a new church, and the like. Children learn through seeing, hearing, implementing, speaking and taking actions. For example, an untitled *aumaga* generates experiences at *matai's* house by serving (*tautū or folafola ava*) (Tui Atua, 2008). The knowledge underpinning in the sacred *ava* ceremony is paramount including the orators' language (*gagana faafailauga*) implementation of the traditional ceremony, seeing, hearing, how the *aumaga* (untitled man) perform the *ava* ceremony and the spoken words used such as *solo 'ava* or the *folafola ava* (to proclaim the cava ceremony) (Tui Atua, 2008) as one day his turn will come. The *ava* ceremony is sacred and must be performed with dignity (Tui Atua, 2008). The most important part is doing the action *tautua* at the *matai's* house.

Tui Atua (2008) synthesise the *Ava* ceremony is a ritual that portrays the present and the history of the *Samoan* people. *Ava* is “sharing of sacred drink, the sharing with the mythological Gods who gifted the ‘*ava* to the mortals, the sharing of *alofa*, *ava* stands for continuity” (Tui Atua, 2008, p. 75). It can only touch or feel, if there is emotion (sacred) that resonates the sharing of traditions, legacy, customs and principles, if not then the result of the ceremony is meaningless (Tui Atua, 2008). During the ritual practice, the learner needs to feel and learn it by heart the importance of the *ava* ceremony and be enthusiastically active, willing to learn and understand it (Tui Atua, 2008). While the *ava* ceremony in progress, the *tapu* that everyone must be aware of is that no one is to cross or enter the house until it is formally concluded. Only the *aumaga* who distributes and serves the *ava* is permitted to do so (Tui Atua, 2008).

2.3.5 Post-contact literacy *Fa'apalagi*

The missionaries arrived in 1830 and document the *Samoan* alphabet for the people of *Samoa* to learn to read and write (Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tanielu, 2004). Literacy skills and learning since then was reading, writing, speech and mathematics (Tanielu, 2004). However, the *Samoan* way or the process of teaching literacy was through building social skills such as *faaaloalo* (respect), *fetausia'i* (reciprocity) (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009); *va fealoaloa'i* (mutual respect) (Vailaau, 2005); relationship with the child and others, *agalelei* or *agaalofa* (kind, or generous) (Kallen, 1982); relationships, culture, values and language (*gagana tautala lelei*), and spirituality is the core of learning (Wilson, 2017).

The oral language shifts of the *Samoan* perceptions into written learning and literacy are driven in the *Aoga a le faifeau* (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1986), engaging learning to write, since then the *Aoga a le faifeau* (McNaughton, 1995; Tanielu, 2004; Tui Atua, 2004), was established so that children of all ages participate in learning how to read and write.

2.3.5.1 Literacy learning at the *Faifeau*'s house:

2.3.5.2 *Lotu* - Spiritual practice

Children are the absolute paramount part of the *Lotu* in any services, especially on Sunday. They must attend Sunday school (Dickie, 2010) as an essential venue for literacy learning. Children also attend the *autalavou* (youth programme) and most importantly their participation in the *Lotu Tamaiti* (White Sunday) (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 1995; Tanielu, 2004; Toso, 2013; Vili & Autagavaia, 2013). *Lotu Tamaiti* is an exceptional service for the children which is held on the 2nd Sunday of October every year (Tanielu, 2004; Toso, 2013; Vili & Autagavaia, 2013). The whole service is performed and conducted by the children. Each child plays a part in this sacred service. Singing and action songs activate the soul and mind of the child when both go together (Kolone-Collins, 2010). Whereas for Tui Atua (2005a), he argues that songs and dance are oral traditions which are fundamental for self-development. At church, Sunday school, and *Lotu Tamaiti* proceedings, children's performance ranges from singing songs and hymns, reciting memory verses from the Bible, acting out a Biblical play, praying, performing evangelism or *faaevagelia* actions and others (Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tanielu, 2004; Toso, 2013). All spiritual performance undertaken in oral language, is when children must come out of their comfort zone, their live experiences performed within their home environment (Toso, 2013), with a strong sense of courage and confidence. Foremost language and literacy are gained explicitly as each child engages in various performances during the service (Vili & Autagavaia, 2013).

Spiritual practice is the centre of lives and beliefs of the *Samoan* people as Maugatai (2018), explained “*O le tofi poo le faasinomaga o le tagata Kerisiano o lona Atua, o lana Tapuaiga, ma lona Talitonuga, o la tatou Ekalesia EFKS*” (p. 2) the identity of the Christian is his/her God, religion, beliefs and the *EFKS* church. Spirituality practice is the duty of the *Samoan* people to fulfil and abide by (Tui Atua, 1989, 2005b; Wilson, 2017). Failure to follow by principles and requirements in the services often becomes a guilty conscious of neglecting the duty of thanksgiving prayer (Tui Atua, 2005b; Wilson, 2017). The aim of spiritual nurturing was to guide them in religious practice, respond to their

emotional needs their competency to deliberate and communicate and to initiate their decision making for themselves (Toso, 2013), and therefore to become a better person in all areas of life. A significant proportion of *Samoa* families do attend churches in New Zealand. This is evident in the 2013 NZ Census; it states that there were 83.4 percent of *Samoa*ns who affiliate to at least one religion. These consist of Catholic (22.8 percent); Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed (17.1 percent) and Christian not further defined (11.4 percent) (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.).

2.3.5.3 Reading

Reading to the children from a very young age can have an impact on their learning (Alexander-Pouono, 2010). The author further emphasised learning to read in the mother tongue has a positive effect on the child's intellectual skills (Alexander-Pouono, 2010). *Aoga a le faifeau* focused on reading, writing, and mathematics (Tanielu, 2004) as well as the learning of the cultural values *tu ma aga faaaloalo*. The pre-schoolers' class was called *Faitau Pi*. The *Samoa*n alphabet or *Pi Tautau* (refer to Figure 3) includes 14 letters plus three additional letters from the English alphabet (Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tanielu, 2004) which was published by the *Malua* Printing Press in 1862 (MOE, 1996c). At the age of 3-4 children are exposed to reading the *Samoa*n alphabet (Duranti & Ochs, 1986; Tanielu, 2004). The children are expected to recite the letters of the alphabet and the picture corresponding with the letter hoping they will read aloud (Duranti & Ochs, 1986; Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tanielu, 2004). Although some of the letters such as H, K, R belongs to the English alphabet, and some of the pictures were not found in *Samoa*. For example, *E elefane*, *I ipu* looks like a Chinese cup, *o ofu* the dress was not representing the *Samoa*n culture and custom, *U uati* again *Samoa* did not have clock in those days (Duranti & Ochs, 1986). All the pictures related to the western countries were used to illustrate the letters of the *Samoa*n alphabet and there was no picture that represented the traditional *Samoa*n culture (Duranti & Ochs, 1986).

The reading sessions in those days was held six nights a week in some villages including Sunday night, (Duranti & Ochs (1986) children attended *Aoga a le faifeau* in the afternoon and reading session during the evening prayer (*faigalotu*) at night. Saturday was the only day off for the children. The children engaged in comprehension reading, where they read a passage, and then the teacher asked questions to ensure the child understood what was studied (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 1995; Tanielu, 2004), whereas Duranti and Ochs (1986) maintained that the session concentrate on oral literacy and interpretation of the Bible passage. Other reading materials such as Bible stories, religious books, and hymn books

were discussed in groups, a similar practice to school (Dickie, 2010). Through reading children talk and often relate to their family life experience and school practice (Dickie, 2010; Toso 2013). Literacy achievement does not develop automatically or was self-taught (Wilson 2017). Its significance lies in its relation to the performance of ethics, self-control and shared morals (Duranti & Ochs, 1986) like the value of the Samoan culture, the relationships with others through daily interactions. It required perseverance and persistence to continuously learn and practice consistency, which produces result in reading (Alexander-Pouono, 2010). Reading and writing was part of the cognitive skills (MOE, 2009). Therefore learning new words further improved children's reading skills which helped them to understand better (Stanovich, 2009). Children "who are not too far behind will progress well but the ones who are significantly behind in reading will stay that way" (Nicholson, & Dymock, 2011, p. 28).

2.3.5.4 Writing

Vili and Autagavaia (2013), '*o le aoga a le Faifeau na aoao ai lau tusitusi ma lau faitau*'; I was taught to read and write at the *Aoga a le Faifeau* (p. 65). The five-year-olds were expected to write the Aa –Rr which is the *Samoan* alphabet and were required to write numbers one to ten, before reading the *Pi Faitau* with the teacher (Tanielu, 2004). Writing is part of cognitive skills (Deane, 2011), although writing at this stage is optional, it is the child's choice if he/she likes to participate while waiting for his/her turn. Usually, children write and scribble anything they want to write because it is not inclusive in the *Faitau Pi* syllabus at this stage. Two to four-year-olds read aloud together with the teacher if required, as other children recognized and were able to read at this stage, others were to familiarise with the letters, sound and the pictures of the *Samoan* alphabet chart *Pi Tautau* (Dickie, 2008; Tanielu, 2004). Although Parlakian (2003) stresses that formal instruction focuses on young children who are "not developmentally ready to read is counter-productive and potentially damaging to children" (p.1). However, studies propose that up to four and a half to six-year-old children should be ready to learn, but some teachers wait until the child's oral language skills were developed before introducing reading and writing (Statistic New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010). This could have a slow impact on the child's literacy development (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010). There is little data to support that the child will ever catch up if reading and writing has been hindered (Clipson-Boyles, 2000).

2.3.5.5 Asking Questions

At the Pastor's School, teaching and learning are based on describing and asking questions to ensure the child clearly understood what was explained in the previous session (Duranti & Ochs, 1986; Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tanielu, 2004). According to Duranti and Ochs (1986), children gaining literacy abilities were developing competency in these learning practices. Children also learned to answer questions from the Bible, could provide a further critical explanation (Tanielu, 2004). Asking questions could foster children's interest in a discussion (Tagoilelagi-Leota 1995). Critical literacy approaches was evident through children asking questions and debating using their understanding and foster literacy development (Alexandre-Pouono, 2010) through mutual collaboration. It aligns with the set of questions asked particularly with the *Mataupu Silisili* (Book of Theology Studies) at the *Aoga a le Faifeau's* school (Vili & Autagavaia, 2013). Asking questions takes the child's thinking to the next level of imagination (Mauigoa-Tekene, 2006), such as visualization, assumptions, reflections, cognitive stimulation, and simultaneously language occurrence. Asking questions support literacy and language occurrence during the discussion.

On the other hand, asking open-ended question leads to many answers as there is no right or wrong answer (Denton, 2007; McNaughton & Williams, 2009). It is usually finding out how people think of the current situation and answer based on the question/s asked (McNaughton & Williams, 2009). According to Denton (2007), asking open-ended questions creates opportunities for learning produces challenges and how to achieve it. It also aids children to become conscious of their skills, supporting others in the schoolroom to produce explanation for resolution to a problem (Denton, 2007), which in turn generates language and literacy gain. Fortunately, questions can be asked to clarify what you already know or to find out what you did not know beforehand.

2.3.6. Resources utilize for teaching

In the homes of most *Samoan* people, the Bible and other religious materials such as hymn book, *Tala Tusi Paia*, are the common reading materials available and are often used to teach children how to read and write (Vili & Autagavaia, 2013). The authors emphasised *Pi Tautau*, (refer to Figure 3), *o le Tusi Pi Muamua a Tamaiti*, (refer Figure 1 & 2) and *Tusi Oti* some of the reading materials used for teaching in the past and are still maintained and utilised as a valuable literacy resources in today's generation (Vili & Autagavaia,

2013). They stressed further that only chalk, board, and sticks were used as there were barely had any books and pencils in those days (Vili & Autagavaia, 2013). However, we were excellent in reading and writing almost 100% of the *Samoan* population were able to read and write because of the work of churches especially the London Missionary Society, Catholic, and Methodist churches, these were the three big churches who arrived first in Samoa (Vili & Autagavaia, 2013).

2.3.7 Culture

Culture means *aganuu* in the *fa'asamoa*. *Aganuu* is formed from two words; *aga*, and *nuu* (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009). *Aga* means the way people do things informally, socially interact (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001), in daily life, how they react in common, their beliefs, values, language, and customs. *Nu'u* means village where people live (Apulu, 2010). To determine the meaning of culture (*aganuu*) means the way people react and interact, in daily chores in the village encompasses the language, beliefs, identity, values, and customs (Apulu, 2010). Mulitalo-Lauta (2000), explains *Samoan* culture is the full structure of the *Samoan* life (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009) and the total of collectively sent out including conduct guides, talent, faith, traditions and customs and all other commodities of people's employment and philosophy. We treasure culture (*tu ma aganuu fa'asamoa*) and the learning (Utumapu, 1998). Maugatai (2018) synthesis "*o le tofi o le tagata Samoa o lona lauelelele, o lana aganuu ma lana agaifanua, o lana gagana*" (p.2). The identity of the *Samoan* person is his land, culture custom and language.

Cultural identity and social security of a *Samoan* person especially for an orator (*matai*) in New Zealand as proposed some find challenging adapting to life in Aotearoa (Seiuli, 2016). Such acknowledgement of respect (*fa'aaloalo*) the core of identity is how to interact with one another especially in a family gathering, with elders, church and other family functions that involve *Samoan* people (Seiuli, 2016). The space (*va fealoaloa'i*) always needs to be maintained and taken care of, the relationship between young and old, *matai* and family members elderly *Samoans* and the extended family members (Seiuli, 2016).

Culture identity, the concept of holistic development encompasses with the aspect of life such as emotional, social, and spiritual (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2015a). Cultural security, identity – the foundation for all other learning taken account of culturally secure learning places is the home where the child feels safe and secure (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Coxon, 2015). Purkey (1967) also suggests and endorses on this when the children "feel good

about themselves and have confidence in their abilities (they are) most likely to succeed” (p. 15).

2.3.8. Culture identity resources used in teaching literacy:

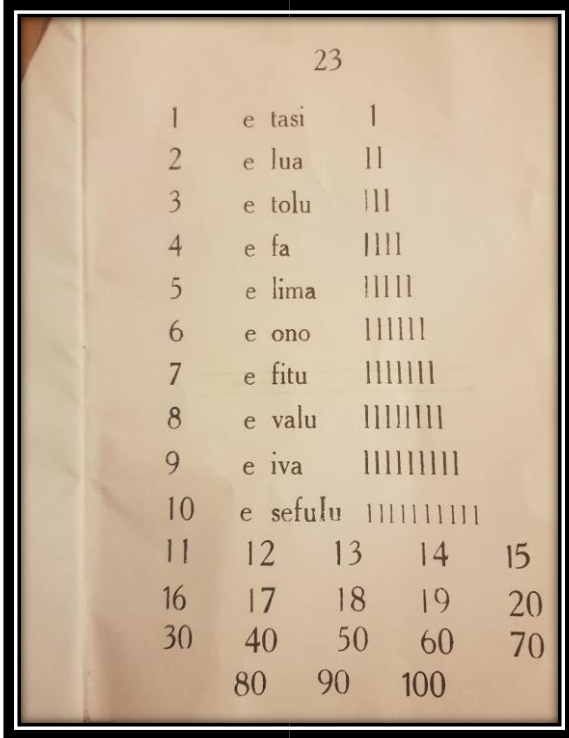


Figure 1: *O le Tusi Pi Muamua a Tamaiti*

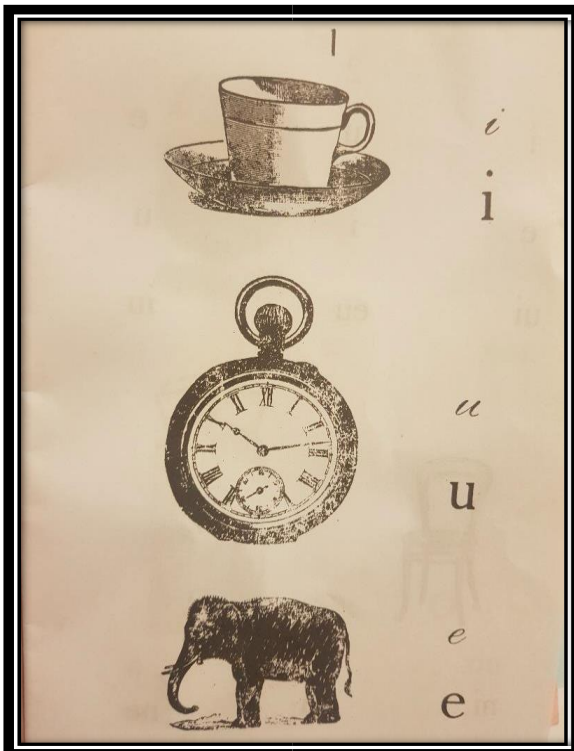


Figure 2: *O le Tusi Pi Muamua a tamaiti*

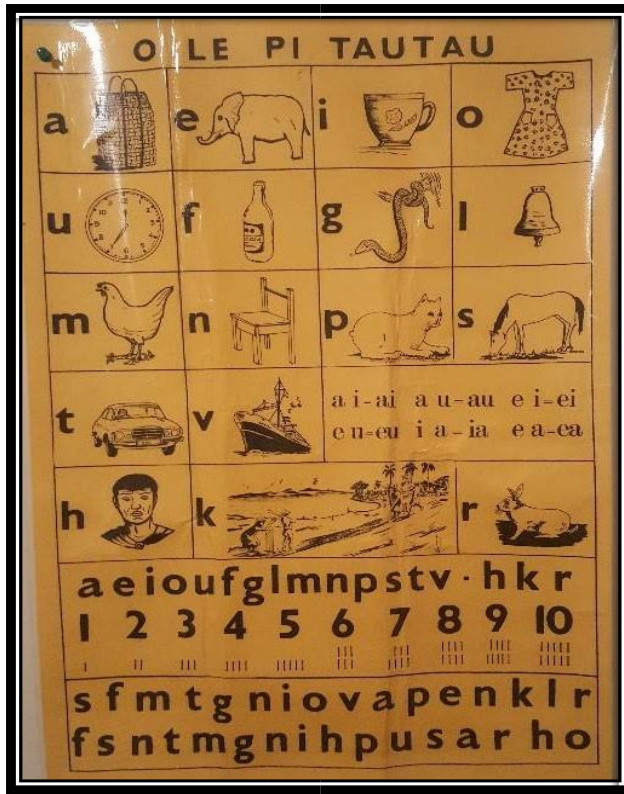


Figure 3: *O le Pi Tautau*

2.4 Literacy in New Zealand

There has been an increase of research study undertaken in New Zealand for Pacific literacy in Primary and Secondary schools (Dickie, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2011). Research studies were undertaken previously on *Aoga Amata* and ECE transition to Primary schools (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Taouma, Tapusoa & Podmore, 2013).

Ward (2016) stated that parents and teachers have a significant role played in contributing to teaching (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Utumapu, 1998) strategies that are most effective to improve literacy achievement in young children in early years before they transit to Primary school. This is because early literacy learning were allied with literacy accomplishment in the future education (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006). It is because gaining basic literacy skills builds a solid foundation for future learning. This research will fill the gap by providing practical teaching strategies and skills to support children in the early years of education. Dickie (2010, 2011) expresses the need to be aware of the home literacy the child brings and values. Wenger (2006) called “the community of practice” (as cited in Dickie, 2011, p. 248), as regular church attendance are the critical aspects of the social and cultural identity of the *Samoan* people (Dickie, 2010).

2.4.1 *Aoga Amata*

Ete (2013) in her statement explains “*Ua toto e le Atua le fatu Samoa i Aotearoa*” (God has planted a *Samoa* seed in New Zealand) (p. 47), to nurture the holistic development of the *Samoa* child in Aotearoa) to prepare the child for the future ahead not only in spiritual but emotional, social and cognitive skills.

The history of *Aoga Amata* according to Ete (2013) ‘*O le fatu na toto i Samoa*’ in *Malua Theological College* (p. 38). In 1975, she established the first *A’oga Amata* at *EFKS* Wellington, New Zealand and in 1986 *Porirua Aoga Amata* was founded and *Aoga Amata* gradually grew in every city around New Zealand.

Aoga Amata means the beginning of formal school, and a transcend from what *EFKS* called the preschool class as *Vasega Amata*, into formal education for preschool children called *Aoga Amata* (Tanielu, 2004). The concept behind the word *Aoga Amata* is derived due to the influence of pastors’ wives and *EFKS* churches in *Aoga Amata* all around New Zealand (Tanielu, 2004).

Aoga Amata is a total immersion *Samoa* centre that focused on nurturing language and culture (Tuafuti, 2000), the *Samoa* way of life, *tu ma aga faaaloalo* (Apulu, 2010) in the children’s lives (Tagoilelagi, 1995). Mara (2005) signifies the effectiveness of *Aoga Amata* based on the efficacy of educators who have the ability and the drive to access quality professional development at the centre’s level and above. Professional development needs to be prioritised by educators individually as well as (Mara, 2005) professional development for management. It is imperative to bring up-to-date knowledge and skills of all involved in teaching, understanding about contemporary research that generates utmost strategies and approach to support educators and colleagues’ practice in the centre (Mara, 2005). As a strong link to professional development often result in reflections and change of practice concurrently (Barnardo’s Early Learning Centre, as cited in MOE, 2011).

Children are at the core of teaching (Siilata, 2014) foremost in *Aoga Amata* settings as children engage in the cultural practice, that is interwoven in the child’s learning as language identity, beliefs and customs are all encompassed in the child’s learning. Spirituality plays a significant part in *Aoga Amata* (Ete, 2013) practice that brings joy and delight, nurturing the soul-making inner being connections with oneself, others and the environment (Tui Atua, 2009a, 2009b).

Aoga Amata in New Zealand needs to align its practice utilise cultural incentives and commitments, merge in *Samoan* traditional practices including *tu ma aga faaaloalo*, (Tagoilelagi-Leota 2017) celebrations, traditional foods and so on, so children can explore various principles and traditional methodologies, designs and strategies for learning. Most importantly spiritual practice is part of the child's life (Ete, 2013; Leavasa-Tautolo, 2013; Tagoilelagi, 2013; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Tanielu, 2004; Toso, 2013; Vili & Autagavaia 2013).

2.4.2 The role of educators in the literacy learning in *Aoga Amata*

Teachers' work should come from the heart (Tagoilelagi-Leota, Kesi, Tagoilelagi, Penn, & Autagavaia, 2011). Also, to build a warm, caring and loving relationship with the children, as teaching from the heart strives to bring out the very best practice, knowledge and skills as well as *mafana* and *malie* (Manu'atu, 2004), nurturing children's social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing (Ete, 2013; Tanielu, 2004). The teachers must create a learning structure environment rich in resources to promote children's learning and participation, as they either guide the child to emerge naturally or through common practice such as scaffolding (Claiborne & Drewery, 2010). It is crucial that teachers accommodate children's needs, introducing opportunities, and guide the learning of the child to choose and initiate own means of education and play (MOE, 2017). "To teach well teachers must ensure creativity and innovation are in place. It dances with surprise, it pursues wonder, it finds joy at every turn" (Biermeier, 2015, p. 4). Furthermore, to build a trusting relationship with the child (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017) together with a stable home language background as it affects the child's social, wellbeing and intellectual development (Wilson, 2017).

A genuine educator knows about literacy gain, understands the values of literacy, aims for high-level of achievement and encourages risk-taking and uses variable series of teaching methods (Hervey, 2013). Teachers support the children's literacy skills by implementing fun and stimulating activities not so much of getting into how to read but needs to engage "children how to love to read" (MacLean, 2008, p. 9). This includes reading books, telling and retelling stories, with a stable home language base (Sauni & Toso, 2009; Tagoilelagi-Leota et al., 2005), asking questions are some of the quality teaching strategies required for children's learning (Mauigoa-Tekene, 2006) that invigorate cognitive skills. Other learning include drawing, playing games, musical instruments, exploring identifying, puzzles, animals and birds, family and, Cooking Block, science, music and most importantly the outdoor physical environment (MOE,

1996a, 2017). Schickedanz (1999) assured that attractive and colourful pictures will motivate and engage the child more efficiently. This enables the educators to cater for the infants' and toddlers' needs and desires precisely.

The children sense how the educator approaches them. Feeney, Christensen, and Moraveik, (1991) and Spiller (2013), states the ways that you communicate, solve problems, and relate to others form a powerful model for how children and others behave. Children especially toddlers imitate and follow what adults do, which means a demonstration of a new skill or objects educators can yield support to flourish or sustain their work (McNaughton & Williams, 2009). The authors further signify demonstrations support learning following questions while the child engages in meaningful learning (McNaughton & Williams, 2009). The child's emotional, social, intellectual skills and well-being depend on the caregiver to guide and encourage him/her to become increasingly capable and direct one's learning (MOE, 2017).

It is significant for the child to self-explore his/her learning and to give ample time to sight see and make sense of his/her exploration (MOE, 2017). Other children sometimes use the silent language or gestures to respond or react through communication with others (MOE, 1996a, 2017). The child often feels connected to the environment when family influences in learning (Dickie, 2008; MacLean, 2008; MOE, 2017). These profound abilities empower the child's self-determination and self-esteem, therefore developing his/her interests, creating ideas, and making meaning of things (MOE, 2017).

2.4.3 Relationship social skills

The *Samoan* child often expects to speak the language and learn to understand (Pereira, 2006) how to perform daily tasks at home through social interaction. It is expected that children imitate, perform, help out, and through ongoing collaboration and communication, results in the child speaking comprehensibly (Duranti & Ochs, 1986). The connections between child-parents' relationship need to be built with love (Tui Atua, 2004, 2006) and trust, so that the child feels secure in his/her space of learning (McLachlan & Arrow, 2011). A trusting relationship is extremely important for the child to believe that his/her environment is safe and secure for better learning (MOE, 2017). The child-adult or child-teacher relationship is paramount (MOE, 2017) because the outcome of the bond falls on how these two domains practice and relate to one another. Relationship determines a place of the *Samoan* being in society and various tasks and positions (Kolone-Collins, 2010; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998; Wendt, 1995). As shown

by the *Samoan* saying, *O au o matua fanau* meaning the “pinnacle of parent’s affection is their children” (Tui Atua, 2006, p. 9).

Teachers are at the heart of building relationships with the child at school (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2009). According to the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2009) when the child feels secure, he/she tends to feel excited and looks forward to learning, attains self-esteem, and self-confidence (Utumapu-McBride, et al., 2008), and therefore he/she achieves better at school. The connection is integral in the four main principles of the curriculum (MOE, 2017) and should be the main priority of an educator. According to Glynn (2013) educators not only focus on building a relationship with the children (as cited in Pereira, 2006) but also maintain professional development to revitalise their own professional practice (Cullen, as cited in McLachlan et al., 2013a; Mara, 2005;).

According to Spiller (2013) a "teacher needs to like the children and believe in their ability to succeed" (p. 62) as often teachers’ misunderstanding in the child's capability affects his/her learning. It is imperative for teachers to understand the child's background, culture, language, and identity and should consider and be familiar with the home and cultural practices of a child in both literacy and language (Dickie, 2010, 2011; MOE, 2017). Lacking in these paramount skills may detract children’s interest in the subject (Spiller, 2013; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017). According to Dickie (2008, 2011) literacy is integral in social practice with the children’s interactions with others at school, and at home, it could be involvement in the same cultural activities and community practices.

2.4.4 Play

This is a complete makeup for the child’s (Slunjski & Lyubetic, 2013) joy and love to play that not only yield language and literacy gain (Kesi, 2014) but also energise the body, mind and social skills through interactions with others and the environment. Leaupepe (2011) regarded play as a natural way of learning in the environment, understanding their abilities and the world around them. The MOE (2017) articulates play is a crucial aspect in children’s developmental stages and the progress of their physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. The MOE (2017) adds that play is essential to the holistic growth of the child. Children play to make sense of their world, and they engage in meaningful play activity, exercise and develop their theories in the natural world (MOE, 1996a, 2017). Apparently, all caregivers, parents, teachers and family members must learn to understand

that play ignites children's cognitive thinking skills, and therefore builds their relationship with others (MOE, 1996a, 2017).

Educators play an essential part to ensure children explore both indoor and outdoor environments so that children accomplish their needs and be exposed to research, finding out what they want to find out and become an explorer in their world (MOE, 2017). While the child explores and engages in play activities, literacy and language skills (Hamer & Adams, 2003). Most importantly when the children initiate their own play activities, literacy and language develops as both learning abilities develop together (McLachlan, & Arrow, 2014; Slunjksi & Lyubetic, 2013), therefore attaining intellectual skills (MOE, 2017). Although Leaupepe, (2010) assumed play is a waste of time, as others believed play is still problematic for various reasons including cultural values, beliefs and perceptions (Paleai-Foroti, 2013).

Pretend play is also fundamental when children choose their own characters. This links to cognitive skills, language and literacy skills when children performs, imitate actions, dressing in costumes or props and other materials relating to the unique character of interest (Rowell, 2010) to express themselves. It is a reminder to all people involved that play has an impact on children's learning (Paleai-Foroti, 2013) and must be treated as fundamental teaching strategies for all learning skills especially language and literacy gain (McLachlan & Arrow, 2014; Slunjksi & Lyubetic, 2013).

2.4.5 Transition to Primary school

It is vital to prepare the child well ahead before the transition takes place for a smooth shift from *Aoga Amata* to primary school (Chu, Glasgow, Rimoni, Hodis & Meyer, 2013; McKenzie 2013; Meyer, 2016; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Sauvao, 1999; Siilata, 2014) building curriculum and connection links between both sectors (Utumapu, 2013). Transition to school is challenging as it takes time for the child to settle in (ERO, 2015). The success of the changeover process is achieved when everyone involved work together including parents, teachers, family members, schools, and the children in the Primary school who speak the same language as the child, and fluent in programmes at Primary school (Sauvao, 1999; Sauvao et al., 2000). The most crucial aspect of transitions is for the child to move effortlessly in the new environment, feel a sense of belonging, and build relationships with other children, teachers, and parents (Dobbin, 2013; ERO 2015). Thus, shifts need to be pleasant, and ensure the environment supports the learning process (Dobbin, 2013).

However, transitions between ECE and Primary school are potentially stressful for young children if educators in both settings do not take responsibility for facilitating a smooth transition (Temperley, McNaughton, Howie, & Robinson 2003). The researchers revealed the reason for not achieving a satisfaction transition is the collaboration and arrangement between ECE and school-based counterparts and relationships in terms of frequency contact (Temperley, et al., 2003). Both sectors need to create to achieve a satisfactory change between two settings for them to acknowledge and recognise the abilities and knowledge of the children involved in the transition (Temperley, et al., 2003).

2.6 Chapter Summary

Samoan children are entitled to understand the history of *Samoa* and how literacy was derived and taught in the 18th century (Tanielu, 2004). Concurrently the focus in the future was on what teaching strategies that contemporary research disclosed to improve future learning and literacy accomplishment for the *Samoans* and all children involved. This can be discovered by comparing the past, present and the future for improvement.

It is understood that there is no specific term for literacy as it is determined, by different cultures, ethnicities and methods inclusively. However, the overall process of learning in the *faasamoa* syntheses involves relationships, culture, language, and spirituality. It is characterised at the core of literacy learning in the *Samoan* homes, *Aoga a le Faifeau*, Sunday School and *Aoga Amata*. One most critical aspect is taking acting or demonstrations of the skill, describing, and asking questions as *Samoan* children learn better when they demonstrate, see role play, and questioning as more effective (McNaughton & Williams, 2009).

The notion perceived that parents' role at home is the key to enrich literacy as home is the foundation of the child's learning (Utumapu, 1998). The support of the church is also immense and critical as the literacy practices, and learning the language is underpinned at the core of their teaching that supports children's learning at all age groups. Children attending *Aoga Aso Sa* and Pastors' Schools benefit from these learning services. Educators on the other hand at *Aoga Amata* also play a significant role in nurturing the child's, social, emotional, cognitive, physical, spiritual development and teaching must come from the heart. These are the core of the child's learning and development if educators provide these at *Aoga Amata*. Vygotsky's philosophy for children's development can only evolve when interactions with teachers and caregivers take place in learning (Claiborne & Drewery, 2010).

It takes the whole village to look after the child, *o le vaaia ma le tausaiaina o fanau e vaaia e le nu'u atoa* and that is what is needed by the young *Samoans* and other children in the world to achieve literacy learning more successfully in the future. For this chapter *Ua fetuutuuna'i muniao; ia a'oa'o le tama e tusa ma ona ala a oo ina matua e le toe tea ese ai lava. A'oa'o i tu ma aga fa'asamoa, o lana gagana ma lana aganuu ao iti lava o le faavae lena o lona olaga atoa*. Teach the child well when he grows; he will not depart from it. Teach in the Samoan way, *tu ma aga fa'aaloalo, gagana ma lana aganuu*, the foundation of his/her entire life.

Chapter 3: “*Ua faailo lupe i le foaga*” -

Research design and methods

Ua faailo lupe i le foaga means ‘to indicate something’ the research methodology of Talanoaga from the Samoan perspective.

3.1 Introduction

To answer my research questions:

1. How do teachers define “literacy and how do they teach for it?
2. What are the teaching learning activities that are provided at home to enhance literacy learning of a *Samoan* child?
3. Are educators and parents utilising different strategies and styles that they believe are most effective in learning literacy in the *Aoga Amata* and in their homes?

This chapter is divided into three sections of the research design; the research method and some reflections.

3.2 Research approach: Qualitative research

For this study, I have chosen a qualitative method and I will apply this through a *Samoan* lens and the use of *talanoaga*. This was to gather participants’ thoughts, views, and experiences (Maxwell, 2008; Patton, 2015; Sutton & Austin, 2015; Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa, & Varpio, 2015) about what literacy a child brings from home and how educators enhance in the *Aoga Amata*. As well, report the intensity of the qualitative method will deliver an in-depth validity of the phenomenon of literacy experience. In the past, many studies on literacy gain have focused on statistics and data, which show and analyse current and past results (Wilson, 2017). Qualitative research focuses on people, as individuals, and members of the groups, community, and organisation. Furthermore, qualitative research enables the researcher to explore why events happen, people’s behaviours and attitudes regarding the facts, and what they mean to them. Teherani et al., (2015), states:

Qualitative research starts from fundamentally different set beliefs-or paradigms- than those that underpin quantitative research. Quantitative research is based on positivist beliefs that there is a singular reality that can be discovered with the appropriate experiment method (p. 1).

As a researcher, a qualitative approach in the *Samoan* worldview looking at the perspective of what is vital to the *Samoan* people and values underpinning literacy practice. Also, a design method that may produce findings that facilitate children with challenging literacy now and in the future.

3.2.1 The Pacific worldview

To explore and understand factors which influence the development of literacy in the homes of the *Samoan* children, it was to understand these through the application of a *Samoan* or a Pacific worldview (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2018). This Pacific worldview is illustrated in Figure 4. As well report that Pacific people see themselves, connected to the creator God/ spiritual, (*O le Atua foafoa*) who creates people, family and social system (*tagata lautele, aiga, fa'alapotopotoga ma le atunuu*); and also, the natural environment and resources (*natura ma le siosiomaga*) (Fairbairn- Dunlop, 2014, 2018; Tui Atua, 2007).

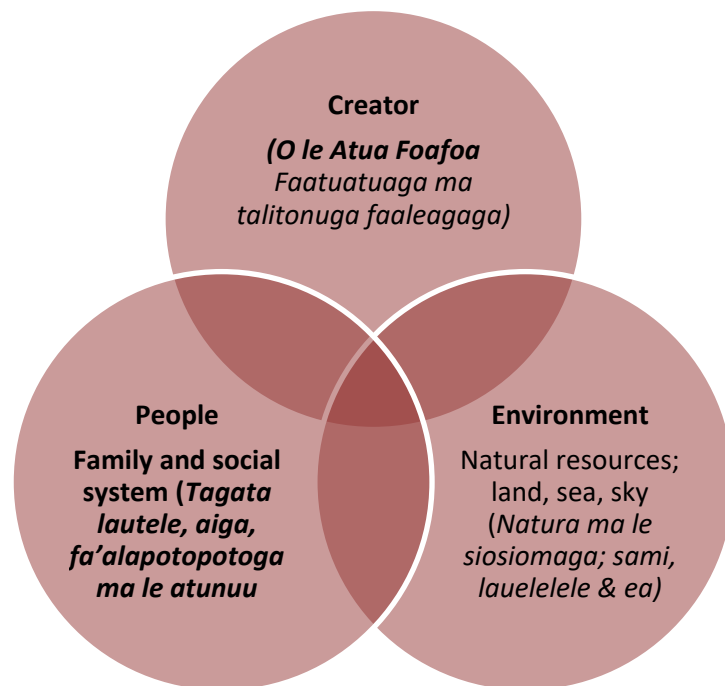


Figure 4: The Pacific Worldview

Source: (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2018)

Tui Atua (2007) emphasises that the morals and ethics of the indigenous people, and that Pacific researchers must respect our spiritual values and physical environment. He adds that the researcher is searching for the truth “the value of life, the value in life then is *Samoan* and other Pacific nations” (p. 13). Tui Atua (2003) portrays the values of

belongings and practices of Pacific people in his quote “I am not an individual cause I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me” (p. 51).

In the Pacific worldview, the family is the foundation and all community base. Family and relatives are based on the belief in (*va fealoaloa'i*), and mutual respect (Vailaau, 2005), the root of relationship. The support, caring and connectedness are vital in ensuring social cohesion and the assurance of the wellbeing of all family members, through service *tautua* to the family, an integral value in the family systems (Utumapu-McBride, 2013). The role of the individual working together to serve as the common quote *o le ala i le pule o le tautua* leadership is through service (Utumapu-McBride 2013).

3.2.2 Talanoaga: A qualitative approach

The qualitative approach I will use is ‘*Talanoaga*’ which is the *Samoan* method of discussing issues (Vaioleti, 2013). I see *Talanoaga* is aligned with the *Samoan* worldview. *Talanoaga*, is a point of view that is acknowledged and shared (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2018). For the *Talanoaga*, all aspects were accepted and discussed. It helps focus participants who may talk about economic issues, spirituality, places, resources, and land. *Talanoaga* develops positioning of Pasifika methodology out in the world of research method as an indigenous methodology (Vaioleti, 2013). It is a research method that increases the efficiency of information collection and understanding (Prescott, & Hooper, 2007).

3.2.3 History of Talanoaga

The oral history of *Samoa* indicates communal, and sacred. *Talanoaga* took place by humans and the goddesses (*aitu vavalo, Tagata itu lua*) for example the *talanoaga* between the goddess Nafanua and Malietoa the head of the Sa Malietoas’ family (Meleisea, 1987). When Malietoa Fitisemanu approached Nafanua asking for his share of her government, Nafanua apologised as she had already given out the head, the only thing left was the tail. She urged Malietoa to take it and “wait for the head to come from heaven” (Meleisea, 1987, p. 57). In 1830 the missionaries arrived at *Sapapalii, Savaii* where Malietoa Vainuupo resided (Meleisea, 1987), and accepted the London Missionary Society religion as the execution of Nafanua’s prediction, and he added his *aiga* who became the first Christians. Malietoa was the head of the state of *Samoa* many years later (Meleisea, 1987). This historical *talanoaga*, which took place decades ago, provides meaningful insights, history, stories, legends and myths of the *Samoan* people in the past. It also generates understanding for future generations.

Thus, *Talanoaga* originates from the word *talanoa*. *Talanoa* is a *Samoan* word and is singular (Kolone-Collins, 2010) and when adding (*ga*) that forms a noun in a plural form (Kesi, 2014). Both words were used in a different context. In my view, the *Talanoa* means to talk in general or a social conversation (Vaioleti, 2013). By way of content to *Talanoaga* in a form of a subject such as celebrations like a wedding, funeral, land ceremony, and many others (T. Iona, personal communication, 15 December 2016). A *talanoaga* can be a formal or informal discussion (T. Iona, personal communication, 15 December 2016).

Informal *talanoaga* can usually be social or a friendly conversation between two or more people in a workplace, at home or social occasions (T. Iona, personal communication, 15 December 2016). Formal *talanoaga* often takes place within a family meeting such as discussions to appoint *matai* titleholders for the *aiga*; or when facing challenges or critical issues that require a serious talk to solve a problem (T. Iona, personal communication, 15 December 2016). Furthermore, formal *Talanoaga* as in *matai's* meeting (*fono*) when dealing with issues such as health and safety, family matters, making rules for the village and families or individual plans and development for the betterment of people in the village (T. Aiiloilo-Maka, personal communication, December 2016). These *talanoaga* or collaborations by the village *matai* or within family members known as *felafolafoaiga*, *fefaasoaiga*, *soalaupule*, and *tofa saili*. Such wisdom invites people as to dig deep in the case (*tofa loloto* or *faautautaga loloto*, critical thinking), searching for solutions or wisdom to search (*tofa saili*) (Tui Atua, 2008), exercise all options for a solution (*tofa tatala*), solving the issue in a peaceful manner. Alternatively, forgiving approach (*tofa faatamalii* or *tofa fa'atupu*), and when reaching a conclusion called (*Ua tasi le tofa* or (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009) *Ua tasi le fa'atofalaiga*) (Tui Atua, 2008), literally means the critical discourse and dialogue discussion have finally concluded. If unable to achieve a ruling solution or an outcome then it must be postponed (*moe le toa, tolopo seia aulia le aso fou*), which means to be adjourned until the next day.

I believe that *talanoaga* in this research, participants will be encouraged in their thoughts and ideas drawing together knowledge and skills about the research topic. The term associated with *talanoaga* is *aoao manogi o le lolo*; meaning gathering knowledge (*tofa loloto* or *faautautaga poto*), drawing from experiences of each member to articulate the most fundamental and possible solution for an issue or issues. Thus, *Talanoaga* fits firmly

within the focus of this research, because *talanoaga* is “coherence, simplicity, and purposeful”, and is culturally appropriate (Meyer, 2013, p. 249).

In my view, *Talanoaga* comes from the heart and must be engaging. Each *talanoaga* underpins the four main concepts that are *talanoaga mafana* (warmth), *talanoaga malie* (social), *talanoaga alofa* (love), and *talanoaga faakerisiano* (spiritual) (T. Aiiloilo-Maka, personal communication, 15 June 2018). The *talanoaga mafana* comes when a *Samoan* researcher approaches another *Samoan* speaking *Samoan*, and during the session *talanoaga malie* occurs when exchanging thinking, and experience; and *talanoaga alofa*; underpinning the discussion in progress as love *alofa* (Tui Atua, 2008) makes them connected (T. Aiiloilo-Maka, personal communication, 15 June 2018). Therefore, underpinning with the *faakerisiano* is when love bonds them in Christian belief as the Bible says; “*O lē sili o na mea o le alofa lea*”. Without those concepts, *talanoaga* is meaningless, and have nothing to talk about.

Talanoaga is an oral “pedagogical tool filled with knowledge and values” collaboration which may incorporate with stories, questioning, reflections, discussions and insight collaboration (Vaioleti, 2013, p.3). The data collections intended to have *talanoaga* with individual participants from both groups of teachers and parents and the number of *talanoaga* depending on the participants’ availability during the week.

3.3 Research Methods

3.3.1 *Talanoaga*

As characterized, my data collection method is *Talanoaga*, a research approach which has successfully been used by *Samoan* researchers when interviewing *Samoan* participants, an issue relating *Samoan* people (Cowley-Malcolm, 2013; Kesi, 2014; Kolone-Collins, 2010). I will carried out individual *talanoaga*, because these will enclose the sense of place and home, without being influenced by others’ presence. *Talanoaga* will enable layers of social systems and aspects such as cultural, values, and beliefs (Tike, 2018) and largely uncover new ways to deal with the challenge of literacy. As Durranti (1981) has noted in *talanoaga* questions and responses are focused on getting to the truth and (Smith, 2013) should be treated as profound.

In my *talanoaga*, participants were formally welcomed before the *talanoaga* began. This is the way *Samoan* people formally or culturally welcome or acknowledge others when approaching them. The intensity of formal cultural approach (*faatulima* or *faatu aao*) to

make them feel at home having a *mafana, malie* and *alofa* relationship; as a result, a rich and innovative experience of literacy practice generates. It was anticipated that *talanoaga* would be conducted mainly in the *Samoan* language, although questions were written both in English and *Samoan*. Through *talanoaga*, I anticipated in preparation written guidelines on A4 paper the questions I would ask in the *talanoaga* meeting. These inform and guide each participant during the *talanoaga* session.

3.3.2 Sample

My research sample comprised two groups of teachers and parents because I wanted to gather two perspectives of literacy from *Aoga Amata* teachers, and from parents. My research sample of five parents and five teachers, a total of ten. I focused on *Aoga Amata* teachers, because of the philosophy underpinning their practice to nurture the language, *tu ma aganuu faasamoa ma le faakerisiano* (nurture the cultural values and the spiritual practice), which aligned with the focus of this study. I also focused on parents who were involved in *Aoga Amata* gathering their views of literacy learning at home (four *Samoan* born, and one New Zealand born parents). My research participants were either female or male.

I also chose teachers from *Aoga Amata* because of the philosophy of the *Samoan* language associated with their practice. Four teachers were *Samoan* born and one New Zealand born teacher. Through a snowball method, I chose only those who were interested, drew attention to my topic, and happily volunteered to participate. I was fortunate enough to find these parents and teachers who showed similar interests and willingness to be involved and looked forward to revealing the outcome of my study. The participants all resided in Auckland and worked in different *Aoga Amata* in the region.

While I waited for confirmation of the participation letter, I thought my questions might not well inform the participants; as a result, I might not obtain the answers I expected. I decided to reword my first question what is literacy? To elaborate a little bit in detail so, the participants have a good amount of knowledge of what literacy means to the *Samoan* people. This was changed to what do you know about literacy.

3.3.3 Recruitment and Steps

After I received Ethics approval, I posted the flyer on Facebook inviting participants for my study. After two weeks of waiting, I received no response except those people who admired the flyer and its design. So, I talked to a parent, and a teacher and both happily accepted my invitation. I gave them the Participant Information Sheets, and Consent

Forms to read. Then they signed the forms (dated and returned them). After a week, I received the signed forms back and was excited that I had confirmed my first two participants. These two formed my first participants interviews. The first interviews took place a week after the signed forms were returned. The Snowballing method was applied (Goodman, 1961) as the method developed and I invited those who were interested until I had five teachers and five parents. Each participant received the consent forms, participant information sheets, like the first lot. The interviews were set according to their convenience, dates, times and places.

The interviewing venues included the public library, AUT South campus library, a parent's home and workplace. The reason why these sites were chosen, were due to convenience and proximity to home of participants.

3.3.4 AUTECH Ethics

Ethics approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethnic Committee was granted on 13 June 2017 (AUTECH Reference number 17/125). The research methods were piloted in July 2017. As a result, of the pilot, the *Talanoaga* schedule (Appendix A) and Question 1 was slightly redesigned to meet the research objectives. Secondly, to meet the ethical standards, to protect the interests and respect the rights of both participants and the researcher and as a result provide honesty (Cresswell, 2006) and authentic data from the heart of the participants (Tike, 2018). The data collection phase commenced in August 2017 and was completed in November 2017.

3.4 Interviews

I engaged in *talanoaga* with the participants. In my approach, I applied the four main components such as *talanoaga mafana, malie, alofa and faakerisiano*, before the session began and after the meeting. I intended to genuinely and culturally welcome each of my participants. Despite this preparation in my *talanoaga* interview, I noted that I had to rephrase or reword the questions in more detail.

I used several strategies such as taking notes, recording on the tape recorder, so I did not miss anything. After I had my first two interviews, my supervisors arranged a meeting with me to discuss the outcome of the previous *talanoaga*. After the supervision meeting, I was satisfied and believed I would do better in the next session, collecting the authentic views, stories, and experience needed for this study. Nine interviews were undertaken in

the *Samoan* language, and one parent asked for her interview to be done in English. The data collection was completed in three months.

3.4.1 Data collection

Talanoaga is a reciprocal approach, a sharing of thoughts and knowledge entailed in the discussion (Wilson, 2017). Each participant has a unique way of expressing views and experience showing the sincerity of thoughts; experiences brought out in the reciprocal conversations. I noticed that they were speaking from their hearts by the facial expressions, body language, and the tone of their voices. Both teachers and parents appear to go in depth, deliver live experiences, skills, and knowledge of practice at home and in *Aoga Amata* through our mutual collaboration when the questions were asked - what literacy is; how you teach for it. Their explanation involves stories of the past and present, methods that ignite learning, and perceptions. Parents shared their teaching strategies they thought worked best for their children at home and hoped this study would reveal a new plan. Teachers, on the other hand, provided teaching strategies they considered effective to support young children in *Aoga Amata* and stories relating to experience.

A koha of a \$50.00 gift voucher was presented after each *talanoaga* session as a token of appreciation and a thank you for taking part in the research study.

3.4.2 Data Interpretation

I intend to get close to the phenomenon; I interpreted as close as I possibly could the experience and skills of the interviewee (Teherani et al., 2015). The data was recorded and typed in Microsoft Word. I handed out copies of each interview transcript to the participants to ensure I had not missed anything and a chance for them to modify or to include anything that needed to be altered or to be included. Simultaneously, I translated the data into the English language for analysis, while the mind revitalised every *talanoaga* detail stored. I had to transcribe the data carefully, ensure I reproduced precisely (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009), what the participants said for the consistency of the data provided. This is the same procedure I attended to after every *talanoaga* that took place.

The interpretation of the data was not an easy task. It was also time-consuming when I tried to match the *Samoan* translation and the English interpretation to ensure I have the same view as it was originally written. However, it was rewarding when I was satisfied with what I had written and what the participants said in the *talanoaga*, as the analysis and interpretation aligned with what participants provided and said. When the

interpretation was completed, I reviewed and revisited the data and was able to discover possible topics embedded (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017) within the *talanoaga* interview. I set out four core headings; 1) how parents define literacy (2) how they teach for it; (3) how teachers define literacy; (4) how they teach for it. The *Talanoaga* findings were based on the universal themes drawn out of the transcripts (Lambert, 2012). Colour coding of themes derived from the findings were used (Maxwell, 2008) and written on a Word document.

3.4.3 Risk

In our *Samoan* culture, the pastor and his wife are highly respected by the *Samoan* community. For some, approaching and meeting them is normal but some people avoid it due to the many challenges. Some of these include language barrier thinking they might say something inappropriate, (*va fealoaloa 'i*) mutual respect.

Table 2: Parents' Profiles

Parent	Gender	Age	Place of birth	L. 1	Highest level of Years involved in	
					Occupation Education	Aoga Amata
1	F	30	Samoa	Samoa	Tertiary (NZ)	5
2	F	30	New Zealand	Samoa	Tertiary (NZ)	5
3	F	50	Samoa	Samoa	Tertiary (NZ)	24
4	M	26	Samoa	Samoa	Tertiary (NZ)	3
5	M	52	Samoa	Samoa	Tertiary (NZ)	3

As seen in Table 2 three of the five parents were female, and two were male, and their age range was from 26-52 years old. All but one was born in *Samoa* and *Samoan* is the first language of all participants. The parents were a well-educated group regarding educational achievement - each had a tertiary qualification. All participants were employed at the time of the study. Some of the participants were *matai*, *alii ma tulafale* (high chiefs and orators), *faletua o le faifeau* (church minister's wife) or *faletua o le tamalii* (high chief's wife), and untitled man and women. It is fundamental to understand the *Samoan* protocols and traditions of respect. As a researcher, I have articulated how to culturally approach each participant as each one of them has a special name title such as; *matai alii - afioga* (high chief) *tulafale- tofa* (orator), *toalua o le faifeau*, *faletua o le*

faafeagaiga, (church minister's wife). The untitled participants were addressed by either of these phrases, *Susu mai*, *maliu mai*, or *tala aao mai*. Maintaining a positive and warm welcome in the beginning, therefore expecting the same respect, as a result, gain the valuable amount of data in return.

Table 3 below, shows all five female teachers their age ranges from 30-59, and four of the five were born in *Samoa*. One teacher was born in New Zealand. The length of time and services working as teachers in *Aoga Amata* and Primary school ranges between 5-30 years of experience. Four of the five teachers had been employed for 15 years or more in *Aoga Amata* in New Zealand, one teacher worked in both Primary School and *Aoga Amata* for 30 years and one of them had been teaching in *Aoga Amata* for five years. As shown, all five teachers studied at tertiary education to achieve their degrees, teaching certificates and qualifications to be able to work as an *Aoga Amata* educator in New Zealand.

Table 3: Teachers' Profile

Teacher	Gender	Age	Place of birth	L. 1	Highest level of Education	Years of teaching	Occupation
1	F	31	Samoa	Samoa	Tertiary MEdL(NZ)	15	All Aoga Amata teachers
2	F	30	New Zealand	Samoa	Tertiary BEd (NZ)	5	
3	F	59	Samoa	Samoa	Tertiary BEd (NZ)	22	
4	F	58	Samoa	Samoa	Tertiary (NZ)	30	
5	F	57	Samoa	Samoa	Tertiary (NZ)	15	

The Total immersion *Aoga Amata* focused on employing *Samoa* born educators and teachers who speak *Samoa*n fluently, and those who have a deep understanding, knowledge, and skills of the *faasamoa* or *Samoa*n way, and were able to support and maintain philosophy, language, and culture of the *Aoga Amata*. Most teachers migrated to New Zealand, bringing their teaching expertise into this country, and worked as teachers in *Aoga Amata*. It is believed that these teachers were rich in skills, knowledge, and understanding of the *Samoa*n language and culture, as well as the teaching experience, and, had utilised the *Samoa*n method of teaching back in the Islands, they merge them well with the training they received in this country.

3.5 Reflection

During my first two *talanoaga* interviews, I was uncertain whether I should ask more questions based on the views provided by the participants. I reflected and found out that, this could be the reason why my supervisors encouraged me to collect as much data as I could to enrich my data collection and my findings.

The Talanoaga session was a complete success when maintained well, and most importantly the knowledge, that was integrated and treated as critical. Although, in my first interview, I realised I needed to rephrase the first question for the participant. When I asked a research question, the participant looked uncertain of what it meant. For effective data collection, it was imperative to ensure participants understood each question properly.

I was grateful for regular meetings from the beginning till the end of my data collection with my supervisors, as this provided feedback and suggestions for improvement. I was impressed and felt enthusiastic to expand data collection by asking questions that inspire the conversations further.

Finding a male participant was a struggle as I approached several males and they said they would get back to me. I kept reminding them from time to time, but I realised there was always an excuse. After waiting for a month, two months, then three months, I finally found one through a friend. When I approached him, he was happy to participate and arranged the time for this last interview.

I think the main reason behind the lack of male participants, is because I am a *faletua o le faifeau*, as they may not have the confidence in the *Samoan* language to communicate with me or some other factor. However, it was an experience I have not forgotten and will be remembered. My supervisor shared with me that 20 years ago, she had the same dilemma in her doctoral research, where she surveyed 100 parents and caregivers (only two of her participants were male) (Utumapu, 1998).

The process of finding participants, and finding the time suitable for each participant was time-consuming. On reflection, all the participants were happy to take part in the study and had shown interest in my research topic. One parent said there are not many literature available online in this area of research, especially from the *Samoan* perspective and were happy to participate. I thought well at least someone knew something about literature in literacy development. As a researcher, I was delighted to capture the experience of the

mature participants back in *Samoa* that may have a genuine contribution to my study. It is a pleasure to be involved in this journey as I believe the result of this study will help those in need as well as teachers and parents and the *Samoa*n people.

Ua faailo lupe i le foaga meaning to identify the research methodology employed in this study. The qualitative research approach from the Pacific worldview takes on board the *Talanoaga* methodology approach, to capture the knowledge, skills, and experiences of the participants in the past and the contemporary ideology.

I believe *talanoaga* is the most effective method that generates the perceptions of participants as always coming from the heart. *Talanoaga* as a research methodology generates aspects interwoven into the process as previously prescribed. They all go hand in hand in the process to bring out the critical views of the participants involved through the *mafana* collaboration. These central concepts are critical to integrating in the *talanoaga* method to produce better results.

It is also to bring out the multiple opinions of the parents and the teachers relating to the *Samoa*n teaching and learning strategies especially back in the days, and how educators extend them in *Aoga Amata*, for future improvements.

Chapter 4: *Ua sa'a faaoti le utu a le faimea* - Findings

This proverb literally means you give it your all to do something to bring out the best as a result. I feel that parents and teachers have shared their critical concepts, views, and experiences for the success of the research findings.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from my *talanoaga* with parents and teachers. It is organised in two parts following the research questions:

Question one - Parents' perceptions of literacy and how they teach for it?

Question two - Teachers' perceptions of literacy and how they teach for it?

In each part I present the view of 5 parents in themes. There were 5 parents and 5 teachers in this study. First their understandings/definitions of the term "Literacy" and then, whether and how parents taught for this at homes.

4.2 Question One: Parents' perception of literacy and how they teach for it.

First their understandings/definitions of the term "Literacy" and then, whether and how parents teach literacy at homes.

4.2.1 Parents' perceptions of literacy

The parents defined literacy using words such as the ability to read and write. For example:

"Literate o le iloa faitau ma malamalama i mea o loo faitau faatasi ai ma le iloa ona tusitusi" (P.1).

Literacy is having the ability to read and comprehend meaning from what is being read, also encompasses the ability to write.

"O le literate o le iloa faitau ma tusitusi ma o le auai ma faatasi atu i a'oa'oga a'o itiiti le tamaitiiti e atina'e ai le gagana e ala i le faalogo ma le tautala" (P.2).

Literacy is the ability to read and write and being exposed to language from a young age helps to develop literacy through listening and speaking

"Ia iloa faitau, ma tusitusi" (P.3). Know how to read and write,

"Ia iloa faitau, tusitusi, faauiga mea i o latou uiga, e pei o feau, fa'amatalaga ma faauiga ata, o foliga, lanu, numera mai i lona siosiomaga" (P.4).

Know how to read, write, make meaning of things, messages, describe and make meaning of pictures, shapes, colours, and numbers within his environment.

However, P.5 went a bit deeper in his explanations – using terms such as communication, to connect with the child through interactions and everything the children are involved with at home as described:

“O le gagana lea e te faaaogaina e tou te fesootai ai ma tamaiti i soo se galuega fai i totonu o le aiga. O ia gagana e aofia ai le gagana faalogo, gagana tautala, gagana tusitusi ma le gagana faitaga” (P. 5).

Literacy is the language you use to communicate with the children in everything you do at home. These languages include the spoken words, written words, listening words and actions words.

As explained by P.2 literacy in terms of culture and he highlighted their appreciation of the role of the *Aoga Amata* in learning culture, values. Cultural framework such as *Tu ma Aganuu faaaloalo* reveals an important aspect of the oral language development of every *Samoan* child. When people discuss the *Samoan* culture, values and language, they relate to all aspects of the *Samoan* language because these always integrate and go hand in hand. They cannot be separated.

“O lo’u fa’anaunauga e āoga la’u tama i le Aoga Amata ina ia a’oa’oina i tu ma aga faaaloalo fa’asamoa, aemaise ia a’oa’oina le gagana tautala fa’asamoa, ona e taua tele iā’i matou tu ma aganuu ma talitonuga o loo fausia ai le Aoga Amata” (P.2).

My aim for my child to attend *Aoga Amata* is, so he may be exposed and immersed in the *Samoan* language, culture and values, as the culture values and beliefs of *Aoga Amata* are important to us.

“O a’u ma lo’u toalua ma te manana’o e a’oa’o tu ma aga faaaloalo fa’asamoa, talu ai o le tele o le taimi o le tamaitiiti o le aoga, ae itiiti le taimi i le aiga” (P.4).

Our inspiration as parents (both my wife and I) is for our child to learn *tu ma aga faaaloalo faasamoa* because he spends most of his time during the day at *Aoga Amata* but less time at home.

(P3) expresses learning the child's first language in the early stages of life is the pathway to success and will make it easier for him to learn other languages later in life.

Hence is the main reason why the child's first language must be well taught and empowered at home and in *Aoga Amata*. Parents' sole intentions for their children while attending *Aoga Amata* is to learn the foundation of culture and values of the *Samoa* way or *faasamoa*, so that the child could practice, and understand, the fundamental aspects of these culture values and beliefs of the *Samoa* people through everyday interactions.

“E taua le a’oa’oina o tamaitiiti i le gagana Samoa poo lana gagana muamua, gagana Samoa. A lelei le aaooina o le gagana Samoa ua faigofie foi le aaooina o isi gagana e mulimuli mai. Aua e telē le fesoasoani o le iloa ma le malamalama o le tamaitiiti i lana gagana muamua, aua a lelei le a’oa’oina i le amataga i le aiga ma le Aoga Amata, e lelei fo’i le aga’ i i luma o le ola a’oa’oina o le tamaitiiti” (P.3).

It is imperative for the child to learn his first language the *Gagana Samoa*. If the child's first language is well nurtured it will be easy for the child to learn other languages later on because, fluency and competency in the child's first language help him/her to understand better while learning in other fields. This will be a positive start for the child in his learning process.

Parents saw reading and writing a fundamental aspect of literacy capacity in the early years. Learning difficulties may arise if learning to read and write was not taught and practiced aptly, as children will have difficulties in the future if learning to read was not promoted in the early stages of life as explained by P.4:

“E taua tele e pei o le faavae lea o le olaga o le tamaitiiti a malamalama ma iloa ona faitau ma tusitusi e faaosofia ai lona fiafia e sailiili e pei o lo ta tama ma tina sa aao ai le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi. O le fatu na toto i Samoa o lea foi e naunau ai ia faapena lou atalii e taua tele ai le aoga a le tamaitiiti” (P.4)

Reading and writing is critical because it is the foundation of the child's life. If the child understands and knows how to read and write, that stimulates interest to explore further and learn more; it's the core of the matter what my parents inherited in me while in Samoa “*o le fatu na toto i Samoa*”, is also the intention I have for my children to achieve because it is extremely paramount.

To summarise the parents' definition of literacy: Literacy is the ability to read, write, understand, describe, and make meaning of things. Moreover, it is a means of

communication through, listening, actions taken, words and speaking the child's first language the *Samoan* Language.

4.2.2 Literacy skills

In responding to this question, it was interesting to note that the utmost thought in all parents was their role as a parent in terms of relationships, role models and spirituality as overarching everything they did. Responses by P.3 and P.4 indicated that they regarded this role very seriously. P.4 also stressed the need to be patient and tolerant with the children.

Relationships with their children were mentioned many times. For example, all parents generally talked about the importance of relationships with their children, if learning was to take place. They talked about building warm and affectionate relationships with their children and referred to being at a child's level in these interactions. An example here is P.4:

“Ia atina’e fesootaiga ma talanoaga ma tamaiti, alu i le level a le tamaitiiti, aua e ese tools sa faaaoga i Samoa, ese foi auala ua faaaoga i Niu Sila e pei o le taaalo i meataalo ma isi mea faapena” (P.4).

Build good rapport communication with the children by being at the children's level, as in *Samoa* there were different tools used in those days to teach literacy, from what we use in New Zealand such as playing with toys and many more.

4.2.3 Role Models

Parents also saw themselves as role models at home noting that they know the children watch and listen to everything they say or do. When I asked (P.3) about teaching strategies she performed at home, her first reply was ‘role model’ I asked, ‘what exactly do you mean by role model?’. Her response was:

“Aua o tatou matua ma tagata matutua o role model, a tatou tautatala ua faalogo atu foi ua faataitai mai e tamaiti e pei; iputi vevela; Aua le tago iai i masaa le ipu ti mu oe” (P.3).

We are role models when we talk, children imitate what we say or do for example: hot cup of tea; do not touch in case it tips over and you may get burnt.

These words clearly indicated children having seen a strong sense of role model's awareness enhances learning literacy with the hope that children learnt and follow their parents' example. For example, P.3 said a child listens to what we say and sees what we

do, so to become a good role model be consistent and always walk the talk. Sometimes we teach the child to do well and when we do things, we do the opposite. She also added that acquisition of literacy was not just at home but also from the Pastor's School.

Spirituality is the anchor and is overarching everything they did including their pedagogical practice as explained by P.3:

“O aso nei ina ua taunuu mai le Tala lelei, e o i le lotu, e o i aoga a le faifeau, faitau le pi, usu le pese ma fai tauloto o le Tusi Paia. O le Lotu Tamaiti e faapitoa mo latou pea oo i le aso e fai ai le Lotu Tamaiti” (P.3).

In those days the pedagogies we had from the lotu, and Pastor's School, were reading the *Samoan* alphabet, sing songs, rhymes and verses from the Bible. The *Lotu Tamaiti* is a special service performed by the children, the above-mentioned pedagogies displayed.

4.2.4 Literacy Skills continued

As noted, parents viewed the skills of oral, reading, written language as essential components, that there is a relationship between these skills. These are presented separately here to ease discussion and build on them from the view of the *Samoan* people.

Oral language

It is probably true to say that all parents gave prominence to the oral aspects of language. For these parents, children learning to speak well was very important. Parents engaged in several activities with their children to develop their children's oral language skills – at home and in activities they participate in.

Lotu; learning recollection verses from the Bible, rhymes, and poems were all seen by parents as contributing to oral and vocabulary development. They also said that the more children participate in and react to these activities the better their thinking skills develop.

“E a'oa'o fo'i i tauloto mai le Tusi Paia, ma le Tatalo a le Alii Faasamoa, solo, ma pese mai le Aoga Amata ma le Aoga Aso Sa, e aoga e tele ai upu o le gagana e mafai ona iloa ma tautala ai” (P.1).

I teach her with memory verses from the Bible, the Lord's Prayer in *Samoa*, rhymes and poems she learnt from *Aoga Amata* and Sunday School helps her vocabulary skills.

The structure of oral literacy skills was also learnt through reading the Bible and memorising verses. Comments by two parents align with the noted *Samoan* practice of parenting (*e a'oa'o le tama e tusa ma ona ala, a oo ina matua e le toe te'a ese ai lava*) teach them well when they grow up they will not depart from it. In addition, that children should be exposed to the *Samoan* traditions of having a 'Family Lotu' at home. P.4 said this was the way he had learnt the language as a child:

“O le faitau o le Tusi Paia i taimi o Lotu i le aiga e aoao ai le gagana tautala e pei ona sa a'oa'o ai a'u e o'u matua a'o ou itiiti lava” (P.4).

Reading the Bible during our Family prayers is also an exposure to oral language like the way my parents taught me how to read when I was a little kid.

“E tauloto fuaiupu mai le Tusi Paia” (P.1).

Recite sentences from the Bible

Some said they now use the *Lotu* activities they had seen at the *Aoga Amata* as a valuable model of what they should do at home to align home and the *Aoga Amata* practices as a guidance for the children. P.4 said:

“A fai le lotu ua fa'ata'ita'i atu e tamaiti mea e fai i le aoga, aumai le Tusi Paia, e faitau e a'u, ao nisi taimi e tauloto verses o le Bible” (P. 4).

When we do the *Lotu*, the children put into practice what they do in *Aoga Amata*; they let me read the Bible while they recite memory verses from it.

The *Lotu* routine is considered as an oral and reading practice when children emulate verses from the Bible exposing others to how the child speaks his/her language.

Preparations for White Sunday is another way of enhancing oral literacy such as acting in a play and more. Others reiterate White Sunday also including *siva faaleagaga*, prayers and more to ignite spiritual emotions as well as language and literacy skills. P.4 stresses:

“O le Lotu Tamaiti e tapena ai le a'o o le tauloto, ma usu pese siva faitaga ma isi lava” (P.4).

For White Sunday children prepare themselves to learn their *tauloto* as well as singing and performing action songs.

Singing at home and in Sunday School were also mentioned by parents as reinforcing oral language skills and most often these went hand in hand with *Lotu* (as above) as parents shared how *Aoga Amata*, Sunday School and church contribute to building literacy skills such as vocabulary skills, and oral language.

“E a’oa’o e ala i pese o le Aoga Aso Sa, pese Lotu ma pese o le Aoga Amata”
(P.1)

Sunday School songs, church hymns and school songs.

Playing

Playing games or use of outdoor resources (P.1 & P.2) is highly valuable and encouraged as many benefits occurs while playing including literacy and language gain as both parents expressed:

“E a’oa’o fo’i e ala i le taalo na o ia po’o ana uo fo’i i taaloga e faaaoga ai le suigi ma le jumboline e le gata e faasoa ae o le gagana e maua mai ai e pei o le faitauina o fuainumera ma isi mea faapena” (P.1).

To teach through playing with friends or by his/her own. While engaging they take turns or counting turns and numbers.

“E a’oa’o pe a taalo e atinae ai le gagana ma le literate. O le natura masani e iloa ai lona lalolagi. E faamalosi ona e suesue ma atinae ai le ola suesue ma iloa ai ni mea fou. E faamalosi ai musele ma maso o le tino” (P.2).

Playing is highly valuable and that there are many benefits for the children relating to literacy and language development. It is a natural way for the children to discover the world around them. I also believe it encourages children to be creative and innovative. It also helps develop fine and gross motor skills.

Family interactions

P.2 stressed the importance of ‘family interactions as specified; an experience her child will treasure in life when making connections with immediate family members, that enhance the use of literacy. Family interactions is vital especially when engaging with everyday chores, and everything we attended to. P. 4 also signifies that collaboration through interactions is the best pathway to improve literacy learning through oral language.

“O le fesootaiga ma lona aiga o se faataitaiga lea mo le olaga atoa o la’u tama, e ala i fesootaiga ma a’oa’o ai le gagana tautala” (P.2).

Family interactions is a life experience for my child not only to make connections but to be exposed to oral language.

“E talanoa i le taimi o ‘aai ai, a lē fia ‘ai i mea ‘ai, ae o le mea taua o le iloa mea ‘ai o lo’o i le ipu” (P.4).

During our dinner we talk about what we have for dinner, the foods on their plates, and even if they don’t have the appetite, at least they know what’s on the plates.

The Parent is seen giving instructions as a profound strategy for teaching his children not only to ensure the child understands what he was told to do but also to ensure the child follows his task and achieves it. P. 4 states:

“Tapena le fale, fesoasoani i feau o le mea ‘ai e pei o le valuina o karoti, ma fufulu ipu’ (P.4).

Clean the house, preparing food such as peeling carrots; washing dishes

Imitating was seen by the parents as a fundamental method. When the child role-plays the actions and performance of a particular character in a movie, the child imitates actions, words, including the voice and attempt to sound like the character himself as P.1 states:

“Fa’ata’ita’i lea o taga a tagata fai tifaga ma ata a tamaiti (cartoons)” (P.1.).

Imitating cartoon and movie characters

Family excursions such as car rides is seen as another time to teach literacy orally as stated by P.3:

“A o i le taavale e vaai lanu o moli o le auala, lanu moli, lanu meamata, mumu, eseesea o siepi ma lanu o laau, faitauga o le Pi Samoa ma le A fa’aperetania” (P.3).

When we go in the car for ride or trip, we talk about the traffic lights, colours, trees, counting numbers, reading the *Samoan* and English alphabets.

Talk and talanoa face to face through interactions is the most oral practice shared by *Samoan* people over the years well before the Missionaries arrived as described by P.3.

Although there are people who are unable to write but they can still communicate through oral language according to P.3:

“Aua o aso la sa leai ni peni e tusi ai ae o le tautala lava ma le talanoa sa a’oa’o ai tagata Samoa. Faatoa a’oa’o le tusitusi ina ua oo mai le Lotu ma a’oa’o ai le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi. E iai nisi tagata, tamā ma tinā, tama ma teine e leiloa tusitusi ae a tautala e lelei tele le gagana tautala’ (P.3).

Because in those days we did not have pens to write but oral language was the method we utilised to educate *Samoan* people. We only commenced utilising pens and paper when the missionaries arrived and taught the *Samoans* how to read and write’. There are people, men and women, boys and girls who do not know how to write but when they talk, they are competent and fluent in every aspect.

P.3. explains Talking Matters is a programme which was introduced to many early childhood educators in New Zealand, to reinforce the use of talking to the children as indicated as a pathway to oral speaking and literacy practice as specified:

“E iai le polokalame na ou alu ai o le Talking matters lea faatoa faalauiloa iinei i New Zealand a ua leva ona ola ai tagata Samoa i le tautala, faalogo, vaai” (P.3).

The programme or workshop called ‘Talking Matters’, which was recently introduced to help literacy in New Zealand had been an on-going pedagogy for the people of *Samoan* in the past and is still maintaining such as speaking, listening and seeing.

Storytelling, and retelling stories were strategies parents used in promoting oral language, again a reminder of the *Samoan fagogo*. The parent child relationship and interactions through collaboration and discussion while telling/retelling a story or reading a book, is evidently contributing to oral language developments outlined by P.1:

“E a’oa’o e ala i le faitau ma toe faamatala o le tala mai le tusi” (P.1).

It is developed through storytelling and retelling stories from the Bible.

Asking Questions

Questioning is clearly indicated as a profound method in teaching literacy for P.3. At home she asked questions to teach not only literacy skills but also to test and practice their memory and thinking skills. This includes questions that are always directed for the *Vasega Faitau Pi* and for other classes such as *Vasega Muamua* according to their curriculum set out for the year.

“E a’oa’o foi e ala i fesili faigofie mai le Tusi Paia le vasega faitau Pi faapea fo’i vasega i luga atu e tele fo’i tusi fesili e a’oa’o ai latou e pei o le tusi Mataupu Silisili ma le Tusi Paia” (P.3).

Teaching through asking simple questions from the Bible for the *Vasega Faitau Pi*, and *Vasega Muamua* as they have sets of questions from the Bible and the *Mataupu Silisili* book.

Counting identifying and naming objects were also more deliberate activities these parents said they practiced out with their children. Identifying objects was another important method as P.4 said:

“A o i le taavale e talanoa i lanu o moli, lanu meamata, mumu, eseesege o siepi ma lanu, laau, o le faitauina o fuainumera, 1-10” (P. 4).

When we go for a ride, we chat about traffic lights and colours such as orange, green and red; talk about different shapes and colours; trees; counting numbers 1-10.

“Ia toaga e faitau le 1-10 faapea ma le Pi Tautau o loo iai fo’i fuainumera 1-10” (P. 5). Practice counting 1-10 constantly especially reading the *Pi Tautau* that also has numbers 1-10.

Repetition of the same words and actions enables the child to respond to it and the parent should always talk and explain so the child understands and communicates further. P.3 talked about the importance of repetition, acting, and *talanoa* while interacting with children.

“Ua ou maitauina i lau fanau, a faalogo so’o i le upu la e te ta’u atu, e iai le taimi e faalogo ai ua tautala ai le tamaitiiti e pei o le: ‘Aua le faia le mea lea’; ae lē o le ‘Aua’, ‘Aua’. Fa’aa’oa’o foi ona fa’aaoga upu faigofie e pei o le ‘faafetai’ pe a aumai se mea’ai, ‘faamolemole’ pe a manao i se mea; ma le ‘tulou’ pe a savali i luma o tagata, ina ia masani ai, i lo latou faaaogaina i aso ta’itasi” (P.3).

Speaking is vital. I noticed my children when I say the same words to them constantly, soon they will use them in their dialogue, such as ‘don’t do this’ instead of just saying ‘don’t’! Children can repeat what we say e.g. ‘hot cup of tea’; do not touch because it’s hot as you may burn yourself. Teach them with the simple words such as ‘thank you’ when receiving something, please, when you want something, and excuse me’, when walking in front of people, so that they know and understand how to use these words in everyday life.

Social skills as stressed is profound when parents effectively promote and engage well in nurturing relationships with children to be able to socially communicate well with others at home and through everyday interactions. The children learn to build self-confidence

within self and the world around them as well as building oral language. Social skills help the child to boost learning as well as interacting with others through communication and decision making as clearly stated by parent P. 2:

“Ou te talitonu afai e galulue matua i le aoaoina o fanau i le fale, e ola a’e tamaiti fiafia i le a’oa’oina, ma maua lona toamalie ma le loto fiafia, lototele e fesootai ai ma isi ma faia ai lava ana faiga filifiliga e foia ai ona faafitauli poo lu’itau” (P.2).

I believe if parents are actively engaging with their children’s learning at home, children will grow up loving to learn, high self-esteem as well as the confidence to exercise their social skills and to solve problems.

Literacy learning starts as early as possible as stressed by P.4. I asked what do you mean by as early as possible? He said, “Oh maybe at preschool level.’ My parents were my first teachers when I was a young child. They sent me to the Pastor’s School to read *Pi Tautau* as most *Samoan* parents did in those days. My intentions are the same for my children, just like what my parents did.”

“Afai e lē iloa e le tamaitiiti faitau e le iloa foi tusitusi. Ou te iloa e taua tele le fa’aa’oa’o o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi a’o laititi lava. Aua o ota matua sa naunau e a’oa’o a’u a’o ou laititi lava lea ua ou manuia ai ma manuia ai lo’u olaga” (P.4).

If the child does not know how to read, he does not know how to write either. I think it is important that children are exposed to various forms of literacy as early as possible. My parents insisted that I learn how to read and write when I was a little child, the reason why I accomplished a better job and live a life full of blessings.

Writing

Writing is part of literacy practice as advised by all parents, but I have chosen only comments from two of them. I chose their comments to be included because they clearly stated, that parents’ responsibility at home is to continuously create space for writing exercises. The importance of writing in literacy learning was also emphasized and more often in terms of ‘knowing one’s name’. For example, as P.4 described if the child does not know how to write his name, he will not know how to read either. And continues that it is fundamental to build a solid foundation of a child to know how to write and read that encourages him/her to practice more often as P.5 suggests:

“Ia toaga le matua e faataitai le tusiga o le igoa o lana tama ma numera o le tasi e oo i le sefulu, aemaise o le Pi Tautau sa faaaogaina e faifeau i aso ua mavae’ (P.5).

Parent needs to practice writing her/his child's name as well as writing numbers one up to ten from the *Pi Tautau* which was used by Pastors School in the past

Preparation for Primary school was solely an objective standpoint of all parents in this research study gaining elementary literacy skills of children before school. Obtaining foundational literacy skills is one of the many reasons why these parents stressed the importance of preparing the children for Primary school. Their expectations *Aoga Amata* accommodates the children with these skills as explained by P.1, and P.3:

“O lo’u faanaunauga e ave ai la’u tama i le Aoga Amata ina ia sailiili, ma aoao ina ia iloa ona tusitusi ma faitau tusi, ma aoaoina le iloa i numera ina ia mauiinoa le sologa manuia pe a oo i le taimi e alu ai i le aoga Tulaga Lua, ma fesoota’i atu i isi tamaiti ma maua lona fiafia” (P.1).

My aim for my child to attend *Aoga Amata* is to explore, to learn, and to gain basic literacy and numeracy skills to guarantee a successful transition to Primary school; to interact with other children and have fun.

“O lo’u fa’anaunauga ia oo atu i le taimi e alu ai i le Aoga Palagi ua lelei le tautala fa’asamoa. Ua lelei ma lava tapena i vaega e pei o le lelei le tautala fa’asamoa; ua maua lona lototele e alu ai i le aoga tulaga Lua; ua iloa uu le peni; alu atu i le isi level ua mafai ona amata, iloa le ‘a e i o u’ ma le ‘a b c d’; ua mafai ona gafatia le isi laasaga o le ola a’oa’o’ina” (P.3).

My intention is for my child to speak fluently in *Samoan* by the time she goes to the mainstream. Must be competent in basic skills such as; speaking fluently; having the confidence to leave and move on to the next level; knowing how to grasp the pen and write; knowing the basic skills of reading the *Samoan* and English alphabets ‘a, e, i, o, u’ and ‘a, b, c, d’, and is ready to encounter the next level.

The use of Technology – less was said, however, parent stresses that even young children were capable of utilising technology. Although technology was not mentioned by other parents, but they all have, mobile phones and other technology devices used as was experienced during our *talanoaga* conversation. P.1 expresses:

“O le fa’aaogaina lea o tablets, telefoni feavea’i, fa’ata’ita’i taga ma ata mai movies, ma le komipiuta” (P.1)

[Utilising] tablets, mobile phone, and computer, imitating cartoon and movie characters.

“O nisi o taimi e matamata ai ata cartoons, ata Samoa o ata video aumai i le faletusi” (P.4).

Sometimes they watch cartoons and *Samoan* video from the library.

4.2.5 Summary

It is believed that spirituality practice overarches the literacy learning of the *Samoan* children. It includes practices such as singing, reading, reciting memory verses, answering questions from the Bible, rhymes and poems, performing action songs, praying, and saying the Lord's Prayer. The language, cultural values, social skills, relationship and identity are all inclusive and blended in the spiritual practice of the *Samoan* people. This is one of the main reasons why children attend *Aoga Amata* to learn and understand the culture (*tu ma aga faaalolo*) of the *Samoan* people. Parents thought that children live away from the homeland, and it is critical for them to learn, understand and live life in the *fa'asamoa*, learn the language, cultural values, identity, and customs.

Reading and writing are essential for the *Samoan* child's learning as describe as 'it is the heart of the matter' as children need to grasp these skills at an early stage of life to prepare for the future. Parents also provide space at home especially for writing exercise to practice writing the child's name and numbers 1-10.

Furthermore, parents continuously utilized teaching practices such as storytelling. Narrating the *Samoan* myths and legends, usually generates discussion, questions, occurrence of fantasy and imagination during story time. This allows the child to activate thinking skills, as well as literacy and language immersion. Language develops when the child speaks from his own understanding in his own way of thinking and thoughts. Talk and *talanoa* were significant for literacy development as parents stressed it needs to be at the child's level, face to face *talanoaga*. Parents suggested that they must 'walk the talk' and follow what you are talking about or align your words with your actions, so the children react in a positive way through interactions and in the future. Social skills help the child build self-confidence and self-esteem if parents and adults support the child through interactions, collaborations and discussion in a positive and encouraging approach, inspiring language and literacy attainment and achieve other aspects of the learning process such as making friends with peers and interact positively with others.

The parents' philosophical view is that *Aoga a le Faifeau* and Sunday school were seen as the main locations for literacy learning. This was because since the arrival of Missionaries in *Samoa*, the focus of the teaching including learning the *Samoan* alphabet, *tu ma aga faasamoa* back in the days, which was still maintained by today's generation. The church contributions in learning is fundamental not only literacy, language and

culture but also spiritual practices are fundamental for the children of *EFKS* church in *Samoa*, New Zealand, and across the globe where *EFKS* churches are established.

4.3 Question Two: Teachers' definition of literacy and how they teach for it?

I begin this section presenting teachers' responses in two parts. First their understandings/definitions of the term "Literacy" and second, how they taught for this in *Aoga Amata*.

4.3.1 Teachers' perceptions of literacy

The response from T.1 and T.2 define literacy as the ability to read and write. However T.1 believes in enhancing ability to speak and identify his identity, through cultural activities while (T.2), focuses on the incorporation of body language to express feelings and thoughts.

'O le mafai lea ona faitau, tusitusi, tautala i le gagana e masani ai i lona aiga ma talafeagai ma lona matua, atina'e ai le tamaitititi e iloa ai o ia o le Samoa' (T.1).

The ability to read, write, speak in a language that is familiar and suitable for his age in cultural and appropriate activities that promote the child's identity as a *Samoan*

'O le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi e le na o le iloa o upu ma tautala i le gagana, ae o le tele o taimi e faaaoga ai e tamaiti gagana lē leoa po'o gaoioiga e faaaoga mata ma lima. E aofia ai le faitau tusi, vaai, o mata. Ou te iloa o le literacy o upu ae a vaai i isi tamaiti e le mafai ona tautatala pe ta'u manino upu' (T.2).

Literacy is not just writing, reading or speaking the language, because most of the time children use the incorporation of body language to communicate such as hands, eyes to express thoughts and feelings. It also includes reading facial expressions. I know literacy is about words, but I know there are also some children who are unable to speak or say the words properly.

The response from (T. 3), also defines literacy as being able to read and write, however the combination of other aspects of literacy, the child engages within his own free time was also mentioned. These literacies learning intentions must be based on the children's interests, but sometimes they can be based on anecdotal and impromptu events and activities that crop up along the way.

"O le iloa lea e le tamaitititi faitau, ma tusitusi ma fai se tala mai i lona malamalama ma lona iloa. e pei o ni ata, oni mea faitino e vaai iai po'o ni tusitusiga ma valivaliga a tamaiti, o faatonuga ma fa'amatalaga, o solo ma pese, tala faitino

poo ni siva foi i le gagana Samoa. O le toe faamatala mai e tamaiti, poo le fai o se ripoti o galuega sa fai” (T.3).

Literacy learning is when a child is able to read, write and say a story in his own way, understanding and perspective. Through various skills like narrating, painting and drawing, sketching, singing or dancing. It is where a child can arrange and organise things and ideas in his own understanding and thinking instead of being told or guided.

“E le na o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi, a’o mea uma lava i lona siosiomaga, iloa fa’amatala, maitau foliga, iloa lanu eseese, numera, ma fa’auiga mea e vaai iai, alagaoa o lona siosiomaga ma faamatala ona lagona fiafia, faanoanoa, alofa, fa’auo, ma isi. O le atina’eina o le mafaufau e aofia ai le atina’eina o le malosi, mafaufau ma le agaga” (T.4).

It’s not only the ability to read and write, but it’s everything that surrounds him. Ability to describe, identify resources, recognise things including shapes, colours, numbers and make meaning of things he engages with, such as resources in his environment, describe his feelings towards them such as happiness, sadness, love and be able to share. Literacy is everything; including cognitive development, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Teacher 4 also expresses it is not only reading and writing but she goes beyond deepening to some extent. And said, literacy is everything in the environment where a child can identify, describe resources and elements within his environment, and even saying it is the intellectual development of a child as explained;

“O le iloa ona tusitusi ma faitau tusi, tautala ma fa’amatala ‘ata maitau mata’itusi ma foliga, maitau ma fuainumera o le pi tautau 1-10. Maitau ma faamatala alagaoa i le siosiomaga” (T.4).

Know how to read, write, and speak, able to describe pictures, identify letters and numbers of the *Pi Tautau* 1-10. Identify varieties of resources and elements within the environment.

Teacher 5 further stressed not only to literacy but understanding the significance of teaching the language, culture and the child’s identity in this country we now reside in, if we categorise people in this country, your language is your identity as a *Samoaan*, unless a child speaks in her/his own language we wouldn’t be able to identify his/her identity.

“E taua le iloa ona tusitusi ma faitau tusi ae sili ona matua taua lava le a’oa’o o le gagana muamua a le tamaitiiti Samoa, o lona faasinomaga, ma lona tupuaga mai lona aiga, matua, matua o ona matua ma isi” (T.5).

It is essential to know how to read and write but most importantly to teach the child's first language as his identity as a *Samoan*, his genealogy within his family, parents, great grandparents and so forth.

To encapsulate the defining term of literacy, all five responses state that, it is the ability to read, write, speak in his/her first language, recognise, describe and identify as a *Samoan*, the letters, numbers in the *Pi Tautau*. It also includes verbal and non-verbal communication and how to say a story, organize action activities and critical literacy. Interestingly, according to T.4's advice it is everything in the environment. It is the cognitive development of a child including physical, intellectual and spiritual.

The philosophical view of teachers, while teaching for literacy, they build and enrich on what children brought from home. The importance of the *Samoan* culture the child brings with him/her into the centre is set out below, these are fundamental and are prioritised by the child and parents' culture.

4.3.2 How to teach literacy

Oral skills

As teachers teach literacy, they build on and enrich, giving priority to the following from the *Samoan* perspective.

The teachers see the structure of our beliefs; we prioritise *Lotu* daily. Some parents join in during our *Lotu* on arrival. This is special to us teachers, teaching children to be familiar with these sacred moments every day. When we sing and recite verses from the Bible children respond in oral language practice. It is evident in the child's spiritual practice and integrate in the teaching of literacy as prescribed which is:

“O i tonu o loo faatino ai le talitonuga faaleagaga fa'asamoa e aupito sili lava ona taua i a i tatou, E taua le nonofo faatasi ma fai le Lotu. O tamaiti foi e tele lava le gagana e maua mai ai o le gagana le leoa ma le fa'aleoina o le gagana e ala i pesega tauloto ma fetufaaiga. E tataua lava ona uumau tatou tu ma aganuu fa'asamoa” (T.1).

We activate our *Samoan* belief in spirituality, which is sacred for our people, It is vital to get together and worship. Children can utilize a lot of verbal and non-verbal functions to express their emotional development. We must embrace our *tu ma aganuu faasamoa*, cultures and customs.

Teacher 1 further outlined to integrate *Lotu* in the programme. “This is our culture the reason we *Samoans* are different from other cultures as we implement *Lotu* to begin and end the day, we feel incomplete if we don't do it”. She reiterates further we pray together,

interact, and practice cultural rituals or spiritual practices such as; praying, singing and reciting verses from the Bible. “Our spiritual belief is acknowledged daily and promoted in our *Aoga Amata* as part of our *fa’asamoa*” (*Samoan* cultural values/beliefs).

Teachers recognise the framework of *Aoga Amata*’s philosophy is to nurture and enrich the oral language of a *Samoan* child, promote culture, ensure the child understands his culture and identity simultaneously supporting his reading and writing skills.

‘O le mafai lea ona faitau, tusitusi, tautala i le gagana e masani ai i lona aiga ma talafeagai ma lona matua, atina’e ai le tamaititi e iloa ai o ia o le Samoa’ (T.1).

The ability to read, write, speak in a language that is familiar according to age, appropriate cultural activities, that promote child’s identity as a *Samoan*.

As a teacher she saw the intensity of knowing and understanding the importance of being able to speak her mother tongue and maintain it through life. Her experience was based on her personal journey when she left *Aoga Amata* and transitioned to Primary School.

Her advice for educators as states:

“E tatau i faiaoga ona faamalosi le tautala i le Gagana Samoa i taimi uma e fesoasoani i le aoaoina o tamaiti i le Gagana Samoa” (T.2).

It is important for teachers to empower the usage of the *Samoan* language because it demonstrates its importance to the children as it seems the English language is dominating.

Teacher 5 shares the importance of our formal language through interactions with the children. The usage of simple words such as *aao* with the impression that children need to know and understand how these words position into practice and apply at home. T. 5 explains:

“Ou te faaaogaina le gagana faigofie o aso uma e matou te fesoota’i ai ma tamaiti. I le vaega o le 4 i le 5 tausaga i Aoga Samoa, e mafai ona aoaoina i upu faigofie le isi laasaga o le tatou gagana, o le gagana faaaloalo e pei o le: o e fufulu tou ‘aao’ e ui ina e le taliaina e nisi faiaoga le faaaoga o le gagana faaaloalo i tamaiti laiti” (T.5).

I use simple everyday language to share with the children. We can teach simple words of our formal language (*gagana faaaloalo*) to the 4-5 year olds using simple words such as *aao* (*upu faaaloalo*) although some disagree. They believe it is inappropriate to use the formal language on young children, it’s only appropriate to elders and adults.

Teacher 5 stressed that a teacher needs to be a good role model, so that children follow what she intends to perform and teach them with action songs. T.1 also reiterates the importance of being a role model at home as explained:

“E pei o ita o le faiaoga e faia taga, 1 2 3 poo le a e i o, ae faataitai mai iai tamaiti e pei foi ona fai i le Aoga Aso Sa” (T.5).

It’s me the teacher that models the actions 1 2 3 or a e i o and the children will follow just as they do in Sunday Schools.

“Afai e mananao matua e aoao le Gagana Samoa a le tamaitiiti e tataua la ona avea i latou ma faataitaiga o le tautala i le Gagana Samoa i le fale” (T.1).

If the parents’ aspiration is for the child to speak *Samoan*, they should also be the ones to support it by modelling it at home.

Conversing *talanoa* is a fundamental asset to build literacy skills and further development of the child’s understanding.

“O le galuega a le faiaoga e fa’amalosi ma lagolago e pei o; ‘o lea le lanu o le poloka, tu’ufa’atasi i fa’aputuga; lanu mumu, samasama. O faiaoga e tataua ona faasoa ma talanoa [ma tamaitii] ina ia mafai ona iloa ma malamalama i le gagana e pei o le iloa ma maitau mata’itusi, e vaaia i tulimanu uma o le siosiomaga’ (T.4).

Teacher interactions to encourage and support such as; what is the colour of this block? Grouping Red and Yellow? Educator needs to converse [with the child] to grasp language skills e.g. identify letters, seen on every corner of the environment.

4.3.3 Oral skills:

How teachers taught literacy from the *Samoan* perspectives continued:

Although all these proceedings relate to how to teach literacy as categorised above, I have separated them to avoid a long documentation and for the readers to capture the notion smoothly.

T.4’s response to this question described how educators in Sunday Schools do similar work to *Aoga Amata* teachers to support children’s learning in every part of literacy, a continued process because it is important.

“E galulue faatasi faiaoga, matua ma tamaiti i galuega i le aoga e pei o solo ma tauloto, i totonu o le Aoga Aso Sa, ma fa’aauau pea le faia o nei galuega aua e taua mo le atina’eina o le gagana” (T.4).

Teachers, children, parents and staff members must work together through activities such as poems in Sunday Schools, songs, play some music and repetitions of these activities is essential for language development.

Building relationship through *talanoaga* as T.2 stresses with the child is vital to enhance literacy skills, building a robust relationship, while working or playing. Teachers need to build a warm and caring relationship, so that the child feels at home when he trusts the place, teachers and the environment. As T.2 states:

“O le talatalanoa ma tamaiti e matua taua tele, pe a saunia avanoa e fa’atupu ai le talitonuina e le tamaititi o ia lava ma lona siosiomaga, ma faasoa ai i isi. O nisi taimi e fai ai talanoaga ma tamaiti fuafua i lo latou matutua” (T.2).

The collaboration between teacher and the child is vital, provides opportunities for children to build their confidence to share. Sometimes it is also through conversation with the children at the child’s level.

The responses from T.2 state vitality for teachers to persist speaking the *Samoan* language, through interactions to support children’s literacy learning. The most important practice of action songs is through activities, such as actions that link to the song as children find it easy to remember the song when there are actions to follow.

“Pese fai taga; ‘aeioufg’ e vave ona pue e tamaiti upu o le pese pe a iai ni taga e pei o le aeiou ma le 5 paluni mumu; 1-10 tama na alu e ‘ai magō” (T.2.).

The children find it easier to remember a song when there are actions linked to it. For example, the *Samoan* alphabet song (aeiou), 5 red balloons and 1-10 boy(s) went to eat mango(es).

Meaningful interactions as stressed by T.1 is fundamental when educators provide questions that require the children to think outside their comfort zone instead of a Yes/No question. She explained further the child learns and develops language with the support of an educator when engaged in a meaningful conversation and provide scaffolding throughout the day.

“E tatau i faiaoga ona talanoa ma faasoa ma tamaiti ia latou galuega ma taaloga o fai ina ia faalautele le iloa aemaise le faaaoga o fesili fa’atupu manatu e faaosofia ai lagona o tamaiti e faasoa atili ai a latou galuega” (T.1).

Educators need to converse and collaborate with the children, having meaningful interactions, using open-ended questions to extend their thinking skills.

Storytelling or *fagogo* is all about building vocabulary skills and this is viewed as the most favourable time for most of the children. They always look forward to storytelling or *fagogo* sessions and children must choose stories for each mat time session. Sometimes they choose different stories and if we have time, we narrate them all, to meet their interests and expectations as stressed by T.2:

“O nisi taimi e faamatala le tala ia Sina ma le tuna tala faa fagogo a Samoa i aso la, poo le tala ia Tui ma Tui ma Tui; poo le tala ia Tupuivao ma lona tina o Taufau O nisi taimi ua tuu le avanoa e faamatala ai a latou tala mai tusi poo galuega” (T.2).

Sometimes at story time we prescribed stories or *Samoan* legends such as the story about *Sina* and the *tuna*; a legend about *Tafitofau ma Ogafau*; or *Tupuivao* and his mother *Taufau*. Sometimes we allow them to tell us a story from a book or from their artwork.

“O le faamatala o tala ma fai o fesili e lu’i ai le mafaufau o le tamaitiiti ma faalautele atili ai lona fiafia ma faamatala atili ai pea ona fiafiaga” (T.4).

Through storytelling and asking questions challenge the child’s thinking skills, extend the child’s interest further and enable them to explain their ideas.

Mat time

For T.1, the mat time session is another teaching strategy we interact with children more effectively and entertainingly. Sometimes we read a book, of their choice rewarding a well - behaved child to choose a storybook to read or even dancing to the music, to make it lively and enjoyable. Sometimes we ask the children to choose a song and we sing it together. We interact with the children effectively while engaging in a mat time activity, a great strategy to boost oral language.

“O le taimi e nonofo ai i lalo mo le Lotu, ou te iloa o le taimi aupito sili lea ona taua, aua e nonofo faatasi ai tamaiti ma faiaoga e pei o se aiga e tasi, ma tatalo faatasi, talanoa, ma fa’aa’oa’o tu ma aga faasamoa e pei o le tatalo, usu pese, tauloto se fuaiupu mai le Tusi Paia. O le talitonuga faaleagaga, ua faataua ma atina’eina i totonu o Aoga Amata o se vaega o le faasamoa (tu ma aganuu ma talitonuga faasamoa)” (T.1).

The time we all sit down for the *Lotu* at mat time is our most significant practice because teachers and children gather together as one family, to pray, talk, interact, and practice cultural rituals, or spiritual practices, like prayer (*lotu*) singing and reciting memory verses from the Bible. Our spiritual belief as Christians is acknowledged daily and is promoted in our *Aoga Amata* as part of our *Fa’asamoa* (*Samoan* cultural values/beliefs).

Poems, Rhymes, identifying, and naming are all integrated in oral literacy practice. These literacy strategies we practice almost every day and most importantly, the learning environment is full of literate resources. The child explores and accesses to these resources without restraining them, so that the child choose and explore (T.3).

“I totonu o le Aoga e tele ina faaaoga tauloto, solo ma pese mai le tele o isi o auala e aoao ai le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi. ’O le faaigoa lea o mea’ ai o loo maua i le siosiomaga. O le iloa lea e le tamaititi faamatala pe faitau fo’i uiga o mea i lona siosiomaga, e pei o ni ata, oni mea faitino e vaai iai po’o ni tusitusiga ma valivaliga a tamaiti” (T.3).

At *Aoga Amata* teachers, children and parents must work together to teach literacy skills through, poems, rhymes, songs and many more. By naming some of the foods they have around them through various skills like narrating (telling a story) painting and drawing, singing and dancing reading and sketching identify what is around him such as pictures, and visual resources.

Working from home was another method that T.3 stressed aimed to revisit the child’s work from home as recognised as a strategy to teach literacy. She often practices this method with the children, not only to recap a few words in the *Samoan* language, but to be able to describe work she had attended to at home in the previous night. She reiterates that:

“O le toe faamanatu ma toe faamatalaina o mea na tutupu poo ni tala sa fai e aoao ai le gagana Samoa ina ia aumai aoaoga o loo maua mai i aiga e toe faamanatu ma faatino i le aoga” (T.3).

Through reflection, sometimes through narration, reporting or retelling activities from the previous day on child’s work brought from home, to teach the language.

Social skills as T.3 specified the child’s listening and speaking skills are important in literacy learning and that is why we intentionally use strategies such as poems and rhymes to practice children listening and speaking skills. This enables them to be familiar with the sounds of words, and the pronunciation in the *Samoan* language.

“E faaaoga tauloto ma solo e aoao ai le faalogo, faaleoga o upu ma o latou uiga ae fuafua fo’i i fiafiaga o tamaiti. O isi taimi e fuafua i mea tutupu i aso ta’itasi e pei o le Aso o Tina ma isi” (T.3).

We use poems and rhymes to practice listening skills, pronunciation of words, understand the meaning of words and speaking. Sometimes they can be based on anecdotal and impromptu events and activities that crop up along the way like Mother’s Day for example.

The teaching strategy based on events throughout the year gives the child opportunities to establish his own learning, expressing his own ideas helps to build social skills and self confidence in himself. Often the child expects a reward after a great effort and the teacher provides a sticker or stamps to acknowledge the child's achievement.

“O le mafai e le tamaitiiti ona faaputupu, tuu faatasi alagaoa ma faaoga ana metotia ma lona iloa e faia ai ana galuega” (T.3).

It is where a child can arrange and organise things and ideas in his own understanding thinking and creativity.

More particularly, teachers regard free play as fundamental for the child to be exposed to spontaneous play where he/she engages in active thinking and to transcend ideas into words, while interacting in free play activities. The child tends to explore every corner of the physical environment choosing own means of play that is meaningful to him/her.

“Ou te iloa o le tele o taimi e taaalo ai tamaiti i taaloga saoloto ma asiasi atu ai i isi itu o le siosiomaga e saili ma suesue ai talu ai o le taalo i taaloga saoloto e taua mo le aoaoina o tamaiti” (T.1).

I think most of the time children are always having free play and they get to investigate, explore other areas of the centre because free play is good for learning.

Teacher 4 also stresses that pretend play is fundamental to drive thinking skills of a child. Imaging the character that he is representing, including actions, words and props that represent the character and perform it either in verbal or non-verbal communication. Verbal and non-verbal language is utilised while positioning in pretend play activity.

“O taaloga po'o gaoioiga faafoliga e faaola ai le mafaufau o le tamaitiiti” (T.4).

Pretend play to stimulate the child's cognitive skills.

Teacher 4 indicates that excursion and trips are recognised as enthusiastic times that ignite oral literacy and language while on exploration, especially when going to places based on the child's interests. The environment must be stimulating full of colourful pictures, shapes, sizes, numbers, letters, naming objects and animals. Anything children see and make connections with literacy. Adult's interaction is required to support the learning while on trips and excursion as mentioned by T.4:

“Faalautele i tafaoga ma maimoaga, ia pe ave e matua tamaiti e fa'atietie i le taavale ma talatalanoa iai” (T.4).

To extend outside the centre such as trips and excursion so that parents enable to collaborate and share with the children while [out on the road].

The environment is the most crucial site for the child's exploration that also inspires literacy drive. Sometimes set the environment and how the child makes connections with the environment, what was he doing, to reveal each child's piece of work done while engaging in the environment and provide resources as T.4 explores further:

“Faamasani tamaiti e taaalo i soo se tulimanu o le siosiomaga, aua o loo vaaia lava mata'itusi o le literacy i lanu, foliga o siepi (shapes) pe a fai e fesoasoani le faiaoga e talanoa ma faasoa ina ia tapu'e le gagana tautala a le tamaititi'. 'E manaomia le oa ma le tamaoaiga o le siosiomaga i alagaoa ina ia mafai ona fesoota'i iai le fanau, i suesuega, ma sailiiliga ma faauiga le siosiomaga, ma sailiili i mea o loo mananao e suesue ma fia iloa” (T.4).

Children are freely engaging in every corner of the environment as literacy is seeing through letters, colour and shapes if the educator encourages the child to converse to grasps language skills, numbers, colour additional, minus through singing 5 red balloons. The environment needs to be rich in resources for the child to make connections, investigate, and make meaning of the environment and search for what they want to find out.

From T.4's perceptions she identifies literacy as seen in everything within the child's environment. For the child's point of view, it is the development of his whole self as prescribed:

“O le atina'eina o le mafaufau e aofia ai le atina'eina o le malosia, mafaufau ma le agaga” (T.4).

Literacy is about everything; cognitive development including intellectual, physical, and spiritual.

Reading

Reading is seen by T.2 as a vital component in literacy development especially when a child is exposed with books that have no words in it. The child explains the same story in her own words, the characters in the story refer to her own immediate family to make connections with friends, at school and at home. It is not only enhancing literacy skills but also builds confidence within the child to read more books. She noticed one child who tells a story from those books referring to her own family and herself. Sometimes she reads it again and includes her friends and cousins in the *Aoga Amata*.

“I totonu o le Aoga e tele ina, fai faitauga tusi, taaloga, e pei o le tini

e faaaoga ai ata ma upu, poo talanoaga foi ma tamaiti” (T.2).

In *Aoga*, children read books or play with bingo/tini game where the caller calls and explain the picture and players match it with what they have on their bingo boards.

Teacher 5 stressed the importance of taking children to the library to explore so many different books to choose from. But it is an exercise to entertain themselves through exploration in the environment, while visiting the library at the same time, reading to learn and understand. This is a positive start for the child while in his early stages of reading to engage with different varieties of books to choose from, that could stimulate interest further in reading. She reiterates further:

“Ou te faamalosiava lava le ave o tamaiti i le fale tusi e faitau tusi ma faaaoga tusi o le faletusi. Ia nofo ai le faiaoga e vaai le faitau tusi ma ia le ova atu le aofa’i o tamaiti i le 1-10” (T.5).

Take the children to the library. I encourage to take children to the library to read books and make good use of library books’ Educator needs to oversee the reading ensures the child ratio is within 1-10.

Having the correct child ratio is very significant for safety as well as the effective result of the activity undertaken as explained:

“Nofo ai le faiaoga ma tilotilo i le ratio i le faitau tusi, aua nei toatele i lau group ia 1-10 ina ia mafai ona vaaia lelei mo le saogalemu” (T.5).

Educator needs to stay put while a group of children occupies in reading and ensure the child ratio maintains to 10 children for their safety.

T.5 comments that *Samoan* resources such as alphabet chart and other visual resources are fundamental for learning literacy as children’s learning progresses well when visual resources are provided.

“A’oa’o le Pi Tautau Faasamoa ma faaaoga alagaoa mai le natura e aoao ai” (T.5).

Teach them with the *Samoan* alphabet chart and natural resources.

It is clearly identified by T.5 the importance of visual resources for the *Samoan* children as she understands from her own experience, if there are no visual resources to support

teaching, children will not learn anything. They also become bored and lose interest when a teacher just talks without movements/actions. She reiterates further:

“O tamaiti Samoa e lelei tele pea iai mea faitino e pei o le aoga Aso Sa e faasino le Pi Tautau e iloa ai le A aua a leai se faatinoga e matua le iloa lava e tamaiti le gaoioiga a le faiaoga la e fai. A’oa’o le Pi Tautau Faasamoa ma faaaoga alagaoa mai le natura e aoao ai” (T.5).

Samoan children do better when applying visual activities like at Sunday School. We provide *Pi Tautau* and indicate the letter A. If there are no visual resources children would not understand what you are trying to teach them.

T.5 reveals that ascertaining natural resources found everywhere in the playground, at home, and it costs nothing. Just like what we always acquire in *Samoa*, when we rely entirely on natural resources to teach literacy, counting in numeracy, because they are colourful, natural and can enrich literacy learning such as oral and writing both at home and in *Aoga Amata*.

“E a’oa’o e faaaoga alagaoa e maua mai i le natura ma le siosiomaga o le Aoga Amata aua e leai se tupe e faatau ai e pei o: ma’ama’a po’o iliili, lau o laau, ma isi e mafai ona atina’e ai le aoaoina o le faitau ma le tusitusi a le tamaitiiti’ (T.5).

To teach them by utilising natural resources from the environment of the *Aoga Amata* because it costs nothing such as; gravel, falling leaves, and other materials that drive literacy learning in *Aoga Amata*.

4.3.4 Intentional Activities

Asking questions was identified by teacher T.3 as a strategy to elevate literacy skills and language for the child. There are different approaches to use questions such as from the child’s work when giving the opportunity to explain and acknowledge his work while the rest of the class ask questions about the child’s drawing. T. 4 asking questions, ignites the child’s thinking as well as an effective strategy for the teacher to reflect on what the next phase of learning would be as stressed by both teachers is:

“E a’oa’o e ala i fesili ma faatalanoaga ma tamaiti. E fa’amatala e le tamaitiiti lana galuega ma ana ideas i ana lava faiga ae fai e a’u le fesili e lu’itau ai le mafaufau o le tamaitiiti ae aua ne’i iva” (T.3).

Through questioning and discussion (*talanoa*) with the children. The child explains his ideas in his own way with prompting questions from me.

“E tatau ona fesili le faiaoga o lea le isi laasaga o le aoaoina o le tamaitiiti e iai ona manaoga faapitoa. E le tatau ona tusia ni ripoti e faavaivai ai le tamaitiiti ma lona aiga, ae tatau ona faamalosi’au i lona taumafai ua oo iai” (T.4).

We need to ask questions where I can take this child who has special needs, as we know very well who is ready for the next level and who is not. You should never write any negative comment in the child’s portfolio, but at least say in a way to encourage and support the child’s effort. The teacher must write a positive feedback to empower the child who has special needs to ensure that he/she is ready for the next level.

The significance of using open-ended questions as T.5 expressed through interaction or during group discussion by:

“Faitau tusi, talanoa faasoa ma tamaiti faaoga fesili e tatala ai mafaufau o tamaiti ina ia aua nei iva. A fesili tamaiti i le faiaoga e tatau lava ona tali” (T.5).

Read and discuss with the children asking open-ended question to encourage him/her to use thinking skills and not bored. When children ask questions, teacher needs to answer.

Teacher 5 reiterates the importance of repetition as young children respond well to activities when repeated. Actions and engagement take place in the *Aoga Amata*. Repetition is required for a child to learn and be acquainted with new movements, songs, rhymes, dances or even a story. (T.5).

“O le fai nei fai taeao, faifai pea. E le tasi loa se faatinoga ona iloa loa lea e tatau ona toe fai ma toe fai seia iloa; like repetition” (T.5).

Repetition needs to be continued for some time. Children do not learn anything in one go, repetition is required until they know what they are learning. They need to acquire what they are learning by repeating the ideas from time to time.

4.3.5 Writing, drawing and writing stories

Teachers perceive drawing and writing stories as fundamental in teaching literacy. Sometimes teachers mismatch what the child thought about his artwork therefore it is significant for the child to tell and describe his story from his artwork and drawing (T.2). Further outlined the importance of writing and listening to the child’s story, to allow the child to think, explain and acknowledge his achievement through his drawing.

“Tusiga ata ma tusiga tala, poo fa’amatalaga e uiga i le ata ma tuu le avanoa i le tamaitiiti e faamatala ai lana tala poo lana ata, o isi ia auala o loo a’oa’oina ai le tusitusi ma le faitautusi” (T.2).

Drawing pictures and writing stories or text messages, letting the children tell a story about their drawings are some of the strategies we use to teach literacy.

The observations and assessments of a child's work and progress has undertaken while the child initiates own learning and develops through collaboration and discussion with an educator T. 1 explains:

“O le maitauina o galuega ma taaloga a tamaiti e mafai ai e le faiaoga ona tilotilo i le tele o aoaoga 'ese'ese e faaaoga i le aoaoina o tamaiti mai totonu o lona siosiomaga i le aoga. O le a fesoasoani tele lea i ana tala tusitusia ma le faalauteleina o le iloa o le tamaitiiti” (T.1).

Observing and assessing of children's play learning allow the educator to explore teaching strategies and learning environments that could promote their learning capabilities.

Preparation for transition to Primary school is seen as a strategy to learn how to write and for the child to be able to hold the pen when he goes to Primary school, and therefore be ready and set to move on to the next step of learning.

“E a'oa'o fo'i le tusiga o lona igoa ma lona fa'aiu, tusiga foi o numera 1-10 ia oo atu i le taimi e alu ai i le Aoga Tulaga Lua ua masani ma iloa ona tusi lona igoa” (T.5).

Writing numbers 1-10 or more as preparation for the next step of learning when he goes to Primary School. The child practices writing his first and his last name as well.

Technology is utilised by almost all the families in New Zealand because it is accessible, however having access to devices and technology at a young age is a worry for some teachers who encourage writing and reading to young children in *Aoga Amata*. As T.5 responds:

“O le faafitauli, ua faamoemoe tele tamaiti i le faaaogaina o komipiuta, ma telefoni e omiomi. O nisi o i latou e le iloa aumai ni tusi mai le faletusi. A fai atu e faitau mai le tusi, ae faitau mai i le telefoni” (T.5).

The problem is children rely on utilizing computer and keyboard and texts. Some of them are unfamiliar with books from the library, when you ask them to read a book, they read from the mobile phone instead.

4.3.6 Summary

The teachers and parents' perceptions of literacy are the same. Thus, the process of doing things in the *Samoan* way is all encompassing in the relationship dimension, of culture, language, and spirituality, the centre in the teaching of literacy for the *Samoan* child. Spirituality is seen as a duty to abide by and feels imperfect if one fails to employ in his/her daily practice. Such practices amalgamate in spiritual practice, are all contributing to the literacy development of a child.

Cultural and moral values, language and identity of the children are significant to development of their learning and understanding. Parents expect that *Aoga Amata* provide learning such as speaking the language, understanding some of the (*tu ma aga faaalolo*) simple respectful aspect of language, and is why the children are enrolled in *Aoga Amata*. Formal language is seen as crucial for the child to understand the meaning of simple words and how to apply them in everyday life. Although there is some confusion if formal language should be applied to young children.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The role of parents and teachers in *Aoga Amata* and at home is imperative and more so when both have a clear view of how to enhance the child's literacy skills in both environments. Asking questions are crucial; this invigorates the cognitive abilities of the child, developing language and vocabulary skills. Open-ended questions are also significant which allows the child to think outside his/her comfort zone and explain ideas and thoughts using own words, that revitalise cognitive thinking skills. Meaningful and useful interactions are also vital for literacy development when educators extend the conversation further by asking open-ended questions and discuss results through experimentation, trials and actions taken. Writing space is provided at home by some parents for the child to be able to grasp writing skills before going to Primary school. Parents believe that the child should be exposed to reading and writing skills at an early stage of life. This teaching was based on learning experience derived at home in *Samoa*, taught by parents and was successful.

Furthermore, story-telling and narration are all fundamental in literacy development not only to enhance language and vocabulary, but also create reflections when referring to the child's own family and friends, most often relates to prompt experiences. Drawing artwork and pictures when providing opportunities to describe the child's piece of

drawing or text message and acknowledging is also an effective strategy for gaining literacy. The child often explains his/her story based on what is on his/her mind simultaneously, either making connections with family and parents, or siblings and maybe a newborn baby or any character of interest. All these experiences emerge when they tell stories from drawings and text messages. Language, vocabulary and cognitive skills used in story- telling are essential strategies for literacy achievement. Exploring the environment and researching based on the child's interest are also strategies not only to enhance literacy skills but to explore further, endorsing thinking skills through imagination while investigating the environment. From the child's perception, it is the development of the whole self; physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, literacy and language development.

Several parents and teachers also work out several ways in preparation for the transition to Primary school. Learning at *Aoga Amata* has an impact on the development providing a smooth shift between two dimensions of learning. The effect of teaching literacy and learning is significant if the suggested learning approaches are intact and well executed providing a positive start for the child in the future. Thus, the eloquent contribution of participants that have been displayed in this research study is extremely exceptional which are signified in this quote "*Ua saa faaoti le utu a le faimea*", as participants gave it their all.

Chapter 5: *O le lupe na faia mai le fuifui* – Discussion

This proverb means the pigeon detached from the rest of the flock.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together and discusses the findings of *talanoaga* interviews with the five parents and five teachers in this study. As noted, the parents were diverse in regards of their age group, gender; their first language was *Samoan*; and length of time in New Zealand, except for one parent who is New Zealand born. They were a well-educated group as each holds a tertiary qualification and were employed at the time of this study. Likewise, teachers are also diverse concerning their ages, the length of time and service working as teachers in *Aoga Amata* and Primary schools. This ranged between 5-30 years of experience; two were born in New Zealand. All teachers studied in tertiary institutions to accomplish their degrees and teaching certificates to be able to work as an *Aoga Amata* educators in New Zealand. These factors have influenced how parents and teachers clarified literacy; what home teaching strategies a child brought into the *Aoga Amata*; and how teachers enhance these to empower literacy skills of a *Samoan* child in *Aoga Amata*. In this chapter, I will discuss my findings in two parts. Part one I will bring together the results of the parents and the findings from the teachers drawing on similarities and differences in the use of literacies. Part Two of my discussion will refer to the literature, the national and international definition of literacy. I will take my discussion findings to identify the most critical methods adopted by both teachers and parents through interactions in *Aoga Amata* and in the homes and families of the *Samoan* child, and how these methods encourage literacy drives within both domains of the child.

5.2 Literacy

The term literacy refers to the “written text use or symbol, reading and writing skills” (Tanielu, 2004, p. 33). The parents’ perception of literacy was the “ability to read, write, understand, describe, and make meaning of things, communicate, listen, through action, and speak the child’s first language the *Samoan* language”. According to UNESCO (2006), literacy is listening, talking, reading, viewing, writing, visual, and critical literacies is integrated as part of literacy.

The teachers’ perceptions of literacy were the ability to “read, write, speak in his/her first language, recognize, describe and identify as a *Samoan*, letters, numbers and *Pi Tautau*, make meaning of things, actions taken, verbal and non-verbal communication, critical

literacy, everything in the environment, cognitive development, including intellectual, spiritual, and physical”. The MOE (2010-2015) added “being literate and numerate is the ability to read, write, listen, think creatively” (p. 14) and the inclusive of mathematics (MOE, 2010, 2012; Tanielu, 2004; UNESCO, 2006) as part of literacy.

The views of parents and teachers as to what literacy is to the *Samoan* people justified similarities in the perception of literacy. That literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, action taken, identify, communicate, and make meaning in the environment including cognitive, spiritual and physical. However, the process of teaching literacy in the *Samoan* way is integral with culture, language, spirituality and relationships overarching the literacy learning of the *Samoan* child as explained in the following.

5.2.1 Spirituality / *Lotu*

The main themes raised from participants’ literacy were spirituality, culture, language, and relationships. According to our *talanoaga* here is how parents and teachers teach literacy at home and the centre.

In the literature review, *Lotu* is part of the child’s life as Dickie (2010), recalled as a place of essential learning literacy skills. Eight participants mentioned spiritual practice is critical in the children’s lives. Parents express extensively words such as reading the Bible, family *Lotu*, prayers, singing, reciting verses from the Bible, asking questions and participating in *Lotu Tamaiti* (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 1995; Tanielu, 2004; Toso, 2013). Teachers also mentioned words such as sacred, spiritual beliefs, worship, and gathering together (Toso, 2013). Spirituality is the most significant factor in the life of people as they carried through, taking responsibility (Du Plessis & Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2009), and guiding their lifetime existence (Pere, 1988) as divulged that spiritual connections guides and provides protection, therefore not feel deserted and lonely (Tui Atua, 2009b) as we all connect to our inner part of the cosmos.

Participants discuss the importance of *Lotu* to start and end the day because it is our culture, beliefs, and part of our *fa’asamoa* (Maugatai, 2018; Toso, 2013), as teachers expressed without *Lotu* our life is incomplete. The children need to learn and be exposed to Spiritual learning. It is our obligation (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Wilson, 2017) and responsibility to assign spiritual practice in life. It is a collaboration that guides life (Tui Atua, 2003), but also a connection between self and God who is within oneself. Again, the view of both parents and teachers illustrates that the literacy practice of a *Samoan*

child integrates into the spiritual teachings, which is significant for the *Samoan* child's wellbeing.

Nevertheless, not everyone believes or welcomes sacred practice in their services as others see it as an ineffective approach for children to be involved in religious practice. Spiritual practice is non-secular and is not part of the New Zealand curriculum in learning.

5.2.2 Culture

Samoan culture constructs the life of a *Samoan* person (Apulu, 2010) whereas Mulitalo-Lauta (2000), adds that the *Samoan* culture is the complete make-up of the *Samoan* life. All 10 participants talk extensively about the *faasamoa* and *tu ma aga faasamoa*. The words used by parents such as “*faaloalo, talitonuga, faasamoa, tu ma aga, a'oa'o, faafetai, faamolemole, tulou lava*” (Apulu, 2010). When we think, speak, talk, and walk, whatever we do in our daily life it has to align with cultural values, spiritual sense, relationships and language of respect, especially with interactions with the *Samoan* people.

Teachers, on the other hand, the words they used were “*taofi mau* embrace, *aganuu, faasinomaga, tofi, tu ma aga faasamoa, talitonuga faasamoa*”. The culture of the *Samoan* child is nurtured and promoted, so that the child feels secured and feels at home as Fairbairn-Dunlop (2015a) states “Home is our culturally safe place; our homeland was our safe place” (p. 3). The author further states that “we learnt the place of family, faith, relationship, language and being *Samoan*” (p.3). The ECE curriculum is a framework that acknowledges the cultural perspectives and must embed in *Te Whāriki* (Te One, 2013; Ward, 2016), to guide the learning and culture of the children. According to Purkey (1967) when the child feels good about himself, when he understands his culture and identity contained in learning.

5.2.3 Language

The existence of the *Samoan* language rest on today's generation (Wilson, 2017). The identity of the *Samoan* child carries through from generation to generation of his family, community and the country (Tamasese, et al., 2005; Tui Atua, 2003). All 10 participants view the *Samoan* language as significant to speak the first language, the *Samoan* language. Parents used words such as “*gagana tautala, gagana muamua, gagana Samoa, a'oa'o, fesootai (ga), talanoa(ga)*”. The values of the *Gagana Samoa* are the heart of beliefs and practice (Wilson, 2017). Parents also stressed, “Children spent more time in

Aoga Amata than home, expecting educators to teach *Samoan* literacy and the *Samoan* language in *Aoga Amata* the main reason why children brings to *Aoga Amata*". Ete (2013) explains *Aoga Amata* is a place of early intervention for the *Samoan* children to enrich in their own culture and language learning development in the first five years of life. Tagoilelagi (2013) describes *gagana Samoa, tu ma aganuu* especially Christianity to be reconciled in ways to enhance, and facilitate learning and development. Tagoilelagi-Leota (2017), adds to ensure the learning of the *Samoan* language and culture in all curriculum and subjects.

The teachers' notion as said predominantly as "*talanoa, faatasi, faamatala(ga), malamalama, gagana masani, gagana lē leoa, iloa faatonuga, gagana Samoa*". Solofa-Viliamu (2018), explains the *Samoan* language is the gift from God for the *Samoan* people. Only the *Samoan* people speak the language, no one else does. It is respectful, nurturing hearts, forgiving and, it is spiritual (Solofa-Viliamu, 2018). Tui Atua (2005b) talks explicitly about language as a sense of belonging, and that language must be maintained as he quoted; "when a language dies, histories die with it and identities change" (p. 28). Teachers further stressed, "if parents' aspiration is for the child to learn *Samoan*, they should also be the ones who role model it at home". Further reiterates that language is your identity in this world, and recognisable by others when speaking your language of identity. This is also supported by Utumapu (1998) because the acquisition of language should be maintained and consistent in order to provide a good result. Both teachers and parents view language acquisition are similar or the same except the use of *gagana le leoa* the non-verbal language as sometimes used by the children to respond to others and the environment.

5.2.4 Relationship

The child-parent relationship is crucial and needs to bond with love (Tui Atua, 2006). Parents regarded this role very seriously and said, building good rapport communication, being at the child's level, teaching literacy, utilised different tools, playing with toys, and *talanoa* face to face. Building an instant bond and relationship takes the child to the next level of feeling a sense of place and home, trusting his needs and wants will be met results in better learning (MOE, 2017). The National Scientific Council on the Development Child (2009) believed that teachers are the centre of building a relationship with the child at school. However, McLaughlin, Aspden, and McLachlan (2015) argue that establishing

a relationship with the child, community, parents and teachers are all critical in the child's learning.

The teachers' views in building a relationship explain such a "collaboration between teacher and the child, as vital, for it provides opportunity, confidence to share, conversation, at a child's level". Utumapu-McBride et al., (2008) focus on the healthy relationship that has an impact on success in learning. This includes seeking how to meet the needs and wants of the children to support learning and achievement in school, as well as the relationship with others and the outside world (ERO, 2011; MOE, 1995, 1996a). Building a trusting relationship with the child and being confident in the child's ability to learn, is crucial because if the child does not trust the educator the child's learning will be poor (Spiller, 2013). On the other hand, parents and school relationship is seen as a key to the child's success in learning as such relationship formed with a "number of factors including communication, relationship and roles" (Gorinski & Fraser, 2006, p. 16). The views of parents and teachers aligns with the literature thus Spiller (2013) proposes adverse outcomes occurs if the child does not trust the child-teacher relationship.

5.2.5 Social skills

Social skills are the development of cognition when the child builds relationships with others, learning and trying out new ideas, with things and the environment (MOE, 2017). For the *Samoan* child social and the divine connection is seen as paramount (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017). Parents highly valued attaining social skills and explain as "actively engaging, self-esteem, self-confidence, family interactions, social skills and problem solve". The social relationship between child-adult interactions build on, collaborate and achieve results (Nunes, 2007). Literacy occurs when the communication of ethical, self-control and community proportion dependent on teens' schooling and their continual contribution in the community measures develops self-esteem and build confidence in their environment (Durati, 1981).

Teachers also discuss extensively the social skills achieved through "poems and rhymes, practice listening skills, pronunciation of words, understand the meaning of words and speaking, anecdotal and impromptu events and activity". Dickie (2008) maintained that literacy is social practice and that educators acknowledge the child's home method teaching literacies and merge with learning at school. Social and cultural identity are the key aspects of religious practice (Dickie, 2008).

Overall, my study confirms that literacy of the *Samoan* child is underpinned in relationships, language, cultural practices, and spirituality overarching the process of literacy learning for the *Samoan* child.

5.3 How literacy is taught and learnt

5.3.1 Oral Language

Oral language and traditions like *Samoan* as Tui Atua, (2004) resounds as tools to recognise the history of the *Samoan* people. All five parents addressed teaching practice through “prayers, reciting memory verses, rhymes and poems, counting, identifying, describe, oral language, make connections and relationships are all critical in learning literacy”. The history that has been passed down from generation to generation through word of mouth considered to be connected to literacy skills (Kesi, 2014; Nunes, 2007; Tui Atua, 2004, 2005a). Siilata (2014), recognises oral language and literacy have connections.

Five teachers discussed oral language quite extensively using words such as “repetition, revise, explain, pronunciation, naming, letters, numbers and shapes”. *Samoan* people relied on the verbal method of teaching children many years ago (Tanielu, 2004). Oral language in conversation is the rich method utilised to educate the *Samoan* people in those days (Nunes, 2007). Similarly, with MOE (1996c) *Taiala mo Aoga Amata* emphasises the significance of obtaining oral language skills first before reading and writing skills occurs. Dickie, (2010) also addresses the importance of rote learning and acting out as integral as part of literacy learning. Whereas Galuvao (2016) further signifies it is the institute’s concern that children must be verbally active, as well as engaged in written and visual support, to understand and make comprehensive decisions.

Both parents and teachers’ views of oral language aligned and divulged for literacy learning as oral language needs to occur first before proposing other literacy skills.

5.3.2 Formal language or *Gagana Faaaloalo*

Samoan language is our identity, *tu ma aga faaaloalo, amio tausaaafia* (Wilson, 2017). It is always expected to use *gagana faaaloalo* when interacting with elders and adults at home (Kolone-Collins, 2010). Only one parent singled out the importance of formal language *gagana faaaloalo* using the word ‘*aao*’ (hands). Kolone-Collins (2010) explained the use of *gagana faaaloalo* to demonstrate manners of respect for the elders. The usual practice parents nurture the learning of respectful language in their children’s

interactions to be able to identify, learn and understand to encounter mutual respect (Tui Atua, as cited in Peteru & Percival, 2010). Other researchers address it is essential that *Samoan* children understand the basic *tu ma aga faaaloalo Samoan* way (Esera, 2012; Kolone-Collins, 2010; Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Wilson, 2017) so they know how to perform when interacting with adults. As Maugatai (2018) signifies the use of language not only to live with it but to use it for the betterment of others, therefore children, need to use the *gagana faaaloalo*, understand the meaning and be able to use it in daily lives. This concept needs further research.

5.3.3 Singing, Action Songs, dance

Singing and performing action songs that coordinate with words is a usual method that supports literacy learning (MOE, 2017). All five parents mentioned, singing as part of literacy learning such as; “Sunday school songs, *Aoga Amata* songs, action songs, and church hymn songs”. The MOE (2017) discuss singing songs, drama, and music brings delight and amusement to children recognising and understanding cultural activities and performance.

Three teachers used singing and action songs to teach literacy using words such as “song and rhymes; music, action songs, counting and alphabet songs, singing helps builds vocabulary, literacy skills, most effectively, songs that are meaningful, numbers, colours, alphabet songs, the weather, days of the week, stimulating social interactions and enjoyment”. Tui Atua (2005a) argues that our traditional chants and dance are vital for personal development. The mind and soul of the child relate to the songs and actions when both go together (Kolone-Collins, 2010). Parents and teachers have similar intentions in singing, and action songs as part of literacy drive.

5.3.4 Storytelling / *Fagogo*

Storytelling and retelling stories are part of oral tradition (Tagoilelagi, 1995). One parent signifies storytelling and retelling stories as “developed through storytelling and retelling stories from the Bible”. *Fagogo* play a vital part in the historical stories in the past to tell and retell from the past generation in an impression of retelling to the future generations (Tuisuga-le-taua, 2009). Kolone-Collins (2010) emphasise that *fagogo* telling stories not only place the children in extreme rational and endurance but also tests the child’s listening skills.

Teachers also describe *fagogo* in detail using *Samoan* legends such as “*Sina* and the eel, *Tafitofau* and *Ogafau*, *Tupuivao* and his mother *Taufau*, children telling a story from the

book or artwork, challenges their thinking skills, extend interests, and explain ideas”. Kolone-Collins (2010), the significance of storytelling and retelling stories of *Samoan* history not only connect the child to history, but also support language development as well as cognitive skills. *Fagogo* continuously contribute to logical emotional and ethical development that carries and articulates the purpose of story or storytelling (Kolone-Collins, 2010). Participants also view *fagogo* and storytelling as building vocabulary skills, literacy skills and encourages progress in thinking skills simultaneously. This part of learning is seen as the most favourable time for most of the children in the *Aoga Amata* (Kolone-Collins, 2010), results in stimulating critical thinking through visualisations and language attainment. Both teachers and parents have the same insight that *fagogo* contributes to literacy gain and cognitive development.

5.3.5 Asking Questions

Asking questions could facilitate children in an oral discussion (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017). One participant stresses teaching literacy through “asking simple questions from the Bible, *Mataupu Silisili* booklet”. This notion concurs with the perceptions as when asking questions, it allows the mind to search for answers from different perspectives. Therefore providing answers could be interesting (Mauigoa-Tekene, Hogan & Howie, 2013).

Two teachers deliberated asking questions, strategies in details as such “through question *talanoa*, explains his ideas, in his own way, prompting the question, where to take the child from here, encourage and support, positive feedback, empower the child’s effort, ready for the next level”. Tagoilelagi (1995), emphasised asking questions is a structure to foster the child’s interest and attention in the task at hand and maintain throughout the session. Tanielu (2004) also reaffirms asking simple questions with the language associated with it could provide a further way to sustain a conversation. Others emphasised asking questions is critical literacy (Freire, 1972; Mauigoa-Tekene, 2006).

One teacher considered open-ended questions such as, “asking an open-ended question, encourage to use thinking skills, the teacher needs to answer” (Mauigoa-Tekene et al., 2013), asking open ended-questions ignite the child’s thinking and sustain the conversation (Tanielu, 2004). It is not ideal to ask a question when you already know the answer because both the teacher and the child need to find the solution and discuss it further. According to Galuvao (2016), asking difficult questions would sometimes cause frustration in children and discouragement in their participation. It is important to ask questions based on the child’s level of competency otherwise asking questions beyond

the child's capabilities would hinder his/her response and hence lose interest to participate (Galuvao, 2016). Teachers only focused on asking open-ended questions and questions that recollect the children's thinking, expecting an answer that supports literacy drive.

5.3.6 Family interactions

Utumapu (1998), argues that it is within family interactions where language development occurs at home and therefore not need to look anywhere else. Three parents recall the importance of family interactions such as “make the connection, life experience, expose to oral language, discussion, environment, excursion, counting, reading *Samoan* and English alphabet”. The role of the family at home is imperative (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2009; Utumapu, 1998), because they contribute to the learning and provide a positive effect on teaching.

One-teacher talks about parents' support at home speaking the language and using words such as “role modelling, support, child to learn”. Others (Gronski & Fraser, 2006; Utumapu, 1998) support this notion as language learning at home is the place where a child speaks the *Samoan* language. Most parents concentrate and put the children's education first for future success (Utumapu, 1998). The acquisition of language through interactions at home if continuously used and spoken by the family and maintain it as it is not automatically occurring (Wilson, 2017), the reason why family interaction is profound. Both teachers and parents value family interactions as vital.

5.4 Reading

McLachlan et al., (2013a) emphasises reading certain books and resources increase vocabulary in children's learning. All five parents talked extensively about “reading as the foremost skill, the heart of the matter, a foundation of learning, and understanding, inherited in *Samoa*, critical, learn and explore further, speaking and listening, stimulates, and interest”. Tanielu (2004) consider reading the Bible as the “best written *Samoan*” (and those who are reading the Bible also “learning good *Samoan*” (p. 303).

All five teachers express reading as the key to learning and clarify as “reading, understanding, narrating, skills, identifying the letters, recognising numbers, making meaning, describing feelings, and language”. The Bible reading activity is the most essential to the *Samoan* people not only as guidance to learning the Bible stories but a start to other reading materials and activities (Tagoilelagi, 1995). The MOE (2009) express reading and writing is part of intellectual learning activities. It is essential for

children to be exposed to reading early in life through social interactions with books and other learning materials (Parlakian, 2003). On the other hand, reading books beyond the child's ability could lead to frustration, (Galuvao, 2016) and therefore may become uninterested and refuse to participate. Teachers and parents view reading as the most significant aspect of the child's learning to be literate, a vital skill for future learning.

5.5 Writing, drawing and writing stories

Siilata (2014) emphasises educators connect learning into metaphors and proverbs of the child's language. In such a way, expecting children to associate closely to their understanding of active story time script. All five parents discuss writing as utmost important for the child to achieve and express an "ability to write and communicate, develop literacy, make meaning of things, messages, written words, and know how to write". Johnson (2000) indicates that educators need to focus with sincere to what students write and the message behind it (as cited in Siilata, 2014).

All five teachers drew attention to the critical aspects of writing and emphasised the significance of "promoting the child's identity as a *Samoan*, in writing a story, cognitive development skills, drawing pictures, using shapes and numbers". According to Parlakian, (2003) writing, reading skills progress at the same time and are closely related. The attainment of reading and writing in the church school is not only the thinking abilities but also socialisation and participation in the cultural form of awareness and discussion (Tanielu, 2004).

Teachers further stressed that drawing pictures and writing stories and letting the children tell a story about his/her drawings’ “For many students’ arts itself was the storyteller” (Jeffers, 2003, p. 5). The author further stressed that everyone else explains what the art means, and everyone has their own story to tell about the drawing and artwork (Jeffers, 2003). The child actively engages in his/her work only if given ample time to explain, retell and share what is behind the scribble, scrawl and drawings (Jeffers, 2003). When the child tells or interprets his/her story and shares with others (Jeffers, 2003), language and literacy development occur. The difference of practice at home and in *Aoga Amata* is the teachers give the children an opportunity to tell a story or explain the meaning behind their artwork and drawings.

5.6 Visual Action Taken

5.6.1 *Aoga Amata*

Ete (2013) synthesised that *Aoga Amata* focus to enrich and stimulate the learning of our language, culture, values and beliefs in the lives of young children as our culture and language is a gift from God we must treasure and value. Three parents explain the role of *Aoga Amata* teachers and its philosophy such as “learning vocabulary skills, exposed and immersed in the *Samoan* language, important, values and belief and to learn”. Tagoilelagi-Leota et al., (2005), emphasises the role of *Aoga Amata* in the attainment of literacy and language skills in the mother tongue is critical. *Aoga Amata* and its philosophy is to nurture the language, *tu ma aganuu faasamoa*, the reason why *Samoan* children attend *Aoga Amata*. The success of *Aoga Amata* based on educators who are continually upgrading professional development to meet the quality learning and interactions required for quality *Aoga Amata* programmes (Mara, 2005). It is our responsibility as educators, and parents of *Aoga Amata* to maintain and protect our uniqueness, language and culture (Ete, 2013).

5.6.2 Educator’s role

Tagoilelagi-Leota, et al., (2011) signify that educators’ role should construct from the soul. All five teachers expressed their work and use words such as “collaboration is vital, opportunities, build confidence to share, converse, meaningful interactions, open-ended question, extend thinking, working together, naming and identify what is in the environment, anecdotal and impromptu events, trips and excursion, grasp language skills, investigate, repetition, and improve use of language”. For the MOE (2017) educators facilitate children’s desire to guide them in various learning spaces and encourage to

select and choose their own learning strategies. Tagoilelagi-Leota (2017), argues that teachers in *Aoga Amata* speak the *Samoan* language constructively through all learning activities with the children, together with the support of parents in both domains.

5.6.3 Play activity

Play is a child's thing (Slunjski & Ljubetic, 2013) and must not be interrupted because language occurs. Two parents explain play as a “highly valuable, natural way that discovers the world, encourages to be creative and innovative, develop fine and gross motor skills. Literacy and language development, counting and take turns, play with a friend or play on her own”. Slunjski and Ljubetic, (2013) signify play is valuable that engage the child in an active activity by himself or with others, as an integral part of the educational routine in a centre. Children engage in exploration, through play and continue to research, about the environment and make meaning of the resources, living things, and nature (MOE 2017). Through play, children are searching what inspires them and they start to build up an attitude towards the environment that affect their mindset in learning over a lifetime (MOE, 2017).

Two teachers expressed their views in play such as “investigate, explore other areas, free play is good for learning, freely engaging in the environment, converse to grasp language skills, numbers, singing, minus and addition, colours and counting”. Hamer and Adams (2003), and McLachlan et al., (2013b) supports literacy and language develops when the child engages and is involves in play activities. Children ask questions and actively participate in making their own choices through play activity (Slunjski, et al., (2013). However, Paleai-Foroti (2013), expresses that parents view that children were running around as fruitless. As educators, we must not be underestimating play in any way, but to encourage the parents to be more open-minded about the critical aspects play contribute to the child's learning which support language and literacy development, physical, emotional, social and intellectual skills.

5.6.4 Pretend play or Dramatic play

According to Rowell (2010), the two skills represent pretend play or dramatic play. These are representation skills the author emphasised that children use objects and materials to act out the characters and skills that closely link to cognitive skills. One parent stressed, “imitating cartoon and movie characters, stimulates cognitive skills”. Rowell (2010) reiterates further pretend play incite language and literacy rich as well as role play skills including language, action and dress up.

Teachers' responses such as, "stimulate the child's cognitive skills, takes the child to the imagination and fantasy sphere". According to Rowell (2010), both acting out or imitating actions and making connections to family, culture and community are significant in stimulating intellectual and literacy skills. Both parents and teachers' perception of pretend play coincides with the thoughts provided by researchers in the literature review.

5.6.5 Samoan resources

According to the MOE (1996a) *Taiala mo Aoga Amata* is seen as a critical document and resource for *Aoga Amata*, but so are the visual resources such as *Samoan* cultural resources required for teaching in *Aoga Amata*. Parents mentioned "*Pi Tautau* and the Bible as resources used at home" Galuvao (2016), argues that the lack of *Samoan* resources could lead to poor performance and attitude towards learning. *Samoan* resources are scarce and limited in New Zealand (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017; Valentine, 2014), is it without visual resources, therefore children struggled to understand.

Two teachers spoke specifically about the *Samoan* and natural resources and the importance of visual resources in the learning of the *Samoan* child. Words such as, "do better when applying visual resources, the *Pi Tautau*, environment rich in resources, gravel and falling leaves, materials that drive literacy learning, without visual resources, the children won't understand". Esera (2012) talks about the development of cultural resources. For Valentine (2014) children often shared reading books because of the scarcity of native resources. The standard reading material used is the Bible (Vili & Autagavaia, 2013), as Tanielu (2004) indicates reading the Bible results in speaking good *Samoan* language. *Samoan* children learn better when using hands on activities, they see, touch, feel and are able to understand the meaning behind those resources as well as providing visual resources in teaching and learning literacy (MOE, 1996a, 2011). Teaching resources, hands on activities play a meaningful learning for the *Samoan* children. On the other hand, effective cultural resources recuperates language and literacy achievement depending entirely on the teacher-child interactions with resources as well as the environment.

5.6.6 Preparation for Primary school

The transition between *Aoga Amata* and Primary school needs to make a smooth progress in the new learning environment (McKenzie, 2013). Two parents specifically emphasised using phrases such as, "gain basic numeracy and literacy skills, successful transition to Primary school, interact with others, confidence, speak *Samoan* confidently and fluently,

move on to the next level”. Utumapu (1998) supports parents’ intention to prepare the child for transition to Primary school and transition (McKenzie, 2013); this needs to be smooth and enables the child to settle well in his/her new school. The MOE (2015) in their report states that “only around a third of services could identify the impact of their practices and processes that supported children as they approached transition to school” (p. 12).

One educator expresses building literacy skills for the next step forward using words such as “writing numbers one to ten or more, preparation for the next step of learning, that is Primary school, such as writing first names and last names”. It is essential to building a curriculum link between two domains to smooth the transition (Utumapu-McBride, 2013) as well as developing relationships with the child. The educator can ensure that the children are equipped with basic literacy skills to prepare themselves for future success at Primary school and beyond (Arrow, 2010). It could have an impact if they have not facilitated well to the transition (Peter, 2010, as cited in McKenzie, 2013). This also coincides with the MOE’s (2015) report that “Maori and Pacific children were more likely to be in services that were less supportive” (p. 12) with the transition to Primary school.

5.7 Chapter Summary

This research suggests literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, listen, identify and make meaning of what is in the environment. This is also including critical literacy such as actions taken, communication, reading and writing, understanding, and asking questions. The most significant factor is determining what literacy to the *Samoans* is in New Zealand. The term literacy provided will support and guide educators in *Aoga Amata* in their practice to equip the child with active literacy practice and attain literacy well before he/she transitions to Primary school.

The process of gaining literacy as per the *Samoan* way of doing things synthesises in four fundamental components. These are language, culture, relationships and spirituality, the essence in teaching literacy of the *Samoan* child as teaching will be ineffective if one of these fundamental components is missing in any child’s life.

Literacy taught through various teaching strategies such as oral language; storytelling; *fagogo*/ retelling stories; songs/dance; *Samoan* resources *Pi Tautau*; *Tusi Pi muamua*; Bible reading; *tauloto* and reciting; Play which involves lots of movements and interactions and enjoyment, as well as maintaining social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills and most importantly literacy and language gain. Reading strategy is

seen as a critical aspect that reinvigorate interest in books and other reading materials. Social skills such as; writing, drawing, and writing stories; free play; pretend play or dramatic play; are all very effective and imperative for literacy and language gain.

The most fundamental activities are exploring the environment, having unlimited time for outdoor play. Retelling stories and telling stories are significant activities that both language and thinking skills ascend. Given the child, ample time to express his idea is an absolute important strategy for language and literacy rich and cognitive stimulation. Asking open-ended questions, expecting the child to reply and explain his method is also profound, and hence extends the child's intellectual skills further.

Significantly, *Samoan* children learn better when visual resources and hands on activities are in place while learning occurs, as without visual resources they may not understand. The children's learning is effective only when they feel good about themselves (Purkey, 1967) achieving what they want to achieve.

Chapter 6: “*Ua sili mea le seuga*” - Conclusion

This quote refers to a task or seuga the hunting gathers their gear when they return, they hung up their nets etc. as a completion of the seuga. Refers to a work well done that is come to an end and praise be to God for this work has now reached the end of the journey as a researcher.

6.1 Introduction

I can now say *Ua sili mea le seuga*, and *malo fai o le faiva*; as approaching the final chapter of the research study, to determine what literacy means for the *Samoan* people. This final chapter aims at enlightening informative insights of literacy from the child's home that has been envisaged as effective from the previous chapters. This provides opportunities for educators to merge with their means of teaching, enhances literacy practice for improvement in the *Aoga Amata*, and Primary School in New Zealand and afar is divided into four parts.

Children deserve the best education, in learning cultural values, beliefs, identity and especially the passion to learn to become literate. Understanding the child's background, language and literacy, the best contribution educators can provide for the children, so they continually engage in learning effectively and be well recognised in society. The children, including *Samoans*, groupings as a deficiency in literacy is an issue that we must all engage in working together to find solutions to alleviate literacy challenges we are generally fronting now.

6.2 The four domains of Literacy

This research study highlights the process of literacy learning of the *Samoan* child, intertwining four critical strategies. These principles guide teachers and adults who are engaged in teaching the *Samoan* child in literacy such as relationships, culture, language, and spirituality. The four domains that are integral in literacy and learning that cannot be separated. From the *Samoan* perspective, it cannot go unconnected as these are vital in the child's learning. For example: when learning the language, it is the culture he is learning. That requires a warm and caring relationship, so the child feels a sense of belonging, connect to the environment, and trust the educator that his/her cultural identities such as values, beliefs, culture, and spirituality are acknowledged. The teacher needs to build a comfortable relationship with the child and others, that includes *tu ma aga faaaloalo*, and most importantly spiritual practice such as to start and end the day's

work with a prayer. When dealing with the *Samoan* child(ren), the educator must commit, in considering these vital factors in learning, to make learning effective valuable and meaningful. The child generates better results when he/she feels good about himself/herself (Purkey, 1967).

The study has highlighted the significant role of educators who work at *Aoga Amata* and the support of parents, and their primary focus in teaching literacy in young children. Participants have the strong belief in learning literacy and most importantly the values and beliefs, the *Samoan* way of teaching and the respect that are integral in learning. The overall insights from this study are dedicated to *Aoga Amata* and Primary school educators, to intertwine formal literacy learning, values and beliefs the child brings from home, and the *Samoan* way of learning in their curriculum. Consequently, this quote affirms, *e a'oa'oina le fanau i mea o lo'o ola ai* children learn from what they live by and experience (International Bible Reading Association, 2018).

6.3 The absence of literacy as a definition in Te Whariki

The Te Whariki (MOE, 2017) curriculum for early childhood education does not have a definition of literacy. This is very important for educators to guide them in their practice. Even though researchers highlight that the Ministry of Education's "literacy is poorly defined" (McLachlan et al., 2013a, p. 14). We have a literacy challenge in this country (McLachlan et al., 2013a) and this could be another issue for low literacy in New Zealand. Novice teachers might not understand the importance of literacy achievement in the children's learning, this could have an impact on literacy development. In my mind the MOE should seriously look into this issue, include a meaningful definition of literacy in the curriculum so that educators follow and ensure that these guidelines are met, ticking all the boxes, before the child transitions to Primary School. It is extremely critical.

6.4 The absence of the *Samoan* child's core values and literacy in Te Whariki

Te Whariki (MOE, 2017) is a bilingual curriculum, which specifies particularly for two specific cultures and all other ethnicities follow accordingly. The *Aoga Amata* philosophy is to nurture the child's mother tongue, *tu ma aganuu aemaise le faakerisiano* (MOE, 2013) for the *Samoan* children born in New Zealand to equip them with cultural identities and values required for their holistic development while growing up in this multicultural society. It is also enriching ties and connections to their native language.

The most significant and the central of the *Samoa* identity in this world that is excluded in the Curriculum for Early Childhood Education in New Zealand, is the Spiritual values that enfold the “mana, *Agaga or spirit*” the whole self and wellbeing of the *Samoa*n child (Tui Atua, 2003, p.58). This is exceptionally paramount that needs to consolidate in Te Whāriki so that educators and the children can maintain cultural rituals to support children and their families knowing that their *faasamoa* and cultural identity is inclusive in the Early Childhood Curriculum in New Zealand.

6.5 The conceptualization of *Talanoaga*

The essence of *Talanoaga* as utilised in this research study informed four main concepts of *talanoaga* that cannot be separated from one another. The *talanoaga malie, mafana, alofa* and *faakerisiano*. These four main factors of *talanoaga* I considered as a critical contribution to the field of theoretical and epistemology in research background as the most significant method and approach in the research study from a *Samoa*n perspective. This cultural method highlights the fundamental proposition that has, to be encompassed and without the above components, *talanoaga* would be meaningless and ineffective.

6.6 The significance of allowing time for the child to tell stories

The fascinating literacy strategies as recommended to advance literacy stimulation when giving ample time for the child to explain his idea, artwork, drawings or retelling stories (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006) from a book or even telling stories, in front of an audience or class, following questions from the audience including the teacher. In that sense the storyteller, instantaneously thought about an answer, and so has the audience. In doing so, each child’s thinking invigorates, and language occurrence is concurrent. The sustainability of this teaching strategy boosts the child's thinking and ignites literacy and language development (Harris & Sutton, 2016); inspiring other children to participate, contribute, admire and imitate. This motivating strategy helps the child's brain function, and learn new things every day (Harris & Sutton, 2016).

6.7 The significance of asking questions

Asking questions through interactions or from a story always expect an answer or some communication from the child based on the story. At the same time his/her conscious mind seeking for a solution to respond and if we do not ask questions the child’s thinking skills would not be challenged as a continuous dialogue with the child turning on the electrical neutrons in his/her brain (Harris & Sutton, 2016).

6.8 Visual Resources and Hands-on-activities

The Samoan children learn better when exposed to visual and hands-on activities and action experimentation during learning-discussion process. These make learning more meaningful and valuable to the child which helps to connect and contribute to learning more effectively.

6.9 Recommendations

6.9.1 Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education needs to define literacy in the Early Childhood Education Curriculum to guide educators in the sector so that all teachers follow similar guidelines. Also professional training of ECE teachers in New Zealand did not show the level of literacy learning in the programmed undertaking (Kane, 2005).

6.9.2 Home

The child's home environment is the place of learning literacy when parents prioritise physical support in reading and writing to gain basic literacy skills (Utumapu, 1998). Others (Vili & Autagavaia, 2013) suggested going back to the basic strategies when the forefathers initiated and generated guidance for future generations in learning. The *Aoga a le faifeau*, Sunday school and reading sessions at home all contribute, and produce valuable results in the children's literacy achievement (Vili & Autagavaia 2013).

6.9.3 Mat Time

Mat time is a significant site for learning when singing, body movements and dancing, action songs, rhymes and reciting *tauloto*, entertainment, storytelling, retelling stories that build social skills of all the children. Mortlock (2014) articulated that children's inclination of talking to each other than talking to the teacher. It is also a time to sit down for the *Lotu* (a way to start and end the day with).

As Glasgow (2018), expresses the value of mat-time in the morning being the learning times to officially commence the day's work. Children always form friendship with peers at mat-time. Mortlock (2014) affirms that children with less friends are not yet equipped with social skills will be more advantaged from group and mat time activity when led by the teacher. At the last visit of the *Aoga Amata* that I worked with, the MOE and ERO (2015) suggested on one of their recommendations was, mat time should be implemented within 10-15 minutes at the most. In my view, if children are unsettled then it is fine but

on the other hand this under-estimates the value of the mat time session for social and cultural interactions are appropriate and literacy driven for Pacific children.

6.9.4 Literacy learning as soon as possible

As revealed, a parent reflected upon his experiences in the past when he started learning literacy at a very young age back home. When queried about his view the reply was as early as possible, at least six months old. Although there are some who seem to disagree with teaching the formal language at a young age (Parlakian, 2003) that could have an impact on the child's learning. This means educators must provide playful resources for the child to explore interesting books and eye-catching resources that attract the child's attention to begin with. Let the child choose his/her own resources and play materials for better results.

6.9.5 Child's assessment

As voiced in this research child assessment for children with special needs is important. As such "where are you taking this child from here? As a teacher we should never put negative comments on a child's portfolio, but positive feedback and words of encouragement". It is crucial for educators to take a serious look at how to improve the child's development or the next step of learning for special needs children in the future rather than imposing negative feedback on their portfolio.

6.10 Areas for Future Research

During my research project, I realised that cultural literacy from the *Samoan* perspective needs to be looked at.

In my research study, I was unable to find, stay at home parents or those who were not working, and therefore their knowledge and views need to be brought into future research.

6.10.1 *Gagana fa'aaloalo*

As there is some confusion in the use of *Gagana Faaaloalo*, the respectful language in young children, as some teachers insist it is unnecessary to use this in interactions with young children while others think it is okay to expose them to it.

6.11 Limitation of the study

Finding participants

The study was conducted in South Auckland but intended to target the Auckland area, however the recruitment of participants was found mainly in South Auckland (both teachers and parents).

It took me nearly three months to find my last participant as I intended to find a male participant. It could be that the mentality of the *Samoan* men is taking children to school is the ladies' job and therefore not value it as their responsibility.

If I was going to do research in the future, I should look at those who were not working and who stayed at home to bring in their views (Utumapu, 1998).

Teachers training

Teachers in Early Childhood Education might not be aware of literacy learning at the preschool level. Some were unsure if literacy was part of their role (Hedges, 2003). Other researcher indicates that ECE teachers' level of understanding in literacy is undisclosed (Kane, 2005) and has not been taken seriously in their professional education.

6.12 Final Remarks

The term 'literacy' I utilised in this study is an attempt to explore what literacy means to the *Samoans*, to support educators, parents and everyone who are involved in teaching literacy for the *Samoan* children. The four main components that are embedded in literacy could clarify how literacy is being taught; outlining the researcher's belief could contribute to literacy achievement in this country, *Samoa* and the globe. To be successful in the practice of these literacies' components need to be implemented, such as visual resources and hands-on actions/activities, and enriched with the passion of teaching literacy otherwise, the challenge of literacy under-achieving persists, and our children remain vulnerable.

Ua tautai a'e i manu lo'u sa na tiu folau.

Ua faamalo le Atua! Ua faafetai!

Ua ou sapaia faatua'ele'ele au fa'amanuiaga e tele.

Aua ua a'e ma le manuia le faatautaiga, auā o Oe lava Lē sa Ta'ita'i.

Ia tumau atu ia te Oe le viiga, ma le mamalu, o le faamanu ma le faaneetaga,

nei ma aso uma lava, e oo i le faavavau faavavau lava, Amene.

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Glossary - Upu ma uiga

aga	norm
agaalofa	generosity
agaga	spirit
aga faasamoa	Samoa lifestyle
agalelei	grace
Aganu'u	culture
'aiga	family
alofa	Love
a'oa'o	Teach/learn
A'oga a le Faife'au	Pastor's School
A'oga Amata	Samoa Early Childhood Centre
atunuu	Country
aumaga	Untitled men
atamai	wisdom
'ava	Traditional Samoan kava
Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano I Samoa	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
Fa'aaloalo	respect
Fa'aevagelia	Evangelism or spiritual performance
Fa'afetai	Thank you
Faakerisiano	Christianity
faalogo	listen
faamalosi	To keep going / to encourage
faamolemole	please
faamanuia	be blessed
faapotopotoga	congregation
Fa'asamoa	Samoa way
Fa'asinomaga	identity
Fa'asoa	share
faataua	Essential
faatonu	To instruct
Faatu aao	To welcome
Fa'aulufalega	Dedication / opening of a new church
fafaga	feeding
fāgogo	Legend or myth
failauga	orator
Faitau Pi	Pre-school class
Faletua	Minister or chief's wife
Fanau	children
fatu	heart
Fealoaloa'i	Face to face
Feso'otaiga	relationship
Folafola 'ava	To acknowledge the ava ceremony

Gagana faaaloalo	Respectful language
Gagana masani	Everyday language
Gagana Samoa	Samoa language
Galulue faatasi	Work together
Lē Leoa	Verbal or silent language
Lotu	Worship
Lotu Tamaiti	White Sunday
lupe	Pigeon
Mafana	Warmth
Malamalama	Light / understanding
Malie	Soothing / interesting
Maliu mai	Come in
Mamalu	Dignity / prestige
Manutagi	Bird / king fisher
Matagofie	Wonderful
Matai	Orator – high chief
Mataupu Silisili	Scripture
Matua	Parents
Mea tatau ai	Food
Momoga	Richness of (Sea urchins)
Moso 'oi	A tree
Natura ma le siosiomaga	Nature and the environment
Nuu	Village
O le Tusi Paia	The Holy Bible
O le tusi a tamaiti	A children's book(s)
Pi Faitau poo le Pi Tautau	Samoa alphabet chart
Poto	Knowledgeable / clever
Saofa'i	Ceremony to bestow a <i>matai</i> title
Su'esu'ega	Research /examination
Susu mai	Come inside
Tagata lautele	Common people
Tagi le fagogo	To chant
Taiala mo Aoga Amata	Early Childhood curriculum in NZ
Tai'ala mo le Gagana Samoa i Niu Sia the Samoan	Early Childhood curriculum for language in NZ
Talanoa	To talk
Talanoa faafesaga'i	To talk face to face
Talanoa faatasi	To talk in collaboration
Talanoaga	Discussion
Tala Tusi Paia	Bible Stories
Tamā	father
Taofi mau	To hold /hang on tightly
Tapu	sacred
taumafa	food
Tausami	To eat
Tauloto	Memory verse

tausaaafia	sociable
Tautu'ava	Serving the kava drink
Tautua	Service
Tina	Mother
Tofa loloto	Critical thinking
Tofa saili	Searching for wisdom
Tofa tatala	Solving the issue
Tofi	heritage
Tolopo	postpone
Tu ma aga faaaloalo	Samoa way of respect
Tuitui	Sea urchin
Tulou lava	Excuse me
Tusi 'Oti	A reader
Va fealoaloa'i	relationship
Vasega Amata	Beginning class
Ve'a	A bird

Alagaupu Fa'asamoa – Samoan Sayings

A'oa'o le tama e tusa ma ona ala a oo ina matua e le toe tea ese ai lava	Teach the child well when he grows up he won't depart from it
Aoao manogi o le lolo	To gather fragrance for the coconut oil
Lupe o le taeao	The early morning pigeons
O au o matua fanau	Children are the pinnacle of their parents
O le ala i le pule o le tautua	Leadership is through service
O le Atua foafoa	God is the creator
O le lupe na faia mai le fuifui	The pigeon detached from the nest of frock
Ua faailo lupe i le foaga	To announce /acknowledge something
Ua fetu'utu'una'i muniao	Readjust the net, so they have a good catch
Ua malo fai o le faiva	Congratulations for a job well done
Ua matalupe le seuga	The hunters are all focusing on the target
Ua sa'a fa'aoti le utu a le faimea	You give it your all to do something or bring out the best
Ua sili mea le seuga	The hunters hang up their gears on return the work is completed (metaphor)
Ua tasi le fa'atofalaiga	Reaching a conclusion
Ua tautai a'e lou sa sa tiu folau	Completion of a job well done (literally you have returned from sailing / fishing)
Ua tuulima le lupe o Malietoa	To hand over Malietoa's pigeon

Abbreviations

CCCS	Congregation Christian Church of <i>Samoa</i>
EFKS	Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano <i>Samoa</i>
LMS	London Missionary Society
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNESCO	The United Nation Education Society Cooperation

AUTEC Secretariat

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13 June 2017

Tafili Utumapu-McBride
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Tafili

Re Ethics Application: **17/125 What are the literacy skills a child brings to the Aoga Amata and how does an educator build on these to empower the literacy skills of a Samoan Child**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 12 June 2020.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard. For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz



Yours sincerely, Kate O'Connor

Executive Manager **University of Technology Ethics Committee Auckland**



Participant Information Sheet

Parent One

Date Information Sheet Produced:

05 Iuni 2017

Project Title

What are the literacy skills a child brings to the Aoga Amata and how does an educator build on these to empower the literacy skills of a Samoan child?

An Invitation

My name is Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka. I invite you if you are able to participate in my research Talanoaga. My focus is to explore effective strategies in learning literacy how to read and write in Aoga Amata and at home in order to eliminate literacy challenges our children are experiencing now a day. The research will contribute to the literacy development and achievement of children in this country especially our Samoan communities, but also support parents as how to support children at home learning to read and write before attending Primary School. This research is also contributed to the completion of the 1st person's qualification Master of Education. It is not compulsory but it's your choice to participate or not in this research study.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to support young children to be able to read and write utilising the most effective and meaningful strategies that facilitate learning both at home and in Aoga Amata. The main focus is to be able to draw together literacy skills to build a solid foundation for our young children with the required literacy skills before attending Primary school. In doing so it may alleviate problems of literacy deficiency that children are currently experiencing in Primary school in this country

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

The snowballing method the primary researcher will have her contact details on the media such as face book; sending emails, phones, AUT student workshops and study room casual conversation with student teachers.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used.

However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

The researcher will have to set up a time and date to meet with each of the participants in times and dates that suits the participants. Consent forms are provided for the participants to sign for approval of being involved in the research study. Each participant must sign the form on our first meeting. There are seven questions for each participant to answer through a talanoaga conversation based on the Samoan context of respect (fa'aaloalo and va fealoaloa'i). After the

talanoaga session the researcher will have to gift the participant with a \$50.00 as a koha for being a valuable participant in this research study.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There might be feelings of discomfort with some of the participants knowing it's the first time we meet in person and should feel comfortable after exchanging our fa'atalofa and fa'atulima in the Samoan culture context of welcoming guests.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If participants experience any discomfort or risks for which they require counselling, AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing will provide counselling session to support participants if required.

AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research, and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment. Appointments for South Campus can be made by calling 921 9992

let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-andwellbeing/counselling>.

What are the benefits?

Teachers, parents, and the communities may be benefitted in this research especially the Samoan communities. Pre-School, Aoga Amata and Primary school children are also being benefitted especially the 3 to six year olds who have literacy challenges in early years of learning and development. It is also benefitted the researcher who is currently working on this study to complete her qualification as a Master of Education degree.

What compensation is available for injury or negligence?

Not applicable

How will my privacy be protected?

The names of the participants are not utilised in the whole research process. Coding and number will be utilised to record documentations and talanoaga interview with all participants. No information will be identified throughout this research approach.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

You will get \$50.00 voucher as a koha being a participant in this research study **What**

opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will have up to one week to consider this invitation **Will**

I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, if you work in the centre your centre will have one copy to keep so that all teachers in the centre may have excess on this copy for practice

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

You can contact Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride if you have any concern about this research.

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka

Email Address: wpk5808@autuni.ac.nz Project

Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *13 June 2017*, AUTEK Reference number *17/125*

Pepa o fa'amatalaga mo sui auai

Mo Matua

Aso na maua ai le pepa o fa'amatalaga:

09. 01. 2017

Autu o le suesuega:

Oa ni a'oa'oga o le gagana tusitusi ma le faitautusi sa a'oa'oina ai le tamaitiiti i lona aiga na sau ma ia i le Aoga Amata, ae fa'aapefea ona fa'alautele e le faiaoga ina ia atina'e ai le gagana tautala, faitautusi ma le tusitusi a le tamaitiiti Samoa?

Tusi valaaulia

O a'u o Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka. Ua ou valaauliaina oe ma le fa'aaloalo ina ia e auai i le faatalanoaga o lenei suesuega. O lo'u faanaunautaiga ia maumautaia ituaiga aoaoga aupito sili ona taua e a'oa'oina ai le tusitusi ma le faitautusi i Aoga Amata, ina ia fesoasoani e tuu itiitia le faafitauli o loo feagai nei ma le fanau iti, o le vaivai lea o le faitau tusi ma le tusitusi. O lenei suesuega o lea fesoasoani tele lea i le atina'eina o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi mo alo ma fanau a Samoa, aemaise o le fesoasoani mo matua i totonu o aiga i le aoaoina o fanau ae lei ulufale atu i aoga Tulaga lua. O lenei foi suesuega, o se vaega o le fa'ama'eaina o lo'u fa'ailoga, Master of Education. E le fa'amalosia ae i lau filifiliga lou auai ma lou le auai i lenei suesuega.

O lea le fa'amoemoe o lenei suesuega?

O le fa'amoemoe o lenei suesuega ia fesoasoani i fanau iti ina ia atina'e ma iloa faitau tusi ma tusitusi e ala i auala ma metotia e aupito sili ona taua ia'i latou, ina ia aoaoina ai i le aiga faapea fo'i i totonu o Aoga Amata. O le faamoemoe aupito sili ona taua i lenei suesuega, ia tuu faatasia aoaoga aupito sili ona taua e fai ma faavae mautu o le olaga aoaoina o fanua i le faitau tusi ma le tusitusi, ae lei ulufale atu i aoga Tulaga lua. Atonu o lea avea lenei suesuega ma auala o lea mafai ai ona tuu itiitia le faafitauli i le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi o loo feagai ma fanau iti i totonu o aoga Tulaga lua.

E faapefea ona iloa a'u ae fa'aapefea fo'i ona valaauliaina a'u ou te auai i lenei suesuega?

O lenei suesuega e fa'aaoga lava auala o fesootaiga i luga o le tusi o foliga, imeli, telefoni, aoaoga ma talanoaga fa'asamasamanoa ma faiaoga tamaita'i o lo'o su'e fo'i o latou fa'ailoga i le potu autu o suesuega Aut postgrad room.

E fa'aapefea ona ou taliaina le auai i lenei suesuega?

O lea tuuina atu pepa faataga e te auai ai i lenei suesuega i le feiloaiga i le taimi muamua, ma saina mai ai e faailoa ai lou talia ma lou le taliaina o le valaulia i lenei suesuega.

O lou auai i lenei suesuega e pule lava oe e le fa'amalosia a'o lau lava filifiliga, ae pe ete filifili e auai pe le auai e leai se afaina o oe i lea tulaga. E mafai lava ona ave'ese mai oe mai lenei suesuega i soo se taimi.

Afai e te fa'amaamulu mai i lenei suesuega ona tuuina atu lea o le filifiliga ia te oe pe faaoga faamatalaga na tuuina mai le faatalatalanoaga na faia ma 'oe, ia pe ave'ese foi mai lenei suesuega.

Ae peitai, o le taimi lava e tusia ai le fa'aiuga o lenei suesuega, o lea le mafai ona toe ave'ese mai faamatalaga na tuuina mai i lenei suesuega

O lea le mea e tupu i lenei suesuega?

O lē o lea faia lenei suesuega, o leā ia faatulagaina aso ma le taimi e feiloa'i ai sui auai ta'itasi, i taimi ma aso e fetau ma sui auai uma. O leā saunia Pepa faataga mo sui auai uma mo le taliaina o le auai i lenei suesuega. O nei pepa faataga o lea saunia mo sui auai uma ina ia sainia mo le auai. E tatau ona sainia nei pepa fa'ataga e sui auai i le ulua'i fonotaga. E fitu fesili mo sui auai ina ia taliina e ala i le talanoaga e fa'avae i tu ma aga fa'asamoa o le fa'aaloalo ma le va fealoaloa'i. Pea ma'ea le talanoaga, o lea tuuina atu se meaalofo, koha e \$50.00 mo lou sao taua na tuuina mai mo lenei suesuega.

Oa ni vaega e ono lamatia pe le sologa lelei ai fa'alogona ma le saogalemu mo le sui auai?

Atonu e iai lava ni faalogona o le le mautonu o le sui auai i le taimi muamua e feiloa'i ai, ae talitonu lava a

mae'a ona fa'afeiloa'i, fa'atalofo ma fa'atulima i paia ma mamalu o le sui auai, ma talatalanoa fa'amasani o lea maua le mafanafana o le sui a'o le'i faia le fa'atalanoaga. **E fa'aapefea ona**

foia ni fa'afitauli ma ni faalavelave e ona tutupu mai?

Afai e maitauina ni faaletonu poo ni faafitauli, e manaomia ai se galuega faamafanafana, o lo'o iai le Ofisa Soifua Maloloina ma le Soifua Laulelei i le AUT latou te saunia fesoasoani mo le sui auai pea manaomia.

O ai e manuia ai?

O faiaoga, matua ma tagata Samoa aemaise foi Aoga Amata i lenei atunu'u, e mafai ona fa'amanuiaina i lenei suesuega aemaise foi tagata Samoa. O Aoga Amata poo aoga e a'oa'o ina ai le gagana faaperetania ma le fa'asamoa, e mafai ona faamanuiaina fo'i aemaise tamaiti mai le 3- 6 tausaga, oe e iai manaoga i le faaleleia o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi. Ae sili ai fo'i ona faamanuiaina ai lē o loo faia le suesuega, aua o le iuga o lenei suesuega o lea faamanuiaina ai i le faailoga tiketi o le Master of Education.

E faapefea ona puipuia mai a'u i lenei suesuega?

O suafa o sui auai uma o lea auai i lenei suesuega, e le faaogaina pe fa'ailoaina i soo se vaega o lenei suesuega. O lea faaogaina fuainumera ma fa'aailoga e fa'amaumau ai talanoaga a sui auai ta'itasi i lenei suesuega. E leai se igoa e faaogaina pe taua i le suesuega atoa.

O lea se fa'amanuiaga ou te maua pea auai i lenei suesuega O

lea maua le \$50.00 koha mo le auai i lenei suesuega.

O lea le umi e tuuina mai ou te mafaufau ai i lenei valaaulia?

E tuuina atu le tasi le vaiaso e fai ai lau filifiliga pe e te fia auai i lenei suesuega.

E mafai ona ou mauaina le faaiuga tusitusia o lenei suesuega?

Ioe, afai e te faigaluega i se Aoga Amata o lea maua le kopi e tasi e tuuina atu i lau aoga ina ia mafai e faiaoga uma i lau aoga ona maua le avanoa e vaavaai iai ma faaoga i aoga.

O lea sa'u gaoioiga e fai pea iai ni ou popolega i lenei suesuega?

Afai e iai ni faafitauli e tulai mai ona o lenei suesuega e tatau ona fesootai le faiaoga sinia o loo vaaia lē o loo faia lenei suesuega.

Afai e iai ni faafitauli poo ni amioga le talafeagai a lē o loo faia lenei suesuega, e tatau ona lipoti sa'o i le Komiti Faafoe ma le failautusi a le AUTEK, Kate O' Connor, imeli: ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6038.

O ai e tatau ona fa'afesootai mo nisi faamatalaga e uiga i lenei suesuega?

E mafai ona faafesootai Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride pea fai e iai ni ou atugaluga e uiga i lenei suesuega.

Fa'amolemole taofi le kopi lea o faamatalaga ma le kopi o le faatagana mo le auai i lenei suesuega mo faamaumauga i le lumana'i. E mafai foi ona faafesootai mai i la'ua nei e uiga i lenei suesuega:

Tuatusi e faafesootai mai ai:

Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka

Tuatusi o le imeli: wpk5808@autuni.ac.nz

AUT Manukau Campus, Auckland

Faiaoga Sinia:

Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride

Appendix C: Information sheet for Teachers

Participant Information Sheet

Teacher One

Date Information Sheet Produced:

05 June 2017

Project Title

What are the literacy skills a child brings to the Aoga Amata and how does an educator build on these to empower the literacy skills of a Samoan child?

An Invitation

My name is Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka. I invite you if you are able to participate in my research Talanoaga. My focus is to explore effective strategies in learning literacy how to read and write in Aoga Amata and at home in order to eliminate literacy challenges our children are experiencing now a day. The research will contribute to the literacy development and achievement of children in this country especially our Samoan communities, but also support parents as how to support children at home learning to read and write before attending Primary School. This research is also contributed to the completion of the 1st person's qualification Master of Education. It is not compulsory but it's your choice to participate or not in this research study.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to support young children to be able to read and write utilising the most effective and meaningful strategies that facilitate learning both at home and in Aoga Amata. The main focus is to be able to draw together literacy skills to build a solid foundation for our young children with the required literacy skills before attending Primary school. In doing so it may alleviate problems of literacy deficiency that children are currently experiencing in Primary school in this country

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

The snowballing method the primary researcher will have her contact details on the media such as face book; sending emails, phones, AUT student workshops and study room casual conversation with student teachers.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible **What will happen in this research?**

The researcher will have to set up a time and date to meet with each of the participants in times and dates that suits the participants. Consent forms are provided for the participants to sign for approval of being involved in the research study. Each participant must sign the form on our first meeting. There are seven questions for each participant to answer through a talanoaga conversation based on the Samoan context of respect (fa'aaloalo and va fealoaloa'i). After the

talanoaga session the researcher will have to gift the participant with a \$50.00 as a koha for being a valuable participant in this research study.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There might be feelings of discomfort with some of the participants knowing it's the first time we meet in person and should feel comfortable after exchanging our fa'atalofa and fa'atulima in the Samoan culture context of welcoming guests.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If participants experience any discomfort or risks for which they require counselling, AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing will provide counselling session to support participants if required.

AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research, and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment. Appointments for South Campus can be made by calling 921 9992

let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-andwellbeing/counselling>.

What are the benefits?

Teachers, parents, and the communities may be benefitted in this research especially the Samoan communities. Pre-School, Aoga Amata and Primary school children are also being benefitted especially the 3 to six year olds who have literacy challenges in early years of learning and development. It is also benefitted the researcher who is currently working on this study to complete her qualification as a Master of Education degree.

What compensation is available for injury or negligence?

Not applicable

In the unlikely event of a physical injury as a result of your participation in this study, rehabilitation and compensation for injury by accident may be available from the Accident Compensation Corporation, providing the incident details satisfy the requirements of the law and the Corporation's regulations.

How will my privacy be protected?

The names of the participants are not utilised in the whole research process. Coding and number will be utilised to record documentations and talanoaga interview with all participants. No information will be identified throughout this research approach.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

You will get \$50.00 voucher as a koha being a participant in this research study **What**

opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will have up to one week to consider this invitation **Will**

I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, if you work in the centre your centre will have one copy to keep so that all teachers in the centre may have excess on this copy for practice

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of ATEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

You can contact Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride if you have any concern about this research.

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka

Email Address: *wpk5808@autuni.ac.nz Project*

Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *13th June 2017*, ATEC Reference number *17/125*

Pepa o fa'amatalaga mo sui auai

Faiaoga

Aso na maua ai le pepa o fa'amatalaga:

05.Iuni 2017

Autu o le suesuega:

Oa ni a'oa'oga o le gagana tusitusi ma le faitautusi sa a'oa'oina ai le tamaitiiti i lona aiga na sau ma ia i le Aoga Amata, ae fa'apefea ona fa'alautele e le faiaoga ina ia atina'e ai le gagana tautala, faitautusi ma le tusitusi a le tamaitiiti Samoa?.

Tusi valaaulia

O a'u o Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka. Ua ou valaauliaina oe ma le fa'aaloalo ina ia e auai i le faatalanoaga o lenei suesuega. O lo'u faanaunautaiga ia maumautaia ituaiga aoaoga aupito sili ona taua e a'oa'oina ai le tusitusi ma le faitautusi i Aoga Amata, ina ia fesoasoani e tuu itiitia le faafitauli o loo feagai nei ma le fanau iti, o le vaivai lea o le faitau tusi ma le tusitusi. O lenei suesuega o lea fesoasoani tele lea i le atina'eina o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi mo alo ma fanau a Samoa, aemaise o le fesoasoani mo matua i totonu o aiga i le aoaoina o fanau ae lei ulufale atu i aoga Tulaga lua. O lenei foi suesuega, o se vaega o le fa'ama'eaina o lo'u fa'ailoga, Master of Education. E le fa'amalosia ae i lau filifiliga lou auai ma lou le auai i lenei suesuega.

O lea le fa'amoemoe o lenei suesuega?

O le fa'amoemoe o lenei suesuega ia fesoasoani i fanau iti ina ia atina'e ma iloa faitau tusi ma tusitusi e ala i auala ma metotia e aupito sili ona taua ia'i latou, ina ia aoaoina ai i le aiga faapea fo'i i totonu o Aoga Amata. O le faamoemoe aupito sili ona taua i lenei suesuega, ia tuu faatasia aoaoga aupito sili ona taua e fai ma faavae mautu o le olaga aoaoina o fanua i le faitau tusi ma le tusitusi, ae lei ulufale atu i aoga Tulaga lua. Atonu o lea avea lenei suesuega ma auala o lea mafai ai ona tuu itiitia le faafitauli i le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi o loo feagai ma fanau iti i totonu o aoga Tulaga lua.

E faapefea ona iloa a'u ae fa'apefea fo'i ona valaauliaina a'u ou te auai i lenei suesuega?

O lenei suesuega e fa'aaoga lava auala o fesootaiga i luga o le tusi o foliga, imeli, telefoni, aoaoga ma talanoaga fa'asamasamanoa ma faiaoga tamaita'i o lo'o su'e fo'i o latou fa'ailoga i le potu autu o suesuega Aut.

E fa'apefea ona ou taliaina le auai i lenei suesuega?

O lea tuuina atu pepa faataga e te auai ai i lenei suesuega i le feiloaiga i le taimi muamua, ma saina mai ai e faailoa ai lou talia ma lou le taliaina o le valaaulia i lenei suesuega.

O lou auai i lenei suesuega e pule lava oe e le fa'amalosia a'o lau lava filifiliga, ae pe ete filifili e auai pe le auai e leai se afaina o oe i lea tulaga. E mafai lava ona ave'ese mai oe mai lenei suesuega i soo se taimi.

Afai e te fa'amaamulu mai i lenei suesuega ona tuuina atu lea o le filifiliga ia te oe pe faaoga faamatalaga na tuuina mai i le faatalatalanoaga na faia ma 'oe, ia pe ave'ese foi mai lenei suesuega.

Ae peitai, o le taimi lava e tusia ai le fa'aiuga o lenei suesuega, o lea le mafai ona toe ave'ese mai faamatalaga na tuuina mai i lenei suesuega

O lea le mea e tupu i lenei suesuega?

O lē o lea faia lenei suesuega, o lea ia faatulagaina aso ma le taimi e feiloa'i ai sui auai ta'itasi, i taimi ma aso e fetau ma sui auai uma. O lea saunia Pepa faataga mo sui auai uma mo le taliaina o le auai i lenei suesuega. O nei pepa faataga o lea saunia mo sui auai uma ina ia sainia mo le auai. E tatau ona sainia nei pepa fa'ataga e sui auai i le ulua'i fonotaga. E fitu fesili mo sui auai ina ia taliina e ala i le talanoaga e fa'avae i tu ma aga fa'asamoa o le fa'aaloalo ma le va fealoaloa'i. Pea ma'ea le talanoaga, o lea tuuina atu se meaalofo, koha e \$50.00 mo lou sao taua na tuuina mai mo lenei suesuega.

Oa ni vaega e ono lamatia pe le sologa lelei ai fa'alogona ma le saogalemu mo le sui auai?

Atonu e iai lava ni faalogona o le le mautonu o le sui auai i le taimi muamua e feiloa'i ai, ae talitonu lava a

mae'a ona fa'afeiloa'i, fa'atalofo ma fa'atulima i paia ma mamalu o le sui auai, ma talatalanoa fa'amasani o lea maua le mafanafana o le sui a'o le'i faia le fa'atalanoaga.

E fa'apefea ona foia ni fa'afitauli ma ni faalavelave e ona tutupu mai?

Afai e maitauina ni faaletonu poo ni faafitauli, e manaomia ai se galuega faamafanafana, o lo'o iai le Ofisa Soifua Maloloina ma le Soifua Laulelei i le AUT latou te saunia fesoasoani mo le sui auai pea manaomia.

O ai e manuia ai?

O faiaoga, matua ma tagata Samoa aemaise foi Aoga Amata i lenei atunu'u, e mafai ona fa'amanuiaina i lenei suesuega aemaise foi tagata Samoa. O Aoga Amata poo aoga e a'oa'oina ai le gagana faaperetania ma le fa'asamoa, e mafai ona faamanuiaina fo'i aemaise tamaiti mai le 3- 6 tausaga oe e iai manaoga i le faaleleia o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi. Ae sili ai fo'i ona faamanuiaina ai lē o loo faia le suesuega, aua o le iuga o lenei suesuega o lea faamanuiaina ai i le faailoga tiketi o le Master of Education.

E faapefea ona puipuia mai a'u i lenei suesuega?

O suafa o sui auai uma o lea auai i lenei suesuega, e le faaaogaina pe fa'ailoaina i soo se vaega o lenei suesuega. O lea faaaogaina fuainumera ma fa'ailoga e fa'amaumau ai talanoaga a sui auai ta'itasi i lenei suesuega. E leai se igoa e faaaogaina pe taua i le suesuega atoa.

O lea se faamanuiaga o le auai i lenei suesuega

O lea maua le \$50.00 koha mo le auai i lenei suesuega.

O lea le umi e tuuina mai ou te mafaufau ai i lenei valaaulia?

E tuuina atu le tasi le vaiaso e fai ai lau filifiliga pe e te fia auai i lenei suesuega.

E mafai ona ou mauaina le faaiuga tusitusia o lenei suesuega?

Ioe, afai e te faigaluega i se Aoga Amata o lea maua le kopi e tasi e tuuina atu i lau aoga ina ia mafai e faiaoga uma i lau aoga ona maua le avanoa e vaavaai iai ma faaaoga i aoga.

O lea sa'u gaoioiga e fai pea iai ni ou popolega i lenei suesuega?

Afai e iai ni faafitauli e tulai mai ona o lenei suesuega e tatau ona fesootai le faiaoga sinia o loo vaaia lē o loo faia lenei suesuega.

Afai e iai ni faafitauli poo ni amioga a lē o loo faia lenei suesuega e le talafeagai, e tatau ona lipoti sa'o i le Komiti Faafoe ma le failautusi a le AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, imeli: ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6038.

O ai e tatau ona fa'afesootai mo nisi faamatalaga e uiga i lenei suesuega?

E mafai ona faafesootai Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride pea fai e iai ni ou atugaluga e uiga i lenei suesuega.

Fa'amolemole taofi le kopi lea o faamatalaga ma le kopi o le faatagana mo le auai i lenei suesuega mo faamaumauga i le lumana'i. E mafai foi ona faafesootai I la'ua nei mo nisi faamatalaga::

Tuatusi e faafesootai mai ai:

Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka

Tuatusi o le imeli: wpk5808@autuni.ac.nz

AUT Manukau Campus, Auckland

Faiaoga Sinia:

Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride

Consent Form

For teachers

Project title: What are the literacy skills a child brings to the Aoga Amata and how does an educator build on these to empower the literacy skills of a Samoan Child?

Project Supervisor: Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride
Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop

Researcher: Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant’s signature:

Participant’s name:

Participant’s Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13th June 2017 AUTEK Reference number 17/125

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Pepa fa’ataga mo le su’esu’ega.

Fesili mo faiaoga:

Autu o le su'esu'ega:

Oa a'oa'oga o le gagana tusitusi ma le faitautusi na a'oa'oina ai le tamaitiiti i lona aiga na sau ma ia i le Aoga Amata, ae fa'aapefea ona fa'alauatele e le faiaoga ina ia atina'e ai le gagana tautala, faitautusi ma le tusitusi a le tamaitiiti Samoa.

Faiaoga: Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride

Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop

Faatinoina o le suesuega: *Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka*

- Ua uma ona ou faitau ma malamalama i le faamatalaina o lenei suesuega mai totonu o le pepa faalauiloa i le aso
- Sa maua lou avanoa e fesili ai i vaega ou te fia fesili ai ma maua mai le tali o a'u fesili
- Ou te malamalama e iai faamatalaga tusitusia a'o faia le talanoaga, ma e faaoga fo'i mea pu'e leo e pue ai fa'amatalaga
- Ou te malamalama o le auai i lenei suesuega e tuu i la'u faitalia pe ou te auai pe leai, ae mafai fo'i ona ou fa'ama'amulu mai i lenei suesuega e aunoa ma se faaletonu e tupu mai ai.
- Ou te iloa afai ou te fa'ama'amulu mai i lenei suesuega, ou te filifili pe e aveese pe fa'aaoga fo'i ni faamatalaga poo ni manatu na ou faia e fa'aaoga i lenei suesuega. Ae peita'i o le taimi lava e tusia ai le taunu'uga poo le faaiuga mulimuli o lenei suesuega, o le a le mafai loa ona toe aveese a'u faamatalaga ma manatu sa folasia i lenei suesuega.
- Ua ou talia lo'u auai i lenei suesuega.
- Ou te manao ina ia ou mauaina le ootoga o le faa'iuga o lenei suesuga pea maea.
- Fa'amolemole faailoa lou finagalo e fa'asao ai le ioe poo le leai. Ioe . Leai .

Saini a le sui auai:

Suafa o le sui:

Tuatusi o fesootaiga (pea mafai):

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.....

Aso:

Faamaonia e le Univesite o Fa'atelenalosi Aukilani Komiti o talosaga mo le faamaonia ma taliaina o aiaiga ma tulafono a le Univesite I soo se Suesuega e faia I totonu o le Univesite o Faatelenalosi.

Note: E tatau I le sui auai ona iai sana copy o le faatalanoaga e taofi.

Appendix E: Consent form for Parents

Consent Form

For parents

Project title: What are the literacy skills a child brings to the Aoga Amata and how does an educator build on these to empower the literacy skills of a Samoan Child?

Project Supervisor: Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride

Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop

The researcher: Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated .
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13th June 2017 AUTEC
Reference number 17/125**

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Pepa fa'ataga mo le su'esu'ega.

Fesili mo Matua:

Autu o le su'esu'ega:

Oa a'oa'oga o le gagana tusitusi ma le faitautusi na a'oa'oina ai le tamaitiiti i lona aiga na sau ma ia i le Aoga Amata, ae fa'apefea ona fa'alauitele e le faiaoga ina ia atina'e ai le gagana tautala, faitautusi ma le tusitusi a le tamaitiiti Samoa.

Faiaoga: Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride

Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop

Faatinoina o le suesuega: *Tuluiga Aiiloilo-Maka*

Ua uma ona ou faitau ma malamalama i le faamatalaina o leni suesuega mai totonu o le pepa faalauiloa i le aso

Sa maua lou avanoa e fesili ai i vaega ou te fia fesili ai ma maua mai le tali o a'u fesili

- Ou te malamalama e iai faamatalaga tusitusia a'o faia le talanoaga, ma e faaoga fo'i mea pu'e leo e pue ai fa'amatalaga
- Ou te malamalama o le auai i leni suesuega e tuu i la'u faitalia pe ou te auai pe leai, ae mafai fo'i ona ou fa'ama'amulu mai i leni suesuega e aunoa ma se faaletonu e tupu mai ai.
- Ou te iloa afai ou te fa'ama'amulu mai i leni suesuega, ou te filifili pe e aveese pe fa'aaoga fo'i ni faamatalaga poo ni manatu na ou faia e fa'aaoga i leni suesuega. Ae peita'i o le taimi lava e tusia ai le taunu'uga poo le faaiuga mulimuli o leni suesuega, o le a le mafai loa ona toe aveese a'u faamatalaga ma manatu sa folasia i leni suesuega.
- Ua ou talia lo'u auai i leni suesuega.
- Ou te manao ina ia ou mauaina le ootoga o le faa'iuga o leni suesuga pea maea.
- Fa'amolemole faailoa lou finagalo e fa'asao ai le ioe poo le leai. Ioe . Leai .

Saini a le sui auai:

Suafa o le sui:

Tuatusi o fesootaiga (pea mafai):

.....
.....
.....
.....

ASO:

Faamaonia e le Univesite o Fa'atelenalosi Aukilani Komiti o talosaga mo le faamaonia ma taliaina o aiaiga ma tulafono a le Univesite I soo se Suesuega e faia I totonu o le Univesite o Faatelenalosi.

Indicative Interview Questions for Teachers

What are the literacy skills a child brings to the Aoga Amata and how does an educator build on these to empower the literacy skills of a Samoan child?

Fesili o le suesuega i le Gagana Samoa

1. O lea le umi talu ona e galue o se faiaoga o Aoga Amata?
2. O lea le gagana e te faaaogaina e tautala ai i le tele o taimi?
3. E te fesoasoani i le aoaoina o le gagana muamua a le tamaitiiti?
4. O lea lau faauigaina o le literacy i Aoga Amata?
 - a) E faapefea ona a'oa'o ai le tamaitiiti?
5. E te fuafuaina le aoaoina o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi i au aoaoga?
6. Oa metotia ma aoaoga aupito sili ona taua e te iloa e faaosofia ai le aoaoina o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi mo tamaiti Samoa?

Indicative Interview Questions for Parents

What are the literacy skills a child brings to the Aoga Amata and how does an educator build on these to empower the literacy skills of a Samoan child?

Indicative Questions for Talanoaga:

For Parents:

1. How long have you been involved in Aoga Amata?
2. Why did you decide to bring your child to Aoga Amata?
3. What is your aim for your child while attending Aoga Amata?
4. Have you heard about literacy for young children and what do you think?
5. Is literacy important for your child?
6. What kinds of activities to help your child's literacy at home? If so, what are they?
7. What teaching strategies do you prefer to teach literacy to your child at home?

Matua

1. O lea le umi talu ona e auai I totonu o Aoga amata?

2. Aisea na e filifili ai aoga amata?

3. O lea sou faamaumauga ia maua e tamaiti I totonu o Aoga Amata?

4. Ne faalogo i le aoaoina o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi mo tamaiti laiti, o lea sou iloa iai?

5. E taua le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi i tamaiti?

6. Oa ni aoaoga o le tusitusi ma le faitau tusi e aoao ai tamaiti I le fale?

A'o a fo'i ia a'oa'oga?

7. Oa aoaoga e te fiafia e aoao ai le faitau tusi ma le tusitusi i le fale?