

Finding our place in Early Childhood Education – The
journey of beginning Pasifika Early Childhood Teachers

Kendra Janelle Tike

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Abstract

This research focuses on the journey of six Early Childhood students and/or teachers who have studied a unique and special first of its kind Pasifika specialised programme. The Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) (BPed [ECT]) was offered at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). This research focuses on the journey of the participants, the discovery of themselves during the programme and the challenges they faced when implementing the programme in their Early Childhood Education (ECE) services.

This programme was different in all ways known to what existed for Pasifika Education. It was exciting, new and revived the hearts of those who had the opportunity to study it. The underpinning of the programme was embodying the concept of '*ofa, alofa, faakalofa noa, aroha, aloha*/love from Pasifika perspectives. The participants' identity was essential as they begun to discover their worth and places here in New Zealand. Wisdoms of the spirit, unpacking of language, culture, values and beliefs were the beginning of being connected with our spirits and other Pasifika peoples. The participants share their experiences with the confidence that their Pasifika community will progress and have more precedence in mainstream New Zealand. Conceptualising their cultures and languages within the university was about bringing forth the *talanoa*/talk of new knowledges, new ways of understanding and knowing which was discovered by connecting to their identities, families, Pasifika languages, cultures, histories and ancestors.

The participants reveal that it was through the programme they began to appreciate their families' migration stories, communities, Pacific country, ancestors and the connection to the *fonua*/homelands. Their spirits were refined, discovered and nurtured. They connected to their Pacific nations' concepts when they uncovered and rediscovered their identity. The 20 papers of the BPed (ECT) programme were *lalānga*/weaved together so that they were interconnected in spirit, knowledge, values and beliefs. Beyond the programme was the space that brought together different peoples, of different backgrounds, socio-economic, histories, cultures, values and beliefs to begin the journey of becoming conscious of their identities in New Zealand.

The *talanoa* methodology has been applied in this research. The concept of *talanoa* from a Pasifika perspective encompasses the researcher and participants to navigate themselves through heart to heart, in depth and meaningful conversations that have no solutions but embrace and contain ideas for the betterment and advancement of our Pasifika communities. The aim of this research will be to revitalise and renew the hearts of Pasifika Early Childhood Teachers (ECT). To remind them of our Pasifika cultural practices, values and beliefs that is embedded within us. The spirit of understanding, thriving, incorporating and accepting our place is the beginning of becoming aware of our surroundings to develop and cement our places in New Zealand.

The anticipation is that this research supports Pasifika (ECT) so that they can continue to make strides for our Pasifika community. The research will support graduates of this programme as they continue to provide our Pasifika children with the finest *koloa* ignited and sourced in our heart, minds and spirits.

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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.

K. Tike

Kendra Janelle Tike

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Ethics Apporval

In accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), the final ethics approval for this research project was granted on June 13, 2017 (Ethics Approval Number 17/139).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter one explores the purpose, the context, its importance and the background of this study. I have taken the approach to write in first person. This research focuses on the journey of beginning teachers and their stories of experience and hope for Pasifika children. In contrast to mainstream knowledge that informs ECE this research will surround Pasifika epistemologies, pedagogies, cultures and languages contributing to ECE today.

1.1 Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to give Pasifika beginning teachers a voice as they *talanoa* (to talk or speak) about their journey through a specific Pasifika programme. This programme informed, transformed and reformed their thinking and practices through becoming aware and intertwined with their Pasifika culture and language. This research will support Pasifika peoples' wisdoms in ECE that have become lost within a society dominant with mainstream ideas, pedagogy, philosophy and culture. The research aims to awaken the spirits of Pasifika ECE teachers who have become marginalised in their thinking, acting and moving because of the mainstream culture in New Zealand. The dominance of mainstream culture has objectified voices, however, this research will bring about new ways of conceptualising Niue, Cook Island, Samoan, Tongan, Kiribati and other Pacific nations' culture, language, values and beliefs that suit the Pasifika children entering ECE today. The research will raise the consciousness of ECE teachers whose Pasifika language, values and beliefs are subjugated and are separated from the knowledge that informs and transforms us so that we are becoming more interconnected with our Pasifika epistemologies, pedagogies, languages and cultures. This is to contribute to the platform already laid for our Pasifika children. The transformation of hearts, minds, and spirits will begin with this research that consists of beginning Pasifika teachings. The reclaiming of one's identity begins with critiquing the knowledge that informs ECE today.

1.2 Context of this study

The latest statistics show an increase of Pasifika children's participation in ECE (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2015). This annual ECE report states 96.2% of children had prior ECE participation before entering new entrant and that 91.2% of Pasifika children had participated raising this 0.9% from the previous year, making this the highest increase in participation since 2005 (MoE, 2015). There has been a demand in the Pasifika communities for more qualified Pasifika ECE teachers to cater to the increase of Pasifika children attending these ECE centres (Kēpa & Manu'atu, 2008). This research is informed by the myriad and diverse wisdoms drawn from languages, cultural practices, principles and epistemologies of Niue, Cook Island, Samoa, Tonga, among other Pacific peoples (Manu'atu, 2013). The wisdoms of our Pasifika people begin with the renewing of our hearts, rethinking and refreshing of our values and practices. This creates a space that enriches our practices that connect the learning space and environment in ECE.

Equality of opportunity is essential for achieving self-determination, recognition and empowerment for children and families in education. Breen (2017) discusses the indigenous children's right to an education that fundamentally shifts the 'powerful domination' of the English language and western values to recognising education in the child's own language as essential as he/she have a right to an education. The manner of appropriate uses of cultural methods in teaching and learning is enriched through decolonising Pasifika wisdoms and bringing together collective wisdoms that encourages a renewing of the heart and spirit through acknowledging and uncovering one's culture and language.

EC (Early Childhood) teachers convey sufficient knowledge across several fields (Kallery & Psillos, 2001) however there is still some disconnection within conceptualising Pasifika wisdoms, values and beliefs which are deeply connected within children attending ECE. This research supports in providing the reflective practices, voices and ideas to developing and renewing the current practices of recognising children who are of Pasifika decent. Teaching children 5 years and under becomes a "complex activity that requires a myriad of knowledge, skills and capabilities" (Hedges, 2000, p. 16) proving that the task is mammoth and requires more from the teacher. The status of an EC teacher remains at the lower part of the spectrum naturally being

labelled as a glorified baby sitter (Hargreaves & Hopper, 2006). However, EC teachers contain a wealth of knowledge but are still working towards affirming themselves, their occupations and professional importance in education.

Manu'atu (2013) writes "the spirit is at the heart of teachers' thinking and practice; their *loto*/hearts are the sites of wisdom, love and passion. What is being created in the *loto*/heart are the issues of lived experiences!" (p. 138). The importance of being aware and informed of Pasifika diversities bridges educators towards the awareness of the complex cultural and social differences Pasifika people encompass (Samu, 2006). As a society the awareness of difference requires different acknowledgements of peoples' understanding of their cultural values, and more encouragement of their identity which fundamentally is embedded within their families, place of origin and histories (Halapua, 2005). The Pasifika programme offered at the university provided a space that enabled students to conceptualise their place in New Zealand, discover their language and culture to reconnect or connect to their origins essentially renaming a space that existed before the programme came along. Utumapu-McBride (2013) states "as a migrant I have always believed in the merits of education and I know that I have a lot to offer (and a lot to learn)" (p. 61).

Lived experiences centralises the way in which we conduct ourselves here in New Zealand. The migrant mind of our Pasifika people entails our acknowledgement of being in a country that has given us the opportunity to receive and form our education related to who we are. This is taken upon observing and learning principles and reflections of the indigenous people in New Zealand. Their value of *manaakitanga*/to care for a person's *mana*/holistic sense, *whanaungatana*/sense of family connections providing a sense of belonging deriving from Kaupapa Māori "a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society" (Pepe, 2013, p. 24) is in essence the point of reference we as Pasifika are to take in order to become strengthened in our purposes of gaining an education. In New Zealand the dominant western culture still thrives in education (Smith, 1999) the space for our Pasifika diversity to be practiced in ECE and education will be about embracing our hearts and unspoken teachings compelling us to deeply connect to our homelands, histories, language, culture, values and beliefs.

1.3 Importance of the Research

The educators emerging from this specific programme taught at the university developed their sense of identity and belonging through the reconceptualising of their culture, values and beliefs. The conceptual framework of this programme was developed using Tongan knowledges, values and beliefs. The idea formed from this programme was that the Pasifika students in university came together to form a site of collective wisdoms encouraging themselves and others to theorise and research their own Pasifika knowledges being Cook Island, Niue, Tonga, Samoa and so forth. The hopes of the programme were for the students to become conscious of their place in New Zealand by reflecting on their direction towards Pasifika education, collective learning and theorising (Manu'atu, 2013). Central to the programme was a development of educators who could begin to reshape a world of western dominance and incorporate their own Pasifika identities for the development of Pasifika in New Zealand.

TalanoaLālānga and *Fātulālānga* was the conceptual framework of the cutting-edge degree (Manu'atu, 2013). The theory of *TalanoaLālānga*;

is concerned with Pasifika peoples and the magnificence of our *lālānga*, weaving –*talanoa*, talk of beauty, elegance...but above all, is the *talanoa*/talk of 'ofa/love, including the unspoken love and wisdom conveyed through the art and collection of the different forms and products people make (p. 138).

The term *TalanoaLālānga* symbolises the exploration of oneself to bring forth an awareness of the spirit that connects to all facets of life. Renewing the minds of what is within our spirits ignites different lived experiences shaping the way we observe and live socially, culturally, philosophically, economically and so forth. Creating a site where Pasifika can exchange their awareness and knowledge to maintain relationships must be deepened if we are to continue to educate ourselves here in New Zealand. The way we observe and practice education in the diverse ECE sector is centred on the abundance of collective living. How we learn, practice, relate and generate our Pasifika wisdoms begins essentially with our awareness of where we situate ourselves in New Zealand. To unpack one's *fatu*/heart takes more than just knowing culture and language, Pasifika educators need to investigate the deeper connections to our ancestors, *fonua*/land, *Tupuanga*/family heritage and histories incorporating their spirit and heart

through their journey. The underpinning of culture and language opens a site for us to learn to know, to do and to become. This begins with unpacking the different ways in which certain Pasifika cultures maintain relationships, traditions, values, beliefs and language within their own community. Once this is acknowledged and made known connecting to the wider world will not hinder a Pasifika person's identity, culture or language. Being immersed in our Pasifika culture and language in essence means being fully encapsulated by the heart, spirit and mind of our being.

Migration to New Zealand from the Pacific Islands of Niue, Cook Islands, Tongan, Samoa and other Pacific nations poses challenges of accepting the bi-culturalism, inter-cultural relationships and challenges needed for Pasifika to uphold and maintain for the integrity of our identities. Amituanai-Tolosa (2010) supports that language and culture is at the forefront of identity for a Pasifika person. It is through this connection to his/her inheritance will he/she be able to co-exist with the indigenous people of New Zealand as well as the dominant mainstream culture which is well known. The values that underpin the cultural relationships between migrants from the Pacific and Indigenous Māori are unseen. What needs to be revealed is the heart that processes what is from within. This brings about the value of sharing, co-existing, existing and maintenance without hesitation of whether a Pasifika culture and language will be extinct or thrive in years to come (Manu'atu, Kēpa, Taione & Pepe, 2014).

Research published by Jattan (2016) argues that EC teachers in mainstream still find it difficult to connect with Pasifika children. The reliance on Pasifika teachers reinforces the value of maintaining connections to our places of origin. There is an abundance of collective living in New Zealand we must begin to enlighten ourselves with for the benefit of indigenous namely Pasifika children. The diversity within ECE creates matters of quality practice, questions the integrity of what is being taught and learnt in these services, questioning how effective teachers are in supporting a child who comes with a basket full of his/her culture and language, values and beliefs. Looking at the current place of indigenous people in New Zealand the Māori have rights to their education, health and various other outlets due to the recognition of different agencies, the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Convention on the Rights of a Child. This however has been an ongoing process of declaring their recognition and rights as the

people of New Zealand. As Pasifika people we too have a right to an education, however, we must be able to connect and live together with the indigenous of New Zealand recognising the work we should in-put to an ever-growing diverse society that reflects our Pacific worldview (Boon-Nanai, Ponton, Haxell & Rasheed, 2017; Fairbairn-Dunlop, Nanai & Ahio, 2014).

1.4 Aims of the research

The title of this research *Finding our place in ECE – The journey of beginning Pasifika Early Childhood teachers* is about the exploration of re-thinking and renewing the contexts in which Pasifika have become educated in New Zealand. This is including our awareness surrounding the relationships Pasifika peoples in New Zealand have with the Pacific nations, Māori people and the wider mainstream population. Examining the significance of these relationships will bring forth Pasifika peoples' contribution to society. This research aims at revealing and renewing the spirits of Pasifika teachers in ECE so that what is unseen can be theorised and conceptualised to cultivate our rich languages and cultures.

The significance of our lived experiences is the lessons we pass down to our children and society. The way in which our families continue the practices of upholding traditions, values and beliefs within Pasifika varies across the board. The programme at the university was created from Tongan concepts, but the development of the other Pacific nations was created through the abundance of the students' spirit, heart, mind and body. Our Pasifika cultural capital can be enriched by sharing our epistemologies, pedagogies and *koloa*/treasures within our homes, diverse communities and education taking upon our experiences and conceptualising it into a space where we can grow and achieve within our education sectors and in this case ECE.

This research centralises itself within the heart of a teacher's purpose to become a voice and resource for the Pasifika communities. The contextualising of teachers' talks, ideas, thinking and relationships within New Zealand breaks through this idea that we are entitled because we have citizenship. The idea of this research is to awaken our current place in New Zealand to influence the importance of connecting to each other so that we can advance our places here.

The main question of this research to bring about the awareness of the different areas to consider when growing in Pasifika ECE is:

What does it mean to be a Pasifika Early Childhood Teacher in reflection to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) Degree?

This question will bring about the positive, struggles and changes needed to be made by those involved in the education of our Pasifika and indigenous children in New Zealand. The sub-questions that guide the research and support this main question will be discussed further in the Finding's chapter;

- Are you able to practice the teachings/learning you have learnt from the B. Pasifika Degree?
- What would be the most challenging thing about being a Pasifika Early childhood teacher?
- What would you change about the Early Childhood sector? Why?
- How do you as a Pasifika Early Childhood teacher provide for Pasifika children? (identity, culture, language)
- Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 and 20 years' time?
- How effective are the Ministry of Education (MoE, 1996, 2013-2017, 2016, 2017) documents to your practice/your centre's practices/Pasifika practices?
- How are your practices, teachings, degree different from those practicing in the field from your perspective (describe your practicum experiences)?
- How has the B. Pasifika Degree changed you?

1.5 The Process of Research

After graduation in 2015 I applied and began to work in a Mainstream Christian Centre. From my experience of six practicums I participated in during the BPed (ECT) programme and being employed as a provisional registered teacher I established my research topic.

As a graduate of the BPed (ECT) programme I understood my position once I knew I wanted to research students and graduates of the BPed (ECT) programme taught at the AUT. For this reason, in this research I have become an insider-outsider researcher. Smith (1999) states "when indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently,

priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, and people participate on different terms” (p. 193).

Smith supports the perspective in which I have taken as an emerging researcher. The way I shaped this research was solely around the programme itself that I took part in and the different problems, barriers and the positive and negative experiences I experienced as a student and a teacher with this first of its kind qualification (Manu’atu, 2013). For this reason, the framing of the research specifically around the programme generated participants and myself having common ground as Wolfgramm-Foliaki (2016) adds “being an insider-outsider means both the researcher and the researched share a common ground” (p. 36).

Isaac (2006) relates the insider-outsider researcher to someone who is knowledgeable and aware of the steps needed to prevent any unethical problems. As I have studied and graduated within the programme the one issue would be my bias to the programme and the expertise I have in this topic. As the interest of the researcher and participants are the same there would be potential for bias research (Grey, 2010). However, Sanga (2004, as cited in Passells, 2010) supports the idea of Pasifika researching Pasifika “to improve it is argued that Pasifika development and policy initiatives that affect Pasifika must be influenced by Pasifika thought” (p. 32).

As my research is based upon the BPED (ECT) programme only offered at the Auckland AUT. I could only conduct such research employing students and graduates of the three intakes that happened at the university. The first cohort was from 2013, the second intake of students was from 2014 and the third and final intake of students was from the year 2015. Mara (1999) writes about the role of the researcher “cultural knowledge and a level of analysis which includes a realism about what research can and cannot do. For our communities the needs are great, the expectations are high and sometimes unrealistic within present constraints” (p. 9).

My role as the researcher was to provide a space for the participants to share and *talanoa*/talk of their journey as only a very few could take part in such a programme. The ability to maintain relationships is central to the research process and its success being that the participants of this programme will be about knowing the process of *talanoa*/talk. As *talanoa* was a central component to the BEd (ECT) programme

understanding the participants will bring about a meaningful contribution to the Pasifika community (Ravlich, 2016) and it is imperative to understand and know the process of *talanoa* (Vaioliti, 2006). The process of *talanoa* was explored, conceptualised, unpacked and redefined in the BPed (ECT) programme. Furthermore Smith (2014) states “As an insider researcher knowing that when enlisting the help of Pasifika people, having some form of connection enhances cooperation” (p. 61). As an insider-outsider researcher being ethical and respectful towards the participants was always the priority. This is the process in which I have taken to ground this research.

1.6 My Journey into Research

A beginning 'ilo/knowledge

I am a product of South Auckland. I lived in a state house in Otara until the age of 5 years old. My family went through some issues when I was 8 or 9 years old and my siblings and I lived with my Mum. My Dad and Mum decided to bring our family back together when I was 10 years old. When I was in form one my parents separated me once again. I went and stayed with my Aunty, Uncle and cousin. After 3rd form I decided I wanted to be reunited again with my family, so I asked my Dad to come home. After some persuasion I was reunited again with my Mum, Dad and siblings. During fourth form I decided that I wanted to leave home and slowly I began to stay at my best friend's house in Mangere.

Always knowing I had a place with my family I began to leave and return as I pleased. Throughout all this I managed to gain NCEA Level 3 and University Entrance. After leaving college I entered University. After two years in my Bachelor of Visual Arts degree I left. In 2006 I decided to begin a relationship with my then partner now husband. I began to stay with my husband and his grandparents and then eventually unofficially moved into his aunty and uncle's house together with my husband and his grandparents in 2007.

My mum is Niuean and my dad is Samoan but I moved into a Tongan house where there could be over 15 people residing there at any given time. It was here I felt the most at home. During this time, I then re-entered University again to do Primary Teaching but left due to giving birth to my daughter at 24 weeks (6 months) prematurely. Fast forward numerous hospital admissions and five years later in 2013

together with my husband and daughter we decided it was time to re-enter university once again. This time I began my journey into the BPed (ECT) degree.

Upon entering the programme what was to happen I never imagined. Knowing my background, I did not think that I would become proud of my identity. The appreciation for my family, my ancestors, my *fonua*/land, my *Vagahau*/language did not at all entice me at that time to where I am today. I was comprised of surface ‘*ilo*/knowledge; a Tongan term that grew as the years went on. The knowledge I had of myself was minute I was Niuean and born in New Zealand. My schooling was all mainstream and my child rearing from my parents was colonised. I did not have any connection to who my ancestors were, what migration meant at all. But I understood my Dad came here for a better life and my Mum’s parents came for the milk and honey talked about throughout Pasifika peoples’ lives (Kingi, 2003). It was safe to say my ‘*ilo*/knowledge was lacking in many ways, but I was to learn very early, my knowledge was about to be tested and changed.

The ‘*ilo*/knowledge I gathered after the first semester immediately sent shock waves throughout my family. My parents were answering questions that they never imagined answering: *Why did you migrate here? What are your parents’ names? What is the Niue word for family? Ancestors? Siblings?* During classes my sister and I would send text messages from the beginning to the end. Asking our mum how do you say this in Niuean? Translate this sentence please, how do we say land in Niuean? Is there a greeting that we can address our class with? And this was only the beginning. My mum was not fluent in *Vagahau Niue*/Niue language, but she admitted the programme we were undertaking was encouraging her to speak more *Vagahau Niue*/Niue language. There was a point where both my parents, especially my dad thought it was best to leave the programme and find something else better to do because learning about our history, ancestors and place of origin was not going to get us a job. I understood my dad. Growing up my dad protected us from certain cultural practices but within a class of Pasifika students and vast reading of Pasifika scholars, academics and lecturers, I needed to find a connection to my heritage sooner rather than later. I remember thinking, what does being Niuean mean? How can I teach any Pasifika child I come into contact with when I do not even know who I am myself? Does my daughter know she is half Tongan, quarter Niuean, quarter Samoan? This feeling ignited a burning

sensation throughout my body and I did not want my daughter to miss out on her *koloa*/treasure any longer. This is how I connected to the conceptual framework of *TalanoaLālānga* and *Fātulalānga*.

Fātulalānga - Poto/understand 'ilo/acknowledge

This concept is an in-depth exploration into becoming a Pasifika EC teacher, mother, wife, in-law, daughter, granddaughter, cousin, co-worker and so forth added onto my beginning. The programme supported my shaping of Aotearoa the world as we see it and my homeland Niue. I realised that if I was to become a Pasifika teacher I needed to take hold my identity and allow my daughter the opportunity to understand her heritages too. I could *poto/understand* and *ilo/acknowledge* and become aware of the *fakapotopoto*/wisdoms to create knowledge of knowing society as we know it today essentially creating a harmonious being within myself. The steps taken I became *poto'i*/experience and skilful in essence I was weaving different facets of life that connected to my *fonua*/homeland, my place of origin.

This was imperative to my growth in the programme understanding that my relationship with Aotearoa required firstly acknowledging *Tangata Whenua* and accepting the ongoing relationship Pasifika have with *Tangata Whenua* in Aotearoa. This was important as it gave me a grounding to where I placed myself, I said Mangere was my home, my place of belonging but in all truth my longing was not for Mangere but for Niue Island. I do not have to physically live on Niue Island to be more Niuean but acknowledging the ties to Niue brought me a step closer to my identity within the programme and where I wanted to see myself in years' time. I became in *Vagahau Niue fefela he is maama*/having knowledge and understanding through enlightenment to pass on and extend to other knowledges (Tāoga Niue, 2008).

The concept of *fātulalānga* is what weaved the 20 papers offered to change, develop and re-shape firstly my family's life. My husband and daughter went through the process together of awakening our spirits to understand our role and place here in Aotearoa. The concept *fātulalānga* allowed me to feel, gather and weave with one another in unison. *Fatu* from a Pasifika perspective encompasses *alofa/ofa/aroha/faakalofa noa/love*. Sauni (2011) expresses *fatu* for Pasifika people was our source of strength, knowledge, understanding and a collective place to gather and

deepen our thoughts, minds, bodies and spirits. *Lalānga* meaning to weave, thinking metaphorically weaving the *fatu*/heart and spirit are like our practices that we weave. Amituanai-Toloa (2010) expresses when we weave from our heart together we transcend who we are, where we are from and where we are going, always developing and moving.

At the end of my first year I realised I had to make a choice, so I decided that I would represent my daughter throughout the degree because her ties to her Tongan culture was plentiful. My husband's grandfather provided in-depth knowledge that supported my studies. My husband began to become awakened in spirit, mind and body of being Tongan, born in Tonga but arriving in New Zealand with no comprehension of the English language. Sharing his migration story, he realised that there was no need to be ashamed of his story but to embrace it within his family, his workplace and to our daughter. The connection to his language he began to appreciate, speaking *Lea faka Tonga*/Tongan Language was only a form of communication but the more we discussed values, beliefs, and issues with his grandpa, the more we both came to understand speaking in your mother tongue was a connection to a spirit of feeling and warmth.

In 2015 nearing the end of our first semester, my family had to go through the process of losing my Mum to cancer. There was no way possible of getting through the year and graduating with my cohort in December. However, the day my mother passed, my husband's family (extended family) turned up once she had been taken to the funeral home, immediately I knew what they were here to do. I would not have appreciated their presence, but because of the learning within the degree I embraced and understood their reasons for coming the *mafana*/warmth, *malie*/beauty and *potupotutau*/harmony. What I witnessed that day I will never forget that feeling. Learning to live together with another culture other than my own demonstrates the knowledge gained within such a ground-breaking degree. My in-laws that day become the cleaners, the builders and the furniture movers. Within three hours the house was cleaned ready for my mum's body to return, the lawns mowed, the garage prepared for visitors (all this was done by what my family considered family after those three hours). This type of relationship shows exactly the type of spirit Pasifika people, children, families and communities bring together as a diverse people, we are very different but our '*ofa, fakaalofa noa, aloha, aroha, alofa*, love is the same.

The learning over the next years shaped my goal of becoming an ECE lecturer. My goal now is to ignite the same type of knowing to Pasifika children and families and teachers that I meet when I become a Pasifika lecturer. The characteristics that form relationships have grown in my *atefua*/heart and I would love to embrace this through my teachings in the future. This is the main reason of continuing on into this type of research.

1.7 Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 presents the author myself stating the thesis will be written in the first person context as the narrative for the purpose, context, importance and aim of this research surrounds a specific Pasifika degree. The thesis outline is provided.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review guided by Pasifika knowledges in Pasifika ECE and university. The literature covers locally and globally ECE teacher reflections, there is also a focus on newly graduated teachers in ECE.

Chapter 3 presents the *Talanoa* methodology and method. The research questions and sub-questions are within this chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the six participants who took part in this research.

Chapter 5 presents the discussion part of the thesis. Themes will be used to discuss the participants' narratives.

Chapter 6 presents the summary of what was researched. It draws on conclusions of the different components of this research.

1.8 Summary

In chapter one I have discussed my personal journey, and how I fit into this research, which is why I have chosen to take the first-person context. I have introduced the topic which is *Finding our place in Early Childhood Education – The journey of beginning Pasifika Early childhood teachers* drawing from knowledges, and voices from the BPED (ECT).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Pasifika teachers' statistics reveal that there is still a shortage of Pasifika teachers within the Early Childhood Sector "...as they only make up 6% compared to the three quarters of European teachers, 14% Māori and 12% Asian ECT in the field" (MoE, 2014, p. 6). The obvious barriers for Pasifika ECE achievement is the fact that there are not enough ECET (Early Childhood Education Teachers) who understand and relate to their upbringing, cultural backgrounds and Pasifika languages to point out a few. Māori and Pasifika children remain the underachievers in New Zealand within education (Perger, 2007). This research warrants the necessity of more Pasifika ECE programmes for both Pasifika and mainstream teachers.

There are targets and retention goals for our Pasifika children in ECE however Pasifika teachers play a significant role as they can relate, respond and grow with the Pasifika children whom are still being misunderstood (Jattan, 2016). Pasifika academics have researched the benefits of Pasifika children being taught and guided by Pasifika teachers (Samu, 2006; Tagoilelagi-Leota, Kesi, Tagoilelagi, Penn & Autagavaia, 2011; Utumapu-McBride, 2013), which corresponds with more Pasifika children are being born in New Zealand versus their Pacific nation making Pasifika ECET role even more vital for these young children (Dateline Pacific, 2017). As Pasifika numbers continue to grow it is estimated that 480,000 Pasifika people will be living in New Zealand by the year 2026 (Pasifika Futures, 2017). Therefore, it only makes sense that there are Pasifika teachers getting qualifications through Pasifika headed degrees or qualifications to cater to the forecasted population.

The research topic *Finding our place in ECE – The journey of beginning Pasifika Early childhood teachers* will support the responsibility different stakeholders have in New Zealand to provide more ECE programmes underpinned by Pasifika methodologies, pedagogies and knowledges. But essentially to equip Pasifika ECE students with connections to their identity through their culture and language that will support Pasifika children in ECE services. This will be the start of closing the Pasifika gap of low success rate across all education sectors. These issues will be discussed in the literature review:

1. The Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) Programme
2. Pasifika in New Zealand
3. Pasifika and Mainstream ECT

2.2 Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) programme

The BPED (ECT) was the first of its kind of programme in New Zealand and around the world. The BPED (ECT) was delivered by the AUT and began in 2013 with its first cohort of Pasifika, Asian, European and African students. The programme's conceptual framework used Tongan principles, culture, language, values and beliefs as the foundation, but students were able to incorporate their own culture, language, values and beliefs. Manu'atu (2013) states

The conceptual framework of the degree, drawn from Tongan principles, knowledge, values and beliefs has indeed been a contribution by a Tongan academic whose spirit has been mobilised, energized and uplifted by 'ofa/love and that, in turn, uplift others. As a set of collective wisdoms, the degree creates a place and space, at the university, where Tongan people are called upon and encouraged to renew their hearts within 'ofa/love, a new step in the very direction of critiquing Pasifika education, collective learning, theorising, and researching Tongan knowledges (p. 131).

In the end there were only three intakes for this programme the first in 2013, the second in 2014 and the final in 2015. The programme provided a space where shared Pasifika knowledges, experiences, cultures and languages became a platform for reconceptualising "colonised wisdoms" as distinct from collective wisdoms.

Manu'atu (2013) supports the perspective of the research through reflecting upon its purpose in university

What is in our spirit, thinking and doing that can be talked about or identified as 'ofa? What could be our new conceptualising of knowledge of the hearts/spirits? (p. 134) ...

Through 'ofa, I have been able to intellectualise and contribute to creating the new teaching qualification...In theory, the degree is first and foremost informed by myriad and diverse wisdoms drawn from principles, values, languages and cultural practices of the peoples of Tonga, Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands, Fiji, Tokelau, among other groups of the Pacific peoples (p. 138).

In another piece of research Manu'atu et al., (2014) speak of the programme through *taulangi*/reaching for the sky in practice.

In practice, the degree is a qualification never made before in a tertiary educational institution in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Spiritually and intellectually, ethically and morally, socially and culturally, economically and politically, the practice calls for academics, scholars, researchers, and educationalists who are courageous enough to make a change in education and society, knowing full well that whatever is made may be disliked by colleagues, students, parents and countrymen, and rejected by politicians and administrators who organise the education system (p. 4).

This has shaken up the education system which has in the end taken the programme and other Pasifika driven programmes out of the universities in New Zealand (Collins, 2018). For a reason too trivial as even myself as an academic, cannot guarantee passing the English test given to Pasifika who do not have enough English language, but more than enough to teach, nurture and grow Pasifika children, unlike mainstream teachers “but the new English language requirement has blocked most mature Pasifika people, who have the strongest Pasifika language skills and cultural knowledge, from teaching pre-schoolers” (Collins, 2018, para. 9).

Jattan (2016) also researched about the programme being offered

The other qualification is the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) degree which started in 2013. This is a unique Pasifika Education Teaching qualification, based on a strong Tongan conceptual framework *TalanoaLālānga* where all 20 papers are derived from teaching and promoting our Pasifika languages, cultures and knowledges. However, the Pasifika degree is finished at the end of 2017. In its place the new Bachelor of Education degree (beginning in 2017), allows all students to learn about Pasifika pedagogy and knowledges throughout their degree in core papers taught in year one and two (p. 27).

As Jattan (2016) states this Pasifika programme was unique as it was based on a strong Tongan conceptual framework. What the students of the different Pasifika culture received was creating their own personalised Niue, Samoan, Fijian, Cook Island, Tongan and Māori conceptual framework ready for their respective Pasifika centres to take on board. However, Manu’atu et al., (2014) expressed it would be turning what seemed ‘normal’, ‘repetitive’, ‘western’ knowledge and education upside down and this is the role of these Pasifika teachers. To advance in today’s society that is already diverse Pasifika ECET must root themselves in who they are for the betterment of the young minds.

In support of the programme Utumapu-McBride (2013) wrote,

Pasifika Education has become 'a strong hold' at AUT University with the popularity of the National Diploma ECE Pasifika (finishing in 2014), and the new Bachelor of Pasifika ECE which began in 2013...There is a unique feature of the new degree in that what students bring with their (their cultural capital) is welcomed and they get to incorporate or weave their knowledge in their assignments. This means that the majority of the ECE students who are of Pasifika decent (from Samoan, Tonga, Cook Island, Niue, Fiji, Indo-Fijian, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Tahiti) can confidently use their first languages and cultures in the classroom to validate and develop their teaching practice (p. 57)

The capabilities of this programme have changed the way we look at Pasifika ECE. Students of this programme got given the tools by their lecturers to weave and incorporate their knowledge, changing the way in which we learn in formal education. The students of this programme were given the power to validate their identities, origins and ancestors, developing more self-awareness, in touch and connected Pasifika teachers. As a new concept mainstream needed to conform to the way Pasifika learn, teach and guide our children and not Pasifika trying to mould and fit into the mainstream categories. They have done us no good in developing our status in NZ (Galuvao, 2013). To grasp the academic world these students began from searching within themselves, their knowledges mattered. They formed their understanding through their cultural values, beliefs and teachings (Manu'atu, 2013). Their hearts needed to be moved firstly to deepen their understanding of their origins and place in New Zealand. These students' identities needed to be affirmed, the way they connected to their practicums and teaching practices was only achieved when they understood who they were, who their families were and why they were not in their *fonua*/homelands, but here in New Zealand developing and nurturing this society.

Su'aali'i-Sauni (2008) supports the notion of the role learning institutes like university should provide for students. Despite colour, gender, ethnicity their role is to provide an environment where learning and self-discovery is a given and this Pasifika programme gave this to the students that entered. Su'aali'i-Sauni (2008) valued the idea that universities and learning institutes must provide Pasifika students equal opportunities. This is in relation to the Pasifika cultures, languages, values and beliefs similar to what the Pasifika ECT programme provided the students of the three year intakes. Regardless of colour, gender, ethnicity learning institutions role is to provide an

environment where learning and self-discovery is a given and this Pasifika programme delivered this to the students that entered.

Pasifika education within universities is gaining minimal recognition of the importance to have such programme's existent. As Utumapu-McBride (2013) expresses AUT was on their way of recognising the formation of a strong Pasifika movement through the BPED (ECT) degree. Although the programme has been removed the students have been given three years of intense, ground breaking, thought provoking tools to develop their own centres, and even business, to pass on the rich *koloa*/treasures taught and gained in the programme if Pasifika is to strive.

2.3 Pasifika in New Zealand

2.3.1 Pasifika today

Pasifika Futures (2017) state that there are 295, 941 Pasifika people in New Zealand and of these people 62% are born in New Zealand, the forecast estimates 480, 000 Pasifika people will be residing in New Zealand by 2025. As Pasifika intend to grow in population more is needed to lift and develop this population as they remain at the lower end of education, health, employment and housing. Pasifika Futures (2017) writes "Pacific families have more children than any other ethnic group in New Zealand furthermore the Pacific population has the highest proportion of children under 14" (p. 6). The Ministry for Pacific Peoples (2018) forecast Pacific people will be 10% of the population increasing 2.6% from 2013. These statistics portray the situation we are in as Pasifika, we must understand our actions are crucial for the improvement and achievement of the Pasifika children to come.

2.3.2 Pasifika Culture and Language

The latest statistics have shown the Samoan language was the third most commonly spoken language nationally (Statistics New Zealand [StatsNZ], 2016) however there is still a worry amongst all Pasifika groups of the survival of their languages and cultures (StatsNZ, 2016). The European dominated society that effects our languages and cultures (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003; Kēpa & Manu'atu, 2008a; Teisina, 2011) is responsible for the declining number of Pasifika people speaking their first languages. Aupito William Sio who is the Minister for Pacific peoples states there is an obligation to Pacific peoples who are separate and distinct and different to the rest

of the world (Dateline Pacific, 2017). As a newly appointed Minister Aupito has a five-point plan that closes the gap of issues surrounding Pasifika languages.

Baleinakorodawa's (2009) research explored the barriers that included culture, language, socio-cultural and socio-economic halting Pasifika achievement in alternative programmes supported the obvious marginalisation happening with the Pasifika community in New Zealand. Pasifika are a group of Pacific identities who offer society a unique embodiment of charismatic qualities, values, knowledges, and histories that originate from their Pacific countries but has been lost due to their culture and language diminishing over time. Baleinakorodawa (2009) states "internalising the dominant cultures, values and identity can cause acute difficulties in school contexts" (p. 20). Manu'atu (2000) understands that being marginalized has taken its toll on how Pasifika students achieve in schools and universities. This is supported by Bishop (2005) who writes about having an alternative approach for Pasifika and Māori students. This approach includes cultural appreciation and a cultural way of learning implemented into the school systems. However, ignorance is a major issue Māori are being faced with regarding their language, which is an official language of New Zealand. Hosking (2018) is one of many high profiled European, mainstream egotist who is against the Māori language writing;

It is not the government's job to go around saving languages. Why not? Because you have to ask yourself why it's in trouble. And the answer is simple: People don't want to bother with it. It's not like they don't have a choice. It's not like they haven't had the choice forever. In fact, given its spoken by so few, it's actually not a lot of use inside NZ. But a language historically lives or expands or remains popular because it exists or spreads internationally and/or it's useful in business. Māori doesn't and never fitted that particular criteria (para. 4-7).

This ignorance is why an official language in New Zealand is in danger and creating a picture of intentionally degrading of Māori people who are the indigenous people of New Zealand (Smith, 1999). However Pacific researcher Penn (2010) states,

...educational marginalisation of minority students will be perpetuated until AUT adopts policies and procedures which enable culturally responsive educational pedagogies and practices which honour indigenous minorities. It was concluded that transforming staff so that they understand Pasifika peoples is crucial to growing Pasifika educational success (p. v).

An educational institute is part responsible to how students are educated, supported and interconnected through their culture and identity this research focused on New Zealand. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) (2015, 2017) admits underlying issues within universities do have work to do to achieve the goals set for Pasifika students. This issue is acknowledged across the board of education in New Zealand. Culture and language is Pasifika peoples' integrity (Vaiioleti, 2003) although statistics suggest otherwise. Penn (2010) reinforces the positions ECE services, schools and universities play in Pasifika students' academic lives (Finau, 2008; Manu'atu, 2008; Su'aali'i-Sauni, 2008). Our spirits are connected deeply to our ancestors and God, though at times it may seem there is a disconnection within our communities, we cannot divide identity, language and culture expecting Pasifika to thrive.

2.3.3 Brief history of Pasifika ECE

The Pasifika ECE movement began in the 1970s where there was an establishment of the first playgroup for Cook Island Punanga reo families followed by two full immersion Samoan centres founded in the 1980s, followed by 150 licensed full immersion centres in the year of 1990 (Grey & Clark, 2013). The reasons for establishing the immersion centres were for Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, Cook Island and Pasifika communities to have a place in the New Zealand society where families and their children remained rich in their genealogies, cultural values and beliefs. The most important reasons behind the establishments were for the survival of their Pasifika languages and cultures. ECE Pasifika immersion centres began in churches, church halls and community halls firstly headed by wives of ministers (Cooper & Tangaere, 1994; Leaupepe & Sauni, 2014). The Pasifika ECE services are for Pasifika taught by Pasifika for a strategy of identity survival (Leavasa-Tautolo, 2004).

2.3.4 Pasifika Education today

Pasifika child/ren that attends any type of education stands with their families, communities and at times their place of origin of a Pacific nation that they represent. This is where mainstream education begins to fail Pasifika in education that has not been brought forth as an issue but more just a topic of discussion. Educating Pasifika will take more than what has been offered thus far (Gaugatao, 2017). There are vast reasons for this and Gaugatao (2017) simplifies it for us:

The challenges for Pasifika students are multidimensional. They cannot be solved by a universal strategy or approaches dependent on a political whim. Let's not play the blame game as well. Rather, we should be focusing on what is important – the success of every learner. To achieve success for Pasifika learners, we need to know them, understand how they see the world, promote difference as a strength and help them understand that their identities, linguistic and cultural assets are vital to their educational success in Aotearoa New Zealand (p. 1).

Pasifika children under 4 are still under-represented in ECE totalling to only 32% enrolled compared to Māori who have 53%, NZ European with 52% and Asian with 44% children enrolled in ECE services (StatsNZ, 2013).

In New Zealand the ECE sector is diverse in the services that provide childcare (Education in New Zealand, 2017; MoE, 2016) and there have been various initiatives to increase Pasifika participation in ECE claiming to give Pasifika children a start in life beneficial for their literacy, numeracy and social skills. However, the problem begins when these children arrive at ECE services with no one to connect to, relate to or feel a strong sense of belonging (Jattan, 2016). This is where Pasifika ECE teachers' role becomes imperative as they guide Pasifika children and their families through their ECE experiences.

Regardless of what is being taught in these ECE services what needs to be asked is how do we increase Pasifika education statistics? As Redmond (2017, 2017a) points out Pasifika and Māori still occupy the lower end of statistics in education achievement and participation with some advancement but not enough to match European and Asian students (Redmond 2017, 2017a). This is where the research aims to highlight as stated there has been countless initiatives encouraging Pasifika families to attend ECE services, more goals set in the Education plan (MoE, 2013, 2013-2017) and remaining "the underachievement for Pasifika students is a cause for concern" (Perger, 2007, p. 73). The concern of participation is only the beginning. The issue is why are Pasifika children still failing in New Zealand and with the majority now being born in New Zealand. A programme like the Pasifika Education Programme that has been discussed in this research could be one of the main ways to increase Pasifika statistics. What we can understand, is that this has been an issue for some time. There needs to be more solutions than problems occurring in this day and time.

Gaugatao (2017) reinforces what has already been written, researched and discussed. The Pacific worldview is amongst what has been researched for Pasifika students who continue to integrate our Pasifika knowledge, wisdom, values and beliefs (Boon-Nanai et al, 2017; Fairbairn-Dunlop et al., 2014). The fact is more needs to be done for the Pasifika children in education than what is being already produced. The promotion of identities, linguistic and cultural assets begin with the teachers (Utumapu-McBride, 2013). Pasifika children are coming from homes already equipped and enriched with their values, beliefs and cultural teachings. Thaman (2011) and Samu (2007) write about teachers needing to develop insights, knowledge and appreciation with the different Pasifika cultures. Both Pasifika academics insist ECET must be aware of themselves and have a strong connection to their *whenua*/land, *fonua*/homelands and origins will benefit each Pasifika child they meet. According to Samu (2007) ECET understanding of Pasifika children will have a positive effect on Pasifika students. Pasifika academics and researchers have countless times reported and written the need to be a sincere, honest and true with Pasifika children's families, country, language, culture and values if we are to develop with the potential embedded within us. Gaugatao (2017) suggests we must become the stakeholders of our own education, design and deliver our own Pasifika programmes that way we are not just "mere instruments" but leaders. This mind set is fervent within the Pasifika community however the issue lies within how confident are Pasifika teachers in ECE services to provide such a service.

2.4 Pasifika and Mainstream ECE Teachers

Jattan's research (2016) highlighted different areas of concern in relation to how teachers are catering to Pacific learners in the ECE services. One of Jattan's findings was "teachers felt there was a lack of Pacific teachers in the field and felt that having a Pacific teacher would help solve many of the challenges they faced" (p. 46). The lack of Pasifika teachers is one of the issues however if ECET are finding it 'hard' to connect to Pasifika teachers this is a bigger concern.

If mainstream teachers are unable to provide true learning, guidance, support for Pasifika children then, their role becomes murky. Participants in this research expressed influences of western education being an issue which is supported by Māori and Pasifika researchers (Pau'uvale, 2011; Teisina, 2011; Thaman, 1997). The influences of

mainstream and European education models are something we as Pasifika teachers and community must consider and contemplate of either changing or just adding too (A. W. Sio, personal communication, January 23, 2018). Onegley (2013) and Smith (1999) advocate through their research for indigenous people of New Zealand. Māori have their own issues regarding education and Pasifika can learn from their experiences but as Onegley expresses part of the problem for teachers is the lack of confidence and a major fear is being tokenistic. Jenkin's (2010, 2011) research proves ECET having lack of confidence and a low sense of ownership when discussing Pasifika children's needs for advancement in education. This is supported through Jattan (2016) as her participants felt it was not only them but Pasifika teachers themselves lacking in confidence and knowledge at times becoming idle.

However, as Kulhánková (2011) writes about the negative effects of having a colonial past which is in relation to the indigenous people of Australia. Similar to that of the indigenous here in New Zealand, the Māori people. As Pasifika begin to state their place in New Zealand it does not happen without recognising the pathways in which Māori have taken to transform their colonized ways of living (Rewi, 2010; Smith, 1999) to then challenge the survival of Māori culture, language, practices and knowledges. The revitalization of Māori in New Zealand is leading the way for more indigenous people to gather and claim what is rightfully theirs and in this case, it is Pasifika having the right to their language and culture in New Zealand. The new Pacific Minister in government recently stated his five-point plan and one of them being Pasifika languages being Niue, Tuvalu, Samoa, Tonga and Cook Island becoming official community languages recognized here in New Zealand (Dateline Pacific, 2017).

The respect of Māori people and their official language in New Zealand is not hindered or challenged by this legislation that will be brought into parliament, it is the Pacific Minister's way of progressing Pasifika people and children in New Zealand. Culture and language is two of the most powerful identity connections for an indigenous person (Rewi, 2010) giving a person *mana*/strength, identity, the maintenance of *tikanga*/Māori values and beliefs integration into New Zealand society but upholding what makes him/her Māori, Samoan, Tongan or Niuean a Pacific ethnic person.

Rewi (2010) expresses “cultural identity is important for people’s sense of self and how they relate to others’ and contributes to the individual’s well-being” (p. 57) connected to self-worth, belonging and confidence. Just as Māori were colonized by Europeans and had major domino effects on their development, this is what is happening for Pasifika in education. Māori for Pasifika are people to learn and practice from in relation to establishing a strong foundation to guide children through education.

The New Zealand Government and MoE have pushed for more participation of Pacific children into Early Childhood services (MoE, 2013, 2013-2017). If there is a gap in knowledge and practice of how to cater to these Pasifika children, then these stakeholders need to relook at their goals and aspirations for Pasifika people and children in New Zealand. They would also need to consider how mainstream teachers are to receive adequate teachings on how to relate, teach, support and affirm Pasifika children for their development into formalized education.

Pau’uvala (2011) connects to Jattan’s (2016) research as they discuss and unpack ‘quality’ ECE education. However, as quality is being questioned having a sense of accountability, also becomes an issue. I do not feel taking the direction of quality teaching will add or enhance what has already been researched but only pointing out the obvious of producing Pasifika teachers who are equipped with their knowledges and that of academic knowledge and practices to cater and enhance our Pasifika children.

Jattan (2016) noted that providing an environment catering to Pasifika children are real challenges for mainstream teachers and causes different pressures for them and what they teach daily. This is supported by Hakim (2014) who discusses what expectations of quality teaching may do to teachers. The fact that they must cater to such a diverse group of children including Pasifika, ‘quality teaching’ as Hakim’s research suggests is being misunderstood by the teachers because the lack of guidance from upper management and stakeholders who are not working on the ground floor with these teachers. Urban (2008) supports this case, stating that quality is a definition with its own understanding especially if relating it to business making ECE services, concerned about pay increases and not concentrated on the quality given by professional teachers. Urban (2008) goes further, arguing that different types of qualification in ECE transcends in the workforce creating a certain type of teacher, once again confusing this

term of quality. There has been different research around the term quality, forcing more ECE services to provide such a service in different ways (Pau'uvala, 2011).

Hakim's (2014) research highlights in New Zealand the concept surrounding quality was "not uniformly understood by teachers today" (p. 11) proving to hold back teachers' understanding; essentially the multiple roles they play in children's lives. Jattan (2016) goes on to state after discussing her participants' voices "...believed a Pacific teacher in each centre would be ideal" (p. 66) this thought or frame of mind from mainstream teachers puts pressure on an already scarce group of Pasifika ECET who are in the field already. This suggests the expectation of mainstream teachers is that Pasifika teachers will come and bear the load of catering to Pasifika identified children disregarding the fact that more than 60% of Pasifika people are born in New Zealand (Dateline Pacific, 2017), potentially are not connected to their country, language or culture at all. In this case it requires specific Pasifika ECE university programmes to begin to close this gap of New Zealand born Islanders.

This issue has no solutions of how to cater to Pasifika children. This strengthens in various ways the importance of this research and the voices of Pasifika teachers who have studied within their own Pasifika culture and language that are coming into a field in great need of their knowledges and practices. A problem occurring within ECE is the dominant western knowledges, mainstream culture that devalues Pasifika wisdoms and practices (Kolone-Collins, 2010). This issue has been prevalent for many years; the problem though is that there are more than enough Pasifika researchers and academics to provide resolutions for the advancement of Pasifika children in ECE. Mara (2017) touches upon the need to celebrate "the strong heritage and resilience of Pacific ECE and researchers" (p. 37) by guiding Pasifika educators towards plotting our own journey in New Zealand. It begins with Pasifika people of New Zealand working together to decolonize the western knowledges, and mainstream dominance that fails to recognise the wisdoms of Pasifika people which could increase Pasifika children and students' education placement when compared to other cultures in New Zealand.

Devaluing Pasifika languages and cultures is being done by imposing the English language in education (Kēpa, 2008). A problem within education relevant to ECE is the mainstream constructions of how it relates and holds Pasifika people. Mara (2017)

begins to map out a way in which Pasifika strive towards establishing their own Pacific stream education by maintaining and creating regional and global networking. The beginning of creating such a pathway has its start within ECE and that is through the full immersion and bi-lingual Pasifika centres. It is at these Pasifika services of Homebase and centres that Niue, Cook Island, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu teachers have a space to place a strong foundation for children to connect and embed themselves in their culture, language, cultural practices, countries' histories, family histories and much more to bring about Pasifika children who are rich in their cultural capital, language and identity.

Mainstream dominance is not the only factor to Pasifika remaining at the lower spectrum of different areas in society. Within education Moodley's (2016) research highlights the gap within Pasifika leadership in ECE. This affects the way in which newly graduated teachers approach ECE, observe what is happening in the ECE services and in turn could possibly turn them away from the sector. Leadership within ECE for Pasifika teachers to grow and develop their skills needs to be worked on if Pasifika children are to have a chance at a founded education in their culture and language (Leauepepe & Sauni, 2014; Matapo & Leauepepe, 2016). Pasifika academics do not hide the fact that there needs to be more improvement within Pasifika teachers advancing in leadership roles within ECE. Moodley's research points out the lack of direction and support of the different stakeholders for the development of Pasifika teachers who hold positions higher than a teacher title. Moreover, the issue of the sector not being compulsory and gaining not enough support from the government (Copper, 2014). As discussed in Pasifika research associated with leadership is the Pasifika observations and practices within specific Pacific nations, male dominance in the Pacific is common. Within a Pacific family the male is the head of the family and well-known to all Pasifika people is God and he is the head of every family (Fitzgerald, 2003) however, in ECE women dominate the services. This reveals the gap in which Pasifika teachers must work towards closing for the sake of the children. Santamaria and Santamaria (2015), touch upon the sustainable change, culturally responsive practices have towards leadership within education this supports the research of Moodley (2016) who writes "...further research is undertaken to highlight Pasifika cultural ways of leading that might aid in the possibility of developing leadership models suitable for the Early Childhood sector" (p. 102). The fact of the matter is even

though Moodley highlights the issue of the dominant western colonization that is continuing to happen within the Pasifika educators' journey in ECE a way to counteract this is to mentor and support Pasifika teachers who display leadership qualities.

What is missing in mainstream education? The heart of connecting to a bigger outlet and for Pasifika children is their families, culture, language, observations of the elders in their families, the way in which they pray, eat, learn off each other, their interactions with their community and homelands all these factors must be considered to provide 'quality', honest and teaching in ECE and education. Being Pasifika is more than just the blanket term given to those who come from the South Pacific (Manu'atu, 2008; Mara, Foliaki & Coxon, 1994; Samu, 2006, 2007) to make things easier for those who are not familiar with Pasifika people. How are mainstream teachers going to relate and be able to provide these types of rich and in-depth learning? That is a question that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. Pasifika ECE requires detailed attention to inter-relational space and specialized cultural knowledge for improvement within the sector (Matapo, 2017).

2.5 How prepared are Pasifika ECE Teachers after gaining their qualifications?

Early literature has emphasized the protagonists of Pasifika ECE and their establishments of Pasifika centres for the maintenance of children's culture, language and identity (Cooper & Tangaere, 1994; Leaupepe & Sauni, 2014; Leavasa-Tautolo, 2004). As literature suggests ECE programmes that enhance and promote Pasifika world views, languages, cultures, values and beliefs. Edwards (2009) and Ord's (2010) research both state the ECET desires during their studies is to have more practice and hands on sense of learning rather than receiving content knowledge that cannot be practiced forwardly while on practicum and as beginning teachers. Edward's (2009) research was based upon ECE perceptions of teaching science the same strategies and gaps in teachers' knowledge connects to the perceptions teachers display around Pasifika children's language, culture and identity. A suggestion of her research is that teachers work together in finding strategies relating to the nature of what is being taught. This can also be reflected in how teachers will support a child of another culture. The lack of practice during students' studies in whichever institution they receive their teachings from need to provide a coherent programme covering all basis of diversity

that the teachers will meet upon leaving their studies. This is supported by Ord's (2010) research where she states "...sense of preparedness lies within the design of teacher education programme" (p.i). This supports the BPed (ECT) qualification that the six participants of this research studied in the university. The programme as explained was for Pasifika students to gain an insight of their identities that made them conceptualize different concepts of their culture to then connect these theories, pedagogies and epistemologies to their respective Pasifika communities. The programme centred around these Pasifika teachers searching beyond the surface of what they knew and uncovering their hearts to connect to a spirit of knowing, learning, unpacking and rediscovering their true identities (Manu'atu, 2013). The three years of study was to ignite their hearts and bring about new knowledges of culture, language, the creation of an ECE curriculum specified for their chosen Pasifika ECE services covering ideas like *fonua*/homeland, *kāinga*/family, *koloa*/treasure and *fakapotopoto*/wisdom concepts that connected to ECE today and the Pasifika families, communities and children they would serve through their teaching. As the current research appears the preparedness of ECET is based upon the sense of learning versus the practice of their knowledge.

Mara (2017) relays the New Zealand government investments in participation for the non-compulsory sector as inconsistent. This contradicts the amount of money and resources used to draw Pasifika families into ECE. Once they enrol their child the question is raised again on how prepared these teachers are to cater to a diverse group of children within an already diverse service. Diversity within New Zealand society is major, thinking about the issues that arise in ECE the 'quality' provided can be premature. The government's initiatives also contradict the role the Education Review Office have on the various Pasifika centres that they open and shut down for not meeting their strict criteria, again questioning the preparedness of newly graduated ECET. Are they prepared to take upon different situations of implementing a bi-cultural document, negotiating with teachers, administration and governance and management? As the programme in the university will not continue on after 2017, Mara and Kumar (2016) raise the problem of outlining a framework for culturally responsive pedagogy and assessment in Pasifika ECE to then not be able to explore or advance this area of expertise because of little funding and resourcing. This demonstrates the necessity to produce research as for teachers both in mainstream and Pasifika ECE services to discover various ways of providing ECEC for the children they

meet. Continuation of culture and language within an ECE service is not just for the children and students within their study must be able to understand the connection a child has beyond the classroom walls. Culture links the child to the generations before him/her and possibly after him/her, language by nature is the opportunity to become an orator, Pasifika people are all too familiar with.

2.6 Summary

The issue surrounding Pasifika children is the fact that we are still unknown to mainstream teachers and mainstream New Zealand. Ten years, five Pacific education plans later there is still a gap in the way ECET and teachers alike relate and sustain positive relationships for Pasifika children in education. As Pasifika there has been enough support from academics, scholars and researchers supporting Pasifika heading their own paths and ways through mainstream society. However, and from the literature review there is still a gap between mainstream society accepting the fact that Pasifika do better when they are the captains of their own ships. For Pasifika to achieve and grow from where we sit at the bottom of all statistics we need to be given full control over what we learn, how we learn, why we learn and full use of our culture and language in a land, majority of Pasifika children now call home.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to justify the use of the *talanoa* methodology and *talanoa* method within this research. The *Talanoa* methodology is a Pasifika concept that is becoming well known in different faculties e.g. Education, Business and Health supported by Vaioleti (2006) “*talanoa*’s non-linear and responsive approaches are qualities that may allow *talanoa* research methodology to have universal appeal...” (p. 25). The *Talanoa* methodology is appropriate for this research as the participants of the BPed (ECT) programme connect to *talanoa*. This will be unpacked and explained within this chapter.

3.1.1 Theoretical Framework.

ECE today is diverse. If we focus on the term ‘Pasifika’, studies (4ESNEWS, 2018; Hawk, Cowley, Hill & Sutherland, 2002; Wayne, 2013) suggests ECET are still finding it hard to relate, respond and guide children in ECE. The context of this research is to guide the ECE sector and reinforce the importance of a Pasifika child’s identity. Identity is recognised through culture and language, and the BPed (ECT) provided a conceptualisation of Pasifika identities. Smith (1999) writes about the dominant society and the constant battle but Vaioleti (2006) suggests that using our own indigenous methods and methodologies, the framing of Pasifika lies within our capabilities. The BPed (ECT) programme connected this to the teachers of the programme. Mara (2017) places Pasifika under the ‘urgent priority’ title and suggests we release our moorings from mainstream and begin to build our own journeys. The BPed (ECT) programme equipped the students to take on such tasks. Manu’atu (2013) a strong advocate for Pasifika to be ignited in their culture and language goes deeper than just what we read and see. The framing of this research takes the conceptual framework of *TalanoaLālānga* and *Fātulālānga* and connects this to the students, providing the space so their culture, language, values and beliefs permeate their knowledge which stems from our hearts (Manu’atu, 2013). Mainstream have a way to go in the valuing of our cultures and languages this research will provide them with knowledge that cannot be read in books, studied at university as Pasifika have the key to enlightening Aotearoa and the world.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 *Talanoa Methodology*

We have a beginning. Pasifika have a beginning. The concept of *talanoa* is discussed in various Pasifika scholars and academics' research. From their extensive discussions of this concept it is well known within academia that the *talanoa* methodology belongs to the phenomenology family (Otsuka, 2006; Vaioleti, 2006). Smith (1999) supports the use of our own indigenous/Pasifika lens to appropriately provide correct cultural protocols and values in a culturally appropriate manner. Vaioleti (2006) suggests Pasifika have unique worldviews and epistemologies requiring the application of the correct methodology when researching our Pasifika peoples so that we do not lose nor remove their true voices.

The *talanoa* methodology relates to the qualitative research approach that provides real life, culturally sensitive and specific information that relates to the participants. Their beliefs, values, culture, emotions, behaviours and relationships can be explored appropriately through the *talanoa* methodology. To suggest that this research is culturally appropriate means that there is a way specifically recognising the participants' culture and language that is embedded within them. The qualitative research framework aligns with the *talanoa* methodology creating the space for participants to draw on their truths with boundaries and conversations set by them, at their pace, by their own discretions. Otunuku (2011) uses the word dynamic when referring to the word *talanoa* because participants decide on the nature and course in which the *talanoa* is spoken and discussed essentially taking Pasifika participants in this research back to where it began which conversing, talking and sharing with their elders, parents and children.

Furthermore, Otunuku (2011) writes “*talanoa* is consistent with the Pasifika education research guidelines that suggest the best research methodologies for Pasifika people are sensitive to contemporary Pasifika contexts” (p. 45) supporting the current Pasifika ECET that have studied the BPed (ECT) programme. As the contents of the degree is still fresh in the participants' hearts connecting to this way of discussion through *Talanoa*. Halapua (2003) expresses terms like dialogue, open dialogue and dialogic interaction developing generic definitions discussed in previous Pasifika research. This

is supported by Vaioleti (2006) who writes “*talanoa* is an appropriate approach to researching Pacific educational and social issue in Aotearoa” (p. 21) connecting once again to this research topic of *Finding our place in ECE – The journey of beginning Pasifika Early Childhood Teachers*.

True voices within this research is crucial because these voices are current, new and filled with collective wisdoms that will renew hearts of ECET in the Pasifika community and provide guidance for mainstream ECET as well. I cannot explain decisively the different aspect that this research brings to the *talanoa* methodology, but there is support of my position through Manu’atu (2013) whom states “the separation of the heart from practice is mate/death (without spirit), likewise the absence of ‘*ofa*/love from the spirit is mate/death in the heart! Wisdoms of the spirit can be called ‘*ofa*/love” (p. 131).

When Pasifika teachers *talanoa* there is no surface discussions, deepening our understanding of why children speak, react, form and guide their worldviews, can only be understood when we are given an arena that understands culture, language, values, beliefs and diversity. It begins with us: It begins with that Pasifika teacher. The teachers of the BPed (ECT) programme offer more than just *talanoa* but *talanoa* with love and their spirit central to Pasifika children’s’ growth and development in ECE services. The *talanoa* methodology fits preciously with this research which can be put down to the connection the participants have with themselves and the papers that connected and unpacked their identities whether they were Cook Islander, Niuean, Fijian, Tokelauan, Tongan, Samoan, Māori or Cambodian. As I wrote at the start of this chapter there is a beginning. This beginning provides the diversity already current in Pasifika ECET and Pasifika children and families within ECE highlighting the importance of grasping who Pasifika are and what they expect from EC teachers. The *Talanoa* methodology bridges the gap between what we understand and the ways we investigate ours and other thoughts and stories. Although as a researcher I was a part of this BPed (ECT) programme, Emmel (2016) suggests that this type of commonality that I have as a researcher builds trust and enables the participants of this research to trust and be forthcoming with their personal stories that are raw and true also supported by Pasifika academics (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2012, 2014; Vaioleti, 2003).

The *talanoa* methodology and method is a common Pasifika research application that has been used by Ahio (2011), Fehoko (2014), Latu (2009), Pau'uvale (2011), Pole, (2014) and Teisina (2011) to reference a few. As part of my extensive understanding and connections to the *talanoa* methodology for this research I have gained an insight into the discussions and unravelling of *talanoa* as methodology and a method. It is clear that different Pasifika academics and researchers have vast opinions around the use of *talanoa* (Fa'avae, Jones & Manu'atu, 2016; Johansson Fua, 2014; Prescott, 2008). However, as a beginning Pasifika researcher all the discussion around the *talanoa* methodology has amounted to little solution or direction for me as a researcher. Pasifika academics and researchers have provided enough explanations, unpacking, re-packing, dissecting, formulating and solutions that there should embedment so that researchers like myself can support the development of *talanoa* methodology and method (McFall-McCaffery, 2013; Vaioleti, 2013) rather than continuous challenging the idea of the *talanoa* methodology and method still lacking and short coming of research. Put simply I believe that the approach of *talanoa* that surrounded the participants and myself as the researcher can be a way to formally accept and embed *talanoa* in research as a sound methodology because at the moment there is still mass discussion around its position in research. The *Talanoa* methodology is vital in Pasifika research especially if it was embedded into a programme like BPed (ECT).

3.3 Research Process

3.3.1 Research Participants

The research is based upon the learning and teaching from the BPed (ECT) programme taught at the AUT. Due to this I began this research with the working title of Authentic voices from the heart of ECE – Pasifika ECET realities, however as I began to converse with interested participants and develop more of an understanding for the purpose of my research, I realised that my title was too complicated and had not influenced myself enough to connect to this research. After some weeks of preparing and receiving confirmation of participation, I decided to reword my research title to *Finding our place in ECE – The journey of beginning Pasifika Early Childhood Teachers*. I will discuss this further on in the chapter. The recruitment of the participants from the class of 2013 and 2014 required them to have worked for at least one year, be of Pasifika decent and have graduated from the BPed (ECT) programme. For the participants still studying

(class of 2017) they were required to be working for at least one year and have completed five practicums and be of Pasifika decent. In total six participants were chosen, with two participants from each cohort (2013-2015).

3.3.2 *Research assistants*

As a graduate from the class of 2013 I required assistance to abide with the ethics requirements and conflict of interest. The research assistant conducted the *talanoa* meetings with the two participants of my year totalling four *talanoa* meetings conducted. I met with the research assistant four times prior to her *talanoa* meetings with the participants and each time after her *talanoa* meetings with the participants. I felt that this was the only way I could connect to the data as I could not face to face. I gained consent from the research assistant early on in my research for the validity and credibility of the research. The research assistant was a graduate of the National Diploma of Pasifika Education taught at AUT and is a full registered ECT. The research assistant had a family bereavement during the research which required me to find a backup assistant researcher. It was not confirmed until the very later stages of my *talanoa* with the other four participants that I required a second research assistant. I required this research assistant for the last two *talanoa* meetings with the graduates of the class 2013. As the second *talanoa* meetings for both participants were pushed forward due to an unknown date of when my initial research assistant would be able to conduct the second *talanoa* meetings. An email was sent two weeks prior to my second research assistant's *talanoa* meeting to the participants of the class of 2013. The participants sent a confirmation email that they were comfortable with this change and were still very willing to share their stories and experiences. Although I required the need of the research assistants as the main researcher of my research I would have preferred to conduct the *talanoa* meeting myself to observe their facial expressions and tone changes that were felt during my transcribing.

3.3.3 *Participant recruitment*

The process of my participant recruitment differed for each year. The information for the research was adjusted for the specific years as well as I required the research assistant. The initial recruitment process for the class of 2013 and 2014 was sending a Facebook invitation of interest to their class pages. This invitation stated the time frame in which they needed to contact me if they were interested and a summary of what the

research was going to base around. Although both years class of 2013 and 2014 had graduated their class Facebook pages were still active. I posted the invitation on their respective Facebook class pages and gave the graduates two weeks to inform me of their interest in the study. The first week of the post on Facebook I received interest from the class of 2013 immediately, I expected this response because during our last year at university in 2013, we students at the time were discussing furthering our studies together into our master's to affirm the knowledges and learning experienced in the BPEd (ECT) programme. At the time there were four potential participants, however I only needed two participants so as the information sheet explained. I informed the potential participants of the likelihood of being chosen or not through picking their name randomly with the guidance of my supervisor. The two weeks was not up so I emailed the information sheet of the research to the four potential participants and let them know I would contact them at the end of the week.

Towards the end of the two weeks two graduates from the class of 2013 emailed me and informed me that they would not be able to commit to the two *talanoa* meetings due to their own personal schedule. Due to this I had the two participants who were still willing from the class of 2013 and required no assistance from my supervisor to pull participants' names randomly. Allowing two weeks for those interested to read and understand what the research was about and the commitment from their perspective, created the space for those interested to pull out or remain after the two weeks. This took stress off me as a researcher because I knew that this research would benefit from different views. At the end of the two weeks I sent the confirmed participants the consent form which they signed, dated and emailed back a week later due to work and family commitments. The participants understood that the research assistant would be conducting their *talanoa* meetings and any correspondence would go through the research assistant but both participants did converse with the research assistant that they would have been alright for me to conduct their *talanoa* meetings.

Recruitment from the class of 2014 was handled a bit differently as the graduates were not as active on their class page as the previous year even though prior to the invitation there was activity on their class Facebook page. The next step I took was reposting the invitation a week after as I had heard no responses or interest to the research. Half way during the second week I contacted my supervisor and updated her on my next step

which was to send the invitation through private message to their class page. After doing this two weeks after my initial cut-off date for potential participants I received interest from two graduates of this class. I immediately sent the information form to both graduates who were interested, and they sent back their consent forms within a week. This delayed my *talanoa* meetings. However, after confirming the two participants from this year I received an email from a graduate of this class asking if she could be a part of the research. I replied with my gratitude and expressed that the participants had been chosen. If I had extended the invitation any longer than the time I did I believe there could have been more interest. This confirmed together with the class of 2013 that there was an interest in my research even though initially it was difficult to find participants. One participant told me that being busy is an understatement in ECE so when she saw the opportunity arise for this type of study, she could not have been any happier to be a part of it.

The class of 2017 were still in university so in my proposal I planned to meet with the class and because I was not part of their Facebook page and my requests to become a part was not accepted. I felt that they would understand my research more if I approached them face to face. With the class of 2017 I only knew one student amongst them, so I realised that it would be respectful and culturally appropriate to meet them and ask for their support in person. My supervisor for this research is one of the lecturers of this programme, so we made sure that if I was to meet the class she would not be present when I went to invite potential participants, thus having no influence on the students or myself and vice versa. The first class that I attended the class leader informed me that majority of the class had not attended that day and recommended that I come another time. I still invited those in class to email me if they were interested in becoming part of the study and gave them that same invitation that I posted on the Facebook pages of the previous years. I advised them I would return in a few weeks as they were off to practicum. During this time their class leader emailed me and advised me that her class were interested in my research but did not meet the requirements I had talked about with them. When the class returned back from practicum I attended their class and invited those interested to take part in the research.

It was when I received the class leader's email I realised that I needed to adjust the requirements of working for at least one year and be of Pasifika decent. The class of

2017 told me that more of them would be interested in becoming part of the research because they were so passionate about the study but could not because they did not fulfil the requirements I set because majority of them did not work while studying or they have worked for more than two years. Upon understanding this I decided that I would make it an open recruitment and have no boundaries to who can participate. To make sure that the research was fair and authentic I reposted on each of the class of 2013 and 2014 pages that there would be no requirements for becoming part of the study besides having to have graduated with BPED (ECT) as the qualification.

Immediately after informing the class of 2017 two students raised their hands and expressed their interest right away thanking myself for removing the requirements to be a viable participant. I waited another two weeks as this was the time set for those who wanted to get back to myself there were no new interests indicated besides the two that I recruited. There was one interest from the Class of 2013 through Facebook but the day after their interest was withdrawn due to not being able to commit to the *talanoa* meetings.

Another matter that arose that was not something I had expected as a researcher is a participant from the class of 2015 was of Māori decent. This participant expressed her utmost appreciation for being able to become a part of this research and because I had taken down the criteria I accepted her interest and this student became part of this research. This participant understood the information sheet and was also part of the reason why I adjusted the working title of this thesis to *Finding our place in ECE – The journey of beginning Pasifika Early Childhood Teacher*). Even though the participant was not of Pasifika decent she did not have any issues at the beginning throughout and at the end of the *talanoa* meetings. At the time of my ethics application I did not indicate there would be a person of Māori decent taking part in this research, but I am able to relay that this was not the intention in the beginning and happened naturally through participant indication of wanting to be a part of the study.

3.3.4 Method of Data collection

The *talanoa* method was used as this way of speaking, conversing, sharing and reciprocating. The face to face *talanoa* meetings with the participants allowed for a space of honesty, trust, and understanding (Manu'atu, 2000; Vaioleti, 2003, 2006).

The feelings were shared by the participants as the BPED (ECT) programme was the common denominator for the participants and myself as the researcher. As graduates and students of this programme the spirit of understanding and eagerness to share their newly graduated and practicum stories were burning through each of the participants' hearts allowing the space to be one of being heard and acknowledged. The *talanoa* meetings with the participants were *lalānga*/weaved through the meeting, each sentence spoken was being recorded and the participants felt at ease. This was observed through their body language, their passion through the use of terms from the BPED (ECT) programme. The mutual understanding of the participants in relation to the research topic of *Finding our place in ECE – The stories of beginning Pasifika Early Childhood Teachers* seemed to revitalise their spirits and opened up the discussion of reflection and awareness.

Therefore, the *talanoa* method was appropriate for the six participants as the degree that they graduated and were studying surrounded itself around new knowledges that evoked more than just an informal way of talking and conversing. Sharing their knowledges provoked insight into the thinking that they were feeling and wanting to express, the participants' heartfelt stories were recognised using the *talanoa* method. The cultural protocol that was required was surrounded around the reciprocal understanding that their knowledge, voices, and stories would benefit the other students and graduates of the programme and support them as they bring about change in their ECE fields. The class of 2013 had the research assistant, so it was difficult to feel their hearts as I could not be with them face to face as I have explained. However, their expressions and *talanoa* that I transcribed was deep and insightful and their heart for the BPED (ECT) programme was appreciated and explained. Clarification of the *talanoa* was only needed for the class of 2013. This was both with the questions provided and the answers given, the second *talanoa* was conducted better as I had met with the research assistant before the second *talanoa* meeting. The first *talanoa* with the initial research assistance had some confusion around what the sub-questions guiding the *talanoa* was this was due to my poor wording of the questions which made me re-look at the sub-questions guiding the research. My insider perspective to this research only made this more viable and being the first of its kind connected the participants and myself on such a deeper level of understanding related to our language and culture.

The dialogue was in English. The main reason was English is the common language for the six participants. One participant did *talanoa* in their own language at one time during the first *talanoa* but then explained that the expression meant that she was just really encouraged by this type of research to support her future goals and plans. The questions were grouped into three sections, the first was the main question, second group was the teaching profile and backing and the third group was the sub-questions that guided the presentation these questions can be read in chapter four. During the *talanoa* meetings that I conducted, I took side notes as I found the first two *talanoa* meetings that I conducted, the research questions needed to be explained in some detail. So, I used this time to re-word the sub-questions to suit the *talanoa* that had happened in time for the research assistant and the *talanoa* meetings to follow. The method of data collection was carried out smoothly as each time the participant expressed their sincerity and excitement of being able to share and carry on the work of the BPed (ECT) degree and the learning that was gained and now expressed in this research and through their actions within their chosen ECE services.

One of the participants of the class of 2014 opted to have the *talanoa* meetings at her work office as her ECE service comprised of her boss, their administration person and herself. It was after work hours, so it was only myself and her at the office. At the time of the second interview she was closing her business as she was to travel overseas, because it was hard to meet for the second interview I sent her questions from the first interview that needed to be explained more and added onto. We conducted two meetings over facetime (the use of video calling) on Facebook but we missed each other the first time due to family commitments and then the second time because we forgot we had scheduled the time to connect. The participant left the country but sent her answers to back up her first *talanoa* meeting. As a researcher I knew that this did not fulfil the two *talanoa* meetings we both committed to have for this research. I was already transcribing the *talanoa*, so I decided that I would meet when she returned even though she had answered the questions in written form and it had backed up and fulfilled what I had needed for the participant. To fulfil the *talanoa* method of face to face the participant agreed to meet for our second *talanoa* method and discussed her first and second *talanoa* meeting when she returned from her holiday. As a researcher it was imperative that I meet with each participant twice as stated in my ethics proposal, even though we had face timed and had continuous communication through email and

Facebook being true to the research meant conducting the second *talanoa* even if the data had been analysed and themed.

3.3.5 *Transcripts*

The transcribing of the *talanoa* meetings was done by myself. The research assistant just informed me of places that maybe confusing and conveyed the meaning behind the participant answering in this way making more sense upon transcribing. All data was gathered after the first *talanoa* and transcribed within a week before the second *talanoa* meeting. This was because in all six *talanoa* meetings the responses provided were answered. The second time we meet it was to discuss what was said in the first *talanoa* and an opportunity to add on and extend to what they had spoken about in their first *talanoa* meeting. Participants were informed of the completion of both *talanoa* meeting recording and transcripts and were excited for their completion. As the class of 2013 did not have their *talanoa* meeting with myself I asked my research assistant to contact them and if they had anything else they wanted to discuss or extend on they had a week to contact and send through any extra *talanoa* that they wanted to express as part of their scripts. They did not contact during this time. The class of 2013, the participants were satisfied with what they had shared and expressed their excitement to receive a copy of the thesis upon completion. The transcriptions of the *talanoa* meetings were colour coded and written on Word document. The dialogue with the six participants was in English. The recorder used for the *talanoa* was a recorder application from the Apple Store.

3.3.6 *Data Analysis*

The data analysis was identified and itemised according to the themes that accorded. Transcribing the *talanoa* was done after becoming familiar with the data through listening to each *talanoa* meeting firstly. During this time of only listening to the *talanoa*, I reviewed side notes and began extracting themes. Whilst transcribing the *talanoa* meetings I was able to review, and discover potential themes and concepts embedded within the participants' *talanoa*. Once the transcribing had finished I read and re-read the transcriptions numerous times over. After reviewing the transcriptions came the extraction of common themes articulated by the participants this was thematically and colour coded. The transcriptions began with 12 themes, then 9 themes. Then after familiarising with the *talanoa*, 7 themes occurred, then eventually 3

significant themes were developed. The three themes finalised have their own sub-headings that relate to the participants' journey. The sub-headings were before the programme, during the programme and after the programme. These will be discussed in chapter four; the Finding's chapter.

3.3.7 *Ethical consideration*

It was highly crucial that this research was carried out acknowledging of the requirements set by the Auckland University of Technology Ethic Committee (AUTEC). The research designs and procedures have meet ethical standards. Ethics approval was granted by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on June 13, 2017, (AUTEC Reference number 17/139) *Authentic voices from the heart of Early Childhood Education – Pasifika Early childhood teachers' realities*.

3.3.8 *Working Title and sub-questions*

As discussed, the initial working title of this whole thesis was *Authentic voices from the heart of Early Childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teachers' realities*. I adjusted and changed this title to *Finding our place in ECE – The stories of beginning Pasifika Early childhood teachers*. There are two main reasons why. The first was that this research surrounds the BPED (ECT) programme that the participants studied and graduated from AUT. The participants had to be from this programme. The first title had too many words and did not get straight to the point and I realised this during the first *talanoa* meeting with a participant from the class of 2014. The second reason is that it is about their journey from entering the programme to becoming a Pasifika ECT. Even though one of the six participants are not of Pasifika decent the degree is embedded in Pasifika knowledges and all those who entered this programme come out with a better understanding and deepened sense of Pasifika children and families, so I decided to leave it as Pasifika ECT. This working title suits this thesis and explains what is being researched.

Main Question: What does it mean to be a Pasifika Early Childhood Teacher in reflection to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood) degree?

- Are you able to practice the teachings/learning you have learnt from the B. Pasifika degree?

- What would be the most challenging thing about being a Pasifika Early Childhood Teacher?
- What would you change about the Early Childhood sector? Why?
- How do you as a Pasifika Early Childhood Teacher provide for Pasifika children (identity, culture, language)
- Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 and 20 years' time?
- How effective are the Ministry of Education (MoE, 1996, 2013-2017, 2016, 2017) documents to your practice/your centre's practices/Pasifika practices?
- How are your practices, teachings, degree different from those practicing in the field from your perspective (describe your practicum experiences)?
- How has the B. Pasifika degree changed you?

The sub-question; Where do you see yourself in 5, 10, and 20 years' time? This was changed to Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time? The reason why one participant raised the issue of not being able to foresee her plan as she just began working in her centre.

These sub-questions guided the *talanoa* and brought about different themes that I was able to recognise and bring about during the scribing of the *talanoa*. Changing the sub-questions also allowed the *talanoa* to be freer flowing and the essence of the participants' voices were more sincere and real. I could feel the love for their Pasifika identity being shared. The initial questions were also aimed at Pasifika teachers only but because a participant of full Māori decent was determined to take part in the study, I had to factor in this as well.

3.3.9 *Strengths and Weaknesses*

3.3.9.1 *Strengths*

The strength of this research was that the participants were graduates or students of the BPed (ECT) programme. Having the connection to this programme immediately provided trust between the participant and researcher. *Talanoa* is known as an informal or formal way of talking however in this arena of research *talanoa* is to connect with our hearts, minds, bodies and soul.

Another strength within this research is the knowledge surrounding the BPed (ECT) programme and the conceptual framework of *TalanoaLalānga* and *Fātulalānga*. Though *talanoa* is known throughout the Pacific countries, the concept of

lalānga/weaving and *fatu*/heart brought a different atmosphere to the *talanoa* always acknowledging the knowledge's that were captured and nurtured within the BPED (ECT) programme.

Using the *talanoa* method for the *talanoa* meetings meant that there were no time restraints placed on the meetings as a result of coming from the same BPED (ECT) programme the meetings were never more than 1 and ½ hours. Provided the participants were satisfied with their first meeting, the second *talanoa* meeting was between 40 minutes to 1 hour.

The BPED (ECT) programme was taught at AUT and the participants were all from South Auckland, this made it easier to book and meet for the *talanoa* meetings.

The participants choosing the time and place to *talanoa* gave more space for the participants to arrive on time and have their other activities sorted, therefore they could remain at the *talanoa* meetings for as long as possible. Choosing the specific time and day to meet coincided with the quiet times in the restaurants, making it not too overwhelming and busy once the *talanoa* meeting began.

Using the *Talanoa* methodology and *Talanoa* method within this research allowed flow, cultural appropriateness and familiarity across the research.

The research was inclusive. The title says Pasifika. Out of the six participants five of them were of Pasifika descent, however one was of Māori decent even though she knew the research was Pasifika she was forthcoming and willing to share her experiences as she believed the programme gave her more space to connect with her inner self. Knowing what she gained from the degree she was eager to state that all nationalities not just Pasifika could benefit from such a programme.

A key strength could be that I studied the programme and could have my own prejudices and ideals. I, however, can fully support my role and convey having no sound actions over what participants shared during their *talanoa* meetings. If there was one weakness from being a part of the BPED (ECT) programme, it would be not being able to conduct the *talanoa* meeting with the two participants I studied together with.

3.3.9.2 Weaknesses

The PGR1 application was sent early in the year whilst waiting for approval from the committee the process of applying for ethics approval began. The PGR1 was accepted and approved and soon after the ethics application was completed and submitted. There needed to be a few things verified for the ethics application before approval during this time, there could be no contact with anyone this made it hard to continue as the year was nearing half way.

The second weakness that hurt the research flow was the criteria I put on the potential participants. These were that they had to have worked for more than a year, had to have completed five practicums for those still at the university and to be of Pasifika decent. I found out that there was a participant who wanted to reply but could not because they were Māori and another who worked for four years part time before studying and during study. It took some time for one group to get back to me with their interest, but once I removed the restrictions I got the six participants who were willing and excited to be part of the research.

As the researcher and using the *Talanoa* method it was difficult for the two participants that I studied with to understand or express themselves to the research assistant. A possible solution that I did not consider was to conduct a video recording between the research assistants and participants, however if I could change something it would be for me to conduct the *talanoa* meetings with all six participants and not just the four.

I conducted the *talanoa* meetings one week after the first one and at times found myself coming out to South Auckland three or four times a week to meet with participants or with my research assistant. At the time of deciding to do my thesis I lived out in South Auckland but between being approved to conduct the study, I had moved out to West Auckland, Te Atatu Peninsula. So, making the drive at the time was very time consuming on my family and myself.

3.4 Summary

The research conducted for the purposes of sharing the journey of the Pasifika teachers from the BPED (ECT) programme is shaped from *talanoa*. The *Talanoa* methodology naturally provides the beginning for the *Talanoa* method to be conducted in a manner that respects and supports the participants. As a novice researcher I have had practices

in the BPEd (ECT) programme and last year in postgraduate studies to prepare for this research, however the mock research I undertook compared to the reality of this research has me striving for more.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings from my *talanoa* with students and graduates who studied at the AUT from the BPed (ECT). The six participants have been identified with a pseudonym to protect their identities. Any other persons that are mentioned by the participants during their *talanoa* will also be identified with a pseudonym. At the end of each themed section I will give a brief summary of the findings. These questions guided the *talanoa* that in turn brought about the three main themes.

- **Main Question:** What does it mean to be a Pasifika Early Childhood teacher in reflection to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood) degree?
- Are you able to practice the teachings/learning you have learnt from the B. Pasifika degree?
- What would be the most challenging thing about being a Pasifika Early Childhood teacher?
- What would you change about the Early Childhood sector? Why?
- How do you as a Pasifika Early Childhood teacher provide for Pasifika children (identity, culture, language)
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?
- How effective are the Ministry of Education (MoE, 1996; 2016; 2017; 2013-2017) documents to your practice/your centre's practices/Pasifika practices?
- How are your practices, teachings, degree different from those practicing in the field from your perspective (describe your practicum experiences)?
- How has the B. Pasifika degree changed you?

After analysing the transcripts these are the three themes

- Identity
- Culture and Language
- Teaching practices

4.1.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was considered for this study. This study is of a constructivist nature and was adopted as a means of collating and interconnecting the data. Thematic analysis is a method that identifies analyses and reports patterns or themes within the

data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The next part will be the participants' teaching background.

4.2 Participants' Background

The participants were from the BPED (ECT) programme that was offered at AUT. Five of the six participants were of Pasifika decent. One of the six participants is Māori but felt her journey and purpose was for the revitalization of Māori and Pasifika together. The pseudonym name given to the participants are random names chosen. Four of the six participants work in a Pasifika centre in South Auckland. One of the six works as a Homebase Coordinator in South Auckland and the remaining participant was pursuing further studies.

Two participants were selected from the three intakes at AUT. These years were from 2013, 2014 and 2015. The ages of the participants were from 27-53 years old. The six participants expressed that they would continue to work in South Auckland.

Table 1. Participant Information

	Nationality	Employment	Registered	ECE Service	Class Cohort
Sophie	Samoan	5 years	Provisional	Samoan Bi-lingual	2013
Sandy	Tongan	4 years (part-time)	No	Akoteu Tongan Full Immersion	2015
Becca	<i>Tangata Whenua</i>	No	No	No	2015
Brooke	Tongan/Niuean	1 Year	Provisional	Homebase Coordinator	2014
Anne	Samoan	10 Months	Provisional	Aoga O Mata Full immersion	2014
Deanne	Cook Island	1 ½ years	Provisional	Cook Island Bi-lingual	2013

4.3 Identity

The theme identity was strong during each of the *talanoa* meetings. Identity was strongly identified as I transcribed the transcripts. Identity within the Bachelor of Pasifika Education programme was about the six participants observing their cultural practices, their families' values and beliefs and affirming their places to better connect

to the young children they met and are to meet. Essentially this was the beginning of their transformations.

4.3.1 Participants before the programme

The participants came from different backgrounds. They entered the BPED (ECT) programme for different reasons:

To be honest I didn't want to do ECE I wanted to do Primary mainstream. But they told me Primary would be over the Shore, mainstream will be over the shore and told me the Pasifika programme will be at Manukau. (Anne)

Working four year's part time for my family centre is what got me into the field. My grandmother migrated from Tonga she was a high school teacher, so she always had passion for teaching but coming here seeing me and my little brother not going to kindy (Kindergarten) or just staying home inspired her to start her own little playgroup in her home. She started that and it kind of extended out into our extended family. (Sandy)

Studying ECE Pasifika has majorly influenced my identity. I don't know whether this programme was helpful for those who already knew who they were. Before I started studying the degree I felt that I was complete because I knew that I was Niuean/Tongan, but my identity and culture was only surface. Learning about myself brought out the culture and language that was once taught to me when I was a child. I'm currently getting ready to go to Niue to learn more about myself. In other words, this (the degree) has inspired me as a Pasifika teacher. (Brooke)

A commonality amongst their differences for entering the programme was their passion for teaching.

4.3.2 Identity that was re-discovered during the degree

Identity played a major role for the participants. Three of the six participants had been immersed into their culture and language at a very early age. However, like the other three participants who had little understanding of their culture and language, the six participants became conscious of their identity with more depth and understanding.

It's actually made me see what has happened to me and why I felt the way I felt while growing up and why I didn't connect to my teachers, to any teachers in school and why I felt away from the education system and why it never connected with me and never did. I thought there was something wrong with me I thought I was really a rebel or something, but no this degree gave me answers. It really helped me to reconnect to my roots and to see my parents in a different light with their struggles. It's helped me to understand myself, my peers and all

my friends that struggle because I didn't know what it was until this degree put a name on it. We are now able to see what it is and how it is here. (Anne)

The degree has really influenced my identity in a big way because my perception of it was I didn't care about it, I didn't value it. I didn't know what it was. This degree helped me to see how lost I was it helped me really reconnect to my roots and to see my parents in a different light with their struggles. It's helped me view myself, my peers, all my friends that struggle because they don't know what it is until this degree put a name on it and made me see how it really is here. Without going through the degree, I would have no idea, I would still be living how I was living not really valuing the culture and language. (Anne)

Tupuanga that for me was one of the first papers that we did in the first year with Lua (lecturer) although I thought I knew who my parents were, where they came from that *Tupuanga* paper not only did I find out about my ancestors and all, but I also knew why I'm here. I knew that my grandma did what she did, but I didn't know why, and I didn't know but through *Tupuanga* being a New Zealand born I learnt about my Tongan history. Of course, I love my grandparents and all, but I never took the time out to really *talanoa* with them about how we came about or how our family have come this far (establishing their own Tongan ECE centre) *Tupuanga* really gave me the opportunity to step back and like go back. (Sandy)

The papers that we do here it's really brings out your inner self. I think compared to when I first started this degree I was not really confident in my culture. I identified myself as a Tongan. People would ask what does it mean to be Tongan and that for me was a bit of a question mark. I know and practiced the protocols and I see the culture and language around me, but I was never able to identify it for myself. These papers have really brought that out for me. This programme it has been an eye opener for me and it challenges you to not just see the child physically but beyond the surface. (Sandy)

Our cultures, our formalities within our cultures, our identity. I mean like knowing one's identity you know you are proud and I think that is one common thing within our Pasifika people because we are strong within our own identities we are proud to be who we are. Pasifika peoples that hold a lot of those values as well. For instance, from our degree we had so many ethnicities inside our class so many, but our mind sets were similar and that is mainly what makes us diverse. (Deanne)

One of the main values I remember our lectures nailed into us was love I find that it is truth because working with children especially with children from a low socio-economic area just to give a hug to that child, or a cuddle you can see they come for that and while studying that was instilled into us and when you practice that on the floor you also see the reactions from the children. (Deanne)

I've actually transformed from my first year. What I am saying I can actually see and feel the growth that I have gone through. I have faced challenges and

it's a beautiful thing actually I cannot help but tell everyone about it. I have studied Māori Performing Arts. I have travelled to my own whenua to study, but this degree has made me look with different eyes and it has ignited a flame. (Becca)

4.3.3 *Identity a working progress*

The six participants felt that their understanding and discoveries of their specific Pacific nation identities did not end after they graduated. One participant described her identity as a life-long learning process especially if she is to teach younger children in New Zealand.

It's a working progress identity and culture, I'm still trying to find out who I am but it's just a matter of being confident about it and then being able to share it with the children as well. (Sandy)

It has and hasn't. I'm starting to see like how I was coming out of the degree in terms of the effect the degree had on me. I'm starting to see it in some of the graduates from the same programme that are also working alongside me it's that we have the same thinking, that is what the degree did. It got us into the inquiry stage being an inquiry teacher and trying to move, not being stuck in the same ways. (Sophie)

You really have to know who you are, you have to know what you really value and believe in and have to be able to teach from that place because if you don't what are you teaching and why are you there in the first place. So, if you have a sense of who you are and what you want and where you are going in life you are able to teach from that true place. (Anne)

4.3.4 *Future plans*

The six participants have future goals and plans. Each participant hopes to have made some progress within ECE within the next 5 years. This progress involved further studies into postgraduate. Obtaining higher positions in the centres was a future goal that the participants reflected on individually.

Oh, five years definitely not in ECE. I have the passion for our little children, but I still feel the system is corrupt for the knowledge that we do have. I feel that I would be suited in Primary as children leave the centre. I can give to what they have and help children move through primary because I have been in ECE I can understand what they come from so giving them what they need to where they need to go I feel that is where I am needed. (Deanne)

I want to go back to school. I want to do Postgraduate studies and the plan for me is just to experience hands on experiences and get fully registered before I go

back so I'm researching, and I want to take that input of that experience that I got and bring what I'm doing right now. (Anne)

In terms of support for leadership the opportunities are there but I think we are a bit scared to take it on. Having the responsibility put on you is a bit yeah. We are scared to be responsible or to be held responsible we are scared to take the risk also the *Va* you know when you know somebody really well and then you're up there it's hard to kind of take charge, but I think if we just can do it we need to gain confidence, but everyone has their own way. (Sophie)

So, I'm just trying to get my provisional first it's because I'm the oldest in my family. My parents are not getting any younger well they are quite young, but I just think that it's time for me to go and help my parents I'm helping everyone else here and my poor parents over there so it's time to go back home. I want to experience the world. I hear Bali has a lot of job offers for teachers. (Sandy)

I would say probably either coordinating still or working in the centre. I would return to a centre I have the opportunity to if I don't get bored of this job. I don't see myself leaving because honestly, I just love my job but if the opportunities there I wouldn't say no. I don't want to get bored with what I do so my options are open if I think about five years' time I can't I love my job; I just love my job. I don't think I could ever get bored. (Brooke)

4.3.5 *Summary of Identity*

The participants unanimously spoke about the foundation of knowing who you are. The purpose of identity is to make you as a Pasifika student and teacher stronger within. The participants agreed that your identity was more than what they understood it to be before entering into the BPED (ECT) programme at AUT. The findings part of the theme identity shows the journey of these six participants and what they knew before the programme, what they discovered during the programme and how they intend to pass on the *koloa*/treasures of what it means to truly understand your identity in New Zealand as a Pasifika person.

4.4 **Culture and Language**

The participants reflected, *talanoa*, and expressed their thoughts surrounding their culture and language and the importance it holds to them as ECET. Culture and Language was prominent in five of the six participants' current work places and situations.

4.4.1 Culture and language before the programme

Three participants were fluent in their Pasifika language and the remaining three were semi-fluent. The Māori participant was fluent in Tē Reo Māori when she was younger but had lost her Mother Tongue when she was adopted into a European Family. This is an issue for our Pasifika people who migrate to New Zealand and for those born in New Zealand.

Language and culture is what motivated me to become an ECT. I have been finding ways to give back to the community it is always hard when it is not in your own country, but I think coming from the Cook Islands and doing a degree in Pasifika it is valuing. I also believe my language and culture is dying and we do say ECE is the way but the Cook Island language there is no continuation in Primary and then in Secondary it is an option and it is not valued right through even though we try and teach it in ECE. Coming to Primary and College there is no connection. I think it is us Cook Islanders we are not that strong enough to keep our language alive. I find that I enjoy working with my work colleagues because we are from Pasifika backgrounds and we do have the same mind set. (Deanne)

In a big way because my perception of it I didn't care about it I didn't value it (Identity, Language and Culture). I didn't know what it was this degree helped me to see how I lost it. It really helped me to reconnect to my roots. We are now able to see what it is and how it is here. Without going through the degree, I would have had no idea I would be still living how I was living not really valuing our culture and language. (Anne)

4.4.2 Culture and language re-discovered during the degree

The participants believed that while Pasifika people from Pacific Nations are different one thing they have in common is the love, proudness and shared values and beliefs of the importance of culture and language within the Pasifika community.

I now understand that there are differences in cultures and languages. It is within knowing who you are and being able to explore the inner feeling of what I do is what will allow me to become secure. (Becca)

When I studied I noticed about the shared knowledges and the benefits. The cultural practices. There's no one way there's no one right way but we have to just be open to accepting that everyone has a different way but, in the end, to be relevant to be diverse in terms of practice and acceptance we still have to keep in mind that the key are the children. (Sophie)

Maybe not me but more the way I see other cultures. I feel that was the bonus. Before coming to New Zealand, I didn't know much about the Samoan culture, Tongan culture or Niuean culture but the degree it made me more open minded

to other cultures. What they believe in and accepting those beliefs and those values like I'm sure if I came from the Cook Islands and heard about the specific things from different cultures I'd be like ewwww but with the degree it helped me accept other cultures and that helps me accept the different children that come into the centre. Like we have a Tongan girl full Tongan no Cook Island but because of that you just accept them and give them that warmth that gives them a place in the centre even though culturally they are not in the centre and neither is their identity. It has opened my mind a lot to the point where I feel that my qualification is needed elsewhere other than ECE. (Deanne)

Yeah, I think this degree has really emphasized on culture and language more. I think I can say like not only do I know about it now, but I can implement it in my daily practice having that *mafana* its really important it brings out that spirit. (Sandy)

I meet a lot of good people, we have become like sisters and it comes down to sharing the same values and beliefs. I mean we have our differences within our own cultures but there it is always those little things that identify us as being the same. I mean if I speak to a Niue, Samoan, or Cook Islander there is always that little thing where we connect. We always find a way to connect. What I enjoyed about the degree was it supported a lot of what I was thinking, it reassured me that I was on the right path and heading the right way. In the degree Pasifika people weren't the examples we were the core of it and we used mainstream as our examples. We weren't the examples anymore it was actually about us and that is mainly what I enjoyed about the degree. (Deanne)

4.4.3 *Culture and language a working progress*

The hope to revive, maintain and pass on their cultures and languages was expressed during the *talanoa* with the participants. There was a consensus during the scribing of the six participants *talanoa* of culture and language being imperative to the development of our Pasifika children.

I believe I'm an Oceania teacher, so I cover pretty much a wider and broader perspective of how to teach other cultures. The point is I want to learn those other cultures I mean that is comfortable with them you cannot learn something that no one wants to give you, so I want to set that straight first. I am using Pasifika language, it's scattering but I still have time to learn and by the time I finish my master's I want to be fluent in Pasifika languages. I'm working at it as for the practices themselves the programme has changed my views on what learning was. I was brought up in Kohanga reo so language I know it is important, cultural identity is important so yeah I think Pasifika has opened my eyes more to its importance. (Becca)

It will be learning to encourage the use of language. Children will feel it when you walk into the centre. They will feel connected to the teachers there. In terms of practice it's not only on language weeks but it should be consistent,

throughout the programme. Being in a bi-lingual centre we get a diverse group of children and the biggest resource we lack and don't use much is parent, children and ourselves to continue on our culture and language. It's the consistency, being proactive about it. (Sophie)

It doesn't matter if your Pasifika or not but being Pasifika makes us unique and that's something we need to be stronger in, be enriched in the culture because we need to know who we are in order for us to teach. When we know who we are we must share it with everybody else not just with Pasifika but with everybody, everybody. (Anne)

4.4.4 Culture and language in ECE communities

Understanding the Pasifika cultures' languages' and cultural practices is a continuous process for Pasifika communities and the participants discussed building positive relationships with the communities would be a continuous process.

ECE diversity it's about acknowledging the different cultures, the different levels that the children are at because even though we talk about diversity we talk about all these diverse cultures e.g. Niuean, Samoan, Tokelau, people being together and people working together we also have to consider the backgrounds. The whole main thing about being diverse is not just about the culture but acknowledging where the kids come from, their different levels of education, and their language. Some kids come in they say they are Tongan for example, but they can understand Samoan cultural practices. This is diverse. It's something we all share together but we can also influence others. (Sophie)

Our Tongan values and beliefs. I think it's more or less teaching from within it's not always about (participant pauses and thinks and then begins to answer the question). Ok for me like cultural knowledge does align with academic knowledge but for me personally especially with doing this degree has made me realise that cultural knowledge aligns with academic. For me cultural knowledge is more significant than academic. A successful teacher you got to have some sort of knowledge for children, but I think especially doing this degree I find it more important to work from within because then you are willing to teach and have the passion for it. (Sandy)

Well here in South Auckland we are really diverse especially Pasifika people. I guess it's that inter-cultural relationship that we need to understand like we can't just single ourselves out as Tongans and Samoans on that side. We really need to be united and as one and I think this paper has helped us identify ourselves as who we are and then also be able to have that relationship with the other Pasifika communities. (Sandy)

Unique, different like with our degree we came from different cultures and even though we were diverse, even though we were so different there are certain things that we came to understand as one. But authentic putting that aside and apart from mainstream us as Pasifika we are unique, we are different from

mainstream and we know what we want it's just getting to where we want.
(Deanne)

Acknowledging the other cultures that have the same beauty to what I think. Culture is and I'm looking at the age difference a lot of people don't consider that there is an age difference, an age to language. I mean the language that I speak is different to my elders so I have to set myself into that setting and when I come here I have to set myself in another setting and when I go to the practicums I have to transition myself into that setting so understanding the setting is helps it helps tremendously and I do that through my culture. (Becca)

Honestly I think everything that we've studied it's easy to relate to. Especially in my field (Homebase ECE). What I am doing as a coordinator it is based around our culture, you know every day practices that we do. In our everyday lives but at the same time I find with our teaching with Pasifika and mainstream it has helped a lot with my practice because I don't want to be one sided, I don't want to go and I don't want to go into a Tongan house where they have Tongan values and just be like no (their culture, values and beliefs) are all wrong and need to be out the door when you are teaching you have to know this. (Brooke)

Within our centre we have more than two with AUT qualifications we have different thoughts but same spirit. I feel like for one of them we think the same culturally but knowledge wise I feel more advanced even though she's been in the field longer. She wants to push Pasifika but she knows we need mainstream to get through ERO (Education Review Office) or through MoE and what they require of the other staff and centre. (Sophie)

4.4.5 *Summary of Culture and Language*

The urgency of the participants through this theme can be felt when they use terms as shared knowledges, implement, enrichment or motivation. Culture and language for these six participants varied in their *talanoa*. One participant admitting it had no value for her until she began her journey in the programme and another stating that it could possibly have no use for Pasifika people who are fluent in their language and who understands their cultural practice. Those who are fluent and confident could become mentors strengthening the Pasifika community further. The commonality amongst the *talanoa* of the participants is the importance of being true to oneself and what you have within yourself as a Pasifika teacher to be able to show the beauty of the vast Pasifika cultures and languages.

4.5 Realities of becoming an ECE Teacher

This section of the findings was the largest. The participants discussed their journey's reflecting on what they learnt in the programme, their practicum experiences and their experiences in their current places of employment.

4.5.1 *What they learnt in the programme*

The participants received vast knowledges of the differences between the various Pasifika nations represented in their classes and New Zealand.

When I graduated I honestly saw it as an opportunity for me. I was thinking this will open doors for me. I'm not going to go and stand there and be like can I have a job when this opportunity came up (Home base Coordinator) I knew that it was not going to be very easy I just graduated, and I knew that I'm not that experienced but then I had the thought I just have to give it a try. I know that out of my friends I'm always willing to take the risk, that's the only problem with them they weren't willing to take the risk. (Brooke)

It begins in the early years this is a crucial time for a child's development we as teachers are crucial in that time. You have to have a love and passion for it, it's not always about the money if you go in it for the money then you shouldn't be in that industry at all but if you love the kids then you can build on that foundation, that philosophy and go from there. (Anne)

I think with the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (ECT) degree we went so in depth when we are out there we try and open all that stuff and try and influence our teachers to try and challenge themselves but it's easy for us to see their way in the system but they are so set in their own ways they think we are knowing it all but it is not like that. Susana (lecturer) pushed us to go beyond. I think in terms of the level of teaching we come in with new things and get pushed down so we have to find a balance to slowly merge it in. I had a break down after my experience in the centre because they are so set in their ways and not going to go anywhere so I thought maybe I just have to step back. (Sophie)

I think if I had the same minded people as me, for instance within the degree if I had five of the girls that were in the degree with me working together into opening a centre then I think I would head that way (instead of wanting to go into primary teaching). We all have the same goals and mind set even though we were of different cultures we all know what we want. I think even within other students that I have spoken to (who studied the same programme) we are having the same problems. We came out of the degree with so much knowledge, we came into our Pasifika centres where we think we can give but we can't because they are so set, and what is sad is that they are not set in our ways but more mainstream, but they call themselves Pasifika and that's why I feel our children miss out a lot. (Deanne)

From my practicum experience I think teachers don't know that they just limit themselves to their job descriptions they don't go that extra mile whereas like I said this paper has taught me to teach from within and that enables me to try and go the extra mile and just go and make an extra effort. (Sandy)

4.5.2 *Practicum experiences*

The participants had both positive and negative experiences when discussing their practicums. Their experiences were from the six centres they attended while in the programme. Five of the six participants attended more than four Pasifika full immersion and Bi-lingual centres with one participant attending only one full immersion centre and five mainstream centres.

- Positives

My first job was from my practicum mind you every practicum I've been to I've been offered a job, every practicum. (Anne)

Did my practicum prepare me well? Not all it could have if my experiences were better but because all my experiences weren't great. I guess actually even the negative ones did maybe it did you know because it kind of taught me the real world it's not always going to be flowers. I learnt in practicum that's just me though I'm always positive. Even when my associate teacher was picking on me I always found ways that I can work around. I still tried to stay positive especially when working with children because one thing I hate is when teachers have ugly attitudes towards children. Majority of my practicums teachers you know the staff members are helpful but then I find majority will kind of use the students as cleaners or bum boys shall I say. I think they just need some reminding a lot of them need reminding of you know being a student it's not easy as they think even though they've been through it. (Brooke)

- Negatives

Sometimes I wish I was blind, but I look at teachers and think this is not what it says here, where is the relationships built. (Becca)

One of our biggest problems was that there was too much focus on paper work and that's what's happening in the centres now. During practicum we had to make sure we had all these tasks done that sometimes we forget to enjoy the experience and for me because practicum was the only time I was away from the centre that I was working in I felt for some of the girls in our class. For some practicum is the only time that they are in that environment and that they get to feel the real practice. Practicum experiences are dependent on your relationship with your AT. We needed more hands on experience and more time in the centre rather than just that set time because when you go out there you can't enjoy it afterwards you have to go and do all this writing and then you check all the goals, reflections for this and this and then you have to worry about your

Evaluative Lecturer visit and the AT and EL are not on the same pages it is a lot. (Sophie)

I don't blame the practicum itself like I have heard for instance MIT (another ECE programme provider) they have work experience for a length of time and I have discussed this in our degree about extending our experiences because for me I know I learn better practically that's just me. I am not a theory person and I guess most of my experience before this was through coaching sport teams and other then that I had no experience what so ever and my practicums I was just lucky I ended up in good practicums. I didn't ever feel from my practicums I needed to quit being in ECE I just think the periods of practicums were just too short. You could never know what happens in a centre in three weeks, you can't understand the ups and downs in the centre in three weeks our last practicum was five weeks but for me that was too short as well that was too short you were learning the ups and downs but then it was over. (Deanne)

From my practicum (are they willing to learn) no I don't think so. I mean there were some teachers I met who are amazing and there are some that just look at you and are like oh you're just a student you don't know what you're talking about that's a put off. Ideally, I would just sit there but this degree makes you push with reason and that is the children the reason I am here. (Sandy)

Sandy was the youngest participant but her experience working within a centre before the programme was the most compared to the other participants. Thus, on both occasions Sandy felt very passionate about sharing her observations.

Honestly, they don't have that spirit. Even when I was at a Tongan centre I thought that I would have that vibe like cool these teachers are passionate about what they do but it's just like shocking you know it's really shocking but I really think it's only because they weren't educated about catering to Pasifika kids and plus they are kind of old school as well and they are not open to change. I think if these papers were to spread out into professional development papers our Pasifika centres would really benefit from it. (Sandy)

From my practicum experience I think teachers I don't know they just limit themselves to their job descriptions they don't go that extra mile whereas like I said this paper has taught me to teach from within and that enables me to try and go the extra mile and just go and make the extra effort. (Sandy)

I have only been to one Tongan centre and the rest have been mainstream. Mainstream but Pasifika children it was challenging because majority of the centre I went to were more Samoan children rather than Tongan. I try to implement my culture and language into the learning of children who are not of Tongan decent it's challenging but this degree has really helped me realise the approaches I need to use and the way I need to communicate and just be mindful I guess. (Sandy)

There were always tensions where I went for practicum and it was always because like I said the job descriptions it would start from that. There would always be disputes about who should be here at this time, lunch breaks. There are always tensions between staff disputes it's not my job, I'm not doing it. We talk about the importance of relationships and going on practicum I saw how important good relationships with your staff and the *va* is. Relationships enables a shared collaboration you know all voices are heard whereas at centres I've been to, there is that one person who says this and everyone has to follow and there is always the two face and then there is always some teacher who label children. I sit there I really wanna say something but I wanna pass my degree. (Sandy)

4.5.3 *Current work experiences*

Participants who had the option of working with their family had a better transition than those who began their work experience in ECE services with no connections. One of the six participants is not currently employed in an ECE service. Their experiences vary with some participants facing the same issues.

I think there is a difference sometimes. One staff she has been in ECE for 11-12 years it's more routine. So, structured like the routine needs to be done and we come from this day and time where we have to change and it's hard for them to change because they are so into it so routine and structure and set in their ways I think that is why there is a difference. They bypass you because you're so young. They need that open-mindedness it doesn't matter how old you are or how long you have been in the centre. (Deanne)

The ones who were in the service longer I found that they were a bit more bitter because it's kind of like sometimes I would feel during practicum the older ladies would misunderstand the practices being taught now in university. (Brooke)

I look at teachers who are fully registered sitting there and I think you are a fully registered teacher, you're a leader you should be doing this, this and this you should be setting the example. (Sophie)

What they are missing is why they got into the field in the first place when we do the degree we don't just look at the positives we also learn about the conflicts that we are confronted with the challenges that we do go through, so I think it's just about what was the reason for being here in the first place as an ECE teacher. Long standing teachers are missing the *mafana*/warmth I don't know they just need to learn off those who know themselves like what we have learnt within the degree. (Sandy)

Within our centre we have more than two with AUT qualifications we have different thoughts but same spirit. I feel like for one of them we think the same culturally but knowledge wise I feel more advanced even though she's been in the field longer. She wants to push Pasifika, but she knows we need mainstream

to get through ERO or through MoE and what they require of the other staff and centre. (Deanne)

4.5.4 *Teacher relationships*

This topic of discussion during the *talanoa* sessions with the participants was huge. I have used sub-themes to divide this section of the findings surrounding teacher relationships.

Sophie felt that there was a clear comparison as she worked in her centre before the programme, whilst studying and after she had gained her qualification. Moving from unqualified to qualified this is what she had to say:

There is a lot of tension between unqualified and qualified but when you get qualified there is another tension between qualified and qualified you know the ones who have been in the field longer practicing so long and then that is a new barrier. It's about meeting half way and acknowledging we all have our own different strengths this is something we don't acknowledge a lot of the time, but we have to. (Sophie)

I think when I went in as a qualified Pasifika teacher it was hard to kind of shift the teachers to the fact I was not unqualified anymore but qualified now. When I was unqualified I did all that was required of a qualified teacher and now this is this stereotype unqualified can't do this and qualified can so yeah. It's really hard you have to step on a lot of toes and sometimes there are people that have their own ways, who are individual workers and then you have the ones that are like yeah, yeah and then next minute they ask what is the focus again. (Sophie)

You can run things your own way but you have to be open to accept the practices of other teachers as well. (Sophie)

Brooke found it hard for a different reason:

I wouldn't say it's difficult trying to work with educators and children the most difficult thing for me is going into the bigger field of ECE where because I've just recently graduated sometimes when I'm alongside others who have been in the field for ten years I feel like oh no I don't feel I know for a fact that they kind of look down on me and they look at me and ask are you a (Homebase) coordinator really? You're a bit young and you've just graduated so what do you know? That's been the most difficult thing for me I have just started but I attend a lot of meetings and stuff and even when I'm arranging meeting with people scheduling and stuff I know when we are on the phone it's all go, all business and then when we meet you know sometimes it's like so how old are you? When did you graduate? So how many houses do you look after? How many children do you look after? I think that has been the hardest thing for me. (Brooke)

4.5.5 *Influencing teachers*

The participants' *talanoa* described how they used their knowledge from the programme to influence teachers around them. An issue that arose from this was the conflict and resistance from teachers who have been teachers for five or more years, these teachers were not willing to accept the participants and what they had to offer.

- Positives

I think I can say I have well because I am one of the youngest teachers there it's kind of hard for me to speak up but the staff they are my family they don't I mean yeah it's a cultural thing to respect your elders, whatever your elders say do but they've kind of opened up and put that wall down for me so you know they kind of need me to share what I've been learning. It's a reciprocal thing they learn from me I learn from them like that. (Sandy)

You gotta look at it they are your left and right wing I mean if you can't depend on either then you are gonna be left off balance. I mean I know there is conflict and friction that do arise within management and within teaching themselves but for myself if I hold myself straight I will achieve, they will achieve, we will achieve. (Becca)

I believe that my role plays a crucial part because I work alongside educators who do not come from an ECE background. Well actually I have a conversation just to try and see what their views are especially on teaching and what their views are on teaching children, what their teaching style is some important things like discipline because they are not experienced so I don't really know what their experiences are with disciplining. I try and connect with the (Homebase) educators and a level they understand. (Brooke)

- Negatives

What I found working in a Cook Island/Pasifika centre it's when you come with a degree you expect that you can use what you have and you get to the stage where you are at now and there are other people who are conducting it and then you try and give what you have learnt but it is not heard and then you think why did I do three years and this is what I come too. I mean I know it comes down to Management and we know where the problem is but at the end of the day we really can't do much about it but that is what I have found. It is really challenging to come out of something that I am so passionate about and then when you give it it's not really accepted that has been my challenge. I say what is on my mind, but it is up to the upstairs to hear you or not and that is the main challenge I have seen. (Deanne)

I wouldn't say fix, but I educate teachers and let them know what's up and what is going on now in ECE. I have learnt with anything in life if you learn something share it, I wouldn't say fix just teach them. I feel like it's my responsibility, my duty to educate others to share what I know and to implement seeds. (Anne)

4.5.6 *What are Pasifika and Mainstream teachers missing?*

The participants highlighted some of the practices, values and beliefs missing within teachers they had met on practicum and while working in their ECE services and the issues this posed.

Regards to culture identity aspects I feel are teachers to be aware of this while in the field. A lot of this is what I wished happened in centre. It is about respect, it's very sad to say and it sounds simple, but we rarely see it. I don't know if there is a cultural clash but it's a word everybody knows but the actions of respect are unseen. For mainstream sections I would love for them to include the cultural factors. One week of a language week is not enough we are a bi-cultural country but understanding our community we've also got to understand that there are cultures that benefit us all together. (Becca)

You really have to know who you are, you have to know what you really value and believe in and have to be able to teach from that place because if you don't what are you teaching and why are you there in the first place. So if you have a sense of who you are and what you want and where you are going in life you are able to teach from that true place. (Anne)

Pasifika teachers need to have open-mindedness. I mean you come into the degree ok yeah, you work with children and you have a fair idea you don't realise how much it benefits you as a teacher to actually have an open mind. (Deanne)

I think there's a lot of things that need to be changed in centres especially in Pasifika centres. I started to really really reflect on who I was as a Tongan and a Niuean in New Zealand and so my last year I thought I was going to go to a Niuean centre to get to know my roots and I was excited just to turn up and find they are not speaking the language but it's a Niuean centre. They weren't speaking the language and just the work load was slack I was disappointed. (Brooke)

Shared knowledges we are now missing that, and we have to try and bring our ideas together. It should be done. (Sophie)

Pasifika teachers have lost what they have been taught because it's too much economic wise it's the struggle just getting the money and getting through that same 8-hour day if they do that then that is doing their job but when we study three years in our respective qualifications I think we sort of lose what we have been taught. (Anne)

I kind of watch them which I mean it is bad slap on the hand for doing that but you kind of look and think how did they pass practicum but then apparently talking to their classmates they are really good in terms of paper work, documentation whereas their practices are a bit yeah. But you kind of don't dwell on that you try and find a way to help them so now I just let try and give them some advice. I think we all come through the same journey maybe they

had it a bit harder than us because of what was happening with the degree at the time, but we were the cohort we also went through a lot. (Sophie)

4.5.7 Summary of the realities of being an ECE Teacher

This theme was sectioned off into different sub-headings as the participants discussed about the relationships within the centre amongst teachers, relationships they encountered during their practicums and the relationships they now build with their centre. The relationships for the participants differed according to how they felt amongst the different teachers, team leaders and board members and others they worked alongside. The participants discussed their struggles, challenges and feelings when they were student teachers and teachers in their ECE services. A commonality between the participants was their openness to create relationships with those in the ECE service but a resistance for their openness to be reciprocated by those around them. Their journeys were all different, they have had their highs and have shared about their lows. The reality for the participants were expressed more when they conversed about the BED (ECT) programme that gave them a sense of understanding, awareness, encouragement through knowing their cultures, languages, philosophies, pedagogies, values and beliefs.

4.6 ECE services

The various ECE services offered to the participants to work at has left some participants questioning the practices, teachings and services.

I think that we should work together because we are all in the same field we are not that different from each other it's just different fields. There is Home base, Kindergarten and Child care centres. I think if everyone works together it will be a stronger voice for that field to work together not work against each other because we are all trying to get the same result. Like doing the degree and everything I think we are all one, we are all the same, we are all trying to strive for the same result. (Anne)

There are things I have seen in the centres that are really just kind of out of it like bad things. I see that they just don't align with what I believe in but having the enrichment of the degree the knowledge I have gained from it, it makes me that better to try and lead by example to try and make things better with the staff relationships and everything else. I don't want to waste those three years that I had studying and not practice it, it won't make me an authentic teacher. There are a lot of hypocrites in what I've seen and a lot of negative things, but it just comes down to how can I influence what I have learnt for the betterment of the centre. (Anne)

They can't cater to us honestly (Early Childhood services) from my experience at the centre they can't know how I feel and what I have found out it doesn't matter about qualification it's not about what you come with its kind of downgrading it's sad. I've been in the centre one year and with a postgraduate diploma I'm still classed as a junior staff that is how bad they look down on qualifications. For them its more about being registered they are pushing me to do my full registration. I am a newly graduated teacher, but they forget about the experience from being a mum, working within sport groups, youth groups, it's not just experiences within ECE there are different places you can get experience from that's what I found sad. (Deanne)

The participants weighed in on their perceptions of the ECE services out there however the common point of discussion was Homebase childcare.

We have to go through all this paper work all this work with children whereas people doing Homebase have no qualifications and no experience and yet they have these kids sitting at home and are paid for it. I mean money is not the problem not a factor, but my point is why do we have to go through this process and Homebase (aren't qualified) The sad thing is the children suffer that is how I see it and in Australia Homebase is starting to pick up there too. (Sandy)

In some childcare centres I went to for practicum teachers were doing their Homebase on the side, but they wouldn't let their staff managers know they were kind of hiding it. The ones that I've seen even the childcare centres doing Homebase childcare (from my opinion) they are not and will not be socially competent because it just four kids in the home with one teacher and even the teacher would be alone on her own. What is she doing, see there's lots of perceptions of the different services in ECE that I found, and I don't think we work together hand in hand (Anne)

Anne shared her experiences whilst on practicum with Kindergarten and Childcare centres.

I found when I was in Kindergarten they put down child care centres but they said something really important that a lot of the teachers coming up they don't provide quality service whereas Kindergartens have been around for so many years and they know what they are doing, and they don't just hire anybody it's really hard to get in. They have a really high caliber of what they look for in quality teachers in ECE and so I took that on board and a Kindergarten manager I met who has been around for years said that childcare centres there are some good ones and not so good ones. The problem is they are giving us all bad names, so she really wasn't for childcare centres. She saw MoE are funding these schools because of the need and the people are going into employment now but they're not looking at the quality and the teacher ratio of it. They put all these flash buildings up but are they giving quality services to our children. (Anne)

However, Brooke who is working in Homebase expressed herself saying:

People need to be educated more on Homebase I already know you know the look that I get every single time Homebase education comes up its just like everyone has sour faces it's quite bad, but I don't in some ways I don't blame them. But in some ways, I do. I'm honestly, I'm quite proud of how well my educators are doing especially majority of them being first time teachers and unqualified. Say we just get children at the beginning of the year and they haven't been to any centres or any ECE services and from Homebase by the time they go primary they know their alphabets, numbers everything they need to know and it's because they get that time the one to one attention. But I wish people did know it is a good field to be in. (Brooke)

4.6.1 ECE sector

The participants during their *talanoa* meetings spoke about certain papers in the BPED (ECT) programme educating them on the different systems and stakeholders within their ECE service contributing to the ECE sector.

- Government and Management

When we have our meetings it's not like the manager says this and then we have to do this and this. The table is like open for discussion if someone feels a certain way they're not afraid to speak out because the manager has left the floor open and is consistently saying we are all the same just because she is the manager it doesn't make me any different we all come from the same place, we are all one and I think that kind of opens up. Any issues there is no one is afraid to say it because everything that is said is on the table and it's handled. We are not I mean our centre is not perfect far from perfect but as we go on we learn more and the *va* has a lot to do with it. I mean our manager she doesn't just stop at our professional life, but she makes the effort to be involved in our personal as well and that's just who she is as a leader. (Sandy)

Following on from this Sandy was asked about the centres' relationship with the Board of Trustees for the centre this is the response.

Like I said it's a family thing and that's one of the perks of it people do say it's annoying working with family, but I think we kind of just make it work. We grew up together and our upbringing has been the same. The Tongan word for it, the term is *fe'ofa'ofani*/loving one another. Our foundation and the way we were brought up we don't let the worldly things come between our family bond I mean although we are working everything has to be managed in a professional way. (Sandy)

Sophie has had the opposite encounter with Governance and Management within her centre and expresses that through her *Talanoa*.

I think in terms of management there is a break down within our Pasifika centres because it's like they are so set on making sure that they do this, this and this and yet it is not consistent and not transparent. One of the biggest things I have learnt is that transparency is not there, there is a lot of gossiping and the back chatting. (Sophie)

Sophie then compares what she learnt in the programme to what she experienced while working and studying at the same time.

When we were doing the Bachelor of Pasifika we were the first cohort what made it easy for me I was working and studying. I was able to understand the things that were taught. I experienced it or when we were taught this I would go back in the centre and see if they were following governance and management. Where is this decision coming from in terms of regulations? Was the governance and management organized and organizing those on the centre floor so that we knew policies and half of the time most the teachers weren't aware of what was going on. (Sophie)

Deanne also has had similar experiences to Governance and Management within her centre.

It's hard I would base it on or around the Island where I am from we have a structure. There is a King or Queen this is a CEO in a centre, then she has her district leaders these are the managers. When I think about it we have our own structure I think the problem it's not about the structure itself in our centre it is about how the information is directed everywhere else but where it needs to go I think. It's more about each area knowing what their role is and how they are to communicate with different areas. (Deanne)

Deanne further explains what she means.

The Tatala paper helped a lot the governance paper knowing the structures knowing the policies that are required I think what really helped me within the degree was about finding things that I could relate to that I already knew for instance the structure. (Deanne)

Deanne gives an example of what governance and management look like in her centre.

For instance, within our centres it's hard to put anything forward because our top person is so dominant and doesn't want to hear any other suggestions so it's really hard to put anything forward to them. (Deanne)

The MoE play a huge role in ECE education. The participants reflected on their initial feelings since becoming graduated teachers.

Our centre is a community based centre. For instance, my induction into my centre, my experience I thought it was poor I don't know if it was because I kind of had work experience there previously that they thought I knew them kind of thing. My expectations were higher just because I knew them I didn't want to be treated like that. I think one of the main things I needed to see on my first day was the policies, even now I haven't seen the full policy folder we have seen the ones on the floor and that is it there are a few I haven't seen. Things are just put there for ERO and I know to me that should be one of the main things in an induction should be our policies. (Deanne)

We work off MoE documents and our own stuff. Every child is different sometimes I wonder why do we have these guidelines to cater to them. There is benefits of Te Whaariki it gives us a good foundation. (Sandy)

MoE hold the power and we need to be accountable. If they passionately believe MoE then we both have to play our part in the processes. Te Whaariki curriculum that is the struggle you sort of kind of use that and you have to go with you know the curriculum that they set up and that's a struggle the MoE really don't believe in other cultures they really don't if they did our Pasifika degree would be still alive so that's a struggle for me I'm, we are under this MoE and the endorse Māori so where do we go and where do we fit in? (Anne)

I believe they all have advantages and disadvantages there are some limitations that I believe would halt cultural knowledge. Another way to look at things MoE there are a lot of negative things I have observed but we can alter the way we think and turn deficit into positive. The recent Te Whaariki I actually completed a survey in this and I wanted to go to one of the meetings when I actually looked at the final draft it was different. The previous was so limited there were things that we couldn't develop. I will always mention culture because that is where my passion is I felt that we were withheld it was straightforward and narrow the first edition. I'm quite happy with what we have at the moment will it last let's hope that programme like this come back because then we will be able to see the progress that it has done making us realise that the GTS. (Becca)

I think it's effective. I think everything that has to do with Homebase is quite straightforward more straight forward then a centre I would say. Home educators agree to most of the MoE requirements, rules, regulations and policies we tell them about their homes and having to be up to scratch and stuff like that before they jump on board. (Brooke)

I think it's gotten to that stage where teachers like for example when we write learning stories it's like you have to reflect on the child's learning at a certain part, but teachers are just using Te Whaariki and using that part, but parents don't understand or the links within the document. I think the language documents coming out are good, but they need to provide more resources if we are going to encourage language. If language is a big thing they need to provide more language documents. When we try and explain Te Whaariki in a sense of belonging you write it on paper but sometimes it doesn't mean or make sense to

anyone but you. Sometimes just sticking to the format notice, recognize, response you're so focused on completing this you forget the important part of the learning and sometimes it just takes a photo. (Sophie)

4.6.2 *Summary of ECE Services*

The participants were aware of the ECE sector as they had papers within the programme that connected to the different stakeholders, governing and management bodies that they all experienced during practicum and at their current ECE services. The main issue amongst the participants was the disconnection with the MoE and their policies that at times did not match Pasifika peoples' values, beliefs and teachings. However, as they are professionals they alluded to their experiences and how they plan on developing as Pasifika ECET.

4.7 **Summary**

The *talanoa* meetings with the participants gathered their journeys as Pasifika people before the programme, during the programme and after the programme. It is through the findings can we begin to understand the transformation of the participants' hearts, minds, and spirits. A journey does not stop after they gain their qualification which is why throughout their *talanoa* the participants were deep in thought about how to continue to grow with the *koloa*/treasures of the programme. Amituanai-Toloa (2010) writes "Language and Culture are two of the most important aspects of one's identity, and they also have a relationship in the formation of identities" (p. 81). The participants' *talanoa* meetings connected as they spoke of their journey before, during and after the programme. The greatest *koloa*/treasure they received was knowing who they were as Pasifika but more so Cook Island, Tongan, Samoan, Niuean and Māori students/teachers.

Chapter 5: Discussions

5.1 Introduction

The structure of this chapter is using the themes within the Finding's chapter and putting together a discussion chapter that combines the different themes to understand the journey of the six participants focusing on themselves before, during and after the programme. At times because the participants compared their experiences during and after the programme I have put that into one theme instead of the various ones observed in the Finding's chapter.

Terms like love, reconnect, roots, spirit, rediscovery, family, searching, culture, language, values and beliefs are amongst the different terms the participants conversed about through our *talanoa* meetings. Their academic knowledge to conceptualise their own culture and language to manifest a different learning capability will be discussed through this chapter.

The hearts of the participants remained the same through their *talanoa*. The goal is to share, encourage and engage with Niuean, Tongan, Samoan, Cook Island and Māori children but more so give Pasifika children in New Zealand the ability to strive in a dominant western society.

5.2 Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) Degree

As discussed, the programme derived from Pasifika knowledges, values and beliefs (Jattan, 2016; Manu'atu, 2013; Utumapu-McBride, 2013). It used university as its stepping stone to develop a space where Pasifika students began to manifest themselves in their own cultures to create a new way for examining the space we occupy. This was done through an intricate connection of 20 papers that all connected to one another as the conceptual framework *fātulalānga* suggests (*fatu* – refers to the *loto*/heart and *lalānga*/the weaving) (Manu'atu, 2013, p. 138), forcing students and the participants to go beyond anything that they had done in regard to their identities, culture, language, values and beliefs. It required each participant and student to become accountable for their learning.

The papers that the BEd (ECT) comprised of are as follows:

Year 1

- *Poto*: Professional Inquiry and Practice I (includes a 3-week practicum in a Pasifika Early Childhood setting)
- *Poto*: Professional Inquiry and Practice II (includes a 3-week practicum)
- *Ako mo e 'ilo*: ECE Curriculum I
- *Koloa Aotearoa*: Indigenous and Migrant Education I
- *Fonua I*: Human Development
- *Mo'ui Māfana*: Health and Safety in ECE
- *Tupu'anga*: Historical Perspectives

Year 2

- *Poto'i*: Professional Inquiry and Practice III (includes a 4-week practicum)
- *Poto'i*: Professional Inquiry and Practice IV (includes a 4-week practicum)
- *Ako'i mo e 'ilo'i*: ECE Curriculum II
- *Fakakoloa Aotearoa*: Indigenous and Migrant Education II
- *Fonua II*: Human Development
- *Kāinga*: ECE Families and Communities

Year 3

- *Fakapotopoto*: Professional Inquiry and Practice V (includes a 5-week practicum)
- *Fakapotopoto*: Professional Inquiry and Practice VI (includes a 5-week practicum)
- *Fakaako mo faka'ilo*: ECE Curriculum III
- *Koloa'ia Aotearoa*: Indigenous and Migrant Education III
- *'Etau Ngaahi Lea*: Our Languages
- *Toutai*: Research Methodologies
- *Tatala*: Governance and Management in ECE

These papers were working towards a cohesive curriculum for ECE which each Pacific nation could adapt and implement into their current Pasifika ECE service. The students of this programme have the ability to create their own ECE Niue, Tongan, Samoan, Cook Island, Fijian, Kiribati and Māori curriculum. Deanne said, “One of the main values I remember our lecturers nailed into us was love”. This was the underpinning of the programme.

Love was not an object of affection, nor was it the love of loving one another as we commonly understand the term. Unfortunately, the problem with translating our Pasifika languages is that more often than not the English language does not give the exact meaning. Love was beyond what we know and deepen our minds, spirits and hearts to uncover thoughts and experiences that can grow and develop Pasifika children. An example of this is explained by Leaupepe and Sauni (2014) “to move, shape and influence the multiple identities of learners” (p. 1719). Manu’atu et al., (2014) write,

we propose that spirits of peace, love and harmony should encircle and inform the words and wisdoms of the collective and the individual, and vice versa about what is right and wrong in our learning and living; education, research and application. Spirits of courage, peace, love and harmony should embrace all of us in sharing, suffering, loss, inspiration, aspiration, joy, beauty, and wealth; sharing good in the bad and bad in the good in creating education committed to both spiritual and material prosperity (pp. 1-2)

The philosophical component of the programme made it different from the start due to the wider community involvement in the development of the programme. The idea of encompassing a space that is shared with our families, friends, community, country men and women begins to stretch our thoughts and learning capabilities.

The six participants reverted to the programme throughout their *talanoa* discussing their ability to deepen their understandings. This awoke their hearts and spirits sometimes beyond comprehension. They found it hard at times to speak and used facial and hand expressions to share their experiences within in the programme. The participants’ *talanoa* involved reflection, re-shaping, discovering and connecting. The academic role the programme had on the participants involved the university, lecturers and students, linking together to create pieces of knowledge new, but from their ancestors from centuries ago. As a researcher I found that each year processed one or two students who had taken away more than what the programme was physically offering. I can understand this because I feel like I too took away more than what my lecturers had intended me to discover and unpack. Although the programme was taught in English this did not take away from the richness found.

The paper concludes by suggesting that Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching) as *tala’anga ‘ofa/* is a site of collective wisdoms in the university. The conceptual framework of the degree, drawn from Tongan principles, knowledge, value and beliefs has indeed been a contribution by a Tongan academic whose spirit has been mobilised,

energised and uplifted by '*ofa*/love and that, in turn, uplifts others. As a site of collective wisdoms, the degree creates a place and space, at the university, where Tongan people are called upon and encouraged to renew their hearts within '*ofa*/love a new step in the very direction of critiquing Pasifika education, collective learning, theorising, and researching Tongan knowledges (Manu'atu, 2013).

As a researcher and being one of the students to graduate from this specific programme two of the participants felt that the programme was just that and looking beyond as Manu'atu (2013) explains was just creating more work and there is enough work in the ECE service. One participant Brooke during our second *talanoa* said that she did not really understand why love had to be so deep and beyond what she understood love was from her mainstream eyes although knowing the programme made her different from those she had met in her ten months of working. Compared to the five participants Brooke took a more 'it is what it is' perspective towards what she gathered from the degree. Anne on the other hand was excited that we had the same minds and ideas of taking what we learnt from the degree into further education. Of the six participants three are going to be furthering their education at university taking their learning from the programme and justifying why a Pasifika programme like this one needs to be recognised in universities in New Zealand.

After comprehending the closure of the programme two of the participants Sandy and Becca still studying at the time of their *talanoa* sessions were shocked and still at a disarray that they would be the last intake. Sandy even stated that the programme would be life changing for Pasifika teachers who could have been given the opportunity to study what she described as a prestige Pasifika programme. Becca said she was gutted that it was ending but would continue its work on a post graduate diploma, which Manu'atu (2013) wrote would happen,

Here, is the turning point, when we come to know our *loto*/heart, our spirits will be opened, and we will become conscious of our being and others. We will know ourselves better and we will see why we think what we think and why we insist on doing what we do. We will perceive our purpose in the world more clearly. In theory, when people give due diligence to take care of their *loto*/hearts, the seat of authority in people, they will be guided by wisdom and will live well in the world (p. 137).

Anne explained her frustration at the fact when becoming aware of the programmes closure in her final year at the university and wanting to protest the university's decision

being told to leave it as it was already a done deal. Anne was angered by the lack of support from her classmates, the first-year intake into the programme and the lecturers who in her eyes had given up. During our second *talanoa* Anne did express the fact that she would make sure what she took out of the degree would be put into a thesis after exploring different ECE centres and investigating her areas of interest. As an advocate for the programme I could understand and feel where Anne was coming from as I too wrote a letter as instructed by our Student Union of reasons why personally shutting the programme would be detrimental to our Pasifika community. I believe this did fall on deaf ears.

Manu'atu et al., (2014), knew that new knowledge from this programme would either be accepted, ignored, neglected or change education from what it is. The consensus now is that if this knowledge is to have any substance in the ECE sector, those who have been through the programme would come forward and begin to assert the stakeholders who removed the programme of its value to New Zealand society.

5.2.1 *The participants*

The participants from each year faced different hurdles and situations. During the *talanoa* with the participants from the classes of 2014 and 2015 they felt they faced different issues compared to the first cohort class of 2013. Sandy from the class of 2015 expressed that she felt the previous two cohorts from the class of 2013 and 2014 had a different class dynamic because they did not have to worry about the closure of the programme which brought about different issues. She felt that they were more united.

This was evident in the way each participant conversed about their journey with their class. Sophie and Deanne from the class of 2013 both felt that they had same minded Pasifika people around them, allowing them to learn, understand and appreciate each Pasifika culture, they mentioned the closure of the programme but also explained how it did not affect them as it did their peers in the other class intakes. Anne from the class of 2014 felt the most hurt upon hearing the closure of the programme. She explained the spirit that was taken abruptly from the lecturers and the students of her class, she was the most passionate about reviving the programme through further study. Anne from the second-year intake class of 2014 *talanoa*/talked about how she wanted to approach media because the issue of what was happening during her time of studies. She felt like

AUT were not upholding certain obligations of what she felt was in the end, disrespect. Disrespect for the students and lecturers but most of all the Pasifika community. Sophie from the class of 2013 expressed if anything she was over qualified because of the programme. She gained too much for ECE and that there would be nothing else but go further in her role when she felt confident. Sandy and Becca from the class of 2015 both expressed their sadness that they would be the last intake to go through the programme. Sandy who was the youngest of the participants said that it was a pity the programme was closing because she felt more Pasifika students who wanted to become ECET could finish university with this type of programme. Unlike the statistics that she heard about during her time in AUT. Brooke and Anne from class of 2014 were also expressive around the subject of the closure of the programme. The six participants were not sad of the closure but sad over the knowledge gained, the teaching and the Pasifika foundation that was evident in the BPed (ECT) programme. Sophie, Sandy, Becca and Deanne of the six participants credited the programme for their new knowledge, new founding love for the culture and new conceptualisation of their Pacific culture, language, values and beliefs. Brooke did not feel sad nor happy about the situation but understood she was more equipped than some of the teachers around her due to her own beliefs and values and those that she gained in the programme.

5.3 Identity

The participants entered the BPed (ECT) programme for different reasons. The one commonality of the six participants was the blessing in disguise through receiving more than just academic knowledge in the programme. Samu (2006) agrees for ECET to understand Pasifika learners they must have an in-depth, contextualised knowledge and understanding of the Pasifika learners. The six participants expressed with their hearts and spirits the utmost importance for ECET to grasp the different ways in which Pasifika children learn, understand and experience. For the participants their identity played a major role in being able to understand Pasifika children more in ECE.

5.3.1 Identity – Before, During and After the programme

In the literature review the dominated mainstream society is one of the main effects of identity loss within Pasifika communities (Bishop, 2003; Kēpa & Manu'atu, 2008a; Teisina, 2011). One participant, Anne realised her journey of schooling before the programme, was why she did not succeed.

For Anne it was the dominant mainstream learning that put her off, as it had no connection to who she was as a young Samoan girl growing up New Zealand:

It's actually made me see what has happened to me and why I felt the way I felt while growing up and why I didn't connect to my teachers, to any teachers in school and why I felt away from the education system and why it never connected with me and never did. (Anne).

Through Anne there should be some realisation that although the MoE, Tertiary Education Commission, and the Pasifika Education Plan has Pasifika people in mind, it does not justify teachers still unresponsive to the way Pasifika children feel and learn in a mainstream society. You could argue that there are enough resources for teachers to support these learners, however, as discussed in the literature review, Jattan (2016) shows teachers are still lacking in the skills to guide Pasifika children.

Goodfellow (2003) states "Practical wisdom requires us, as a profession, to not only acknowledge, explore, and support professional learning of content knowledge, but also those aspects of practice that are usually hidden" (p. 27). The keyword is 'hidden'. ECET are still unaware of the hearts and minds of a Pasifika child. This is where the disconnection in the classrooms begins to happen (Bishop, 2003; Samu, 2006).

The western education system strips children of their identity especially when Pasifika students enter an ECE programme with no connection to Pasifika cultures, languages, knowledges and pedagogies and so on, and then expected to go into different ECE services and guide the Pasifika children but also are seen by their colleagues to be the 'go to' when they do not know how to deal, educate or guide a Pasifika child they encounter (Jattan, 2016).

Another participant Brooke said this during the *talanoa* "my identity and culture was only surface". Brooke had a different take on the degree then the other participants before she entered. She believed she knew herself and her identity was already strong however as she began to journey through the degree she concluded that it was only surface. However, Brooke believes that the programme would not suit someone who was embedded in their Pasifika culture, language and family. Which respectively, I disagree with as one of the participants was strong in all aspects of her Pacific descent but gathered a deeper sense of cultural practices that she is now passing on to her teaching team and in hand enhancing the learning of the Pasifika children she teaches.

A common practice for Pasifika people is to study and achieve in university for their families. Naturally following in the footsteps of those before them is something passed down within generations. For Sandy this was the case of entering the programme “my grandmother migrated from Tonga when she was a high school teacher, so she always had passion for teaching”. The heart and spirit of a Pasifika child is not recognised yet in mainstream society, this is the issue we are facing today.

During the programme the participants realised their journey was about searching who they were so that they could connect better to themselves, their family and origins before trying to connect to children they were to meet.

I thought I knew who my parents were, where they came from that *tupu'anga* paper not only did I find out about my ancestors and all, but I also knew why I'm here. (Sandy)

Sandy felt that her parent's migration story to New Zealand mattered so that she could relate to the children who also have a similar background. It was not only their physical journeys but the unseen impact it had on them and their lives. This required her to deepen her physical senses and understand her ancestors, her parents' *fonua*/homelands and all the different aspects that made them and her who she was today.

The degree really influenced my identity in a big way because my perception of it was I didn't care about it. I didn't value it. I didn't know what it was. (Anne)

Kolone-Collins (2010) agrees that devaluing Pasifika wisdoms is from the dominance of western knowledge in society. The identity loss of Pasifika peoples has different reasons behind this that have been researched vastly. Kulhánková (2011) and Manu'atu (2000) reflect on the negative effects and colonial past of our ancestors. This could be the reason why Anne and other Pasifika students in university and children feel such a disconnection when learning, studying and growing up in New Zealand. Resulting in failure to develop and move up from being at the lower end of statistics compared to other groups (Perger, 2007). It is still apparent in today's society mainstream is missing vital principles, values and beliefs that Pasifika children, students and families having an effect that some are just passing off as 'more effort needed' (TEC, 2015).

Deanne and Becca, who reflect on how recognising their identity and embedding it within a Pasifika programme, has changed the way they learn, reflect and teach Pasifika which is a benefit to Pasifika children they will meet. Identity for the participants was more than just their physical appearances being identified, it was more about their histories, family migration stories being conceptualised into academic learning to become worthy of being appreciated in academics. Pepe (2013) believes through her experiences connecting to society is firstly connecting to one self's identity. As Manu'atu (2013) explains to teach Pasifika children/students '*ofa*/love must be central in what we do this is supported by Mabbs and Laureta (2013) who write:

'ofa with *loto mafana*/warm heartedness is the 'magic' pedagogy. This is the most effective teaching pedagogy and '*ofa* is the most valuable value of our Tongan style of teaching that I grew up with...teaching in ECE reflects these values which is '*ofa*/love, *loto mafana*/warm hearted, *faka'apa'apa*/respect...love transcends languages and cultures and yet the spirit is the heart of both of them (pp. 39-40).

There is no surprise that mainstream teachers cannot understand what Pasifika children entail. Although it is not an excuse to pass Pasifika children off to Pasifika ECET who have been through mainstream education in university, as they themselves do not have the correct training as the six participants received in the programme.

Mara (2017) positions Pasifika education in New Zealand as an 'urgent priority' where we must 'plot our own journey' although different policies, stakeholders and expectations of 'mainstream education' make it somewhat difficult to begin and maintain. As expressed by Dr Sala Fa'asaulala Tagoilelagi-Leota who said in an interview "We are back to square one when the training started in 1987" reflecting on English IELTS test that many Pasifika teachers failed to pass, although they were trained teachers with high quality Samoan culture and language desperately needed in our Pasifika centres (Collins, 2018). Lyn Lewis is the head of the Auckland University of Technology's School of Education expressed "the level 7 hurdle has decimated the number of students who were eligible for teacher education" (Collins, 2018, para. 5).

Our Pasifika peoples' identity lies within us but not recognised in Mainstream Education that New Zealand society adheres to. The participants understood that the programme was not where they stopped rediscovering and extending what they had the ability to learn and reconnect too. Sophie explains:

I'm starting to see like how I was coming out of the degree in terms of the effect the degree had on me...It got us into the inquiry stage of being an inquiry teacher and trying to move, not being stuck in the same ways.

Relating to Spiller (2013) who suggests that the disconnection to Pasifika children and teachers is surrounded by the misunderstanding of Pasifika identity knowledge. The barriers of not knowing how to get to the inquiry stage as Sophie explains could be blamed upon the mainstream ECE programmes. Mainstream ECE programmes only have one type of learning and does not have the richness of many Pasifika children with their own identities of home, homelands, family, ancestors and cultural practices and included in the process of child learning development. For this reason of misunderstanding and loss opportunities to enrich the ECE sector with Pasifika pedagogies, knowledges, cultures and languages.

Deanne who decided to do her postgraduate studies feels her dream of guiding Cook Island children to success in ECE is not possible:

I have the passion for our little children, but I feel they system (ECE sector) is corrupt for the knowledge that we do have. I feel that I would be suited in Primary as children leave the centre. I can give to what they have and help children move through primary because I have been in ECE I can understand what they come from so giving them what they need to where they need to go I feel that is where I am needed. (Deanne)

Deanne felt her knowledge and qualifications could be used to close the gap when a Cook Island child leaves the centre and enters primary as there is another disconnection for Pasifika. Deanne feels her academic training and knowledge combined with her specialised Pasifika degree would be accepted more in Primary because of the different expectations of the MoE and her centre blocking her from practicing and teaching her teaching team. Each participant has their own goals and aspirations that they understand will change as they experience more in ECE. The similarity for each of the participants is that where they go, their identities will go with them, they were given the opportunity to learn about whom they were, and this does seem simple. However, with the complexities of society, environment, socio-economic status and position of Pasifika people in New Zealand, these participants left the programme with more than just academic knowledge of being an ECT. Creating a new batch of teachers who do not need to search for themselves to connect to children but who know themselves in order to better connect and guide ECE Pasifika children they are to meet and have met.

Gaugatao (2017) supports the participants equipped with their identities as “we need to know them, understand them, understand how they see the world, promote difference in strength and help them understand their identities...” (p. 1). To better understand the position of the participants Tagoilelagi-Leota, Kesi and Galu (2013) write:

“...the learning of a child starts from a mother’s womb (*fanua*) and the connection to *fanua* begins there with the mother been the provider of the produce from the *fanua* (land). Therefore, the *fanua* can embrace the physical land as well as the social, cultural and the spiritual relationships created and cultural practices among people on the land” (p. 100).

This complex learning and knowing for a Pasifika child is not always received from reading a piece of paper for him/her to learn. Their identity is shaped through different processes of story-telling, songs, role modelling that happen even before they are born (Kingi, 2003). It is this teaching that mainstream must acquire although it would not be necessary if more Pasifika teachers were educated in ECE with specialised papers connecting them to Pasifika children in society.

In regard to identity participants felt disconnected and found themselves searching for their values. They realised that teaching Pasifika children requires love, a love that can only be understood when they themselves understood oneself. They always had their identity however, it had become colonised after years of mainstream schooling and living in a dominated society. It gave them the understanding what colonisation and dominant society had done within their families to be able to understand children who have been through similar experiences. The participants spoke about their roots both in New Zealand and their families’ Pacific country of birth for all of them ignited a flame that gave them the opportunity to reconceptualise their Pasifika identity and begin the unpacking and restacking of their outlook.

5.4 Language and Culture

Even in today’s society Pacific languages are still declining in New Zealand (StatsNZ, 2016). This issue has been prominent in our Pasifika communities over the years. The numbers of speakers have been declining, fluency of the Pasifika languages declines with age and “the use of the language is seen to be in decline in secure language “domains” such as churches, during cultural observances, at schools, and most importantly at home” (Amituanai-Toloa, 2010, p. 80). Nowadays there are different

initiatives offering language classes each term, there are different Youth groups being created for language retention so amongst the Pasifika community there is awareness.

5.4.1 *Language and Culture – Before, during and after the programme*

Three of the participants entered the programme fluent in their language. The other three participants admitted during their *talanoa* that they had some fluency in their languages. One participant explained how she was fluent in Te Reo but is re-learning the language along with the Pasifika languages.

The conceptual framework of the programme enticed Deanne, as language continuation is one of her passions and goals for her Cook Island community:

Language and culture is what motivated me to become an ECT. I have been finding ways to give back to the community it is always hard when it is not in your own country, but I think coming from the Cook Islands and doing a degree in Pasifika it is valuing. (Deanne)

Culture and language is underpinned through the understanding of the programme's conceptual framework inclusive of weaving Pasifika *talanoa*/talk and '*ofa*/love.

TalanoaLalānga is an exploration of oneself that brings all facets of life together. The awareness of language and culture for the participants was more about coming to terms with the loss that was happening in their community. Sophie noticed that it was about shared knowledges and their benefits. Sandy discussed about how it was more about the *mafana* of practicing your Pasifika language and culture.

Thaman (2011) mentions how appreciation of Pasifika cultures is required from different teachers. Participants agreed that this was through exploring with an open mind not only their culture and language but those of their peers in class. Bishop (2005) agrees that there needs to be alternative approaches to learning Pasifika culture and language as mainstream does not offer this in their programmes. The role of universities then come into question as expressed by Manu'atu (2008)

Because the leading question is: How are the migrants and descendants from the Kingdom of Tonga, the islands of Samoa, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau and the many Cook Islands to re-position their knowledges in the University when it is not us who control society in New Zealand? (p. 11).

This question poses different perspectives of the role of university for Pasifika. As highlighted through the expectations of those in charge (Collins, 2018) ECE Pasifika driven programmes have stopped or there is a lack of interest because of the threshold set by those not of Pasifika decent. So, although Bishop (2005) speaks of these alternative approaches there has to be an understanding made. Honourable Minister of Pacific Peoples, Aupito believes Pasifika people have a choice to continue to be recognised differently from mainstream or add to mainstream and their curriculum and policies already given (A. W. Sio, personal communication, January 23, 2018). Following this, Dateline Pacific (2017) interviewed Aupito William Sio and he expressed his plan of making the Samoan, Niuean, Tongan, Cook Island and Tokelau languages recognised as community languages, placing more importance than they respectively have now. As the government has changed there seems to be some light at the end of a long tunnel that has Pasifika people at its forefront.

As they entered their centres they observed culture and language and expressed this about it within their centres:

Being in a bi-lingual centre we get a diverse group of children and the biggest resource we lack and don't use much is parent, children and ourselves to continue on our language and culture. (Sophie)

I was brought up in *Kohanga Reo* so language I know it is important, cultural identity is important so yeah, I think Pasifika has opened my eyes more to its importance. (Becca)

As Amituanai-Toloa (2010) expressed we as Pasifika are lacking to follow through with our language and cultural practices and retention within our Pasifika centres. However, as an only English speaker myself and the experiences of only having the one language I came to an understanding through the programme that not having my Niue language did not take away the *tōaga*/treasure of my cultural knowledge and practices. It became apparent to me by learning, discovering and conversing with my family members, my *Vagahau Niue* naturally increased and I was learning words and then sentences as I proceeded with my cultural practices (Taumoevalau, 2004). So as urgent as our Pasifika languages are in relation to retention and revival cultural practices essentially play a role in how we begin or proceed to teach these languages.

Without provoking the participants each spoke of the role language and culture play in their Tongan, Samoan, Cook Island and Niue communities. They also related this to their experiences and upbringing and the importance culture and language have to a Pasifika person living in New Zealand.

I think it's more or less teaching from within (Tongan values and beliefs). Ok for me like cultural knowledge does align with academic knowledge but for me personally especially with doing this degree has made me realise that cultural knowledge aligns with academic. For me cultural knowledge is more significant than academic. A successful teacher you got to have some sort of knowledge for the children, but I think especially doing this degree I find it more important to work from within because then you are willing to teach and have the passion for it. (Sandy)

Sandy who speaks Tongan believed that cultural knowledge is academic knowledge if not more important than academic knowledge as it requires skills of embedding cultural practices of ancestors, those that hold a high status in the Tongan culture (Koloto, 2004). Cultural practices to Sandy was realised more through the programme. At one point fully understanding the cultural practices she had observed and the role she played in her Tongan family as a daughter, granddaughter, aunty, niece and teacher (Koloto, 2004). Through acquiring more knowledge her appreciation of her culture was more about being willing to have the passion to practice and pass it on to the children she teaches. *Mafana*/warmth was a concept that Sandy conversed about throughout her *talanoa*. Without *mafana* she said she would not be Tongan or where she was today. This feeling and notion she needed to reconceptualise within the programme to be able to practice this in her Tongan centre.

Becca looked at culture as an aging concept and with this language naturally changes and develops or becomes forgotten. Becca insisted that her elders have a different manner or speaking and she also herself speaks another way. This highlights the movement of language and culture that has happened over time in which we have to become fluid in the way we teach our Pasifika cultures and languages (Dateline Pacific, 2016; May, 2002). From experience this becomes political within Pasifika communities as elders have their own way and at times see the younger generation like mine changing and swapping terminology that they cannot accept. The problem then is about if we are to maintain our Pasifika languages and cultures we must stand together and not in our generations.

Brooke on the other hand compared to the other participants seemed to have taken everything in her stride. This could be because she was working within a family business and understood being a Homebase coordinator had its negative reputation with centres versus Homebase education. Brooke expressed what she was doing in her Homebase homes with her educators was based around culture and language but working in mainstream Homebase. As a researcher I could sympathise with her role as a coordinator in her family business. Sophie also brought another perspective which was different from the five participants as she worked alongside two other teachers who studied in a different year from the same AUT BPed (ECT) programme. She felt like they had the same culturally upbringing and understanding but knowledge wise she was more advanced. Sophie drew attention to the fact that even though she was equipped with this new knowledge, adhering to mainstream was in the end the deal breaker for her centre as ERO and MoE have their own rules and regulation that contradicted at times our Pasifika cultural practices and knowledges (Mara, 2014, 2017).

An issue amongst Pasifika is the colonisation that began in our homelands which continued when we migrated to New Zealand (Rewi, 2010; Smith, 1999). Māori have fought for their rights to have their language recognised as an official language of New Zealand. With some resistance of western society Māori and those in support of Te Reo have become more respondent to those who still believe it should be a choice not a requirement. Stewart (2017) wrote from a Niue perspective:

“The problem that colonisers had left behind you know, they’ve taught us well to look down on our culture, to look down on our language...you know, at this late stage we’re trying to grip onto it and try to think otherwise” (p. 1).

This programme sparked a love for culture and language within the participants, the programme got them to discover and find the underpinning pedagogies, values, beliefs and practices within their Pasifika community. *Tangata Whenua* are our role models of where to begin to fight for our rights as citizens of New Zealand. One can imply to be respected we must respect those before us and before us are *Tangata Whenua* so naturally as Pasifika not only should we be fighting for our own languages we should all be speaking Te Reo Māori as well.

5.5 Realities of becoming an ECT

The participants had the most to converse through this section that became a theme whilst writing, re-writing and reading their transcripts continuously. Their realities of what they experienced on practicums and working in their centres had its positives and negatives for the participants. Four participants were employed in a full or bi-lingual Pasifika centre, one participant was a Homebase coordinator recognised as mainstream and one participant was not working during this time of our *talanoa* meetings. Each participant drew upon experience so there were similarities and differences. They based their observations and experiences on the programme and the underpinning of *Fātulālānga*/weaving with the heart and *TalanoaLalānga*.

5.5.1 Learning to practicing in ECE services

- Practicum and current place of employment experiences

Sophie, Deanne and Sandy

These three participants felt that they would be better off if there were more teachers who were trained as they were in the programme. Sophie believed the programme was so intense with in-depth new knowledges, connecting and unpacking of her Samoan culture that teachers she worked alongside after graduating felt threatened. She had to step back and take her time in introducing the new knowledges that she had acquired.

We went so in depth when we are out there we try and open all that stuff and try and influence our teachers to try and challenge themselves but it's easy for us to see their way in the system, but they are so set in their own ways they think we are know it all's but it's not like that. (Sophie)

Sandy had a similar outlook on the teachers in the field.

From my practicum experience I think teachers don't know that they just limit themselves to their job description they don't go that extra mile whereas like I said this paper (programme) has taught me to teach form within and that enables me to try and go the extra mile and just go and make an extra effort. (Sandy)

There is said to be a transition period for new teachers in ECE from University to their chosen centres, but this gap between the two is alarming for many teachers (Mahmood, 2000).

It was a common theme amongst the participants of the lack of effort being observed by teachers already in the field at their current places of employment. This was also observed by the participants whilst they were on practicums during their time in the programme:

One staff has been in ECE for 11-12 years it's more routine. (Deanne)

The ones who were in the service longer I found that they were a bit more bitter. I would feel during practicum the older ladies would misunderstand the practices being taught now in university. (Brooke)

I look at teachers who are fully registered sitting there and I think you are a fully registered teacher, you're a leader you should be doing this, this and this you should be setting the example. (Sophie)

What they are missing is why they got into the field in the first place when we do the degree we don't just look at the positives we also learn about the conflicts that we are confronted with the challenges that we do go through. (Sandy)

Wadlington (1995) explains how university degrees cannot teach teachers all they need to know about work but can prepare them for an experience only once experienced can a teacher make their mind up whether to continue or find where they suit within the ECE sector or Education sector itself. In the beginning it is natural beginning teachers who experience some type of trauma in their first year as they begin to understand their personal and professional selves. Mahmood (2000) explains further how new teachers are put off through the range of cultures met in the centre and the reality of being and dealing with multicultural children who have different needs, wants, culture, language and most importantly identities.

Having different experiences in practicum is the purpose of the students going out. They are faced with problems and issues which could either break or make them stronger. The positives and negatives of practicum for the six participants varied. Becca said that she wished she was blind at times to teachers she met on practicum making it hard to build relationships. Sandy said that teachers were not willing to learn what she could have taught them and that although there were amazing teachers, she was reminded of the programme and the knowledge it gave to her to give to the children. Brooke felt like majority of the teachers treated students like 'cleaners' or bum boys (those that just do things when asked) and felt most teachers needed

reminding of when they were students. These feelings and emotions that the participants experienced are common amongst student teachers (Dobbins, 1996).

Sandy the youngest amongst the six participants had the most to share when she compared her Tongan centre she had been working part time and her practicums. She described teachers as having no spirit for their job, the limitations teachers put on themselves due to pay or job descriptions, and the tensions amongst teachers on and off the floor. Sandy brings light to an issue within ECE as five out of her six practicums were mainstream centres. Sandy recommended the papers become professional development day or week courses provided to both Mainstream and Pasifika ECE services. This echoed the route that I wish to take as a previous graduate of the programme. This was what I had planned to do but hearing Sandy converse about this through our *talanoa* she provided me with more to add to the foundation of furthering my studies and becoming an entrepreneur for ECE.

Ord's (2010) research is based upon the preparedness of student teachers after leaving their programme. Part of her research focused on students choosing teaching but lacking the understanding of a complex choice. This seems to be the case for the teachers already practicing that the participants meet, their life-long careers becoming a repetitive 'job'. Edwards's (2009) research incorporating reflective practices within ECE services for better content knowledge and teaching practices.

5.5.2 *Different ECET*

One theme amongst the participants was the issue of not being able to contribute to the planning for the children and the development of staff as they had different knowledges, perspectives and teachings as newly graduated teachers. Sophie felt that as she had previously worked in her centre it was hard for teachers to take her seriously. She was once unqualified and then returned qualified.

She discussed the tension between unqualified and qualified as well:

When I was unqualified I did all that was required of a qualified teacher and now this is this stereotype unqualified can't do this and qualified can so yeah. It's really hard you have to step on a lot of toes and sometimes there are people that have their own ways, who are individual workers and then you have the ones that are like yeah, yeah and then next minute they ask what is the focus again. (Sophie)

This experience was similar to Brooke who felt she was judged by Homebase Coordinators who were a bit older than her and had more experience. She believed that her age was an issue as coordinators older than her questioned her position in her workplace.

I've recently graduated sometimes when I'm alongside others who have been in the field for ten years I feel like oh no I don't feel I know for a fact that they kind of look down on me and they look at me and ask are you a Homebase coordinator really? You're a bit young and you've just graduated so what do you know? That's been the most difficult thing for me. (Brooke)

Deanne experienced resistance of her knowledge and opinions for a better teaching environment from upper management. Deanne became frustrated at the lack of support and growth with the different ideas, teaching practices, learning opportunities the teaching team and herself were willing to work towards for the betterment of the children in their centre.

What I found working in a Cook Island/Pasifika centre it's when you come with a degree you expect you can use what you have and you get to the stage where you are at now and there are other people who are conducting it and then you try and give what you have learnt but it is not heard and then you think why did I do three years and this is what I come too. I mean I know it comes down to management and we know where the problem is but at the end of the day we really can't do much about it but that is what I have found. It is really challenging to come out of something that I am so passionate about and then when you give it it's not really accepted that has been my challenge. I say what is on my mind but it up to the upstairs to hear you or not and that is the main challenge I have seen. (Deanne)

Edwards (2009) suggests that newly graduated teachers come to a realisation of not only absorbing knowledge of academics but must create their own new knowledge that support the current social economic society they will meet once qualified. Although the participants settled into their ECE services having different road blocks of misunderstandings and a lack of contribution into their centres has caused some confusion. They gained this qualification that is new knowledge for the Pasifika community but there is a lack of reciprocity. Dunkin and Hanna (2001) state the whole dynamic of a child's path in ECE requires quality interactions between teachers and teachers and teachers and children. The relationships of the teachers are imperative for the development of a centre. From the perspective of this research teachers in Pasifika ECE services could be lacking a growing 21st century teachers who are "those who dare

to lead, be innovative, creative and bold” (Leaupepe, 2017, p. 61). The six participants who studied this programme became fearless (Leaupepe, 2017) as they began to understand their pedagogies, knowledges, cultural histories and ancestors which provided them with a strong and affirmed foundation. Pasifika teachers who are practicing have these foundations, but they are clouded by the dominant teachings, programme and curriculum of mainstream education. In terms of what the programme offered, the participants along with their peers were in a space where they were grounded in the knowledge of who they were and where they come from (Leaupepe & Sauni, 2014) essentially for all Pasifika teachers in New Zealand society. The BPed (ECT) Degree prepared the Pasifika teachers to enter their Pasifika communities and their Pasifika centres essentially having ‘inner workings’ of understanding their sense of learning versus their knowledge in their head (Ord, 2010). As the participants entered the first of its kind Pasifika ECE programme this research also offers a new aspect allowing newly graduated teachers of this programme a space to involve, evolve and produce a ‘new’ Pasifika ECE community that close the gap of Pasifika occupying the lower end of education statistics

A different perspective has come from Sandy who works in her family centre. As a Tongan young lady, she understands her place in the order of a hierarchal system that is carried out in the Tongan families, communities and so forth (Pau’uvale, 2011). She understands not only is she younger, but she is within her family centre that has her aunties, grandma and other members who she respects greatly as a cultural practice amongst Pasifika. What makes her different from the three participants who have found it a challenge to integrate their knowledge and teachings is that Sandy has been given the opportunity to teach her aunties and family members in their centre.

I think I can say I have well because I am one of the youngest teachers there it’s kind of hard for me to speak up but the staff they are my family they don’t I mean yeah it’s a cultural thing to respect your elders, whatever your elders say you do but they’ve kind of opened up and put that wall down for me so you know they kind of need me to share what I’ve been learning. It’s a reciprocal thing they learn from me I learn from them like that. (Sandy)

Of the six participants three are working within family centres. However, of these three two have been able to share, integrate and develop professional knowledge within their centre and Homebase related to the programme. In other words, they have been given

the opportunity to share their teaching within their ECE service, which is opposite to the other four participants who have struggled to build their status in the centres to be respected enough to bring forth their new knowledge. This could be part of an issue of nepotism that one participant to some extent touched upon during her *talanoa* expressing one problem of her centre was that the management were all family members affecting what was happening in her centre with the teachers. However, from the two participants that are working with their family, one admitted that she would have had difficulties if she did not have her family centre to be employed into. She shared the toxic relationships of teacher relationships in centres, she experienced during her practicums. The other participant was just thankful that her boss had studied the Pasifika diploma and upgrade before the BPed (ECT) replaced it. Having a boss connected to similar Pasifika philosophies, pedagogies and teachings as she received during the programme has made it easier for her to implement with her Homebase educators of Pasifika descent.

Anne expressed although there is a lot of work to do by Pasifika teachers to become more united with the different suggestions she has, it is not about fixing the solution but more so letting them know:

I wouldn't say fix, but I educate teachers and let them know what's up and what is going on now in ECE. I have learnt with anything in life if you learn something share it, I wouldn't say fix just teach them. I feel like it's my responsibility, my duty to educate others to share what I know and to implement seeds. (Anne)

Becca had the same thoughts as Anne:

You gotta look at it they are your left and right wing I mean if you can't depend on either then you are gonna be left off balance. I mean I know there is conflict and friction that do arise within management and within teaching themselves but for myself if I hold myself straight I will achieve, they will achieve, we will achieve. (Becca)

The programme did not obviously teach the participants how to interact with teachers they met during practicum or at their current places of employment. However, with their founded knowledge of their culture, cultural practices, languages, values, beliefs and with their new-found appreciation for their ancestors and family. The participants were able to re-group and maintain their purpose of developing their Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, Cook Island and Māori philosophies and knowledges, doing justice to the

programme that they all feel should have remained for those Pasifika students interested in Pasifika ECE and improvement.

5.5.3 *What are our Pasifika teachers missing?*

In order for Pasifika to advance our teachers we/they must become more confident in who they are, and their identity as explored in the programme and throughout this research. An issue surrounding leadership which has been a focal point for some time is leadership within Pasifika or the lack of it. Matapo (2017) supported by Ravlich (2016) emphasize specific Pasifika success can be determined by specialised Pasifika teacher programmes. It is hard to disagree that Pasifika success will be from forming Pasifika programmes like the BPED (ECT) that support the different Pasifika literature. Matapo (2017) further goes on to state “there is little mention of the importance of culturally inclusive leadership or connections made to leadership in promoting culturally inclusive pedagogy which is fundamental to the purpose of Pasifika education” (p. 48). This statement supports the participants’ observations surrounding Pasifika teachers they have met while on practicum and working in their centres.

Pasifika teachers need to have open mindness. I mean you come into the degree ok yeah, you work with children and you have a fair idea you don’t realise how much it benefits you as a teacher to actually have an open mind.
(Deanne)

Shared knowledges we are now missing that and we have to try and bring our ideas together. It should be done. (Sophie)

Deanne and Sophie believe that shared knowledges (Pasifika) has been halted for different reasons. For this reason, the Pasifika teachers in the field that they have meet have closed their minds to learning, growing and mentoring the children with our fundamental Pasifika values, beliefs and teachings. This could be excused as the teachers were not educated by the Pasifika programme as the participants have been, however the participants are willing to share their knowledges and as well be taught and mentored by their senior Pasifika teachers essentially together becoming the leaders for Pasifika ECE (Cooper, 2014). Reciprocal learning in Pasifika centres can be unseen if not working with family, as it is hard for elders of the Pasifika teaching community to trust the young ones fresh out of university. There must be an equal space of removing positions especially in relation to teacher’s ages and their service within their ECE

community. This does not mean they are not respected by the newly graduate teachers, but it does mean that then they would be open to the new knowledges, Pasifika pedagogies and philosophies.

Pasifika teachers have lost what they have been taught because it's too much economic wise it's the struggle just getting the money and getting through that same 8-hour day if they do that then that is doing their job but when we study three years in our respective qualification I think we sort of lose what we have been taught. (Anne)

Anne believes the different Pasifika teachers she has met throughout her three years study within the programme and her experience working in her *Aoga o Mata* teachers are to be focussed on mainstream culture and mainstream curriculum in ECE, they are slowly forgetting their cultural practices, teachings, values and beliefs. This could be answered because of the dominant mainstream education (Jattan, 2016; Pau'uvale, 2011, Teisina, 2011) and their expectations and guidelines that are not of Pasifika standards. Another issue is that not all teachers had Pasifika specialised training so their teachings, philosophies, curriculum are that of mainstream clashing with Pasifika values and beliefs. The issue is how do we as Pasifika produce Pasifika teachers who have the ability to create a collective Pasifika ECE environment that covers a child's personal, collective, community, spiritual, economical, physical, mental space where he/she are not adjusting to mainstream but fitting into Pasifika. The BPED (ECT) degree created Pasifika leaders for ECE and suited for this society today (Manu'atu, 2013; Manu'atu et al., 2014).

You really have to know who you are, you have to know what you really value and believe in and have to be able to teach from that place because if you don't what are you teaching and why are you there in the first place. So, if you have a sense of who you are and what you want and where you are going in life you are able to teach from that true place. (Anne)

Becca who is Māori truly believes that it is about commitment. As a Māori she classes herself as an Oceania teacher and spoke about how the Pasifika programme connected her to who she was, it allowed her to be open to Pasifika and those she met. She mentioned cultural classes that she observed in both Mainstream and Pasifika ECE centres whilst on practicum. She also requested that Mainstream do more to include cultural factors but as Jattan (2016) mentions Mainstream teachers have a hard time connecting and understanding where Pasifika children come from and leave it up to

Pasifika teachers, once again highlighting the need for specialised Pasifika programmes as Mainstream programmes do not do enough to inform student teachers of the differences amongst Pasifika teachers. The reason this is imperative for the Pasifika community is as written in this research, the Pasifika population is going to increase and there must be Pasifika teachers and ECET as whole who can cater to children who have their identity as a Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island, Fijian, Niuean, Kiribati or a Tuvaluan child.

I don't know if there is a cultural clash but it's a word everybody knows but the actions of respect are unseen. For mainstream sections I would love for them to include the cultural factors. (Becca)

5.5.4 ECE Sector

The participants felt that certain papers of the programme supported them when looking into the MoE policies and documents, Governance and Management order and purpose. The papers *Tatala* and *Mou'i Mafana, Ako mo e ilo'i, and Poto* were mentioned during the *Talanoa* meetings. These papers focused on Governance and Management, Health and Safety, ECE curriculum and ECE practice/practicum. These three papers collectively related ECE services and sector to Pasifika (Cook Island, Tongan, Samoan, Niuean and Fijian) cultural practices, knowledge and experiences connected to coming from a Pasifika family.

Like I said it's a family thing and that's one of the perks of it people do say it's annoying working with family, but I think we kind of just make it work. We grew up together and our upbringing has been the same. The Tongan word for it, the term is *fe'ofa'ofani*/loving one another. Our foundation and the way we were brought up we don't let the worldly things come between our family bond I mean although we are working everything has to be managed in a professional way. (Sandy)

Although Sandy's centre is a family centre and for some it could be about nepotism their foundations and roots are embedded in their Tongan culture and language. They guide themselves on as she said loving one another. Beyond her love Tongan culture encompasses so much more. For example, their spirits, their relationships and the space of respect (Manu'atu, 2013). Sandy made it very clear that her family's centre was not perfect but because of the understanding and connection to their roots of being Tongan the difficulties if any were faced together. Decision making, and discussions were consistent and the new knowledge of reconceptualising and the underpinning of the

Tongan culture and language that Sandy gained and has been sharing in her centre, has brought another dimension to growing their family centre for focus on Tongan children grounded in their heritage, country, ancestors, language and culture.

On the other hand, Sophie who is in a Bi-lingual Samoan centre had the opposite experience:

I think in terms of management there is a break down within our Pasifika centres because it's like they are so set on making sure that they do this, this and this and yet it is not consistent and not transparent. One of the biggest things I have learnt is that transparency is not there, there is a lot of gossiping and the back chatting. (Sophie)

The participants felt along their journey they began to understand because of specific papers of the programme approaches that Pasifika centres were taking even though it was not transparent. It was not the fact the centres were wrong it were some of the practices were lacking, the Pasifika approaches, thoughts and processes. For example, Deanne shared:

It's hard I would base it on or around the Island where I am from we have a structure. There is a King or Queen this is a CEO in a centre, then she has her district leaders these are the managers. When I think about it we have our own structure I think the problem it's not about the structure itself in our centre it is about how the information is directed everywhere else but where it needs to go I think. It's more about each area knowing what their role is and how they are to communicate with different areas. (Deanne)

Once again another participant through her experiences talks about the transparency within her own centre that is blocking development of her Cook Island teachings and that of other teachers. She related their structure to the King and Queen's structure for managing their islands and country. Pasifika teachers and Pasifika ECE services have their cultural knowledge to relate and follow mainstream processes by firstly understanding their Pasifika heritages structures, cultural processes and contextualising this to their ECE services (Manu'atu, 2013). This is the layer in which the Pasifika programme generated, the participants alongside their classmates at the end of their studies were able to produce a specific curriculum according to their culture, each ECE curriculum was based around their own unique take on what they gained and experienced in the degree. Furthermore, as different researchers have stressed (Mara, 2017; Matapo, 2017; Teisina, 2011) for Pasifika to grow and develop they need to

develop their own way, within their own boundaries, curriculum and pedagogies. This has happened within this one of a kind specialised Pasifika ECE programme.

An issue that the six participants experienced through their journey that is an issue for Pasifika ECE was the relationship their centres and others experienced during practicum towards the MoE. Some participants felt that the MoE documents like Te Whaariki (MoE, 1996; 2017) (ECE curriculum for New Zealand), GTS and policies and procedures were a burden at time to their centres. However, the participants made it very clear as well that they understood and agreed that certain policies and procedures were required in ECE settings. Becca mentioned once again the limitations of MoE documents halting cultural knowledge. This is supported by Ward (2016) who references different MoE documents and Pasifika teachers' experiences when relating to the Te Whaariki document that at times is still hard to manage and understand. The participants except for Becca agreed with this:

I think it's gotten to that stage where teachers like for example when we write learning stories it's like you have to reflect on the child's learning at a certain part, but teachers are just using Te Whaariki and using that part, but parents don't understand or the links within the document. (Sophie)

The recent Te Whaariki I actually completed a survey in this and I wanted to go to one of the meetings when I actually looked at the final draft it was different. The previous was so limited there were things that we couldn't develop. I will always mention culture because that is where my passion is I felt that we were withheld it was straightforward and narrow the first edition. (Becca)

Te Whaariki curriculum that is a struggle you sort of kind of use that and you have to go with you know the curriculum that they set up and that's a struggle the MoE really don't believe in other cultures they really don't if they did our Pasifika degree would be still alive so that's a struggle for me I'm, we are under this MoE and they endorse Māori so where do we go and where do we fit in? (Anne)

The participants were not against the MoE documents and Te Whaariki however they did find relating to the document was at times not an accurate representation of a child's culture, language, values and beliefs especially when the children were of different Pasifika cultures (Ward, 2016). Ward (2016) has the most recent research relating to Te Whaariki and Samoan teachers,

Te Whaariki's bicultural values were seen as giving only superficial place for Samoan values, and with no proper implementation procedure provided. Supporting comments focussed on this superficiality and the absence of core everyday values of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *loto alofa* (love from the heart), *ola tautua* (live to serve). The implication drawn from all this was that you cannot use something created for one culture to promote another...Additionally it was considered that Te Whaariki to some extent followed Western ideologies, was opposite to all Polynesian cultures by emphasising independence and individualistic learning. (p. 100)

Even though the research was about Samoan teachers the same core values are within each Pasifika culture. For the participants they felt at times they were just following the template and repeating what they were saying about children's learning and even though Te Whaariki relates and supports the learning of children. They believe that with more Pasifika programmes like the one they studied Pasifika were on the right track to create their own Pasifika curriculum inclusive of the Pasifika values, beliefs, cultures, languages, practices of each Pasifika nation represented in New Zealand. One participant understands that there is still some way to go but having the programme was beginning to close the gap of Pasifika being at the lower end of the education statistics.

5.6 Conclusion

The participants have portrayed the realities of becoming a teacher requires more in-depth of understanding but most importantly a foundation that allows newly graduated teachers to be confident, understanding and lucid in their transitioning into the ECE field. The participants have expressed that there must be different initiatives for Pasifika, steered by Pasifika within the Pasifika communities in New Zealand. The participants connect to MoE documents, MoE policies and their centres expectations to an extent but expressed the need dire need for Pasifika to lead Pasifika as the programme did for them. A space is needed within the MoE itself so Pasifika teachers of ECE can develop their Niue, Samoa, Cook Island, Fijian and Maori specialised curriculum. Although the curriculum and other documents are developing, an urgency is still needed so that Pasifika teachers can provide a sustainable, loving, culture and language-based area for Pasifika children to thrive. The programme is a great model of where we must head if Pasifika are to grow in New Zealand.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to provide an arena for students and graduates of the BPed (ECT) degree a space where they could vent their frustrations and explore their new knowledges in comparison to teachers already in the field. There is research surrounding Pasifika but not directly from Pasifika beginning teachers' voices. This study is fresh and is in support of Pasifika researchers calling for more specialised Pasifika programmes aimed at developing the Pasifika pool of graduates in University and when out in their respective fields.

In New Zealand discussions are still prevalent surrounding Pasifika children/students occupying the lower end of education across ECE, primary, intermediate, high school and university. The participants clearly indicate when Pasifika teachers discover, reconceptualise, underpin their identity, cultural practices, values and beliefs the space in which they occupy becomes richer in understanding, knowledge and beliefs. Pasifika children who remain misunderstood would thrive with teachers who are competent, confident and who know themselves and their worth. The programme changed each participant in different ways. Some connected more to their culture and some became more embedded in what they already knew and understood. At the centre of this was always the programme's framework *TalanoaLalānga* and *Fātulalānga*. The way the programme was designed and taught in the University setting allowed participants to control their own space and shared space. This research has been conducted to support those students who were able to take part in this ground breaking one of a kind programme.

The fact that Pasifika were their own leaders in a mainstream dominated educational society forced those to hear, recognise and acknowledge that we as Pasifika have our own foundation to support the children in ECE. What has been most apparent is Pasifika have our own ways of learning, measuring success and achieving however unless we are given the support to further programmes like this without the different policies and hoops that we must jump through, I believe Pasifika growth can and will rise.

6.1.1 *Limitations of the study*

- Ethically considerations would have been the most challenging part of conducting this research. As a past student and graduate of this programme I was not able to contact two of the participants whom I studied with however I believe having research assistants changed the way in which their *Talanoa* sessions were conducted.
- Putting a cap on the number of participants for the study limited the information that could have been collected.
- Restricting participants by expecting them to have been working in an ECE service for at least one year. I did not factor in that the students currently studying at the time and their other commitments outside of university. This is why after three weeks of waiting for participants to become interested in the programme I removed this requirement to become a participant and received interest the day after from the Class of 2015.
- Throughout the three intakes of from 2013-2015, Māori, South African, Chinese-Cambodian and Vietnamese students graduated with the BPED (ECT) degree. Only wanting Pasifika students/teachers limited the study as they could have validated even more the benefits of Pasifika ECE programmes.

6.1.2 *Strength of the study*

- The biggest strength was having participants of the specialised BPED (ECT) Degree participate in affirming the programme's position in a University even though it has been removed.
- Another strength was giving Pasifika beginning teachers the voice to share their journeys before, during and after the programme. Understanding where they came from, what they discovered and how they implement it and would implement it will show the University and other stakeholders a possible solution to the low status of Pasifika children education in New Zealand today.
- This study is the first of its kind following the programme, having a research to back up the programme could hopefully give stakeholders an idea of the way

forward when discussing and providing initiatives for Pasifika children in ECE and Pasifika in general.

- Initiatives are still being suggested of ways to better support Pasifika in university. This research supports the connection Pasifika students should be entitled to when they are in university. Papers that could be integrated into any programme offered besides ECE at university are *Fonua* (Homelands, Origin), *Kāinga* (Family and ancestors), and *Tupu'anga* (Identity). One or no papers to represent Pasifika children in New Zealand is not doing justice nor supporting the different goals posed by Tertiary Education Commission.
- Pasifika specialised programmes are imperative if New Zealand society, the Education society claim to want Pasifika to become successful. There has been vast, continuous, varied Pasifika research undertaken by Pasifika peoples. The evidence of its significance for New Zealand society and Pasifika in New Zealand does not need to be uncovered as it has already been researched and proved to be beneficial.
- Voices of newly graduated Pasifika teachers and students near to graduation makes the experiences raw, fresh, and unfiltered. Honesty is what these participants have offered. It is now the stakeholder's responsibility to listen, learn and act upon the changes needing to happen.
- This highlights once again the mainstream, dominant society's strong hold, almost arrogance in truly accepting Pasifika, causing the gap of Pasifika success.
- Finally, this research focuses on Pasifika ECET roles and responsibilities towards our Pasifika countries, communities, cultures, identities, values and beliefs.

6.1.3 *Suggestions for further research*

- Continuing on the research of the teachers who studied in the BPed (ECT) programme. Where did they end up? How are they implementing the programme? Does there need to be a space in institutes for specialised Pasifika education programmes?
- BPed (ECT) teachers versus Pasifika Teachers who studied in Mainstream. Further research into this could provide some understanding of where each

teacher stands and how Pasifika children are being educated and guided within the ECE services.

- Research into ECE services versus Homebase. How are these two ECE providers different, which one is more beneficial for our Pasifika communities?
- Research into Qualified versus unqualified teachers. As the participants of this research discussed how differently they were treated with their qualifications. One even saying that her qualification in the end did not matter. It was up to the Pasifika ECE service to recognise the qualification or not.
- The New Edition of Te Whaariki. The participants discussed about connecting to such documents and how it is still an issue for them as Pasifika teachers to relate too. How is this version different from the previous? Is it time for Pasifika to create their own and have it recognised by the Ministry of Education.
- The hierarchy in the Pasifika services. Participants all agreed that with their qualifications they still faced different obstacles especially when trying to pass on different teachings, learning's and knowledges from this specific BPED (ECT) programme.
- Research into the various and numerous ECE buildings within South Auckland. Are they for Pasifika children? Do they fit with Pasifika values, beliefs and cultural practices'?
- Further research into Pasifika ECET who have been in the ECE service for more than 10 years. This could be used as a contrast between the newly graduated teachers possibly highlighting the gaps, issues and benefits of these teachers.
- Pasifika families position with full immersion, bi-lingual Pasifika ECE services versus Mainstream ECE services. Where are Pasifika families opting to place their children and for what reasons? This could further support the demand of Pasifika specialised ECE programmes.

6.2 Concluding Remarks

As the participants expressed we cannot do much but give our sincere thanks and gratitude to the past, present and future Pasifika academics who have fought for our Pasifika rights of having such a programme introduced into the University setting. The

AUT programme from 2013 to 2016 opened the space for Pasifika students to advance in what is a mainstream dominated space. Niue, Tonga, Samoa, Cook Island, Māori, Fijian and other Pasifika cultures and languages were transformed, informed, investigated and the conceptualisation of our cultural languages, practices, beliefs, pedagogies were evolved. This programme has created three generations of Pasifika ECET grounded on a foundation of knowing oneself, discovering true identity, connecting love and shared knowledges. At the end of this, the purpose is that Pasifika children get given the best beginning to their journey that we can provide as Pasifika ECET.

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Glossary

Talanoa – to talk

loto – heart

mana – strength

whanaungatana – relationship/kinship/sense of family connection

TalanoaLalānga– *Talanoa* – to talk

lalānga – weaving

‘ofa – love

FātuLalānga– *fatu* – heart

lalānga– weaving

fonua – homeland

Tupu’anga – homeland/where you grew up/family heritage and histories

‘ilo – knowledge

Vagahau – language

Vagahau Niue – Niue Language

Poto – understand

Fakapotopoto – wisdoms of knowing

Poto’i – experienced/skilful

Fefela – knowledge

Maama – understanding through enlightenment

alofa – love

aroa – love

fakaalofa noa – love

fatu – heart

lea faka Tonga – Tongan Language

mafana – warmth

malie – beauty

potupotutau – harmony

atefua – heart

taulangi – reaching for the sky/fighting the sky

tikanga – Māori values/beliefs

kāinga – family

koloa – treasure

va – space between

fe’ofa’ofani – loving one another

tala’anga *‘ofa* – site of collective wisdoms

loto mafana – warm heartedness

fonua – land

tōaga – treasure

fa’aaloalo – respect

loto alofa – love from the heart

ola tautua – live to serve

List of Abbreviations

ECE – Early Childhood Education

MoE – Ministry of Education

BPed (ECT) – Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early Childhood Teaching)
degree/programme

AUT – The Auckland University of Technology

ECET – Early Childhood Education Teachers’

ECT – Early Childhood Education Teacher

ERO – Education Review Office

AT – Associate Teacher

EL – Evaluative Lecturer

MIT – Manukau Institute of Technology

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

GTS – Graduating Teacher Standards

TEC – Tertiary Education Commission

StatsNZ – Statistics New Zealand

Appendix A: Ethics Approval



AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
13-18, Waiata Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

13 June 2017

Tafili Utumapu-McBride

Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Tafili

Re Ethics Application: **17/139 Authentic voices from the heart of Early Childhood education - Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities**

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
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: frv7509@aut.ac.nz

Appendix B: Participation Information Sheet

Facebook Invitation



Fakaalofa Lahi atu,

Hello Ladies,

My name is Kendra Tike. I undertook the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood Teaching) and graduated in 2015.

This year I will be undertaking my Masters in Education at the Auckland University of Technology. I have decided to base my research on and titled *Authentic voices from the heart of Early childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities*.

This is an invitation to those interested in taking part in my research this year. I need 8 participants who have graduated with the qualification of the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood teaching) from The Auckland University of Technology.

If you are interested in becoming part of my thesis, then please respond privately to my email address within a week from today stating your

- Full Name
- Year you graduated
- Contact details

A few requirements

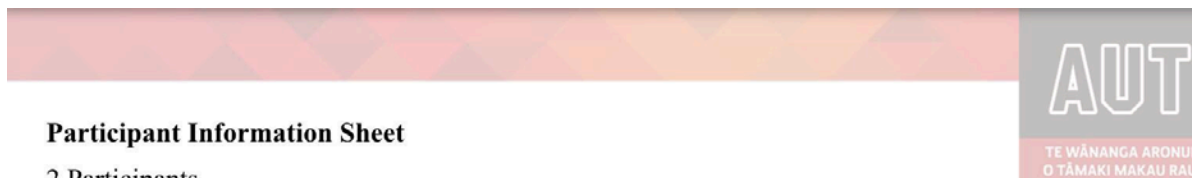
- 1) Completed your studies and graduated
- 2) Currently employed and been working for at least one year
- 3) I am looking for a range of teachers from this degree etc centre, kindergartens, playcentre, home based services.

Any questions please do not hesitate to email myself, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely
Kendra
Email: frv7509@autuni.ac.nz

2 July 2015
page 1 of 1
This version was last edited in June 2016

First Year Participants – 2013 BPed (ECT) intake



Participant Information Sheet

2 Participants

Class of: 2013

Graduated: December 2015

Date Information Sheet Produced:

05 April 2017

Project Title

Authentic Voices from the heart of Early childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities

An Invitation

Fakaalofa Lahi atu,

My name is Kendra Tike and I would like to invite you to participate in my research titled *Authentic voices from the heart of Early childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities*. The reason for this research

- An opportunity to express your realities, experiences once entering the workforce through completing your degree, *Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood) Degree*.

As you are aware your Class of 2013 were the first cohort of this qualification, your participation in this thesis is for myself to complete my Masters of Education here at the Auckland University of Technology, this research will also solidify the reason this degree would have benefited more Pasifika Early childhood teachers in the future. This thesis will not in any way put you at a disadvantage in regards to gaining future work employment or furthering your studies, you be identified under a pseudonym. I hope you take time to read this information sheet and consider becoming a participant for my thesis.

Fakaue Lahi

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood teaching) that you have gained qualification for, the purpose for your participation is so that you can convey your experiences as a newly graduated teacher from this specific degree. This research would benefit you as it will help support your practices in your chosen field of Early childhood education, and provide a resource for your centre/workplace. If an opportunity arises for me to present or write publications relating to this research, your identity and place of employment will be protected through using an alias. I would like to also note that this research is to bring about awareness of the importance of such a ground breaking degree for our Pasifika communities, as well as providing a platform for you to express your experiences as a new Pasifika teacher. This qualification was ground breaking in the Early childhood community, it allowed Pasifika teachers to express and weave their culture, language, knowledges and so much more whether you be Fijian, Cook Island, Tongan, Samoan, Niuean etc. My goal for this research is that more Pasifika teachers are able to understand your approaches, rationale, and concepts through what you have gained from this qualification.

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

The recruitment and selection process for your participation is firstly through having undertaken and completed the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood) Degree. The process of selecting you as a participant furthermore is that you are of Pasifika island decent and you have been working for at least one year since completing your degree, but no more than three years in Early childhood education itself. This selection process would have excluded other participants that would have been willing to become a participant for this research. I have chosen to invite you as you meet all the requirements for my thesis. If more than two participants offer their participation in this research, then I will pull two names from a ballot box with the assistance of my Supervisor Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride.

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 be an advantage nor disadvantage to yourself or myself as the researcher.

All your information (name, place of employment, personal details) will not be published in the research, I will be using coding and a pseudonym. This will protect your privacy. You have the opportunity 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?

As we have undertaken studies together, a research assistant named Merry Jackson-Faumuina who is an early childhood teacher will be conducting the interviews with you for this research. The research will involve you allowing Merry as the assistant researcher to meet with you at least two times, at the place of your choosing eg McCafe for a 30 – 1 hour talanoa session. The meeting dates and times can be negotiated depending on your availability. I will be providing you with a list of questions that Merry will be asking during your talanoa sessions, these questions are all about your journey as a Pasifika teacher in Early childhood education.

What are the benefits?

As a participant this can support you in your further studies if you choose, and be a guide for those who you work alongside with to understand the rationale, objectives and concepts in which you bring to your place of employment. This would benefit myself as the researcher as I will be using this thesis to gain my Masters of Education qualification, and further my goal for early childhood education.

How will my privacy be protected?

I will not be using your name during this research process this is one way your privacy will be protected. There will be no use of your current workplace name. I can confidently say we do not have any type of relationship that could cause harm to yourself as a participant. If you feel at any time your confidentiality has been breached, please contact my supervisor.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There will be no monetary value involved as you participate in this research. Although your time to meet with Merry (research assistant) will be greatly appreciated by myself, time after work and possibly minimal loss of time spent on family commitments will be a part of becoming a participant for this research. I will be truly thankful for your consideration of becoming a participant for this research.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like a copy of the findings please indicate this in the consent form.

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, tafili.utumapu-mcbride@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the

Executive Secretary of AUTECH

Kate O'Connor

ethics@aut.ac.nz

[\(09\)921 9999 ext 6038](tel:(09)921 9999 ext 6038).

Whom do I contact for further information 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:

Kendra Tike

Email: frv7509@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Project Supervisor

Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride, tafili.utumapu-mcbride@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the

Executive Secretary of AUTECH

Kate O'Connor

ethics@aut.ac.nz

[\(09\)921 9999 ext 6038](tel:(09)921 9999 ext 6038).

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on June 13 2017
ethics approval was granted, AUTECH Reference number 17/139 Authentic voices from the heart of Early Childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities

Second Year Participants – 2014 BPed (ECT) intake



TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Participant Information Sheet

2 Participants

Class of: 2014

Graduated: December 2016

Date Information Sheet Produced:

05 April 2017

Project Title

Authentic Voices from the heart of Early childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities

An Invitation

Fakaalofa Lahi atu,

My name is Kendra Tike and I would like to invite you to participate in my research titled *Authentic voices from the heart of Early childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities*. The reason for this research

- An opportunity to express your realities, experiences once entering the workforce through completing your degree, *Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood) Degree*.

Your intake for the degree was the second intake in 2014, your participation in this thesis is for myself to complete my Masters of Education here at the Auckland University of Technology, this research will also solidify the reason this degree would have benefited more Pasifika Early childhood teachers in the future. This thesis will not in any way put you at a disadvantage in regards to gaining future work employment or furthering your studies, you be identified under a pseudonym. I hope you take time to read this information sheet and consider becoming a participant for my thesis.

Fakauc Lahi

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood teaching) that you have gained qualification for, the purpose for your participation is so that you can convey your experiences as a newly graduated teacher from this specific degree. This research would benefit you as it will help support your practices in your chosen field of Early childhood education, and provide a resource for your centre/workplace. If an opportunity arises for me to present or write publications relating to this research, your identity and place of employment will be protected through using an alias. I would like to also note that this research is to bring about awareness of the importance of such a ground breaking degree for our Pasifika communities, as well as providing a platform for you to express your experiences as a new Pasifika teacher. This qualification was ground breaking in the Early childhood community, it allowed Pasifika teachers to express and weave their culture, language, knowledges and so much more whether you be Fijian, Cook Island, Tongan, Samoan, Niuean etc. My goal for this research is that more Pasifika teachers are able to understand your approaches, rationale, and concepts through what you have gained from this qualification.

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

The recruitment and selection process for your participation is firstly through having undertaken and completed the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood) Degree. The process of selecting you as a participant furthermore is that you are of Pasifika island decent and you have been working for at least one year since completing your degree, but no more than three years in Early childhood education itself. This selection process would have excluded other participants that would have been willing to become a participant for this research. I have chosen to invite you as you meet all the requirements for my thesis. If more than two participants offer their participation in this research, then I will pull two names from a ballot box with the assistance of my Supervisor Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride.

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 be an advantage nor disadvantage to yourself or myself as the researcher.

All your information (name, place of employment, personal details) will not be published in the research, I will be using coding and a pseudonym. This will protect your privacy. You have the opportunity 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 research will involve you allowing Kendra Tike (myself) to meet with you at least two times, at the place of your choosing eg McCafe for a 30 – 1 hour talanoa session. The meeting dates and times can be negotiated depending on your availability. I will be providing you with a list of questions that that will be asked during your talanoa sessions, these questions are all about your journey as a Pasifika teacher in Early childhood education.

What are the benefits?

As a participant this can support you in your further studies if you choose, and be a guide for those who you work alongside with to understand the rationale, objectives and concepts in which you bring to your place of employment. This would benefit myself as the researcher as I will be using this thesis to gain my Masters of Education qualification, and further my goal for early childhood education.

How will my privacy be protected?

I will not be using your name during this research process this is one way your privacy will be protected. There will be no use of your current workplace name. I can confidently say we do not have any type of relationship that could cause harm to yourself as a participant. If you feel at any time your confidentiality has been breached, please contact my supervisor.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There will be no monetary value involved as you participate in this research. Although your time to meet myself, time after work and possibly minimal loss of time spent on family commitments will be a part of becoming a participant for this research. I will be truly thankful for your consideration of becoming a participant for this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

As the researcher I would like to give you one to consider this invitation (from the time ethics approves of this).

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, after each talanoa session in two weeks of meeting with myself, I will send out a brief description of what was recorded. I am open for you to contact me if you would like to meet again in regards to the feedback, or receive an email if you would like to adjust what has been transcribed. Once the thesis is submitted and passed I will be sending you out a copy of the final research.

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, tafilu.utumapu-mcbride@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the

Executive Secretary of ATEC

Kate O'Connor

ethics@aut.ac.nz

[\(09\)921 9999 ext 6038](tel:(09)921 9999 ext 6038).

Whom do I contact for further information 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:

Kendra Tike

Email: frv7509@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Project Supervisor

Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride, tafilu.utumapu-mcbride@aut.ac.nz

Executive Secretary of ATEC

Kate O'Connor

ethics@aut.ac.nz

[\(09\)921 9999 ext 6038](tel:(09)921 9999 ext 6038).

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *June 13 2017*
ethics approval was granted, ATEC Reference number *17/139 Authentic voices from the heart*
*of Early Childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities***

Third Year Participants – 2015 BPed (ECT) intake



TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Participant Information Sheet

2 Participants

Class of: 2015

Graduation date: December 2017

Date Information Sheet Produced:

05 April 2017

Project Title

Authentic Voices from the heart of Early childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities

An Invitation

Fakaalofa Lahi atu,

My name is Kendra Tike and I would like to invite you to participate in my research titled *Authentic voices from the heart of Early childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities*. The reason for this research

- An opportunity to express your realities, experiences once entering the workforce through completing your degree, *Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood teaching) Degree*.

Your intake for the degree will be the last for this qualification of Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood teaching) so your experience and voice will be vital to this research, your participation in this thesis is for myself to complete my Masters of Education here at the Auckland University of Technology, this research will also solidify the reason this degree would have benefited more Pasifika Early childhood teachers in the future. This thesis will not in any way put you at a disadvantage in regards to gaining future work employment or furthering your studies, you be identified under a pseudonym. I hope you take time to read this information sheet and consider becoming a participant for my thesis.

Fakaue Lahi

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood teaching) that you have gained qualification for, the purpose for your participation is so that you can convey your experiences as a newly graduated teacher from this specific degree. This research would benefit you as it will help support your practices in your chosen field of Early childhood education, and provide a resource for your centre/workplace. If an opportunity arises for me to present or write publications relating to this research, your identity and place of employment will be protected through using an alias. I would like to also note that this research is to bring about awareness of the importance of such a ground breaking degree for our Pasifika communities, as well as providing a platform for you to express your experiences as a new Pasifika teacher. This qualification was ground breaking in the Early childhood community, it allowed Pasifika teachers to express and weave their culture, language, knowledges and so much more whether you be Fijian, Cook Island, Tongan, Samoan, Niuean etc. My goal for this research is that more Pasifika teachers are able to understand your approaches, rationale, and concepts through what you have gained from this qualification.

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

The recruitment and selection process for your participation is firstly through having undertaken and completed the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood) Degree. The process of selecting you as a participant furthermore is that you are of Pasifika island decent and you have been working for at least one year since completing your degree, but no more than three years in Early childhood education itself. This selection process would have excluded other participants that would have been willing to become a participant for this research. I have chosen to invite you as you meet all the requirements for my thesis. If more than two participants offer their participation in this research, then I will pull two names from a ballot box with the assistance of my Supervisor Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride.

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 be an advantage nor disadvantage to yourself or myself as the researcher.

All your information (name, place of employment, personal details) will not be published in the research, I will be using coding and a pseudonym. This will protect your privacy. You have the opportunity 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 research will involve you allowing Kendra Tike (myself) to meet with you at least two times, at the place of your choosing eg McCafe for a 30 – 1 hour talanoa session. The meeting dates and times can be negotiated depending on your availability. I will be providing you with a list of questions that that will be asked during your talanoa sessions, these questions are all about your journey as a Pasifika teacher in Early childhood education.

What are the benefits?

As a participant this can support you in your further studies if you choose, and be a guide for those who you work alongside with to understand the rationale, objectives and concepts in which you bring to your place of employment. This would benefit myself as the researcher as I will be using this thesis to gain my Masters of Education qualification, and further my goal for early childhood education.

How will my privacy be protected?

I will not be using your name during this research process this is one way your privacy will be protected. There will be no use of your current workplace name. I can confidently say we do not have any type of relationship that could cause harm to yourself as a participant. If you feel at any time your confidentiality has been breached, please contact my supervisor.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There will be no monetary value involved as you participate in this research. Although your time to meet myself, time after work and possibly minimal loss of time spent on family commitments will be a part of becoming a participant for this research. I will be truly thankful for your consideration of becoming a participant for this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

As the researcher I would like to give you one to consider this invitation (from the time ethics approves of this).

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, after each talanoa session in two weeks of meeting with myself, I will send out a brief description of what was recorded. I am open for you to contact me if you would like to meet again in regards to the feedback, or receive an email if you would like to adjust what has been transcribed. Once the thesis is submitted and passed I will be sending you out a copy of the final research.

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, tafili.utumapu-mcbride@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the

Executive Secretary of AUTECH

Kate O'Connor

ethics@aut.ac.nz

[\(09\)921 9999 ext 6038](tel:(09)921 9999 ext 6038).

Whom do I contact for further information 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:

Kendra Tike

Email: frv7509@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Project Supervisor

Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride, tafili.utumapu-mcbride@aut.ac.nz

Executive Secretary of AUTECH

Kate O'Connor

ethics@aut.ac.nz

[\(09\)921 9999 ext 6038](tel:(09)921 9999 ext 6038).

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on June 13 2017
ethics approval was granted, AUTECH Reference number 17/139 Authentic voices from the heart
of Early Childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form



Project title: **Authentic Voices from the heart of Early childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities'**

Project Supervisor: *Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride*

Researcher: *Kendra Tike*

Assistant Researchers: *Merry Jackson-Faumuina & Kerri-Anne Lafu*

- ☐ 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 have an opportunity to view and edit the transcripts.
- ☐ 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 my personal details and place of employment will not be mentioned in any way throughout this research.
- ☐ I understand my confidentiality will be respected and my real name will not be identified except under a pseudonym.
- ☐ 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 ☐

Participants Signature :

Participants Name :

Participants Contact Details (if appropriate)

Email :

Mobile :

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on June 13 2017 ethics approval was granted, AUTEK Reference number 17/139 Authentic voices from the heart of Early Childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

Appendix D: Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement



TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Confidentiality Agreement

For an intermediary or research assistant.

Project title: *Authentic Voices from the heart of Early childhood education
– Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities.*

Project Supervisor: *Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride*

Researcher: *Kendra Janelle Tike*

- i I understand that all the material I will be asked to record is confidential.
- i I understand that the contents of the Consent Forms, tapes, or interview notes can only be discussed with the researchers.
- i I will not keep any copies of the information nor allow third parties access to them.

Intermediary's signature:

Intermediary's name:

Intermediary's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on June 13 2017 ethics approval was granted, AUTEK Reference number 17/139 Authentic voices from the heart of Early Childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities

Appendix E: Questions that guided the *Talanoa*



Questions for Interview with Participants

Main Question:

What does it mean to be a Pasifika Early Childhood teacher in reflection to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood teaching) degree?

Background teacher profile:

- Which Pasifika ethnicity do you identify with?
- When did you complete your studies? Are you currently studying?
- Are you teaching in an early childhood centre? Which one?
- Are you a registered teacher?

Reflective Questions: (that will guide the research)

- What does it mean to be a Pasifika Early childhood teacher in reflection to the Bachelor of Pasifika Education (Early childhood) Degree?
- Are you able to practice the teachings/learning you have learnt from the B. Pasifika Degree?
- What would be the most challenging thing about being a Pasifika Early childhood teacher?
- What would you change about the Early childhood sector? Why?
- How do you as a Pasifika Early childhood teacher provide for Pasifika children? (identity, culture, language)
- Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 and 20 years' time?
- How effective are the Ministry of Education documents to your practice/ your centre's practices / Pasifika practices?
- How are your practices, teachings, degree different from those practicing in the field from your perspective (describe your practicum experiences)?
- How has the B. Pasifika Degree changed you?

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *June 13 2017 ethics approval was granted, AUTEK Reference number 17/139 Authentic voices from the heart of Early Childhood education – Pasifika Early childhood teacher's realities*